



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2013

There have again been few days that were flyable, but several sites were flown on some days (April 6th takes up half the flying reports!). Conditions look to be improving towards the end of the month with winds easing and drier spells. Hopefully see you all out soon.

March 2013 Meeting minutes

Apologies: Robin Mogridge, Darren Sheperd, Terry Brennan, James Bull

Zillertal Trip

Mark Ansell reports that the chalet is now booked with 4 from South Devon staying there.

Club Coach Course reports

The course went ahead at the new venue as planned. Colin Blagdon reports that the weekend went well. He also added that due to the settlement of the Dunstable incident by insurers the BHPA fees are likely to increase next year. Club coaches will still be insured under the BHPA.

Robin Mills said the course was very well presented

Parachute Repack

Robin Mills has done 3 repacks so far for 14 members and is willing to do more if required. He asks members to remember to bring the packing manual for their parachute if they have one.

He also reminds members that a hook knife to cut away the parachute is essential. A 10mph wind will easily drag a downed pilot uncontrollably.

Andy Farrow will arrange for Andy Guy to set a date and book the Devonport School for a big repack.

Trethill

Mark Ansell says Trethill is on the sites guide but not yet on the wind rose on the website.

Alan Hughes recommends the site as an alternative to Freathy, with a nicer t/o with less compression.

Safety

Colin Blagdon suggested that emergency procedure details could be put on the back of the sites coordinates card that is available.

Next Meeting

Richard Osbourne from North Devon will be giving a talk on flying and hazards at Codden.

Club Constitution

This was ratified by majority vote.

Next Meeting

Agenda - 25th April 2013

Meet 7:30 in the bar; meeting start 8:00 prompt

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|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| 1. Intro | Alan | 5 mins |
| 2. Flight "Confessions" | All guilty pilots | 15 mins |
| King Tor Sat 6th etc. | | |
| 3. Safety Matters | Safety officers & coaches | 10 mins |
| 4. N Coast XC potential | Richard Osborne | 30 mins |

9:00 Break

9:15 Restart

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| 5. Codden - site peculiarities & flight safety | 90 mins |
| Richard Osborne | |

10:45 meeting end

[UK] Flying News

Wednesday 27th March North Devon Chris was at Belstone:

Keith was a real star, and really earned his beer. As I flew over his house and new baby he followed me, picked me up and drove me all the way back to the van at Belstone. Ant Moore and Richard Osborne were still flying when we got there at 5pm (but different less thermic air). Keith walked back up to take off with me to check the walk for his HG.

Had a lovely 20km smooth flight in gentle 0.5-1 ups. I used mittens with a trigger finger for the first time in the air- and they worked a treat. Chris...

Thursday 28th March Julie was at King Tor

Both Maln and Tim made 1000ft ato but didn't go as thermals not big enough.. Tim said "small thermals but ok. Bit rough". . I didn't fly as inconsistent.

Some guys (Colin B and crew) flew slope to north of King Tor and were doing ok.

Saturday 30th March Malin went up to Wales:

Last night, me, the wife and our two dogs camped at a campsite at the foot of pandy, with the intent of an early start and epic days thermalling in the sun....

10 am I was greeted with overcast skies and 40mph wind on take-off... Sounds about right! We walked back down the hill (mountain) with all my flying gear that I had just hauled up and left it at the car.

Then at five the wife came in to the tent and said "there are six in the air now and there all moving"... Oh great, I'm going to have to get up now.

An hour and 15mins in the air saw me cover a 10k out and return, watch the sun set over snow-capped hills from 1000ft, then land at the campsite, beside the pub that I'm currently writing this from, sat in front of a fire with a pint.

Same day Dougie sneaked in an XC from Beardown (spotted by the sailplane crew), flying almost to Liskeard (see blog <http://dougieandjulie.blogspot.co.uk/>)

Same day Sam was at Vault:

Got a hour at Vault on the HG 18 - 22 ESE and very nice; quite bubbly at times with good lift and sink to match 500ft ATO max. Some para's flew for a short while, and one speed wing.

Same day Julie was at Beesands:

Headed down to Beesands at lunchtime. Too strong to fly on arrival - great for hangies. Mark Nicol had hour and a half, plus 2 Condors.

We went to pub and waited for wind to ease which it did around 3.30pm. Woohooooo

Mark and Jen, Colin Jones, Evan and I walked to take off and flew. Off to north but still ok, but now light. No massive height gained, but a peachy 50 minutes in air before switched off completely.



