



NEWSLETTER

March 2010

Well March was an marked improvement after the wet February and brought some early XC surprises. It was still rather cold for me and we need to be aware of the bumpy spring thermals that occur for the next month or so and were mentioned in several reports. It's fine for those with plenty of current flying hours, but those newer CPs please be wary as we hope to have a long summer ahead and want no early accidents to cut short your season.

Also a reminder that **annual subscriptions** are now overdue with only 47 paid up out of 87 last year. Please bring your money to club night or pay via PAYPAL on the website www.sdhgpgc.org.uk

February Meeting minutes

It was a wet and windy evening and attracted a low turnout of 13, with few reports of flying

Annual Repack

Gordon arranged the event at Devonport School for Saturday 27th March. Andy agreed to support with tuition as usual with several other volunteers. The event runs from 3pm to 7pm and we recommend members spread their arrivals, but don't all turn up at 6pm (especially if flyable) as it will give too little time for everyone to get a repack sorted. There is no agreed fee to cover costs of booking the hall, but we will look into whether coffee can be arranged.

Make the most of it as each year has revealed some worrying mispack or another, e.g. reserves not attached or failed to deploy. Best found out in the hall rather than spinning towards the ground over Dartmoor.

Directions are below in appendix.

First Aid Courses

Julie's contact who may be able to do a free assessment (we would have to pay for the venue) has been long term sick, but is still a potential trainer.

Chris N's brother-in-law is a Derbyshire paramedic so might be persuaded down.

The London Inn Venue

The London Inn is up for sale so we may need to move. The Landlady is still awaiting news on the sale of the property and whether that will force closure of the pub.

The Royal Oak is an option being considered in South Brant, but meetings may clash with Restaurant operations.

Brass Monkey Competition

This was proposed for 27/28th Feb or 6/7th March. [Karl finally cancelled this year's event due to bad weather being forecasted].

Trophies

The Club has a number of trophies that can be awarded if merited. For 2009, 4 were chosen based on XC League results:

Best Distance (single flight) PG went to Mat Allott with 42.2 km;

Best Distance (single flight) HG went to Chris Smith with 38.6 km;

Best Distance (season total) PG went to Robin Mogridge with 150.2 km;

Best Distance (season total) HG went to Geoff Brook with 83.5 km;

(Season total takes the top 6 flights the individual submitted).

Well done to all involved. It was noted that the Club now has several budding skygods including Dougie as well as the above.

Devon Adventures Flying School

Some members had expressed concern whether Robert Greenwood's school was BHPA registered and had National Parks permission to teach at our sites. This followed concerns over rough pilots jeopardising sites.

Robert responded:

"To allay your old hands' concerns Devon Adventures is indeed an approved school BHPA no.364 and I have a first class safety record having been teaching hill launched paragliding (solo and tandem) since 1992.

The landowner (The Duchy of Cornwall) has authorised my school to fly on its sites and is in the process of drawing up a written agreement and if you would like I will be happy to forward you a copy when I receive such. The Duchy has advised that it could be some time before I have in my hands a written agreement as they have quite a few protocols to follow but that as far as they are concerned I should carry on in the meantime.

I have liaised with the Dartmoor National Park Authority and they have approved my school operating so long as the Duchy of Cornwall is in agreement which as before mentioned is indeed the case."

If anyone wants to learn more, the school mobile is 079 1766 1766

Insurance

Robin Mog pointed out that BHPA insurance has been increased to £5m for land owners and £2m for 3rd parties, which should now satisfy the Strete licence requirements.

Future Events

For March it was suggested asking Phippsey to give a talk on Paramotoring [this has been confirmed] Richard Whitmarsh has been rebooked for April.

Robert Greenwood of Devon Adventures will be invited to give a talk at the May meeting.

Video shows

Mark & Julie showed their flying videos of the air games at Olu Deniz last autumn.

Other News

Twitter

Bob and 6 members are experimenting with SMS texting to the web for pilot reports on site. Various e-mails have been sent via the group mail explaining progress. Hopefully Bob can give an update at the next meeting.

Freathy Fence

Bill reports that a gang of men are replacing the wire fence & posts around the TO field. The good news is that a stile has been put near the lay-by at the west of the TO field, but the bad news is that there is a dangerous steel structure supporting the fence in front of the top TO. A mistake & someone could be impaled on the top of a steel spike. Can the site officer have a word with the land owner to see if we can cover this with an old mattress or some other sort of padding? Landing on the barbed wire could cut a pilot or tear a sail or PG, but landing on this spike could seriously injure someone.

