

SKYWORDS

September 2021

Chairman's Chat

My wife's a pain in the back...

The latest challenge to my flying currency manifested itself about a month ago. My wife was just leaning forward to put her empty wine glass on a low table when her back went into spasm. She described it as the worst pain that she has ever felt in her life and, to allow you to do some mental calibration, she's had twins! She tried to sleep it off but when she had to get up to go to the loo, the pain was so intense that it made her vomit. The paramedics gave her gas and air to get her into the ambulance that took her to A&E.

Four weeks and 2 MRI scans later she has been referred to a specialist. It seems likely that one of the L3/L4 discs has dried out and cracked producing a hidden fragment. This is pressing against nerves causing severe pain in her knee and numbness in her hands. She's on diet of very strong pain killers, anti-inflammatories (plus stomach liners) and sleeping tablets. She can't walk very far, gets severe pain in her knee if she stands for too long, and can't drive. I don't have the heart to leave her to go out flying for the day.

I've done a bit of research instead. Apparently, most people suffer from back pain at some time in their life, and it leads to 12 million days of work being lost every year. It's very common and there is lots of advice out there. Whilst the drying out of disc is mostly age related it's clear that we all need to do everything that we can to protect our backs, particularly if you're in the habit of throwing a heavy load onto your back.

Exercise regularly. My wife was quite fit before her misfortune. She was a keen walker and did regular aerobic and strength classes in the gym. But that (and walking up a hill with a heavy weight on your back) isn't necessarily the right sort of exercise for preventing injury. Several years ago, I took up yoga to improve my flexibility, and I was delighted to see that the exercise that the physio has prescribed are almost identical to what I do twice a week. I'm told that Pilates is a good alternative.

Avoid sitting for long periods. Hand up all those that sit behind a computer all day long? Not so bad if you're using a PC and have it set up correctly, but a laptop can lead you into all sorts of bad habits; and have a think about your posture when you're loafing in front of the TV...

Safe lifting. Here we go – the bit that's most relevant to us. *Avoid leaning sideways* (who¹ would be stupid enough to do that?). *Do not twist when you lift. Do not jerk or snatch.* *Avoid lifting at a distance* (over a wall, gate, etc). I believe the trick in lifting a paraglider² onto your back is to do everything deliberately. Facing the bag, use both arms to lift it slowly onto your bent knees. Then, and only then, twist around and manoeuvre your arms into the shoulder straps. Cheat if you can – use the boot of your car, a friend, or a nearby wall to hold the weight whilst you turn around.

I was once shown an alternative method for lifting a heavy bergen (whilst on skis). Lay the bag on the ground with the straps uppermost. Stand with your feet (and skis!) on either side with the base of your bag facing away from you. Reach through the straps grabbing the bag in a bear hug. Lift the bag all the way over your shoulder and let go. It should come to rest in the normal position. It's further to lift, and can end in a bit of a jolt, but avoids the twist. Try it - it may work for you.

Always think about what you are doing: I believe they call it 'mindfulness' these days. Be especially careful if distracted. The worst-case scenario is probably when you're hitchhiking miles from anywhere and the only car for an hour stops. Whilst holding your half-eaten sandwich in one hand, you throw your bag onto your shoulder with the other, whilst trying to get the car door open before the driver changes his mind.

Fly safely,
Martin Baxter
Chairman

(1) Quite a few years ago (when I was still young and fit) I took a paragliding holiday to Spain. On the last day, after my last flight, I went to lift my glider bag into the minibus. Stupidly I lifted it with one arm at the side of my body. Ouch! That night was agony, but I my main worry was how I would get my wing through 2 airports the next day without any fellow travellers to help. Somehow, I made it home and the GP gave me some strong painkillers. Luckily, I got better fairly quickly and haven't suffered any relapses. Lesson learned. Don't make the same mistake as I did.

(2) My experience only relates to paragliders. But hang glider pilots are made of stronger stuff – Titanium and Kevlar, I believe. Perhaps the terms 'stiffy' and 'floppy' refer to the pilot's spine rather than the structure of the aircraft!

Club Social Calendar...

While we're all waiting for this long-promised heat wave to arrive, the increasing westerlies remind us that we have a long season of superb socials ahead.

As well as clear-skied winter flying, of course... (we hope)...

On **Thursday the 2nd of September** at 7.30pm in the Horse and Farrier in Otley, we kick off with Head Top Chief Coach **Pete Logan providing insights into some varied specifics of Dale's flying.**

He will be joined later by **Tam to introduce the first X Dales social event** which will take place a week or so later. Ed has designed a lively looking challenge for the weekend.

The months that follow will feature **Richard Meek telling of his Lanark adventure**, a **possible visit by Jocky Sanderson** and a reminder that **January will bring the now celebrated film competition** (open now, various prizes, send entries to me, nothing longer than 4 mins please).

