

SKYWORDS

October 2021

Chairman's Chat

Last week your committee held it's first face to face meeting since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The main objectives were to establish our financial position, agree what we want to spend money on next year, and to set subscription fees accordingly. You'll be pleased to hear that, despite spending around £2K on a remote weather station, we're still in a pretty good position – details to follow in the Treasurer's Report prior to the AGM in December. Working on the principle that *'if it aint broke, don't try to fix it'*; the committee proposal will be that subscriptions remain unchanged. Those of you that roll their eyes at mention of the Flying Fund don't need to read the next paragraph.

The [Flying Fund](#) was set up in 2005. Money is now held in a separate savings account and can only be spent if agreed by the membership at an AGM or EGM. The original idea was that the money could be used towards the cost of purchase if any of our sites came under threat, but we have since widened its potential use to include 'unforeseen eventualities'. At every AGM we agree how much we want to contribute to this Flying Fund in the following year, and for the last few years it has been 15% (about £3.75 per member, or about £600 in total per year). I'm not going to report its current value here because Skywords is a public document, but I'm happy to discuss it on the forum or by email. Or you can just wait for the Treasurer's Report.

On the subject of threats to our sport, I recently received notification that Leeds Bradford Airport is about to launch another Airspace Change Proposal. We await further details, but I have again teamed up with the Regional Soaring Airspace Group, with whom we successfully defeated the last ACP. I'll put any updates on the [forum](#).

We also discovered recently that a lot of the land at [Dodd Fell](#) has been sold to the [Woodland Trust](#). We're still trying to confirm exactly which bit they now own, but it looks as though the take-off isn't affected. Quite how soon they will start planting trees, and how our relationship with them will develop, remains to be seen.

This month a landowner contacted me to complain about 2 wings flying low over his property in Burnsall. I was relieved to establish that they were paramotors, and was able to reassure him that they were unlikely to be club members. I was also able to inform him about the relevant airlaw (the 500' rule), and I think that we have established a good relationship. Videos of several recent low flying paramotor forays into the Dales have been published on Youtube, the landowner has used those to track down the culprits, and warn them that future infringements will be reported to the CAA. You may be able to guess which ex-member is implicated.

Fly safely,

Martin Baxter
Chairman

Club Social Calendar

Next Social – 7th October

Hike and Fly has blossomed in the UK this year with at least three new events, including our home grown X-Dales (see later)...

As part of the completion of his XC trainer programme in Greece, Amilios Apostolopoulos wrote ***The Beginner's Guide to Hike and Fly***, available now for around £20 on line.

Greg Hamerton ("Fly with Greg" and ex-FlyBubble) said 'It really delivers for all levels of pilot'.

Amilios will be presenting an hours outline of his knowledge to us from Greece on Thursday 7th of October at 7:30 pm at The Horse and Farrier with a 20 minute QnA after a short break.

If you're not able to come, we will be on zoom for the presentation.

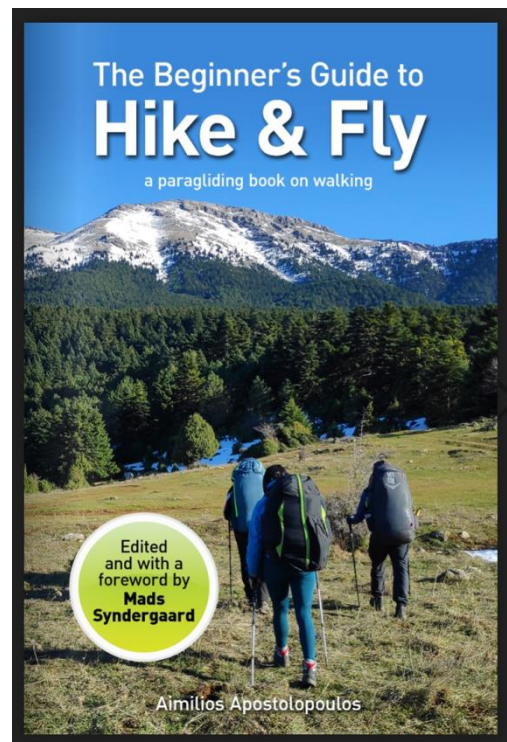
But as a spur to attend in person we'll be throwing in a book to a lucky winner picked at random from those who come along.

Amilios is a lovely guy and has plenty of superb tips and expert knowledge, so it should be plenty of fun.

Come early to guarantee a seat.

And don't forget we have our own Richard Meek telling of his huge Lanark fly on Nov 4th.

Stef Sykes
Social Sec.



Lessons learned...

From the Safety forum [here](#).

Knots in Lines

On Saturday I took off with a knot in my rear lines. I was lucky to be able to clear it using the stabilo line. I'd done exactly the same thing at Wether Fell about a year ago and had to land at the bottom to sort it out.

Lightening shouldn't strike twice in the same place, and you'd think I'd learned my lesson, but obviously not. This is partly a 'note to self' but I hope it helps you too...

In a word: complacency...

I've developed the bad habit of not checking my lines in too much detail before clipping in. I leave my harness attached all the time and, a quick check that one set of A lines goes to the top of the wing can be enough to indicate that everything is the right way around, IF you can build a large enough wall to check that everything is clear.

On both occasions it has been quite breezy and I haven't built a wall big enough to check the rear lines. (You can see the holes in the slices of cheese, or links in the chain, if you prefer, starting to conspire against me).

I was being quite gentle with my pull-up on Saturday, and noticed that the wing was being very sluggish coming up - **clue number 1**.

When I did get it above my head I turned round too quickly, I had to move a significant distance to the side (perhaps subconsciously) and counter with brake - **clue number 2**.

I still took off - doh!

In future I have promised myself:

- I will check my lines more thoroughly before clipping in, **especially if it's breezy**,
- I will build the biggest wall I can, and check all my lines are clear,
- I will control my wing before turning round,
- If something doesn't feel right, I'll put the wing back down and investigate.

I've always found it difficult to check my lines during a forward launch, relying more upon a good layout and 'feel' (one reason I don't like forward launches).

I guess that the less time you have during launch (light or strong wind) the more important a good check/layout is... Ignore both at your peril!

