



The Journal Of The Journal Of The Southern Hang Gliding Club

WINDSOCK



The Building Of The Carbon Dragon

Editorial

Sorry for the lack of an April issue this was due to technical problems of the computer variety. In fact this issue nearly did not make it as the hard drive on the computer crashed. Most unusual says my technical bod. Yeah! Well it didn't console me considering the amount of work I lost. Any way enough of my woes. Just a short piece from me this month as I am going to leave it all up to the new sub-editor, Nick Cresswell, who was elected as sub-editor at this years AGM. Nick has come up with a number of new ideas for the magazine, so please support him in his task. As for me? Well it eases my burden and also enables me to spend more time putting the magazine together.

Paul

Hello everyone. I know that good news travels fast around here so I'm sure you know that I'm now part of the Windsock Editorial team (good news for some at least!). Over the coming months (until I get booted off, that is), I'll be responsible for features and articles - and I need your help with this.

"**Windsock**" is your magazine so instead of representing the views of a few members, we're opening things up a bit. If you've got a story to tell, something interesting to say, or something to get off your chest then write it down and send it on (contact details are at the bottom).

Stories: Whether you've got 1 hour or 1000 hours, I'm sure you've got something to share with the community. Tell us about your first soaring flight, or about the time you were at 15 grand and thought you were going to die!

Does anyone want to share what it's like to throw their reserve? Anything like that with a lesson for the rest of us is what we want. We may even be offering a cash prize for the story of the month so get those contributions in.

Competitions: We'd like to start regular competitions with some worthwhile prizes. Any suppliers, dealers or other interested parties out there who'd like to donate something as a prize.

Opinion: We'd like to start a gossip column, reflecting the current opinion and vibe out on the hill. This could be a nice, humorous way to get a few controversial issues out in the open *without* causing any upset. More about this in the next issue.

Other Stuff: Can you draw or paint? Do fancy yourself as a poet? Can you draw cartoons or characatures? Spotted any look-alikes out there? If the answer to any of those is 'yes', then get busy and send us what you've done. Even if it is highly controversial, we might still publish it!! You might even win a prize!

I hope that lot's got you thinking. You can send your contributions electronically to me at nickjresswell@hotmail.com but if you insist on pens and paper or want me to scan your photos, send it to:

Nick Cresswell
3B East Dulwich Grove
London
SE22 8PW

...and if you want anything sent back, include an SAE.

Thanks for reading this far and see you on the hill.



Chairman's Letter

So a year has passed by, and another AGM has come and gone. Thanks to all those who attended this year's event. There wasn't a queue of eager aspirants to my chairmanship, so you're stuck with me for another year.

Many thanks are due to Nigel Barratt, who retired as Sites Officer, and to Theresa Burlington, who has stepped into the post. Thanks also to Stewart Swanton, stepping down as social Secretary, and to Neil Brennan-Wright and Dave Burgess who are combining the post with paragliding competitions officer. Paul Cryer has agreed to do the Hang Gliding competitions job, so we now have a complete team. This year I hope to see Southern teams doing well in the British Club Challenge. With the pilots we have in this club, we ought to be reaching the finals every year, not falling at the first hurdle - getting a team together.

And now for the question unresolved at the AGM - towing/winch. There seems to be a core of pilots in the club who'd like to go winching, on those days where it's too windy to fly from a hill, or the wind's in the wrong direction. One or two have started on the route to getting winch qualifications. Others already have them. What there seems to be is a lack of, is anyone prepared to get up and start the ball rolling. So I'm now calling for a few people to come forward as a group, and announce that they are willing to form a winching committee. We'll probably need a chairman, someone to research obtaining a winch, someone to work out the finances, someone to look after any winches we acquire. Money for a winch is not a problem. The main club committee are not going to do this job for you and serve it up on a platter. If you want it to happen, then put yourself forward. This is the FINAL call for volunteers. A nil response will tell us that there is no real demand. I really hope that someone will come forward.

Regards
Dave

SHGC Committee meeting 2nd April 2003

Summary

- * New marshaling scheme to start 1st May - do you know red from green?
- * We welcome the new committee members after the AGM.
- * Membership renewals are due - please send back yours promptly.
- * The AGM was fun - a good video, a shame not to see more people there.

