



NEWSLETTER

New Year 2012

Well a Happy New Year to all those I haven't yet seen on the hill. After a depressing December it looks promising that we are having a better start to 2012, at least at the coastal sites, so here's hoping it is a good omen for this year. Now is also the time to be considering your flying goals for the year ahead and whether you want to give some of your time towards running the club and joining the committee.

November Meeting minutes

Ground Handling Course Feedback

Feedback from the GH course held by Mark Leavesley at Strete was all positive. It was suggested that the club repeat the course next year. A video of some of the day was shown at the end of the meeting.

It was also mentioned that Mark guides at the Long Mynd and also does trips to Bulgaria, a possibility for a club trip.

Speedwings

The club has received an email from David Reckitt, who is training with Gordy Oliver to fly speed wings and intends to fly them on club sites. He states that he won't be joining the club until the BHPA has sorted out the situation with speedwings and insurance. An invitation for him to attend a club meeting has been extended and for now the club is ok with the situation until clearer direction comes from the BHPA.

Somebody pointed out that the current situation with speedwings is similar to that with the early days of PGs.

Trophys and awards

It was decided that the awards for PG and HG distance, league and most improved will be merged to just one for dist., league and most improved. This is mostly because there are now very few HG flights being made and PG performance improving.

The most improved award will only be offered if there is an obvious choice.

A trophy will soon be acquired for the Mark Stapleton award, for contribution to the club. However a procedure for choosing a candidate is still to be finalised and will be discussed on the club Yahoo group.

HG crash landing article.

Alan Hughes brought to attention an article in October Skywings about how to crash land an HG in an emergency. Apparently the advice on how to do this relatively safely has changed somewhat and is worth a read.

Frostbite comp

This has now been announced for 28th/29 January, weather depending.

Condors XC course

This classroom-based course with Pat Dower is now full on the 4th February but there were still places [Now sold out] for the 5th. The cost is £30. Contact Viv Fouracre at the Condors for details (see Condors website).

Sailplane talk

Mike Gadd will give a talk on his experiences of learning to fly sailplanes at the February meeting.

Agenda January 2012 AGM

- 1 Intro & Chairman's report
- 2 Treasurer's report
- 3 Membership fees for 2012
- 4 Donation to air ambulance?
- 5 Election of officers for 2012
- 6 Club awards: intro
- 7 New Year's resolutions: club objectives for 2012
 - speakers?
 - training?
 - flying trips?
 - socials?
 - comps?
- 8 Flight Confessions
- 9 Safety matters
- 10 AOB
- Break & vote counting
- 11 Club awards presentation
- 12 Quiz

For those interested in the committee membership for 2012, here are the current officers:

Chairman	Alan Hughes
Secretary	Tim Pilling
Treasurer	Julie Stapleton
Membership Secretary	Dougal Martin
Club Contact & Coach	Bob Moore
HG Safety Officer	Mark Nicol
PG Safety Officer	Paul Cioffi
Sites Officer (Dartmoor & East)	Robin Mogridge
Sites Officer (West)	Mark Ansell
Club Webmaster	Ashley Ryall
HG Comps Officer	Colin Jones
PG Comps Officer	Matt Allott
XC League compiler	Ashley Ryall
Social Secretary	Gordon White
Club Librarian	Simon Kiddy
Newsletter Editor	Mark Ansell
Schools Liaison Officer	Paul Cioffi

Not all have confirmed they will re-stand, so if interested in a post make a show at the AGM or let the Secretary or Chairman know in advance.

[UK] Winter Flying News

Sunday 27th November Mark Nicol went to Dizzard:

A fun afternoon was had by the Hangies on Sunday. The forecast was for NNW strong at first, decreasing during the day.

Arriving at 10.30 am the wind at take off was 25-30 mph but by 2.00 pm it had dropped to 18 - 22 mph and so Geoff Brooks, Mark Nicol and two visiting Malvern pilots chose to fly.

Ridge lift took us to about 900ft but using weak sea thermal height gains of up to 2000 ft were possible.

