



# NEWSLETTER

## SEPTEMBER 2013

Although I have included some extensive flight reports (from excitable HG pilots), there have not been as many good days as hoped. When not too windy (for PGs) we've been dogged by fog and low cloud. So now the seasons are changing I'm hoping for more unstable Polar air, but without strong winds. Best of luck to all for October.

### **August 2013 Meeting minutes**

#### **Apologies**

Mark Ansell, Bob Moore, David Reckitt, Stephen Coley, Julie Stapleton

#### **New Members**

Steve Last - PG Ivybridge - nearly finished CP with Cloud 9

Paul Hill – PG Ivybridge – Nearly finished CP

#### **Exeter TMZ**

Robin Mogridge has had an email from Tom Hardie (BHPA) concerning temporary zone around Exeter Airport from 16/9 for up to 28 days. It is in place to facilitate a radar upgrade and may only last for a week or so. Exeter Services manager Dave Thoams is happy to open the airspace for us with at least ½ hours notice. The site affected would be Labrador Bay, though some XC's off Dartmoor may also be affected. Several Condors sites will be affected. More details to follow.

#### **Countryfile**

Mark Nicol reported that BBC Countryfile has been in contact with the club wanting to film one of their presenters on a tandem somewhere near Tavistock. He explained the difficulties of doing this especially with a tight filming schedule but he was happy to do it.

#### **BP Cup**

Tim Pilling and Malin Lobb reported on the recent round of the BP Cup in the Peak District. Malin came 2<sup>nd</sup> overall and was also best newcomer.

#### **Flights**

Robin Mills gave a report on his recent XC from Sourton to Torbay.

#### **Safety**

Colin Blagdon presented his 'all in one' flight planning sheet. It is intended as a single resource of information and checklist for flight planning, in particular XC flights. It is proposed that the sheet will be published on the club website.

## Next Meeting Agenda for 26th Sept 2013

### **Meeting start 8:00**

1. Intro Alan
2. Sites news
  - Exeter TMZ termination Rob Mog
  - Cox Tor Farm height restriction Rob Mog
  - Plans for sites guide update AlanH / Rob Mog / MarkA / Ash
3. Tee Shirt retail opportunity! Malin
4. Flight Confessions All guilty pilots
5. Safety Matters
  - Update on Simon's accident Col B
  - Alan's pile-in at Dizzard Alan H

### **Break**

6. **Google Earth Track Log Session...** XC flights & key decisions
  - Dizzard to Fowey (getting it right) Mark N
  - Dizzard to A30 (getting it wrong) Alan H
  - Zillertal PG XC Mark N
  - Zillertal HG XC - "Boiling in Convergence" Alan H

## [UK] Flying News

### Monday 26<sup>th</sup> Aug Dougie managed to get away from Corn Ridge:

I managed 28km which took over 2 hours to complete (3 hours total airtime all thermalling), no cloud drift at all and surprisingly scratchy. Was amazing to finally fly the Oke meet valley which was working a treat as you could see! Thermalled with 4 sail planes over Brent Tor in the seabreeze convergence, was wondering if one was Mike Gadd - its always good to meet up with friends at base ;-). Then binned it at St Annes Chapel as the sea air over took me. Even my Mantra on full bar was not quick enough to stay away.



Towards Brentor.



Over Gunnislake

### Same day Graham was at Meldon Hill:

Myself, Colin Jones and Bondy were sat on Meldon Hill. We spent most of the day pulling up bracken in frustration to clear a patch.

Colin and I finally got off and after an eventful XC finally landed on the cricket pitch at Chagford. Lift was very small, punchy bubbles in a clear blue sky...perfect :-). Walked to the pub, where Bondy did the retrieve thing!

### Friday 30<sup>th</sup> Darren had a flight at Polhawn:

I was joined by Mark H and was later joined by Mike Bond and Martin. I spent 1.30hrs floating about mainly into wind to progress as far past Freathy, but in a head wind it was a long hard slog. Mark h joined me at 400ft ato over Freathy before heading back to Polhawn. After a while it got too choppy again to land at Polhawn, but my safest option was to head for Freathy and arrived there after a 25min head wind battle at 400ft ato (should have used more bar, but wanted to maintain height due to no beach) not really losing height I practiced some tight turns and big ears before bringing it in to land nicely.

Many thanks to Martin for the retrieve; Mike and Mark managed to get in at the bowl and Martin had to use full speed bar and was almost still going back over Polhawn and had no alternative but to put it in the field to the right and behind take off.

### Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> Sam went to St.Agnes:

Aggie was excellent, most turbulent coastal flying I have experienced thus far, but great lift to boot. I managed to climb out to 950 above launch (the big 1000 eluded me), 4 up and 6 down. Wind got a bit too strong at around 1pm; eased again; then picked up at about 3pm so much so on the second flight I was blown backwards at trim speed.

### Same day Alan and other HGs were at Dizzard:

The Infamous Five: Colin Jones, Mark Nicol, Chris Smith, Karl Sweeney and me, Alan Hughes.

Post cold-frontal (though weak) conditions, with strong & gusty wind (20-25mph at TO?). RASP was spot on with speed & direction, and with Cu forecast (narrow strip following the coast). Cu was high, but not very deep, and forming out to sea.

CJ was first off, and self-launched easily despite the strong wind. He was first to leave the hill, & disappeared downwind circling under a nice looking cloud. No idea what happened to the other 3, they'd disappeared by the time I launched.

I was finding the lift quite weak, and left at c.1,000ft ATO circling in a 0-200fmp wimpy thermalish thing that kept taking me gently up & eventually turned into a proper thermal a couple of miles inland under a small street of clouds. After going round in circles for ages, I eventually got to cloudbase at something over 4,000ft ASL (4,200ft?) and I adopted the "Nicol" method, opening the circle to fly away from the lift under the cloud, and circling back through the lift to maintain height.

This worked for a good while, then I couldn't find any significant lift to go back to, so had to set off for another cloud. By this time I was on the edge of Bodmin moor, and following the cloudstreet would have meant heading across the moor on a glide, which I didn't much fancy, so headed inland to try to go down the E side. Bad mistake! I was on the deck very quickly, for a turbulent but safe landing that ended up about a mile short of the nice field I had originally targeted.

As is often the case when these thermal things are around, Mr Nicol had the biggest problem & got blown all the way to Fowey before he was able to land.

CJ & I ended up landing either side of the A30 to the W of Launceston, and Chris & Karl seemed to have made a fair attempt to get home, landing some way S of Launceston I believe.

All in all a very nice day's flying. Was that the first time that all pilots left the hill from Dizzard? Maybe best cumulative distance from the site amongst all pilots? Anyway, a taste of what's to come, hopefully, as the sea-thermal season begins and the challenge of the "coast-to-coast" is upon us!



Mark N added: Here is how I got blown to Fowey on Saturday...

Thursday evening some of us were talking about Dizzard and that it could be a good day. The sea temp is now around 18C and the air temp for Saturday was predicted to be maximum of 15C -so there was the possibility of

sea thermals -but also a reasonable day inland with a good cloudbase. Still I was a little disappointed to see that the air was not polar air but maritime air going around the top of the high.

Within minutes of launching I thought -this could be good! Ridge lift was giving me between 100 m to 200 m above take off but the first decent sea thermal that came through felt quite strong and when I checked my vario it was 2m/sec -400 ft per min. I didn't feel like leaving the hill until I was more switched in to the day and stooged about until Colin , Karl and Chris were also airborne.

After about 45 minutes on the ridge I was getting quite frustrated. It was quite fresh 20 mph+ and so whenever you went back with a thermal you had to watch that you didn't go so far back that you couldn't fly forward again. The Atos gliders have a much better glide ratio and Colin had been making easy work of gliding forward after taking a thermal back behind the cliff. And then the big one came through... To my delight I found myself climbing out at 2m/sec in a very big sea thermal with Karl below me and to one side and Chris below me and to the other side (see photo) and a nice looking cloud above us. The thermal was so big that it seemed to affect the wind on the ridge and I did 2 or 3 360s without drifting much behind the cliff. I think that I was about 400m above the ridge before I was committed to going xc -which felt comfortable.



When you are top of the stack you can relax. If Karl and Chris were both going up then I only needed to position myself somewhere between them and above them and I would go up too. Interestingly we all got to base still with the same separation between us both vertically and horizontally so I think we were all climbing equally well, or badly in our own cores. I tried my hardest to go into cloud as the clouds looked quite benign -but I never got further than the wispy bits. Max altitude for me was 1255m.

Clearly if you are being blown along at 20 mph + then you only have to stay up for an hour and a half at the most and you get to the other coast from Dizzard. All three of us hung around at base for as long as we could. A couple of times I lost my lift and so immediately flew over towards Karl or Chris, as long as they were circling, and generally found lift before I got to them. This was a big area of lift that was taking us due south towards Bodmin Moor.

