

SKYWORDS

April 2022



Dales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club

Chairman's Chat

Those of you that attended the Farmers' Dinner, and were subjected to an even longer Chairman's Speech than usual (covering 2 years), will be relieved to know that I'm going to keep this short. Just a quick summary from this month's committee meeting.

The club reserve re-pack, as reported in the last edition, made a profit of £76 after paying for the venue and the services of the supervisors. But don't go expecting a refund or reduction of subs just yet - the venue politely pointed out that we hadn't paid last year's bill yet!

There was a proposal at the AGM that we review the club's minimum working capital (to prevent us going overdrawn). Although the suggestion was made in light of rising inflation, the Treasurer actually proposed a reduction from £2,300 to £2,000 (£1,200 to pay for Farmers' Christmas Drinks (before subs come in) and £800 for unanticipated contingencies). This was passed by a majority vote.

You may have read about the new Sports League in [Skywings](#): in essence filtering out EN D wings from the National XC Paragliding League to give EN B and EN C wings some prizes. The committee decided not to pay the club subscription of £30 at this time. This means that individuals will have to pay £5 each if they wish to participate. Financially it makes sense for the club to pay if more than 6 club members want to enter. We're told that individuals will get a refund if their club subscribes, so please get in touch if you have, or would like to, participate. We are not like the politicians who see a change of mind as a sign of weakness! (These costs are in addition to individual and club entry fees to the traditional XC league.)

The club projector has been declared serviceable, as long as we don't try to plug an ultra-high-tech laptop into it. Hopefully you'll witness our new USB camera and directional microphone at the next club night.

Having survived the winter storms our remote weather station recently went offline for about 12 hours. Apparently, this was due to a server error. We suspect that Holfuy reconnected weather stations in alphabetical order – perhaps it wasn't such a good idea to call it Wether Fell!

The UK flying season appears to have finally arrived. We've seen the [first few XCs](#) (and received our first flying complaint!). Enjoy the conditions whilst you can but remember that Spring thermals can be fairly boisterous. Take your time if you haven't flown for a while and only fly if the conditions are right for you.

Fly safely,

Martin Baxter
Chairman

Livin' it up at the Hotel California

View of an old timer (Martin Baxter):

I qualified as a paraglider pilot, in the latter part of the last century. Soon realising that the UK weather wasn't exactly conducive to our sport, I decided to sign up for a paragliding holiday. Flicking through the back pages of Skywings I decided to give [Hotel California](#) (the one in Spain) a go. I first wrote about it in [Skywords in 2007](#) and have just returned from my 20th visit.

I had planned to go in 2020, but COVID-19 put an end to that. I'd stretched the length of time that a deposit can be carried forward by a business struggling through a pandemic to breaking point, and so when a friend of mine from Germany declared that he was going, I jumped on the bandwagon. My friend travelled with a German companion, and it made sense for me to find somebody to car share at both ends. The only person brave/daft enough to respond to my advert on the forum 'pilot seeks travelling companion' was Liam 'Toot' Toohill. Unfortunately, by the time he got around to booking, my flight was full, so he ended up flying from Manchester whilst I flew out of Leeds/Bradford.

COVID-19 travel restrictions at the time had eased and were limited to a form each way, and masks in public places (not the hotel) in Spain. (There was a time when they were wearing face masks on take-off, only removing them for flying!) I enjoyed a leisurely afternoon flight to Malaga, with no queues at either end, and was collected by my friend, arriving in time for dinner and a relaxing beer.

Hotel California isn't the cheapest holiday in Spain, but I maintain that it is one of the best. The price is based upon 2 sharing a hire car for transfers, trips to the hill, retrieves, and anything else you fancy if not flying. We all paid a €75 supplement to get our own room: they are all ensuite with a balcony. We also opted for the full food package (breakfast, sandwich for lunch and 2 course evening meal) for €140. The atmospheric bar is run on a chit basis and there is a good wifi signal. There is even a harness hanger on the terrace, and Dirk is a dab hand at minor repairs - everything from superglue and sewing to 3D printing.

Dirk is a qualified instructor, which proved handy when we discovered that our new German acquaintance had never been taught to do reverse launches. Believe it or not Dirk is also more enthusiastic about flying than you are! Unlike many of those operating out of Algodonales, Dirk is fully recognised and respected by the Spanish authorities (enforcement is currently stricter here than in Algo'). He speaks fluent English, German, French and Spanish and knows all the local pilots. This can make for some interesting chatter on the radio!

I normally like to go in March. This allows me to regain currency whilst the weather is still crap in UK, prior to the start of the UK season. This trip was a week or two earlier than I normally go. The weather forecast didn't look particularly promising and we heard tales of

doom about fellow UK pilots who had cancelled their trip to Algo as a consequence. But we were going, so best make the most of it...



