

# SKYWORDS

November 2019

## Chairman's Chat

The shoutbox is dead: long live the shoutbox!

A long time ago, when he was still a novice, Tim started a WhatsApp group to co-ordinate flying amongst a small group of friends. Later, as membership secretary, he received enquiries from new members asking if we had a club WhatsApp group, so he invited them to join it. The chief coach then caught wind of the fact that novices were chatting about where to go flying, so he asked that all coaches be added to the group so that they could provide appropriate advice. Fearing that they might be missing out, a few more experienced pilots also joined the group. That's the story of how the DHPC Flying Plans WhatsApp group came into being. It now has 50 members.

The club also has an 'unofficial' Facebook page. I'm also aware of a Dales XC group. There is also a Dales XC group and a Dales Retrieve group on Telegram. And those are only the ones that I'm aware of: no doubt there are many more.

Personally, I find social media very intrusive – and that's with all notifications turned off! From my perspective the less said about 'Fakebook', the better. WhatsApp (and similar) groups seem to work pretty well when they are limited to small numbers, but to work with large groups requires discipline: 'please try not to stray off topic and keep banter to a minimum'. The problem is that what makes these groups so attractive: the ability to post messages, photos and videos so easily; is also their downfall. They are quickly overloaded with meaningless drivel from those who didn't listen to their Grandmother when she explained why people have two ears and just one mouth!

The knock-on effect is that traffic on both the forum and the shoutbox has pretty much dried up. I think this is a shame. I've always tried to encourage members to use the website as a 'one stop shop' so that when they are checking where other pilots are going flying, they also note any flying restrictions, NOTAMs, etc. The 'Going Flying' section of the forum is designed for general thoughts, mostly the night before, on how things are shaping up and what the options are. The shoutbox is more for facts: 'I'm going to Wether Fell' or '3 wings in the air at Windbank'. There is another section on the forum for bragging about what a good day you've had on the hill. From my perspective the advantage is that I can catch up when it's convenient to me.

The committee have discussed social media a few times and mostly concluded that it's beyond our control. Groups will come and go, with members and traffic ebbing and flowing. At some stage we'll have to discuss if it's worth keeping the shoutbox, and perhaps at a later date the forum. It's called evolution. As a bit of an old dinosaur I'll continue to use the website for as long as I can.

Fly safely,  
**Martin Baxter**  
Chairman

Choose Flying. Choose a window. Choose a launch. Choose a goal. Choose a buddy. Choose a fucking cool wing. Choose a harness, a vario, a backup, and a techno moving map solution. Choose coordinated flying clothes, lies to tell your boss. Choose an SIV. Choose reasons for failing to get away, excuses for the fucked-up ground handling. Choose a cloud. Choose a lofty line. Choose a bird. Choose a trigger. Choose sitting at home watching your mates on live tracking in far flung corners of the globe whilst it pisses it down outside. Choose sweating up a big hill and swearing all the way back down again. Choose highs. Choose lows. Choose cancelled commitments, lost friends, strained relationships. Choose a selfish life suspended below a nylon rag, manufactured by underpaid labourers in some exotic flying destination. Choose your future. Choose Flying.

Anon

## A trip to the seaside

Wind bang on, sky looking reasonable, no one here, why? 'Cause its September, no decent flights are done, excepting Jake's last week, but he's a flying freak so that doesn't count, and they are all on holiday in the mountains with grander flying objectives now.

Launch, fly, sky improving, base not super high yet, explore the lift, ride out the lulls, more people turn up. Sky over the back still looking average, no one to join me, been up for two hours, decide a pee is more important.

Lunch, parabolox, launch again. Sky busier now, clouds out front epic, no one wants to go, perhaps because its mid-afternoon in September? Drift back, spy Joseph connecting with one, hang in the whispies, a friend at last.

Clouds sparse and a little undefined, but reachable, and all with gentle lift under, not a racing day. Itchy groin, must be getting too close to Fylingdales, head south. Joseph low, perseveres, rewarded, a nice climb out. Unlucky decision, tries the farm, tree line, crop sprayer, has to put it down, a personal best in September.

Mince some more, late in the day, shall I try south, no obvious sea breeze front, head for Scarborough instead. Connect with another climb, slow, use the drift, Scarborough in the bag, take it all the way, surely going to hit the breeze soon? 45kmph, Scarborough 1300m below, can't see the wheel properly, town looks pretty from here, castle bathed in evening light.

