



NEWSLETTER

September 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!

August 2012 Meeting minutes

Apologies: Tim Pilling, Simon Kiddy,

Membership Secretary

Due to the pressure of work, Dougie has had to stand down as Membership Secretary and the Committee is looking for volunteers.

Sites Issues

Woolacombe – the issues there were repeated and Ashley has now updated the [North Devon] website with details for those interested.

Perranporth Airspace restrictions are still impacting on St. Agnes flying and also Perran Sands, if you cross the beach (HGs?).

Struddick – the Monkey Sanctuary have been contacted following a recent complaint, and have been requested to supply a photo of any pilots considered to be infringing the restrictions.

Beesands – pilots have noted that recent ‘improvements’ to the sea defences means that nasty great rocks cover the old beach up to the first walkway. This means pilots need to take more caution if they get low out front.

Senior Coach

Further to last month’s plans to make Colin B a Senior Coach we have become aware of BHPA restrictions. Senior Coaches should attend a £250 course! Mark N was therefore currently a ‘Chief Club Coach’ and CB could become an ‘Assistant Chief Coach’ once he has attended a refresher Coach course.

The BHPA have indicated that they would give MN ‘honorary’ Senior Coach due to his length of experience [this has since been confirmed].

MN has ‘booked’ a BHPA Coaching Weekend (2 days) to be held in March 2013 for the south west area. It is open to 30-40 people, with our club getting first pick as hosts. Older Coaches should consider a Refresher. Subsidies will be reviewed nearer the time (£10 last time).

Safety

Pod Harnesses – further to the article in Skywings, Colin B explained a ‘pod incident’ at Freathy last month where he nearly crashed. The issues revolve around difficulty weight-shifting; significant drag when coming in to land legs out; getting in at take-off can be difficult and risky on rocky T/Os; risk of not strapping in correctly; difficulty deploying reserves.

Sand in Wings – beware of gathering sand in the wing when on a beach or trying Wagga. New pilots may not realise how easy it is to become unstable.

Risk Taking – MN is still concerned that pilots are taking too many risks – think hard before pushing your luck; be alert to risks.

Devon & Cornwall Paragliding Club

Malin Lobb has led the forming of a new paramotoring club, largely including SDHGPC members.

Details at <http://www.sdppgc.webeden.co.uk/#>

They are negotiating their own sites, so should not conflict with free-flyers.

Club Trip

Discussions concluded that we should combine a trip to Zillertal with the Northampton Club.

[Editor will act as project co-ordinator. Details have been circulated to members since the meeting, but if you need more details contact me]. 10 members showed interest at the meeting.

Next Meeting

Agenda – 27th Sep 2012

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

1. Intro - Alan
2. Feedback from Condors Sep meeting: "Safety" - Colin B, Alan H
3. "Flight Confessions" - significant flying over the last month
 - 19th Sep - Woolacombe
 - 22nd Sep - Labrador Bay
 - Others??
 - HGs at Freathy - "Close Encounters of a Concrete Kind 2"
 - PGs at Chinkwell - "Close Encounters of a Rocky Kind"
4. "Safety Matters" - Mark N, Colin B
 - Strategies for getting caught out as per Richard at Chinkwell
 - PG safety notice – SkyWings Sept – hands through brake loops?
 - Club Coach Course
5. Weather station at Freathy

After the break:

6. Club Trip 2013 – latest info – Mark A
7. (First report – French travels; St Hilaire 2102 – Mark N ??)

Meeting End 10:30

[UK] Flying News

Friday 31st August Bob went to Batcombe

Jim McD and I got there at 11 ish. More breeze than I expected (just 7 -8 mph forecast) and strong thermic gusts. We were surprised to see nobody else there? As we were setting up Chrissie from North Devon and John ? Condor turned up and we were pretty soon all in the air. I was second off and had a couple of unpleasant lively surges immediately while pretty low. Not very nice. Bitty broken thermals with sharp edges with big sink in between. 1st flight managed 272 feet ato, but thermals, instead of getting more defined with height, just petered out. After one good low save out front the next time I was down low I ended up going down. I was followed moments later by Chris then John. Jim McD stayed up a bit longer, but then ended up going down too. We walked back up and waited a bit. The sky looked great, but very strong gusts at times.