Stef Sykes
Social Secretary

DHPC Weekend of flighty fun

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

Campsite available from Wed 8th Sept

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Stef Sykes
Social Secretary

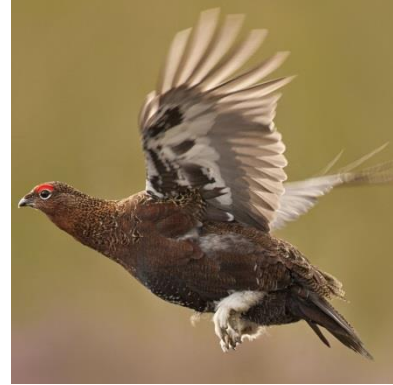
The Glorious 12th

(Please see the DHPC website for the latest individual site flying restrictions)

Like it or loathe it, the **Glorious 12th** is now in force - the official start of Britain's 121-day-long grouse shooting season. The sport, which always **begins on August 12th** each year, lasts **until December 10th**.

It has been an integral part of the countryside calendar for decades, although having once been an aristocratic hobby, it's increasingly at the centre of rows over animal cruelty and class.

Regarded as the "king" of game birds, red grouse are incredibly sought after and represent the supreme shooting challenge. They can fly at speeds of up to 70 miles per hour, often fly low and have a habit of changing direction at the last minute.



Red grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*) are not artificially reared for shooting, like pheasants and partridges. Teams of gamekeepers manage the moors to maximise the number of birds available - so some years the numbers fluctuate according to the conditions.

As well as berries and seeds, a typical grouse eats up to 50g of heather a day. They eat the young, tender heather with green shoots but nest and shelter in the old heather. Heather moorland is now rarer than rainforest, according to the Moorland Association. The UK has 75 per cent of what is left worldwide.

Grouse are safe for one day of the week. It's illegal to shoot grouse - as well as many other game birds - on Sundays. In 2012 when the Glorious 12th fell on a Sunday, it had to be moved to August 13th. The law about Sunday shooting is laid out in the Game Act of 1831. (It's not against the law in Scotland, but the custom is still adopted.)

Grouse shooting generates about £150 million for the economy every year. The industry also supports approximately 2,500 full time equivalent jobs - from gamekeepers and beaters to people in tourism and hospitality.

Therefore as this brings in significant revenue for the land owners, and we access their land with their permission, please respect the restrictions that are imposed (the website will be kept up to date).

Simon Tomlinson
Sites Officer North

Seaside!

by James Goldsborough

It's Monday night on the 2nd August and there was a fair bit of chat on the group about where to go the next day, the plan was to depart Stanage near Hathersage in the peak district and fly to the coast. Suits me, as Stanage is closer to my house in Wakefield and as far as I'm concerned the best XC hill in the world - I've only ever been there three times and each time I've managed a decent distance over the M1 and beyond.

Overnight the weather had changed and everyone (more or less) was heading for the Dales, apart from Richard and Jacob who were going to Parlick. I was still in bed reading all the messages and seeing as how I couldn't get to Skipton in time to meet the usual crew I thought I'd try Parlick for a change. Just as I was leaving the house Neil C posted to say he was going to Brant Side and for some reason I had a last minute change of plan and decided to drive there myself.

I made good time and arrived in Hawes to find out that Wether might be the place so I binned off Brant Side for now and drove up to the top and sure enough there was light wind on the hill. Jakes full taxi van had gone some circuitous route from Otley and so it was that they were five minutes behind me, in the end we all made it to the right hill.

In the air by five past eleven, it was soarable in the light wind and before too long we were all climbing slowly up to base just over the back. Losing what I was in, I pushed forward into the valley and found another weak thermal, as I was working that a pair of RAF Typhoon jets passed underneath me to the south flying very low right over launch. That must have been exciting if you were down there but from my vantage point high'ish in the valley it was a non-event.

I continued to climb in my slow thermal drifting in the WNW wind, at this point there was a lot of chat on the radio and everyone was already half way to Semer by the time I hit cloudbase at 3300 feet just over the top of the hill. On my own I briefly considered going back and waiting for conditions to improve and base to go up but there were at least nine very good pilots leaving together ***so chances are someone would find a climb for me before I got there and so it proved!***

Jake had pushed on and got low but managed to find something just before Addlebrough and everyone briefly climbed together before splitting into two distinct groups - Jake (Alpina), Chris (Zeno), Pete L (Cayenne) and Allan (Rook) all elected to cross the Wharfedale valley whereas David (Eden), Rosie (Rush), Pete D (Sigma), Nick (Mantra) and Joseph (Xi) were all heading for the high ground at Bishopdale. Still being a tad behind I had the choice of the two groups but didn't fancy trying to cross Wharfedale with cloudbase being this low so I picked the second group. With the mix of gliders I thought I'd have more chance of keeping up on my Blacklight rather than trying to chase the higher rated gliders in the first group.