Martin Baxter

(Editor's Note: Published & named with permission. If other's have learning points they wish to share, then feel free to post them to the newsletter email, happy to publish anonymously if you would prefer, or please contribute them to the [Safety Section](#) of the forum)

X-Dales 2021

A view from the organiser - Ed Cleasby

There's something rather special about hike and fly... According to the latest XCmag (and even Skywings) it's the fastest growing element of paragliding competition. It certainly has the ability to grab wider public attention, plus the extra elements it brings for pilots in terms of strategy, decision making, route planning, mental resilience, not to mention the physicality involved...

God! I wish I was younger!

Following the success of the Dragon, Eyri, X-Lakes (my personal best adventure day this year) and X-Scotia it seemed, just maybe, an X-Dales was possible ... even if organised rather late. A series of chats, with various people ... some false starts, disappointments, frustration and then a spirit of 'just do it' took over. And so it was put together, aimed to coincide with the DHPC social weekend organised by Tam and Stef., and best of all it worked!

Everything worked that weekend. ***OK, perhaps not quite the weather you'd have wished for***, but good enough for open air beer drinking around an open fire, some free flying, wall building - and hike/flying 50K around the hills, what more could you wish for...

Having responsibility for the hike and flying part these are my views and my take on how things went. More loose thoughts than a coherent analysis...

People think I work hard to make things happen – I don't. Basically, I'm lazy at heart. My philosophy is not to reinvent the wheel, more to just find convenient carriages to stick them on.

Hence, I piggy-backed XCmap which I've been involved with and had great support from by Chris Foster over recent years. It makes setting up a task, sharing and scoring it easy. From my side it removes a lot of the faff, leaving me free to just do the other paperwork. My own website is another convenient way of gathering and getting it out there.

We ran the X-Dales'21 on a shoestring – the biggest cost being a mega round of drinks at the end – the competitors deserved it and salivated over that end of day pint like, Ice Cold in Alex. The pleasure was all mine folks. Above all it was a trial event. What would be the level of interest? What problems would it throw up? Would I be hated with a vengeance until memories of pushing the pain barriers faded? Are the Dales even suitable for H&F?

Ten things I learned about the event, the pilots and myself.

1. Whilst we didn't fill the field (max would have been 25) we did surprisingly well from just within the Club. I think 18 pilots signed up in total. Given better and earlier publicity I don't believe there would be any problems getting a full comp and drawing in pilots from further afield.
2. I think this particular course was a good one. It's less easy to plan a Dales route than a Lakes one due to the topography and ownerships. The size of the route at 50k 'ish was about right. Half the field made it into goal which both surprised and impressed me. I think the idea of a 2hr start window worked. 8pm though, is too late a finish time in September, the nights start closing in quickly after August. 7pm would have been better and safer.
3. Logging a hike and fly is tricky. Getting the start to log correctly and then ensuring a full tracklog produced some 'odd' tracklogs that only creative tweaking of the start cylinders managed to overcome. We also came across various file formats that

xcmapp couldn't deal with. Because we usually just switch on and fly, it seems some instruments don't start logging until they recognise either speed or height change parameters are met. Pilots would be advised to do a few pre comp test runs to ensure their logging system works. Not a big problem, but increasing the logging interval for a H&F task means a quick tag of a cylinder can be unforgiving so a check needs to be made. A back up is also very worthwhile if things go belly up. Good tracking can provide that ...but can't be relied on.

4. Tracking worked well initially – then half way through it became erratic. Fortunately, regular pins dropped and location messages helped keep tabs on everyone and provide support at the right places and times. L24 is now poorly maintained and less reliable than it was and there may be a case for dedicated trackers (borrowed) ... although the X Lakes ones threw up a few glitches too.
5. For any bigger future event then a small team would be useful. As it was there was great support from Tony and Zena, Carl, Liam, Tom and wife and the odd other bods that showed up at various points.
6. It would be nice to get a small degree of sponsorship ... it doesn't require much, but it really helps. Some has already been forthcoming for next time. Pre-publicity also helps to generate interest. I believe that you raise any future comp on the back of the previous. We now have the basis now to do that...
7. Unlike a conventional paragliding task, landing out short doesn't bring a disappointing end to the day. The task continues, you continue it's just part and parcel of pushing on, trying harder, rethinking your strategy.
8. We finished within 50yds of a good pub and had a room all to ourselves. It wasn't planned, merely great fortune...
9. Hike n Fly pilots don't whinge! It's less about competition than the individual challenge being taken on. Wherever you finish you know you've done a full stint, given it your all, discovered things about yourself, and enjoyed unrivalled camaraderie. It's about having an adventure and the (hopefully) retrospective pleasure that can bring.
10. For me, who just sat, drove, photographed and watched over things the great pleasure was seeing pilots safely home at the end of a long day and the joy, relief, elation on their faces and in their voices. I also get a real buzz from reading their accounts. It makes it all worthwhile.

Like I said earlier – it works... One small snapshot...

Scouting ahead I arrived at Brantside. At this stage the sky looked good and the wind was on – it was soarable. Tom and I watched as Mike arrived, laid out and took off. We filmed. He was well ahead with a good margin over Rod – maybe 30 minutes behind. Mike climbed, pushed out, then headed back low. whatever he spotted didn't work ... he landed out of sight and low. 15 minutes later he arrived back on take-off. Things had changed markedly. The wind had died the good clouds were now off to the north a light breeze started along the hill. He knew one small error and his chance had faded of a climb and fly down the valley. Not like him.

then...

A glider appeared high to the north and approaching, occasionally gently turning. Ziggy had jumped the field with a great piece of flying from Wild Boar, those on foot could only watch in envy. Mike was now gripped by a cool urgency ... the game had changed. Ziggy almost made the cylinder but was now also down side by side with Mike. The conditions made it difficult to get off ... Mike tried several times unsuccessfully. Ziggy nailed it first time. With Ziggy heading out into Dentdale, Mike got it together and set off after him on a glide. For a short period he was second.

Ziggy landed – Mike made it three fields further. Both packed fast! From that point on it was a foot-race down the valley to a soarable Barkin...

and that's what makes hike and fly exciting...

Ed Cleasby

The Scores on the Doors...