As soon as you went behind the ridge the sea thermal went to nothing and it was too late in the day to go xc.

There was clearly no land thermal -the sky 3 miles downwind of the coast was blue.

By 4.30 pm it was just about paraglidable -but it was also getting dark. C'est la vie.

Same day Sam went to Sennen:

Had a lovely day on the hanger and para down at Sennen,

Weather was very well behaved and did exactly as forecast, 25+ on arrival by about 12pm had eased to 20 - 22 and by 3pm I had a scoot about on the para.

Was the first time I had flown the site and found it very friendly. Take off for the hanger is easy with a large flat top landing area (which is a car park in summer and can be very busy). The last 20ft of my landing approach got a bit rotory with gliders nose dropping and me heading for the ground quicker than expected, managed to round it out for a soft landing on the wheels. Don't think it was a speed issue/stall as I was trimmed in and had been from about 40 - 50ft after my final turn, perhaps I was a bit too far back in the field.

Flying conditions were great fun with strong lift and sink cycles to keep you on your toes and 500+ on the hanger. Ed and Iain turned up and we flew the para's from about 3.30 until the lift switched off and it started to get Dark.

Good day glad to be back on the Hang Glider as it had been a while.

Saturday 10th December Mark N was out at Polhawn:

Got there at 10.45 to find WNW 18mph, gusty and showery, so retired to the van for food and drink.

An hour later it had backed Westerly and dropped to around 12mph -although about a mile off shore you could see wind lines on the sea. I launched and had a nice flight boating about at up to 250 ft. The wind picked up whilst I was in the air as I thought it would. I top landed, as agreed, to report on the conditions to other pilots and found that it had picked up sufficiently that launching for all of us would be quite tricky.

At this point Colin Jones launched from the pony field, flew over to us and slope/top landed rather neatly.

Another hour passed and it dropped again and went WSW-probably around 15mph. By this time the beach was getting smaller. I launched and boated about again at up to 250 ft -but the conditions felt like a mildly thermic day which I guess it was. Big areas of gentle lift, followed inevitably by big areas of sink. The sinky bits were big enough to make me nervous and start thinking about where I might have to land.

After 20 minutes I chose to top land -using the D risers to kill the wind, as suggested by Mark Leavesley. It worked really well. As I was packing up the wind veered WNW again and picked up again. It was blowing along the bay just as it had done 4 hours earlier.

All day the sky looked really active -showers forming out to sea and over the land. It may have been a ridge of high pressure -but it was a very unstable airmass. I expected the wind to back during the day -but it then veered again. There were no obvious big clouds behind us that would have caused it to veer.

Regarding my comments about the suitability of Polhawn for inexperienced flyers -its interesting that Nick Bubb agrees with my views. I had a good look at it yesterday from the air and feel that I certainly didn't overstate the case. Enjoy -but only fly if the conditions are good.

Same day Mick chose to go to Woolacombe:

Arrived at Woolacombe 10am; big shower out to sea so waited until 11am for that to clear and then launched in the bowl. Quite strong conditions, but fine if you stayed in front of the hill and only ventured in as and when there was a calmer period. There were a few other wings in the air (Joey, Dominic, Greg and the three Chester pilots). By 1 pm it was time to move to the dunes with sea thermals taking you from scratching the dunes to a few hundred feet above. Every one packed up about 3pm when the rain came in. Once again Woolacombe was worth the drive

Tuesday 10th January Bob reported from Polhawn:

An interesting day at Freathy/Polhawn for a lot of mid-week reprobates.

Alan and I got there around 11am. Too far off at Freathy and we could see a couple of people at Polhawn so we headed there. Eventually there was Bill, Dazza, Col Jones and Blagdon, Rob Mills, Sam A, Ed and Ian, Cad, Dougie, Mark Helm - I counted nine or more.

