



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2009

Well a much better month since the last Newsletter. More good XCs than I can remember in a long time. Well done to our enthusiastic and dedicated members.

May Meeting

A good turnout with 23 members attending.

New faces included:

Robin Mills who recommends Chinkwell Tor near Widecombe for NW to SW. Robin is an experienced pilot.

John from Newton Abbott.

T-Shirts

Paul brought a selection of garments for members to see and gained general approval.

Polo Shirts will be around £14;

T-Shirts around £12;

Fleeces £10.

Logos are viewable on the website.

New School

Robert Greenwood has set himself up as a local BHPA approved school – “Devon Adventures” and is based in Barnstaple. It was proposed that the club supports him to increase potential members in the area. Also to ensure he is put in contact with the National Parks team. He has subsequently joined the club and I have an e-mail address for those wanting to contact him – robertlifecoach@hotmail.com.

Summer BBQ

Mark Canvin was not at the meeting, but was reported to be considering organising an event at Cox Tor sometime. Condors members have also shown interest in such an event. We await further details.

First Aid Training

Matt proposed some basic First Aid training, which he believes he can organise through friends. It would not be a formal course, but would enable pilots to assist at accidents whilst awaiting the ‘professionals’. It was thought this was a good idea given the problems we’ve had finding cost effective training through the major training organizations.

Turkey Trip

15 pilots plus 16 non-flyers went to Olu Deniz. Most days were flyable, but they did suffer some thunderstorms. A video was shown of last year’s trip.

Flying Feedback at Meetings

Members were asked to report more flying / site experiences at meetings so that others could benefit from up to date tips and advice, e.g. new owners, take-off concerns, etc. Please remember that this can be of great help to others. As mentioned above, new member Robin Mills gave useful advice on sites local to him that he regularly flies with agreement from local farmers.

Flying Reports

May 2nd had seen some N.Devon pilots flying from Widgery to Dawlish (stopped only by the sea). 19 pilots had been out on that day.

May 22nd had seen 3 pilots make cloudbase on the South side of Cox Tor, which was unheard of (it got rough later).

Other News

Paid up Membership

I can now report this has now reached 78, with more enquiries every week. The sport has clearly started to catch attention with interested people coming along to flying sites to ask how to get started.

NCI Froward Point

www.nci-frowardpoint.org.uk/weather.htm for real time reports for Strete and Beesands is now back on line after "thunderstorm damage".

Site Padlocks

Martin Reed reported:

Would it be possible to put a notice on the club website regarding the importance of rotating all the tumblers on all the gate locks, Bill the car park man at Freathy has mentioned it again where he has found the lock snapped but the xxxx number being left showing.

Please ensure you not only close the gates behind you both in and out, but that you tumble the lock (or some comedian might reset it behind you as well).

Flying News

Two serious accidents in the month.

I think I should start with the bad news before looking at what was otherwise a very good flying month.

Sat. 30th May – Labrador Bay – Bill crashes HG in the sea. (I have edited his own report):

I was wrong about the tides - still in when we arrived on Saturday after mid-day. The wind was 20 mph straight up the gully to the take off field at the end of the lay-by. Because I am the only HG to fly here before - on 22nd August 2000 - I was the wind dummy. I took off at 1245, flew forward to the cliffs & turned towards Teignmouth where the best lift was to be found. Here I gained 500' above TO and flew back past TO to Maidencombe & back. Gaining more height & taking lots of photos I went to the Ness at the mouth of the Teign & back. Then flew past T/O & Maidencombe to Oddacombe. Here I flew past the cliff railway & Den (Babbacombe Theatre) & took photos of the next bay below with the little harbour there. I returned easily to TO & others had started to launch. I realised I had accidentally deleted all the photos.

Starting again at the Ness I took a couple of photos of another glider & then topped up my height (only barely 500') before setting boff again. After Crossing Maidencombe I was below 400, & did not hit the lift expected before Watcombe beach (another small gap). Approaching Petit Tor I was getting very anxious at 200' above TO & should have continued across to land on Oddacombe Beach - the only feasible bottom landing for 8km! But I turned back hoping the sheer cliffs at Watcombe would save me, but it was down all the way. Crossing Watcombe beach took me below the top of the cliffs. I did spot a small grass clearing, but a 270 degree turn would probably have taken me too low to reach it. I almost made it to Maidencombe beach. I had unzipped my harness, did a good flare before dropping into the water - trapping some air under the glider so I could unclip both my Karabinas. Keeping hold of my Karabinas, so they would not clip onto the lower wires I swam free of the Xtralite - undamaged!!!!