The first three positions were:

1. Mike Cavanagh	Ozone Zeolite	9hr – 03	1000pts
2. Zibigiew Latka	Ozone Alpina 3	9hr - 57mins	812pts
3. Rod Welford	777 Queen Light	10hr – 24 mins	708pts

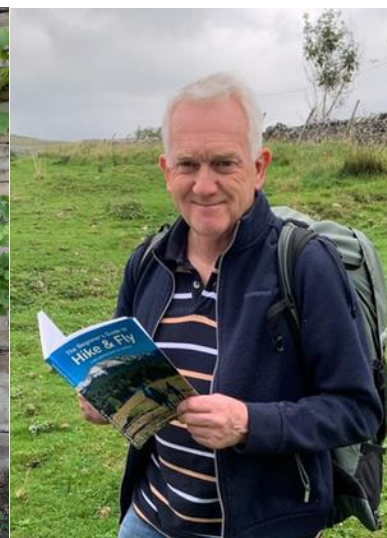
And for a gallant, first attempt at hike and fly, a copy of 'Hike and Fly for Beginners' was presented to Ged McCann (Prion 4).



Mike



Zibigiew (Ziggy)



Ged

The 50k circular course, starting and ending in Sedbergh, covered the Howgills and Western Dales. Turnpoints were based around the highest and most dramatic flying sites in the area.

For maximum flexibility competitors were free to choose one of the three days for their attempt and a maximum window of 12 hrs to complete.

In total 8 pilots made goal with the rest being seduced by either pub, café or exhaustion.



Photos: Ed Cleasby, more available at : <https://aeros.smugmug.com/Flying2021/X-Dales21/>

X-Dales - Competitors Views

Joseph (herbaceous)

Let me first say - I never thought I would do a hike and fly competition. The idea was preposterous to me, however this year I decided to give it a go - and I've certainly no regrets!

We had 3 possible days to choose from and the only real possibility was Sunday so that was the day we all did it ! ... First up was a nice walk out of Sedbergh, up the side of Winder and into the Howgills. The views were lovely but the air was very still. At least it wasn't raining!

The first flight was a glide down from Caughtley crags and towards the foot of Wild Boar Fell. I opted to hang back, see how everyone else did and catch my breath after trying to keep up with people much fitter than I am. The site of multiple wings flying down across the valley was lovely to behold. Unfortunately everyone went straight down and there was no particular route that seemed the best.

I took off and opted to land as close to the road as possible to give me an easy hike up to the foot of Wild Boar. Ed, Tony and Zena were waiting by the side of the road and offering water etc. I preferred to keep moving in fear that if I stopped I may never start again.

The hike up Wild Boar Fell was long, really long and took quite a while. I nearly caught up with Chris and Kev for a brief moment but quite soon lost them as I decided to have a breather and take on some calories.

Once on the top of Wild Boar, it was clear that the real contenders had all made it onto Swarth Fell and I even saw some take off and get above takeoff. I had to snag the next turnpoint which is the top of Wild Boar and actually required walking away from Swarth. The rules allow for the dumping of packs to snag turnpoints, however I saw Chris and Kev take off from the summit of Wild Boar and get a little bit of lift.

They didn't really manage to get far, but by this point I was pretty fed up with walking and welcomed the prospect of a little bit of "fly" even if it was probably slower than simply hiking to Swarth. On the takeoff, the wind was very light and off but it was doable. I discovered that I had drunk all my water but thankfully I had brought a special water filter bottle with me and filled it up from a very brown pool on the summit. Not the kind of water you would normally consider drinking but I put my faith into science and eagerly sucked through the fancy filtering straw. This saved me from certain misery and I'm very glad I had it.

I took off, gained no height at all and enjoyed a bumpy glide in the lee of Wild Boar and as high as I could manage onto the foot of Swarth. Packing up and hiking up to Swarth I could feel that I was now pretty tired but I was still having fun. I must admit that it was a bit nicer to be on your own than to feel like you were trying to catch up with people much faster than you.

On Swarth takeoff, the wind was starting to come through over the back, though there were occasional breaths of air in the right direction. I got set up as quickly as I could and was joined in that time by Ziggy. I managed to get away, found a few lifty bits on my glide but decided against trying to milk them for fear of bombing out and losing the opportunity to glide down the side of Swarth and save a few KMs of hiking. What a terrible mistake!. As I packed away in a quiet secluded valley I saw Ziggy high above me and slowly circling in what must have been a very weak but consistent climb. I wish I had given it a go!

From here I hiked towards Garsdale station. It was actually a lovely walk in an area I've never seen before. There was a very nice barn conversion that I'm sure cost a lot of money though I'm sure the kind of person who buys that kind of house does not really want random sweaty paragliders tramping through so I didn't spend too much time looking around.

At Garsdale station I had left a trailer with supplies so that I could refuel for the final section of the trip. I was greeted by Tony who was waiting with Zena as they had seen me land. Once I managed to drink some orange juice and get my brain working again, I weighed up

my options. I was 7.5 hours in on a 12 hour time limit. Rosie reported wind blowing over the back of Brantside which implied that the next leg would basically be an extended walk over Brantside, through Dent and up Barkin in the far distance. Or I could call it a day and accept a lift generously offered by Tony and Zena. I was also aware that I needed to safely drive myself and trailer home - around 3 hours of driving including picking up trailer and stashes.

I'm happy to say good sense prevailed and I took the lift. I drove my car back from Sedbergh and up to Brantside to retrieve some bottles of water I had stashed there. There was a fresh wind blowing over the back - way more than even Chrigel could launch in I'd imagine.

Massive respect to the people that completed it - certainly something to be proud of

Lessons I learned:

- Water - I should have accepted a top up of fresh water from Ed at the foot of Wild Boar, though my filter bottle did save the day here,
- Food - I carried way too much which added excess weight and made my day harder,
- Flying - I should have taken the chance with the tiny bubbles of lift and maybe I might have flown to Brantside,
- Fitness - doing the full challenge required an athletic level of fitness,
- Fun - doing it without really expecting to complete it was totally worth it and allowed me to have a good time but not kill myself.

It was really good fun, introduced me to flying a whole new area and also got me thinking about flying sites in a completely different way. I intend to continue hike and fly as a past time and I think that over winter it could be a nice way to play in the dales. I'm confident even on purely ridge soaring days there is some fun to be had.

Maybe next year I'll be fitter and a better pilot and might actually finish it...

Some others...