Meanwhile I was clocking the ground features that I know from many other xcs from Dizzard and felt rather pleased that we were still at base when we flew over the wind turbines and garage that are 16 km downwind from Dizzard. I landed there twice one Autumn -its often where you get to if you only get one climb.

Chris eventually lost the lift he was in and landed on moorland -but he knew the farmer and got a lift with his hang glider on the farmer's quad bike. A few minutes later Karl went on a glide, due south into the blue and I was alarmed at how quickly he lost height. When I could no longer find any lift under our cloud I decided to fly towards another cloud that was slightly cross wind and quite close. It didn't look like it was working but I thought it was better to go for where there was a cloud rather than fly into the blue.

This inspired bit of luck found me more lift -although I never got to base again- and by now I was trying to work out where best to aim for. I recognised Looe and realised I needed to head West to maximise my distance but with a 20 mph NNW wind and a flexwing hang glider I was never going to make much progress crosswind.



A third climb got me high enough that the coast was in reach -but where to land? Getting blown out to sea would really have spoilt my day. I chose the last flat field before the coast and before the road I was following dropped down towards Fowey ( not actually Fowey as Fowey is the other side of the estuary). Having chosen the big flat field I promptly flew over it, turned into wind and realised I may not make it into the field. I pulled on speed and was sinking alarmingly towards the hedge and road so chose to land in the field I seemed to be hovering over - on the other side of the road to the big flat one!

I remember thinking -this could all go horribly wrong -but the landing was fortunately very sweet. The most difficult bit was walking the glider forward up to the gate to de rig it. It was blowing at least 20 mph, possibly more. I was absolutely knackered, dehydrated but elated.

My straight line distance was 46.68 km and my distance with a turnpoint was 49km.

#### Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> Sep Paul went to Bell Hill:

I flew around an hour in total at Bell Hill in Dorset, the previous day was New Lane in Dorset too.

The day started off very much a no go with too little wind to soar and therefore I completed a couple of top to bottoms and general ground handing including using the wing to pull me back up to take off, which was surprising as at that stage it was still not enough to take off.

I found the site came alive once we had enough wind to soar and the 2 o clock house thermals near the magic tree were very good to take us to around 400 foot above take off, some made it to a "guesstimate" of about 700. The site had good parking, is well organised and also has its own weather station as the club owns the hill.

#### Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> Michal had more interest than he wanted at Polhawn:

I went to Polhawn today. I got there at about 13:30. Condition was a bit light: wnw, 8-12mph.

I tried to make a take-off then landed and so on a few times, as I was not very confident with the lift. After 3rd or 4th it went to light and was going down so slope landed, unfortunately with my wing in the bushes. I tried assess the situation and recovered it in less than 10 minutes. I thought that I was very lucky.

Just after I was getting ready to lift my wing up when coast guards showed up, as divers from the middle of the bay called them and said that a paraglider had some problems and fell down on to the cliffs. They took my details and I thanked them for coming and assured them that everything was controlled (except the overflying) and they left. They said that there was a boat on the bottom with more guards.

#### Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> Chairman involved in incident at Dizzard:

Silly sod didn't get close enough to the edge before attempting to launch. Result was right wing lifting as the glider went over the edge, turning back into the hill & flipping onto its back. This is not good.

Pilot totally uninjured, & glider only suffered bent uprights (glider checked v. carefully during de-rigging). Amazingly tough things these Atos gliders. This is good.



Luckily all the other pilots flying on the day had the decency not to fly all the way to the south coast. Thanks chaps, you're true mates!

Wind at TO was much stronger than RASP f/c - prob 25mph-ish. However, Graham Gilbert managed to get his Delta 2 into the air, and once he got onto the speed-bar even managed to get it to move forward rather than backwards. Once away from the hill he seemed to be having a fine time, so eventually the HG pilots went up to join him - Colin J first, then Mark N, and after helping retrieve me & my glider after my failed attempt to get airborne, Geoff & Keith.

All were amazed to watch Graham glide back to the hill from a long way behind, then fly on through & carry on thermalling. PGs don't do that Graham. Please don't do it again.



Malin arrived from Corn Ridge (by car - don't get over-excited here) reporting gusts up to 39mph at TO there. He joined ColinB & JamesB parawaiting while the rest of us headed off to the pub to join MarkN & Geoff who'd taken the short route & flown there.