Martin launches at La Herradura

I won't get you a blow by blow account of each day, suffice it to say that Dirk managed to find quality flying locations on all 7 days. One of my highlights was climbing to 7,500' AMSL in the foothills of the snow capped Sierra Nevada. On another day we flew at the coast (La Herradura), over luxury villas, swimming pools and cliff tops, before landing on the beach as the wind picked up. Five minute drive back to the hotel for a sandwich and a mug of tea whilst the rain lashed down outside. An hour later and we were back on take off for another couple of hours of gentle soaring.

I was flying with new/different instruments this year. Having downloaded the Spanish airspace my first flight dictated that I turn it off!

'You are approaching Seville airspace';

'You have entered Seville airspace';

'You are now well inside Seville airspace'..!

Such is the relaxed attitude to Spanish airspace – a possible indication that they have far more than they need. For a bit of fun I've set up a few tasks on XC Map. The best I managed was on the Cenes Grid Challenge (16 waypoints), view [here](#).

Everyone who has flown there remembers Otivar; a thermic site about 20 mins drive from the hotel. The landing field is on a spur with very little in the way of overshoot options. This makes it very intimidating to the uninitiated. However, briefed on the best landing approach and with a local expert to judge the prevailing weather conditions, it's as safe as any other site.

Toot hadn't flown there before, but didn't need to worry about the landing field because he followed the rest of us and landed on the beach 16km away. That may not sound very far but it's a very technical flight crossing several valleys and ridges with very limited landing options. His achievement earned him a prestigious O2H (Otivar to Herradura) badge (see photo). I put my foot down in an attempt to get a decent time score – link to track log [here](#).



I'll put something on the forum prior to my next trip and, if you can't justify 3 weeks in Colombia, you'd be more than welcome to join me.

Martin

Dales Club ground handling challenge on the beach

View of a newby (Liam Toothill) - Sobering thoughts

I'm writing this sat on the top of Nappa scar, I've just seen my first bumblebee of the year and have 2 Ravens for company showing me what's possible when you are designed for flight with some impressive acro, so here goes fingers to board with a few lines about my trip to HC.

In Feb i saw Martins post on the DHPC group and thought that's ages away, and with racking up more points for the car moving too quickly and an imminent trip to talk to the man in the wig stalled my plans, then a few weeks later and after a pants winter with storms that Dorothy would of hid from, I thought I need to get away.

When I went to book, all the flights from Leeds/Bradford were full, I think this scuppered Martins plans of someone coming along to make life cheaper and easier, probably not the only thing! so Manchester it was.

Before booking I called Dirk for a low down on what to expect (from him not me) and because I was just shy of the 100hrs post CP needed for some of the sites - the expected level required, as Dirk was Guiding not instructing.

So flights booked, all the hire car end of things HC sorts out so anyone can drive any car.

My doglets in kennels, off time...

I arrived much earlier at Malaga than Martin so went to get the hire car and drive to HC alone, this ended up being one of the only times I was allowed to drive unless it was completely necessary, I have feelings, but this also meant I could lay down in the back for the remainder of the trip watching the world go by and WhatsApp' my new Slovakian beauty. Martin did draw the line at having my feet out the window on the motorway though! - something about seat belts I think he said or something.



Martin – fly towards that Cu Nim so that I can take a photo

Travelling from Malaga to HC is super straightforward, then at our first dinner found out there are speed cameras at tunnel entrances and dotted about, I'm plagued by these bots, it was just impossible to program the car radio with all these Spanish dance stations I knew Martin would love, and look out for speed cameras at the same time, such unfairness.

Dirk's great, he knows the area and weather inside out, a straight talking no nonsense hard bloke who wouldn't suffer a fool, I liked him instantly.

Dirks wife Tracy is lovely and takes care of anything that you may need help with, or Spanish, (lets say like if you need to call Jet2 in malaga and ask if they found your tablet on the plane.... Oops....

Dinners were super and Tracy would ask us what we fancied for the evening in the morning and whatever sandwiches for lunch, I wanted to move in.



Each morning at breakfast Dirk would give us a briefing of the day to come, and from the start of the week, saying the weather was marginal, he put us on the money each day, sometimes managing a couple of sites. Martin has already mentioned what sites we flew, but my highlights...

Cenes de la Vega, up to over 7000ft, looking down over to the Alhambra and being able to avoid the landing at Otivar as I flew down to the coast instead! The O2H was made possible by Dirk's guiding, and was a fantastic flight. The only other xc flight I had done before was from Dodd to nr Hubberholme shortly after passing CP. Cloudbase was a tad low, so the plan at the start of the day for me and being my first time was to stay at Otivar and have a bimbie around there. Then at 1250m and a stint in cloud, I tried to see how close to the Pyramid I could get, flying over the gorge - the first transition. Dirk was on the radio telling me to go back and top up with height, second try and we were off.