I still had my harness on, so the lower part was acting as a sea anchor, & kicking my legs was not really enough to take me anywhere. Waves were breaking & I was getting water in my mouth. Laying on my back my helmet provided some buoyancy & I thought my parachute bag on the front of my harness could also help. Perhaps I should have unzipped my harness & somehow got my legs out of the leg loops & then swam faster, but may have drowned getting it off so decided to stick with it & rest on my back a lot. I was not cold as my thininsulate flying suit & balaclava & helmet were keeping me warm. Eventually I got near the rocks, where someone had swum out on the end of rescue line. He shouted & I turned over to find his hand was only a yard away from me. I made a last effort to reach him met & I was hauled in!

I was hauled above the breaking waves by several people and then took my harness off.

I realised the glider was a total write-off - upside down on the beach with a broken keel & nearly all the battens bent & broken too. My digital camera (which probably helped to get me into trouble as I was giving a lot of attention to taking photos, instead of flying), my mobile phone & *Lindsey Ruddock* Vario have all been wrecked too.

We have decided that this site is dangerous & needs caution. Best to fly with just the correct ESE wind direction to clear the gully. Low tide would make limited landing options better too!



HG flying low and no beach for miles.

Wed. 10th June – Struddicks – John Chick crashes on PG. (compiled from several pilots reports):

It seems as though John entered a parachutal stall whilst joining a thermal, the glider recovered close to the floor, with the resulting pitching swinging him into the floor..... hit the deck rather heavily and as a result was unable to walk, an ambulance was called and John received treatment from a Paramedic and was air lifted to Derriford Hospital in order to assess his injuries.

Jim visited "He had just come back from X Ray it appears he has broke his pelvis in two places, three ribs and a broken collar bone , His back seems ok ."

John is now at home, he has opted not to have surgery, so is just resting lots instead.

Other Flying News Reports

May 29th - The Beesands Curse. Bob wrote "Got there 0930 Wind on the hill just 6 -7 mph, but forecast to increase rapidly by midday. Tim and I hung around and hung around, and despite there being 13 mph at Portland and 18 mph at the Channel Light, 13 mph at Exeter, there was still sweet FA at Beesands. It picked up to 9 / 10 mph and we both tried a little soar. I managed to scratch back in to top land, Tim had a go but tried too hard and went down. Eventually at 1430 it picked up to 10 - 11 mph, still NE ish and we both took off and immediately were pretty much pinned by top end wind. I got 150 ft ATO but looking at my ground shadow it was barely moving on 3/4 bar. Tim was also struggling. To make things even more fun, it was pretty unpleasantly bumpy, we were both tossed and pitched around, possibly by thermals from the hot cars and road. I big eared and barred and slowly got forward, soared for a bit but mostly gale hung. Tim landed and I shortly followed, as it wasn't a lot of fun. 20 mins flight!"

May 30th – Maker – Colin wrote: "Arrived at 11:30am to find myself alone and the wind just too light but blowing ESE 8-9mph. I laid out my wing and took off at about 12 into a perfect 12-14mph breeze, I was immediately drawn up to 200ft ato and started making my way towards Plymouth, I didn't quite make the fort-apartments

before the lift stopped and I was on a glide back to the fort beside takeoff, got back about level with T/O before climbing rapidly to 300ft ato in a combination of rough lift and rotor from the wind which was now blowing along the ridge having gone around to the NE in the space of just a few minutes! Luckily I was in the perfect position to take in the view and situation before flying to the back of the T/O field and landing beside my van just after 12:35. None of the forecasts I had seen had predicted a swing to the NE that early."

May 30th – Labrador Bay (unaware of Bill's crash) – Bob wrote: "Andy Holt and I went to Labrador Bay late Sat pm. Andy had one short and very brown trouser frightening flight and went down (no doubt he will elaborate) fortunately at low water there are a few landing options. Not a good place if the wind is to the north!"

May 31st – King Tor – Robin and Dougie XC to Cox Tor in very marginal conditions (I made the Warren House Inn).

June 2nd – Beardown – Paul wrote:" Myself and John Chick arrived at Beardown ready to take off at 11am. Conditions were fantastic, with wind pretty much square onto the hill and thermals smooth and plentiful amidst a bright blue sky. As soon as I took off, I took a smooth thermal to over a grand ato which ought to have been enough to go over the back with but thought was too early. Should have really though cause soon after the wind went off to the north and although lots of thermals about, seemed more tricky to connect with. Around midday, Robin, Malcolm, Ivor, Innes, Matt and Tim turned up. Innes made it look easy and got away early making a 30km flight to around Callington. After much persistence, Robin and Malcolm darted off in a thermal together around 2ish and my heart sank as I watched them disappear into the distance as small dots. After a bit of swearing at missing that thermal, a bit more persistence rewarded myself and Ivor with a nice thermal to go with, leaving the hill with about 200ft ato. Although Ivor dropped out of it at the top of the tor as we were quite low above the top of the hill, kept faith in it and kept climbing. Was nothing spectacular but nice to get away from the hill. Got just short of Cox Tor where I could see Malcolm and Robin neck and neck at what looked to be around 2-3grand above Cox and heading out to Tavistock. After speaking to Robin, he said he made it out to Callington after breaking through an inversion over Tavistock at 4k asl. That took him to over 6k asl, the highest he's got to in this country. Malcolm decided to land at the pub in Tavy instead. Bloody good show there Robin, look forward to seeing the GPS track! One day....!"