[Summarised from the forum, read the full accounts [here](#)]

From Rosie D:

...suffice to say was a fantastic day and I may not have stopped talking about it for several days.

I'd not had the easiest week at work and my preparation consisted of a brief look at the map with Pete on Friday night and removing any overly heavy things (such as a saw) from my flight bag. Arriving at 7ish at Settle and seeing people preparing food and stashes and spare clothes only highlighted my lack of prep! At least there was no stress about the day choice and several others were planning to start at 8am too. Essentially my plan was to walk up and fly down until I was too tired. I thought the chances of completing it were remote. I was hoping (perhaps unrealistically) that we would be able to fly off all the hills, but wasn't expecting any proper XC

...Forward launched and so good to be in the air. I almost whooped. This was it. I was doing it. Proper hike and fly! I headed along the side of the valley until the last minute before crossing to the shoulder opposite...

... sitting in the back of the Red Lion, still couldn't really believe I had done it, amazing feeling and had a buzz for days. Can't wait for the next one. Might prep more this time!

From Tim R:

Didn't think the the word "enjoyable" would be what I would be using to describe a 45km yomp around the Howgills and Western Dales but - what an enjoyable day it was!

...

... I think Ed's inaugural X-Dales event was a great success. The entry list, though modest in size, showed a great mix of entrants - from skygods and H&F superstars through to first timers. Some creative twists like having to pick your day and start time gave a unique flavour to the event. In my head it was a "challenge" rather than a "competition" and I personally thought the low-key vibe on the day was great. Sure, there was a competitive element but from where I was in the middle of the pack the spontaneous camaraderie - the *esprit de corps* as Pete said - was a real pleasure

Highlights of the day for me:

- The mass fly-down from the top of Cautley Craggs, and ending my first glide by channelling my inner Chrigel and landing on the road near Rawthey Bridge near Pete
- Coming across Ed, Tony, Zena, Liam, and others at various points during the day offering water and encouragement - very much appreciated! Also a big thanks to Joseph for positioning his Tuck Trailer at Garsdale Station - perfectly placed!
- Watching Ziggy's brilliant flight from Wild Boar to Brant Side (couldn't identify who it was at the time but whoever it was he'd obviously zoomed into contention with that flight)
- Buddying up with Pete and Chris for a large chunk of the day, which made the long hike sections a lot easier - especially when we'd walked up to Brant Side from Garsdale station to find it wasn't flyable and we'd have to walk down to Cow Dub and all the way down Dentdale
- After getting a march on down Dentdale, realising that Barkin was going to be flyable and if we didn't hang about we were still in with a chance of getting into goal before the cut-off time



Photo: Ed Cleasby

DHPC Social Weekend

The first Dales Social “Week-end” took place on Wednesday 8th to Monday 13th September, as a relatively low key “suck-it-and-see” event to test out members’ appetites for such an event and our abilities to organise one. The organisation was helped enormously by the generosity of members, who arrived with equipment for all to use, industrial bags of firewood etc. and a considerable ambition to relax and have a good time.

The forecast wasn’t promising. After a blistering Monday the week was to be cold, with plenty of rain and low cloud spread over the later part of the week. A few members had said they would definitely turn up, though plenty were not coming due to suddenly booking foreign trips, prior commitments etc. I was thinking ... “This could end up a being bit of a mess!”

As it was, the weather was kinder than forecast, and flying activities started on the Thursday with landings in the camping field to the strains of Beethovens 9th coming from Zena’s melodeon, followed by beers served up whilst we were still packing up – a stylish start!



Chris Foster landing at the campsite
Photo: Zena Pickering



Beers in the landing field
Photo: Zena Pickering

After that, the event built its own momentum through the week, culminating with around 30 people around the camp fire at the Saturday night communal BBQ, the number being swelled by several of the Hike and Fly athletes, and members who live pretty locally to Langcliffe, turning up for a social drink.

Some attendees had come from considerably further away – Bristol in the case of Rosie and Ben Ireland, making a detour on their way to flying in Glencoe. During the day, we had visits from prospective members who had heard a bit about the event, and from members not

seen for a while. It was great to see old friends, and to get the club together in a great location – convenient for the Dales and with plenty of facilities available in nearby Settle.

There was a lovely relaxed vibe about the place - possibly helped by a few beers, and the tunes being selected by Liam (Toot)...

Events had kicked off with some impromptu ground handling races on the Wednesday afternoon as we set up camp, with Adam “comfortably winning”. Apparently.



Adam wins the ground handling race

Photo: Tony Pickering

During the following days, between us we clocked up flights on all the days except Saturday. Pete Logan would probably also count Saturday as a flying day, after all he had a 5 second flight from a 3m “shelf” in the field – including a new trademark somersault in the harness before landing! Thursday and Friday saw landings in the field by 5 or 6 pilots, which gathered quite an audience of other campers and walkers on the adjacent road.



Pete, practicing for the Baildon Sod...?
Picture: Carl Maughan

Kev approaches the camping field
Picture: Tony Pickering

On Friday, 6 of us had Tailbridge to ourselves, with a steady, occasionally strong-ish breeze on the hill, but very pleasant boating about. ***Most got an hour or more in the air***, and Zena

got her first flight in a couple of years – good to see. The day was rounded off with Pete Logan and Chris Foster landing at Dalefoot.



Tailbridge, Photo: Pete Logan

As the fitter members headed off to the H&F on Sunday, the forecast for the rest of us was examined roughly every minute, and long discussions were had on where to go. Eventually, a small party headed to Whernside, with others going further North to Model ridge. The Whernside contingent had a lengthy wait before the wind picked up and came round to the forecast ENE. Conditions however were not epic, and after a bit of ridge soaring, the accuracy landing comp was lost by Tam, who unsuccessfully tried to change the rules part way down and landed at least field away from the windsock. The forfeit? Beers at the Station Inn, naturally.

Non Flying Activity

On Saturday, strong winds meant no flying. With some brave enough to attempt trying some ground handling, the dangers of flying the lee of trees was amply demonstrated – if you could get the wing up, it would immediately spin and collapse. We had 3 windsocks down the middle of the field, which were frequently all pointing in different directions. With the day being a non-flying day a number of us had a walk up the river Ribble as far as Stainforth, and a visit to Chris Maudsley's Knight Stainforth Restaurant.

