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# WINDSOCK

July 1999

The Journal of the Southern Hang Gliding Club

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## Chairman's Letter from Paul Coidan

Hello to you all.

I have three things I want to talk to you all about this month. The first being **Paramotoring** on SHGC sites. There is only one thing to say on this matter:

### IT IS NOT ALLOWED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

The use of paramotors on any of our sites will lose us those sites so don't do it.

Secondly I want to talk to you all about **free loaders** who are using our sites. If you know of anyone who is constantly flying our sites, is not a member of the club and does not pay a daily membership fee, point him or her out to a committee member. Better still shame them into becoming a member or paying the daily membership fee. Remember they are **sponging** off of you and your fellow members, **you** are paying for their flying, on a busy day it could be these **free loaders** who are stopping you flying because they are already in the air.

Please note that visiting overseas pilots are allowed to fly as guest of the club.

Thirdly and finally the competition to find a new club logo closes at the end of this month. On behalf of the committee I would like to thank those of you who have taken the time and effort to enter a design. Judging will be taking place during the August committee meeting with the winner being announced at the 25th anniversary celebrations.

Safe Flying.

Paul.

# AEROTOW COMPETITION

ANYONE INTERESTED ?

Phone Will on 01273 477388

An aerotow competition is being organized at Long Marston for the weekend of the 4th & 5th of September. The guys who are putting this together are Paul Bennett and Andy Goldney.

It will be run as a team event with teams consisting of tug & pilot plus six principal hang glider pilots. The teams will organize themselves as far as finance is concerned to ease the burden on the competition organizers. All pilots must have the appropriate qualifications.

The organizers will be able to cater for a number of pilots who are not members of an established group. Non-competition pilots will also be welcome, but must expect to launch outside the competition window.

Would all groups, tug pilots, glider pilots and potential marshals who wish to be involved please register their interest by subscribing to the competition mailing list. To do this you should send an e-mail to: [Aerotow-subscribe@listbot.com](mailto:Aerotow-subscribe@listbot.com) and put the word SUBSCRIBE in the heading box.

The registration fee is expected to be around 15 per head for the weekend. Further details will be distributed via this list and on the league website.

Discussion and suggestions should be posted to the list.

- John

# Blorenge Fly In

We have just heard from the "South East Wales Hang Gliding And Paragliding Club" that they intend to celebrate their ownership of The Blorenge by holding a fly-in on August bank holiday weekend. Numerous events are planned, including fancy dress flying competition, evening barbecues, cross country competition, and - nude flying !!!!!. Watch this space for further details.

If any members plan to attend this event, could you please let your club chairman know, so that he can advise the South East Wales club, thus enabling them to have some idea of the number of people likely to arrive.

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1) E-mail or Floppy Disk. **NO LARGE ATTACHMENTS PLEASE!** Only small graphics/photos can be accepted - as either .gif or .jpg attachments. For articles, Microsoft Word is fine, but we accept .txt, .rtf, works, etc.

2) Typewritten in large clear characters for scanning in *if you must*.

3) Smaller items such as notices and ads may be handwritten.

Contributions may be edited unless the author declares "all or nothing at all".

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# TALES FROM A HOMING PIGEON

By Mandy Sharpe

Thoughts of leaving the hill usually serve to fill my head with the (presumably) common fears amongst most learning pilots... Where will I land? How will I get back? How well will I judge the wind direction/strength/rotor areas in a strange place? Will the farmer have a big stick? Etc, etc...

But, I've thermalled out to hill-leavable heights on various sites, served my time ridge soaring, ground handled and scratched until my harness begged for mercy. Yes, the time was fast approaching, when I'd run out of my vast array of insignificant (and purely mental) excuses for not flying and exploring new things.

Then, a beautiful Saturday dawned at Firle - vertical take-offs, easy height gains of around 800' ATO in a few of beats, and it was only 10am! Best of all, many pilots strangely seemed to be sitting it out leaving an uncharacteristic amount of space around the hill. I had a few short flights to practise thermic/strong top-landings, a task which I tend to avoid - usually by staying in the air, but when it gets to the stage of clocking up 6 hour+ flights, it's time to remedy the situation!

Around 11am I was practising my thermalling-with-fast-vehicles techniques - quite a tricky task on my Perche Sage, which usually involves me rotating around my right wing-tip watching the blur of a speeding hang glider/Vertex/etc travel around me. Any attempts to follow the prescribed circle of the thermals' occupant usually result in me leaving after half a rotation as I am caught up.