A few more pilots turned up. Paul, Simon Fouracre, Jamie plus a n other, (all Condors) and our Andy Guy, and a bit later we had another flight. Stronger wind so soarable now, but still a bit gnarly and sinky in between. My wing went very odd and floppy at one point and I must say, a lot of the time I was contemplating what it would be like to end up in the trees. Very active flying and not going anywhere someone said. And not a great deal of fun. Windy but not lify and not possible to get a climb out. If you found something good enough to 360 in you were very quickly back behind the tree line and going down. Pushing out front was not a lot better and quite bumpy in places. I managed 337 feet ato this time. We all landed after a short while, some getting a bit rock n rolled low down when coming in, and we agreed it wasn't a lot of fun. Shame really as the sky looked great. It began gusting 20+ mph at times, down to 11 -12mph.

It looked as though it was improving a bit and latecomers Simon F and Jamie flew, though didn't stay up long and agreed thermals were going nowhere and it was still a bit rock n rolly.

Waited till 4 ish and despite forecasts suggesting it would ease, it just stayed strong and gusty.

Shame the planning for flights the coast and our gps fiddling came to nowt, but hey ho. Had about an hour of bumpy flying, but better than sitting at home wondering if I was missing something.

Same day Geoff was at Sourton

Sourton was fun if not epic. It soon got a bit fresher, enough to keep Robin and Malcom on the ground for a while. I scrabbled about for ages with a couple of climbs to around 2000'(asl). Then just after Robin took off it got good. We climbed out together. Robin doing better than me. I pushed back up wind and caught a few more climbs, I think Robin landed just downwind? I tried to do a little out and return, only got about 3.5 k upwind though, base was about 3300' asl and the climbs weakened a bit so each one took me nearly back to the hill ! I landed after about 2.5hrs. Back at Sourton and home in time to milk me cows! Very good to fly again.

Robin added: Yea, I landed near the Fox and Hounds and had a pint with Malc - it wasn't the day to try and cross the moor. That's the first time I've thermalled with a hangie and although it must be easier for the P/G you realise it's limitations when you both reach base and Geoff just bombs back to the hill in no time at all and without losing much height, whereas I had no chance at all in following him. He did some impressive (or suicidal) low saves way out in front of Sourton and below T/O height as well.

Next day (1st Sep) Geoff was out again at Woolacombe:

After a drought of flying for me this summer it's been two days on the trot now, went to Woolacombe yesterday aft with my friend tall Paul and 'big bertha' the tandem. The wind was quite well off when we got there, Brett and Rebeka where there having both flown and about 3 other visitors. We rigged up while Brett fetched Rebeka from the beach and launched at around 5, Brett wired us off and had a good critical look at my gear, always nice when stuff is 'new'! Take off was a little bit wobbly as Paul is 6'8" and I'm 5'7"! but once we were in the air the glider handled nicely. Had about an hour, the lift wasn't great and I said to Paul we were off to the beach when a mercy thermal came through. We gained about 150 200' quite quickly and popped in on top. Phew. First try out of my tandem gear very pleased with it all.

Monday 3rd Mick was at Sharkham:

Sharkham worked for a while had about fifty minutes with the sea breeze. Never much more than fifty feet above take-off and then dropping so got in while I could and let the model aircraft man have a go but all good fun . mick

Same day Editor was at Freathy:

After 20 mins hard work I scraped back on top. It then dropped to around 8mph and never felt it was worth punting off again. Visitor 'Brian' (Southern club) was flying a Sky Antea medium, and never had enough height to get back in on top. However he planned to beach land as his wife and friends were down there, and didn't go down until after I had landed. Lovely sunshine, which had thrown thermals up the face of the chalets, so I didn't skim them as close as usual, as then lift/sink was unpredictable.

