



NEWSLETTER

november 2012

I have to take my hat off to those who've managed to fly in the last month. As I type this the wind and rain are lashing at the study window and the wing is snug in the corner after returning from the Loft for its annual service. I'm enjoying reading other pilots reports, but patiently wait for calmer weather, as we had last January.

October 2012 Meeting minutes

Apologies: Tim P, Karl S.

Committee meeting

Alan H reported on a recent committee meeting, including his intention to produce a draft constitution as the BHPA require clubs to have one. The committee had concluded that powered flying would be outside of the club scope, but that the newer mini-wings and speedflying would be included.

Curry Night

The Royal Oak has been booked for the Friday 14th December. Cost will probably be around the £10 mark, to be confirmed once we have a reasonable estimate of numbers. For those that haven't been before, the food is excellent, and considerably better than your average curry! Wives / partners / girlfriends / boy friends are very welcome.

If you would like to come, please let Alan Hughes (alan.hughes51@gmail.com) know ASAP with an indication of how many of you, and whether a "possible" or "definite" booking. (If we get too many for the upstairs room the pub will let us take over the restaurant area). Book early to avoid disappointment!!

Sites Issues

Struddick – as part of a new monthly review of sites and because of further concerns at problems with the Monkey Sanctuary, a group review was made of the Site Guide [this has now been updated on the web]. Thanks to all present for their inputs.

Flight Confessions

There had been more strong wind flying at Labrador Bay.

Struddick had seen 25 pilots turn out for a rae good autumn days flying.

Speedflying Lauterbrunnen - David Reckitt

David gave an interesting video talk on his recent trip to the Alps, as mentioned in Skywings. It looked rather hairy for the docile PG pilots, with some interesting high speed landings.

French Flying & Pilotage – Julie Stapleton

Julie had just returned from a Pilotage course at Annecy. She explained how this differed from the standard SIV and how it could be tailored to individual pilots. Some members were so impressed that they have also booked to go.

French Flying & St Hilaire – Mark Nicol

Mark and his wife went down for a tour of the alps, with a visit to St.Hilaire, site of the festival. He gave a good talk with aerial photos to describe the set-up.

Club Trip

Editor explained the current status of the trip to Zillertal with the Northampton Club. There are still 15 members showing interest.

Next Meeting

Agenda – 29th November 2012

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

Reminder - don't forget your homework for tonight's Special Topic!

- 1 Intro Alan
 Xmas Curry reminder
 Latest on Zillertal trip
 Reminder for AGM at next meeting in Jan
 Nominations needed for Mark Stapleton Award
 - 2 Sites Review Rob Mog
 Strete & Beesands
 - 3 Flight "Confessions" All "Guilty" Pilots
 - 4 Safety Matters & Technique Mark N & Colin B
- Break
- 5 Glider Polars & Speed to Fly Karl & Alan

Meeting End 10:30

[UK] Flying News

Saturday 27th October Mark N went up to North Hill, Somerset:

North Hill was worth the journey with just Alan Hughes and myself from S Devon, but quite a few Condors and Nick Collins and co from the Malvern club. The majority of pilots were flying Atos hang gliders.

As predicted by RASP, the wind was West of North, making launching at North Hill a little tricky. During the day the wind gradually picked up more and backed further so that pilots turning up later didn't get to fly. Max height gain for me was 2,300 ft in thermal. I was still going up nicely in a 3-4 up but had to leave it and fly back to the ridge, (or go xc). Flying back to the ridge I lost over 800 ft., but the Atos with me lost much less height. Oh to have the money for a better wing.

This is where speed to fly is so important. Alan and Karl's talk next month will be a timely reminder of just how fast you have to fly to get through sink and fly upwind.

Nick Collins flying an Atos crossed the gap at Porlock and flew West as far as Combe Martin before returning and landing back at t/o .At one time he connected with wave and gained 2000 ft in silky smooth lift to get to 5000 ft asl.

Top landing was challenging in a 20-25 mph gusty wind. I top landed to be near Alan's car, my sandwiches and flask -but wiser pilots landed on the beach at Minehead.