After a time of this I found myself at a peaceful 1700' ATO with small gaggles of people below and way above me, the bowl was still within speedbar-able distance. I radioed back to our party to say that I *may* think about going off. Ian

Blackmore's voice appeared saying I could probably make it back, but a few more 360's down-wind during the conversation soon remedied that situation, and I parted with the advice of 'go west'.

I felt a bit of a fraud leaving the hill with so little height, especially when I saw the gaggle at cloudbase (4400' ATO) head back to the hill, but it was a glorious day with no sign of the sea breeze, so I continued heading out. My initial thermal had now de-materialised into level flight, so I took a glide west-ish. After a while of *apparently* not moving, and the vario now settled into a constant down-tone I decided to not go west, and instead to head for possible thermal sources whatever the

direction. So, I frittered away my height by zig-zagging randomly around, chasing any likely source. Eventually, my pursuits were rewarded with a weak and small rise off a couple of dark-roofed houses (I was getting desperate!). Enthused by this I headed for a nearby cloud shadow and instantly hit an up that went off the vario scale! Circling in this took me most of the way to Newhaven - arriving with about 1500' ATO (Firle).

Hovering on the eastern edge of Newhaven in the tail end of my last thermal, I wracked my brain for the minimum height you can overfly a town - trying to extract the number from the multitude of heights I'd learned for my pilot's exam 3 weeks earlier! Enticed by the black tarmac of the dock area - I ventured forward. It seemed quite bizarre flying above all the houses, main roads and cars. The dock/container park worked excellently and I circled above Newhaven Cliffs at 2600' ATO (Firle). I explored the area for about 15 minutes, enjoying the big easy almost continuous thermals from the dock. The view of the coastline from here was really quite spectacular, and I was only 2 miles off my planned goal, so I made the most of it for a while.

The difference between flying on the hill, and this was quite extraordinary: the freedom (to turn left in thermals, to go anywhere), the peacefulness

(nothing Nova-purple, only wafting smells and wind-noise), the variety, the endlessness...

During 90% of the flight I was (perhaps too) pre-occupied with the eventual prospect of landing, so I was constantly picking out possible landing sites - even at points with loads of height. However, at this stage I was equally aware of the prospect of continuing the flight further, but the plan of a 10 minute walk and jumping in the car back to Firle to do it again was more appealing. Besides which, all my previous attempts to go anywhere other than downwind didn't seem terribly effective.

Heading over the river was no real concern at this height, my next plan was to head for a large caravan park - which produced no discernable lift at all! Oh well, on to Peacehaven - I could see my house now and I had 800' ATO (Firle) to choose a suitable landing field. Well, it had to be the nearest to the house, just to round things off, so I chose a long into-wind rectangular one with houses on two sides. There was quite a dramatic wind shear below roof height, but it wasn't a problem (my field was pretty big!), and I gently alighted next to a couple of dog-walkers. My glider deflated, and it then hit me what an excellent flight it had been, and that I was down safe and sound, and I *then* fell over (in a fit of hysterical laughter)... much to the amusement of the dog-walkers!



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# Coaching News

from Trevor McLoughlin

## Congratulations!

A big well done to all of you who passed your Pilot exam and in due course will have your Pilot rating. They are as follows:

**Paragliding:** Mandy Sharpe, David Howell, John Harvey, David Nortcliff, Peter Impey, Mark Bullough, Dave Lewis, Keith Richardson, Richard Day, Don Nunan, Craig Nicholas and Fred Berwick.

**Hang Gliding:** Robert Peck, Brian Brunswick, Geoff May, Graham Simons, and Simon Neave.

The highest pass mark was 93% and was achieved by Dave Lewis – well done Dave, an excellent result.

Mandy Sharpe flew from Firlle to her house in Peacehaven as a first XC within days of getting her rating. Well done Mandy.

I'm sure those of you that haven't flown XC, will be itching to get out and do so as soon as conditions allow. So good luck and once again well done.

## Next Lectures

I've already got a list of people who want to know when I'll be doing the

next lot of lectures, so if you want to join them let me know. As soon as I have enough people to justify it, I'll set some dates. A venue closer to London has been suggested – I'm open to suggestions, let me know. Please note my phone number change – it's now 07747 628903. My apologies to those of you that hadn't been able to get hold of me and had to call me at the school. I've not been able to read my email regularly either lately, so a phone call is the best way to get in touch with me.

