



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2011

There was no formal meeting held in July as a mark of respect for our late Chairman Mark Stapleton. Around 30 pilots attended Mark's life celebrations held in Brixham, but we were a small number in the total of around 400 who attended the church service. Yet more, unable to make that service, went on to the crematorium and the Rugby Club gathering. It was a very moving experience and rightly marked the passing of a good man.

Alan Hugh's has kindly written some words to sum up his memories of Mark.



Mark Stapleton 1959 - 2011

Those are the simple words that record the dreadful fact that our friend and fellow flier Mark tragically died after a freak road accident on July 22nd. Julie was in the passenger seat alongside Mark, together with two work colleagues in the back seats. Mark was driving them home from Exeter when they hit a stray horse on an unlit stretch of the A380 dual carriageway, close to Newton Abbot. I'm sure that everyone in the club has heard the terrible news by now, and I won't elaborate any further here.

We all know of Mark as the Chairman of our flying club, and that he has, with characteristic good-nature, allowed himself to be bullied into being unanimously re-elected year after year for, what, 10 years? With Julie as Treasurer, they have both been a core of the club over a period in which we have really grown as an active community of fliers thanks in no small part to Mark's calm influence.



Mark and Julie have been flying paragliders for 15 years, ever since Julie bought a surprise taster day as an anniversary present. When they progressed from sharing a single glider, the pair of blue and red Firebird Spider paragliders were a clear sign that Mark and Julie were in the air together. About the same time they discovered Oludeniz as a paragliding Mecca, and started a real love affair with this spectacular location. Flying holidays in the company of many of our other club members became twice yearly. At the end of June this year Mark & Julie joined a few of us for a trip down to Laragne, meeting up with the Northampton Club for their annual flying holiday. It was wonderful to see Mark's evident excitement and pleasure after he'd mastered the fearsome Chabre and succeeded in being one of the very few pilots who fought their way back to the camp-site in quite tricky flying conditions. On executing his usual perfect landing, the ladies in the reception committee awarded Mark the only 10/10 of the day. At the end of the week of very mixed conditions, Mark had enjoyed the holiday so much that he was talking of making a return trip in September.

Since I 'progressed' to paragliding, Mark provided the encouragement to try some of the Dartmoor sites that I had never before attempted to fly in some 15 years of flying a hang-glider down here. He showed me a particularly quick route to King Tor along some of the really obscure C-roads. I've attempted to find the same route since, and failed miserably! When I asked how he came to know the more obscure parts of the moor so well, Mark told me the tale of his Ten Tors exploits. These began at the age of 14, when he blagged his way onto one of the teams which had lost a member, and would otherwise have had to withdraw. Mark's father was a scout-leader at the time, and Mark had gone through the training program, so felt up to the challenge despite being well below the minimum age limit of 16 years. By the time he was eighteen Mark had successfully completed 5 Ten Tors Challenges: 1x35 miles, 2x45 miles, and 2x55 miles. He thought that this must have been a record, since the first two were officially under-age, but he had no way of checking. In most of these Mark was leader, and inevitably over this time-span, he encountered a Ten Tors that suffered one of Dartmoor's infamous storms. The army tried to persuade Mark and his team to evacuate to Okehampton, but they refused. They were allowed to stay on the high moor only on condition that they camped alongside one of the army groups sited up there. On the following morning Mark awoke to find that the army tents had blown away

overnight, and he and his team were the only ones still safe, snug and dry under canvas! I think he said they were carrying Good Companion tents... remember those?

During his Ten Tors exploits Mark gained bronze, silver, and gold Due of Edinburgh awards, and progressed to become a Duke of Edinburgh Award assessor. His approach to this says a lot about Mark as a person. Rather than sitting in comfort in his warm car beside the road, as was the normal procedure, forcing the teams to divert from their route to find him, Mark made a point of hiking into the moor and setting up his check-point at a position convenient for the participants rather than for his own comfort. He took great pleasure from the grateful appreciation of the tired and weary participants!