We climbed as we reached Bishopdale the thermal releasing at the edge of the hill, David, Rosie, Pete and Nick took a crosswind glide SSW to Naughtberry hill the high point of the next ridge, I went on my own more with the wind but heading for a cloud with another behind that towards Pen Hill, Joseph was just behind me on my tail climbing in his own thermal.



Rosie, Pete D, David and Nick climb over the edge of Bishopdale



Joseph at cloudbase on his Xi

By now it was an hour and a bit into the flight and cloudbase had risen to a slightly more respectable 4200 feet but it still wasn't high enough for me to relax. I was taking everything I could however slow it was, 0.5 m/s on the averager - that will do for me. My more direct route flying the clouds had put me at the front, unfortunately at this point we lost David who had also been on his own but the rest of the gang, myself and also Joseph met up climbing together at the north end of Coverdale. Rosie took a glide with a more northerly track towards East Witton which unfortunately put her down early which left Nick, Pete, Joseph and I tracking ESE towards Roundhill and Leighton reservoirs.



Leighton and Roundhill reservoirs

Half past one now and leaving the hills for the flats, cloudbase just short of 5000, plenty of clouds and four of us to find the climbs, things were looking good. Looking at the airspace of my gadget I could see we had what I thought were two danger areas coming our way which we would have to be careful about. It wasn't until Pete identified them as the ATZ's at Leeming and Topcliffe that I got my head around exactly where I was. The other thing that had snuck up on me was that the wind which was WNW in the dales was now very definitely WSW, with the A1 in sight and at cloudbase just to the east of West Tanfield the call was made to glide between the two ATZ's with what wind there was pushing us through the gap.



Joseph on glide near West Tanfield



Sailplane action, not too close please



Joseph at cloudbase on the edge of the Dales

We were down to about take-off height now as we looked for the next climb but still had a good 1000 feet plus above the ground. I saw Joseph to my left hook something and went over to join him. It was one of those times (I seem to encounter them a lot) where even though we were so close he seemed to be going up after every 360 while I seemed to be going down. This was also the last time I saw Pete and Nick, they can't have been that far away but I just never saw them again. I minced along not quite going up but making ground slowly drifting in the wind. The air was buoyant, it was going up somewhere I just had to find it. Joseph had by now gone well in front and I was on my own.

Around this time Richard called on the radio with his position having taken off from Parlick, always amazed how big the sky is and then all of a sudden you bump into your mates. I was hoping I could join up with him but he was booting it on his Zeno while I was in full on mince mode so I only saw him in the distance and never got anywhere near him.

I could see some smoke between me and the A19 and it kept going up, then sideways, then up and I figured if I could just hang around a bit it would surely work there and get me back up. I eventually found it and climbed slowly then above the A19 the climb accelerated above 3000 feet into a solid 2 m/s up on the averager and got me to over 4000 feet approaching the edge of the moors.



Crossing the A1 at Kirklington

I could see Richard on his Zeno heading for Bilsdale mast with Joseph in pursuit, I was on my own and gave myself a bit of a talking to - four hours in the air now and in a good position, if I kept my concentration and didn't do anything daft I could get a PB out of this. I was heading for the next cloud and climbing as I approached the mast, then it went boom getting me to cloudbase at 5000 feet in only a few 360's. With at least 3000 above the

ground I could see the coast in the distance and started to think that it might just be possible. Pete D and Joseph were down somewhere close and Pete radioed some encouragement from his position as I drew lazy circles drifting at cloudbase.



Approaching the mast at Bilsdale

I had been listening all day to the first group of Jake, Chris, Pete L and Allan on the radio and they were all way ahead of me making good progress cross winding to Whitby. Richard had goal at Whitby also but seeing as I was on my own and with the coast in sight and getting closer I decided to just carry on heading NE with the wind right behind me flying the clouds. I was well north of Whitby and I couldn't care less about landing there, ***the plan at this point was just to get to the seaside.***

Just to the east of Chop Gate I climbed again at Round Hill, cloudbase by now was high at 5500 feet and the next cloud a few km further on got me to 6000 and I wasn't much lower when I got to the edge of the clouds with the



Clouds all the way to the coast

coast in sight. I set off on my final glide still not quite believing that I'd make it but I had plenty in the end arriving over the sea at 4000 feet. I briefly considered trying to fly south to Whitby but with no clouds and a good 15 km to go I didn't think it was possible so I opted to land at Skinningrove and the hope of retrieve.



