

SKYWORDS

June 2020

Chairman's Chat

I'm sorry that you didn't receive copies of Skywords during lockdown. Arguably that would have been when it would have been most appreciated, although I know that some of you didn't want reminding of what you were missing. Unfortunately, Carl's internet issues put paid to the April edition. And some confusion over dates, meant we missed May's. Shame really because I had already drafted a Chairman's Chat predicting how we would come out of lockdown. I didn't anticipate how messy it would be...

You will recall that the PM made his announcement on the Sunday evening, indicating that from the Wednesday we could all travel as far as we liked to participate in outdoor sports. Unfortunately, he didn't appear to give anybody (including government departments and the CAA) advanced notification of the relaxation measures, resulting in much confusion over the next few days. My favourite contradiction was on the Government's own website where it said you could 'only leave home to... spend time outdoors'. Clear as mud! Even by the Wednesday when the new measures came into force, the Department for Transport (DfT) and the CAA were still saying that we couldn't fly. This confusion allowed those with strong views (either way) to be selective in their choice of evidence, and views became polarised. (Remember BREXIT?!)

On the Thursday the BHPA Chairman received a response from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). I wasn't actually convinced that it added clarity, but I was grateful when he showed some initiative and leadership and declared that we could fly again. I wasn't quite so enthusiastic about the way he announced it on Facebook 'Let's go flying' which didn't take any account of local sensitivities. Fortunately, our Sites Officers had been very pro-active in consulting farmers, further enhancing our reputation with them. Advice suggested that Mountain Rescue pressure was less critical in our area so we cautiously started to open sites that evening. **Sites remain closed where owners have asked us not to fly**, but the number reduces each day. **Please check the [website](#) before flying.**

Last week we held our first committee meeting, since January, on Zoom. Finances seem to be pretty much on track. At this stage of the year membership numbers are only down slightly on last year. Most pilots renewed before lockdown, although overall figures will depend on when the schools can resume training and produce some new CP.

We all agreed that the Shoutbox, which has served us well over the years, had been superseded by the WhatsApp group. The Shoutbox has now been locked and will be removed from the website in due course. The membership secretary is drawing up some guidelines for the WhatsApp group (Editor-see later), but in the meantime, we encourage you to use it just for short messages saying where you are going flying and what the conditions are when you get there. The (members only) [forum](#) on the website is the place to ask questions, enter into more lengthy discussions, and brag about the flying you have done.

Fly safely, Martin Baxter (Chairman)

Spring has sprung, take care everyone

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.

When you add this to the fact that most of us are coming out of hibernation, possibly not having flown for many months I guess it's no surprise that Spring time sees the more incidents and accidents than other times of the year. And especially so this year with the and especially this year with the extended lay off due to the 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 4 or 5 months, let's all be extra careful for a while until we have a little more currency. Pick a suitable time to fly according to your experience level, a little more attention at launch, a little 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

Sites Notice – Windbank

Windbank parking fee is now **£3.00**

Parking fees should be now taken to Mr & Mrs Hall at the main farmhouse at Old North Cote Farm, which is the original farmhouse in front of Kilnsey Crag. A **payment box is in the porch.**

(view from takeoff looking towards the landing field)



Shaun Pickard
(Sites Officer South)

[Editors note: We have heard very good reports from Mrs Hall and other locals, that it's nice to see wings back out on the hill]

Sites update...

Sites North - The Latest Update.

Sites now fully open.

Barkin Fell.
Dodd Fell & Grove Head.
Semer Water.
Stags Fell (Members Only).
Tailbridge.
Wether Fell.

The farmers & land owners for the above sites have been very supportive in our actions to open these sites again.

Sites still closed.

Brantside.
Whernside.

The farmers have specifically requested that we **do not fly** either of these 2 sites in the near future.

Sites still closed.

Addlebrough.
Bishopdale.
Fremington.
Nappa Scar.

We are in contact with these farmers regarding opening these sites again soon.
Luckily these are our lesser flown sites.

I will keep you all updated regarding the latest site developments via the Sites page on the DHPC website.

Fly safe.

Simon Tomlinson
(Sites Officer North)

A Dip into the Archives

Visit to RAF Leeming ATC (from Skywords March 2010)

Friday the 5th of February brought somewhat less than ideal conditions for a visit to RAF Leeming ATC: the clag was well and truly down and it had been drizzling steadily all morning. It would, by all accounts, be a slow day in terms of airborne activity.