This was also a reminder that there was a lot more to Mark than the part we've seen in flying. A lot of us will remember the barbecue that he and Julie organised at Elbury Cove, giving us a chance to play with Mark and Julie's ski boat and various drag-along toys. Getting back onto a banana that has capsized in the middle of Torbay was a tough challenge for me! And Mark Nicol will recall the scary moment when he was being towed on the Stealth(?), and Mark, driving the ski-boat, headed towards the shore. Mark N was supposed to release the tow, to skim gracefully back to the beach. Not realising this, Mark N held on, and was treated to a very high-speed hammering as he was whipped around the outside of a tight turn!

Mark & Julie's home has one of the most spectacular outlooks in the whole south-west, looking directly over Broadsands and Elbury Cove, and on over Lyme Bay. Water-skiing in Elbury Cove has been a passion over many years, often in the early hours or after a day's work. Mark said that when he was young he used to walk along the coast path and vowed that one day he would buy one of the houses that looked down onto the coast there. And so he did!

And there's more: the many of us who attended the Rugby Club in Brixham on the Friday of Mark's funeral will have seen the photos of a very young Mark and one of his mates in their climbing gear pioneering some tough routes up the sea-rocks off Berry Head. Access was only by boat, handled by an even younger Julie.

Mark also had a hidden side not known by many outside Brixham: he was an accomplished tailor! Each year he produced the most amazing fancy dress gear for himself and Julie to wear at Brixham's New Year's Eve fancy dress fest. Each year's new creation was usually kept secret until the night, and we'd all have to scour the town to find out what Julie's imagination and Mark's creative skills had come up with for that year.



Hiking, climbing, swimming, scuba diving, water-skiing, flying, clubbing and I don't know what else: by anyone's definition that was a life lived to the full, even if cut cruelly short. And in the course of it, many many friends have been made. That was evident by the crowds that crammed into Brixham church for the celebration of Mark's life. It was full to overflowing, with people forced to stand at the back. Relatives and friends had flown in from the Americas, from Europe, and in one case, by microlight from Northampton. Phil Osborne had set off at the crack of dawn in his microlight to pay tribute to Mark on behalf of the Northampton Hang Gliding club and the many friends he and Julie had made in the space of one short week.

Along with so many others I will miss Mark enormously, and I remain very grateful to have enjoyed his friendship, albeit for too brief a period of time and our thoughts must go out to Julie, as she sets out to re-build a life without Mark. A tough task. A fine man.

Alan

Other News

Bloreng Bash 27th – 29th August

Several members are showing interest in going, although Mark Helm is already in the area. Details on <http://www.swwsc.co.uk/index.php?topic=1024.0>

[UK] Flying News

After a bit of a lull, flying picked up again during the month, although the weather again made life difficult for many with frustrating wasted journeys on several occasions.

Saturday 20th July Bob went to Strete:

Had an hour at Strete after speaking to Mick B who said it was on. Bit off so Blackpool Sands not possible, but 300 feet at and nice to be boating up and down in nice smooooth coastal air for a change. As I was leaving a hange was rigging, not sure who (maybe Andy Farrow).

Mick had a couple of flights at Strete and then also flew at Beesands. Peter Reeve also flew at the latter.

And Robin Mogridge was also out at Labrador Bay

Had a good hours flying at Labrador late afternoon in the company of Ian and Ed Brookes and Robin Mills getting 400 and 500' plus @ T/O. Overcast conditions with a low base (600 or 700') and 10 to 14mph wind at T/O slightly off to the south and surprisingly cold so there were sea thermals about - ideal conditions really. Robin had been flying from almost lunchtime when conditions were even better and had made the round trip to Babbacombe fairly comfortably. He set off for Babbacombe again with less height than before and I followed a km behind thinking I'll use him as a height-dummy. Getting to Maidencombe below T/O height and seeing Robin just hugging the cliff-top trees further on above Arkle Bay, I chickened out (not fancying a tree-landing as the only alternative to a soaking or worse) but got back to T/O fairly comfortably. Having made a bit more height on the big cliff and seeing Robin had gained good height at Oddicombe (could just make out the arced silhouette of his wing up above the trees) I went back to Maidencombe to see how he would make the return trip. As it was he only just made it back on to the low cliffs at Maidencombe where he scratch for several minutes before getting back to T/O. A very creditable effort but too buttock-clenching for my liking, I might try it in winter with more sea-thermals or with a bit more wind!

