



NEWSLETTER

July 2012

Well at first thoughts I would have expected the rest of June and early July to be a wash out (now a 'burn' out), but as ever the determined few managed to find somewhere in region to fly. However Bob probably made the right decision to do a France Tour at this time. We have a new exciting report of an XC from Plymouth to Paignton as well as my chance to explain how to chuck your reserve, how to avoid it and the consequences. There are some other confessions not posted on Yahoo which I hope will come out at Clubnight.

June Meeting minutes

Apologies: Bob Moore, Julie Stapleton, Chris Bellamy

Treasurer's report

Colin Blagdon reported that the club accounts are roughly £2000 in credit, but he suggests thinking about the possibility of site fee increases which may mean an increase in the membership subs.

He also reports that the club account is now online so BACS payments can be made into it.

Flights

There were reports of some speed flying and a video of Colin Jones on his Atos at Freathy.

Colin Blagdon had flyable days every day at Oludeniz recently, though he found Reaction Paragliding let him down for lifts to launch.

Interlaken

Alan Hughes gave a small presentation of his recent trip to Interlaken with the Northants club. This is an annual trip, normally to Laragne but they changed venues this year, having found the weather in Laragne getting less reliable. There was some discussion about the club joining them next year, again to Interlaken.

Next month

Any members with ideas for future meetings can air them on the Yahoo group or mention them at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

8:00 pm Meeting Start

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| 1. Intro | - Alan | 10 mins |
| Woolacombe windsock info | | |
| 2. Club T-shirts | - Ashley | 15 mins |
| 3. Flight "confessions" | - all guilty pilots | 20 mins |

4. Safety matters - Mark N 5 mins
9:00 pm Break

5. Chase Cam designs & results – Bob / ColinB? / James?
6. Flight videos – including Colin's XC
10:00 Meeting Close

[UK] Flying News (following on from where I cut off last month)

Sunday 24th Richard went to Freathy

Got out off Freathy . First hour got motion sickness. Quite distressing as I had to stop big boat sailing due to it . I thought "Oh no not another sport I can't do". Anyway second flight was a bastard launch due to the wind swinging, but once up the best flight I have had. Bright sunshine, plenty of wind - just pure fun. I can say the Zion rocks in these conditions.

Same day Sam was at Chapleworth

Flew Chaple Porth on the hanger then Para. On arrival about 11am the wind was 18 - 22 wsw cloud quickly clearing, I was the only pilot. Paul H, Nigel W Phippsy, Kaz and students arrived by which time I was rigged and ready to go. The only hitch was no beach and the wind was dropping but veering more on the hill. Luckily the beach appeared before the wind dropped to much allowing me a decent flight about 250ato which slowly diminished so time to land. Para then came out the bag for a bit, as wind continued to drop & veer so moved to Perran for more para's. A lovely day and much needed as June has been one of the most frustrating months for flying I think have experienced!

Wednesday July 4th Editor went to Freathy (and nearly died!)

Well a promising start to the day after Bill texted me. I arrived at 12:15 with Tim and Bondy also just unloading. I went for a first flight, expecting many more, and got excellent height flying over the beach from Polhawn to Tregantle (red flags) and didn't drop below 300' ato with magnificent views I cursed leaving the camera in the car and landed after 30 mins to get it and for a coffee.

Then I realised that the wind had picked up and I wasn't getting off again. A large crowd then arrived, unable to get off except on speedwings, or Graham Gilbert's determination.

A hardened group hung around until 5pm when it eased enough for many to get off, but Bondy and I still thought it a bit too strong. CJ had been flying a demo wing and soon landed, offering me a chance on the Niviuk with his reversible harness (very comfortable). I am now the same weight as him, so thought it might be better in the stronger wind. I checked out the reserve position and speed system, but didn't ask about Big Ears.

After 3 attempts to launch (it comes up very fast) I punted out and had a nice flight , with Alan H the only other PG still airborne. Colin said to try the speed system, and sure enough it hurtles along on full bar, feeling very comfortable. After a more beats around take-off and the chalets I was feeling quite comfortable, and decided to try big ears in case the wind got even stronger. At this point I looked up to only see a single red line to the tips, but on pulling that I couldn't see much difference. I therefore looked around and saw what looked like a Big Ear pulley that we have on the Sky wings. I started heaving on that, but it seemed to offer too much resistance, so released it again At that point all hell broke loose and I looked up to see a huge cravat half way across the wing.

