

SKYWORDS

August 2021

Chairman's Chat

I loved the comment from Jason Perry, quoted by Charles McDonald in a recent post on the forum. ***'One day they will make a movie covering the intense drama paragliders go through during site selection on the morning; the rest of the movie will be predominantly blokes sat on a hill doing nothing and lying to themselves about the weather.'*** I think we can all empathise with that. But if you think that making a decision about your personal flying is difficult, then spare a thought for the organisers of free flying events. The unpredictable nature of the weather makes it particularly difficult in the UK.

You will have seen on the forum that Ed has proposed a Dales Hike and Fly event. In an ideal world we'd combine it with a club social (camping) weekend, but that brings the conflicting requirements of flying and social events into stark contrast.

Without good weather a H&F event quickly becomes a H&H event. In order to give the best chance of some flying Ed's plan is to adopt a flexible approach. For the one-day event, he'll nominate a couple of adjacent weekends; decide which weekend offered the better prospects about 4 days out; then declare the actual day about 2 days beforehand. The task, including start and finish, would be based upon the prevailing conditions. Competitors will be invited to organise their own administration. For a club organised event we also have to consider the rather thorny issue of landowner permissions (for taking off).

In contrast a camping weekend requires firm dates in order to make bookings and allow participants to deconflict. Even if you plan to rough camp, you still need some infrastructure – portaloos, etc. (A few years ago, Kate Rawlinson tried to organise a Dales Bash along these lines at Dodd Fell. The event was cancelled because nobody would commit in advance, and the club didn't want to pay for facilities that might not be used.)

We're going to try again. Elsewhere in this edition you will find information about the proposed social weekend. The club has agreed to subsidise the event up to the tune of £130. Advance bookings will not be required, but the costs will be clawed back from participants. Success will depend very much on the weather, but there is a good chance that over 4 days there will be some local flying, and certainly the option to do some hiking. Keep your fingers crossed and pray to the weather Gods every night.

Whilst we're on the subject of planning against uncertainty, you may have noticed that the virus hasn't gone away. Stef is putting together a programme of winter club nights starting in September (first Thursday of every month) and the Horse & Farrier (under new management and opening again of 29 July) has been booked. Keep your fingers crossed!

We're still planning to hold a face-to-face AGM in December. The back up plan will be a forum-based AGM, as we did last year. Hope for the best; plan for the worst.

Fly safely,
Martin Baxter
Chairman

NOTICES

Pendle East - I've just had a request from the PSC to remind our members please do not fly Pendle's East Face. The landowner has specifically asked the club not to fly that face and *incursions will put the use of the whole hill at risk.*

Martin Baxter

Semer Water - Road parking is very sensitive at present - please don't block gates or laybys/passing areas. An arrangement to park some vehicles off road is being discussed and will be announced shortly (keep an eye on the site guide).

*Simon Tomlinson
Sites Officer North*

BOS HG Competition 2nd - Andy Lumb

Andy, flying a Discovery, achieved a 2nd place award in the Club Class of the BOS hang gliding competition held in June / July 2021 – Well Done. (We think a full article will be published in SkyWings next month)



Trev Birkbeck

Note from the Editor:

Any article/notice gratefully received, "note" form will do (with a picture even better)

Email to: newsletter@dhpc.org.uk

Carl Maughan

DHPC Weekend of flighty fun

DHPC members, their families and friends are invited to a weekend communal chill out on the weekend of September 10th to the 12th 2021

Campsite available from Wed 8th Sept

The site is Jack Towler's Lodge Yard Rally Field, Settle, North Yorkshire which is a beautiful field right next to the River Ribble with Settle's wondrous heights all around. (GE 54.079, - 2.280)

There are not many opportunities for the whole club to socialise together for more than a couple of hours during a normal flying year. The best opportunities are either on small group organised holidays, or at events hosted by other clubs – such as the Buttermere Bash or LCC – these tend to again attract small groups of pilots because they are more remote for Dales based pilots and their families. Therefore this is being organised as a club wide social event, hosted in our own area, allowing a much wider selection of the club to turn up to enjoy a flying based event with their clubmates.

We're aiming to plan a few organised activities, like kit demonstrations, ground handling races and a possible hike and fly jaunt if the wind permits it (see Ed's details of the hike and fly event elsewhere). As the field is surrounded by trees, landing would only be attempted in light winds, although it is fairly large at around 2-3 times the size of a football field.



A suitable tent for evening socialising and a small band is planned for the evening.

Cost: A flat rate fee of £25 per caravan / tent to include use of toilets – no matter how many nights you stay. No deposits required, and no minimum number caravans or tents is stipulated. Cash payment on arrival to the organiser (Tam).

Facilities: 2- 5 Portaloos will be in place. There are water stand pipes in the field. No electric hook up available.

Booking: Pre-booking not necessary, just turn up, but it would help us to know whether you're planning on coming along.

Therefore please let Tam know on markandpat@sky.com or Stef on stefsykes@gmail.com.

If this works, we can organise something a little larger next year.

Stef Sykes
Social Secretary

DHPC Repack 2021

Due to Covid-19 restrictions the DHPC Repack was held much later than normal this year. Ideally it should be in February or March so we can repack our reserves before the flying season starts. This year it was on Saturday May 29th. We were not sure if it was even worth organising given how late in the year it was as the feeling was that pilots may have made alternative arrangements - repacking their reserve themselves or perhaps sending it away to be professionally repacked.

So we ran a member poll to gauge interest: 25 people responded, 15 said they would attend and 10 would not. Polls can be a double edged sword as they only give a picture of those who respond and may not be a reflection of the membership as a whole. If only 15 people attended the repack, and possibly less if the day was flyable, then the club would end up running the event at a significant loss.

However, ***given how important it is to repack your reserve at least once a year (many manufacturers now recommend repacking every 6 months)*** we decided to go ahead.



The venue changed this year. For the last number years, we have used the Sports Hall in St. Mary's School in Menston. However, 2 years ago we were locked out with no way to contact the caretaker and it was only thanks to Chris Baird who found an alternative venue on the day that we managed to salvage ourselves from the wreckage.

Last year, despite multiple assurances that there would be no problems, we found the Sports Hall was already occupied by the Cricket Club when we arrived and the phone number of the caretaker that I had been given as a failsafe did not ring through. So, not willing to try our luck for a third time, we booked the Sports Hall in Ilkley Grammar School this year. A week before the event I was contacted by the facilities manager to tell me she would have to cancel as the hall was not in fact available as it was under renovations on this weekend. What? You couldn't write this stuff!!!

