



# NEWSLETTER

## AUGUST 2009

No. I'm not going to comment on the glorious weather we've not been having. Suffice to say I've booked another escape to the Alps next month, despite promising I'd stay in the UK this year. Yes there have been good breaks, and some pilots have been skilful enough to catch them. However the forecasting has been so terrible, that even when I did get it right at Freathy (8<sup>th</sup> Aug), only 2 other pilots were there, and we wondered where everyone else was.

### **July Meeting**

17 members attended. Apologies from Jim Fish, Gordon (moving), Brian Clavin (in London) and Paul C (working (and apologised that T-Shirts were not yet ready)).

### **John Chick Accident Investigation**

John attended the meeting and thanked everyone for their support during his recovery and said it made him proud to be a member of the club.

Initial accident investigations focused on the wing and found that the lines had shrunk 3 – 4", despite being only 9 months old. In fact the wing has been retained for further checks.

John recounted the event saying he had been flying backwards, even in light winds, tried to turn, but went parachuted. He has 15 minutes amnesia and can't recall hitting the ground. He suffered a fractured pelvis, spine, clavicle and ribs and spent 5 days in Derriford before managing to escape. [For all these injuries John looked in very good condition].

### **Malcolm Accident Recovery**

Malcolm didn't make it to the meeting, but John C reported he still has a deformity of the arm, is recovering, but bored.

### **Summer BBQ**

Mark Canvin was at the meeting [first time in ages – he had to be introduced to new members] and was still considering organising an event at Cox Tor sometime. We await further details.

### **Flying Feedback at Meetings**

Matt announced he had flown that evening, taking off from Cox Tor at 5pm and catching a thermal at 5:40, only to put down 20 mins later at Beardown in order to get back in time for the meeting! Or was it to pick up the kids?

Robin Mills recounted a recent evening flight, taking off at 8pm for 1 ¾ hours in Wave over Widcombe, with mist forming below him.

Ashley was pleased to announce that he and Martin Reed had done a Powered conversion course for HGs with Phippsy and looked forward to light wind conditions. He said that the training for powered flying was very much 1 on 1, so very useful.

The 'Dangerous Brothers' were reported to have been seen at Cox Tor with PPGs and an antiquated fluorescent wing. They are said to be John and Gordon Featherstone, who briefly joined the club in '98. Mark C tried to talk them out of flying within the National Park.

### Photo show

The meeting went on to show various members' photos.

### Other News

#### Paid up Membership

I can now report this has now reached 83.

### Flying News



Rogue pilot seen at Freathy with outdated headgear, undersize flying suit and trying to take off in light westerly wind.

### July 31<sup>st</sup> – Karl at Struddick

Chris Smith and I flew at Struddick Farm on a day forecast to be SSE at force 3-4 increasing to 6 in the west later. It blew 15 -20 mph (ie. 4-5) due South all the time we were at the site - ie. 10 am to 3.30pm . The sky was generally overcast with the odd bit of blue coming through.

We both climbed very slowly in smooth, weak wave lift to 1400' and 1275 ' ATO respectively with Chris easily making Banjo Pier in Looe at 500' ATO. We ventured over to Battern where oddly the

lift was not as good....Cloudbase was still a long way away -I would estimate another 1000' at least. The views were great and the flying easy. I'd be interested to hear from anyone who has experienced this phenomenon at Struddick before. Certainly these are the biggest height gains there that I'm aware of.

Interestingly despite letting Plymouth Tower know we were there and suggesting that they might want to route all local traffic to the north of us, we were treated to our own air display featuring a low-flying Hawk, a Sea King and a police chopper all upwind of and at roughly the same altitude as us . As we derigged an Air Southwest Dash 8 flew directly over the site at about 1000'. I like to think the pilot was aware of us (via Plymouth tower) and had checked the sky carefully before flying over to have a look...