Getting low a few at points, (twin Peaks plus ridge after) and losing even more height on bar trying to penetrate I thought it was going to be all over a couple of times. I was well chuffed to make it to Herradura and could only remember snippets of the 90mins flight.

After landing on the beach a girl in a white bikini and linen dress wanted me to take pictures of her and then selfies with me, what a great way to spend the morning and all before lunch!

I had a fantastic week meeting Martins friends and getting to know Martin better too, we all got on great and had some real out there stories to tell over dinner. (not for these pages!)

For those of you who know me a little, and some that don't, one of my near lifelong sports was extreme beering , which after knocking it on the head for a while at the beginning of January made this sobering trip to the HC - another first!

I'm definitely going to return to The Hotel California and couldn't recommended it enough

If you have never been - go, I wish I had never left!



Sunrise at Almunecar (walking distance from the hotel).

Toot

DHPC Social diary

Next Meeting – 7th April (last of the season)

The UK Paragliding Team achieved great things last year with Russ Ogden taking individual Gold and Team GB also taking the Gold. This amazing achievement was led by Jocky Sanderson who is taking time out from training in Turkey to give us the latest news on Team GB at our last social of the season.

Please come along, enjoy a pint and a pie and arm yourself with a question for Jocky who will be joining on Zoom at 8pm.

Although we always encourage you to come along and meet other club members, especially if you're new to the club, you can join on zoom if you can't make it in person - Keep an eye on the Whatsapp chat for the link.

We are a friendly bunch and it's always good to see a face you know on the hill.

Below are the dates for the next season. Please enjoy the air in the intervening period and create plenty of stories, films and pictures for us to enjoy retelling over the long winter.

Hope to see you on the 7th of April - **Horse and Farrier, Otley from 8pm to 10pm.**

Stef

Winter 2022-23

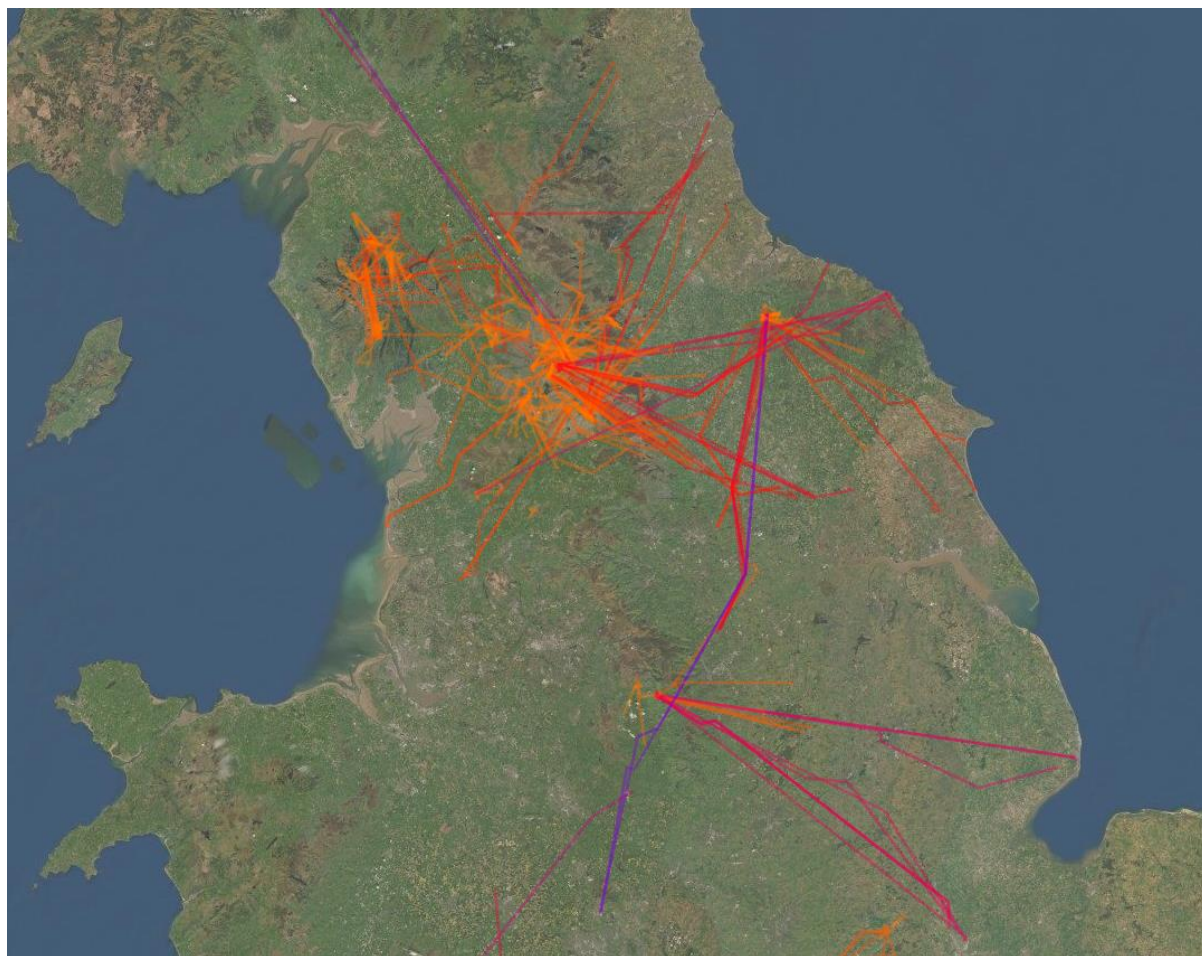
Horse and Farrier, Otley from 8pm to 10pm.