Luckily, the school agreed to make the drama hall available to us - it was a good bit smaller than the Sports Hall but at this point I'd have taken the janitors cupboard. As part of the Covid-19 precautions, in order to keep the number of people in the hall to a minimum at any one time we split the event into a morning session and an afternoon session so the smaller venue turned out not to be a problem.

Possibly the biggest surprise was the number of pilots who attended: 31. So around the same number that normally attends the repack. This was pleasantly unexpected and certainly confirmed our commitment to running a repack event every year.

But of course it begs the question: had we not run the repack, how many of us would have repacked our reserves this year?



A big thank you to all who attended, especially to licensed repackers Guy Richardson (<https://gingernomad.co.uk/> - lots of goodies for sale) and Kevin Williams who helped out.

Guy also provided the following feedback on how we might be able to improve the event next year which we will certainly look into:

- Found 2 reserves that were out of date
- Found 2 reserves that would not have deployed correctly, one that would have been catastrophic due to failing lines
- A hang point would be good for throwing reserves.
- More re-packers needed (I can provide these)
- A break of 30 mins would be useful

Stay safe

David May
DHPC Safety Officer

Coaching Update – July'21

Mid-Season Prep.

It's a rainy Saturday and I thought I'd jot down a few thoughts as I try to avoid the inevitable draw of watching the Film4 Star Trek Movie Marathon! So I don't really have a clear topic for this... more of a mixed bag.

Nags out of the way first...

David May, Pete B and I will be running pilot exam sessions in the autumn and we're half way through the flying season so ***the time is at hand to be ticking off those Pilot or Adv. Pilot tasks with your coach.*** Ed Cleasby's been running similar for pilots out in the western Dales...

I've picked up an interesting tip from my daughter when preparing for exams. She uses Anki Flashcards and apparently it really helps in storing information long term. These days I can read several paragraphs, know I've read them and then have no memory of what those paragraphs were conveying.

Writing information down and summarising is a good start. Apps like Anki (<https://apps.ankiweb.net/>) then go on to test you adaptively which is what you need to get that exam information to really sink in.

Now I come it to it, I have a recent experience where I was forced to reflect on what I was doing and why I was flying that day, so what I was going to talk about can wait... as I think it's worth passing some of that on...

Learning

I was at **Coniston Old Man**, my first flight there. On launch it was good to see some old faces and some new ones too. It's a mega site! High, mountainous and rugged. ***Rugged also means limited side landing and occasionally turbulent*** so anyone who flies there needs to have their act all together. I'd only had two hours sleep the night before on top of a fairly stressy week. Hmm...

My group launched and made its way north to Swirl How. The intention was to go up to Keswick, across to Ullswater and then back for tea and crumpets. A full on day in anyone's book. I was not flying well, losing air to the others in the gaggle and the tight turns close to cliffs were not helping. In fact I was becoming dizzy and losing my sense of direction. About to make the crossing over Wrynose, I had a look up at the route ahead and thought that I was not up for another four hours of this. I'd possibly be a danger to myself. This is not normal for me at all.

Generally I have a mayfly's attitude to flying - whilst I have my brief chances, I want to make the most of them.

But that day I was just not feeling it and let the folks know on the radio. I realised it was not going to be the day to stretch myself and that I should go land and have a swim in the lake, followed by a cream bun.

As I flew straight and away from the fells the dizziness eased and I was able to think straight and take in the view. I didn't have to have a particular objective in mind, I didn't have to go fight with the landscape and the air to make the next kilometer. **Feeling that freedom lifted me a lot** and I didn't feel the need to go land straight away either, so I just decided to do what gave me pleasure, and if I landed out what the hey? It turned to be a good day in the end.



How does this translate then? **There's a couple of things you need to have when you're out flying with some objective or task in mind. You've got to be able to physically able to do it** - rested, switched on, aware, decisive etc. **but you've also got to want to do that task.** I had neither of these as we started down the course and thankfully acted on it.

Also, our desperation to fly or bravado are pretty weak reasons to convince ourselves to fly some task we're probably not going to enjoy or, indeed, complete, safely...

BTW this could be any task from take-off through accuracy landing, XC triangle to infinity tumbling. Decide if this is the day you want to be flying a busy site or whether you'd rather wait for the mid-afternoon thermals to ease off a little.

Or even whether you'd rather have your flying day on a grassy slope versus an amphitheatre of pointy rocks.

Fly in a way that is going to give you pleasure... and...

Train for and maintain the skills that will enable you to get pleasure from the flying you do...

Pete Logan

Bradwell to Northborough

23rd June 2021

Not as much a story, but more than a few thoughts...!

At nearly eight hours, this is easily my longest flight and the thought that strikes me is respect to the X-Alps athletes. My sea legs have just about faded from all the turning but I still have numb fingers from a bit of cold and the brake pressure. They do that each day and then climb 2000m peaks several times.

After a pretty easy climb out (***there must have been forty odd gliders at Bradwell pointing out the early climbs!***), Chris, Rich and I gaggled up and topped up over Eyam, followed by an almost disastrous flop onto Curbar which started the slow flying. High, dry, dark moorland was working, even though we were out of cycle, but it still took nearly 3 hours to go the 30km to Chesterfield.

Flying on and off with Ash Ginn and then Neil Furmage, we where joined at Chesterfield by Jake on his Alpina who'd gone back to the hill and obviously had an easier time getting out of the Peaks.

Down the track from Chesterfield to Nottingham is a land of sheds, presumably distribution centres and factories but you never see the extent of this stuff from being on the motorway.



The gaggle flying potentially slowed us down a little but we had good discipline to keep the 4 or 5 of us together. A climb would fade near it's top and alone you'd just widen your search, fail to pick anything up and then just leave.

As a group you're looking to see if anyone around has found something better and it then takes longer to reach a decision. Talking of decisions, we'd set the goal of Peterborough but the slow flying and then the southerly thermal drift we got mid-flight, made us think that was unrealistic so we were planning to land at Grantham ~ 75km.



A series of good climbs and lightening winds made us think Peterborough was realistic even though the time was 5pm.

It is mid-summer - make hay whilst the sun shines. I landed on the outskirts of Peterborough with Chris in the next village. At gone 7pm, the energy had left the day by then. Jake followed by Rich had got a mission on and set off for goal a little sooner, finding some good climbs that Chris and I didn't really find on the way.

Some other points...

The inversion strengthened towards the base at 5500 feet. At our highest ~1800m it was striking - the grey murk out to the horizon contrasted with the fresh blue right above it.