Fighting to control the wing as it turned into the cliff I could see I was now below the chalets (Alan K says that I had had big ears in, so had lost some height) and there was no beach, just the roaring of the waves at the base. So I gave it 3 large pumps on the brakes, but no sign of it moving – SO TIME TO DEPLOY. I watched the reserve sail out of view as the wing now spun hard and it was 1,2, bang I hit the cliff (back first!) and then bounced off and tumbled further down the cliff before wing and reserve snagged – in fact the reserve continued to try and fly, while I could see I was on a very steep cliff, and fought to get it down and stable. I think I the reserve inflated fractionally before I impacted, and I may in fact have been penduluming under it when I hit the cliff!

A quick review of my nervous systems suggested I was not paralysed, but in danger of falling further. I rang James Bull to say I was alive (some thought I was a goner as they couldn't see me deploy) and decided (although the book tends to say stay there) that I would get out of the harness and scramble up the blackthorn (it cushioned my impact) to safety.

Thanks to all those who came to my assistance (including RNLI, Coastguard, Police, Paramedics and finally an ambulance) with Martin Foley, Steve his mate, Graham, Terry (thanks for dropping off the car), James, CB, Colin J (I believe I owe you a new reserve, or lines), Alan H and Alan K (who followed me to hospital and got me home) and anyone else I've forgotten. After 3 hours immobilised in Derriford I sighed a huge sigh of relief when they told me I had severe bruising ("it will hurt like hell in the morning") and that my spine was a mess, but only from the previous smash, with no new fractures.

So if you are going to fly a demo wing, make sure you know how to pull Big Ears and check where the Reserve is (which I did).

Thursday 5th David and Richard were at Beesands:

David - "Just landed after half hour, glorious, east with a tad of south but steer had north. Come join me all alone, sun starting to shine. No more than 8 - 10 but ok for my alpha5 28. It dropped a tad hence I made it to field for coffee"

Richard - Beesands beckoned and I was not one to refuse. 14:00 light wind and drizzle. Clouds lifted sun and a little more wind. Time for the slug and speed harness. Several dummy launches testing the wind. Up and away. There lay the problem. Up was too much up for a speed harness and the away was only checked by big ears. 2nd attempt with the slugs harness Brilliant. Up with the clouds. Had a good afternoon starting on spirals (Didn't quite fall asleep whilst it went around) Then tried to see how much I could asymmetric collapse the slug and still stay true and straight. Big confidence builder. Quick trip to Halsands and back to see another glider setting up. That did it the wind went.

Same day Bob was at Labrador Bay

Lab Bay was the place to be - until the orographic rolled in and the wind picked up!



Got there 12 ish, top end wind, one glider up. Cad. Chris B launched first and they both headed off towards Babbacombe. TimP and I launched and headed off to Babbacombe. Arrived back at t/o end 3/4 hr later and noticed Chris B and Cad had gone across the Teign. About the same time the oro started rolling in. I was big earring and pushing out to stay in clear air. Top landing became out of the question. Figured I'd wait for a hole and try and drop in to top land but it got worse, you could see wispy stuff coming in below you at times. Tim said he had a white out at one point. Shouted to Tim beach would be a good idea, which I'm sure he'd figured too. We lost height and I discovered it is VERY difficult getting into a beach, even a long one, in a good breeze when it's backed by steep cliffs. Lose height over the sea and come in but almost impossible to get down. Just ended up soaring the beach at 30 feet. Tim eventually got down on his feet and in the end I got down but not a pretty landing, just a fast one on my backside, feet dragging a trench along the beach. On reflection I might have done better to bit the bullet, get height and fly across the Teign and land on the beach that side. I'll certainly consider that if the situation arises again. Or land with big ears in? Dragged mushroomed gliders through the tunnel to pack on the grass and were met by a coastguard vehicle as they'd had a report of two paragliders landing in the sea. Unfortunately I used to work in the CG Operations room so new I was in for a ragging. The CG passed me his phone, two incidents in 24 hours the Watch Manager said. (I know him.) Well actually ours wasn't an incident. Why don't we phone and say there are 6 of us going to xyz to fly. I explained it's not quite as straightforward as that! And then Chris B and Cad arrived having got the bus back from the 'other side'.

Anyhow good old Jon Thorne turned up too and gave us a ride to the top where we saw Rob Mog and Martin Foley having fun trying to get down as the tops were still quite clagged and the breeze had picked up. Nice flight, good decisions made and a lesson learned re landing on the Ness Beach. Made me realise just how difficult it would be squeezing into one of those little cliffy coves.