This is Mark Nicol before he landed. Lovely to see the sunshine

Saturday 6th April turned into an epic day:

David was out at King Tor: I learnt loads this morning. Several got away a.m., but incredibly the thermals seemed to shut down in the early afternoon??? The wind died as predicted and the gusts were coming from east, north, all over. I left the hill with a few still trying to stay up but struggling. Spent a good half hour watching Dougie take off and make a few thousand feet above king tor - he didn't head away immediately - really impressive flying.

Dougie added: Thanks for your kind words David, I must have launched just at the right time! As you say I hung around launch for a while waiting at base for it to rise, which inevitably it did, and tempted me over the back. I had a couple of low saves just past Postbridge and to the south of Princetown then headed for the sea breeze convergence. Conditions there were pretty much hell in the sky going from 800ft up to 800ft down per min in split seconds, I suffered one full frontal then managed to climb in the convergence for 1000ft or so before deciding enough was enough - just too rough. Not convinced Paragliders are capable of convergence flying. Will have to test it out a few more times in the legendary Cornish convergence (One can dream)! Anyway I went on to land in Central Park Plymouth in a howling sea breeze after 3 hours flying and 42.2km.

Malin was hero of the day: That was my first XC, and my third/forth? time trying to leave the hill, the first being Bell hill a few weeks ago on my old wing. We got an early flight in (11am) and I got 800ft ATO, but pushed forward to land have lunch and get ready for better conditions, little did I know that it was downhill from there and by 12.30-1pm there was no getting away. I was then at King Tor a week or two ago and got to just shy of 1000ft ATO and started to go over the back with Tim Pilling but the lift fizzled out and we both pushed forward to land, and again by 12.30 it had switched off again, very frustrating. So I knew I could climb in lift and if I could just get away I thought I might be able to get a couple of kilometres in... I didn't expect to do what I did though! For any newer pilots reading this, learning to pick out little bit of lift in last year's sea thermals was the key for me, there nice and gentle and great for honing your skills and if you can work them you will be fine in stronger lift.

So as far as my view on the coastal leg of the flight goes, it's something like this: (and unfortunately it was far from cruising down a convergence highway). The wind was NW - NNW and was blowing me out to sea slightly so I was having to crab my way along the coast, which is why I didn't stop to thermal once I got to close to the coast, you can see on the track log my last climb was beside Yealmpton (Worston) area, I thought it too risky to drift any closer to the sea by thermalling after that. I met the "convergence" above Kingston as you can see from the track log going a bit wiggly, i had some cracking collapses, two on bar, (there the best) and like you said it was pretty fruity stuff, hit sink then it got spicy again over Ringmore but I encountered lots of lift, I think not thermic because it was constantly ruff and the wing was all over the place but there was lift everywhere and i was going in a straight line and up, it was lift like i haven't experienced before. Then when i was setting up to land my GPS was telling me to do a 180 in to wind but i new that wasn't right from my ground speed, (good lesson there, never rely on your equipment always trust your instinct) a figure of eight confirmed i was in to wind..

So somewhere in the rough stuff, (and the cause of it I should imagine) the wind had completely switched directions and was now blowing from SE - ESE. So if that was the convergence I would say that it would be possible to fly in it because there was plenty of lift but it isn't like thermals (it's hard to describe) it was non-stop bumpy/little collapses, it would get pretty tiring after a while, easy to stay up though so nothing comes for free I suppose.



Robin Mog also did well: My flight turned out to be 48k, not a site record but my longest for quite a while. After mistiming my first T/O and having to slope-land, I took off in the next cycle and got a couple of grand @T/O with Martin and another (possibly Malin) and, while the others hung back, I decided to go for it. A decision I soon regretted as I sank to T/O height by the Warren House and thought I'd have to land for an early pint. Luckily I stumbled into some small bubbles of lift which took me to Postbridge where I got a decent 5up to 2000' @T/O again. Went on a glide towards Princetown without much confidence as the small flat clouds that were around seemed to decay as soon as you headed for them. Started to get low again at Powder Mills, but headed for the plantations at Beardown where I remembered getting a low save on a previous flight. Sure enough it didn't disappoint and I got a stonker of a climb from T/O height (1400@S/L) to over 4000' @S/L and for most of the rest of the flight stayed high (between 3 and 5 grand @S/L) until well into Cornwall. By now I was wishing I had Bob's heated gloves as my fingers were completely numb but luckily the working clouds were small and even just wisps so thermalling was done in sunlight which helped a bit. Coming up to Yelverton I crossed-winded to a decent looking cloud over Horrabridge to get away from the sea-breeze's barren skies that were looming on the horizon and that worked quite well.