Minutes Of The Southern Hang Gliding Club AGM 29th March 2003

Summary

* President Johnny Carr welcomed members to our 29th AGM, looking forward to our 30th anniversary next year. We are now looked at by councils and National Trust as a responsible body - thanks to lots of work by the committee and members. We must be careful to continue to live up to this.

* Chairman Dave Massie summarised some achievements in steering the club super tanker. New marshalling scheme; Interest in a winching group; Prospective new sites.

* Treasurer Martin Brady showed the club in a good financial situation, managing to keep the entire amount of the last membership increase for the site fund, in addition to the amount being saved before.

* Andy Kirkland's web site report shows massive progress in improving the clubs on-line presence, and facilities for communication. Completed projects include the Web Site redesign, with a new Members Area, and the Forum/Email change over to our own domain. Upcoming projects include an Online Notice board, and an Online Membership Database to ease the membership secretary's job and allow members to keep contact information up to date. The new site guide is also up coming in down loadable and browse-able formats.

* New membership secretary Simon Goodwin thanked outgoing Claire Page for the good state of our records, and showed club membership still going strong, with the renewals about to go out.

* Sites officer Nigel Barrett was away, but Stewart Swanton presented his apologies and a promise of a report on the forum. Nigel steps down this year, and received a round of applause for all his work for the club in the last years.

* Entertainments Officer Stewart Swanton is also stepping down, but has organised the summer do already. He received thanks from the meeting.

* The Aero tow group's Will Greenwood explained how the group continues to go from strength to strength, with the new tug almost ready. He offered thanks to the tug pilots, Nigel & Mike Broadbent.

* Paul Coidan our Windsock editor apologised for the absence of December and January, and urged all club members to actually contribute something. If each person wrote one article every 5 years, it would be more than enough. Have you written yours?

* Trevor McLoughlin our chief coach thanked all those coming along to the monthly meetings: Dave Massie especially who has kept coming. Dave Lewis, Mandy Sharp, Pete Fox, Chris Joel, regularly come along. Thanks to Carlo Borsattino, Michel Carnet both Senior Instructors for their regular attendance and support at the meetings. There will be attempts to get another meeting going more towards London or at a more 'central' venue, eg East Grinstead. Any volunteers to get one going? We still need new faces at existing meetings, and also to train additional club coaches. There have been another 15 people just getting their pilot ratings just recently.

* Michel Carnet, our Airspace and Safety officer presented his report - there have been rather a lot of airspace infringements and also a lot of very close calls and broken bones - we have been lucky to avoid fatalities. There was a general discussion about possible actions and ideas to improve the situation, and a number of initiatives were decided upon. New airspace charts are out. Need for defensive flying, good practice and airmanship.

* Dave Massie and Michel Carnet presented details of the new Devil's Dyke Marshalling Scheme to the meeting, and answered a number of questions and suggestions. The scheme was generally liked by those there.

* New committee members: This year we welcome :-

Membership - Simon Goodwin

Sites - Teresa Burlington

Social & PG Comps - Neil Brennan-Wright + Dave Burgess double act

Windsock - Nick Cresswell, elected to sub editor to assist Paul, by editing submitted articles etc.

HG Comps - Paul Cryer

* There were a number of motions discussed from the floor, but after answers from the committee none were moved to a vote. The committee remains firmly behind the idea of a winching group, and ready to fund it on the same basis as the aero tow group, but as yet no one/group has really stepped forward to do the work of running it.

* The video "One flew over a vulture's nest" was presented to those that remained to see it. This film has a little bit of everything - vultures, hg, pg, aerobatics, scenery, XC, women swimming... really!

A warm welcome to the following new members of the SHGC:

On behalf of the committee and the members we would like to welcome the following new members to our club.

David Bailey, Douglas Varney, Amanda Cook, Ian Stewart, Carol Moyse, Rowland Ogden, Greg Shaw, Daphne Freedman, Martin Hillier, Micheal Crook, Stephen Carter, Steve Wood, Chris Arthur, David Burgess, John Lewis, Nigel Penfold.



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A Day In The Life Of A Wannabe Skygod... by Clive Belbin

It was the last day of the British National Hang Gliding Championships 2002 and the forecast, according to those who could understand it, was crap.