Look down the coast, guess that is Filey then, why not, should be an easy hitch. Sun low, fields of static caravans, sea a calm azure, air silky smooth, is the bay really a massive semi-circle? Train station, why, coast is best, watch the gulls, look for signs of wind, none, cliff top in the sun, looks like a decent soaring site, put it down on bowling green grass, 6pm. Smile, autumn light glorious, pinch myself, pack, old couple perambulating the cliff top, bus in 10 minutes, 50 metres away, thank you, direct to Scarborough, via every static caravan in-between.

Meet Joseph, town centre minging, Polish supermarket nearest, absinthe in three flavours, every variety of meat product imaginable, great for a veggie. People watch, Joseph has a arranged a lift, thank you Charles, no whale music, service station sandwich. 9:30 back at Carlton Bank, 11pm at the house, pinch myself again, Rosie asleep, impervious to my euphoria, time for a beer, why go to the seaside?





**Pete D**

## Flexi BOS 2019

The British Hang Gliding Open Competitions series has followed the same format for quite a few years. So with the permission of the Comps Panel and with about 50% of pilots behind the idea I tried to organise a flexible competition. The aim being to make the most of the weather, and travel to the best site for the weekend, and hopefully get to fly with a few local pilots.

After a few phone calls and e-mails to sites officers and clubs, I managed to get agreement to use the sites the BHPA had helped to buy: Blorenges, Long Mynd and Tinto, and the clubs were very happy to offer other sites. In the end we had the choice of almost every site in the west of the country.

Four weekend dates were chosen, a "Flexi BOS 2019" facebook page was set up and we were just waiting on the weather. The plan, such that it was, involved watching the weather the week previously, discussing which site would suit the expected weather, and on Wednesday night make a decision on which site. Arriving Saturday morning ready to fly - not unlike the BPC paragliding comps.

The first weekend came and went under a cloud of strong wind and rain. The second and third had some discussion before being canned.

Jon Sacre, always up for a party tried to identify campsites and some accommodation for all the sites we might have flown, and has now got an extensive knowledge of campsites up and down the country.

Flexi BOS 4 was the last chance and the weather was giving a glimmer of hope on Wednesday night. I was positively optimistic and after searching my soul, and not wanting to carry a glider across Clatter, I opted for the Dales, Tailbridge and Wether Fell. Having committed to the area, Jon went into action and scoured the Dales for suitable and available campsites to get as many people as possible in the same area. I got stuck into looking at tasks and letting people know we were coming. An apology is needed here as it appeared I forgot to mention the fourth weekend to the Dales sites officers, and was suitably reprimanded.

The weather immediately changed for the worse with strengthening winds and rain forecast. By Thursday Jon had not only found a great campsite, he had already sorted a group meal at the Aysgarth Falls Hotel, for Saturday night and there just happened to be a band on. Sadly the weather got worse and it began to look more like a party than a competition.

Photo Wave behind Tailbridge on Saturday .Kevin Gay



Still hopeful, we pitched up at Tailbridge at 9.30. My Co-Meet Director, Dawn, was already there and keen to get on with setting a task. I rapidly made an assessment of the conditions, flyable but taskable? I looked at the options and the only task feasible would have been a short XC to Barnard Castle. There was a lot of wave induced clouds around, including some cumulus level with take off but a long way 10 kms up wind, reducing the likelihood of achieving a task.

And suggesting rough conditions.



I took the decision to can the day, trying not to be influenced by the lack of enthusiasm to rig. Justin, Trevor and Christo rigged and Trevor took off into what was obviously rough air, Justin followed soon after.



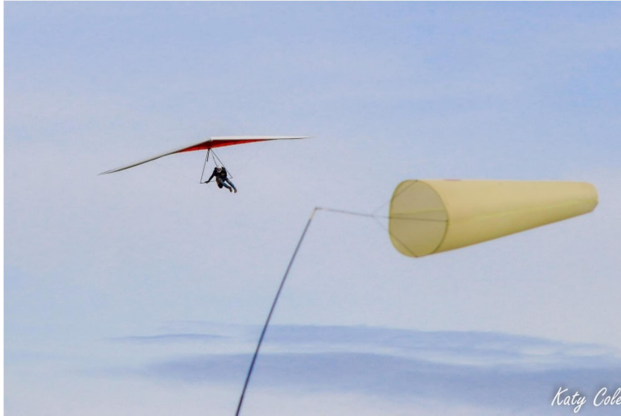


*Katy Cole*



*Katy Cole*

Almost as soon as they had launched the wind swung slightly south and increased. Watching them gain height and then head out away from the hill justified everyone's decision not to rig. Instead we stood in admiration as they both flew in some really weird conditions, wondering why they didn't come down, Apparently both were waiting for the other to lead the way.