Another point to note about this site- which I hadn't flown in over five years- is that we need to let the farmer, Kevin Andrews, know if we are planning to fly there. This is so he can move cattle out of the field if necessary. We did this ourselves as Chris is a cattle farmer by trade but I wouldn't recommend others to try it. Please let me know if you need Kevin's number.

#### August 2<sup>nd</sup> –Mike Connatty ventured over to Beer Head.

I was convinced on the drive over that it was going to be blown out judging by the tree movement and a bit concerned it would be slightly off to the SSE. I arrived at 1100 and measured 19mph smack bang square on the hill from the patterns on the sea. Happy days, but I was the only one there and had not flown the site before???

I had been there previously and scoped out Branscombe beach and gap a year ago. A quick call to Mark Nicol confirmed landing options and approaches, top and bottom.

Hey ho. I rigged up in the wind shadow of the van, dropped the wing flat and took the van back to park. To expedite things I took my mountain bike and pedalled back to take off hoping the wind had not increased. Still 20mph. I took off and cautiously and flew around gaining a couple of hundred feet just to the left of take off keeping well clear of the stacks and any rotor from them. Then after a couple of runs down to Branscombe gap and back I had 500 feet ato and jumped the gap, I barely lost 50 foot on the way over. I was off, VB at half and gaining height all the way without trying. By the time I reached Sidmouth I had topped out at 1100 ato, I obviously hadn't had enough brave pills that morning to jump Sidmouth, maybe another time on my flopper as they can be squeezed in anywhere if you go down.

The only problem I really encountered was losing height to land, back at Beer Head I flew nearly a mile out to sea and still remained at the same altitude. I flew back behind the cattle grid and lined my approach up, as Mark Nicol had briefed me, the approach was quite bumpy, but I flew in with good speed to keep control, at 50 ft everything smoothed off for a comfortable controlled flair.

#### August 2<sup>nd</sup> Paul C added

Robin Mills and myself also managed a nice little window at Chinkwell. I was camping nearby in the van overnight so it was a nice surprise to see Robin flying at 9.00 am whilst having breakfast in the van. I quickly proceeded to join him and had a good couple of hours or so flying in quite knarly conditions. It became very unpleasant towards midday as the wind had picked up considerably and began getting rotor off the hill in front combined with huge cloud development directly above so called it a day.

#### August 7<sup>th</sup> Bob visits Wessex

Myself, Mick Boarer and Chris Bellamy had a good time at Bell Hill. Rough at first and top end wind strength. Both Mick and Chris getting some good height at times as well, once we all got used to the rock n roll conditions.

Best flying was at 1600 when thermals were less broken and we got 1100 / 1200 feet ato and did think about going over the back. Blue sky though and the bit of elastic that connects you to the take off prevailed. I turned back into the head wind and even risking half bar couldn't quite make it back to launch, landing way to the back of the field behind. Post flight de-briefing with a couple of pints at the Fox at Ansty was good.

## August 7<sup>th</sup> Paul at Sourton

Lovely day was had at Sourton by many. Switched on nicely around midday, Robin and another unknown pilot got away early on, Robin making it to near King Tor and the other pilot apparently making it to the coast. Innes did his usual own thing of going anywhere he wanted to, pushing out way way in front, followed by Mike Connatty and myself but nowhere near matching the distance. Mike did extremely well, regularly boating about at cloudbase( 2400 ato), I only managed 2k ato in pursuit but unbeknown to Mike and Innes, a private light air craft flew directly beneath no less a few hundred feet away, bit too close an encounter for my liking, I doubt if the pilot even saw us. Mat turned up around 2ish and got away pretty much immediately, although not going far. Colin Jones and Alan Hughes also managed a late flourish in reaching base back towards Corn Ridge. Stayed flyable to around 5ish.