Wind light at first 8 mph. Then it started picking up so me, Bill, Dazza, Dougie and the Cols took off. 360 feet at best (or worst?) It very soon got too strong and myself and a couple of others had interesting landings. I struggled to get down. Very big Big Ears (25% each side) got me down in the field towards Freathy though I landed not very prettily and with the glider over the fence into the road. A couple of others landed in the stubble field behind the road there. In the end just Col Blagdon was flying and he landed perfectly without any probs whatsoever at Polhawn. Anyway no injuries to anyone and a few of us learned how Polhawn can get very tricky if the wind picks up!

The wind soon picked to 18 plus so we hung around and hung around and eventually it dropped 3pm ish to 10 - 12 maybe and everyone who was still around flew AND Mark Helm had his first post accidents flight! Anyhow it was well west so the best beat was towards the church. 20 mins later it was getting even lighter so we all dropped down and packed up and went home.

I had I guess maybe an hour and it was the first flight of 2012 for most and me. Bob

Wednesday 11th Jan Editor also went to Freathy/Polhawn:

I arrived at the coast around 1:30pm. As there were already 7 PGs in the air I reckoned the Polhawn parking would be full (very wet on the grass) so parked at Freathy next to Bob's camper. The Reeds were there 'airing' their HG and Bill A turned up with his on the roof, but the wind speed only registered 5 - 6 mph (Bill's meter) so he didn't unload.

PGs were flying past from Polhawn with evident WSW wind at height. Bob came along and landed (after 45 min flight) to take his van along to Polhawn. So I popped the wing up in a 'light breeze' and felt it tugging to go, so took a run down to Polhawn and back (on bar) with no difficulty and thoroughly enjoyed the 30 min flight. I landed for a coffee and prepared to go again in a similar breeze, but this time the wing turned more WSW and wouldn't fly, so packed up and joined the others for a chat at Polhawn

It was still buoyant with Bob, Chris B and Mark H floating around and practicing landings. Chris Nash and Tim were packing and I passed Bill N on the way over.



Mark Helm refuses to come down!

Same day: Alan K rang me to say he had flown at Cox Tor with Matt, CJ, CB and Chris M.

Friday 13th January Mark Helm was at Beesands:

Friday the 13th brought some lucky flying conditions at Beesands. I flew alone on the NE bit in strongish winds for a couple of hours before Les arrived. His timing was spot on just as the wind dropped to a nice 12mph and started to shift more easterly. Mick B and two other blokes arrived and things started to get really good.

The wind was now ENE and with some nice sea thermals which allowed a couple of trips across to Start Point and back. It was good to see Mick also made it over with some skilful low level soaring before gaining good height over towards the lighthouse.

All landed safely and went to the pub. Awesome day!

Monday 16th Jan Robin went to Labrador Bay:

Four of us flew at Labrador Bay in the afternoon. Initially it seemed too strong with the wind gusting 20mph in the compression by the car park, but over at the steep T/O in the field north of the car-park field it was less. Robin "wind-dummy" Mills took off first as usual, had a little trouble penetrating with big-ears and speed-bar, but once out over the sea seemed to be managing fine and in fact flew down to Babbacombe and back on speed-bar. I prevaricated, thinking that, although the T/O seemed manageable, the landing in the stubble field behind could be a little hairy, being in the compression zone plus the fact I hadn't flown for two months and felt pretty rusty (as well as old). Anyway Mick turned up and soon took off penetrating easily, which gave me the incentive to follow.

We all flew down to Babbacombe and back without any dramas and with the help of some good sea thermals (4 or 5ups on occasion) - the first time for me and Mick! - and landing with big-ears in the stubble field wasn't as hairy as I'd feared. Tom (?) also flew and landed safely but a little too close to the road for comfort (watching from above it looked like, as he wasn't using big-ears, he was getting blown back onto the road, but in the end he had 20ft to spare). All in all a good hour's flying and a good way to end my two months drought!