Their landings, both safe, were watched carefully. Trevors particularly had everyone worried as we spread across the moor in readiness to catch wires, he rapidly ran out of field being drifted back wards every time he had to correct a turn, Tailbridge is HUGE. and to land at the back of the moor is a fair walk bac

With a great meal to look forward to everyone left the hill fairly promptly, and found various walks, waterfalls and cafes to enjoy in Swaledale.

The short walk to the Aysgarth Hotel from the campsite under an amazing wavy sunset made us all appreciate the beauty of the Dales. The Meal was definitely the highlight of the weekend 20 people had a great time, and the band was amazingly LOUD, so loads of head banging, drinking and quite a few TPs (technical pulls). Returning to Bed at the campsite became a bit of an obstacle course for those that were a bit late to bed, having to negotiate, the kids playground equipment that found its way into their tents.



The camp site , Colmans at Aysgarth is amazing, campers get use of the little hut with toaster, kettle, microwave, ironing board and iron, a fridge and freezer with ice packs to borrow.

The Aysgarth Hotel, also has a small campsite with a few hard standing pitches and has some very good rooms. The George and Dragon also has rooms and food. All this within a few

hundred yards makes it a great base, good internet on the campsite, wifi in both pubs, and the sites are only 30 to 50 minutes away.

Sunday rain to the south and low cloud on Wether fell forced us to Tailbridge again, lighter winds and flyable but with rain approaching upwind no chance of getting a task in, again free flying was called but the rain came early and forced a hurried retreat.

The Flexi BOS was an attempt to make use of the best weather at the most usable site, The British weather didn't play ball with us and make any of the weekends an easy option. But despite that we managed to get 12 pilots together and had a great weekend. A previous weekend had one reasonable flying day, and people did fly at the Mynd on Sunday, so perhaps we need to be more flexible and go to the sites where the weather is even average, and even if only one day is flyable.

The FlexiBOS had its supporters and objectors. I'd like to thank all those that supported the idea, and also many of the objectors for their ideas and contributions throughout the year. In particular I would like to thank Dawn and Jon and the Sites Officers from the SE Wales Club, LMSC, North Wales, Dales, North Yorks Sail Wings and Lanarkshire and Lothian club, and the Malverns for their support.

**Editors Note: And now a view from the other side...**



# The worst top landing of my entire hang gliding life.

Trev Birkbeck

This year we changed the British Open series from three 5 day comps to two 5 day comps and 4 "flexi BOS" comps of two days each. Decision as to whether to hold the flexi BOS comps would be taken by Kev Gay on the Wednesday before to avoid dragging folks up on duff weekends.

Basically, a flawed plan as pilots are not going to be keen to travel a long way in the hope that the forecast will be any good, maybe only to get one days flying (or none). The first 3 flexi BOS dates were cancelled on the basis of poor forecasts but this particular comp was to go ahead as the weather looked half reasonable on the Saturday although, in my opinion, atrocious on the Sunday.

Just twelve pilots duly assembled on Tailbridge plus WAGS and drivers and Kev set a possibly suitable task – there was a bit of reticence on the part of some pilots to rush into rigging due to forecasts showing potential wind increase. However, as I was first to be rigged, I thought I would see what the air was like.

Light on take-off initially but once I was in position to go, it picked up to a strong-ish level. I took five and when a lull came, lobbed off OK. I was not on radio or Kev may have let me know that, as soon as I was airborne, the wind increased to 30 mph. Hmmm.

Well, it was a bit jiggly but sort of live-able with so I carried on flying. Next to fly was top pilot Justin Needham (usually one of the first off) and we were both ratcheted up and down according to the lift and sink that we were experiencing. The rest of the guys had either not rigged or stopped rigging to watch our efforts. They reckoned Justin had a real hard time to start with – it always looks worse when you're low. I normally expect a better pilot on a better glider to be continually above me but as we were at the mercy of the ravages of the system, we were up and down like yo-yo's.