You're encouraged to arrive early, perhaps have a meal and buy some drinks, as the pub doesn't currently charge us for the room.

Sept 8 th	
Oct 6 th	
Nov 3 rd	
Dec 8 th	- AGM & auction
Jan 12 th	- Film competition
Feb 8 th	
Mar 9 th	
April 6 th	

It's not all about the numbers

The sun is out, lambs are fattening in the fields, curlews, lapwings, oyster catchers and thermals are back, cross-country flying is restarting, and we have spring and summer in the Dales to look forward to. Last year was an awesome one from the club's perspective, with second position in the national XC league club rankings, and first placed club in the UK XContest. According to wingman (<http://apps.hilltop-analytics.com/wingman/>) there were 271 cross-country flights over 10km done by Dales pilots last year and it makes good viewing to look at them all on one map.



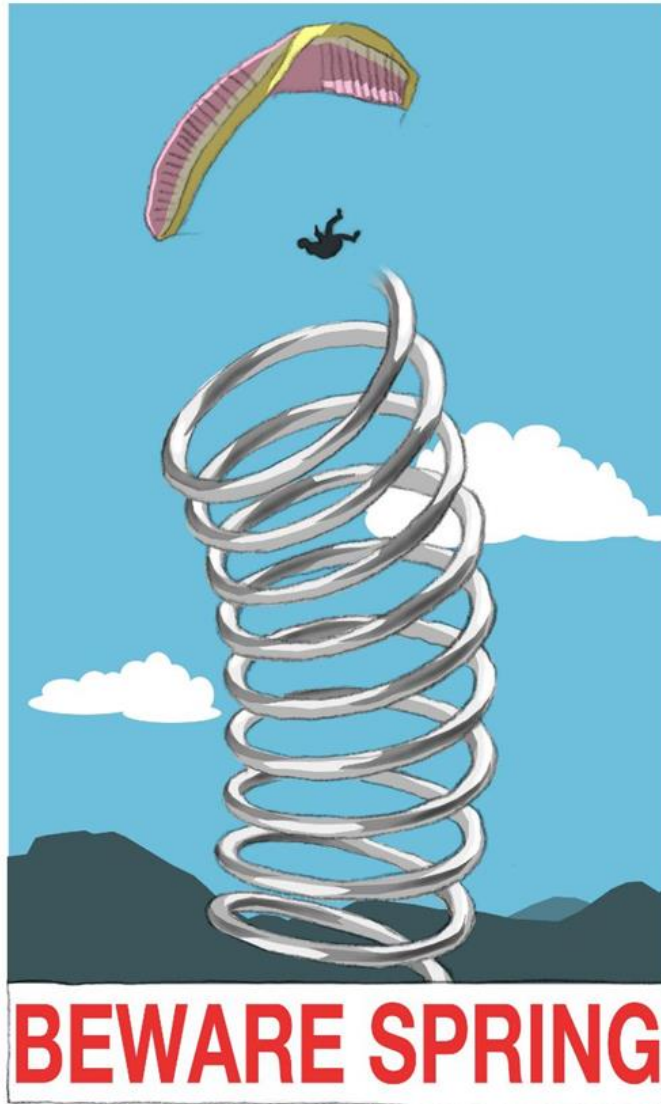
So it is now time to relearn how to power on your gadgets, reconnect with the updraughts, and get some flights uploaded to the leagues. These are a great place for intermediate and progressing pilots to record and measure their achievements and progress, as well as advertising the strength and depth of DHPC. The Dales XC league is also how the club prizes and trophies are determined at the end of the season, with a pilots top six flights counting. See you up there!

<https://www.xcleague.com/xc/>

<https://www.xcontest.org/united-kingdom/>

by Pete Darwood

Spring Thermals (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.

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 returning to flying - 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

Lesson Learned...

Friday 25th - Spin and hard landing

So I decided to try some Hike and Fly on Friday, seeing as the weather was looking so tricky and sweaty walk ups were likely, I thought why not just make the whole day about doing big sweaty walk ups! I loaded up the three peaks route on xtrack and took my hike and fly harness out for the long walk up Whernside.

