



# NEWSLETTER

## MARCH 2013

Still COLD....!!! Usually I would be getting excited about the lengthening days by now, but the bitter winds have made me put the wing back under the stairs. We can but prepare with some revision of the Handbook, Club Coaching and, of course, a Reserve Re-pack. However be patient and don't take risks just because you are frustrated. It must get better soon – or so the Forecasters hope.

### **February 2013 Meeting minutes**

**Apologies** - Julie Stapleton, Robin Mills, Jim Macdonald

### **Mark Stapleton Award**

Mark Nicol presented the Mark Stapleton Award to this year's winner, Alan Hughes.



### **BP Cup**

The dates for this years BP Cup have been announced and are 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> May for the the Isle of Wight round and 3<sup>rd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> August for the Peaks round. Tim Pilling will coordinate lifts etc. if there is any interest from club members who want to go.

### **PPG Liaison**

Malin Lobb has volunteered to be the PPG liaison for the club and is the process of forming a separate PPG club for the area.

### **Club Constitution**

Alan Hughes has not had time to go through the draft constitution yet, so ratification will be put back to next month's meeting. The draft is on the club Yahoo group for members to view and comment on.

### **Zillertal Trip**

Mark Ansell reports there are now approx. 13 pilots and partners going. He will be collecting deposits from those who have booked to stay at the chalet. If there are any extra members going let Mark know. He also says that the campsite at Mayerhofen will need booking.

### **Repack**

The dates for this years repack are still TBC but will most probably be still be at the Devonport School as usual.

### **Frostbite Comp**

Geoff Brook gave a report on this year's Frostbite comp.

### **Safety**

Alan Hughes reminded members to be aware of Spring thermals as the season approaches. Any pilot who may not be current after the winter is advised to avoid flying in the strongest part of the day. This is the time of year when accidents are most likely to occur.

There was some discussion of the disappearing beach at Beesands and other landing options if the landing field can't be reached.

### **Banner Ads on Website**

It was proposed that the club sell banner ads on the club website to any members who wish to advertise their business there. This will help avoid cluttering up the Yahoo group. A price of £10 p.a. was proposed. Contact Ashley Ryall for details.

### **Trethill**

There was discussion about using Trethill more as another launch on Whitsand Bay. Mark Ansell will check to see if Trethill is on the club sites guide.

### **Next Meeting**

**Agenda - 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

**Meet 7:30 in the bar; meeting start 8:00 prompt**

1. Intro – Alan - 10 mins
2. Club Coach course feedback – Col B & participants - 20 mins
3. Repack - Rob Mi / Andy F - 10 mins
4. Easter Fly-in / Comp ? - Col J - 10 mins
5. Trethill Site – Mark A – 5 mins
6. Flight “confessions” - all guilty pilots - 15 mins
7. Safety Matters - Mark N / Col B - 10 mins
8. Club Constitution – ratification - Alan - 5 mins

**Break 9:20 – 9:40**

8. Active Flying - Matt

**Meeting End 10:30**

## [UK] Flying News

### 1<sup>st</sup> March David reported from Beesands:

The guys were up today with a similar direction forecast [NE] and wind strength and it was a decent direction - easily making the Hallsands jump (and slowly back!). Rob particularly impressive with his altitude control having launched from Hallsands, pushed up way over the car park and then brings himself straight down below the ridge...no idea how he did that.

I went to the start point car park to take a look at the area for future flying, measured 36mph at the car park compression...think it's particularly strong at that point.

### Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> Bob was at Beesands:

Quite a few people landed through cold hands at Beesands (and Hallsands) today but not me (for a change.) Beesands a bit breezy to start and the wind had shifted to NE by the time I got there at 11. Was more east earlier and Jim McD and Mick B had got to StartPoint . A first for JimMcD. and got back (1st time.) Then it switched NE quite quickly.

I got off third attempt at Beesands (I blame thick heated gloves and lack of feel) but the wind was strong (had to bar to get away from the hill when I took off.) Couldn't really go far south as it was hard to get back, got a bit bored and on full bar occasionally so landed after 40 mins but still got over the L/Z with good height. A few others turned up but only one or two flew I think at first shift.