We haven't seen much of Chris this year, due to pressures of running the business, so it was good to catch up. With the weather closing in and rain imminent, the shortest option was chosen for the return journey, taking in the impressive Hoffmann Lime Kiln, and Langcliffe Village, which many had not seen before.



Hoffmann Lime Kiln, Photo: Carl Maughan
Read more about: <https://www.visitsettle.co.uk/craven-lime-works.html>



Langcliffe Village, Photo: Pete Logan



Stainforth, Photos: Pete Logan

Alternatively on Saturday, you could have helped with some dry-stone walling! Chris K, Ed and Kev rebuilt a wall above Langcliffe for a farmer they had met on the Friday.

The farmer initially accused them of having knocked it down. He soon realised this wasn't the case, and was very grateful with the offer of a free repair, an offer that generates enormous good-will for the club. It's amazing what skills we have in the club, well done guys...



Wall repair, Photos: Ed Cleasby



Some walked up to the nearby Victoria Cave, although visibility could have been better! Photo: Carl M.

Also discovered nearby to the campsite was **a trusty Yorkshire weather station**, what a pity we can't get a feed from this as well as the Shack in't Dales!

Evenings

The fire pit was lit each evening, becoming the focal point on the camp site (**many thanks to everyone who brought wood** – particularly Simon Byrne for his HUGE bag of off cuts!).

Numbers grew each night and many of the world's problems were solved, flying knowledge shared and the parabolox universe considerably extended. The communal BBQ on the Saturday night saw many groups of happy members and friends around the fire and a great atmosphere as everyone looked forward to the Hike and Fly. Long after my bed time there was even some time for extreme dad dancing as a prelude to the new Strictly season.

In short, a fantastic opening event, which will be repeated and built upon next year – suggestions would be greatly appreciated if anyone has ideas for activities we could include.

Thanks to all who helped make the event – in particular to Adam, who provided so much equipment (marquee, fire pit, BBQ) – it is unlikely that we would have had such a success without his contribution.

Top marks also to Tony and Zena, who were the first to arrive on the Wednesday, and last to leave on the Monday.

Roll on next year!

Tam

(Editor's Note: On a personal note, I'm sure shared by all those who attended, many thanks to all the organisers and participants for an excellent weekend).



Photo: Joseph Edmonds

Some days all your ducks line up – 20 Sept '21

A classic September afternoon, conditions better than forecast... good clouds despite RASP predicting much blueness, ground sources working on the occasion the clouds did not, birds, sailplanes, and a healthy dose of divine intervention over the moors.

A few had the day down as soaring only, but I had hopes of getting as far as Harrogate provided we could creep across the moors in the blue. It was thus pleasing to see the odd cumulus already popping on the drive up Langstrothdale and, as we crested, 3 gliders maintaining well above ridge height.

Within half an hour it was a spectacular sight with at least 15 or so gliders pushing out front under the blue autumn sky...

This year seems to have been one of leaving the hill with a ridiculously low base; and getting away with it on a number of occasions. Thus, when Jake radioed to flop over the back into Raydale with less than 1100m I was game. ***Crossing to the Whernsides in the blue was a case of jumping from one into wind ridge to the next with much mincing in between.*** Funnily enough, the Cus did seem to be following us, but at least one ridge back each time!

At Little Whernside, Jake started pushing upwind for one of the now promising looking clouds that had stationed itself over its Great sibling, however, despite buoyant air, the brisk wind meant we had to cut and run into Nidderdale. The following move was the next defining moment of the day for me. As we got drilled heading for Rigg's moor to the south of Angram, my poor line choice meant I only really had two options - Head crosswind along the southern slopes of Angram, OR roll the dice and head over the middle of the moor with little altitude. Jake (with more altitude) chose the former, I gambled on the latter, potentially committing to a long walkout. Bang in the middle of the high ground, the wing started twitching and it was game on; a very lucky and sweaty save at about 150m AGL. Unfortunately, Jake was too far away which meant no more follow-the-leader for me.

Over Nidderdale there was a step change in cloud base, as predicted, and lots of nice shallow clouds to aim for. It then became of a game of choosing the best-looking option with the most downwind potential, hopping around a fair bit to avoid the large blue holes that kept on appearing. Choosing to skirt around the great looking clouds over Harrogate due to the large amount of shade on the ground, I headed east and when the next cloud dissipated on approach, it was back to ground sources. I was behind the shade line so pushed on to catch it at the A1(m) where the Allerton recycling plant seemed an obvious and ultimately successful choice.

Having not been low for a while, what struck me (other than the smell!), was how weak the climbs were below 1000m; it felt like an age to climb out again.

From there I jumped south attempting to connect with the great looking cloud line that headed east and appeared to offer kilometers measureless to man! However, with so many



parts to the clouds in the street I struggled to find the working bit for a long while, drifting or mincing in weak stuff for an age. Eventually, as I approached Rufforth, the sailplanes and some buzzards provided the insight I needed and the certainty of getting to York.

But the cloud street went on ... At this point, having been on my own from Little Whernside, I spied two gliders a few climbs back and excitedly blabbered into the radio. No response? I tried again just past York and eventually, after remembering I had turned my volume down when concentrating a few hours earlier, managed to speak to Chris F. and Martin B.

Past York they were only one climb behind, but the day and cloud street were dying and so approaching 5pm I headed for the village of Wheldrake which was in the sun and had an obvious footy pitch landing option.

I circled in zeros over the houses at 250m AGL watching Chris and Martin come towards me and realised that ***this bubble might just release if I had enough patience and could stay in it.***

Much more mincing later, predominantly to the right today for some unknown reason, and I started to climb out, eventually reaching 1000m at gone 5:30pm with the help of another buzzard, whilst watching three balloons come out of York. It was a brilliant evening and it seemed rude not to go on glide to Pocklington for the tonne.

Having ample height to scout the area before landing, I opted for the huge bowling green airfield, with no wind, easy access to a hitchable road, and a bunch of friendly and inquisitive pilots. However, once again none of them offered to give me a lift anywhere. A short wait for a hitch to York, a run to the train station, and I was back home at 8:30pm. The car can wait for tomorrow; now I needed some food and a beer. A slow but great day!