Anyway - conditions on Whernside were flyable but tricky. I've never really flown it properly before but thankfully saw Chris Kay take off and connect with a climb that saw him drifting over the back and into the beyond.

I bumped into the Junction thirty something crew as well and we all scratched about in tricky conditions.

I'm afraid to say I had my first ever real SIV incident in 240 hours of flying. I was hovering in a thermal and getting hoovered up so I decide to try to put a turn in. Unfortunately I think I'd forgotten I was flying with quite a lot of brake and so as I release the outside wingtip to turn, it instead initiated a spin. The sensation was very clear - I stopped turning and started twisting, I also started to descend quickly.

Very close to the ground, I didn't have a lot of time but I seemed to go into "bullet time" thinking. I recognised I had gone into spin, knew that I needed to put my hands up and so that's what I did, then the wing surged and I pumped the brakes again. That was all I had time for before I hit the ground.

I'm very please to say I was totally unhurt - I landed on the airbag and it did it's job beautifully. I am really pleased I was not tempted by the string harness type things or it would have been a very different outcome.

This was a total pilot error and I definitely regard it as a warning shot to remind me that this sport has real consequences and we're only one f**k up from getting f**cked up.

My lessons were

- Be really wary of flying with a lot of brake
- Be really wary of doing low turns
- Be mindful that after a long hike you might not be firing on all cylinders
- Extra safety is worth every gram in weight

Joseph

Flying Diary

(Some extracts from the forum)

March 18th (Friday)

Av8tor (Kev) - Arrived at Stags to see quite a few cars parked up along the road. Walked up with Gez & Simon, wind off to the south meant a walk down the ridge, a few gliders in the air, more waiting to take off.

Decent breeze and thermals spread everyone out doing their own things. Tried pushing out into the valley a few times, but progress into the headwind resulted in big altitude loss for me. Followed others up in a thermal, drifting back, but they all turned and headed back to the front. Started to get a bit frustrating as there seemed to be loads of pilots higher than me most of the time.

This made me think its time to make something happen rather than waiting for it to happen. So next big climb at the western end of the ridge, almost to base with Dean & Ed (I think) and I set off for Cotterside. Wind was SSE so the leg I was flying had a little downwind component, so i could actually make progress. Arrived at the East end of Cotterside to be rewarded with another climb to base, so things were now happening.

Decided to have a go at XC (on my own yet again) so headed off over the moors, towards Tailbridge. I tracked along and towards the edge of Mallerstang which provided regular top ups to keep me in the air, eventually reaching Tailbridge...

Set off towards Kirby Stephen, this was a mistake I think, the high ground was working, why did I leave it behind?



The view back down the Mallerstang valley was great

Landed a couple of Km after in a good looking field with no sheep or lambs, but as I was packing away I could hear the sound of an approaching quad bike. Ok so Farmers on his way, remember Martins advice, keep cool, apologise and all that.... Anyway he asked me if I wanted a lift to the road in his trailer, and after a chat about paragliding, he took me back to his farm house. As we arrived at the house, he spotted his neighbour about to get in his car,

"where you going" he asked, and that was a lift sorted for me to Kirby Stephen. Top bloke, farmers are great.

Can't wait for the Dales Club XC group to get going, would love to try some gaggle flying!

March 21st (Monday)

Shed - Good days flying at Windbank, flyable most of the day up to about 2k ato. Nice easy thermals, got a bit raggy as some sort of front came in at about 3 ish, so 3 of us landed, 2 still flying just above ridge as I drove off. - Surprised only 5 there.

Martin - Sounds like you got the best of things. I found the conditions at Stags Fell quite tricky. Dean and a group of others were waiting at the usual take off, but Rob C and Pete M were thermalling off the S face. Some of us walked around to the S face but it was still light. Rob and Pete came in to land, and as the thermals became more frequent Pete talked me into taking off. I landed, with another pilot, on the lower shelf in front of the usual take off, and felt much better when Dean joined me.

Second attempt was a bit better but 3 of us found ourselves sharing just enough rising air for 2 and I landed on the lower shelf again. I think Dean and a few others managed to climb out from that one.

After a spot of lunch I thought my third flight was going the same way as the other 2. I lined myself up for another landing on the lower shelf. The previous landings had hinted at lift off the shelf and it was the same this time, so I tried to turn in what turned out to be quite a strong thermal. I was rewarded with a sizeable collapse (below take off height) but managed to tame the beast and climbed out. By this time the sky had clouded over so, after a brief tour of the ridge, I headed down to land by the cars. As I drove away a couple of pilots were soaring the S face in what looked like dynamic lift.



