



NEWSLETTER

March 2012

It's been a mixed month with cold foggy days to start and then balmy high pressure to end. This has brought some opportunities as well as frustration at our local sites and led to some individuals heading up country to find better conditions. Overall, though, plenty of flying reports.

February 2012 Meeting minutes

Apologies: Julie Stapleton

New Members: Alistair Baker-Dartmouth CP Paraglider

Pat Dower XC Course Feedback

There was good feedback all round from the XC course. Bob Moore "Inspirational", Mark Nicol "Fascinating- money well spent"

Pilot Exam

Papers have been ordered and the exam sat on March 4th.

Brass Monkey Comp

Provisional dates were set for the weekends of 10/11 March or 24/25 March. These have now been moved back to 7/8 April or 21/22 April.

Safety- High Wind Landings at Polhawn

After a recent occasion when several pilots were caught out by increasing winds at Polhawn, members are reminded to look to the sea for clues of any increasing winds. If caught out at Polhawn landing in the field behind the road(the one without the horses) may be safer as there are no obstacles downwind in case of being dragged.

Horses at Polhawn

After some investigation Mark Ansell concluded that the issue with the horses at Polhawn was that they were just going for their feed and that there was no major issue with those horses and PGs. However other horses may not be familiar with PGs and members were reminded to be aware of overflying any horses, especially if they have riders.

HG Crash Landing Video

Alan Hughes showed a video demonstrating why the new crash landing technique written about in recent Skywings is required reading. The video showed a HG landing heavily with the pilot still prone(he was attempting to cross the goal line in a comp) and the nose of the glider ending up on the back of his neck after he shot forwards through the A-frame.

Schools Liaison

It was decided that it was unnecessary to have a formal position for a schools liaison and that a local contact in each population area will do.

Mick Boarer offered to cover the Torbay area. The club is needs contacts for the Plymouth and Okehampton areas. This not strictly a buddy systems, the club coaches can cover that, just a local contact for newly qualified pilots to contact the club.

Repack

A provisional date for the club parachute repack is set for March 31st at the Devonport School for Boys with a possibility of a second one at the South Brent sports hall. Times and dates are still to be confirmed.

Agenda - Thurs 29th Mar 2012

7:30 pm – meet in bar

8:00 pm – meeting starts

1. Intro – Alan – 5 mins
2. Feedback from Pilot Lectures – MarkN / attendees – 10 mins
3. Brass Monkey Comp update – Colin / Matt – 10 mins
4. Repack plans – Alan / Robin / Andy – 5 mins
5. Social events update – Gordon – 5 mins
- Cox Tor bash for April or May - Matt
6. Flight confessions – All Guilty Pilots -10 mins
7. Safety Matters – Mark N – 10 mins

9:00 pm – break for beers etc

9:10 pm – meeting restarts

8. Met: Forecasting & use of RASP – Rebekah Sherwin

10:30 pm – meeting close

[UK] Winter Flying News

Monday 27th Feb Julie went to Woolacombe:

Headed to Woolacombe yesterday afternoon and although scratchy conditions, did manage to gain 300 feet ATO and a fantastic hour in the air. For a day that didn't look too promising it was brilliant to be in the air again after gap since November.

Thanks to a call from Mark Helm, weather guru, I was in the right place at the right time.

Thursday 1st March Mark H was at Batcombe:

No wind but managed to stay aloft for an hour in little thermals today at Batcombe.

Tuesday 6th March Bob went to Freathy

Got there 12:00 ish and 6 or 7 mph spot on direction. HW water at 16:00 and plenty of beach still. At that time just Tim P, Mick B and me there. It picked up slowly to flyable strength by about 1215 and several others turned up as the wind slowly picked up further. A few of us started landing at around 13:30 ish. I started to have to go hands up and could see wind lines starting on the sea so big eared down, lost a bit of height over the sea to about 100 ft ato to make an approach. It was still flyable (if you could get off ok) when Mick and I left at maybe 1500 though a bit top end for launching.

Nice day . Quite easy to get 400 foot plus ato towards the end. I had about an hour and a quarter and about 420 feet ato at best. I counted 6 gliders in the air at one point. Other skivers included Mark Ansell, Col Jones, Mike Connatty, Tim P, Julie S (woo hoo), Mark Helm, Sam Allum, Martin Reed, and a couple of others. Alan H also turned up late, but not sure if he got to fly.