Robin Mogridge added: A stonking thermal to get away from Sourton, hoisting me to base (at 3000' @ T/O) in 10 mins and was 10 up at times. Another good climb when getting low in the middle of the moor coming up to Cranmere Pool and Hangingstone Hill. Making the mistake of cross-winding to the north at the Warren House Inn because there was a blue hole (unusually) over the plantations and the cloud over King Tor looked closer. After walking to the Moretonhampstead road, the first car I thumbed stopped. On the way stopped for a quick chat with Chris Blanchard who had landed by the Warren House and was also hitching. He reported that Richard the fireman, who'd got away earlier had reached the coast but didn't know where.

## August 8<sup>th</sup> Freathy

This was the editor's day at the coast in a light sea breeze. I turned up at 3pm to find only Mike C flying low along the cliff. After some hesitance I launched through the gorse (thankfully the speed-bar was tucked up) and just cleared the barbed wire. It was going off to the West, but still managed 45 mins (2 T/Os). Colin B joined us and continued to fly after it was "clearly too far off".



### 14<sup>th</sup> August Robin wrote:

Had 45 mins spectacular flying at Bolberry Down yesterday afternoon. Arrived about 3pm and it was too light (you have to be very sure of soaring there as there is absolutely no bottom landing and slope landings are mostly covered by gorse!) - then too strong. But about 4 it seemed about right, so I took off from the round gorse-free shoulder of land that leads down to Soar Mill Cove about quarter of a mile on the Salcombe side of the car park. I gained height steadily (eventually to 550 @ T/O) and skirting the orographic cloud to windward flew out to past where the cliff bends round to face south at Fernyhole Point and then back again to cross Soar Mill Cove. The only time I've done this before, getting back across was touch and go, this time I made it comfortably, thanks to the good glide angle of the Aspen. Eventually I big-eared down and landed by the Port Light which appeared closed, unfortunately.

### Cross Country Records

Dougie and Robin have started to create a list of records flown at our sites as a challenge for us.

Widgery to Burton Bradstock (near Bridport): 94.5 km by Innes Powell - Sept 2002.

Cox Tor to Chard: approx 85 km by Dave Morris - late 90s.

Belston to Wadebridge: 67.1 km by Innes again - March 2004.

Sourton Tors to Start Point: 60 km by Pete Bridstone - Spring 1994/5.

Corn Ridge to Beesands: 55.6 km by myself - June 1996.

King Tor to Normansland Village (near Looe): 49.9 km by Peter Robinson (Wessex Club) - May 2004.

Meldon Tor to Buckland Monachorum: 30.3 km by John Bates - March 2003.

Chinkwell Tor:- a couple of flights to near Bovey Tracey by Robin Mills and myself, but nothing over 10 km known of.

### Unofficial Sites:

Beardown to Frogwell (near Callington): 30 km by Innes - June 2009.

Staverton to Ashton (on Haldon Hill): 22.0 km by myself - Sept 1999.

Please let us know of any other records known, or disputing / improving on the above.

### Car Parking at Freathy

Mark Nicol e-mailed:

Mr Gynn's son is over on holiday from Canada at the moment. He returns to Canada on Saturday [29<sup>th</sup>].

There were a few of us at Freathy yesterday [Monday 24<sup>th</sup>] afternoon and Mr Gynn junior walked up to us and asked for £2 parking for each vehicle. There was nobody collecting on the gate and so just like his father he chose to collect some money himself. We all paid up good-naturedly.

He also mentioned that he only receives £100 per year. I thought that it was now £150 and suggested that to him. He wasn't sure but seemed content with us using his field.

So, if a big Canadian chap asks you for money this week **please pay up**. The deal has always been that as a club we pay for use of the field and then we pay individually for car parking if asked by the guy on the gate or the owner.

**Next Meeting** is on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August at the London Inn, South Brent, 8:00pm, **If any members have photos / videos they'd like to show [of recent flying] please bring them along as well.**

**Mark Ansell, Newsletter Editor, SOUTH DEVON HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING CLUB**

e-mail: [44homepark@supanet.com](mailto:44homepark@supanet.com)