Pete Darwood

Windbank - 25th September

I reached cloudbase pretty early in the day, over the high moors near Grimwith Reservoir. I put my headlights and windscreen wipers on and continued towards Windbank. On arrival there was no wind in the landing field and, although there was cloud on the tops of Great Whernside and Pen-y-ghent for most of the day, Windbank was clear. On take-off the wind was a little off to the West but quite strong. Shed went first and slope landed.

Shaun followed me to Hawkswick but it was drizzling there, so we came back. Just managed a top landing and rewarded myself with a sandwich.

Graham McAnany was high over Hawkswick. More pilots arrived and soon the sky was full of wings. I counted 14 at one stage. Still overcast with a fairly low base (2,300') I set off on Ed's DFC task, the '[Arncliffe Amble](#)'. Actually pretty challenging given the conditions and it took me just over 2 hours to complete. Landed within a metre of Simon's spot landing marker and rewarded myself with another sandwich.

Took off again with the plan of doing a 'Richard (not so) Meek', and racing around the course in the improving conditions (the sun even came out for a brief spell), but TP 2 was still challenging and I only did it 10 mins quicker than the previous attempt.

Great to spend some time in the air with Pete & Rosie. Towards the end of the day the wind went a bit SSW and Ziggy followed me in to land at the bottom. Rosie and Pete decided to have a dip in the river. I had a flask of tea!

A day that gave far more than it promised. Just as well; the weather looks to be turning distinctly autumnal.

Dropped off our dues to the Dibbs on my way home. Our £12 together with what somebody had left on the window sill came to about £21, although there may be more stashed away somewhere. If you do fly at Windbank please don't forget to pay.

Martin Baxter



Photo: Pete Darwood

Semer to Mungrisdale

31st May 2021

They had a year of pandemic to get the rail tracks right but I'm still on a bus, freezing my nuts off because the air conditioning is turned up to eleven like they're trying to show us the value for money we're getting!

On second thoughts maybe I shouldn't be grumbling, since I just had a second flight from the Dales to the Lakes. That's something I've been hankering after doing ever since I've been flying XC, which is getting to be quite a while. And now two Dales-Lakes flights come in as many months..... just like buses. Aye, thank you.

It all started lazily enough with Tam, Joe and me meeting at Ribbleshead and deciding to leave the two gliders flying Whernside for the much more civil walk up Semer. On reflection Whernside was the better hill for the day despite strengthening wind. Someone on a Phi was getting plenty high for 10:30am.

Semer was busy. Certainly thirty, possibly forty gathering there through the morning. A few faces I hadn't seen for a while. I took my time kiting just to get a feel and check my lines when I found Martin Underdown and Pete D. tackling my legs and man handling me off the hill. I managed to keep the glider up - I think that must be one of the exercises in the ground handling app? (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=de.schmidt_voigt.ground). Well I can now tick that one off!

Properly launched I started the serious business of getting a climb out...

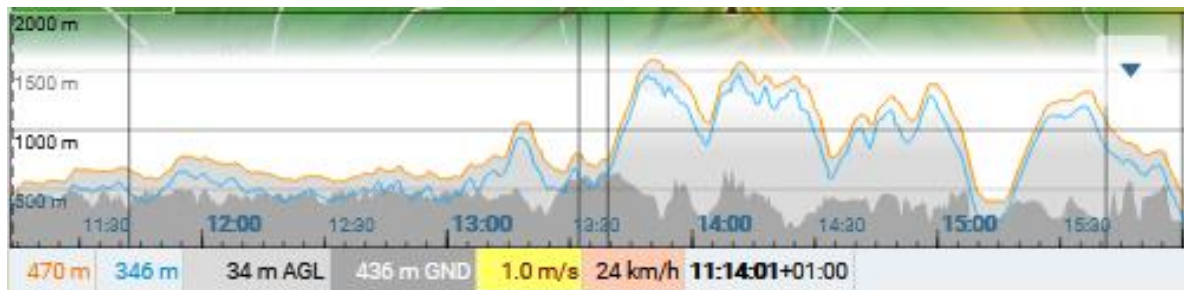
And for that we'd all have to be patient. The wind was off to the east but not irritatingly so. The inversion was capping climbs badly though and getting a grand above the hill was nigh on impossible.

More gliders were being added to the mix from below over the next hour so I concentrated on staying high so as not to contribute to the busy air.



My take off was just after 11am and the climb out, such as it was, was 13:10. Two hours of busy air and weak lumpy climbs! Small wonder some folks top landed for a break. Rich, Charles, Alex, Rob and I, did find ourselves high and far back though at 1ish.

Rich and I at the same height had a quick shout to each other and bailed leaving Charles and a grey Advance to the weak dribble at about 800m amsl. Rich ploughed ahead on bar to pickup a climb John and Rob were working back on the hill. But he ploughed through something I was happy about sticking with. Although it petered out at about 1000m by that time I was committed and I thought that given the inverted airmass Semer was in, it was about as good as it was going to get. I'd have to settle for going XC trawling the valleys.



Charles had dropped back onto Yorborough, obviously admiring the workmanship on the weather mast we put up a few weeks back. The grey Advance I'd lost sight of over Gayle somewhere so I was very much on my own. The tactics were easy at this point...

Crossing the valley to Humesett would have been a poor use of height. Easterly winds low down meant hopping ridges was a possibility. Joining Ten End, North end of Dodd kept the glide okay, not too sinky. Then Great Knoutberry started to come into range.

Tam had remarked about a few people wanted to try it for a flying site. Well, I was being handed the chance to give it a go.

I came in at the north end and found a weak drift but decided to commit myself to the hill proper. **A kite showed me something that I tried to climb back in but it turned out to be nothing special.** It did get me high enough to see a tarn and the SE wind on it.

I thought about diving over the back but decided to get back to the ridge, at least I could top land and relaunch. It was choppy but half bar firmed things up getting back to the front and would you believe it I had some height to play with. The downside was I was behind a plantation which was not going to help the thermals get to me. Working further south in the direction of a big, even slope and cloud tendrils high above, **I saw three gulls cruising out at my height. This was all the confirmation I needed. This was my climb out.**



It barely slowed for the inversion. An easy 2up that took me to some light whispies at base. There was quite a bit of blue to cross but I felt brighter now that I'd reached a better airmass.