I had arrived in Laragne 2 weeks earlier to compete in the Nationals for the first time and had been expecting to spend both the practice week and the competition week staying in the usual campsite by the railway line with its 6.30am wake-up train but, by some strange twists of fate, in the 2nd week I found myself sharing an apartment in the centre of Laragne with Gordon Rigg and his merry band of scousers.

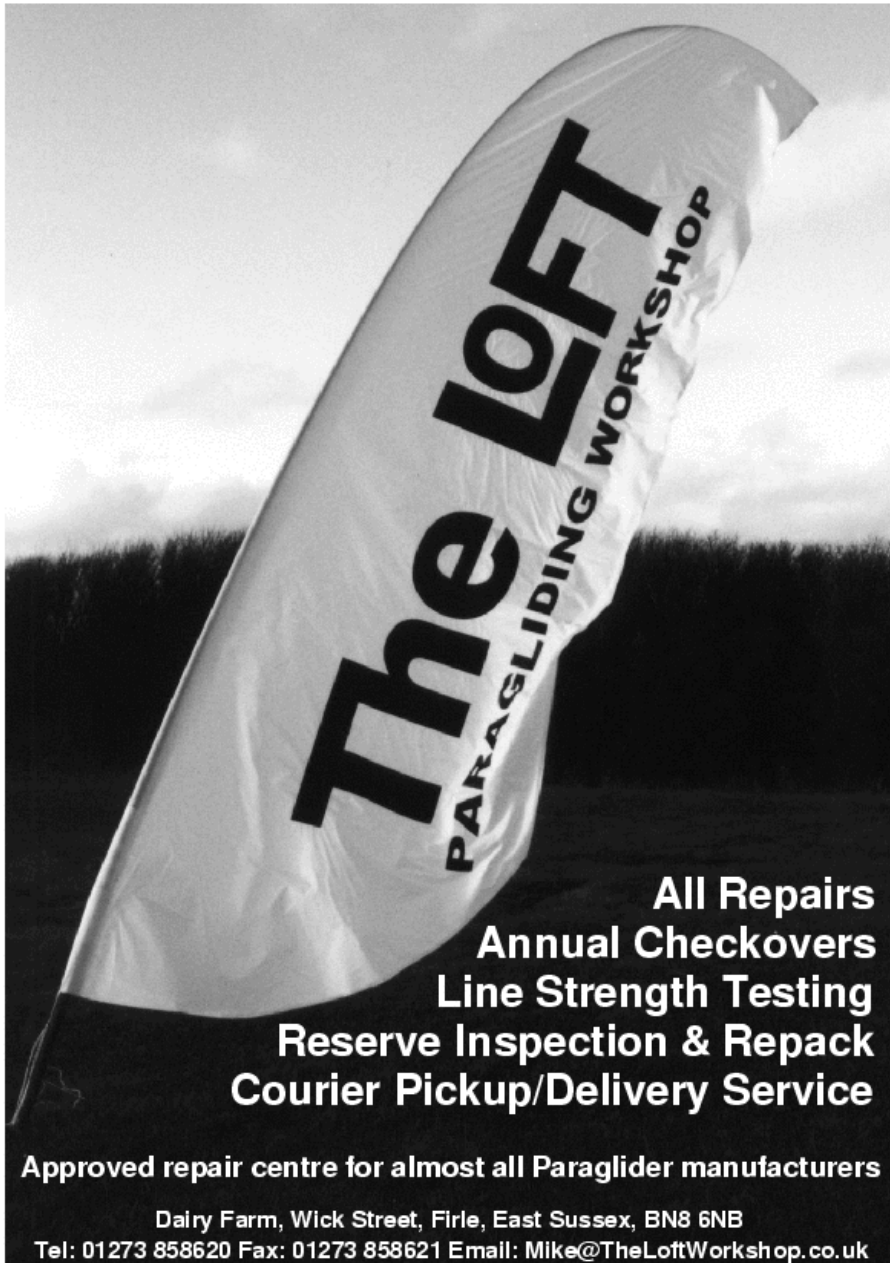
Bob, Shedsy, Jimbo, Steve and Martin (and the missing two, namely Phil and Carl, who had other commitments digging for black gold) are a diverse bunch who appear to have little in common except for being scousers and the North Wales HG and PG club. A bit like any other group of pilots really - just insert the appropriate region and club name. Having grown up in Wiltshire and lived in Croydon for the last 14 years, it was a bit of a culture shock to be sharing with these people from the diagonally opposite corner of the country. This culture shock was eased by the fact that I had been the scorer for the 2002 Welsh Open/Celtic Cup/BHGS, which had been hosted and run by the North Wales Club - in fact this was probably the strange twist of fate which led to our sharing in the first place.