Flying News (sorry no photos as I wasn't out)

27th Feb Bill wrote:

Got to [Freathy] after low tide at 1130 - nearly mid day & paragliders were flying. One landed near the gate in the TO field & the last one took a long time to get high enough to join him. The wind was about 10-12 mph, but then increased to 15 mph at 1230 & Martin Reed started rigging his HG. When Martin took off before 1300 it was 18 mph & he joined the paragliders flying again.

I started to rig - slowly as I have not flown since the end of October. Martin landed at 1330 saying that the wind was dropping off. I checked & it was still 13-15 mph. I continued to rig & was ready to carry forward at 1345 when they said that the wind was dropping off again. One PG was flying back past TO well below the road & the other could only land in the field in front of the road! The last PG eventually gained some height above the Cafe on the beach & landed next to the other PG - in front of the road - opposite the gate to the TO field.

2nd March Bob wrote:

Me, Tim Pilling and Mark Helm had a bit of flying at Beesands today. I had 3/4 till I got a bit cold, wind was off to the north to start, but came on well enough (after I'd landed) for Mark Helm to jump Hallsands and fly the ridge towards Start Point. And he got back too.

Robin Mogridge and Robin Mills flew at Labrador Bay. Plenty of beach for much of the day as it was BIG Spring today.

5th March Dougie wrote:

Great afternoon at Cox today, with easy and strong climbs to the inversion, there was lift all over the valley and 18mph on launch. Story and pics on <http://dougieandjulie.blogspot.com/>

6th March Jim McD wrote:

Got to Beesands at 13:30. ENE at 17mph and steady. No one else there but had a nice 90 min flight testing a new harness and winter gloves, could have stayed up much longer too. The good news is that most of the beach seems to have returned. A couple of weeks ago the sand/shingle was about 6 ft down - don't know how that works - so there are more landing options again.

11th March Jim Fish wrote:

Myself, Tim, Chris b ended up at Cox, with Malcolm and Ivor arriving an hour or so later, Had a good days flying, although as rough as but keeps you on your toes climbs to around 400 - 600 ato , and a last climb to get half way back to cars , Malcolm went over back and landed at Tavy golf course, said it was roughest flight ever

13th March Mat wrote about "Stonking day at corn ridge":

A rather excited Matthew was spotted by Dougie this morning, as i was jumping up and down by the cars, raring to get going! Cu's were popping and the wind was ON. A brisk walk up saw us take off at 1050, straight into some bumpy bumpy. The cycle ended and i was dumped at the bottom requiring a sweaty walk up! After a spot of lunch the wind had picked up a little and more pilots were steadily arriving. Thermals were getting a little punchy at times, with better and better climbs beginning, eventually one came through with the names Dougal, Matthew and Mike on it. We all climbed steadily until Mike unfortunately dropped off the bottom to be snarled up by the Fir Tor monster.

Dougie had his racing head on again and quickly shot off in search of something better, whereas I amazingly had learnt one of my lessons and stayed near base in 0's just happy to be drifting along in my own little world! Another good climb was

found near the Beardown plantation, where i had to decide whether to follow Dougie over the middle of the southern moors or head to Princetown and over Burrator. I chose the latter and was rewarded with a good but short lived climb over Princetown and then a much slower climb over the east side of Burrator. The scenery was simply stunning.

By now i was drifting towards the quarries on lee moor, i estimated my glide to take me well over them. WRONG! at the point of no return the vario dropped off the bottom, so i made a quick escape to the east side where i found the thermal responsible for the massive down, resulting in massive up! phew!

A steady glide down saw me over Tesco at lee mill, hoping that the huge car park would be working, not really! so i carried on a bit further where i did find something, hurrah! The climb was progressing nicely until an air south west plane appeared from nowhere heading what looked like straight for me. Some wild turning from me saw him pass about 300m from me, none the wiser! After the climb topped out i ran into the most awful sea breeze convergence which was really really nasty. I was glad to be heading for the ground and landed just south of Holbeton a couple of kms short of the sea, where it was probably soarable with the sea breeze!

Robin Mog added:

Just to rub it in I did too about an hour or so later, landing at Modbury in a SW wind which probably explains the rough air I encountered near Ermington (11 down at one point) - so the sea breeze is active even this time of year! I know how you feel though, Dougie flew over or close to my place, landing at Dartmouth Cross near Halwell to score the longest distance of the day for SD flyers (don't know how the North Devonians did, except for Richard the Fireman who got to Gara Bridge, I think, also over my place).