Coming up to Tideford, I managed to get my camera phone working (difficult with numb, thickly-gloved fingers) and took a shot of James's house and a couple looking back towards the Sound. Soon after that I hit the 'washing-machine' type air which I presume is the shear-level between the sea-breeze and the gradient wind. The collapses and recovery were so violent that at one point my righthand brake-handle was ripped out of my hand - I was really thankful to be on a 1/2 and I was thinking I really don't want to have to throw my reserve here because at the time I was between the A38 and the railway line and there were power lines lacing the countryside in all directions! I didn't know whether to head towards the coast or inland so in the end I headed along the A38 sank below the shear-level and landed without drama on a small hill just north of the A38 opposite Castle Motors.

Same day Steve was at Beesands: Looks Like Six had a fly at Beesands...Jack Cadman (his last chance of a flight before his shoulder op) and myself were First on the Hill and went for our First Beesands Flight, we had plenty of Height at the Landing field so I went left over the houses adjacent to the field to lose it. Wind was East at this time so it worked well. We then saw Four wings on the Hill, I know Bob was one of them, He later said he was getting cold so landed, Also on the way back home Street was on but the Cows followed us around the field ...so did not fancy them trampling on the wing...went home ...great day.

And same day Mark H headed to the coast: I have spent the last few weeks worrying that I had put my "girlfriend" Jo into great peril by introducing her to PGliding and sending her off to get her CP in morocco so decided not to launch her off king tor today but just get the sea breeze at the coast which she flew like a pro (professional !) so phew, big relief that my suspicions that she was a potential flyer was correct.

Darren also ended up there: on the way back [from King Tor] I saw a familiar back pack and it was Mike Bond who had parked at Yelverton, so i dropped mike at Yelverton and then we both raced to Freathy. Got to Tregantle about 2:30 ish to see a wing over Freathy (terry) so we put are foot down to race there and terry was there along with mark h and newly qualified Jo having a bit of gh practise, mark b took off and but the wind was southerly, so some of us headed to Struddick spent the whole afternoon up until sunset (20:00) flying around doing touch and goes etc., Jo ground handled like a pro and didn't decide to launch until around 19:00 and climbed out and must have been 300ft ato and stayed up there until sunset; not bad for her first flight in the UK and after passing her CP (well done Jo)

Same day Mark N went aero-towing: I chose to aerotow my hang glider on Saturday, and also to fly the tug at Smeatharpe in E Devon. Conditions were very rough in a 5-10 mph wind mixed with bullet type thermals. I towed 5 pilots up -some releasing as low as 900 ft ato and the others releasing below 2000 ft ato -and they all stayed up. Three went xc, Brett Wright flying past King Tor to land at Gunnislake and Alan hughes who flew around 20 k to land south of Ottery St Mary.

Finally it was my turn to be towed up -but it was getting late and the sky was not so good. Also I had to wait for a hang glider pilot to land so we had enough ground crew to do the launch signals.....

After my first tow I landed back at the airfield after 10 minutes. My second tow was more successful. I released at around 1500 ft ato in lift and stayed up for around 60 minutes. I never got to base and found the lift very broken and bitty -typical spring thermals. My only satisfaction was out climbing a rather high performance sail plane -that must have been finding the lift even more difficult to use. It was too late in the day to go XC. Analysing my day I realise now that drinking until 10.00pm on Friday and getting to bed after midnight definitely left me tired on Saturday.

Alan added: As Mark said I pinged off at 900ft in what felt like a nice thermal, and immediately regretted is as I struggled to find it and it turned out to be a ratty little blighter. Luckily I found a screamer over the airfield and had the Atos cranked right up to core it. Lovely stuff! That gave me my best height of the day at c. 3,300ft AMSL, still some way short of cloudbase.

From there I tried to stay N to keep clear of the inevitable sea breeze, but in the end everything seemed to have blued out so I was scrabbling at low level for whatever lift I could find and working it hard, so ended up going pretty much where the wind wanted me to go.

Gave up in the end because ground downwind not looking good for landing Atoses, and I was starting to feel airsick from being bounced around so much. Wouldn't be a good idea in a full-face helmet with visor down, would it! Hard work from start to finish - to such an extent that I never zipped my harness up, but finished up with a perfect nil-wind A-frame on the shoulders landing, and a big grin.

Only 20k in 1.5hrs, but worked hard for every km and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Tuesday 16th Darren was at Freathy:

As I got there I saw a wing low down (mike b) and got to the hill to find ,David ,col j, michel j, Graeme (billy wiz) and Martin. Col then launched flew around came back and said it was ok , David launched and was getting some nice height, by the time I sorted myself col had landed and said its starting to get light be carefully. At first I seemed to be keeping height but soon started to hit lots of sink, I turned around and noticed mj was heading my way and we both ended up landing close together on the beach. I didn't pack fast enough and a wave came in and soaked my wing, so once we packed we took the long walk up the cafe route as the white rock route was

blocked by the incoming tide (and boy did it come in quick). We did finally arrived [back at T/O] to find everyone on the hill packing away.