Wednesday 5th Tim went to King Tor:

Ivor, Malcolm, Robin Mog, Martin Foley and I decided it was worth a walk up at about 10'clock after blowing all morning. Got there with wind almost bang on, slightly to N but speed ok. We were all soon off with conditions cycling between good and a bit scratchy. Ivor climbed out in a good thermal with me just below. I lost it and just made it back to the ridge but Ivor went over the back, causing Malcolm some concern, as he had not seen Ivor do that for so long he was worried he would get lost!

In the end we all had a reasonable amount of flying, maybe a bit snotty at times but nothing unusual. Rob and Ivor flew most of the way back to the cars, and Ivor didn't go far and sunk out just over the back somewhere nr. Hamel Down. Martin was still flying when we left with a few more arriving for an evening fly.

Friday 7th Bob went to Sharkham:

Had a nice half hour at Sharkham this afternoon at about 4 ish, all on my todd as Mick has gone off to N Devon. Wind off to the west but a nice 12 -13 mph and when I got the wing up was lifted up immediately. Could only venture half down the field for fear of rotor off the spur that sticks out, so no chance of Mansands run, but flew all the way to the point the other way and 170 feet ato at best. It's getting less scary there.

Biggest problem is the dogs. I waited till a bloke with a big Alsatian (German shepherd if you prefer) cleared off, as I had visions of being mauled, or the wing shredded if I dropped out of the sky within a 100 mtrs of them. And a couple with a Colley were going the other way. Even as I packed a woman came through the style with 5 barking dogs who had a thing about helmets and took to barking at me. Nice site though.

Sunday 9th Richard went to Chinkwell:

Rasp and XC showed a window for an early flight so all was ready as the mist lifted. After 40 minutes of bumpy stuff 390' ABT in the clouds as a best. Tom and Cadman arrived along with some almighty sink. After 20 minutes trying to maintain 100' the wind picked up and then up again. Tom and Cadman managed to get around the front and back to the car park . Me on full bar was too far back and going further back by the second. My first proper crash. Came in backward behind the hill. At least I grabbed the "c" risers before touch down so was not dragged far. Well shaken and stirred but apart from pull muscles and a broken Go Pro mount unhurt.

Same day Alan came to Freathy:

I arrived at about 11 with a PG in the air and, I think, HG too, & loads rigging, including 2 Atoses & a WW Sport 2 (flexy) from the Condors, ColJ with his Atos, Martin Reed, Karl Sweeney, Chris, "Coach" Blagdon testing another & others. There was plenty for HG (no beach) & gliders were getting high - it was probably 15-18mph. The 2 PGs seemed to be finding it a bit top-end on TO, but no real problem.

New member Mike Belkin arrived to have a first look at a S Dev site, and to admire our skilled flying. I explained that the site was notorious for top-landing on HGs because of the dead air behind the track.

Most of us then proceeded to demonstrate this with inelegant dumps or harder smack-ins. Col J demonstrated the "float-in on the stall" approach quite effectively, & Mark R-H made probably the most consistently elegant convention approach on his Atos.

Prize "arrival" of the day went to Karl, out flying for the first time in quite a while. His first landing was near perfect, & I made the mistake of telling him he hadn't lost his touch...! On his next approach, Karl decided that anything "coach" could do on a PG he could do better on an HG, and narrowly missed a face-plant on the concrete block. Karl was aiming for the glider-bag "spot" he'd put out, with a low-level turn dropping him into the dead air, resulting in an arrival wing-down & still in the turn. It was a hard hit, & Karl was quite shaken. At first it looked as though he'd got away with no damage, but when he checked the glider more carefully he found the keel was broken. It could have been much worse though. Hopefully Karl will be able to get his glider fixed & back in the air before too long.

Thursday 13th Richard went to Woolacombe:

I got to the top at Woolers around 11:00 in light wind. A couple had tried and sunk. Within half an hour I think 5 PGs were up. The wind was a little off and the left hand side by the bench got choppy but with good lift. I topped out at 400' Ato

After playing with speed bar and Bigears on my new 'super slug' I had a sniff at the top landing zone. Plenty of lift so bared away from the hill as if I landed I would never get off again. Another half hour way in front before a beach landing just getting used to the wing. The 1-2 are so much nicer than my old 1 slug. At least something happens in the same calendar month.