## Check Your Reserve!

Dave Kahn, a colleague of mine and a Gliding Instructor at Dunstable, wrote the following in an email message and it is reproduced here with his kind permission:

*"It was an ASK21. P1 Pete Goldstrav, P2 Graham Cooper. Minor injuries.*

*At about 5pm on Saturday we saw heavy rain coming in from the West and decided to put the K13s in the hangar. There was also a huge cu-nim looming up. I was feeling a little disappointed that I hadn't been able to find a spare club glider a few minutes before as the sky was looking very interesting and I rather wanted to be up there.*

*Just as I was approaching the apron in front of the hangar there was a tremendous lightning flash followed about 8 seconds later by a sharp and*

*very loud clap of thunder. As we were putting the gliders away rumours began to come in of an accident. Parachutes and descending wreckage had been seen, but reports differed. Some had seen 2 parachutes, others 3. Because of the wreckage we initially thought it must have been either a mid-air or a single glider caught in the cu-nim and breaking up. As the remaining gliders landed it became clear that we were missing only one. There was a very anxious 15 minutes or so before we knew for certain that the pilots were only slightly hurt.*

*Pete is an experienced and popular instructor at Dunstable. Graham was his pupil on a 1 day course. It was his first ever day of gliding. They were flying under a clear blue sky at 2500' about 3 miles in front of the cloud's leading edge. According to a witness on the ground, a ball (yes, ball) of lightning flew out of the cloud and hit the glider. Immediately the right wing exploded and fell away. As the glider began to spiral down the left wing also came off and the 2 pilots baled out.*

*Graham landed on the roof of a disused garage and, I believe, managed to get himself down. He was slightly hurt, complaining of a sore arm and a stiff neck. Peter landed in a field but fractured his ankle. He also suffered slight burns to his neck and the back of his head. His yellow fleece jacket was blackened. Both pilots have damaged eardrums but neither has*

*lost his hearing completely. Graham visited back at the club today (Sunday). We offered him a free week's course but his girlfriend suggested that they'd rather have book tokens. Peter is in hospital and will probably be discharged on Tuesday. He is dazed, but in reasonable spirits. He talked (or rather shouted) Graham out of the glider before baling out himself. This is a bizarre accident. The skin of the right wing was completely blown off, as was part of the skin from the fuselage. It probably accounted for the 3rd parachute some witnesses had reported. The control rods are melted through. It appears as though the rapid heating caused air and/or water trapped inside the glass fibre structure to expand rapidly and literally explode. If the same thing had happened to a powered aircraft of similar construction the fuel tanks would almost certainly have exploded too. The wreckage is being removed to Farnborough for the boffins to give it a good going over.*

*We owe a debt of gratitude to our recently departed CFI Jed Edyvean who introduced the compulsory wearing of parachutes in club gliders. Up till about two years ago we generally did not use them in 2 seaters except for aerobatics. A Dunstable parachute repacking rush is now expected and basic instructors are being doubly careful about parachute and baling out briefings."*

What can I say? Reserves save lives!  
Get yours checked!

### **BHPA Letter**

This is old hat now I know, but as I said I would do it in windsock, here is the contents of the letter from Marc Asquith to our Secretary Brian Brunswick. It would be illegible if scanned and reproduced here, so here is what it said instead:

30 April 1999

Dear Brian,

Thanks for your letter dated 13th April 1999

In answer to your question about whether accepting entries into your Club XC league exposes your committee to a risk, the answer is that it does.

The insurance is only effective when we act in accordance with BHPA rules and procedures. FSC have laid down that members should hold a Pilot (P) rating before flying cross country.

By accepting entries from CP pilots you could be argued to have encouraged them to fly cross country whilst not suitably qualified. Thus, the insurers have an escape when an injured pilot (CP) or a landowner who

*has suffered loss comes a-claiming!*

*In order to avoid exposure to such a risk, you should limit entry to your XC league to those holding Pilot rating or above. Should you need assistance BHPA office will always help you to discover if a pilot holds such a rating.*

*One final point, HG pilots who previously held P2 remain entitled to fly XC.*

*I hope that this is of assistance.  
Yours sincerely*

*Marc Asquith  
BHPA Chairman*

Hopefully, we can now put this to bed. There is no reason why anyone who wants to fly XC can't do the exam. If you want to do it, but have reading or learning difficulties please contact me, we'll find a way round it somehow. You can approach me in complete confidence; I'll gladly read the paper for you in privacy or invigilate while someone else reads it for you.

On that note, someone confidently approached me the other day and said in passing, that they would just sit the exam without swotting and pass. Sure you could sit it, but it would be unlikely you would pass. There is more to this exam than people realise, as anyone who has just sat it will testify.