We even had a call from general aviation around Grantham - just wishing us a pleasant flight but the chances of GA being on our 143.850 MHz VHF amateur band rather than being on Air band are vanishingly small.



He must have had a scanner and been listening in to our calls to pickup our location. He said he was passing under us and that happened at about the time a Hurricane or something with a decent sized engine and camouflage markings passed under us.

We saw quite a few posh houses - Chatsworth near Curbar, Grimsthorpe Castle, Hardwick Hall and Bolsover Castle both on the M1.

Mansfield appeared to have a crime problem due to all the sirens there, although but we had some great climbs there...

Close call getting round the ATZ airspace at Syerston airbase. Although the only activity was an RAF roundel badged sailplane that pipped off several of my low saves there. I'd gotten disconnected from



the group at this point and had to go off and search for climbs coming off the villages south of Newark. This worked nicely in the end and when they saw my 2 up I got some company fairly quickly.



Lovely retrieve. Walking out of Northborough village a car pulled over, having read the Pilot - Lift Please sign on my glider bag. I didn't even have my thumb out. Annette was on her way home from a Nandos meal with her daughter and didn't mind taking the scenic route into town to drop us at the station. Passed retirement, she's become a bit of a thrill seeker and is off to north Wales to do the Llanberis zip wire. She even offered to pick Chris up as we passed in the next village. It's been a year of retrieves as good as the flying 😊

Pete Logan

Cow Close Fell on a light wind triangle day

1st July – by Herbaceous

Cow Close Fell was on, by unanimous decision and that was reflected by the number of pilots out for a mid-week jaunt. RASP had a very promising forecast with it supposedly getting the best around 3-4pm. This was fortunate for me as I really had to do at least some work in the morning before I could get out into the Dales.

I set task as a three peaks triangle

<https://flyxc.app/?p=%7DnpiLnibLnF%7C%7...c%40nvJxmA>

This flight is one I would really love to be able to do some day - more than hitting 100k etc, just flying round the three most iconic hills in the Dales would be so good.

I arrived in Litton and could see wings already in the air - a great motivator when you have a hot sweaty climb ahead of you! The farmer saw me parking and suggested I park at the end of the lane as there is more space and they are totally cool with that - great.

The hike up was punishing, the late morning heat combined with a seemingly never ending patch of dead, baking hot air. I saw the lead gaggle leave the hill and that gaggle split with many choosing to bail out and head back. Listening to the radio on the way up was interesting to see what people were saying. I saw Tam take a significant tip collapse and Shed gracefully fly into the side of the hill with a bit of a splat - saved himself a hike up though!

On arriving at takeoff I bumped into Shed and Ed. Ed was looking slightly miffed that he had come out without his instruments. Didn't seem to hold him back though!

So having seen others struggling a bit, my expectations were suitably lowered a bit. I launched into a cycle and was met with rough strong climbs and a cycle that ran out and dumped us back on takeoff. This repeated a few times and claimed a few pilots bottoming out. Ges hung in for ages as seems to be his special move, but even he got flushed to the bottom eventually. I made sure I avoided another sweaty climb up by top landing at the first sign of the cycle dying out.

I had more collapses this day than I have had in the last 12 months or more. Nothing really serious, just tip collapses - but they were really aggressive - not a washy tip that quickly pops back out - it felt more like a the air gave you a slap round the chops for falling out the side of the thermal. These were most aggressive low down - obviously the last place you want to be dealing with collapses. Thankfully the wing behaved impeccably, I never felt pushed off course and at one point, even though one tip looked like it had caveated, it popped back out with just a few pumps.

The climbs started to improve and pilots started to spread out. I saw Tramp head out across the valley towards the Kettlewell/Buckden ridge and it looked buoyant the whole way so I thought I would follow. It was nicely buoyant crossing over, but on approaching the ridge it

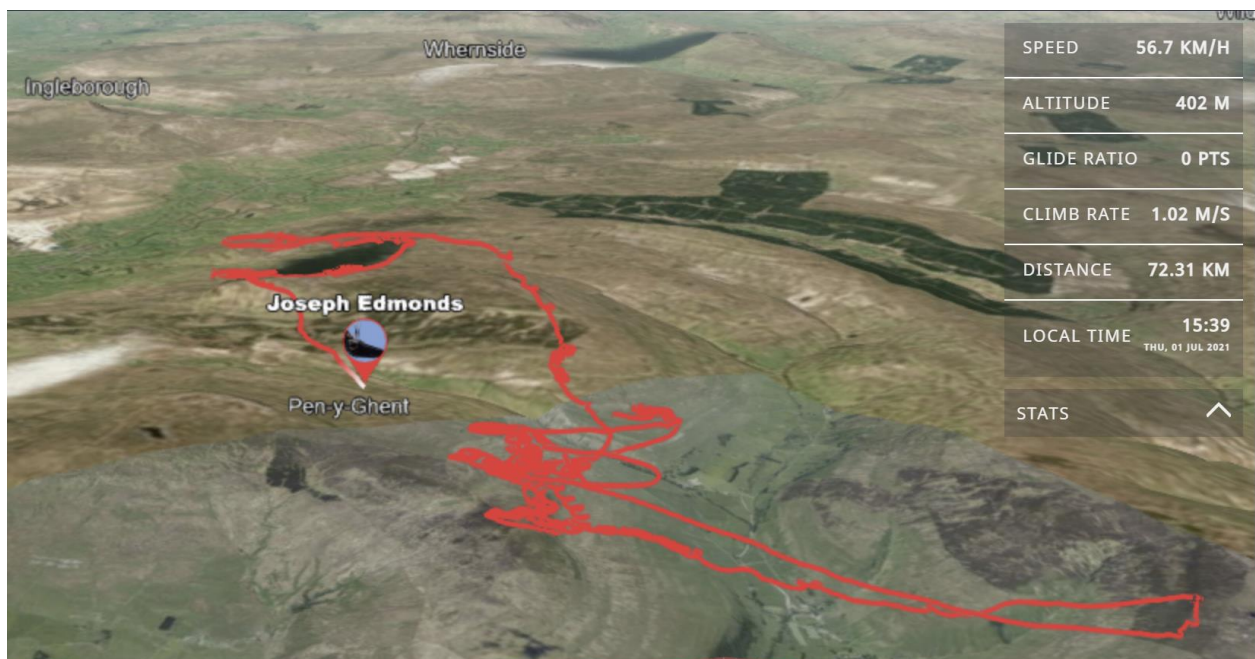
got sinky. I was hoping for some lee side/southerly slope goodness but that wasn't to be. I saw Tramp low and struggling in the valley and decided to bail after one last attempt at finding a climb over some darker ground - again nothing there.