Robin added - Yep, great conditions at LabBay yesterday - so much lift around - any time you get 1000'@S/L on a coastal site in summer (no sea thermals? I guess) can't be bad. Got to Babbacombe and back without getting below 100'@T/O, so no stress there. Only prob was the orographic, but then that seems to come with or cause the lift - can anyone explain that?

Yes, both Martin and I top-landed or rather top-crashed, both of us in the car-park field! Luckily no injuries. I came in too fast in big-ears and couldn't turn away from the hill in time so skidded up the slope luckily avoiding the cow-pats. Martin came in lower down the field, got caught in rotor from the fore-cliff and dropped 6 to 8 feet then got annoyed with a sikh who was filming all this - so you might be able to see it on Utube. The problem with top-landing yesterday was that you needed big ears to get down low enough to land and also to get below the orographic but if you came out of them too early in the landing process you could shoot up into the orographic become disoriented and end up flying down-wind over the road - not to be recommended! Well done to John and Chris who jumped the Teignmouth Gap and got to Holcombe, if I known about the bus service back I might have tried it, I've only used my bus pass twice on retrieves since I've had it!

Saturday 14th July Richard went to Woolacombe:

Woolers worked well today. Had to wait for the wind to swing then it slowly built all day in good sunshine. 3 Paras 1 tandem 2 mini wings and a hangi (Not all at the same time). Rather nice to try a new wing. I took a little Cloud Spurline 16 as a PX . Bit fast a furious but good fun.

Sunday Julie was there as well:

Flew for hour and three quarters. Now 3 hangies in air and stronger. At least 22/25 mph at take off later. Mick and Richard Osborne been flying as well but now landed. U turn para in Air as well now. Too strong for me later, so went for an hours boogie boarding!

Chris Bellamy added: Woolacombe was sweet today, arrived at 09.30, quite top end. Lovely and sunny. Few hangies and one paraglider already up. I had an hour and a half flight, 1070 ft above take off. Saw Mick, Andy Holt and Julie Stapleton arrive to join me in the air.

Had a break for some munch and then took off again, was even stronger so ended up playing around in the dunes with Mick for ages (oo er), another hour and a half flight had so am satiated flying wise for now.

Simon went to Perran instead:

Sat arrived at 11.30, hang gliders had been flying all morning, wind reports under what was on the hill. Went down on to the dunes, flew for an hour and half. Lunchbreak. Wind dropped so went for a coffee with 3 of the lads, small rain belt went through, wind picked up behind, so had a nice flight to finish the day.

Sun arrived at 10, wind reports were well out, blowing 18+ bang on the hill, local hangies flying Sam turned up, took off after I left for the dunes, came back up at 1.30 for lunch, bumped into Tim, not sure if he flew, still blowing 18+, so went back down to the dunes again! Wind took a bit of south in it so the last flight back was slow and challenging, managed to top land, finished at 5.30.

Overall weekend of good flying, dunes only, however, learnt a lot, loads of A's and C's launches, loads of side landings, loads of scratching, about 5 hrs Sunday, add Sat's hours – well happy with the weekend's flying, good to get away from the wife!!

Sunday 22nd July, while most of us hung around Whitsand Bay in Fog, Sun and then no wind, Mick went back to Sharkham:

Had over three hours flying around the corner at Sharkham /south downs still flyable when I left at six. Wind was light so after trying to launch packed up walked up to field overlooking Mansands hoping to fly there go up the valley where birds were thermalling, but wind too light to soar the field .so launched and went over cliffs half expecting to go to beach, but nice bit of lift light at times and had an hour and three quarters and landed back in Sharkham field and packed up left at two went back at four a nice sea breeze by now took off normal place and played till six but it was still really nice even then.

Plymouth to Paignton Sunday 15th July – Newsletter exclusive!

Colin Blagdon writes: The area to the east of Plymouth Sound is possibly our most sensitive “off radar” site, it has grim history, indifferent land owner's, is in a time controlled Danger area and if the take-off wasn't challenging enough, bottom landing options are equally poor and we are in full view of the whole of Plymouth.

There much to consider here, please, don't attempt flight here without consulting with me or another committee member first.

On Sunday the 15th the forecast winds from the North West seemed stubbornly strong and determined to stay way off to the North. Myself, Graham Gilbert and Colin Jones decided that we could do para-waiting, staring into space, multiple coffees, walks, talking as though, if we talked long enough the conditions would change. 3hrs after we arrived, and should have gone home, having talked plenty, against the odds, the conditions came to us!

A zip in my flying suit was broken, no worries, it was a warm day and we wouldn't be aloft for long.... I'll not even bother with gloves; more important I thought, was that I had a camera on my head.