### **Advanced Pilot Exam**

For those of you that have enquired about the Advanced Pilot exam, the Hang Gliding one is pretty much the same as the pilot one. It's multiple choice and well and truly out of date as it was written in '91. Get to know your air law as it was in '91! The paragliding one on the other hand is a little more difficult as it is not multiple choice so you can't guess at anything. You will need to know your airmap, navigation techniques, air law, altimeter settings etc. Although this is still out of date (same year) it's not so important that you need to study history. Get in quick with these exams, as new ones are on the cards.

A point worth mentioning for those of you that are bi-lingual. If you have your Pilot or Advanced Pilot in one discipline, you don't have to take the exams in the other. You need only do the necessary tasks and get signed off by a Chief Coach or Instructor.

With regard to swotting, my revision notes are still available at £7.50 + 50p P&P. Send your cheque to me at 229 Barking Road, East Ham, London, E6 1LB. Alternatively, if you're in the area there are a few copies in the Sussex HG & PG shop on the A27 (in the Q8 Garage).

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# IN NEPAL

by Adam Hill

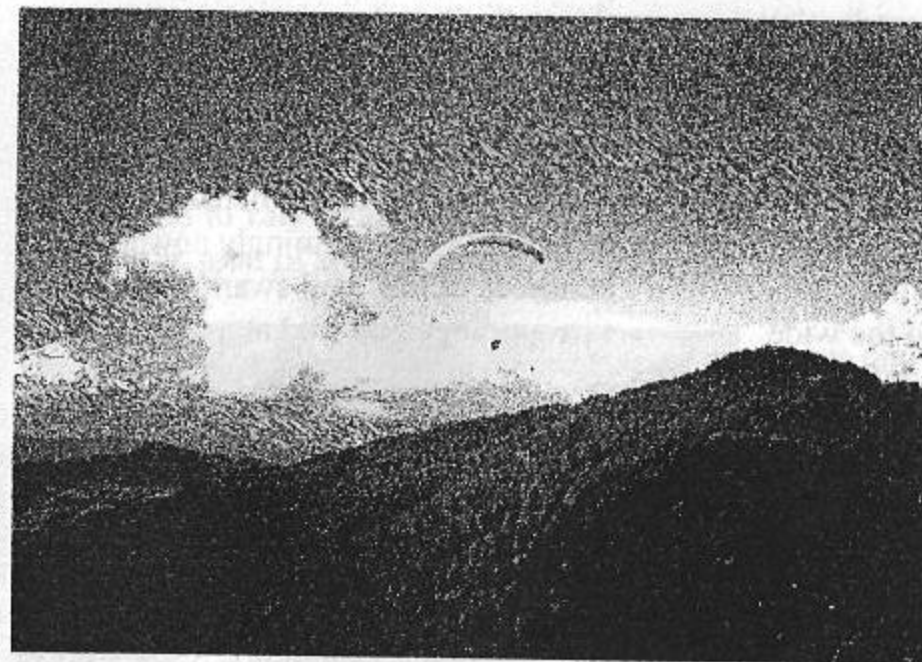
Break left, he runs left, brake right, he runs right, shout obscenity, he opens his arms, I raise my legs, he jumps up and catches me full in his chest. The canopy is still inflated as he gently lowers me down to the ground and with a huge smile he welcomes me to his village. Not a new BHPA landing technique but yet another rather surreal touch down in Nepal. I have had many interesting landings in Nepal, but never have I been plucked from the air by a Gurhka Sergeant. His name was Jit Bahadur Gurung and as a retired sergeant in the Queens Gurhkas he was very pleased to make my acquaintance. "But one thing sir, where is the plane you jumped from" I don't know what they teach soldiers in the British army but I am sure that catching people is not a common form of parachute training.

It was to be an eventful evening as the entire village decided I was enough of an excuse to stop work and have a party, something the Nepalese are very good at. It came as no surprise that I made the biggest laugh when it came to the dancing bit in your typical Nepalese village knees up. This ritual hilarity always accompanied my efforts in trying to copy the natural grace of the young and beautiful village girls I was dragged up to dance with.

It's not all fun and games as the , exhausting schedule of flying everyday can take its toll. Flying fatigue is a little know complaint in the UK but after flying for 3 months strait (with only a 2 day break, no kidding) you find yourself wistfully dreaming of those "I'll wait a bit longer see if it picks up" days that we've all shared at the Dyke.

It is not surprising then, that paragliding in Nepal is not like flying anywhere else.