After half an hour, Justin went in and landed – at this time, I was quite high and out front so his landing didn't look too bad to me. Apparently, it was pretty bloody awful!

Now, I just wanted to be on the ground but I kept getting higher in a sort of broken wave – well above Mallerstang tops...I was getting nervous! Wind was picking up and at one stage, I was pulling 38mph to keep station – then the glider hit a hole in the air and the side wires gave a great bang as they snapped taut, scary. Then I was put into an involuntary 360 and had to go round with it – good job I was high.



Finally, after battling for around  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour, I found enough sink to get down to 250ft above Tailbridge top and went in to land. Hands very firmly gripping the base bar, the wind was now very strong and turbulence kept trying to turn me downwind. Avoiding that potential disaster, I was down to 50 to 100 ft and, bang, lifted up beyond my powers of control, seemed like 100 ft but probably was less. The guys on the hill were running all over, from left to right, to be in a good position to catch me, bless them.

Eventually, after what seemed an age of frantic penetration, I achieved hill top level and landed not that badly (thanks to the boundary layer) with only a bit of a plonk down. Many hands grabbed the glider wires and carried the glider for the longish walk back. Thank goodness for stability and good handling of my Wills Wing U2.

Phew! Derigged and went to a nice café in Kirkby Stephen for lunch, followed by a great evening get together and meal at the Aysgarth Hotel, organised by food hero of the day, Jon Sacre, and flexi BOS martyr, Kev Gay.

# NOTICES

## Dales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club Annual General Meeting

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December at the Horse and Farrier, Otley. LS21 1BQ.

7.30pm for 8.00pm start

### AGENDA

#### 1. Actions from previous AGM

#### 2. Reports

Reports from committee members will be published in the December edition of Skywords. Members will be able to raise any questions regarding these at the AGM.

#### 3. Accounts

The Treasurer's Report for 2018/19 is available on the [club website](#). Included in the report is the budget for 2019/20, upon which subscriptions will be calculated.

#### 4. Appointment of Auditors

#### 5. Proposals

- i) That membership fees remain the same (£25/£22.50 for prompt payment)
- ii) Contributions to the Flying Fund remains at 15% of subscription income (approx £3.75 per member - £600 in total)
- iii) Corrections for clarity in the Club Constitution (See attached)

#### 6. Committee

All committee posts are up for re-election. You are welcome to stand for any post. All you need is a little spare time and a willingness to put something back into the club. We currently have no volunteer for the vacant post of Trophies Officer, which could suit even a relatively inexperienced member. If you want to stand for this, or any other post, please do so.

#### 7. AOB

(not for voting on)

### DHPC AGM Proposal 2019 – 5(iii)– Changes to Club Constitution Wording

At the 2018 AGM, the Committee were asked to incorporate changes to the Constitution to allow electronic voting. This has been done. During the work preparing for the change a number of anomalies in the Constitution were discovered. This proposal is to amend these anomalies as listed below.

Current Wording	Proposed Change	Justification
<p><b>4. General Meetings</b>            4a. An Annual General Meeting shall be held in or about the month of December each year. At least 14 days' notice of the meeting will be given to Members. The agenda shall include: ...</p> <p>...Revision of <b>Club Rules</b></p>	<p>...Revision of <b>Constitution</b></p>	<p>Section 1d of the Constitution establishes that the Committee can alter the Club Rules/Code of Conduct. Revision of the Constitution requires an AGM or EGM</p>
<p><b>3. Executive Committee</b>            3e. The committee has the power to legislate on any point not provided for in the <b>Club Rules</b></p>	<p>3e. The committee has the power to legislate on any point not provided for in the <b>Club Constitution</b></p>	<p>Make consistent with above</p>
<p><b>5. Voting at General Meetings</b>            In the event of a tied vote, the Chairman or Acting Chairman shall have the casting vote.</p>	<p>The Chairman or Acting Chairman shall have the casting vote at General Meetings. <b>The casting vote shall be in addition to their normal vote, in order to break a deadlock.</b></p>	<p>Clarity</p>
<p><b>3. Executive Committee</b>            3c. The Chairman or Acting Chairman has the casting vote at Committee Meetings.</p>	<p>The Chairman or Acting Chairman shall have the casting vote at Committee Meetings. <b>The casting vote shall be in addition to their normal vote, in order to break a deadlock.</b></p>	<p>Clarity and consistency with above</p>

**No other proposals from members where received**

**Club Sec  
2 Nov 2019**