There was a nicely trimmed patch of grass at the bottom but try a I might every time I went for it lift came and back to square one. After my last landing I was all in for the safer option hence the beach.

Sunday 26th Editor went to Freathy: (I didn't fly, but as no-one else reported the day, I will recall.)



I arrived late morning to find a gaggle of PG pilots and a couple of HGs. The wind was f/c to increase, but already most of us felt uncomfortable in the cool, windy, overcast conditions. However Chairman Alan was not

being put off, having come so far, and quickly rigged his PG. Fighting the compression he was pushed off to be the wind dummy and despite him having a very enjoyable flight of 90 mins, nobody else felt inclined to join him.

By the time he landed the HG brigade were rigging, with Colin J buzzing the field; Graham de Gasperi demonstrated 2 HGs for Martin R to try, but he remained unconvinced when I left (with the other PGs). It was getting quite gusty even for the stiffies

Wednesday 19th Jim S went up to Woolacombe

Well worth the drive today. A little top end but do able and plenty of thermals to be had, Tim got away, I tried to follow as a thermal took me up to 1000 ato. Then I hit massive sink put my bar on full hoping to find another quick, couldn't find another to take me high enough but plenty for a good days fun flying, I think Bob also had a pb for height there, he was well above me anyway, Steve C got some good flying in too..

Bob added: Bit challenging take off conditions at times, but in the end we all had a couple of hours and some good height ato. Jim shouted he'd had 1000 feet ato. And Steve and Tim did well too. I was first off and had to bar to get away from the hill and was on a bar on and off for quite a bit. It did moderate at times though. After an hour I got a climb with Richard the Fireman, Joey and a couple of other pod gods. It was quite a big gentle thermal and we all drifted over the back. My max was 1624 feet ato, maybe 2050 feet asl, (my best ever height at Woolas) but I let the small gaggle get slightly ahead and at that point figured I didn't much like the look of the route ahead, a line of wind turbines, or a big wide estuary to its right to fly over, so bottled out and tried to push back to t/o. Even with bar I didn't quite make it, but landed safely and easily a couple of fields back. Speaking back at t/o to a visiting Sigma pilot who was in the gaggle, he said he'd also bottled out as he didn't like the look of the big fans! He said that Rich, Joey the maybe two others had tracked north as they approached the fans and went around them.



Tim connected with something later too and disappeared over the back. Sigma man thought he'd landed the woolas side of the turbines. I phoned and he was down ok.

I had a second flight and got to near 1000 feet ato. It was a bit bouncy at times, I had 900 feet per min on the averager at one point, but we all had a couple of hours of good flying!

Steve got his first post CP flight out of the way and did well in challenging conditions, so well done Steve!

Same day Graham was at Sourton:

Ivor had a couple of flights but it was still too strong, so walked back.

Myself, Colin Jones, Alan and Robin walked up a little later and it was still top end but ok. I had a flight and with active ranges set off towards Okehampton camp to try and skirt around the ranges. A couple of helicopters "playing" in and out of the camp prevented that so and I landed back by the cars.

Walked back up and went the other way and got as far as the ranges in the other direction, ended up at the Dartmoor Inn, closed as usual!!!!

Robin tried my earlier route, but with similar helicopter problems, ended up by the quarry. Both Colin and Alan had a play, but thermals were a bit rough. Base was pretty low, only a couple of thousand feet above take off and with the active ranges getting away on such a good day was frustrating!!!