I came in low over Litton and was expecting a bottom landing, but managed to find a low save that dribbled me back towards Cow Close and built into a proper climb that took me right over takeoff. At this point Cow Close Fell itself was working really well. I enjoyed a leisurely climb whilst munching my inflight apple held securely in my inside hand. Ed was still flying and easily outclimbed me. I left the apple and got back into focus mode.

Some Cus had started to form towards Pen-y-Ghent and so I headed towards them and got the best climbs of the day as my reward. Gaining over 1400m, I decided to push onto Pen-y-Ghent itself which had more promising Cus above it. I made the glide easily enough, but the climbs dwindled en-route and once on the face I found myself low down and scratching in a fair breeze blowing right up the Horton side. ***This was totally different to the wind direction on Cow Close Fell and I guess this must actually have been the sea breeze?***

I was pinned really low on some cliffs to the left hand side of the main walking path for Pen-y-Ghent and scratched here for a while before managing to gain a few tens of metres and try to get round to the main ridge. Once on there, it was clearly working well with ridge lift but not much else. Eventually a weak climb came through which gave me enough to squeak over the top and head back towards Cow Close. Unfortunately it wasn't enough to keep me aloft but it did get me back to the stony track and an easy hike back to the car.

Not really the epic three peaks triangle day I had hoped for, but a good long flight and still managed to get a reasonable (for me) XC distance. The couple of low saves were great fun and really educational in terms of not giving up and getting the reward for staying in the game.



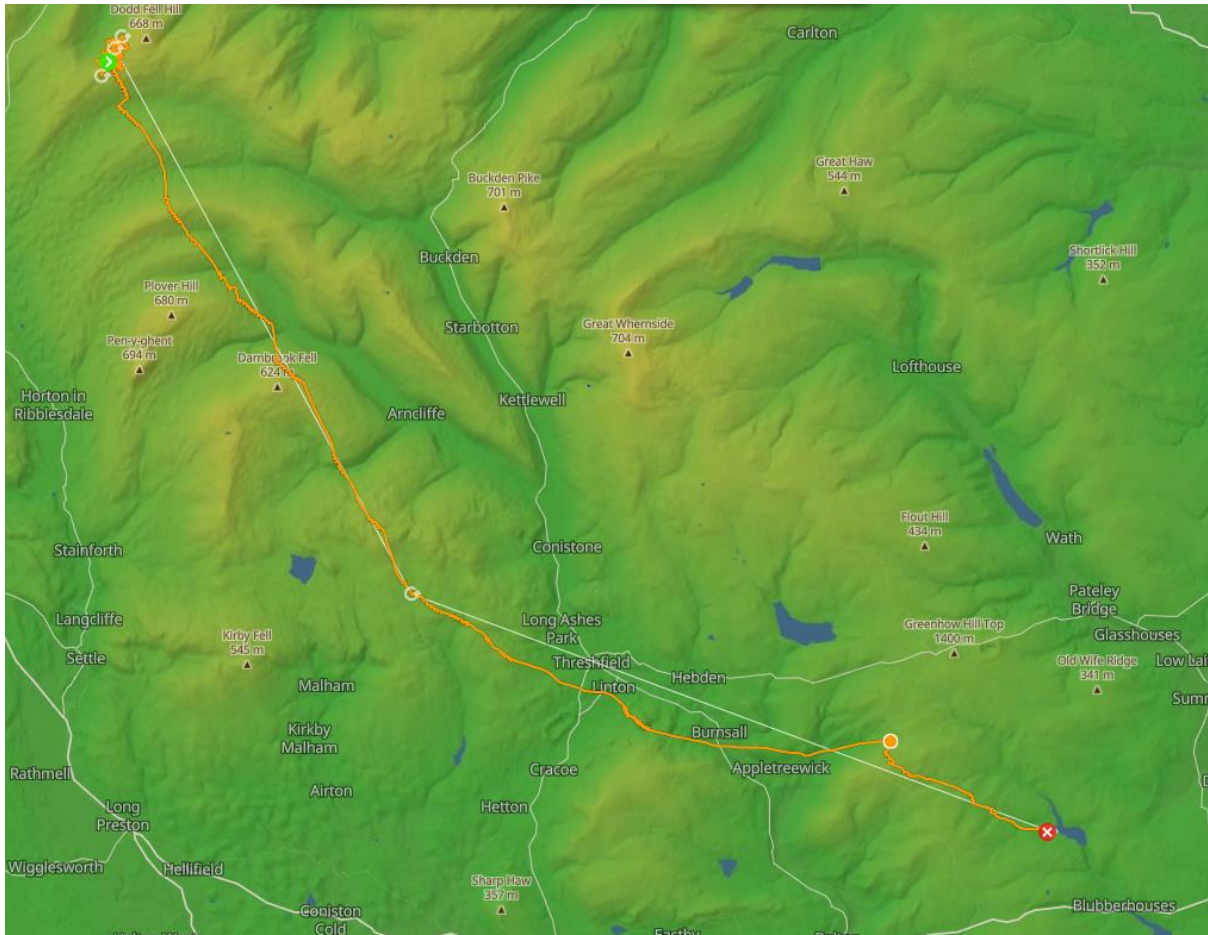
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Joseph Edmonds

Best XC Route in't Dales

July 16th 2021 - Dodd Fell to West End - 46km

I'm going to come right out with it and state that this is **the best XC route in the Yorkshire Dales** and, therefore, the country. Mic drop, walk away.....



Oh, you want evidence? Go on then...

but you'll need a few ingredients to make this recipe work...

Firstly competence! Going back to the house to get a phone after setting off will help enormously with avoiding (some) of the airspace. If competence isn't available, then someone else can often be a good substitute.... The gentle folk who fly the Dales will occasionally bend over backwards helping fellow travellers who may have "repaired" their pod footplate and stowed it, haphazardly, on their glider bag, only for it to drop off somewhere on the walk over to take off.

Competence may fail you on the camera front too, but gaze at the pictures contained here from fliers who remember to turn up with these things! A NNW drift on your climbs is going to be a fairly useful ingredient as well, but probably not crucial. That NNW drift helps in making the decision not to go the standard route from Dodd, which would have been to head over to Buckden Pike.

Anyhow, once clipped in and spec'ed out, this is what awaits you....