Situated between Tibet to the north and India to the south this 850 by 200 km rectangle of a country has an amazing diversity of Flora, fauna, topography and culture. In the distance of 150 km the Gangeatic plane at 50m ASL rises up to 8848m at the summit of Everest. In between are Nepal's "foothills". Lush and fertile, these various ranges of hills offer some extraordinary flying potential. The broad valleys of the Maharbaharat hills, with their population of subsistence farmers and terraced mountainsides, home to the majority of the Gurhkas, is the flying jewel in this Himalayan Kingdom. In the post monsoon months of November, December and January, this area offers very consistent weather. Cloud base varies between 2000m-2700m and with takeoffs between 1400m-1800m, the subtropical to temperate conditions are ideally suited for paragliding. There are no valley winds and the



thermals are friendly averaging 2-3m/sec on the strongest of days.

The Broad Pokhara valley, with its seven lakes, has quickly established itself as the paragliding centre of Nepal. With its unique micro-climate and fairy tale surroundings the flying here is as consistent as it is spectacular. With 3 of the worlds 14, 8000m peaks 50Km away, they still dominate the skyline. It is incredible to think that you are floating 1km above the ground yet still 5km below the summit of these giants! The beautiful lakeside town of Pokhara with its numerous bars, restaurants and hotels has a very laid-back atmosphere, a Mecca on the hippy trail in the 70's, it still retains some of that atmosphere. But now the average visitor is more of the adventurous type as Pokhara is the staging post for many of the countries

more popular treks and expeditions. Over the last couple of seasons we have also seen an rapid increase in the numbers pilots who have chosen to spend their winter flying in Nepal. It is quickly becoming a paragliding bum heaven, as the consistent flying

conditions, short and T-shirt weather and cheap living costs are a magnet for those pilots with a bit of time on their hands during the winter months.

Sarangkot is the main site overlooking Pokhara. Some say that the 20 min drive up is what makes it all worthwhile. Every taxi in Pokhara is a 1971 Toyota Corolla in various stages of decay, and Nepalese driving standards are what you might expect from a culture that believes in reincarnation. It is a 10 min walk from where the taxi stops to the purpose built take off. A 45m<sup>2</sup> area that has been cleared out of the mountainside. From 11:00am the upslope breeze makes for easy reverse inflations. With regular cycles coming through there is no problem picking your moment to launch. This is pure thermic flying, with no winds at any time of the day to

worry about, which surprises many visiting pilots. Takeoff is 1500m ASL and the huge lakeside landing field is 700m lower. This site is very similar to Annecy but on a grander scale, with mountains surrounding the lake on all sides except to the south where it opens up into the wide Pokhara valley. The south facing Sarangkot ridge is 10km long and is the starting point for numerous out and return and triangle flights. There are a series of ridges running parallel to this in an east-west direction. It is a question of getting the height to cross each valley and then you have a whole new ridge to play with. With a dirt road running along the Sarangkot ridge's base, if you bomb out, it is easy to hitch a ride on the roof of a passing bus. I must stress again that where the average person would hesitate to take a 4-wheel drive vehicle the Nepalese start a regular bus service. Fortunately 2 of Nepal's 3 tarmac roads run through Pokhara, so as long as you stay within site of one then you will probably be back in town by night for a cold beer. But the true pleasure of paragliding here is in landing out and meeting the people.

This area, although mountainous is also relatively densely populated, with villages perched on step hillsides and where all available land is turned into terraced fields, which make excellent landing fields. Although make sure you pick a dry one as they use Buffalo

shit to fertilise them, and it is difficult to run off the speed from a nil wind landing when you are ankle deep in paddy field stew. So wherever you land you are guaranteed an incredible reception. From seemingly nowhere hundreds of kids will swarm from the surroundings followed at a more respectable speed by the adults. If you land in a village that has not seen a paraglider before you will be viewed with wide eyes. Old women will sidle up to you with their tongues sticking out (as a sign of exclamation) and tentatively try and touch you to see that you are real. When they are convinced that you are solid they report back to the others. The kids are trying to push each other onto your equipment and there always manages to be the village drunk somewhere about attempting to start a sing song. You will always be asked to stay and it can be extremely difficult to decline. It can be quite overwhelming to be on the receiving end of a few hundred peoples hospitality. Just remember that the local brew called Rockshi, distilled rice or millet is stronger than you would imagine. Learning a few simple words of this easy language puts you in a much greater position to fully enjoy this incredible experience. It also helps in getting you back home in the morning.