Skinningrove and the coast is in the bag

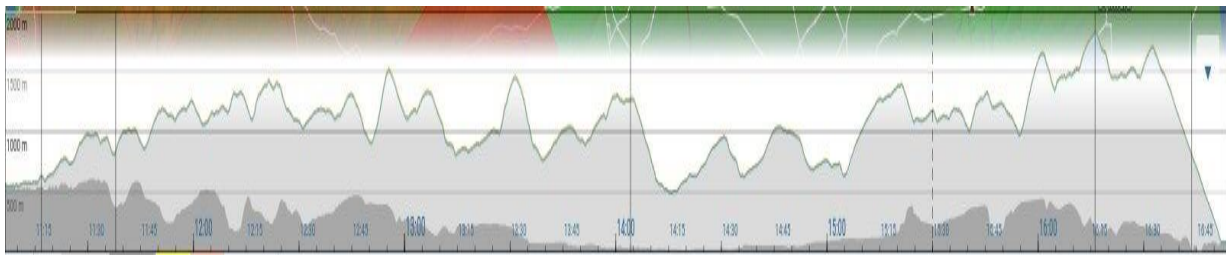
I decided to use my height to FaceTime the kids and tell them where I was and to prove I'd made it the coast, obviously they weren't that impressed - what does a dad have to do?! I thought about a beach landing as the tide was far enough out but as there were quite a few people around and I needed a wee I decided not to push my luck and opted to land on the last field on top of the cliff.

As I walked out of the field I was rebuked by a local chap for 'disturbing his racing pigeons,' and quizzed about the legality of my flight! No point asking him for help then, better start walking. Then my XC retrieve rule kicked in - the ease of retrieve being directly proportional to the length of the flight. The second car to pass took me to the station at Redcar just as a train was arriving (thanks Terry), then it was home to Wakey towers by half past seven for a pie sandwich and a beer with the famalam.

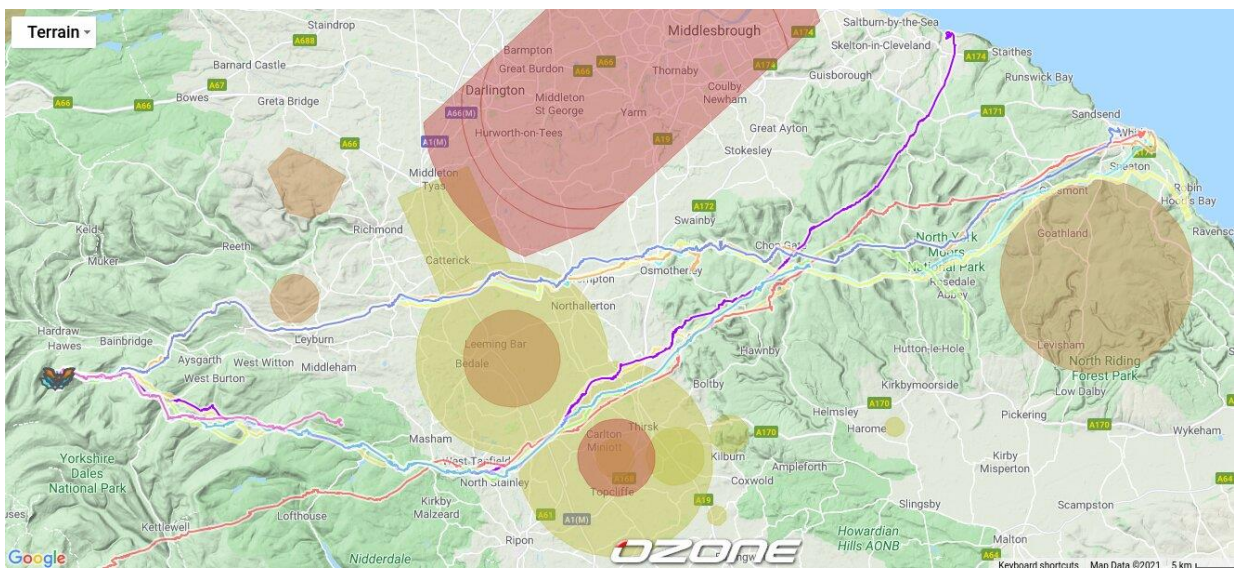


Chosen field

107 km beat my previous best of 79 which was about twenty years ago, the flight took me 5 and a half hours. Thanks to Neil for moving my car down to Hawes and Pete D and Rosie who gave me a lift back to the Dales on the Wednesday to pick it up.



Altitude profile showing just how little ground clearance we had early in the flight



Tracks from the day - mine was the purple one ending furthest north, both groups can be seen with the more northerly direct tracks to Whitby of Jake, Pete L, Chris and Allan and the dog leg southerly tracks of myself Rosie, David, Pete L, Nick and Joseph. Richard Meek is the red one from Parlick appearing from the bottom.