14th March Robin again wrote:

Innes manage to make the coast from Sourton yesterday in pretty wild conditions, landing on the beach at Strete and then got a lift back all the way to Mary Tavy - how does he do it? Some other hardy individuals braved the 20mph+ gusts - mostly ex-hangies who thought it was normal to take-off in such condition and Paul who'll fly in a snowstorm, but most of us sat and wished 'we were up there' rather than the other way round.

15th March Tony was at Widgery Cross:

Tom was my guide for the day and took me for a hike up the biggest bloody hill he could find on Dartmoor. I should have been suspicious when he was not carrying his usual handbag stuffed with Hula Hoops. Flew with Tom, Ray, Myles there were also 3 or 4 students learning below and coming up for the odd bit of ridge soaring. Wind was off to the North a promising sky early on but not very productive. Three of us managed to find a thermal and fly back to the car park later in the day. Enjoyed the day.

16th March Bob wrote:

Tim Pilling and I had a nice hour at Strete lunchtime ish. (It made up for missing epic Saturday!). I got there just after 9 and it was 4 - 5 mph e, and a bit claggy (even though Froward web site had shown ese 10 mph?) Anyhow Tim turned up a while later, and after sitting there for a hour or so, it did come on about 11 ish. It was forecast to go south, but we had a hour in quite strong conditions. I had just short of 500 feet at best, to Blackpool Sands once, with a slow struggle to get back as the wind was south of se. Got very low and thought I'd end up on the beach (there was loads) but got back in front of the green house and whizzed back up. We both had a nice boat about, playing with harness adjustments and practising efficient turning in good lift. Plus watching the buzzards and another unidentified small bird of prey that was swooping about the cliffs. Could have been a Hobby Hawk, I've seen one there before. Eventually it did go too far south and I just made it back to the LZ by the car park when I decided to land, because it was well into wind by that stage.

Range Infringement

On that Saturday there was a reported infringement of the Willsworthy range, which was 'unexpectedly' active. Most members have assumed that ranges are safe at a weekend. 2 North Devon pilots admitted to overflying and the club secretary rang to apologise, however it appears to be an easy mistake to make and Robin Mog added:

Oh the ignomy of it - after calling the two North Devon pilots who landed in the Willsworthy range 'naughty boys' at Sourton yesterday, I found when I got home and checked my flight track for Saturday against a map of the ranges, that I too had been a 'naughty boy'. What a muppet! Yes I'd been flying down the Rattlebrook valley, stupidly thinking that because I was well East of the red flags on Rattlebrook Hill and Hare Tor that I was clear of the range but of course the flags don't mark the boundary they just indicate the range is active! In fact the boundary bulges east of the Rattlebrook near where it joins the Amicombe. I reckon I infringed it by a upto 250 metres over a track distance of 2 ks, but it's difficult to compare tracks on Google with a map as

Google doesn't name the Tors. So I'd appreciate it if someone who maybe has the range boundaries on GPS could check this - my flight log is attached. If I'm right I apologise to all for this stupid error and will do whatever members think appropriate to assuage the range authorities e.g. write cringing apologies to the officer i.c. ranges, wear a hare vest for a year, etc..Of course I won't be entering this flight in the XC league.

To check the ranges activity go to www.dartmoor-ranges.co.uk and click on "Firing Notices".

Next Meeting is on Thursday 25th March at the London Inn, South Brent, at 8:00pm
Graham Phipps will give a talk on Motorised Paragliding

Mark Ansell, Newsletter Editor,
SOUTH DEVON HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING CLUB
E-mail: 44homepark@supanet.com

Appendix

South Devon HG& PG Club Repack

Foulston gym Devonport High School for boys, Paradise Road, Stoke, Plymouth PL1 5QP

This describes the most direct route to the school from the A38 via the A386 Tavistock/Outland Road:

1. To get to Outland Road:

From the North East (Exeter)

- follow the A38 past Plympton, over the Marsh Mills interchange flyover
- turn off at the Tavistock/City Centre exit, following the signs for Plymouth City Centre

From the South West (Cornwall)

- Cross the Tamar Bridge and leave the A38 at the Tavistock/City Centre exit, following the signs for Plymouth City Centre