You could not talk about paragliding in Nepal without mentioning raptors. There are 5 true vulture species in the Himalayas, including The Himalayan

Griffin Vulture and the true king, the Lammergeier. There are several species of eagle including Golden eagle, numerous hawks kites and falcons. All to varying degrees get involved in a bit of sport with us. All



the vultures seem to enjoy joining a paraglider so long as its going up in lift and it is this experience that for me defines our sport. Tip to tip in a thermal with a dozen vultures, is literally unforgettable. Their 10 ft wingspan supports a body the size of a

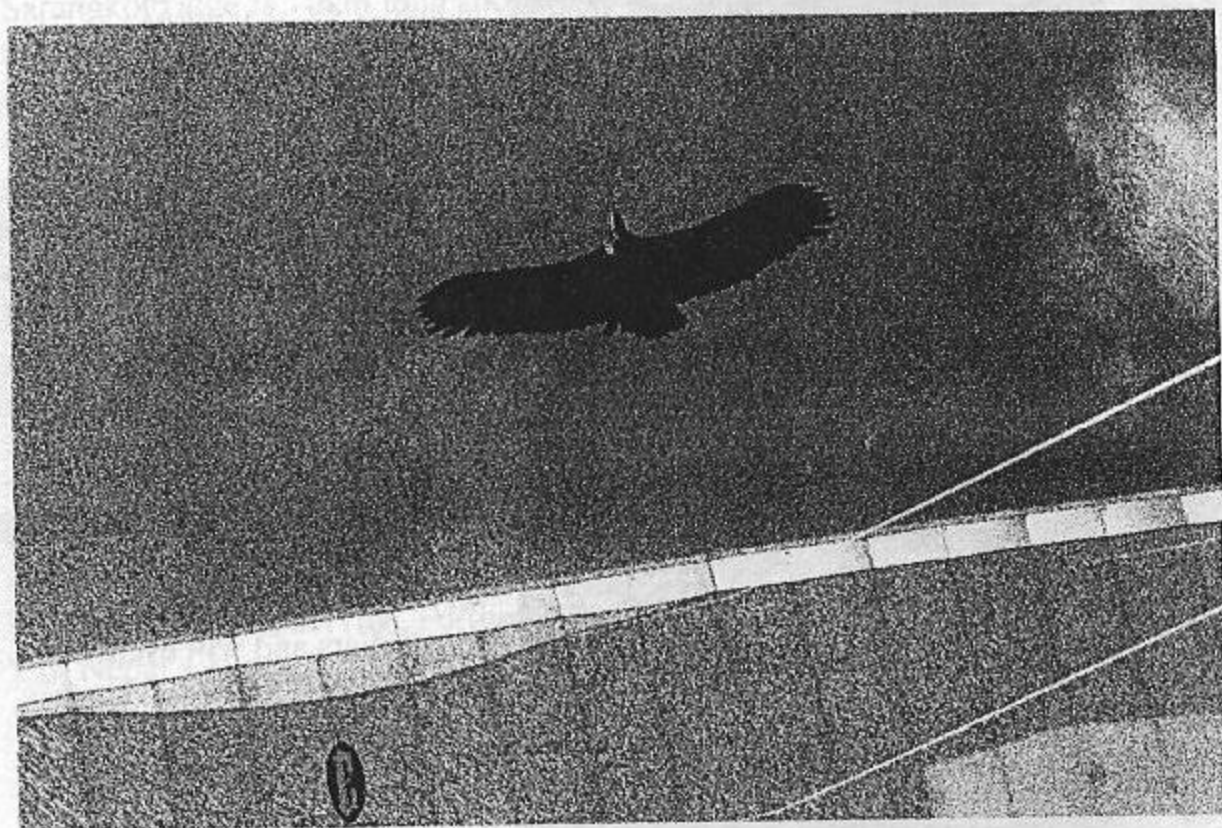
large dog, and their inquisitive nature sees them sometimes flying under the span of your wing. Up this close you can see that they are not the most attractive of birds! But what they lack in looks they more than make up for in skill. I was astonished last year to see one with his head tucked under his wing preening himself while effortlessly coring a thermal I was struggling to stay in. They also particularly enjoy surfing the leading edge of your wing, slowing themselves down to match our speed and sink rate. What is surprising to some is that these big birds do not like rough air and their absence is a good indication of conditions. The vultures that hang around Sarangkot have very much accepted paraglidiers and will even wait above takeoff for us to launch. It is an incredible feeling to find lift and then see all the vultures come and join you. But more often than not it happens the other way round as they effortlessly adjust their turn to accommodate you into their thermal. Pure Joy.