Keith had what I think was his first XC, and got a fantastic retrieve in real style aboard a smoke-belching vintage tractor.

So, a memorable day for all kinds of reasons, but disappointing flying conditions considering the sky looked so good with lots of cumulus about. I'll leave it to others to report the airborne heroics.

Mark N added: Well Sat 14th Sept wasn't as good as two weeks before. It wasn't as windy and so launch was less challenging (except for Alan) and with less wind I was hoping for better conditions BUT the sea thermal was less strong, averaging 1m/sec (200 ft per min), smaller and more difficult to centre in and the thermals never felt like they were a route to cloud base.

Colin Jones eventually top landed- making a challenging landing look easy, Geoff Brooks was the first to go over the back and landed half a mile past the pub. I was getting frustrated after over two hours of not getting away and decided to go with the next half decent opportunity.



I climbed out to around 300 metres above t/o and stayed with the lift as long as I could , hoping against hope that it would develop into something but no it just stayed bitty and scratchy and I was turning half in and half out of lift. By the time I got to the pub at Wainhouse corner I had lost the lift altogether and so chose to land two fields away from the pub.

That was a bad decision. There were no power lines, or animals but the field was quite muddy. By the time I'd walked from the middle of the field to the gate with my glider the bottom of my harness was covered in mud and I had to de rig in a muddy field.

Keith Sutherland flew over the back for a good landing away from the site. His first xc.

Whilst we were rigging the farmer turned up to spread muck on the field but was soon persuaded to muck spread elsewhere. Fortunately the farmer is a friend of Keith Sutherland. I took loads of aerial pictures of the farmer's farm and have sent them to Keith to pass on. If only we had the same relationship with all site owners.

After a challenging launch Graham Gilbert managed very well on his new delta paraglider. I expected him to struggle but he was coping well with the 20 -22 mph wind. Paragliders are getting better.....

**Keith added:** Geoff and I answered the call from Mark to go to Dizzard on Saturday so with pasties loaded we met at Kennards House to drop off a car in anticipation of a getaway.

Arrived with high hopes of following the guys up, up and away and happily found a good 20+ mph NNW, cumulus and hangies rigging. The owner of the field we take off and land in came by to say hello and asked for some photos of the farm, thanks to MN for sending his on, I'm sure he and his family will be pleased, mine were rubbish

The plan was to just practice my thermalling and get myself into a position to hang onto the coat tails of the gaggle if it left the hill. Had a good hour before all my ducks (well Geoff and Mark) got in a row and I gained some good height with/underneath them but I felt like I was in and out of the lift and was somewhat relieved when they headed back to the hill too. I wasn't anywhere near when they finally did get away and I found myself all on my lonesome so when I got into a 2up a little later I went with it shouting things like 'work the lift' and 'I'm going up' to motivate myself and avoid heading down - It didn't work.

It was only when I started to think about landing options I realised how many wires are strung around the countryside but I picked a field and was pleased enough to land, right beside the road and gate, a quite astonishing first xc distance of 3k downwind (miles doesn't sound quite as far)

Walking back to the car a vintage grey Fergie trundled past and I was able to ask him for a lift without him even slowing down! It's right what they say - the retrieve is part of the fun!

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> Bob braved strong winds at Beesands:**

Had an hour flying but top end, took me a couple of attempts to get off. Couple of other people turned up but too strong to get off. Landed at Iz but very windy and on bar to stay forward even last 50 feet. Mick b, Michael j and Evan flow. Mick got across Hallsands but couldn't make it all the way back to t/o.

## **Other News**

**Exeter temporary TMZ**

Robin has received news that the work at Exeter Airport has been completed and the TMZ has been lifted.

**Cox Tor restrictions**

Not for the first time, we have had problems with the farmer at Cox Tor. This time Dougie was accosted by him after landing, having overflowed the farm buildings on landing approach. The club (Robin Mog) has followed this up with the farmer to try and sooth the situation and has agreed some limits with him:

“During our committee meeting last night we agreed on a no-fly zone over Mr. Bellamy's farm (Coxtor Farm - that's the land to the west of the stone wall at the bottom of the Cox Tor's western slope) with a ceiling of 500'. That's the bare minimum, flying any lower than that and you could spook his cattle/sheep. It's about TO height so if you're flying that way and you're not well above that height, turn back/away. I phoned Mr Bellamy to give him the glad tidings and he's happy with that (as long as we don't upset his sheep/cattle, obviously). Any rate he's got my no. now so if there's any problem he said he'd contact me rather than beat up the culprit! I'll adjust the site guide in due course”.