Adjourned to the pub for a quick half and then I went to meet Rob Mills at Hallsands to check out the take off there. He'd said it was too windy at the car park.

Took off there for the first time. Lots of bracken, but easy launch and loads of lift (too much almost) got within a cats whisker of Start Point light, but was having big ear and push out as so much lift. 633 feet ato but very strong wind gradient and didn't want to go higher. Second time that end for me (the big boys end Mick called it?) and 1st time from Hallsands take off. Cad, me and Rob M flying there at 1st. Cad and Rob M did get over the light today. It was surprisingly rough at times too, and strong sea thermals.



Landed on the beach by the vans (avoiding the stream!). It was quite hard to get down. Cad took off and landed at the car park take off.

Then Mick B and Jim Fish and Chris B arrived just about as we were landing, but only Mick flew, landing after a short while I think because of cold hands. There was some beach today too and some people used it when they couldn't quite make the L/Z and I think there was the odd landing on Hallsands beach or cliffs that end after Start runs?

Quite a few others flew later at Beesands too but it was NE'ly. I think everyone got some airtime, some two flights. (Like me.) Almost an hour and half total and no cold hands! A good few of us in the pub at Torcross afterwards. Dazza, Mick B, Rob Mills, JimMcD , Steve Coley, Ed and Ian, Cad, Chris B, Jim Fish and ? is Gary (or Russell) amongst others. Good turn out considering it was grey and 5 or 6 degs.

### Same day Tim went to King Tor:

Sam Allum and I arrived together and braved the walk to King Tor, not expecting much. We got our wings out to GH for a bit with the wind light and a bit off to the East and occasionally blowing through a bit stronger. Sam then braved a launch and immediately started climbing, so I quickly joined him and was surprised to find that the climbs were thermic and not dynamic, despite the claggy sky. Sam had about 15 mins before landing then I caught a climb up to 2500ft where I hit the inversion, just able to see the big blue sky above. Thought about heading off but my fingertips were so cold it was painful (rubbish new gloves!) so it was an easy glide on 1/2 bar back to launch, expecting more of the same when I went again. Unfortunately that was pretty much it, though Sam did eventually get a weak one 1/2 way back to the cars. I left with Mark Helm trying to convince me that it was going to be epic soon. The climbs were surprising strong, I was getting 2m/s on the averager, but pretty gentle. My first thermalling for the year and should have been XC it weren't for my gloves!

Sam added: Didn't really expect to fly, thought it would be too far off to east would not have gone if Tim had not been up for it (thanks Tim) and too lazy to drive to Beesands. Stopped to check Bear Down but ruled it out as without thermals it's such a small site and it did not look very thermic. Never had thermals in such overcast conditions on the first launch there was no blue sky 8/8, was climbing up feeling a bit confused as to where the lift was coming from, guess the air was so cold did not take to much heating to lift off. First flight fingers froze up after 15 mins stopped being able to feel the brakes so landed got to about 2000 asl. Watched Tim circling back and make an excellently judged glide back to launch, jumped around to warm up. Not much happen after that quite a few launches and a few beats and slope landings. Last launch was a little involuntary, ground handling out of the gorse something came through, was weak and broken progressed over the back to the wall leading down to the cars, lift not strong still quite broken only about 1800 asl, not enough to go with so landed. Love the days when expectations are low and it turns out good, I shall remember this one whenever it feels like the weather has a personal vendetta against me!

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> David went up to Wales and witnessed some useful stuff:

Got to Bryncaws parked up at BL with 10mph and cloudy. hmmm...decision; I'll take the Aska17 up, check conditions and ttb to get the PG. At launch it was slightly off and blowing 20 -24mph. Damn. Had 2 great speed flights with the Aska met Shane (local) and then part ttb to van.

Headed off to Pandy where Ali & Richard were. They had had a good dat from the start. What a site! By the time I arrived it was 16mph ese. New site...I take no less than 20 minutes to asses a new site. Sometimes a lot longer if conditions are marginal. Plenty pg's up. Wind increasing to 18mph and by the end 20mph with only hangies in the air. Damn. Aska in the van miles away.