Still, it's good thermic airtime and a couple of beers in good company

Robin added: Yes, thanks Graham for wind-dummying and encouraging the rest of us to get in the air - eventually at gone 3.30. It was gusty and not very comfortable flying, more like spring conditions. Eventually I got nearly 2000' above T/O but was tracking toward the active range and had to pull out of the thermal. Graham was 500' higher near base and cross-winded south. I went north, picked up some more lift by the water treatment plant and got to the quarry with 800' in hand. The ***** army helicopters were still buzzing around the army base like angry wasps but they didn't seem to be doing anything - not landing or hovering - just making a

noise and burning fuel! Anyway I thought if I got a stonker like the last time I flew over the quarry I'd get high enough to comfortably fly over the hellies and trundle off down the A30. Unfortunately the quarry, this time, was mostly in shade; I didn't get a bleep and had to land in the field next to it. Was grateful to find the air-bag on my new reversible harness worked OK as I was dumped from 5 or 6 ft by rotor from the quarry edge. And was also grateful to Alan for picking me up at the quarry entrance just as they were locking up!

Same day Sam was at Perran Sands:

Perran was also excellent. Got on site for about 1pm as I had to do some work to relieve the feeling of guilt about bunking off all day. Wind was light at times not as strong as woolers sounded and thermals excellent! Really interesting coastal flying and Perran behaving completely different to usual. Pilots at one end of ridge could be scratching around whilst others skying out a few hundred yards away. My best altitude for the day was 800 ft above head and shoulders above any height I've had there before, very exciting circling back over the caravans then dashing back to the ridge.

Well done Tim, think there is something extra special about getting away from a coastal site!

A much needed excellent day's flying.

Thursday [wargames day] 20th Ashley was at Freathy:

Go to Freathy at 11, to find Kernow Bill waiting for the wind to drop, was 22+ and looked stronger.

As we waited the wind started to drop, and by 2pm was blowing 15-16. Mike Connatty turned up just as I followed Bill into the air. Initially very smooth, but soon got a little bumpy with the odd bit of broken thermal coming through or a bit of low cloud suck.

Also joined by Martin from Saltash, who was happy to do circuits and bumps. All landed by 3pm as the wind continued to drop and getting scratchy, good to steal an hour in the air even if we did have to share it with numerous helicopter fly pasts!

Saturday 22nd Bob tried Labrador Bay:

I got a text from Jim McD at 1600 saying 14mph at Lab Bay, good direction. Phoned him to make sure as it was showing very gusty at Froward. He said flyable. Drove over and saw no white horses in Torbay which was encouraging and got close and saw Mick B and Jim with very good height on their way to Babbacombe. Jon Thorne arrived same time as me and we both took off. I went straight up 500 ft above and made my way slowly to Babbacombe following Jon, but was quite sinky in places on the way and was down to 150 - 200 ft most of the time. I turned back just short of Babbacombe. Flew back to join Mick at the Ness end who had some good height. Jim and Jon had gone across the Teign and were on their way to Dawlish again. Jim still with a lot of height.



After 45 mins I was pretty cold and thinking about landing when I got a good 400 - 500 ft per min on the average that took me to 1000 ft above. Just a continuous steady beep beep beep all the way up. We all had some good height at times, especially Jim who seemed to cruise around a good 300 - 400 ft above us. He said his max was similar to mine at 300+ metres above. I had actually had some difficulty getting down and bled, with almost 25% each side, almost all the way from 1000 ft. It took me considerably longer to get down than it did to get up! Mick said he had similar trouble getting down and did wingovers and ears. Anyway, Mick landed and I soon followed in the big field behind the bowl. A little rotory, but not terrible. The wind was top end again and I wasn't really going forward as I came down. Mick said he'd been trashed as he'd come into the field to close behind the trees.

The wind had definitely picked up again and driving back I could see plenty of white horses in Torbay. XC shows increased at Portland later as well. There was just a window of a couple of hours I think.

New CP Russell was there without wing, but I don't think this it would have been wise for a flight mate and it's not really a good low air time site. There was beach, but as I said when Jim and I got caught in orographic and had to beach land a while back, it's blooming difficult to get down in the places where there are cliffs behind. Plus

even flying a dhv 2 , (3/4 on the weight range) I was on half bar a good few times to stay out front. JimMcD and Jon didn't need bar though? Not sure what you fly Russl but you may have been pinned as well? I spoke to Jim McD while on my way home and he suggested when it is strong the safest option is probably to cross the Teign and land on the beach?