It is when you are on a glide that the smaller birds of pray, some eagle and especially the Phariahs Kite, think you are fair game. This not so pleasant interaction, occurs at the site we fly the

most. In early November the Kites are at their most territorial, and will often harass you in numbers. The most common attack is from above as they dive at the middle of the leading edge. More often than not they do not connect, but simply just want to play. By simply shrieking loudly or flapping your glider to create some noise will

can't be bettered, and I can honestly say that the time spent in their company is the best experience of my life, so far!!

We have had 8 Southern club members come out the last couple of years. Each one can attest to the beauty of the country and its varying cultures and I



usually see them off. Wingovers or spirals will also work and as long as no damage is done this aerial dog fighting can be very exhilarating.

So whatever your fancy, I cannot think of a better place that allows you to interact with the species we have chosen to follow into the air. Flying with the true Sky Gods of soaring flight, vultures, on an everyday basis

think that they can all say that the flying wasn't half bad either.

If anyone wants any more information on PG in Nepal, or any other info on the numerous other activities this vast adventure paradise has to offer, from trekking, climbing, white water rafting, safaris and mountain biking feel free to contact me on 01273 748032.

### SHGC Cross Country League sponsored by Sky Systems Ltd

Positions as on 20/07/99

Table #1: Flights anywhere in the UK, anytime.									Total
1	David Newns	Edel Open	69.0	37.9	35.4	23.8	20.5	0.0	186.6
2	Simon Oliphant	Apco Bagheera M	39.8	38.8	32.5	31.1	21.6	18.5	182.3
3	Paul Andon	Nova Vertex 26	60.6	30.0	17.9	14.5	10.9	0.0	133.9
4	Russell Ogden	Apco Open	90.4	13.5	13.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	117.3
5	Steve Purdie	Apco Bagheera M	88.7	18.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	106.7
6	Mark Watts	Gin Bonanza 26	66.6	19.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.8
7	David Watts	Gradient Open	18.1	17.4	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	52.2
8	Simon Smith	Gin Bonanza S	27.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.1
9	John Ellison	Nova Axon 24	21.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.2
10	Alex Heron	Swing Astral L	11.0	10.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.1
11	Dave Lewis	Apco Futura 28	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
12	Dave Howell	Nova X-Ray 20	17.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.1
13	David Massie	Nova Vertex 28	11.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.4
14	Mandy Sharpe	Perché Saga L	9.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.2
15	Peter Impey	Airwave Harmony 30	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7

### Table #2: Flights anywhere in Sussex, anytime.

Table #2: Flights anywhere in Sussex, anytime.									Total
1	David Newns	Edel Open	69.0	37.9	35.4	23.8	20.5	0.0	186.6
2	Paul Andon	Nova Vertex 26	60.6	30.0	17.9	14.5	10.9	0.0	133.9
3	Simon Oliphant	Apco Bagheera M	39.8	21.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	61.4
4	David Watts	Gradient Open	18.1	17.4	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	52.2
5	Simon Smith	Gin Bonanza S	27.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.1
6	Alex Heron	Swing Astral L	11.0	10.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.1
7	Dave Lewis	Apco Futura 28	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
8	Dave Howell	Nova X-Ray 20	17.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.1
9	Russell Ogden	Apco Open	13.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.4
10	David Massie	Nova Vertex 28	11.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.4
11	Mandy Sharpe	Perché Saga L	9.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.2
12	Peter Impey	Airwave Harmony 30	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7

### Table #3: Weekend flights in Sussex.

Table #3: Weekend flights in Sussex.									Total
1	Simon Oliphant	Apco Bagheera M	39.8	21.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	61.4
2	David Newns	Edel Open	37.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.9
3	Paul Andon	Nova Vertex 26	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
4	David Massie	Nova Vertex 28	11.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.4
5	Mandy Sharpe	Perché Saga L	9.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.2
6	Peter Impey	Airwave Harmony 30	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7

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# LOOKING GOOD

by John Lancaster, Club Coach

This has got nothing to do with fancy flying suits or the triple Salko with inverted twist that you have just performed / survived. I actually want to look at what may arguably be the most important of any pilot's flying skills - keeping a GOOD LOOKOUT.

Now, those of us with good eyesight and even the bespectacled among us will, I am sure, insist that they are more than capable of keeping a good lookout - it goes without saying, we take our ability to see entirely for granted - and yet we have never had any training. Ask around - do you know anyone who has been taught to keep a good lookout?

I don't profess to be any kind of expert in visual perception or lookout techniques but I have, like most if not all of you, had a near miss and it prompted me to ask a few questions about my lookout and overall awareness of what is happening around me in the sky.