What struck me most was how uncurrent I was. I hadn't flown a hangie for over two months -and that was in laminar air at Freathy. As soon as took off I was horrified at how rough it was and even considered landing. My hang glider didn't want to turn and I was uncomfortable with the conditions. However after 45 minutes I was tuned in to the hang glider and the rough conditions, and flew for just under three hours.

Tuesday 30th Oct Julie ventured up to Woolacombe:

Arrived at Woolers take off around 14:30 and had 30 mins in air. There were 9 flying, 12 pilots on t/o. Some landed, including me, due to large black cloud heading for take off and white horses. Fast wings and pod gods still flew on. Wind went slightly off to south as well. Joey, Richard Osborne, Annee Willis, Mark Helm, 3 newbies from Yeovil and trained with Andrew Pearce plus few others didn't recognise. 12 flew. Great day and worth the drive. Finished with lovely meal at Red Barn before driving back



Wednesday 14th Nov Bob was at Labrador Bay:

Well definitely not light! In fact quite top end. I got there 1030 ish, 2 gliders in the air, Cad and Tom. Chris B got off on his tandem with his mate, I got off and went straight up and had to bar to get away from the hill. Simon Vacher flew and Michael J.

Landed after an hour and a half and a run down to Babbacombe and back, 600 feet ato at best with one sea thermal. Was half tempted to try the Dawlish run, crossed the Teign and got part way to the pier and then bottled out, flew back to the Ness cliff!

Landed and had a warm up with a coffee after which it was a bit too strong. Mark Nichol got off but that was it really, as it began gusting 18 - 20 mph. Alan H and Rob Mog and Jon Thorne a bit too late. Tiger man Mr Nicholl **went over the back** (deliberately!) Got a sea thermal climb and took it back, but it petered out. Not a bad day, but no pub afterwards!

Thursday 15th Bob was out again at Beesands:

Beesands was good fun, thanks Malin for the heads up. Quite light with patchy lift by sea thermals, which meant you had to do some work to stay up. Light wind meant you could 360 in the thermals and carry them back over the hill knowing it would be easy to push forward again. I had an easy cross to Hallsands (with sea thermal assistance) and nice fly that down to the car park with Malin, though a tight scratch to get back to take off after crossing back! Loads of beach today, even along the bottom of much of the cliffs the Beesands side. A few others were flying incl. Roger Davis, Richard T, Rob Mog, Mark Helm, Malin and me!

Saturday 17th David was up the north coast:

Great day today. Malin, Me, Richard, Ali (CP training) and Daz (short TTB's only) all flying the dunes alongside a number of other pilots.

We had hoped for a speedwing day but again as is usual for Mexico the wind was never quite enough, had a couple beats on the Zion19 but mostly soaring fun on the PG. Malin made it all the way to Gwithian and back and put in a few wingovers along the way. I was just happy boating, pulling in big ears and also pulling hard(ish) towards the dunes then weightshift over again (the beginnings of wingover! ;)).

Wind was off to start which made for some great downwind legs! Vid up soon which will hopefully show Malin's alaska arse bump when we discovered it was not enough for speedwings.

Mexico Towans highly recommended if the wind is a bit too north for Woolers and also its just 1.5 hours from Plymouth, dual carriageway nearly all the way.

Same day Darren was bogged down at Woolacombe:

I got there but by 10 o'clock when si turned up and I was close to drowning in mud the wind died slightly, but was still off. It was around 11mph, but still NW Si and Doug both launched on their Rush 3s and scratched around and Si eventually got some lift up to around 100 at Doug landed to adjust his harness: to me it didn't feel lifty so I just ground handled and then Doug said its brilliant out there go for it, should have listened to my gut as I went off hit a bit of lift and was level with the hill but couldn't get back in and then noticed si go into land as it had gone light, so I thought what the hell try and scratch it out but ended up on the beach, then went to use my radio but battery had gone so couldn't ask for a lift plus my water had fell out of my backpack in the car so had a long walk back up with no fluids, the good news is when i eventually got back to the top Simon and I managed to find some flat rocks to put under my wheels and with a bt of rocking and a push from Simon I got out of the mud, so thanks to him for his help.

I think if the wind was on the hill it would have been a good day as it didn't pick up like RASP had forecasted, in fact the forecast was totally wrong.