Tuesday 9th August Martin F was over at Batcombe

Batcome worked today but not until 3pm. Nothing like last time, too late in the day, Phil Fouracre and I got to Puddletown at about 5 grand, but then found nothing else, Martin

Peter Dixon was also in Wessex territory that day:

Went to Bell Hill. Flew about 1.30. One Litespeed got away to coast I think and as I left at 4pm a paraglider was doing well. Good conditions if I was a better pilot. Flew half an hour and top landed in the wheat. Lovely site some day. Met some friendly Dorset folk. Yet to break my UK XC cherry though. Getting frustrated!

Friday 12th August Editor flew Freathy:

Arrived 11a.m. to find strong wind and orographic cloud, but Kernow Bill loomed out of the fog in front of T/O having been there since 9:15. The cloudbase lifted so I swiftly rigged and launched just as Phippsy arrived with some trainees. Landed after 30 mins, keeping below cloudbase (140' ATO) as rain was coming in over the sea.



Waited 30 mins and that cleared. Bill then launched in a lull, but the rest of us got blown back, so sat it out until Bill landed. Mark Helm flew from Polhawn, but [wisely] didn't land at Freathy.

Thick low cloud for over an hour, but had lunch and the parawaiting banter passed the time. The rest of the afternoon was sunny (Terry arrived and launched well), but the wind got stronger, many launches were trashed and only short flights were achieved - all landed safely (just).

Saturday 13th August Simon came to Freathy:

Well the early bird catches the wind, getting to Freathy about 10:30, although not that sure as I left phone, wallet, wind meter, vario at home, it was a little on the strong side for me so I went along to Polhawn, a lot better there, did a short flight before going too far forward and losing the lift and landed on the beach, got back to the top as Martin was just taking off. Then got off again, settled in, got some height and did three runs up to Freathy and back, no one was taking off at Freathy, although not getting pushed back had to pull big ears and speed bar to loose height, first time used since CP so that was good drills. Drove to Freathy to spend the rest of the afternoon with Mark, Cornwall Bill and a few other hardcore Parawaiters, all in all a great lunch time flight with a disappointing afternoon. Think the HGs missed a good day!!

Simon was keen and was out again at Perran on Sunday 14th:

Managed to get some good flying in at Perran Sands. Arrived about 1pm and left at 6:30pm. Wind was good for HGs, so kept to the dunes. Got sucked up a couple of times so another good day for speed bar, big ears and tighter figure of 8's. Drive was around the same time and distance as Woolacombe, so all in all, great weekend.

Editor was back at Freathy on Monday 15th:

Arrived 10:45 to find Bill N unloading. Wind was on the light side, but picked up as we rigged and we both had 10 mins before landing to message folks. Had 2 more flights with the wind increasing. Dougie, then Alan arrived and launched.

I then landed to find it on the strong side. Tom and Blue turned up, but found it too strong despite attempted t/os. I had a couple of goes but equally couldn't penetrate the compression. Those in the air had a good time - Dougie got to Battern Cliffs and Alan & Bill made Portwrinkle before turning back.

Rain appeared to be a distance off, but suddenly there were drops forming and the fliers quickly landed and we packed up at 2:30, driving back through showers. Had an hour in total, so pleased with that after the abortive day on Saturday.

Friday the 19th Aug was good for Pete D:

Had a wonderful flight up Chinkwell today. Hour and a half getting high and getting low. Interesting to see the effect the high cloud had on thermals as it periodically cut them off. Feel like I learnt a lot about UK hill flying today and at Bell last week. The carry was not too epic either.

Interesting how no vario flying can heighten your senses to smells and sounds drifting upwards. Thought it was a load of nonsense before.

Bob also enjoyed the day at Freathy:

Freathy came good. My first trip there this year. Came on about 1230 ish a little on the light side, but OK. Flew half an hour Polhawn and back and top landed. Flew again 1330 to 1448, wind picking up all the time. 18 - 19 mph when I landed. Made Freathy to Polhawn to Portwrinkle and back, as did Cornish Bill.

A bit later Mark A was well made up when he and Allen Weyneberg got past Portwrinkle to Batten and back.