The first section seems to be easy. A little height is needed above Dodd, or more likely the Grove Head / TO end. Jammy fliers can probably go with under 1000m amsl if there are tricky conditions like thermals being shredded in the wind. However you'll find the air you're going to put your trust in doesn't seem to matter much because out over Oughtershaw Side the air remains buoyant. You're fortunately then looking SSE to five or so ridges, all into wind and all of which will sustain you on your journey. **Keep your height or not - these beauties always seem to work** whether you're tall or short on altitude. Eller Carr Moss will get you out of a pickle as surely as you climbed out of Grove or you can remain conservative and cloud hop over the great curving, lonely sweep of Langstrothdale Chase.

There's a quintessentially Dales scene next. Right at the head of Littondale is Foxup, which boasts four barns, equally placed, in four fields. (Apparently, Harrop and the Lower Lathe barns are somewhat famous in the landscape photography world).

Take your time here, as you should have plenty of lift coming up. Either Plover Hill at the north end of Pen-Y-Ghent or Darnbrook and Fountains Fells across the high and wide valley of Silverdale are going to see you back at base again. And you get to climb out here with the Three Peaks of the Yorkshire Dales to your west and Upper Wharfedale's almost equivalent offerings of Buckden Pike, Park Rash and Starbotton to your East. At 5000ft you'll easily see both Harrogate and Morecambe Bay. The views are starting to come, thick and fast.



The barns and view down Littondale (note cloud shadow on Darnbrook/Cow Close)

Press on. Don't be tempted to cross Littondale eastward to start avoiding Leeds Bradford airspace. That will prove a sticky end for the unwary aeronaut. **Descending ground and a valley with no into wind ridge all conspire to increase the gravity**, but hitches are plenty on the roads around Kilnsey and, if you're that way inclined, there are some trout to bother in these parts.

Remember, we're going for views per kilometre, not league points here...



Over Eller Carr Moss, looking back at Dodd (note the great cloud shadows)

The geology changes now and brings a different character to the moors as they move away from the gritstone capped peaks and lower down into the Yoredale limestone series.

Imagine, if you can, Yorkshire as a blue lagoon, basking on the equator at a more than civil twenty five Celcius. From Skipton to Alston and beyond lounged in these conditions as innumerable critters sacrificed their shells to create hundreds upon hundreds of metres of the Dales' signature stone.

Take in the high limestone karsts¹ and pavements of Parson's Pulpit with deeply cut in valleys leading west from Littondale - you'll get superb views of the Bluescar and Great Knott valleys and outcrops.

Creeping up to the south and west of you is the obvious but improbable Malham Tarn with the steep drop off to the south marked by Gordale Scar and Malham Cove. Who knows how the tarn manages to stay there on top of all of that fissured limestone with it's caves and unexplored passageways to swiftly draw water away. Could it be the frequent refreshing of water levels that Yorkshire enjoys? It's all adding up to being epically beautiful countryside and if you're not lucky enough to be flying it, then, by bike and foot, there's good access to this moor from Mastiles Lane which starts at the foot of Kilnsey Crag. (**Editor:** *as I remember it, Mastiles Lanes is an excellent and fast mountain bike descent...*)

¹ (**Editor:** I had to look this one up!) - **Karst** is a topography formed from the dissolution of soluble rocks such as limestone, etc. It is characterized by underground drainage systems with sinkholes and caves. (Wikipedia)

Take a moment to appreciate how this landscape was made. If you're at cloudbase, that's going to be about how high the glaciers reached during peaks of the ice ages over the last few million years. Small wonder there was enough water to slice the tough Carboniferous limestone of Malham and Gordale with multiple dramatic flood events. Think of the film 2012 and you're definitely on the right lines. Summer will gently fade on these moors soon, carpeted in purple heather, but that peace belies the violence of this land's formation.



Malham Tarn, with convergence line clearly visible along Malham cove

After noting this and then leaving behind the multiple quarries of Kilnsey and Swinden, there's a choice to be made. You can track directly south, making for Skipton and an easy retrieve but with a fairly certain end to the flight as LBA's 3000ft control area limits your climbs. Or (equally at high risk of premature landing) sharply turn east to try and skirt north of LBA. This brings many more sites into view, which makes it my routing recommendation.

If you do happen to choose Skipton then you'll almost certainly make it with Embsay Moor being the last ridge facing into wind to help you back up.

Back at the meeting of the Wharfe and Winterburn valleys is a great place in itself. Below are Grassington and Threshfield, spanning the tea stained Wharfe, as it steps down through limestone pools and weirs. It doesn't look like much from above, but Threshfield's garage accommodates many pie based treasures within.

And onto Grassington, now slowly being taken over by tat shops it still manages to be a functioning Dales market town and an excellent place to stay for hill based adventures. Here's a remarkably reasonably priced get-away with hot water, electricity and lots of walls...



<https://www.sykescottages.co.uk/cottage/Yorkshire-Dales-South-Grassington/Lane-Fold-Cottage-11838.html>

But I digress....

Follow the Wharfe downstream at the foot of Thorpe Fell, as it winds through isolated drumlins - these TellyTubby like mounds are left over from the retreat of the glaciers, fifteen thousand years ago. No one knows quite how they formed but they certainly add some texture to the landscape and potentially become great little thermal triggers in themselves, as well as the higher ridges above.



Threshfield-Grassington-Grimwith (note the lack of shadows on the moors)