Stag's

A mixed day for me. Far from easy and I didn't get very high, but plenty of practice. I got to walk away from 2 slope landings at Stags - which is the most important thing.

Carl M - Certainly sounds like Windbank was the right place, was a coin flip for me - Windbank or Nonts. Picked the latter for some reason (oh, yes our wind station was saying that direction migrating to the south and SSE. I know that's on Wetherfell but thought not that far as paragliders fly!... so thought Nonts perhaps more likely) - Note to self - wind can change that much over that distance, and follow the averages not the instant values...

When I arrived blowing strong, hangies rigging, nearly called it quits (as forecast to strengthen further), had an hour in the car on the laptop, then wind dropped off - probably

10'ish in the sky at one point - a bit too crowded as air was "odd". To explain that - very gusty, very little ridge lift, but raggy thermals, lots of up, then lots of down.... was hard work (and low) at times (not a good idea at Nonts). But managed around an hour 45 over 3 flights, so worth the trip.... and refreshed the muscle memory a little....

Wind dropped off around 2.30'ish. Hangies had packed up and gone long before, in the end only one of them flew and that was for all of 10 mins - turned out to be a para day after all...

Ed Cleasby – Cotterside



Arriving near 4300' with Chris. Quite abundant good thermals



The long glide to Nappa in the far distance

March 23rd (Wednesday)

Herbaceous (Joseph) - Woke up and checked the forecasts and everything indicated sun and rasp stars. Massive breakfast and made haste into the Dales straight from the school run. The sky looked weird though. What's all that cloud, and that water on the windscreen? I'm still miles away i thought and so happily made my way to Hawes.

The weather didn't improve, it seemed to get worse. I opted to kill a bit of time at the creamery cafe making good use of the wi-fi and toilets and having a cuppa. I sat with a view of stags and noted the total lack of pilots, sunshine or blue sky.

After a productive hour or so I spotted some blue patches appearing and so off I went. I was still caught between Semer and Stags. My reading was Semer best early on, but potentially very windy and due to shift too far off to the south. Stags maybe a bit too easterly earlier on, but due to come more on and wind strength peaking at 1pm then gradually mellowing out.

I've decided that I've no problems flying in strong wind as long as the forecast is to stay the same or drop. If there's a forecast wind strength increase then that's where I think twice because being stuck high knowing that the longer you stay up the worse it's going to get is a pretty unpleasant experience. Did it once, decided never again...

So I went to stags. Got to take off and met up with Pete D, Chris and James, however I'd timed it badly, they had already got clipped in and were taking off. I'd also seen plenty of pilots flying Semer so maybe I'd made a bad call.

Those guys took off and started gale hanging. Feedback on the radio was that it was very close to trim speed wind and that they were probably just going to push out and land. Chris told me not to bother taking off just yet, which was hugely appreciated good advice.

I sat on my own on the front of stags for a while doing a bit more work, entirely on my own and enjoying the peace when I felt a tap and heard an unmistakable chuckle.. it was Pete M, the guy to blame for turning me into a pilot when he taught at Sunsoar. Full of enthusiasm as always, he suggested we head down the hill a bit to take off lower, out of the venturi. Liam (Toot) also turned up and so three of us went and found a grassy patch lower down the hill.

Pete got off ok and confirmed it was fine. The walk over though had tangled my lines completely. I seem to be really out of practice dealing with the perils and pains of windy conditions with a lightweight glider. So I decided to go even lower down to try to get out of the wind as much as possible, unclip and sort things out.

Liam took pity on me and helped to unravel the lines. Super grateful for that one as well. Finally I was ready to actually take off. I managed to ground handle a few metres back up the slope and before long was plucked into the air and a few scratchy beats saw me above the tops.

The flying was lovely and smooth. That was a shame as I was really hoping for some proper thermalling. There was plenty of lift about though. I tried flying slowly in it, doing s turns in it and even a few circles though in the wind my circling seemed to be pretty useless.

Liam took off and eventually Ed and John also turned up and took off.

We all had a good time flying around for a couple of hours or so and eventually landed back by the cars as things started to mellow out.

Not the epic xc day I was hoping for but still an lovely day in the Dales..

Ed - As Joseph said a splendid afternoon... John and I did the usual coffee and chip butty in Penny Garth, watching for signs of action on Stags (we gave up on Semer).

About mid-afternoon the winds seemed a lot calmer so we drove up and it seemed just about OK. As we laid out at the far end Joseph and Pete M were in the air, Liam was tootling about on the ground 100m further along and it seemed OK and better with each passing minute. Easy take off, smooth air and no signs of any strong winds in fact very pleasant.



We had a good couple of hours, enjoyed a few passing thermals, pushed across the valley and eventually landed by the cars in a light breeze. A very nice afternoon before work tomorrow! There are many days like this where it pays dividends to do the shopping, some DIY and a bit of work before heading out for the sweetest part of the day...