Also flying Mark N, Colin J, Chris (pony tail) Blue Ramsey, Malcom W sporting new sexy short haircut and Ivor T and maybe others who I have forgotten! Dougie and Peter Reeve turned up later but it was blowing too strong. Nice to get off the ground for the first time in several weeks. Bob

Editor added:

Really pleased with the Polhawn to Battern run (1 hour 20 mins, 15 km total) as Dougie had done it earlier in the week on his hot ship when I didn't stand a chance. Allen cheated by having a rest on a barbed wire fence beyond Portwrinkle (I'd only cleared it by 20') then running up the field to re-launch. I was impressed that he made it back low over the village.

Interesting wind direction in the bay - A fair bit of West in it at Freathy, but we heard Tom was flying at Struddicks so Dougie, Blue and I dashed over to find it was a strong SSW. We took off at this 'easier' site and had 20 - 30 mins flying, before deciding there were too many white horses, so retired to the pub.

Meanwhile Matt was at Cox Tor:

Had a fly up Cox earlier, windy and rough as f***! in the air, landed after 20 mins or so.

Sunday 21st August Mark N went back to Freathy:

As is often the case when the meteo wind is westerly it does actually pull on at Whitsands. Tim and I arrived separately around midday. It was blowing 9 mph WSW but by the time it had picked up to 14 -16 mph it was SW at sea level - but Westerly with height. In fact the cloud shadows were running parallel to the cliff so at cloudbase it could even have been North of West.

Tim helped Jen and I launch tandem at Polhawn as soon as there was enough wind to be confident of staying up ie 14 -16 mph. Fortunately for us it then picked up to around 22 mph so we had a ball, 500 ft plus above t/o and an easy run down to Tregantle fort. At 800 ft asl it was noticeably more Westerly.

After 90 minutes or so the wind it dropped to around 18 mph and Tim landed at Freathy and Jen and I landed with a quick out in the top corner of the pony field. After running up to Freathy to collect Tim I then launched tandem with a friend at Polhawn. I measured the wind on t/o at 18 mph -which really is my limit for launching a tandem. The wing has a mind of its own, the trailing edge wants to fly and its difficult to build a proper wall. We started to get dragged but then the wing was above our heads and we got away cleanly. With it only blowing 18 mph there was not so much height to be gained -but we were still boating about at 350 ft ato. Tim and I both landed at Freathy, me using a quickout. Thanks to Tim for assistance on launching. It helps to steady the passenger and is essential when its really fresh.

So two days out of three I've gone out to Freathy all tooled up with paragliders and a hangie -but after flying a paraglider I've had my fix and can't be bothered to get the hangie off the van and rig it.

Meanwhile Dougie was on the moors:

The Moors were good, myself and Tom went to Cox Tor and found the wind speed pretty much the same as at the coast

Just after we launched it got too strong for most arriving later to get off, but I went on to have a very nice hour and 45. The wind up top was strong and base was only around the 1600ft at, I had a retrieve driver organised but decided against a downwind blast over soggy Moors in favour of practicing my upwind flying. I had in mind a little triangle, from Cox to the edge of the Brentor gliding club onto Tavi and back to Cox (I tried this a couple of weeks ago and failed arriving back a km short) and I was no better this time! I got half way to the runway well over the Tavi to Oke road and failed to connect again so had to rush back to the hill with my tail between my legs. The climbs were OK averaging 500ft per min and very smooth all over the sky, I was always a couple of hundred feet below base as I was leaving climbs as the downwind drift was rapid.

The air was a pleasure to fly in, I was using the C's to steer and half bar most of the time apart from when climbing or ridge soaring, but the gaps between cycles were getting further apart as cloud cover increased so I settled in for thermalling over the Tor sometimes dropping onto the ridge to climb out again, the extra speed my serial class wing has allows me easy soaring in plus 20mph winds without needing the bar.

Once the cycles became weak, I decided to land getting over the cars with a couple of hundred feet and could not get down, the M4 really does have an aversion to descending!

A good number of pilots arrived during my flight but only Robin Mills launched and mainly gale hung in the increasing wind.