Happy to walk away, met a few locals and will be confident about this site in future. Also saw my first reserve deployment live and in anger. Some foreign pilots (Russian?) pod god types were flying. One of them obviously considered himself to be rather good with his weird launch style followed by immediate wingovers...in a pod, seemed to be executing either a spin or helico...got a crevatte...couldn't get it out and going down fast..**onto reserve**. I was the nearest bystander and started a fast walk to his possible location when friend above shouted he was okay

### Then on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> he scares himself at Beesands:

Launch in benign lifty conditions, get to 250ato quite easily. Okay so 3mph groundspeed at max glide on a wing that is rated something like 24h meant winds aloft. But still got around okay. So, I make the numpty of the day decision to go on my travels towards Hallsands (wind was ene almost ne at times). Get over the fields where I had landed last time.....and im pinned! Totally going nowhere, speedbar just loses me loads of height, no problem I thought I'll get to the cliffs and with less wind scratch my way back....oooooh nooooo...I'm going down into the bleedin field. On landing i take a measurement: 18 gusting 20mph at groundlevel, just here! Ffs.

I was so furious at getting caught I didn't prepare my landing at all. Fine, just ugly.

Went back for a nice ttb to the L/Z. By then Mark had already landed and Thomas, who had got caught slightly on his 'a' rated wing, landed behind the houses (on feet, okay) and then just ttb to the beach.

Good to be up, lesson learnt....again..

### Same day (?) Michal also has problems at Labrador Bay:

First time I had checked wind speed 8-13 as posted. Wind swinging a little bit from e to ese. I am always checking a wind 2-3 times, so the reading was from a period of about 10 mins. It took me probably 10-15 mins to post the info on group and prepare to fly. When was ready I felt that it drops a bit but instead of checking it again I took off. I knew that I am not going up so did not want to pass tree lines as time of up tides was after 11 (it was 10:30) I turned right to land across the slope I did it too late and left side of the lines hooked up on the tree and my glide turn towards tree and me with my feet on the ground.

After removing my wing from the tree with a lot of help Chris B., his girlfriend and the other – big THANK YOU for all of you - I did check all my lines and surface of my wing I wanted only to lift up my wing to check if it is ok. I think I had chosen wrong place to do it. When lift up the wing the gust came up and lift me from the ground. It immediately turns right towards the bushes and I was still facing backwards. I am sure that there was no knots on lines and not sure if the right brake was blocked (with facing wrong direction, I could spin a little bit on

opposite way) and that is why the wing done so sharp turn. This time two other pilots helped me. I own them a big pint as well. No harm done to me or the kit, only pride.

#### Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> Darren headed for Maker:

Well Maker was also a brilliant day, despite the wet ground , arrived around 10:30 ish with orographic to the left ,and right of take-off plus some out front with a cloud base of around 150ft ato , so sat in the car to have some lunch first. As I looked up Tim was standing there and arrived shortly after me , and then Mark N and Jenny arrived with comet, then Ash turned up so we talked crap for 30min before wondering down to launch, Mark N was the first to test the air and, after my normal wait, I went off and it was lovely, no need to fight to stay up and at the same time not too strong. we were then joined by Terry, James B and Colin B, Jim fish and Chris B and Kate on the tandem. A couple hours of flying was had, and later it was just myself, Jim and Colin left on the hill as the sun truly emerged. The wind had dropped but Colin had got off and was just staying up nicely but Jim and i thought it wasn't strong enough for us. We were then joined by Chris Blachford (sorry if spelt wrong) who shared the air with Colin in what seemed to be light conditions, soon after wind was few and far between and we all packed up, another great da with great company, many thanks to Terry for giving me some words of encouragement over the radio which saw me get to the fort Picklecombe for the first time.

#### Same day Sam went to Vault Bay:

Decided on Vault today as it looked like a little more wind into Cornwall and still trying to up the hours on the hanger. On arrival SE – SSE, so Gorran Haven end to launch. I arrived so see Graham A up on his Falcon. Graham landed and Phil L went up; we watched then as he slowly sunk out and had to make a beach landing. Paragliding was then the order day and nice conditions, if a little up and down as the lift and wind came and went. With the wind increasing at one point I found it hard to penetrate with 200-250 decided I would use bar to get away from the hill. The result was a reasonably large asymmetric (on full bar), nothing too drastic but got turned 90 before recovery. Phippsy was up on the tandem and crossed in front of me so I guess it could have and been turbulence off his wing.

#### Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>, Robin Mills recorded an XC. Bob reported:

The indomitable Robin Mills phoned me from Prawle Point, he's just landed there having flown from his little site near the racecourse, Pennywell? [Buckfastleigh] way I think. 3,700 feet, not rough but a bit cold. Caed is picking him up. Well done to that chap!

#### Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> Colin B was at Sourton:

Many of us had a fantastic day at Sourton today. Lots of soft easy thermals coming in cycles until I was unable to cope with the cold hands any more, my fingers are still very sore now. My gloves just aren't up to it. So, having abandoned cloud base at around 4000ft en route to Oakhampton because of finger pain, upon landing, the rush of blood back into my fingertips made them feel as though on fire! Agony, so, vowed that once home I'd order a pair of the heated gloves Bob has introduced us to. Don't think any epics were made today but it was a great day for lots of practice re-engaging with Dartmoor thermals. Got some cracking video but due to some git finger work, missed the key climb to Beer and chips in the Fox and Hounds afterwards, bliss.....

Robin Mog added: Yes, it was a disappointing day in some respects (after the eager anticipation), I had 3 or 4 slope landings before I managed to top-land and must have spent more time trudging up the slope than actually flying. But the corker of a thermal that came about 2pm made up for it. 4 or 5 of us got to base (almost) at about 4600' @ S/L where it was absolutely freezing. Doogie shot off for Okehampton and I followed envious of his Mantra's speed and glide angle. He was (according to his blog) trying for an out and return and I was trying to skirt the moor, pick up some lift at the quarry or Army Camp and scoot off down the A30 to Exeter. Neither of us was successful, he landed in Okie and I, finding no more lift, glided on to land near the A30 just passed Belstone. Gallingly, while I was chatting to the farmer a mostly white wing overflow me and I thought at the time it was Doogie, but then later in the pub Chris Blanchard came in and said he'd had a call from Richard (Osbourne, I assumed) that he'd landed at Cheriton Bishop and was going to retrieve him. So then I thought the wing that overflow me must have been Richard! But from what you're saying, Geoff, it must have been Chris and they both must have got to near your place.

Thanks for the retrieve, Cad, and for the chips in the pub afterwards , whoever bought them?





Sam added: Had one my best Dartmoor flights to date, initially had trouble getting into anything solid and had lots landings and launches, must have been at least 3pm before a decent thermal that I did not balls up came through. Climbed out to behind Corn Ridge at 4300ft, pushed forward to the A30, turned left back towards launch to join up the smallest ever triangle.

Same day Martin went further east:



Batcombe turned out to be really good, James Lynch spiralled off 5000ft to land in his declared goal at Swanage, landing next to Marcus Webster from Bell Hill. Viv Fouracre got to Bere Regis. I had the lowest save

ever, two hundred feet below take off height, on the edge of some trees near Wool .It was really rough and for a short while I stalled the glider while turning into the thermal and lost the plot. I pulled out of the last thermal just past Wareham as I had had enough of the really strong conditions, and was freezing cold. I entered a goal on the beacon of the Corfe Ridge but landed short of it as I left the last climb too early. The first flight since the autumn was quite a surprise, (cold, nerve racking and exciting).

Jim F added: very punchy strong thermals even gnarly at times.. Not making an excuse for not getting away , but had a first flight to break me in , I now wish I had gone with the first gaggle, but it's good to get a first half hour flight sometimes to feel what the air is doing as its been a long time since flying strong spring thermals. On that note I am VERY VERY HAPPY, Main reason I've had a strange 2 years due to lack of air time, I wasn't sure how in was going to handle the strong thermals ... Well I relaxed mentally focused on not stiffening up and instead of worrying myself and flying out of the thermals into rough edges just enjoyed cranking it in there.. A lot of active piloting was needed. It took a lot of work at times to keep the wing square above the head. No major collapses. A few times the brake pressure just completely went on one side then another, but instead of panicking and looking up at the wing, just sorted it, kept the pressure on occasionally as a few other pilots they found their wing just go ripply and floppy above their heads. Also when the wing would suddenly turn and bite into a thermal I was taking good advantage of this and going with it. I would remind myself "safety with height" which was certainly helping me to get up there. I did go over the back a few times but came back to the hill, not because I didn't want to leave, just wanted more height to do so. The afternoon was strange, it was cycling a lot and a lot of pilots were struggling and getting grounded at this point. All in All a fantastic day. I came home smiling and I feel I now have my confidence back that I seemed to had lost around 2 year ago ... ( and I don't mean over confident and cocky by that ),,,,