Bob wrote the Skywings article 'Squeal like a pig for me boy' which described his experience of mistakenly landing in a Florida State Penitentiary and he is better known to Cross-Country readers as Superman - that was him in the St Hilaire photo last year. Shedsy is most famous for having a car that tried to launch itself in St Andre whilst the retrieve driver was taking a 'comfort break' behind a bush. I first met Jimbo in The Vine Tree at Llangattock where, by way of greeting, he offered me a fight. I turned him down and it was probably just as well: at 2 o'clock the following morning I was woken by some commotion in the campsite and I found out at breakfast time that it had been Jimbo kicking seven shades of s**t out of his car for some reason! I'd met them both Steve and Martin at some stage during one of my three visits to North Wales.

Those of you in the know may now be saying "What about Gordon - he's not a scouser?!" - well Gordon's twist of fate was that, having taken Carl under his mentoring wing a couple of years ago, he has been drawn into the scouser fold (and now finds 'mentee' Carl snapping at his champion heels).

During the week that we had been in the apartment, in the mornings I would usually make my way, with one (Steve or Bob) or sometimes two (both of them) passengers to the competition HQ at the campsite to check the scores and to confirm that we were to head up Chabre for a task briefing, but this morning things were different.

The sump on Gordon's car had recently come off second-best in a head-to-head with a piece of mountain sticking out of the track coming down from Chabre (it was rumoured that Martin had driven down the hill more enthusiastically than usual under Gordon's explicit instructions). Exit left Gordon to get a lift up the hill with a German friend. This left Shedsy and Jimbo, who had been sharing Gordon's car with Martin as their retrieve driver, in need of a lift to the top. No big deal you might say, but they had been out the previous night "looking for The Green Goblin"[1] in the vicinity of The Globe restaurant and had consoled themselves with alcohol when they had failed to find him. Martin and Steve had hired a car at Nice airport when they arrived in France, but it was nowhere near big enough for all of the scousers to fit in. Which left me with my car which, mainly due to it not even being fit for the journey until 2 weeks



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before I left the UK (having been off the road for three years), I had all to myself - how could I refuse fellow pilots in need?

Shedsy and Jimbo were bumbling about the apartment in a generally incoherent manner so I told them I'd come back for them after checking things out at the camp site. Bob and I headed for the campsite half expecting, because of the weather forecast, to be told that the presentation was to be held early in the afternoon but no! John Aldridge (the Meet Director) was going to attempt to set a task using the lower and smaller North take-off, as the wind strength made the higher take-off unsafe. We headed back to the apartment to find Shedsy and Jimbo bumbling about in a generally incoherent manner and told them that we were going flying.

After a certain amount of remaining calm in spite of it all on my part, we got all the gear loaded into the car and Bob, Shedsy, Jimbo and myself set off for Chabre. Bob was not flying as he'd injured his ankle and didn't think it was up to committed launching but was fit enough to drive the car down.

Shedsy and Jimbo sat around in a generally incoherent manner in the back seat of my car as we drove up the mountain. After a while, Jimbo started complaining about feeling sick, but made no attempt to open his window - I had visions of ... well, you know exactly what I had visions of! Thankfully, The Ultimate Hang Gliding Vehicle has electric windows, so I opened Jimbo's window for him. Miserable shit never even said thank you.

We arrived at the top (with Jimbo still outside his breakfast) to find all of the good spots and most of the bad ones taken. At least we didn't have to find a tie-down ring today because there was no possibility of dust-devils. We unloaded the gear and selected rigging spots. I chose one directly behind the most popular launch spot which left me with only three or four gliders to get past if I wanted to launch before they did - as if. I managed to get my glider tensioned and up on its A-frame before the task briefing was called.