Slim Jim - Grey morning but the sun was just poking out as we walked up Staggs. Didn't seem that windy on take off but as I launched I got hooped up while still facing the wing! Don't panic, let the wing fly and keep it pointing away from the hill while you untwist. And relax... only I didn't really relax as I was most definitely going backwards and sliding round the side of the hill.

A bit of bar had me moving but still only at 4 kph but at least I was moving. I had put a task in the gadget so I could at least confirm I was creeping forwards not backwards. Pushed out and piled on a bit more bar as I gained height and it felt a bit safer.

Flew out gaining height all the time to beyond Sedbusk where there's some pretty big fields where I planned to land. By this time I'd had about fifteen minutes or so and I was no longer on the bar and had started to relax a bit. Maybe it wasn't too bad? But then I had a word with myself, I was soaring about 1000 feet above an essentially flat field, yes of course it was still too feckin windy!

Got down to about 200 feet and then got hoovered up 1000 in 3m/s lift while doing absolutely nothing. Spent another ten minutes getting down again to my big wide field.

Walking back it had obviously calmed down a bit, the pilots flying the ridge were showing off doing 360's!

Not quite what I had in mind for a first flight after a six month lay off but it was still good to be out and not at work

Cartoon Corner



**Damien
wasn't finding
teaching quite
so easy!**

*By S & L
Craven*

Dodd Fell - Update

We had a good meeting with Alistair Nash - he will be running the re-wilding project. We (Ed & I) came clean about who we were eventually & what our interests were, which worked in our favour as they want to take all parties into consideration.

It turns out that a paraglider pilot is quite high up in the Woodlands Trust (WT) & so they are well aware of our activities. They even wanted to know if we could provide some aerial shots of the area from our flying perspective!

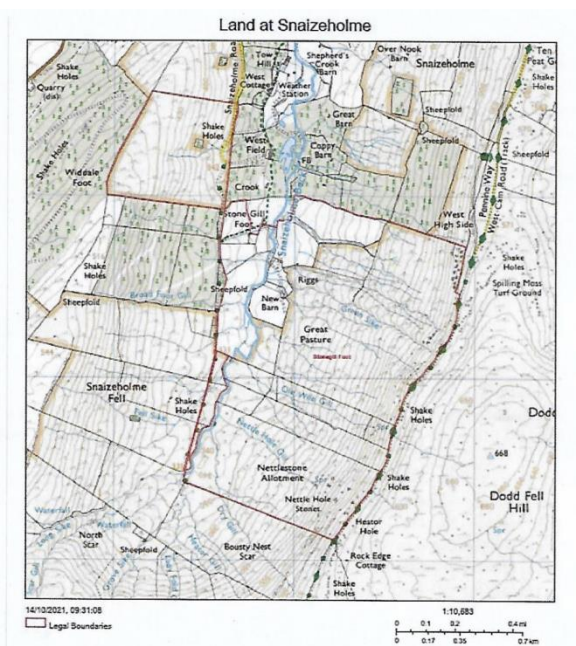
The areas concerned are as we thought – scan below. Luckily the WT out bid at least 10 other timber companies who would have covered the area in trees for future revenue. The WT option is more sympathetic to the area.

Essentially they will be planting trees over the next few years - the main density will be on the lower third of the hill with the density reducing considerably higher up near the Pennine Way track. The valley bottom will be more open for grazing etc. .

It should be OK for slope landing just below the track as there will be very few trees there. A possible objection might be from the RSPB who will be heavily involved in the project - apparently there are some rare breeds nesting in the rock outcrops just below the track.

Similarly the WT have found some rare flowers dating back 1000 years in the same area. Funding is still required to complete the project but things will start moving gradually over the next year or so.

The DHPC will now be kept in the loop regarding ongoing surveys etc. But for now I would say it is business as usual.



The Woodland Trust has acquired 222Ha (550acres) of land in the valley, adjoining the Mirk Pot (Red Squirrel Trail) woodlands as well as privately owned spruce plantations to the north and west. Currently used as rough pasture grazing for sheep, the majority is grassland, with a mosaic of other habitats including drained upland peat, riverside meadows and high, steep, rocky terrain. The Pennine Way runs along the majority of the eastern boundary, on top of the high valley sides at nearly 2000ft.

Simon Tomlinson
Sites Officer North

Cow Close Fell

A Reminder To Close and Fasten Gates, With Particular reference to Cow Close Fell

Whilst on the last Christmas drinks run, I knocked on the door of West Farm in Litton (Cow Close Fell) as I have done for the past three or four years fully expecting there to be no answer and to leave the gifts as usual on the doorstep.