RobM.

**NO OVERNIGHT CAMPING AT THE WOOLACOMBE SITE**

North Devon club have advised that the National Trust had contacted them about a camper van that had parked overnight up on the hill at Woolacombe. They're not sure whose it was but the Trust wanted to make sure the message was sent out that there is strictly no overnight camping up on the hill.



Mark Nichol added that “If I stay up there overnight I park on the sea front road amongst the surfer vans –or camp at Little Roadway Farm campsite –which is right behind Woolacombe and has fabulous hot showers and a shop”.

#### Paraglider safety checks

Bob reminded pilots to regularly check their kit: “I noticed a couple of missing O rings on my riser maillons at the weekend while parawating for hours at King Tor. Pulled out the glider this morning to fit some new rings and discovered the sheathing had chafed right through on an outer A at one maillon. Possibly been like it a long time. I give lines a cursory check over as I lay the glider out but think maybe I should have done a better job”.



#### Membership Enquiries

I have set up a new email address dedicated to membership enquiries so i can keep things a bit more organised my end (please don't add it to the sdhpg mailing list or ill end up getting double mail?) The address is simple its [sdmember@yahoo.com](mailto:sdmember@yahoo.com)

#### Kernow site guide

We now have access available to the Kernow site guide, if you would like access please email Darren (on the new address above) for the login and password details, it should by now give you access to all the site guides if not one or two, but their web guy is working hard to bring the others on line to us. If you request login and password details, just like gate codes do not share them with anyone that includes other members within the club.

Please also do not change the password on the Kernow site as it will be shared by all qualifying sd members, if we run into any difficulties with this then access to the Kernow site guide may be withdrawn for all so please use it with respect.



### Unofficial Sites – Sites Officers views

We have several unofficial flying sites in our area, some are on the coast and some inland. There are various reasons why they haven't been added to our site guide. Most of the coastal ones suffer from poor bottom-landing options and some of our members have had to ditch in the sea or been stranded on isolated beaches in the recent past. The inland ones are mostly in amongst the rolling hills and valleys of the South Hams. Consequently they are small (around 200' high) thus needing strongish winds to soar, and suffer from rotor from the hills upwind. They also suffer in comparison to our Moorland sites which are in the main twice as high (400' to 500') and scattered around the edge of the moor so the countryside upwind, is in most cases, comparatively flat and lower than the hill, offering a more linear air-flow. Chinkwell being a notable exception. All of these unofficial sites in the South Hams and Torbay are surrounded by farmland which is usually not a problem when only one or two of us negotiate with the local farmer to fly his hill, but when it becomes more popular sooner or later someone will upset him, either by landing in a crop or leaving a gate open or parking in the wrong place. I know of two of these inland sites that have been lost in the last year or so and have been warned off three coastal ones over the years.

So if you hear of any unofficial sites through the grape-vine, before you go and fly them, please go back to the grape-vine and find out all about the ins and outs of the site, what the dangers are, who you might upset etc. Usually there are two or three people who know the site well and can fill you in. But bear in mind that for every unofficial site there are official ones listed on our website taking the same wind direction and usually better; their only disadvantage being that, if you live in the South Hams or Torbay, it might take you a bit longer to drive to them.

The only two sites which I think might possibly warrant official status are Pennywell and Labrador Bay. The former is lost at the moment, probably due to it's increased grape-vine popularity, and Robin Mills is trying to get it back. Whether the owner would be happier with it made official is a moot point. Giving official approval to a potentially hazardous activity on your land could open you up to possible accident/injury claims, at least that's what his insurers (and land agent, if he has one) will tell him. This is what happened at Strete and it wasn't until the BHPA increased the higher limit for land owners' third-party insurance to £5m that the land agent, there, was happy to renew our license. The same thing applies to Labrador Bay and there, we don't even know at the moment who owns the site. If it's the RSPB, they presumably won't want us flying during the nesting season. If not them we need someone local there to sound out the owner/tenant unofficially and get his thoughts on the matter. Either way it's going to cost us money for licences, possible land agent fees and Xmas drinks. My own instinct at the moment is summed up by the phrase: - If it's not broke, don't fix it!

### Berry Head Webcam

For those planning trips to the 'East coast' we now have a webcam at Berry Head at <http://www.berryhead.co.uk>.

**Next Meeting** is on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 7:30pm at the **Royal Oak, South Brent**.

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