Sunday 21st Aug Simon was back at Perran:

Another good day at Perran Sands, arrived at 13:30, three PG flying, off a little to the south, most of the locals had gone around to Chapel, got 4 good flights in, and only 2 walk ups, the headland north was getting all the lift and got a good flight there, top landed at 18:40, could have flown another hour or so bar the drive home

For Sale (still to my knowledge)

My **Niviuk Artik** is up for sale and available now! 170ish hours, in perfect condition and always concertina packed. Pick up a bargain wing with great performance for around the £700 mark (**special reduction to £500 for Club Members**)

See blog for pictures. Dougie 07771676622
<http://dougieandjulie.blogspot.com/>

Advance Epsilon 5 It has under 100hrs flight time.
Seat- big and comfy suit intermediate or big person. with parachute.
Helmet almost new. Skyrunner full face.

Mike Hardy - 7mhardy@googlemail.com , Brixham

Advance Harness. I have an Advance Success 2 +. I paid £750.00 for this and have flown it around ten times (this harness is as brand spanking new). It is a large, if you are six foot or over and around 12 stone, then this would be fine. I have come to the conclusion it is too large for me. I bought it from The Sick and The Wrong in Keswick end of last season, didn't get to try it as it was raining all week. Obviously to try to sell it back to a shop now I would be given a silly offer. I have the receipt & booklet . I am looking for £600.00 please no offers. Have gone back to my old harness for now , shall buy a medium once this is sold <http://www.advance.ch/SUCCESS.602.0.html?&L=1> Contact Jim Saunders 07743 259020

Mike Gadd's paraglider equipment.

-Firebird Mowenpik Reversible (Large) - As new, one hour of air time, very comfortable, carbon-fibre seat plate, magnetic speed bar clips, reverses into fully adjustable and very comfortable high quality rucksack (£650 new) VERY LIGHT - New Reduced price £475

<http://www.turfhouse.com/acatalog/harnesses.html>

http://cms.flyfirebird.com/paraglide/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=69&Itemid=84&lang=en

-Charley Second Chance 118 – New and in the harness for one hour - £360 (£460 NEW)

<http://www.turfhouse.com/acatalog/paraglidingreserves1.html>

Firebird Matrix Medium (still available), DHV 1/2 . New in July 2004. Blue and white, still quite crispy, probably less than 60 hours. Very good condition - no tears or damage of any kind. It would be a good, safe, first wing for someone new to paragliding. I would like around £450. Mark Nicol 01752 896597 / 07773331964

Below is the list of paragliding equipment that Mark N has been asked to sell.

The equipment belonged to a paraglider pilot who has recently died of a heart attack - definitely NOT paragliding. I will sell it and give the proceeds to the Devon Air Ambulance.

~~—Nova Ra wing size medium. DHV 2, the take off weight range is 90 -112 kg. The wing is in fantastic condition. Virtually unmarked. —£500~~

~~—Charlie stirrup Harness —old, a little scruffy —£75~~

Small reserve -would suit an all up weight of 85 kg -£150

Open face helmet, medium size, as new £ 20

please give me a ring if you are interested. **Mark Nicol - 01752 896597**

Airwave Sport on the club web site for sale. [Medium 350hrs good nick, a few patches but still very flyable. £250 ono.](#)

Ashley

Gin Sprint Evo Size: Medium (90 -110kg) Colour: Kimchi (that's red with a white leading edge)

Serial: BA05-K5400133P

I bought it new, it now has just under 5 hours on it. The new price is £2,800; I'm looking for £2,300. All the usual accessories (brand new, not used, not even been outside): Back pack, Stuff sack, Speed bar, Stickers, Repair tape, USB manual. Plus Gin concertina bag (new, only used with this wing). Blue Ramsey 07861 221900

Firebird Grid DHV 1/2. 200 hours. 80 -105 kgs flying weight. Concertina packed and carefully looked after, even to the extent of airing it when I've flown on damp grey days on the coast. 3 x very small patches over match-head sized holes. Stuff sack too!

Still crispy and mylars good and flat. Inspect Torbay. Pics can be seen here

<http://homepage.virgin.net/bobmoore.sfy/grid.html>

£425 - Inspection welcome. And even maybe a test flight, if we get a half decent day!

Bob Moore 01803 851402 / 0794 11819106

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

Directions (roughly) are to go into the town centre from the roundabout before (westbound) or after (eastbound) the London Inn. The Pub is in station road (near the station car park) to the right, when you get to the middle.

Mark Ansell, Newsletter Editor,

SOUTH DEVON HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING CLUB

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