Friday 9th March Mick went to Eype:

Had to go Exeter about work today so carried on to Eype. Arrived about half eleven to find wind a bit westerly but a tandem in the air. On walking up he tried to jump Eype gap but ended up on beach. I launched, wind about 13mph, got 250-300 ato; went across gap with 100ft to spare, but no lift at all from cliffs other side so landed on beach. Repeated this exercise, go to bowl, get 300ft cross gap with even more ht just the same on beach again.

3rd time forget crossing the gap, played in the bowl get some ht and do some wingovers having great fun. Then got direct hit on the nose from pebbles - must have been caught in wing previous trip to beach wind. Came and went throughout the day; landed in a lull about three. Well worth the trip and nice to fly a different site.

Same day Col B was at Freathy

Too strong to paraglide, so I hang glid at Freathy today, the first time for many years. Thanx to Malc for helping me with the hang check and to Col Jones and Alan Hughes for the encouragement. Having picked up a harness from the ill-fated Hang gliding career of Mr Gilbert, I'm at it again!

Yippee! Took off very intuitively and found my old Solar Wings Rumour 1 much nicer to handle than I remembered and the harness was a perfect fit thx Graham. Unfortunately the air was very buoyant indeed and I was very quickly much higher than I wanted to be.

Alan Hughes achieved a height of over 700 ft and was well on his way across the channel before he decided to find his fun back on the ridge. For me landing from on high without an altimeter in view or a sense of being current with the wing made for real excitement. A couple of flights, no damage no injuries, success! Though I must admit the corrosion coating every nut, bolt and cable on my 22 yr old looked much worse in the air, she occasionally "pinged" and creaked like an old wooden ship! Maybe I need a younger model, anyone?

Alan added: As for my flight... conditions were good. When we took off the wind had dropped to around 18mph, and slightly off to the W, but ok @ TO. The flags were flying at Tregantle, so headed over to Rame and off the end a bit.

After a bit of formation flying with Mr. B, headed back to TO, and by now the flags were down, so on past Tregantle. Interestingly I didn't lose any height crossing the rifle range, even though the cliffs are a lot lower there. Seemed to be very buoyant air. Crossing Portwrinkle and the golf course, the lift ran out in the westerly wind. I did push on towards the corner at Batten, but couldn't find any more lift, only bits of rotor off the cliffs. Headed back from there to land at Freathy.

So a fun couple of hours in the air, height gains of 700ft +, and the pleasure of seeing Mr.B flying his Rumour. Excellent!

Sunday 11th March Julie was up at Corn Ridge

Caught my first Spring thermal at Cornridge this afternoon. Woooooo!! Only thermal, no dynamic wind. Arrived to one glider in air then thermals started to come through in small groups. Small and mellow-not punchy. So had to work at it.....

Flying today were Mark H, Malcolm, Ivor, Phil Bailey, Richard on his speedwing, Richard and Andy from North Devon, plus 2 more - sorry can't remember names. Great day had by all

Wed. 14th March Bob was at Labrador Bay

Rob Mills, Cad and Tom flew 11 ish but very top end wind. Cad took off and was going straight up with hands up. Rob Mills and Cad flew to Babbacombe but vis remained pretty poor and low cloudbase.

They landed and cleared off after a while. I hung around hoping it would clear. Jim McD turned up and took off (hasn't flown for 3 months.) Wind still top end but not quite as strong. I wasn't inspired. 8 degs colds damp and clammy.

Jim landed after an hour or so, warmed up, Jon Thorne turned up 15:00 – 15:30? And finally I thought OK I'll fly! 7 degs by this time. Wind dropped a bit by now and nearer low water too. Anyhow Jim McD and Jon still were flying when I landed a bit cold (silly summer gloves) after 20 mins at 17:00. 390 feet ato, but not very amazing views up the River Teign!

Thursday 15th March Editor went to Freathy

Frustration at recent weather and a grim weekend f/c drove me to head out to Freathy, despite webcams showing low cloud. Arrived to find low murk and little wind, so spent 40 mins cropping gorse by the lower PG t/o. By 4pm could see Rame clearly and the wind picked up enough to risk a launch. The tide was out and gulls soaring.

Soon found there was strong wind at height and well off to the West, so stayed low out front. Had 40 mins in comfortable lift and landed as it seemed to be easing again and the Dauphin helicopter loomed out of the low cloud towards me for the 3rd time.

Monday 19th March Bob went to Freathy

Got to Freathy at 1200 ish. Two gliders in the air, but a bit scratchy and lightish. Mark A managed to scratch in and top land, but Mark N on tandem went down. Anyhow 10 or 15 mins later it came on and gradually increased. Direction pretty good. Kernow Bill, Mark A and Mark N and me had an hour or so. Very lifty in places. I had 498 feet at and some lovely views. Shame the flags were flying. Wind lines appeared on the sea and one or two white horses, was on 1/2 to 3/4 bar to get back from Polhawn, so I landed after an hour and was slowly going backwards the last 20 feet before touching down. Reached up for the c's when 3 or 4 feet above the terrain to kill the wing on touchdown and it prevented any drama. Poor old Dazza missed out as he had to leave before it worked for him.