The cream of The Dales Hang-gliding and Paragliding Club are made of sterner stuff, however, and not to be put off by the adverse meteorological conditions. We gradually assembled at the Coppice Gate entrance to RAF Leeming, there were about a dozen hardcore members altogether.

We collected our passes and were shown onto a small bus that was to ferry us round for the day. As we entered the base we were told we would have to have our cameras vetted and authorised at an intermediate security point; why mobile phones, which boast comparable performance, were excluded is a little unclear. After some hasty deleting a few members wandered off to another security point and were asked a few questions about their cameras and what they intended to do with the photographs (I've tried selling mine to The News of The World but they're not interested). Cameras duly vetted we set off on our tour.



First stop was air traffic control where we were shown into a lounge area and told to help ourselves to tea, Trevor very kindly did the honours. We were then hurriedly informed that owing to the bad weather there were only two planes going to land, and that that would be it for the next two hours. The planes were preparing for final approach so we made our way to the tower and the control room.

We were split into two groups, one of which would go upstairs to the tower and watch the planes (Hawks in this case) land. The other would go into the control room where the radar equipment was. The radar room was quite small and the equipment was very modern, no eerily glowing green radar screens with amorphous blobs flashing periodically. Instead, the radar information is overlaid onto a representation of the surrounding airspace and the whole lot displayed on a computer screen. You can just about see the Fylingdales limit of interference on the far right screen. **[Ed: Image on prev. page]**

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



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

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



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



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

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



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

After a quick question and answer session in the briefing room we headed off again to visit 100 Squadron and get a close up look at some Hawks on the ground. I think we might have caught them on the hop as they sent down an American on a three year exchange program, that said, it seems tours are a pretty informal affair, you just turn up and some pilots come down and show you around.



According to his name badge he was known as 'Worm' by his colleagues, he seemed a little unsure of where to start but Trevor quickly put him at his ease by shouting 'Oh my God, an American!'. Worm showed us through into the hanger where 100 Squadron's Hawks are kept.

After some more informal chat it was time to go home, Worm posed with us for a final group photo...



Cloud Spotting



Communication v1.2

(DRAFT May, 2020)

In the early days of flying in the Dales a note stuffed in the dry stone wall at the bottom of Windbank was used to tell people “where it was at” for the day. More recently, a shoutbox on the home page of the website was used to post quick messages on where you were going. This was removed in May 2020 as more functional and mobile apps took over.

1. Standard Communication

With the plethora of potential communication channels available now, unless it is tightly managed, key club information could easily become fragmented and difficult for members to keep track of. We therefore take the approach below.

“Formal” club communication

The website www.DHPC.org.uk is the authoritative source of information about the club. All club announcements, significant news stories and updates, releases of the club magazine Skywords etc will be on the website. Accurate site status, club contact details, instructions for visiting pilots and other potentially useful public information are on the publicly accessible area of the website. Members also have access to the forum, where they can share flying reports, photos/videos, detailed chat about flying plans, and general information. This area also includes safety reports, details of club meetings etc.

Keeping up to date with what is going on can be made easy by subscribing to notifications of new posts in the forum. To do this, go to the [forum](#), click on the area you are interested in (eg General Discussions / Site Issues, etc) scroll to the bottom of the first page, and UNTICK Subscribe forum – the button will change to say “unsubscribe forum”. You can check which tabs you are subscribed to by checking your user control panel, accessed by clicking your username at the top right of the forum screen.

DHPC Flying Plans WhatsApp Group

What is it for?

“DHPC Flying Plans” is a place for DHPC members and visiting pilots to help decide where and when to fly in the Dales and beyond. It is intended as a place to share your thoughts, plans and site reports in order to help meet up with other pilots and get the best out of any free flying opportunities that arise.

Who is it for?

The group is intended for people who have attained at least a Club Pilot or equivalent rating, for either paragliding or hang gliding. All DHPC members are invited to join and contribute. Our club welcomes visiting pilots and the group is also open to pilots from neighbouring clubs and other BHPA members, as well as suitably-qualified visiting pilots from overseas.

Joining and leaving

If you'd like to join the group please email your request to the DHPC Membership Secretary at membership@dhpc.org.uk . As it's a WhatsApp group you'll need to be a WhatsApp user and provide your mobile number. If you're not a DHPC member please also tell us your BHPA membership number and which club you are from. For overseas pilots we'll ask for your qualification – we are a BHPA recreational club and you may find the information provided at www.bhpa.co.uk/sport/bhpa/visiting_pilots.php useful.

