



# NEWSLETTER

## october 2012

As the main flying season draws to a close, the general theme seems to be of pilots facing many strong wind days. Even if it has been light enough to start, it often blows out quickly, potentially catching flyers in difficult situations. To repeat the Safety Officers comments – be alert to risks and think hard before pushing your luck!

### **September 2012 Meeting minutes**

Apologies: Tim P, Julie, Terry B, Mark H.

New Member ; Graeme “Billy Whizz”

### **Sites Issues**

Colin B and Alan H attended Sfety meeting with FOST/SATCO (Naval air operations). They were advised that we need to use a new phone number on weekdays to advise them if we are flying at Freathy. They also asked if the Danger Area (D009) could be removed or relaxed given changes in flight operations.

Robin Mills also expressed concern at low flying around Chinkwell, although that may not be Navy.

Codden – CB & AH also attended the Condors meeting to discuss this year’s problems. Lots of problems were highlighted, but few solutions proposed. Rebeka gave a good in depth talk on the unusual metrology at Codden, with sea air interacting with local systems. This made it clear that the site has many potential met issues. We have booked Richard Osborne (Condors) to give us a talk on Codden at our Feb meeting (we also hope we can talk on some good XCs he’s had this year from coastal sites).

### **Flight Confessions**

Bob talked about his recent trip to Woolacombe and Jim McD covered Labrador Bay.

Sea Thermals – there are more reports of these at this time of year as the sea remains warm compared to the land. R.Mills explained that you get sea thermals at Teignmouth when the tide goes out, from the mud flats.

Mark N flew to Alan H’s house at the end of August (just after last meeting). He was flying a small site that R.Mills has negotiated at Buckfast and had been hanging around for 2 ½ hours before it came good at 3pm and he got away on a thermal drifting slowly towards the coast. He surprised Alan by landing in the next field, as he was expected by car. Thanks to R.Mills for looking after his car.

### **Safety**

Chinkwell Incident – Richard had posted a video of a difficult situation he got into. This was discussed as best we could, but Richard wasn’t available to comment. One recommendation is that pilots should consider carrying a whistle to call for help in case they crash land out of view. [A full report will be sent out with this Newsletter].

### **Membership Secretary**

Darren was voted in to take over from Dougie.

### **Club Trip**

Editor explained the current status of the trip to Zillertal with the Northampton Club. There are now 15 members showing interest at the meeting [more info to follow].

### **Thermal Photos**

Karl showed us some photos of thermal activity near the Tamar valley, visible from his house recently. The mist allowed you to clearly see how thermals formed and quickly developed (example below).



### **Raffle**

Darren generously donated some champagne prizes and we raised £53 [for the air ambulance].

### **Next Meeting**

**Agenda – 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012**

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

1. Intro                      Alan.
2. Flight Confessions - all guilty pilots
3. Sites Review
4. Safety Matters / Flight Skills / Coach Training Course - MarkN, ColinB
5. Homework for next meeting - Alan & Karl

### **Break**

6. Speedflying Lauterbrunnen (check spelling!) - David Reckitt
7. French Flying & Pilotage - Julie
8. French Flying & St Hilaire - MarkN

**Meeting End 10:30**

## **[UK] Flying News**

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> David took the speed machines up to Towans:

Malin & I headed for Mexico today. I kite there and brought all my toys. Arrived at 9am to find about 18mph on the lower part of the dunes (only 12 - 14mph on the beach, not really enough for exciting kitesurfing)) so out came the Aska for Malin and Zion19 for me.

Hmmmm, got a couple reaches but not really enough, wind was dropping as forecast and the kites were coming off the water so PG time.

By this time a crew from Kernow turned up aswell....and I thought we'd have the beach to ourselves having never seen any PG activity on the beach there!

EPIC! Two long sessions either side of lunch cruising up and down, I learnt loads and Malin got into some wingovers. Some VERY low saves on my part. Sunny day, laminar wind at around 10mph - perfect! :)

Same day Sam was at Sennen:

Good day at Sennen yesterday (Sat), arrived and it was on for hangers, rigged and had two good flights. Some sea thermal to be had 500ATO Phippsy had double that but I could not get near him. One slightly unorthodox landing, ended up on my feet after an almighty flare but not before skimming my knees along the ground, still not rounding out early enough.

Wind then eased off and come on for Para's again good conditions as it came around to the west making more of the bay accessible Ed and Ian both looked like they were having a ball. It was top end at times making launching challenging with quite sinky cycles followed by lift. Ian seemed to be top of the stack most of the time.

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October Jim McD was at King Tor

King Tor was good. about 8 of us flying from mid day. I don't think anyone went too far but it was easy to stay up.....about 1000ft max. I think Robbin Mills got higher. Few of us were able to land at the cars about 4pm. At times it was too light if anything - weird.

Had another half hour at Lab Bay on the way home. Bonus!