Mark N flew on a bit longer and also landed without drama using quick outs.
Fab day! (sorry workers.)

Same day Mick went up to the moors:

Me and Robin arrived Chinkwell at eleven; sky looking great, wind just starting to blow. All looked good we took off (Robin first). Thermals were there but the gaps in between meant slope landings. The wind became more northerly so along with Cad we moved to Nattadon where we all got some thermalling (them two doing far better than me). but there was still big gaps between so a lot of slope landing. Chris Blanchard appeared in the sky from Widgery to show us how its done. He landed by us and I drove him back to Widgery so flown two new sites, had some air time. On the right day both sites worth another visit.

Julie added: Yes I was at Widgery along with Mark H, Tim, Malcolm, Ivor and Chris Blanchard. Gusting zero to 20 mph - hence I left my glider in the bag. Mark H and Tim unpacked, but decided against flying. Chris Blanchard took off and flew XC to Chagford. Gorgeous day with epic looking sky, just too strong. Also pretty cold, hence Malcolm and I were using Mark's Ozone Delta as a duvet to keep warm!!! Pic will probably appear in skywings!!! Could see 3 wings in air at Cox Tor at times. Good to be out even though didn't fly and Malcolm was on great entertainment form and giving us all lots of laughs!!

Sam added: Two yellow gliders spotted by Col at Cox were Matt A and myself; finished most of what was required for work then headed out for about 1.30 under an epic looking sky. Dougie, Robin and Matt already flying. Direction on the hill was shifting north and south a little with scratchy and light cycles followed by bumpy and quite strong. Was grounded for a little while as the wind picked up and blew consistently for about 15 mins but managed to get off in lull. Had very little forward speed but a good thermal and a few turns saw me quite high over the back but due to wind straight pushing back to hill not really an option. Matt had landed by the ice cream van so followed him. Only a very small goal from Cox to Van but the first time I have managed it so I was chuffed.

Although conditions not as great as hoped what an excellent day to have so much activity at so many different sites!

Tuesday 20th March Editor went back to Freathy:

Terry arrived as I was rigging. Launched into good lift, off to the W, and had 10 mins checking lift both ways (thought Polhawn to Portwrinkle might be on), then realised vario battery was low, so landed and pinched batteries from camera, so no photos.

Terry flew off to chalets, but didn't have much height, and I rushed to launch again from lower t/o. Breeze was still good, but I failed to notice less lift and ended up in the gorse (what a muppet!). Luckily wing fell into a cleared 'strip' so not too bad getting it out. I therefore moved up to top t/o and pushed off easily, but lift was not so good. Terry led towards Polhawn, but seemed to be struggling so I topped up at the View and got to Polhawn with 90' ato. Expected some lift from the bowl, but no! Headed back dropping to 50' ato before getting back up to 80' at chalets. Could see Terry scrape in a landing at t/o and realised lift was weakening. Tom and Dougie arrived as I got back up from the beach. With the beach covered we went home through some rain.

Wednesday 21st Bob went back to Labrador Bay:

As I arrived at Lab Bay I saw two gliders up and out front and not massively high, a couple of hundred feet, which indicated that maybe it wasn't too strong. Anyhow launched with A and C's and was straight off and going up. Didn't need bar at any time, but it was quite top endish and hands off cruising. All three of us got to Babbacombe and back, though got a bit low coming back. (Not below cliff height though I should add!) I was a Babbacombe run virgin! Mick has done it twice before. My second run just to Maidencombe and back came back even lower (there was beach here and there as not far off LW, but not very desirable to be very low there.) We all landed after an hour or two as the wind dropped off. 351 feet ato at best and 1 hr 25 mins flying. Lovely!

A couple of points to note. Both Mick and I got a bit rotoed (not nice) when we flew back quite high to the left hand bowl take off from the big cliffs. The wind was a tad off to the north. It's something to bear in mind if one is planning to head for the big field behind the left hand take off to land. Go around to the front of the bowl before heading back!

Great to get down there overlooking Babbacombe Downs, though Mick said he had loads more height last visit there. There are a few places en route where you could possibly dump a glider (in bushes or trees) if you got desperate, but not a lot below the cliffs except rocks and sea. So not a run to be taken lightly I'd say?

