

SKYWORDS

March 2020

Chairman's Chat

On the penultimate Saturday in February the club hosted 24 farmers at the annual dinner at the Boars Head in Long Preston. Despite some atrocious weather conditions, with serious flooding across the southern Dales, an equal number of members turned out to act as hosts, and to receive their club trophies.

Earlier in the day Horton in Ribblesdale had been cut off by the flooding so it was something of a relief when the minibus containing most of the farmers arrived about 15mins early. By coincidence the pub was hosting a charity quiz night and the bar area was pretty frantic, so we soon moved through to the function room. We have learned from experience that if we don't have a seating plan then all the pilots sit at one end of the room and all the farmers at the other – which doesn't exactly meet with the aim of getting to know one another. So, for several years, we have had a seating plan where everybody sits opposite their partner, alternating pilots and farmers, and males and females. It serves to break the ice and works really well.

After a sumptuous 3 course meal, we presented some of our annual trophies:

Chris Baird and Graham McAnany were congratulated on passing their Pilot Exam.

Graham also received the award for best article in Skywords; SIV in Annecy.

Rob Burtenshaw received the (brand new) trophy for best coach, as voted for by the coaching group.

Kev Gay swept the board with hang gliding awards: mug, best flight and hang-gliding shield (best 6 flights).

Chris Kay got a 300km mug, and received the award for most enthusiastic pilot.

Rosie Darwood got a 200km mug and received the Fairbrother Trophy (Pilots' Pilot). Not only had she completed her first UK 100km XC, but is also a UK record holder for a 95km out and return in Bir.

I was surprised when everyone came back following a ten-minute leg stretch: it was time for the Chairman's Speech. I started off by introducing each of the farmers in turn. We then raised a toast to 'absent friends' in memory of Cliff Allen who died from motor neurons disease last year. From the home team I introduced our sites officers, and new trophies officer and treasurer.

Helen Setnicka had booked the venue and sorted out the menu before she stood down at the AGM. (*Helen & Marek were jointly awarded the Mark Sellern Trophy for services to the club.*) The rest of the planning rather fell between the cracks so, as Chairman, I ended up

doing most of it. Time had been a bit short in previous years so I decided to keep things simple with no quiz and no raffle. I did however use my speech to ask the audience what they liked. They voted strongly in favour of the presentation of awards, the quiz, and the raffle. The only idea that wasn't supported was to have a disco! The mixed seating plan is popular, as is our childish fetish for balloons and flying toys.

We hold the function at this time of year to deconflict with lambing, but given the weather (and the fact that some committee members were either flying in Colombia or ski-ing in the Alps), I aired the thought that perhaps the autumn would be a better time of year. However, on reflection, 'If it ain't broke – don't try to fix it'.

The farmers seemed very supportive and impressed when I explained that we had defeated the proposal to increase the Leeds/Bradford airspace over the Dales.

I used Pete Darwood's excellent article in last month's Skywords as a template to explain that we had had an outstanding flying year. After thanking all members for supporting the event, Simon Tomlinson for organising the minibus for the farmers, and Richard Meek for preparing the trophies, I finished off by raising a toast to 'The Farmers'.

One of the farmers then responded, raising a toast to the club. He thanked us for our hospitality, and confirmed that we have their full support.

Each year we hold a sweepstake where everyone tries to guess the length of the Chairman's Speech. It was a long one this year at 17m 42s. Sharon McAnany was actually closest at 15m, but was disqualified on the basis that she left early and hadn't actually endured the speech! Next closest with a guess of 14m 30s was Richard Meek, so he got the bottle of wine. (The only person who guessed longer than the actual speech was Dave Bradwell – he knows me too well!)

Before we poured the farmers back into the minibus, I had a chat with Alex Stott, the gamekeeper at Stags Fell. It was his first Farmers' Dinner. He hasn't been exactly supportive in the past, but was very amicable on the night. He even offered to ferry pilots up to take-off! It's the same old story – good communication leads to understanding and empathy.

Flying in the Dales has been secured for another year; which is handy since spring is just around the corner (allegedly).

Fly Safely

Martin Baxter
Chairman

Farmers Dinner 2020



Photos courtesy of Dave Bradwell

Archive Corner



Martin Baxter leaning to fly under the tutorage of Ian Curren, Addleborough 1994

Editors Note

Unfortunately this month's edition is a little thin, if anyone would like to contribute then please let me know. I assume at least a few members have been away for some winter flying, any articles welcome, and if its your fist time, then I'm happy to help. I can be reached at newsletter@dhpc.org.uk.

Carl Maughan (Editor)