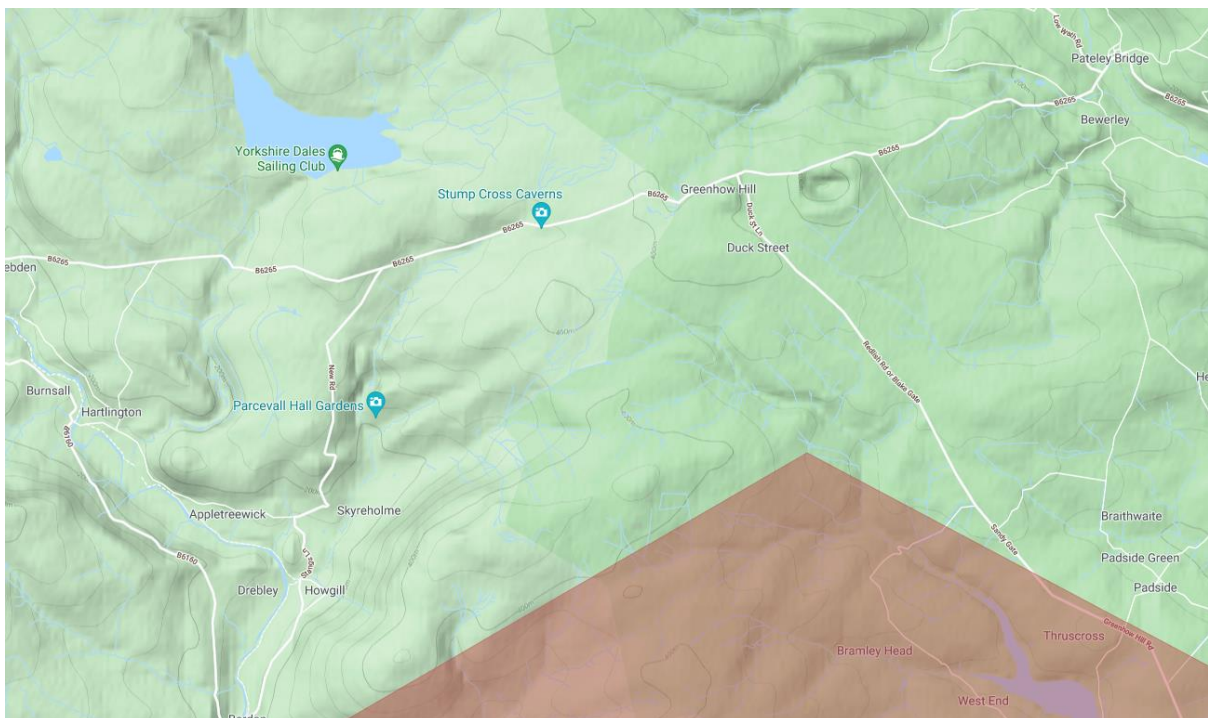
Next is Burnsall, nestled in a meander of the River Wharfe as the valley tightens to the south east. It's usually a big draw for the summer crowds who park around the bridge and paddle on the pebbly banks of it's ox bows to be. Once a year the village plays host to the Burnsall Classic, a race from the valley bottom to the top of the fell 300m above.... And then down again. Much like putting the Cooper's Hill Cheese Roll on steroids but without the insurance forms!

Try and stay on the north side of the valley, close to Grimwith Reservoir, stalwart of Bradford's water supply and Stump Cross Caverns. Grimwith is a marvel of logistics and patience. An eleven year build took this meagre Victorian damn to the monster it is today.

Forty metres tall and a mile wide. You'll notice the roads aren't particularly wide or flat. Eleven years is what it takes to fit that many lorry loads of earth, clay and cement down those lanes. All done whilst stopping the whole thing sliding down the hill, plugging leaky lead mines and moving the odd monk's barn, stone by stone, out of harm's way. Finished in the early eighties, it ensured water supply by bolstering the earlier schemes in the Nidderdale Valley - Angram and Scarhouse reservoirs.

(Late in the day Jake got a low save all the way to 5 grand out of Grimwith...)

The more north you have in your track here, the better you'll skirt LBA's CTA. But if you succumb to the wind drift, all is not lost, you still have sights to see. The druid meeting point of Simon's Seat looms above Skyreholme which leads up into the steep sided Troller's Gill. You can well imagine the fabled trolls lobbing rocks down from the top of this gorge at some hapless and puny walkers below. Thankfully not at us, circling serenely above.



If you're tempted by the face of Simon's Seat or over the back where the dark high moor faces the sun, then your clock is surely counting as...

***Airspace at 3000ft is cruel
when the moor is at 1600ft!***

You can finish your journey coming down to Thruscross reservoir and West End for an easy walk to the A59 and the Swinsty, Fewston reservoirs car park. Journeying here with a friend would allow you to leave a car there for convenience.

The lucky few that make it around airspace are rewarded with many more delights. The Golf Balls at Menwith Hill where American spooks tap into our every move online and send Edward Snowden a nasty tweet or two when they feel a bit grumpy. Brimham Rocks, home of the Rottentrolls and reputedly the birthplace of British gritstone climbing. Also Kettlesing Bottom, mainly just because it's called Kettlesing Bottom 😊

But mainly, the reward is the chance to fly, unhindered from having to make space for plane loads of sunburnt punters fresh from knocking back Watney's Red Barrel in Torremolinos. Out into the plains,

Passing the uber posh spa town of Harrogate and into Yorkshire's very own flatland arena. You have, at last, through concentration, fortune and patience, earned double the height from cloud to ground. Use your speed bar with abandon and remember fondly, what jewels the Dales has just revealed to you, for the afternoon has only just begun....

**Alan (Whickers world)
Pete Logan**

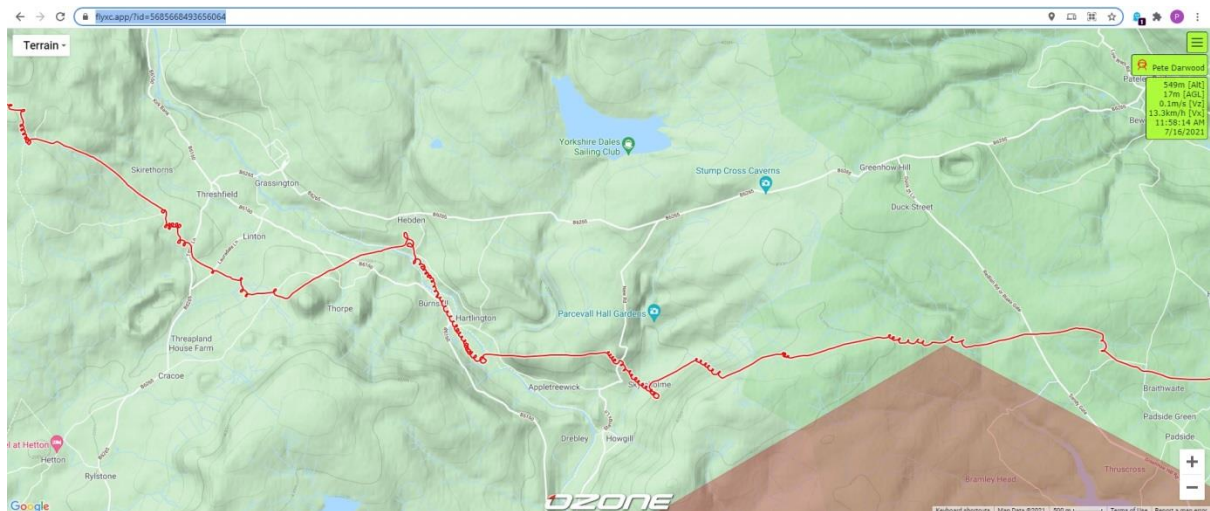
(Thanks to Pete Darwood on camera duty (the orange glider in most of the images is Chris Kay), Liam (Toot) for his carbon fibre sniffing ability and to Jake Herbert for a routing decision and sacrificial valley crossing.)

PostScript from Pete Darwood....