This time, as I was tucking the goodies into the lee of the doorway it was answered by both Mr & Mrs Lund. The usual small talk ensued, I mentioned how nice it was to meet them for the first time, possibly being a little earlier than usual I'd caught them home for lunch. They were both very chatty and very grateful for their gifts and the invite to the farmers dinner. Everything was going so well, but just as I was about to say my goodbye's Mr Lund said "I do have a bone to pick with you lot".

It appears that on one particular day last year, several field gates on Cow Close Fell had been left open enabling a number of separate flocks of Mr Lund's sheep to intermingle resulting in a huge effort to sort them and get them back into their allotted fields. He went on to point out that this had happened on the same day that a number of paragliders were seen flying the fell.

I expressed my concern, and made an apology in advance if it had been anything to do with our members, but at the same time I did explain that I would be extremely surprised if any of our pilots would make such a blatant error. We are a trustworthy lot especially when it comes to maintaining our duties with landowners. I said I could pretty much 100% guarantee the situation was not of our making. Leaving multiple gates open was an act of someone who didn't care, and that's not us.

Mr Lund took the point, and did go on to say that the only other people he sees regularly on the fell are local dog walkers and he had already talked to them.

I agreed to pass on Mr Lund's concerns to the membership. He thought it worth pointing how important it is to secure a gate as well as shutting it as "sheep can be tenacious buggers when rubbing up against gates".

Still on Cow Close, the site guide mentions the landowners request of a limit of 6 pilots on the hill. I always wondered if this actually did mean physically on the hill. I asked the question and I'll change the guide to ***in the air at one time***.

Shaun Pickard
DHPC Sites South

Farmer's Dinner 2022

This is our way of thanking the farmers for the use of their sites during the year, without their permission we would not be able to fly in the way we do and I'm sure that the relationships with our land owners may well be the best in the UK.

Like many other aspects of paragliding and hang gliding, we have not been able to run this event due to the prevalence of Covid for 2 years, and we have given vouchers instead...needs must.

Venues considered were the Wensleydale Pantry in Hawes and the Knight Stainforth Hall near Settle (run by the Maudsley family), both places have a good reputation for putting on an excellent dinner but we chose the Settle establishment as we have used it for coaching events and we knew that Chris Maudsley (also a paragliding member), would really look after us.



A minibus brought sixteen folk down from Hawes and our numbers totalled 37, comprising 24 farmers and 13 members/partners.



The farmers get treated to a lovely nosh up and free drinks, although this doesn't amount to much, as they are a fairly steady bunch! Club trophies are duly awarded and, I recall, one year that we didn't dish out the trophies, the farmers made the point that they enjoy seeing the Trophy awards so we reverted to awarding at the trophy at the dinner.



How different though from the early days of the Club! It used to be called the Dinner Dance so, apart from a great nosh and Trophy presentation (farmers invited as free guests, as now) we would have a DJ, dancing, visiting speakers, special performances... – we did a Spice Girls act one year. I was Baby Spice – can you imagine that with my tree trunk legs!



They were quite riotous affairs, to be honest, I don't know how we fitted it all in – one year, we were having to close the entry list at 70 because the pub couldn't cope. As paragliding became the main activity of the Club, members didn't seem to want such good fun evenings.

But I think Joe E has hit the nail on the head – we should make it the Dales Bash or whatever and make it an event that members want to go to – the farmers really like meeting the club pilots, whereas this year it was principally a few committee members.

This year was a relatively low key affair, for the tropies...

Ed Cleasby started the ball rolling, being awarded the Fairbrother Trophy for Pilots Pilot. Definitely one of our best pilots.

Pete Logan has had a fantastic flying year – the award tonight was best article for Skywords plus a 500Km mug. Not to mention being 2nd in the Dales XC league!

Simon Tomlinson and I were presented with the Mark Sellen Trophy for the installation of the Holfoy weather station.

Mark (Tam) Morrison was next, receiving the Cock of the Dales trophy for excellent flying last year. Super enthusiastic, Tam was recorded as having flown 19 consecutive days in the Dales.

Tom Shuttleworth seems to be a pilot going places - he was awarded four different prizes! The Cockroft Cup for most improved pilot; the Active Edge Cup for best 1st XC; the Northern PG Trophy for the highest total distance in his 1st year of flying plus a 100 Km mug for all his flights!

I won the Founders Trophy for hang gliding, the most historic award in the Club, going right back to the early days but, sadly, it hasn't been located yet, hopefully soon. I also got a 100Km mug which now has pride of place in my kitchen. As I am also looking after the Mark Sellen award for for the next 6 months, this has now taken up residence on the central walkway of my barn, no room in the house.

So, that was it for the Trophy presentations – for members not coming to the dinner, awards were made at a club night. Thanks to **Chris Maudsley** and his team for looking after us so well at **Knight Stainforth Hall** (BD24 0DP).

Lets see what early 2023 brings – it would be great to have a DHPC event with many more members present, as Joe Edmonds has suggested.

Trev Birkbeck