The climb out was epic, Graham on his newish Gin Spirit Evo and fancy harness just rocketed skywards, Col flying a demo Gradient Aspen 4 seemed to be staying behind in case we needed retrieving, though this would change. I was flying a new Advance Sigma 8 demonstrator, kindly loaned by Ashley, thx mate; what a wing! Although we were all clearly going up, a little work was needed to stay in the strongest lift which unfortunately seemed to be going straight out to sea over Bovisands.

After an undue amount of height gathering facing out over Plymouth sound and a realization that we would need to keep crabbing cross wind; at between 2000 and 2500ft we began circling across the county. We were still going up! I began to feel reassuringly cool and happy. In fact the ecstasy of the flight mixed in with the fact that I was sharing this flop over the back with mates and had it on camera was keeping me warm. Then the lift failed us, a bit, we raced North and South trying to pick it up again.



I'd flopped over the back to the end of Yelmpton a couple years ago, and for a while it seemed that we would perhaps be landing not too far from there again. In fact what seemed low this time was on closer examination in fact still some 1200ft asl it was just that we'd been at around 3500ft for long enough to lose some perspective. Luckily I found a low thermal and much to my surprise the three of us needed that "low" save.

From there on, watching Colin and Graham appear to race around the sky, taking in the spectacular view below us, and the continuous, mainly gentle lift, never exceeding 7.5's up or 6.5's down made for a truly dream like experience, for me the best uk flying experience ever, and I've got it all in HD video! Crossing in turn the rivers and estuaries along the way was just icing on the cake.



We crossed the Yelm, then the Erme over which we got relatively low, the Avon leading out to Burgh Island, the Salcomb Estuary and Kinsbridge, Slapton Ley and finally the very picturesque, Dart. Apart from our relatively low pass over the Erme the lift was more or less easy and everywhere with cloud streets sort of forming and going in equal measure. We just flew over a mouthwatering list of beauty spots in great weather.



I was in a very privileged position looking down on one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world, with my mates, and on camera – wow!



Without radios our obvious goal was Paignton. Before we crossed the last and most picturesque river, the Dart we were at some 4500ft asl, the clouds had that convergence apron appearance about them and it was 1.5c! I was beginning to notice that I'd been shivering for some time, my hands were blue, my flight was coming to an end, at this point we'd been wafting across the county for about an hour and a quarter.



While in the air the windspeed had increased and possibly gone a little more north, curtailing any plans we may have had for landing on the beach or anywhere too close to the coast, such a landing had to weighed up against the risk of an unscheduled swim!

We were all on new wings and wanted to live, so we played safe, each landing safely within a few fields of each other near the old Nortel Factory in Paignton. The GoPro2 has a battery life of 1hr 36mins and it ran out about 150ft above the landing field, what are the chances? Until I got home and put the camera chip in the tablet I couldn't be sure that I had even remembered to turn the camera on, but, Yes!



I landed safely to see Graham approach a landing in what appeared to be one field over. Then I heard what sounded like migrating wildebeests, Graham's approach had scared some 70 bullocks out of the field adjacent to mine into a thundering herd that came at me through a gap in the hedge I'd hither to not noticed. Bugger! At the speed of light I sort of junk gathered/packed everything and ran to the edge of the field when I realized that the herd had stopped as though some invisible force field held them in it's power, it was in fact a difficult to see electric fence! Phew!

We had real ale and an everlasting plate of chips in Paignton's new Premier Inn while waiting a short time for Colin's darling retrieve wife Cass, to come and get us. A group of girls in the same bar had been watching our landing approach from the beach, for a few moments we basked in the warm golden light of celebrity. It turns out we had also been seen by those in my local pub who were boat fishing that day and most unhappily I suspect by Dougie, who was also fishing from the shore near the Hoe and who had to watch the full birth of this unlikely minor epic emerge!

Other News

Windsock at Woolacombe

The wind sock box at woolers now has a combination lock, (ND had expensive socks getting nicked), the combination is, you guessed it, 1013. Could pilots take care putting it up and taking it down please, it's huge and can snag on the barbed wire. there is a small fishing rod with a swivel and brummel hook at the top, with the wind sock connected the ex fishing rod slots into a cup on the wooden pole then clips into a white plastic pipe clip. The National Trust expects us to stow it after flying, so we usually say last on the hill stows it.

For Sale (see club website)

I have not duplicated all Ashley's work, so please see <http://www.sdhgpgc.org.uk/>

Next Meeting is on Thursday 26th July 7:30pm at the **Royal Oak, South Brent.**

Mark Ansell, Newsletter Editor,

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