We flirted with the edge of the convergence for a while, passing Malham Tarn and Threshfield quarry, but then gambled on the big game by cross-winding to Hebdon trying to get around LBA airspace instead of an easy trip to Skipton.

Given the wind, each climb took us unhelpfully close. Climbs along Simon's Seat ridge had to be abandoned before the top until I eventually squeaked round to a vast blue hole. The next clouds being past Summerbridge to the east or Menwith Hill to the south. I am sure there where climbs anyway, but I failed to connect and landed on the road down from Stone Cross.

Good fun and a cracking if circuitous route; I wonder what could have been achieved if we had cross-winded earlier or waited for later in the day when the clouds were even better?



Skirting LBA airspace with less than 50m to spare!

Pete Darwood

Three little XC's

With all the talk of monster XC's by our top PG pilots, it seems a bit piffling to discuss my pathetic little efforts on my WW U2 – I'm still waiting for the opportunity to get across the Humber and sod the retrieve problem. Hey ho.



The First - Out on Wether on my own, April 7th, thinking that I could probably launch OK, when Pete L rolls up with, I think Jake and Chris, as it was too windy on Dodd.

Pete wired me off OK and got a reasonable climb straight away but didn't go with it and then spent the next hour doing rubbish, even thinking that I was going to go down.

Back to the North end of the ridge and got into a corker and was on my way! Trouble was that it was going in the wrong direction, seriously North West.

Cloud base was 6000 ft and it was seriously cold – I had **hoar frost**² all the way up my arms and on my helmet – but the die was cast so I carried on. Past Grimwith reservoir, Grassington, Burnsall – the climbs were now not so radical, thankfully.

I sort of ran out of lift and landed in a sloping field by the road to Drebley, unfortunately in a boggy stream. A good job, as I was on my way to breaking airspace. A good retrieve from Kate to collect my car, whist she went to collect an Indian take out!

² **Editor:** Not heard that one before, from Wikipedia - Hoar frost is a **type of feathery frost**. The word 'hoar' comes from old English and refers to the old age appearance of the frost: the way the ice crystals form makes it look like white hair or a beard.

Second - Wether Fell again on May 5th (I prefer to go XC from there as it is going past my home, always a plus) and strong climbs tempted me off the hill, leaving Colin Rider on the hill.

This time (lesson learnt!) as I was being blown away from Wensleydale, I zig zagged to stay with gliding reach of the valley. I actually nearly landed near Leighton Reservoir which would have been good for retrieve by Kate (near home), zip open, down to 100ft when the vario said another climb was available and off we go to cloudbase again.

Over the A1 with Boroughbridge in sight, I noted that to my left and ahead, there was column of cloud to the ground, whilst to my right was another very active looking cloud column. Time to land, methinks and with minutes spare I had to shelter under the glider from hailstones!!! All was OK though and Andrew (not working due to the pandemic) collected me and took me back to the car – result!

Third - More of the same again, bumbled off Wether Fell in a straight westerly with not very radical climbs or height gains.

Good fun and ran out of lift in a field next to Jervaulx Abbey, just near my home in Ellingstring. Once again, I was able press Kate into retrieve service, always a plus.

Actually, my landing was spot on, just up a small rise in the ground, a good end to the day.

Still waiting for the big one into Lincolnshire, sod the retrieve problems...

Trev Birkbeck



X-Lakes 2021

27th June 2021 – day trip

When I signed up for the X Lakes, 'Daytripper' it sounded quite innocuous. The previous year I sort of gusted it, enjoyed it and didn't feel it was much harder than any normal day out. In fact a nice roam around the fells from Carrock without any WW waypoints in my instruments. This year was to turn out a bit more complex, a lot harder, immensely rewarding and with very much the feel of an adventure.

The preparation didn't start off too well. A simple shopping trip on the Friday resulted in a freakish tweaked Achilles tendon and a pronounced limp. I decided I'd do what I could ... if I had to I'd limp it and hope it was mostly flying, not hiking. Being smart I thought I'd drive and over-night near Loweswater after registering at Eskdale base Friday evening - that went well except I never actually sussed out exactly where the start field was. Next morning, early (6.25am) saw me plodding the roads under an already warm sun, sack on back thinking it was only 100m away or fairly close. Discovering it was obviously some distance further away I headed back to the car. Now late, I drove until I saw flags and banners arriving just as the start hooter sounded and the race began without me. Mind you I prefer doing my own thing. Tracker sorted and 15 minutes later I followed my own solitary path. I had a plan.

A word about the task. There were three mandated WW (turnpoints) Grasmoor, Red Pike and Low Fell - roughly a triangle. **Missing any would result in a third deduction of the final total ... miss all and it was nil points!**

The time deadline was 4pm and missing that also carried big penalties - 5pm, again meant nil points.

Aside from the mandated turn points you gathered whatever extra you could, by foot or air.

A sweet, but tricky 9 hr task on a beautiful Lakeland day...





Heading towards Rannerdale - one of the mandated TP's is Red Pike, the obvious summit on the middle skyline

A glorious morning for a walk. I headed off on a route no one else favoured it seemed. A solitary trek through woods alongside Crummock, then some roadwork heading into Rannerdale. I saw barely a soul - just so peaceful. The leg was being tested, I was slower than normal due to a reduced stride length, but I hoped going up hill would be easier. Heading into Rannerdale I was pleased to see the cylinder neatly clipped the path edge. I was chuffed by an easy bonus so early on. So chuffed in fact I managed to lose the main track when cutting a corner and ended up in a nightmare of head-high gorse and assorted bracken on a steep hillside - I was in the land of sheep. I could have retraced, but reluctant to lose height I headed in deeper and steeper! This felt a big gamble. I followed sheep trods, convinced that sheep weren't really stupid with their own special intelligence at getting from A to B and it worked. Within 40 sweaty minutes I was back in a landscape I understood of steep grass - pathless, but better than where I'd been. Better still - it did cut off a big corner towards Whiteless Pike. But it was becoming a grind.

Whiteless Pike was a swine false summit after false summit and no way around due to steep craggy sides ... so all the way to the top. **Then followed a sharp ridgeline to Wandhope ... that was now three Wainwright's bagged.** Getting there steadily. By now the wind was really howling up the immense gullies to my right (NE) ...I briefly considered if it was launchable, but the spine back I was on made it a very dodgy place to risk launching.

The temptation was to gain height quickly by flying. I resisted the pull and succumbed to good sense.