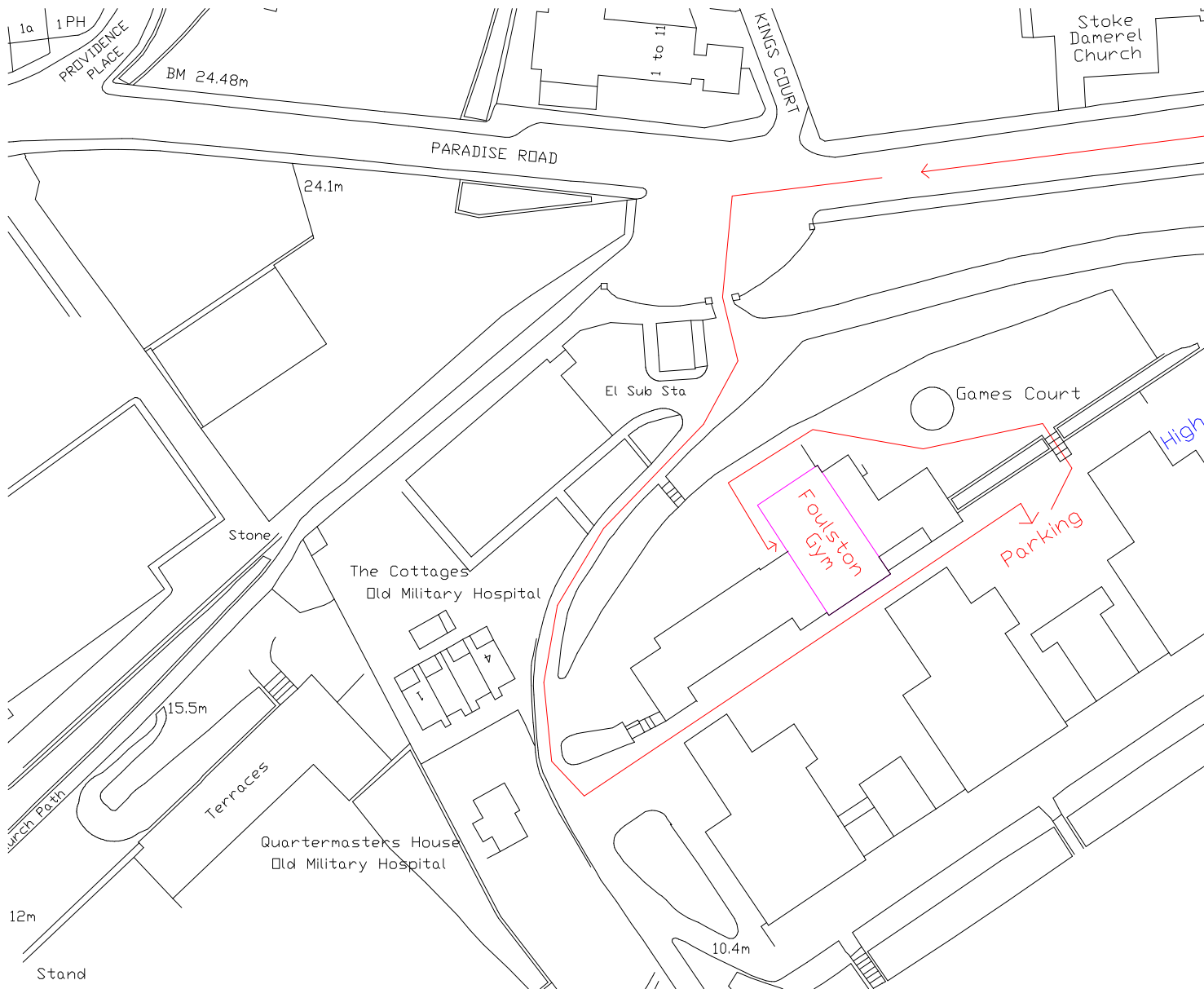
From the North (Tavistock)

- Follow the A386 over the A38 interchange flyover, following the signs for Plymouth City Centre

2.To get to the school from Outland Road:

- at the complex traffic light junction (after the Park and Ride car park & Plymouth Argyle Football club) fork right into **Milehouse Road**, following signs to Torpoint Ferry
- at the next traffic lights, at the top of the hill, turn left on to **Molesworth Road**
- at the Millbridge Inn traffic lights, turn right on to **Wilton Road which becomes Paradise Road**

Devonport High School for Boys is on the left, behind the high stone wall, 250m from the traffic lights



Directions inside the School Campus to the Foulston Gym