Mark H added : yes it was rather good. I got just past Postbridge then my thermal turned off.

. Btw ... just a reminder ... its break right when on collision course, not left. If in doubt please paint a big R on your right glove

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> Bob was at Labrador Bay



Got there 1130 ish with Chris B and Andy Holt and there were already a couple of gliders up.

MASSIVE turnout. I counted more than 10 gliders up at one point. Started out a bit off to North but good strength. Babbacombe run not easy early on though a few (inc me) ventured to Maidencombe and a bit further. Sea thermals not as strong as a couple of weeks ago, but managed a best height of 666 feet ato.. 1000 feet asl?

The wind direction gradually improved (and was picking up) making a Babbacombe run possible. I pushed out with sea thermal height over the Teign too, but don't think a run that side would have been on with the wind off to the N?

Landing was interesting. I deliberately picked a spot well back in the field behind t/o thinking further back would be safe from rotor but had a frontal just 5 or 6 feet off the ground, got dumped and a hard landing. I had the undercarriage down early anyway. I figured afterwards I was already thinking about the c's and had possibly put my hands up. I would have done better to active fly right to the deck?

Pretty much everyone landed in the back field too and I saw others in not very clean air at times.

Ed and Ian landed a field back on the other side of the road. I think maybe blown back? The hill beyond the road slopes down into a valley from there, but they were ok.

Flyers were Mick B, Chris Bellamy, Cad, Tom, Jim McD, Jon Thorne, Col Blagdon, Rob Mog and Mills, Andy Holt, Sam and another refugee from Cornwall. Mark Helm? Roger Davis. That's 17 with me? Poss a couple more? Plus a couple of latecomers who didn't fly cos it had got a bit strong. Les, Julie and Evan, Dazza.

Nice pint at the Thatched Barn afterwards.

I was thinking driving back home, that had the field been in crop (as in summer) and not available for landing, it might have been quite difficult to get down in the take off bowl? Very lofty there. It needs thinking about?



Colin B added: my first ever flying at Labby Bay today, the flying was terrific and the views stunning, unfortunately it was just a little overcast and I find the GoPro always a tad disappointing under those conditions. Because of the cloud cover flew without the camera, saw just how spectacular the views were, and landed after a fantastic flight intending to take off with it, by which time we were watching pilots being blown over the back and the cloud thickening!

I'm very lucky, finding plenty of pilots offering help and advice and a special thanks to Mick Boarer for the tip that it might be on today and then for landing to give me a very helpful thorough site brief before take-off; also to Pete and Les Cherrington for sorting the camera.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> David was up at Woolacombe:

Malin & I arrived to find huge rainstorms passing through. Then it cleared up initially 5mph but then the wind line came through 14mph gusting 20mph+. It was very rough and bumpy but we were on Aska's which are superb in these conditions and made it perfectly flyable (although the lulls killed me, had a couple slope landings before finally making top!). One chap set up a PG..I thought hello, obviously a very experienced local. I landed and saw Richard's wife, so said, where's Richard?. She pointed to the sky!! Actually he did fine, a lot of height and big ears and got down fine in the back field. He went off to get the Zion19 when we had to leave.

A number of Hangies from Condors were there including Simon Murphy. They looked like they were having a ball.



Same day Sam was at Chaple:

Had a fly at Chaple on HG Yesterday, was very windy on arrival up to 30mph, settled down by the time I had rigged. Still a bit gusty making the glider bob up and down on launch, had to move down the ridge away from the usual spot to find cleaner air, was a tad to north and was possibly getting rotor off and engine house chimney. In the air it was the most turbulent I have experienced on the HG to date, very definitely sea thermic 5ups and 5downs. Found that my arms got tiered quickly as i was unnecessarily tense keeping the glider where I wanted it to go, realised how tense my arms had been after landing and relaxing. Paul H was the only other pilot out so had the site to ourselves. He did not find the conditions quite as challenging so guess it was mostly just my being a bit rookie. Must remember to relax!

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> Bob reported on a crowd along Whitsands Bay:

An hour or so at Freathy, 330 feet ato at best with a bunch of others. Quite interesting playing with the lift as the wind a bit off and some weak sea thermals . Then wind came round even more to the south so quick dash down to Struddick. Busy, busy, busy with at least 15 plus people flying and 380 feet ato, with weak sea thermals again. (Surprising as the air wasn't really that cold?) 360 ing over the back with some of the thermals. Really BIG turnout. And no self harming monkeys spotted?

It was so busy that pilots needed to keep very switched on as the usual ridge soaring rules were mixed with a few people 360' ing and crossing the slope. It highlighted the importance of scanning the sky around at all times to be aware of all flyers around you and I think most people were doing that really well. Cracking good day with no incidents, which was good considering a busy sky.