As 11am approached I was heading onto the flat top of Crag Hill not fast but making progress. I'd planned to launch here and thermal back towards Grasmoor - most took

Grasmoor on foot via their own approach routes. I met a fellow pilot heading down from Crag Hill he'd not actually been to the top, just tagged the cylinder and assumed it was too windy (as he'd found Grasmoor). He intended to back track my route on foot. No sooner had he headed off down than a glider appeared in the sky ahead. I shouted and whistled - but he just kept on heading down at pace. More hopeful I continued on up.

Several wing's were laid out a few launching and the wind was almost light. In fact aside from a lowish base and the sea breeze visible to the NW it looked pretty good.



Where has all the wind gone?

It was still fairly early no great rush, but the sea breeze seemed to be getting closer.

Impatience then got the better of me time deadlines do that to you.

Only 5 hrs to go and some tricky distant turnpoints to get. I launched or rather got yanked off launch in a less than elegant, uncool fashion. I had a short 10 minute soaring session, went forward and tagged Sail (now five tagged) arrived back at the hill to find a climb that got stronger ... and stronger until the ground became rather hazy, the cloud wrapped around me and the gaps smaller until just bits of a terrain jigsaw I couldn't place not knowing the NW feels that well.

A word on instruments. I'd put my intended route into Skytraxx ... and set it to 'hike' mode. It didn't work for me. At Rannerdale it didn't show cylinders clearly, or make any sense so I'd switched back to 'fly' mode which worked a whole lot better but doesn't store an igc file as the parameters aren't met. I had it running from the very start until I finished. The cylinder countdowns were my biggest booster - I love numbers. The problem came when in flight I

intended to use mainly xctrack for navigation. The issue was on switch on, no gps signal ... I waited, still nothing and took off with it still showing Harrogate from the previous Tuesday.

Now entering the white room I needed xctrack to provide a heading - odd glimpses of ground didn't cut it. I took the best heading I could for Grasmoor, flew blind and tried to use the Skytraxx without much luck. It seemed a longish period in persistent lift with few ground references.

Eventually the ground and hills reappeared and below me a scattering of clouds, so spectacular and no camera there was also a 'ping'. The gps had finally connected. I appeared to have wandered off track, not far, but missed the Grasmoor cylinder. A quick turn back and it was tagged.

Ahead, across the lake was Mellbreak I should have ignored it as I could have got it on the way back later. Instead I deviated and went for it. **Over the lake I got a sudden, huge collapse ... about 70% frontal.** A short fight before normal flight was resumed ... not sure where it came from as most of the time it was fairly smooth. I passed over Mellbreak high and headed for the back ridges intending to fly up to Red Pike. It wasn't to be and I did a high slope landing on steep rocky ground above a big face relieved to have escaped a big walk up.

I packed, fairly happy with progress - now I had seven in the bag and a 30 minutes walk up Starling Dodd, number eight. The ground was rough and boggy in parts, but a path appeared leading around a shallow bowl towards Red Pike soarable? Maybe but it seemed better use of time to continue walking and launch in the cylinder on Red Pike. I arrived 5 minutes before Tim (Rogers) on a perfect grassy shoulder above an enormous, steep bowl with crags looming overhead. **At any other time, with the wind on and nice strength, you'd have thought it possible to soar up to the summit.** But I'd seen others struggling here as I walked up.

I launched and after a single beat found nothing, this was one really sinky place. I had hoped it would be easy getting up and heading NE towards High Stile and Haystacks. Instead I was being flushed out and down, back to Melbreak where other gliders had been happily soaring all day. The climbs appeared as I approached ... nothing strong, just weak thermals but just enough to get me across the valley to Low Fell - the final mandated turnpoint. Maybe it was that fixation which gave me brain fade...

I approached Low Fell just above ridge top height to see a glider laid out and it appeared windless **but especially interesting where four wings above skying out.** This looked like **the famous Loweswater convergence. Getting high was easy - lift everywhere the question being, What to do with it?** For reasons unknown to me I pushed back into the high fells intending to tag Whiteside (not on my list so a bonus). What I should have done was gone south where three or four Wainwrights were just begging to be tagged - I had time and even landing out would have at most been a 30 minute walk in along the valley to the finish. Whiteside was a silly, futile idea - high and in the lee, so I turned back 400m short having lost height.

Tagging Fellbarrow instead gave me a final tally of 11. It could so easily have been 13 or 14 had I realised the potential of my final height and all the lift. **Somehow one can be quite**

blind in decision making at times. Too late I tried to get across to Carling Knott and in the end just made it back into the finish field.

***“This was a great day out,
probably one of my most memorable ever”***

The task, the people, the weather and the sheer beauty of the setting. I can't really complain ...but you always think, What if? I certainly learned a lot too.

I didn't take any photos other than odd ones with my phone. To save weight I ditched the video rather wish I hadn't in retrospect.

Final X-lakes results available here: <https://x-lakes.uk/2021-results/>

Ed Cleasby

(Editor: Ed runs a regular blog at: <https://www.xcflight.com/>)

The 42nd International

Tue 22nd
July 2021

Baildon Sod

First held
1978

On arrival a sort of “run”way had be scythe’d down the hill, much needed with the bracken/grass certainly tall enough to swallow a small child (try as David May did).

It was turning out to be a lovely sunny Yorkshire evening, As we convened at 6.30pm, Pete was just organising lifting the flight ceiling with Leeds Bradford airport “just in case”, the wind was varying from “strong’ish” to “not much”, and “sort of on the hill” to “not really” (those being the level of technical terms in this competition you understand!)



Pete just needing a black cloak for the recreation of the Monty Python's Meaning of Life. The filming of Death leading his dinner guests across the bleak moor is believed to have been filmed on Baildon Moor!

There where around 15 or so of us. Richard was one of the first to glide out on his Zeno, and following a gust generating some lift, reached the far fairway, thus the “virtual” marker to reach had been set (as it happened the marker was still on the hill, but that’s another story).

The completion is a straight glide, although a few managed some half beats, but still didn’t didn’t reach much further than the first fairway (which is still good for some years I believe).





After some grunting back up the hill “for another go”, some challenging ground handling in the bracken, a couple of hours had passed and it was time for a debrief in a local watering hole.

Although rumoured / threatened no hangies were to be seen, more the pity (although they would have probably been able to happily reach the bottom of the valley). Interesting enough a few of us learn’t to hang glide on that very slope 30 years or so ago. I still have fond memories of running up and down that hill hanging onto ropes (nose and wing tips)... and Ian Curren soaring a stubby...

Scores on the Doors

1st - Richard Merik

2nd - Jake Herbert

3rd - Pete Logan

A good time was had by all I think, and many thanks to Pete Logan for organising.