A good glide over Garsdale put me on the slopes of Knoutberry Haw but no top up was needed from it and I carried on over heading for the Howgills. The floaty glide continued and with good cloud to guide the way I connected with another strong 2up stopping well before base.

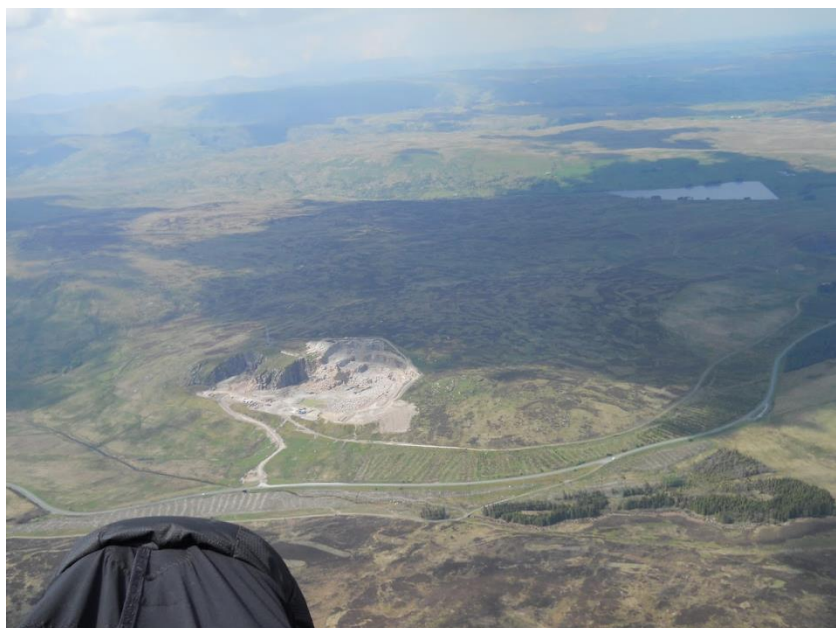
I've had a couple of cloud "issues" in the past and this was heavy stuff I was moving into...



You don't need to be trying to work out which way is forward in the white room when you can be sat with a bit of bar on cruising the lift underneath. I only turned to take photos as I munched kilometers, passed Tebay and then dropped onto the rising ground to the eastern fells.

Drop is the key word there. Heavy cloud can mean lots of lift but count on it too much and you get the flip side.... it shuts out the sun and deprives you of lift.

With obvious signs of sea breeze to my south I spotted one of the Shap granite quarries.





The aerial photo image here is a little offset but shows what I found. The quarry faces south and had been in sun, just clear of the shadow of previous heavy cloud from the Howgills, under which I'd descended. When you're getting low you have to fly the landscape so the job was to find what, if any, thermals were forming.

The quarry was big enough for not all of it to be working so I tried one end first and found nothing. Then to the other end and yes! That was textbook...



That got me back to midway between cloud and ground, where I could pay attention to clouds and the lift they indicate... More importantly, it enabled me to commit further onto the rising ground that headed for the high fells of the Lakes.

A couple of top ups brought me over the dam at Haweswater Reservoir. From here on the cloud was heavy'ish on my track but without the white cotton tops and clear blue between that you'd want for classic XC conditions. The Eden Valley was sunny by now to my east and the cloud better to the west but with signs of sea breeze.



I didn't sense I had many options but to continue downwind so ploughed on. Dale Hause and Arthur's Pike (the back of Barton flying site) provided nothing and I arrived over the Ullswater valley high over the water but in amongst the fells. It was going to be the end of the flight, I felt, but awesome views as I crossed the lake.



As I looked down at the packed beaches and the dinghies I was quite content, having flown for about as long as I'd spent on Semer itself trying to get the climb out. I needed to make a decision about landing.

There was enough height to cross the lake safely but I could also divert to the NE head of Ullswater and land near one of the busy campsites that would virtually guarantee me a lift.

“We fly XC for the views and so I elected for the lake crossing and some safe fields on the far side...”



You can see from the picture I had a few minutes of airtime to play with and the ground was rising ahead up to Little Mell Fell. What the hey?

Let's give it a final shot. It was floaty on this side of the lake and the sun was on the ground. The Cayenne sniffed out some zeroes above a farm near Longthwaite with camping in the back.

I turned as flat as possible, nudging around to see where the next bubble was...

It wasn't great, but catching sight of a raptor heading away toward the steep slopes, I was tempted to follow...

Tucked into the back of this tight little slope I'd possibly found my route out.

Being low down in amongst the hillsides, the rising air was disorganised and giving some good surges along with the bumps and bangs you'd expect.

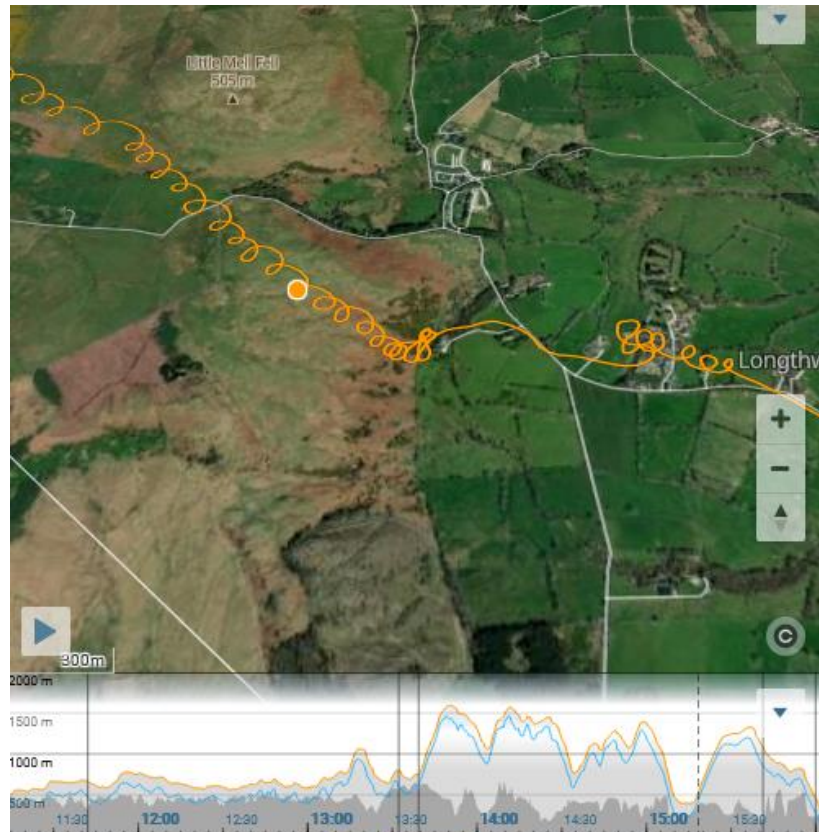
Above fell height it settled down and I had the time to think that I wasn't expecting that outcome at all.