The task chosen was the same as the day before: a race to Puimoisson via a turnpoint at Oraison. This meant that I didn't need to program my GPS, as the route was already in there. 'Fantastic!' I thought 'Something that's LESS time-consuming than it was yesterday!' The only thing that I wanted to take more time today was my flight - I had previously only made 16km of this 66km task. I had been stumped by the Montagne de Lure which is a big impassable looking ridge about 20km into the task which stands, at its highest point, more than 1000' higher than Chabre. The first 15km of the task was over the same ground as it had been for several of the tasks during the week of the comp so I was getting a bit bored with the scenery!

By the time I'd got my glider rigged, vario and GPS set up and everything packed away in my harness, there were quite a few of the 50-odd competitors in the air. It looked like there was plenty of lift about, both dynamic and thermic, so I got on with the process of reassuring myself that there was nothing to worry about and that I'd got bad launches out of my system some time ago and that landing wouldn't be a problem in this wind strength and that I'd ran off the no-second-chances North take-off without incident earlier in the week in very light winds and there was really nothing to stop me going flying as soon as I'd had a pre-emptive piss and a couple of mouthfuls of a sandwich.



TAKE OFF

As I approached the launch spot, an uninvited stranger grabbed the nose-wires and Martin grabbed the left wing-wire. I hadn't wanted this and was not sure if I needed it, but I accepted it. Standing on launch I was in the hyped up positive launch effort frame of mind that I adopt before every launch and looked at the guy on the nose-wires and barked "Clear above?" in the same manner that I adopt when shouting "All-out" on a foot-launch aerotow. He showed no sign of understanding what I had just said so I asked him "Am I clear above?". Still no sign. I looked away from him and said "OK" to myself out loud, whilst I absorbed this insight about my self-appointed nose man, at which point he let go of the nose and sloped off to my right 'which was nice'. Given his performance thus far, this was not entirely unexpected. The glider felt OK on my shoulders. Martin on the left wing shouted "you're clear above" so I started running.

"We've got a photo of you - you nearly died." said Sue Brookes a few weeks later. The launch run is about eight strides and then a sheer drop of over 2000 feet - in fact you run down an overhang. On about the second stride, I could feel that the left wing was a bit low and also lagging a bit so I applied some weight shift to correct it and kept running. As I cleared the drop the left wing was still low - my spatial awareness suggested that the tip was very close to the ground, but I wasn't about to turn my head to look at it - I was airborne and needed to concentrate on staying that way. That evening, when no-one mentioned my launch, I wrote off my original misgivings about it as being misguided. It was only when Sue mentioned it several weeks later that I thought that maybe I was right first time after all.

Safely clear of the ground, I reached down to zip up my harness and found that the zip was reluctant to come more than about a quarter of the way up. After about half-a-dozen tries I gave up. I got some height above the ridge and went out in front a little and then had a look down to see what the problem was. I had forgotten to do up the zips on the bottom of my leggings, (the zips that enable you to take the leggings off without taking your boots off) so the bottoms were hanging down and snagging the harness zip. I dropped

one leg at a time out of the harness, brought my knee up as far as I could and reached down to close the zips. This done I was able to zip up my harness. "Can I get on with flying now, please?".

I find lift (which was no great achievement) and climb to cloud base. A voice in my head says "I'm going to make goal" and another one says "Calm down! You've got a load to do yet". The cloud is quite sucky and has quite a deep dome so I HAVE to take some photos - my wing is in clear air yet there is a curtain of cloud not far away on all sides that stretches below the height I'm at. When I get to base I always get that "Wow - look where I am!" feeling - it knocks being up a tree or up on a building site scaffolding into a cocked hat.

I'm having to fly quite fast to stop myself being sucked into the cloud and I have one hand on the bar and a camera in the other so my directional control is not what it could be and I'm getting chucked about quite a bit which just adds to the fun. I fire off 3 or 4 photos, put the camera away, check my GPS for a heading and head off down the course.