Bear in mind that joining the WhatsApp group does not necessarily give you permission to fly at all DHPC sites. Please respect our site rules. **All pilots should have third party insurance cover (included as part of BHPA membership) to fly at any or our sites.** Landowners and your fellow pilots expect you hold suitable (£5M) third party liability cover. Also as part of our negotiations with landowners a small number of our sites are designated as members-only. The latest information about our sites can always be found at www.dhpc.org.uk/site-guide .

It's a fairly large group and can be quite active on and around good flying days. If the number of notifications bothers you remember that you can temporarily or permanently mute them in WhatsApp if you like. But if you decide to leave the group you can do so at any time – we'll be sorry to see you go!

Posting and content

Experienced and novice pilots alike use this group to share thoughts and opinions about weather conditions and suitable flying sites, and to post site reports in “real-time”. Low airtime pilots and those new to the area may find the group useful to help with the process of meeting other pilots and choosing where to go flying. We aim to provide a friendly and supportive environment and encourage everyone to “have a go” and offer your own thoughts and suggestions rather than wait for someone else to tell you – it'll help build your experience much more quickly, and you'll find others more inclined to offer their advice and opinion if you do so.

It's quite a large group so it's important not to stray off topic. For DHPC members the forum on our website is more suitable for in-depth discussion and analysis before and after flying, and other topics not directly related to going flying. Photos or screen-shots can be useful, for example to illustrate weather forecasts or site reports but people won't necessarily thank you for posting lots of hi-resolution images, or video clips.

We do moderate the group and while we like to cut people a bit of slack please keep the banter to a minimum, it can easily get out of hand! However abusive or offensive posts will not be tolerated and moderators reserve the right to remove offenders from the group without notice.

It is possible that some important club announcements on the website will sometimes be linked from this group – but it should not be used as your source of all important information, as this is not its function.

DHPC Telegram XC Retrieve group.

For pilots going XC we have a Telegram group set up within the national XC retrieve system (XCRT.aero). This enables you to drop a pin with your location when you land out and say where you are trying to get back to. Again, this is open to non members. A key aspect of the system is that, if used properly, all pins will appear on the same map, making multiple retrieves easier. Instructions, and access to the group can be found through

<https://flyaszent.com/xc-retrieve/>. Again, important club announcements on the website will sometimes be linked from this group – but it should not be used as your source of all important information, as this is not its function.

DHPC Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/DalesHangGlidingParaglidingClub/>). This page is a social media presence for the club and is primarily used to signpost important announcements on the club's website. Again though, it will NOT signpost ALL the information on the website.

Informal groups

In addition to these “formal” club groups, there are a number of smaller “flying buddy” groups set up by members that use telegram or WA. As you develop your own networks and buddies within the club and outside you may naturally join these groups, or indeed may form your own. The club has no control over these groups, and the channels detailed above will remain the sources of all club information.

Phone/Wifi/Radio communication

Mobile phone coverage once you are out and about can still be patchy in the Dales. <https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-coverage> will give you some comparative information on coverage and reliability of the network providers. Our southern sites generally have good coverage on most networks. There are free-to-use WiFi hotspots available for customers at pubs and cafés throughout the Dales. For the price of a pint of beer (after flying!) or a cup of tea and a cake you can browse all you like.

Pilots with 2m band radios are encouraged to use **143.850 MHz** when flying in the Dales.

Skywords

The Club also produces a monthly magazine Skywords, which is available in the [library on the website](#). As a member you should receive an email notifying you with a link to each new edition. You are encouraged to provide articles to the magazine if you have had a particularly good trip somewhere – home or abroad, or if you have photos, anecdotes etc that you think the paragliding community would enjoy. You can contact the editor at skywords@dhpc.org.uk

2. Emergency Communication

The Emergency SMS service is designed to allow deaf people to text 999, but it could be very useful to us where mobile reception is patchy. You have to register first but it's very easy - just text 'register' to 999 and wait for the text reply.

In a wider sense, you should also familiarise yourself with the Europe wide emergency 112 service (<http://www.sos112.info/uk.htm>) . As ever, beware of misinformation, even if it is well intended: <http://www.mountainsafety.co.uk/EP-999-or-112-Which-is-Best-asp#emergencysms>.

Mark Morrison (Tam) (Secretary)