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> Michal flew Freathy for the first time (with the Editor):

Mark and me did some fly. There was a window of about 30 mins. The wind was dropping down and then dropped too much. I spent 18 mins in the air. I had 1 m/s lift, but mostly half of this and get 50 m ato. Mark had a little longer air time.

It was my first time when I managed to fly there and I am very glad to have this even so short time. This site looks very impressive from the ground and is better when you airborne. I saw my house from there (almost, it is hide behind a bigger building from this side). Thank you once again Mark for a nice chat and all the information.

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> Julie ended up at Struddick:

Decision was made to dash for Maker at 1pm today. We left in rain and the sky looked very dark and the rain got heavier as we headed west!! On route diverted to Struddick, thanks to report from Mark Ansell of 'bang on hill'. We were met with sunshine!! Wooohooo

Mark and Michael J had had readings of 20mph and we luckily arrived just as it got flyable. Michael, Bob and Evan got 20 mins before it dropped completely. Billy the wiz and Martin also arrived and later Malin. I got some ground handling practice in before heading to the pub. Lovely sunny day afternoon at Struddick, leaving wet Torbay behind.





Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> Colin was at Freathy:

[Thx for the heads up Tim, a sweet hour or so of sea thermals and changing winds at Whitsands](#)

[Malin added: Perfect little session to try out the new wing, three short flights and a load of ground handling...](#)

## **Other News**

### Club Coach course



The Club Coach course went ahead on Saturday and Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> March with Mark Dale and Dave Thompson from the BHPA, after having to be postponed and relocated to the Whitsand Bay Holiday Park. Well done to Colin for the quick reorganization.

Ashley summed up his feelings – “Bloody good course, well done Colin B for organizing it and getting a decent venue at such short notice. If anyone gets the chance to get on one of these courses, go for it. You will learn how to coach and learn something for your own flying. The day rounded off well with a quick, but breezy blast at Freathy”.

### Zillertal Trip

The dates have now been fixed as 27<sup>th</sup> June – 6<sup>th</sup> July (Thursday – Saturday) for the chalet in Mayrhofen. Anyone else wanting to come and needing a bed in the chalet needs to contact me immediately as any spare places will be advertised by Northants Club from this weekend in Skywings. Cost is £150/person with £50 deposit required now.

Due to some drop-out from the chalet / Munich flights, we no longer plan to hire a retrieve car as it will not be cost viable.

### Reserve Re-Packs

Robin Mills has already kindly arranged some sessions at Bickington.

The Hall in Devonport is still available for later, subject to Andy returning from his hols, so expect further news.



## Codden Safety Workshop

2 pm Sunday 7th April in Woolacombe village hall

Objectives:

To improve flying safety at Codden:

to discuss the characteristics, difficulties & risks of the Codden site

to propose new guidelines for the site guide to help pilots understand the dangers that are peculiar to this site & aid risk assessment before flight.

Richard Osbourne, the N. Devon chairman, has invited along those of us who have experience of flying Codden. The intent is to keep the meeting to a manageable size & focus on people who could contribute to the safety discussion from their experience of flying there.

Following this meeting Richard will come along to our April club meeting & present the conclusions of the workshop with any new recommendations for flying Codden safely.

Immediately after the Safety Workshop the N Devon club will be holding their AGM, which we are welcome to attend. Food will be laid on, but the village hall is not licenced. We are, however, welcome to take our own drinks with us. There will be a band playing after the meeting!

**Please let Alan Hughes know if you'd like to attend**, and if you'd like food, so that Richard has some idea of numbers for catering.

**Next Meeting** is on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 7:30pm at the **Royal Oak, South Brent**.

Please be 'early' as we wish to start the meeting promptly at 8pm to help members who cannot stay late.

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