June 4th Beesands (no curse?) Bob wrote: "twas indeed the best day at Beesands for a couple of years. (Robin M said so, so it must be true!) It was actually EASTERLY instead of bloomin' NE. Flew first flight, 1 h 40 mins on my todd, top end wind strength, speed bar at times, best height 383 ft ATO , but easy cruising up and down to Hallsands Cloudy and cold so had to land for cup of coffee, pastie and warm up in The Cricket Inn. Then second flight, wind dropped off a bit, only 220 ATO, 1 h 7 mins, sun even came out, but was flyable all day. Joined by Mick Boarer, then Jim Fish, then Robin Mogridge. Robin got across Hallsands and soared the other side, and got back."

June 10th – Beer Head – Robin wrote: "Conditions were ideal at Bear Head today very buoyant with some orographic cloud giving extra lift. but no problem. Managed to cross Sidmouth (a first for me) and carry on round the corner to Ladram Bay and then all the way back again - a magical hour and a half's flying!"

June 10th – Strete – Bob wrote: "I had a nice hour and a half at Strete, 320 feet ATO at best. Bit light at times. Took off with just 7 -8 mph on the hill, but once above the trees and green house was pretty easy to stay up. Watched a black cloud coming towards me for half an hour which had some worrying looking ruffled sea under it. I stayed safely on the edge of it when it went across and it was quite lifty for a few minutes. Few spots of rain as well. Wind went back to the south after a while. Nice pint at the Start Bay Inn after.

June 16th – Whitsand Bay – Bob wrote " Struddick came on for a while at 1400 this afternoon. Quite nice thermals popping off from cliffs and beach, good enough to 360 back with. The wind went a bit more to the SW just as a few others arrived, so some of us legged it to Freathy for another hour or two's flying. Colin Blagdon and Alan? (Rush) were still flying as we left at 1830. Conditions were just getting really good then, but a few of us had already packed up as it went light for a while."

June 22nd – Sourton – Matt wrote: "An amazing day really, Dougie and I got to take off just after 10, launched pretty much straight away, probably did 4 or 5 beats up and down the ridge and climbed out in the first thermal we came across. This took us slowly into a very unconvincing sky! Thermals were pretty easy to find with every raggedy looking cloud having a climb underneath. Dougie left me standing after finding a better climb and also regular use of the speed bar.

After last times early finish at the warren house inn, i was determined to take my time and stay in the air. I was slowly catching Dougie until he caught a rocket to above base into a bit of wave! I saw Dougie going down but didn't see where, whilst above what i now know to be staverton i got a call from Dougie saying he could see me and guided me towards Broadhempston, where i landed about 1km south, walked to the PUB for a lovely pint of jail ale and plenty of parabollocks!!!!!! Dougie said 37km”

Robin wrote: “In the afternoon when Martin, Malcolm (from North Devon) and myself got away the sky didn't look too promising - lots of high wavy cirrus and undefined cums, in fact I wouldn't have bothered if I didn't have company. There was quite a lot of punchy lift about but it wouldn't take you to cloud-base. However with the combined thermal-locating capacity of three, we got to Postbridge fairly comfortably and there to base at last at 2500@T/O. At height the cums looked almost lenticular with flat tops and bottoms, sort of biscuit shaped. With the relief of getting across the moor and avoiding the dreaded Fir Tor walk-out, I think at that point I lost concentration (and the plot). The others were heading south to some sunlit ground, but I saw a b*st**d bussard take off by Dartmeet and start circling over a glade in the trees so I went there but after half a dozen turns it shot off leaving me still in sinking air and landing soon after. Martin went on to Buckfast and Malcolm to Totnes. Malclm was the real star of the day. Not only did he fly the furthest but he only needed three lifts to get back to Sourton and then he walked out on the moor to help his mate Ant, who'd been snaffled by the Firry Monster and was struggling back across the bogs! Unfortunately he'd left the passenger door of his Ford Focus wide open and his p/g bag for all to see. When Martin dropped me off at my car next to it, this apparently abandoned car was a bit of a mystery as no-one seemed to be attached to it. After establishing that it wasn't Dougie's Focus I had a cup of coffee and after 20 mins the two weary pilots appeared over the rise from Corn Ridge direction and the mystery was solved. It had taken Ant 2 1/2 hours to walk out from Fir Tor. So the Devon Northerners had the best and the worst of the day!”



Next Meeting is on Thursday 25th June 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.**

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