Sunday the 18th Mark N headed for the south coast:

Quite confidently I set off to Maker on Sunday, to be joined by Mike Boarer, Roger Davis and Polish Mijael. Around 12.30 we were looking out to sea and noticed the smoke from a funnel of a boat near the breakwater went from a very light ESE to due South and picked up.

Then followed a mad rush to Struddick, leading to hours of ridge soaring, big sea thermals and coastal runs for those so inclined. Jen and I, flying tandem, even crossed Donderry to fly at Batten cliffs and got back to land at take-off.

Colin Blagdon went xc and made the A38!

I counted 15 paragliders and Mike Bekin on his hangie. There may have been more fliers.....

[Phil Bailey got across Tregantle, could get no further but got all the way back and Mark Helm got around Portwrinkle and back.]

So, the moral of the story -don't listen to me. After 27 years I still don't know where to fly.....

Other News

Club Coach course

The Club Coach course is now firmed up with the BHPA and the Royal Oak, South Brent as venue for Saturday and Sunday 9th/10th March 2013.

Anyone wishing to express an interest to participate that has not already done so should contact Colin Blagdon on kol8in@gmail.com. Food and drink will be available for purchase at the venue.

The venue has limited Accommodation available and there's

Venn Farm Guest House 01364 7322402.6 mls

Sandwell farmhouse 07779 4962403.7 mls

Acorns B+B 01364 6439433.9 mls

Also for the motor home enthusiasts the large train track side, car park is available, only a hundred yards away it's suitability gets mixed reviews as it's a live bit of track

Mike Connatty hits the European trail – Mike has kindly written an article on his summer travels which I am publishing in stages – Part 3 (final):

Mens (flopper)



Possibly one of the most dramatic sites I have visited due to the rate at which the mountain emerges from the landscape, that and the beautiful rural surroundings. Take off is about 1/3 of the way up if that. I have been coming here for at least 5 years, having flown it on several occasions but not in the best of conditions and not getting above the ridge (2780m).



This was the last day camping here and finally the forecast was looking good. I got to take off at 1400 and watched some local tandem pilots take off and wind it up. With both the take off quite low and the site north of Gap, the thermal activity is weaker than further south.

I watched a French pilot take off in front of me and go down so pressure was on to be as efficient as possible with what lift was around. I was also conscientious of waiting too long for the thermic cycles to develop more in case they did not, having missed out at Plane Joux.

I picked the strongest of the next few cycles and tentatively worked the light lift. 40 minutes later and with the assistance of half a dozen vultures I was above the ridge having carefully hooked into some lee side thermals popping off a spine.



It was a combination of the years it had taken learning to fly, returning for another go and the scale and drama of the mountains that blew me away. I only flew for an hour and a half before landing 10 minutes walk from camp so the Mrs and kids did not have to leave the pool. Massive cross country potential for another year.....

St Hillaire Le Touvet



Every one is a winner, took the family up the funicular, treated them to lunch and then flew the lower walls. First time in years it has not rained when I have been passing. According to some French pilots at the camp site the real flying here is across the valley from the western facing range Chaine de Belledonne accessed by cable car. I'll be back!



Le Grand Bornand, Mont Lachat (flopper)

Inspired from the book '100 best Flying Sites in the Alps'. Having made the wrong choice of going to Annecy the previous day, too busy both on the lakeside and flying in August. Accessed by cable car which was fun for the boys and Annabel too.

A very steep alpine grass take off. I took off into a thermal and after 3 seconds experienced a 2/3 collapse. Too low to throw but after an immediate pump all was well apart from my damaged nervous system. Height gains were good with views over the next valley to Mont Blanc. Other pilots were experiencing big collapses around me and I called time after an hour in an untrustworthy air mass.

My thanks go out to the South Devon Club and members including Mike Woods, Colin Jones, Mark Nicol and Paul Squance for engaging and helping me gain the necessary skills and experience level to achieve these flights.

Mike Connatty

For Sale (see club website)

See <http://www.sdhgpgc.org.uk/>

Next Meeting is on Thursday 29th November 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.

There isn't a December Newsletter, so enjoy the Xmas festivities (I can't make the Curry Night) and see you on the hill in the New Year!

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