Tuesday 17th Jan. Editor went to Struddick:



At 3pm it suddenly switched on from calm somewhat later than we had hoped and Bill N, Mark H, Tim (on solo), Malcolm, Jim F, Robin Mog, Sam and I quickly launched into a slightly SSW breeze, which was strengthening all the time. Several of us pushed (bar) down to Millendreath before exploring East. Bill shouted "Freathy?" and finding I had 300' ATO followed him over Seaton beach to top up on the next hill. I wanted more height so topped up with Tim joining me, but Bill was off and we had to push on to keep up. I used a lot of bar, but Bill was half a mile ahead of me by Portwrinkle, and I only gained a bit as he struggled at Tregantle.

Bar was needed from there to push on round the bay and I turned back at the car park just short of Polhawn as the lift was weak and bonfire smoke indicated the wind was coming over Rame head into that corner. Tim pushed on a bit further before following me back towards Freathy, thinking Bill would land there.

However I then realised there were 6 of us on the expedition and I wondered who would retrieve all of us! So no option but to follow Bill back towards Seaton. Tim (Aspen) and Sam (Rush3) soon overtook me and I followed their lead back across Battern Cliffs (full bar!), landing after just short of 2 hours in the half dark back at Struddicks. All 6 made it back packing in the dark.



Sam and Tim lead me back over Portwrinkle (Bill is a speck ahead over Battern Cliffs)

Malcolm had decided not to follow, and Jim had to land after finding his speed bar lines caught around his leg straps [A wise decision as I was on bar for most of the trip]. It was then too gusty to launch again.

Other News

Curry Night

A good evening was had by all who went and well done again for Gordon organising.



Mark Helm Injuries

Following Mark Helm's unfortunate cascade of injuries reported in the autumn you might have seen that his doctor has failed to keep him out of the sky and he is back on the hill with his camper van and appearing in flying reports. He still has a weak left elbow, but this doesn't appear to hinder his exploits. Welcome back Mark.

Darren makes CP

Just before the last meeting Darren 'razzadazzas' Sheperd finally got his CP sign off and has been anxious to get out at every occasion this winter.

Pilot Exam Lectures

Jeff Hoer, the Condor's Senior Coach has told us he's not certain the Condors will be running the lectures this winter. So, its up to us to sort out our own lectures and invite the Condors along!

Any pilot is welcome to attend the lectures. They are designed to help you learn all you need to pass the pilot exam, but even if you don't want to take the exam, or are already pilot rated, you are still welcome.

The date of the lectures will be determined by the weather. Mark N (Senior Coach) will make the decision on a Thursday evening after checking all the forecasts for the following Saturday or Sunday and put it on the Yahoo group.

The lectures will be held at the Royal Oak, South Brent -where we have our club meetings. Start at 10 a.m. Two lectures before lunch; break for lunch and then one lecture in the afternoon. Air law covered by Mark Nicol, Meteorology covered by Alan Hughes and Principles of Flight covered by Karl Sweeney,

Following the lectures your mind will be turning somersaults but once you have had a break -perhaps a walk around the block (in the rain), then you may be ready to take your pilot exam.

The BHPA say that sitting your pilot exam should be the last step in gaining your pilot rating. In other words you should have completed all your flying tasks first. Any pilot who wants to take their Pilot exam or even Advanced Pilot exam can give Mark their BHPA number and he can order their paper in advance.

Taking your exam immediately after the lectures is optional. If you don't feel quite ready then you can sit the exam at a later date. Normally pilots sit their exam at Mark's house in Ugborough or before a club meeting in South Brent.

You have 1 hour 40 minutes for the exam, but in practice most pilots finish much quicker. You either know it or you don't..... The exam is multiple choice with 4 possible answers to each question. The pass mark is 70 % in each section. Everything you need to know to pass the exam is listed in the back of the pilot handbook and there are various websites that give you helpful revision questions.

Just to give you a taste of what to expect Alan Hughes, Robin Mogridge and Mark will be organising a quiz for the February club meeting. A lot of the questions will be similar to those you might be asked in the pilot exam. So, if you think you want to attend the lectures then please let Mark know so he has an idea of numbers.

For Sale (also see club website)

I have cleared down last year's list, so please let me have any fresh adverts you want posting.

AGM Meeting is on Thursday 26th January 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.

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