Rob Mog and Mick flew from Batten back to Struddick with a low save from the beach and Bob, Terry and Dazza tried to cross towards Donderry and ended up on the beach (I expected to really!) Couple of hours lovely autumn flying. Rob Mog flew from Struddick to Freathy!



And several people went down to the Inn on the Shore for afters.

Mick B, Alan H, Alan K, Dazza, Terry, Tom Dodge, Mark n Jen, Dougie and Julie, Ian and Ed? Richard T, Russell, Julie and Evan, Rob Mog, Col B, Col J, Bondie, James Bull (arm in sling) Karl Sweeney, Sam and Roger Davis, in fact too many to remember!



## **Other News**

### **Carbis Bay**

Had a message from Kernow club that the take-off field for CARBIS BAY has been ploughed and the site is not to be flown until they have resolved the situation.

### **Qualifications**

Congrats to Caedmon Mullin who has now passed his pilot exam.

He didn't feel he had done particularly well -but his overall pass mark was 91%. –MN

**Mike Connatty hits the European trail** – Mike has kindly written an article which I am publishing in stages – Part 2:

### **Col Bas, Dormillouse (stiffee)**





Having once again hooked up with a German Pilot from the previous year here and a French Club I had the good fortune to fly from this take off as it requires a forestry permit and a 4x4.

The take off is rough and almost a cliff, quite dramatic 3000 feet above the valley. Having learnt to turn into the hill quickly and tightly height gains to 3700 feet ATO were rapid and as a group of 5 headed for the Tete d'Estrop. Having reached the top we hooked into a thermal above it and pushed higher and higher. It was yet another blue day and visibility was crystal clear all the way south to the Mediterranean.

I started to notice a shortness of breath followed quite quickly by becoming dizzy with an ever increasing length of blink. Having suffered from altitude sickness once when skiing the signs were the same. With full determination I pulled on speed and headed out into the valley and shaking off some height, I immediately felt more coherent. It was gutting watching the other pilots thermalling higher and higher disappearing south.

I flew back up the Dormillouse to St Vincent and out across Lac de Sere Poncon, from there I headed west to towards Tallard and south. Sail planes were everywhere indicating thermals despite another cloudless day. The real fun started on my landing approach, I pulled the zip down on my harness and it jammed half way closely followed by a sharp pain, I gave it (the zip) another tug and it was well and truly jammed the pain struck again. I was wearing lightweight shorts with no underpants and they and my foreskin were jammed in the zip, F#@k, ouch!!!

Surveying the landing field which was surrounded by high tension wires and trees the pain was the least of my worries, so I had to pull the zip back up releasing the afore mentioned before opening it fully. It was more of an arrival than a landing with relief and pain in equal measures, the broken upright was the least of my worries. On inspection of the "other" damaged gear it was apparent I would be out of action for a week or so.....Next time safety pants. 60-70 km under my belt.

### **St Andre les Alps (flopper and stiffee)**

Several fun local flights on the paraglider around midday with good height gains to 4000 feet above take off at 2000m.



Conditions are well known to be lively in St Andre and especially in August, this place bites hard. That is why take off on the stiffee was not until 1730 and the day had started to calm down a bit, thermals were mellowing out a bit but you still had to be careful.

I was in a thermal with a French guy and we were topping out at 2300 feet ATO when I suddenly hit the falls, like going over the top of a waterfall. I was staring at the ground below and screaming quickly towards it in a vertical orientation. After a second or two I managed to pull out and went back to find the lift. The French pilot was less impressed and headed out into the valley. Back for more and this time there was some turbulence at the same height but I pushed on and things smoothed out again climbing to 3900 feet ATO. I can only think that this must have been breaking through the inversion as yet again it was a blue day.

After pushing out both north and west I headed across the valley for the run down to the Pic de Chammatte. On the return I decided to land as it was approaching 1900. With 500 feet to go to the main landing field at Aerogliss I commenced my approach across the river. Throughout my descent I had been watching the wind socks. At this point they dropped indicating nil wind.

I then hit a very strong head wind and pulled on as much speed as possible on bar (55mph max), I was making almost no head way but just heading down quickly. At this point I had prepared myself for a possible riverbed landing, worst case. I inched forward and cleared the river with 10m height, from previous flights I had learnt not to fly in over the trees.....

I had popped out the other side of the gust pretty quickly and landed halfway up the landing field. So in 100m I had lost 450 feet.

Possibly the last time I land at Aerogliss instead La Mure, just when you think you have factored in a safety margin there is still room for compromise.

### Whitsands Webcam

Ashley found a new webcam coming on line at the 'Eddystone café' on the beach.

<http://magicseaweed.com/Live-Whitsand-Bay-Webcam/22/>

This also gives a local forecast for comparison, although no live wind reports.

### For Sale (see club website)

See <http://www.sdhgpgc.org.uk/> - apparently a lot of kit coming available.

**Next Meeting** is on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October 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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