Saturday 20th Bob went to Maker:

Maker came good. Breezy at times, 3 flights, a couple of hours and 584 feet at best when it did get strong in first flight. Nice sunshine and good company too. 12 gliders up at one point Phil said.

Editor adds: It was a 'strange' day with light wind forecast and when I arrived around 11am it felt fine, but pilots were only just getting ready as it had come on. Chris B then took off and got good height to boat around for some time on his Delta. Others were then encouraged to go, only to find it light low down with 3 bombing out and Bob having to work hard to get up to Chris (it was off SSE). Within 15 mins a wind-shear layer dropped to just above T/O causing some scary draggings including some broken lines. There was then a lot of parawaiting before it came on again mid-afternoon and most then got around an hour's flying before it died again at 5pm.



Sunday 21st Mark was out again at Freathy:

It didn't quite go according to plan..... It stayed blowing 10 mph and southerly for a long while so there was much parawaiting until it picked up a little and went SSW.

By 10 am pilots were in the air. Some pilots chose to fly down to Struddick/Millendreath and back.. This wasn't as easy as expected because the wind was picking up and then dropping off. Of course there was beach nearly all the way and certainly at every gap.

It wasn't a beautiful day. We soon lost the sun and there were even a few spots of rain when some of us were between Portwrinkle and Batten. Still a 30 km out and return for those that could be bothered - followed by beer, roast potatoes and chips in the Finnygook. As the beer flowed all you could hear was pilots talking parabollox. I've flown three days in a row -spring must be here.

Same time Editor tried out Trethill:

Thanks to Mark's early tip-off that it was off to the South, I decided it was time to try out Trethill as it has a SSW & a SW face. Arriving at 11am I couldn't see anyone flying at Freathy (bad eyes) so rang Mark who said he was clipped in ready to go (and rang off). I also then launched and had 10 mins at 40' at along over the golf course, before realising I was sinking and slope landed. After 20 mins chatting up the farmer (Sarah) it appeared to be turning on again and I had over an hour's flight, including a run to Polhawn. That was after a

flock of PGs passed me heading for Struddick, including one limping along the hedge-line with a bad shoulder. I watched Mark, CB and CJ glide off over Portwrinkle, but they were low on the other side and I decided they had a better glide angle than me, so I wouldn't be tempted (predicted bad weather and incoming tide being major factors in the decision). However the limping PG pushed on and made it to Seaton beach - leaving him a hard walk up to Struddick for a re-launch. I landed and waited to check he got back alright before joining up in the pub. A much better day than expected. Mark A



Monday 22nd Michal went back to Freathy early:

I was lucky it stopped raining for about 2hrs. At the beginning was too light, so waited. Then it picked up and the direction went to almost SW so I went to Freathy (I waited at Polhawn). I had about 40 minutes in the air, got to Polhawn and back with easy lift up to 115 m ato. Had to land because of rain. All kit checked, dried and ready for tomorrow!

Other News

Reserve Re-Packs

Robin Mills has already kindly arranged some sessions at Bickington.

Regarding the annual re-pack at Devonport High School, it seems that there is still interest in this event going ahead so Andrew Farrow has *provisionally* said we'll hold it on Sunday 12th May from 16:00 to 20:00 (although if it goes a bit later that won't be an issue).

Flying on Dartmoor – inland seasonal conditions

Colin Blagdon (Chief Coach) writes: We have arrived at the time of year when the strongest thermic activity on our moorland sites can be nothing short of BRUTAL! I'm not exaggerating ask Dougie!

In the strongest thermic conditions you could be encountering significant control challenges every few moments, that's how it can be on some of the best days.

If I'm not current you won't find me anywhere near an inland site on a 5star day, let alone a particularly small, low one with dubious bottom landing options in a sheltered valley!

Obviously I've still yet to achieve the huge golden gonadian globes required to fly Beardown on a stonking day. My best advice to anybody who hasn't been flying regular XC's from inland sites would be to consider Beardown a site for your second year of XC flying.

There's simply no need to risk flying in small punchy moorland thermals at such a low altitudes on such a small site during your first year of inland XC flying. In the early days especially, if you can, fly big; fly high; there will be years ahead to make the best of our tiny Dartmoor sites.

Next Meeting is on Thursday 25th April 7:30pm at the **Royal Oak, South Brent**.

Please be 'early' as we wish to start the meeting promptly at 8pm to help members who cannot stay late.

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