What can prevent us from keeping a good lookout?

How do we keep a good lookout?

Do we only look when we turn?

Do we have blind spots?

Can we judge distance and speed effectively?

Can we trust our own eyes?

What can prevent us from keeping a good lookout?

The first problem I have to contend with is the sheer thrill of flying - I still get a rush of excitement and adrenaline whenever I fly (even after walking up

Caburn) and it often takes a definite act of will to contain my exuberance and fly with safety and consideration.

Distractions - and there can be so many - from our mates still sorting out their lines or rigging on the hill, to those seagulls thermalling out there over the road. We can lose concentration (this may apply more to PG than HG) as we float slowly and sedately around the sky, taking things easy, totally relaxed, our minds free to enjoy the ..... SPLAT!

How do we keep a good lookout?

Research assures me that our eyes don't do a very good job if they are constantly on the move, things don't register very well. The most effective way of looking out, it seems, is to scan our airspace in short jerks this allows the eyes to rest and focus, and the brain to register the objects or changes that we are looking for.

This focus-register-assess-react process can take longer than we may assume or allow for ..... CRASH!!

Do we have blind spots?

The answer is obviously yes, and lots of them. Above, behind, below, none of our gliders have rear view mirrors fitted as standard, and I haven't yet seen a glider with transparent panels to help us see above (although I believe that some early hang gliders had this facility). Full face helmets can restrict the field of vision, glasses and goggles can give tunnel vision, visors and masks get misted and dirty - none of which are problems when you are up and away, but on a crowded site ..... CRUNCH!!!

Do we only need to look when we turn?

A basic question but one that needs to be asked; we have all flown with someone

who only looks around when they turn, or worse, turns before they have looked. Fun it isn't. We have to do all we can to assure ourselves that the airspace we are in, and that we intend to use, is available to us and that our manoeuvres are no threat or danger to others. We can be following our own particular flight plan or in the the circuit with others on the ridge when we hit lift/sink, our reactions tell us to turn in/away but have we cleared the airspace first? ..... SMASH!!!!

Can we judge speed and distance effectively?

Our eyes are marvellous but, like the rest of us, they are lazy at times; they get tired at times; they also have to work together to get the best results. Binocular vision enables our brains to develop the ability to "approximate" distances (and to a lesser degree speeds). This ability works best when we are stationary - as we walk away/towards an object it's more difficult - if we run it's harder still. Add more objects, move them around, move us around, increase our speed ..... SPLAT!!!!

Can we trust our own eyes?

Apparently not. You only have to close one eye for a while to realise how our distance perception can be changed. The

eye/brain combination doesn't always register what is clearly in the field of vision, and when focus (or concentration) returns, we receive quite a shock and the incident report reads "he came out of nowhere" or "all of a sudden he appeared". Our brains will often take precious time to make sense of the information it receives from the eyes if, things are out of place, in the wrong setting, weren't there before. We don't always perceive things as they really are, we sometimes see what we expect to see, and sometimes don't see the things we are looking at ..... PRANG!!!!!!

We are all aware of the problem of overcrowding on our sites and whilst our innate sense of self preservation may ensure we keep a lookout in a defensive and mostly reflex fashion, what with euphoria, adrenalin, apathy, selfishness, complacency and even at times our own senses conspiring against us, perhaps we need more than defensive reflexes to keep us safe as we fly.

We need good scanning techniques.

We need to build and constantly update a mental map of our airspace.

We need to concentrate harder when we fly in company.

If this seems like hard work - it is - but the alternative is .....harder.

## A Taste of Paradise...

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# St. Hilaire Trip 99

High in the Massif de la Chartreuse near Grenoble in France is St Hilaire-du-Touvet, which hosts the annual flying festival of film, the "COUPE ICARE" - now in its 26th year. The celebrations centre around the many sport flying films submitted to the competition, but it also incorporates an international flying trade show.

The festival is also famous for its spectacular masquerade/fancy dress flights. Paraglider pilots are disguised in all manner of elaborate fancy dress outfits and launch from the spectacular 3000-ft high rocky plateau in a burst of colour, mayhem and madness - as only the French can do it!

The Coupe Icare really is a must for all pilots.

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The festival runs from the 16th to the 19th of September and we will arrive on the 12th of September, giving us three or four days of free flying before the festivities begin. The cost of the trip includes transfers to and from Geneva airport, shared car hire, retrieve service, local guiding, and chalet accommodation in St Hilaire-du-Touvet. Flights to Geneva and food are not included.

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