Other News

Julie in France

Julie has been on a 'road trip' round the Alps including my favourite site at Annecy.



Sites Padlocks

Please ensure you spin the lock whenever you go through the gates, even if others are still there. Particularly at Freathy - rogue campers have got in before, and if the code is revealed, we may have to set a new one confusing lots of members.

Beesands access

Simon Honeywell who rents the fields behind T/O at Beesands has said they've been harvested now and there's good access again. Also he's going to make a better attempt to get the chap who sub-lets from him to leave a decent margin around the edge of the field this year so we can drive around the crop. Trouble is the chain of command is so long - N.T.>tenant> sub-tenant>ploughing sub-contractor. So hopefully you hangies won't have to carry too far. RM

Qualifications

James Bull is now **Pilot** rated. His overall pass mark was 90 %

Also Colin Blagdon is now **Advanced Pilot** rated –and his pass mark was 94%.

Congratulations to both pilots. As pilots who have taken these exams will tell you –they are difficult – there is a lot to learn, and understand. MN.

Steve Coley also got signed off as a **Club Pilot** by Andrew Pearse

Mike Connatty hits the European trail – Mike has kindly written an article which I will publish in stages:

Woolacombe (stiffie)

After months of rubbish weather and non-stop work commitments I finally had the opportunity to test fly a potential upgrade stiffie from my Moyes Litespeed 5 to Moyes Litespeed 4.5S loaded with carbon extras. With only three days to go before heading off to Europe for the summer I spotted a weather window at Woolacombe. It was a stunning, sunny, mid-week day and on arrival conditions were ideal 18mph west wind. The test flight went well and I was taken aback at the difference in performance, not as stiff as the Moyes RS4 rocket ship I had test flown the previous year. Thanks to Trevor Jordan for the banter and Leffes.

Verbier (floppy)

Within a week I was chatting to the guys from Verbier Summits at a landing field in the valley, the next afternoon I was in the air with Jay Jordan, Trevor's son.

A stunning location with potential to explore the glaciers on a good day.



Plane Joux (Chamonix valley) floppy

After waiting several hours for conditions to improve and let the local tandem flights take off the air mass went to rats. A breeze intermittently came from behind take off and the visibility closed in. Flight aborted with advice from locals.



St Jean (Montclar) flopper

Wedding anniversary. Downhill mountain biking with Mrs C using the lift in the morning and swapped out at lunch time for the paraglider.

Took off in what I thought was a good cycle and slowly went down for what I thought was going to be an early bath. I scratched around at tree top level and when I was sufficiently scared headed off to the landing field via the town. With 500 feet to go I sniffed a weak thermal and gently teased it up and up. Matters had not been made easy with the new Brauniger helmet vario not working. I suspect it had something to do with not reading the instructions???

Once above the tree line the thermal was pumping and I soon shot up above the Dormillouse ridge and maxed out at 3700 feet above take off. Take off being 2000m ASL. I had questioned why there was only one other paraglider flying but I was confident that conditions were within my limits.

It was a blue day and having flown here before I headed down the ridge to the Tete de L'Estrop 18km away, the highest peak in the range at 2960m. Progress was quite quick with a couple of top up thermals in order to remain high. Before committing to going further south I turned into wind and realised that progress was rather slow if almost non-existent. Decision time? Wedding anniversary, 3-4 hour retrieve if I kept going, no, not today. I then spent 1 ½ hours flying the 10 km back to Seyne les Alps where I was camping. Visibility was astounding, some lenticular cloud had formed over Mont Blanc, I suspect I was flying into wave as the lift would continue for 10 to 15 minutes at a time without turning. I experienced some nasty turbulence at height and did not go anywhere near the speed bar. I landed 10 minutes' walk back to the camping. Storming flight.

For Sale (see club website)

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

Next Meeting is on Thursday 27th September 7:30pm at the **Royal Oak, South Brent.**

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