Fab day. Anyway.

Friday 23rd March Bob travelled to Maker:

Came good for a few of us early afternoon. Not epic, in fact a bit challenging at times as the wind was coming and going a bit. My second flight I thought I was going down, but scratched in. A dozen skiving SD pilots on the hill. I had maybe half an hour or so and some had a bit more. At best I got about 145 feet ato, but a lovely day. Worth the drive for me.

Tom Dodge, Jim McD, Dougie, Tim P, Tony Nelson and aussie mate, Dazza, Mark A, Colin J, Colin B, Mike Conatty, Terry B, Chris N, and me!

Editor adds: It was flyable from 10a.m., but low cloud and very wet grass (my wing was still 'raining' 15 mins into the 1st flight, which had me worried). At one point there were 12 wings in the air and Bob arrived late to make 13 (Dougie arrived 14th after working). Wind was dying in the afternoon as the sun burned through and I stayed up too long on the last flight and didn't get back in, so a walk up from the bottom, but a lovely day. Excellent turnout.



Same day Julie was at Mere:

Flying at Mere today. Weak thermals but I managed to 360 and thermal with the sky gods!!! At one point I was top of the stack at around 200ft above take off- woooooohooooo!!! Around 20 pilots so airspace was pretty tight at times when thermals dropped.

Sunday 25th March Julie had moved on to Great Malvern:

WOW WOW!!!!!! One of my best flying days ever!!!!

Had 3 hours epic flying at magical Great Malvern today!!! Lovely thermic conditions but not big enough thermals to go XC. Approx. 40 gliders in air. A mixture of paragliders and hang gliders. I was top of the stack and 1500 feet at one point. Woooooohooooo

Mark H completed 18k triangle.

Same weekend Sam headed up to the Blorenges:

Saturday was the Blorenges SE launch. Bit of a breeze ESE/SE but not too bad; could push away from the hill reasonably well, thermals were small and punchy but there was a strong inversion and height gains not great, but good active flying.

Sunday we had a late start and made it to the SE launch for about 2 as everyone was landing as the wind was backing East. Flew the NE Bowl Launching from the left hand side (which faces more East). Other local pilots were launching here but both Dave and I found it rather interesting to start with. The wind was coming up the face at 10 - 12 mph, however 10 feet back from the edge it was virtually nil wind. You needed to give the canopy and fair pull to get it off the ground it would then rocket up in very lumpy air, we both got dumped on our backsides before getting off. The wind seemed to back a little more over the next hour and increase a little, we both had two great flights pushing out from hill in lumpy cycles then running back in the sink, thermals larger and smoother than Sat but still a strong inversion. Was hoping for some magic lift but this did not seem to happen. Landed in Castle Meadows about 6.30pm many shirtless drunk locals being the major hazard. Dave very kindly drove his van down to pick me up.

Other News

Annual Repack

Andy Guy has kindly organised use of the sports hall at Devonport School again this year for our repack. This year we will be holding it on Saturday 31st March

In the event that it's flyable on the day, Andy G is offering an early start (as early as 7am if we want!) so we can fly in the afternoon.

Note that our repack assistants (Andy Farrow & Robin Mills) wouldn't be there until later in the day, so early birds would have to be happy to repack unaided [although if you speak to Robin he says he may be able to go earlier]. We can make the decision on times at the club meeting on Thurs 29th when we know the forecast for the weekend.

DISCLAIMER: as usual you are solely responsible for repacking your chute to the manufacturer's instructions. Andy & Robin will offer guidance to help you. If you're not confident to do this, we would still advise chucking your chute to confirm that it deploys OK, and then send it for professional repacking.

Pilot Lectures

The Pilot Lectures went ahead on the 4th March thanks to Alan, Mark and Karl. Those attending much appreciated them giving up there Sunday.
Results are coming in for most who took the exam.

Cloud 9 Demo Wing

"We have a Demo ASKA 17 at the moment which we would be pleased to have your members try. I have been flying it comfortably in up to 24 mph winds and it gives both speed and lift all whilst feeling secure and not too twitchy.

The ASKA is more of a mini wing rather than a speed wing and this is reflected in its characteristics.

We would suggest it would be fine for most competent pilots and is advertised as a beginners wing (of its kind) for 80kg and less getting progressively more advanced as you get heavier!

You can check out my thoughts on our blog at <http://flychaps.blogspot.co.uk/>

Phippsy, Cloud 9 Hang Gliding & Paragliding "

www.flycloud9.co.uk 01209842877 07785593559

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.

March Meeting is on Thursday 29th March 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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