Two low-ish saves in a flight is good fortune.

When the third is the one you have your feet out of the pod for, that's just high drama...

I cross the Keswick - Penrith valley over the sugar loaf of Great Mell Fell. The sea

breeze is in with a giant, broken cloud step visible from Skiddaw to Penrith. It doesn't look inviting in the Skiddaw range so I opt for Souther and the SE facing slopes in front of me.



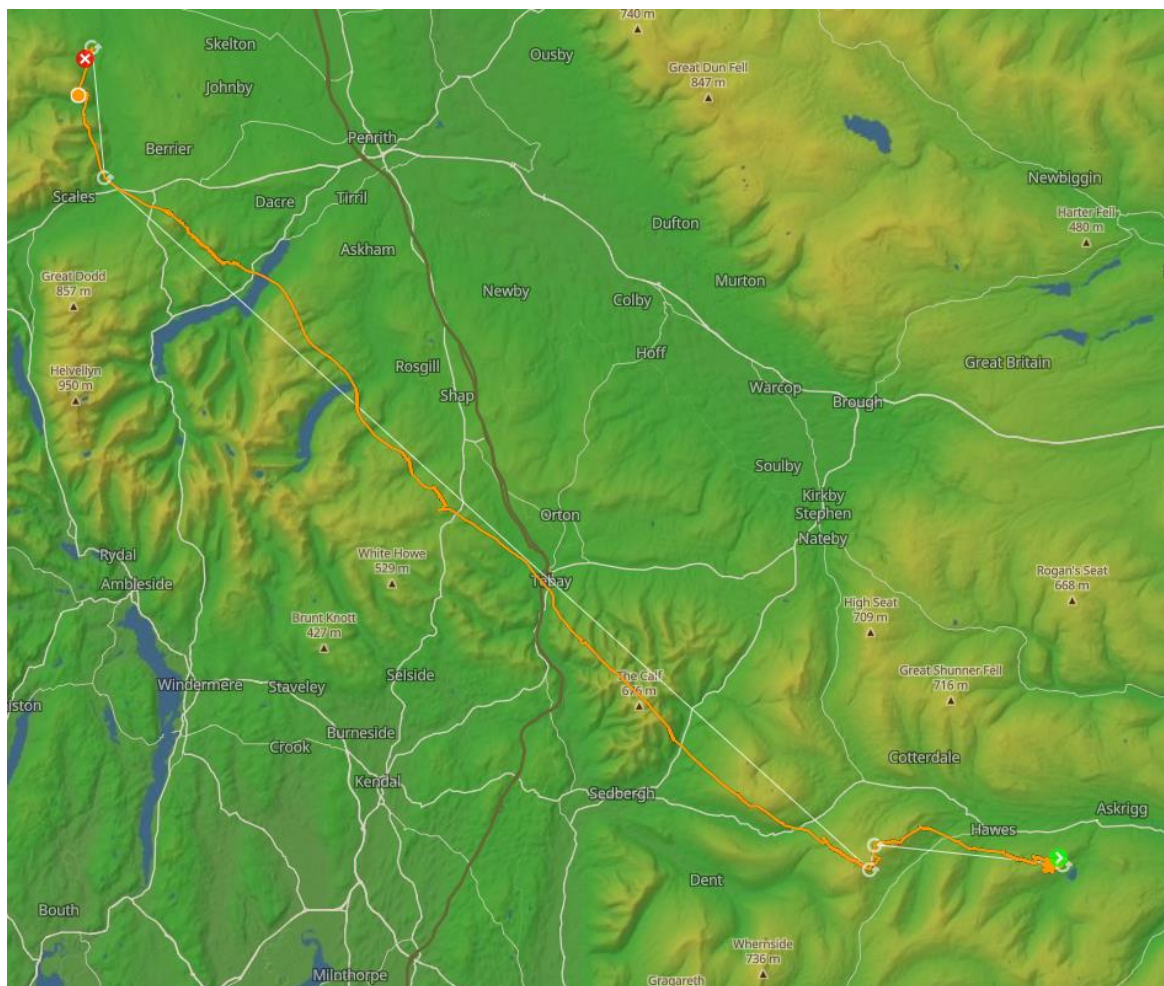
What I expected just doesn't materialise, or I'm missing it?. There was very little off the peaks on the east of Blancathra and I expect I'm in for a Lakeland conditions learning experience. I hoped ridges until I got to Carrock Fell and didn't really find anything worth climbing on there either.

The low ground to the east was in sun though so I decided to use my height to search for any lift over there instead. ***It didn't work but noticing my ground speed, I began to twig what was going on.*** That band of sea breeze convergence was not pushing in from the west, it was coming down from the north! I landed in a light northerly on Mungrisdale Common to the surprise of a few sheep and several sets of folks having a relaxing afternoon.

Keeping an eye on conditions it's worth noting the sea breeze can reverse the wind on this side of the Lakes. I pack up and call to find what's been going on back at the hill. Rich has gotten away from Semer and managed Penrith, not many others decided it was worth flopping over the back.

It turns out I'd landed very near Rosie's parents but it didn't seem wise to beg for a lift with Covid still lurking. Stopping down the road, I was picked up by a fell runner and his daughter in a Fiesta heading back home to Blackpool. He'd seen me from the top of Carrock. Impressively, they were just finishing off doing the Wainwrights... she was nine! and seemed happy enough with an ice cream I bought for us on the way back.

I met Richard in Penrith and elected for a train home which swiftly turned into a bus to Lancaster, and then a train where thankfully the air conditioning was off.



<https://www.xcontest.org/world/en/flights/detail:vikingforties/30.5.2021/10:13>

Pete Logan