CLOUD BASE

As I approach the edge of the 5Km start cylinder I check the time. It's 3 minutes until the next 15 minute start window. I would have waited 30 seconds, I would probably have waited one minute, but 3 minutes seemed like too much of a wait for someone who'd never even made it to goal before, so I continue on course. I take every meaningful bit of lift that I find - I'm determined to get past De Lure today.

I make it into the big valley before De Lure with plenty of height, but De Lure still looks big. Things aren't that gloomy though - I've caught up with a quite a few people and I'm looking at the top surfaces of some of their gliders - I can't possibly blow it with a plentiful supply of thermal markers! "I'm going to make goal" "Calm down! You've got a load to do yet". I recognise the transparent top surface of Phippsy's

Talon - being higher than pilots way more experienced than me is such a buzz, I guess I must be the competitive type! I get a good climb off of a lump in front of the big hurdle which puts me at base when I finally clear De Lure. "I'm going to make goal" "Calm down! You've got a load to do yet".

Having cleared De Lure, I set off on a glide in bouyant air but my VB jams for the umpteenth time this year and the pack starts to get away from me. The ground features don't look big enough to trigger anything but they seem to be doing so because lift is not difficult to find. "I'm going to make goal" "Calm down! You've got a load to do yet". By the time I'm approaching the turn point, I have the sky to myself apart from a sailplane which passes by a few hundred metres away. I've got my GPS on the snail-trail screen, but the scale is set to show the 5Km start circle - this is not much use as a visual aid for making a 400m cylinder around the turn point so I concentrate on the distance counter in the top right of the display. I remember that the turn point was at the end of a valley and figure that it must be one of the valleys that I can see heading off to the East and, as my GPS says I'm about 2Km from it, I figure that it must be the second valley. However, I'm flying in a straight line and I don't seem to be getting any closer. As a frown of confusion forms on my brow (I couldn't see it, but I know it was there!), another hang glider who obviously has a working VB whizzes past but seems to be heading off down the first valley. Why has he gone over there? He's got that wrong! Why am I staying about 2Km from the turn point? Why is the distance getting bigger now? I try to remember what the turn point feature was and have a look around for likely candidates. I spot what looks like some kind of sports track and remember that John Aldridge had said at the briefing that the feature was a "racecourse or something". And, of course, it's now about 3 Km behind me.

I turn back and make the turn point at cloud base. "I'm going to make goal" "Calm down! You've got a load to do yet". I glide down the downwind side of valley towards where my GPS says the goal is but find very little lift. In the distance I can see something that might be a load of hang gliders up on a plateau but once I'm close enough to have a chance of being sure, I no longer have enough height to get a decent look. My GPS says I'm about 5Km from goal. I'm above a shallow slope. The ground at the bottom of the slope is in sunshine with patches of cloud shadow. To my eyes it has everything it needs to produce a nice thermal for me but it isn't doing it - just little blobs here and there that don't really help my cause. I'm not low enough to find ridge lift, but it's starting to look likely that I will be. "Am I going to lose all my height here looking for a climb and so close to goal? Bastard!".

I've still got enough height to cover some of the rising ground between me and goal so I decide to make the best on-track distance that I can. I can't make goal from where I am (I can't even see where I think it is any more) and the landing options on the way look scarce. Relative to goal my position is about 30 degrees off track so, using the GPS rolling road screen, I fly in a direction that takes me toward goal and puts me back on track. I'm now about 500' agl and looking for today's landing field. "Why did that pilot land in that field - it looks horrible!" I pick one that I like and arrive over it with about 300' which I start to burn off to set up my approach.

'Bip bip bip'. My vario starts to play my favourite song. It's snotty (it's low!), I have to work it hard. Push right-out in lift, pull in a bit just on the stall, swing my legs to yaw it round tight, "I'm going to make goal" "Calm down! You've got a load to do yet". Push out, pull-in, swing. Push out, pull-in, swing. Half a dozen times and the thermal becomes better defined. Now I'm circling really tight and I'm having to climb up the base-bar to keep the top wing the right side of vertical but I'm established and I'm going up!

"I'm going to make goal" "Calm down! You've got a load to do yet". A few more 360s and goal hoves into view. It's the first time I've been really sure that it IS goal. I can now see the airstrip that we were told

not to land on. I reckon I can make it now "I AM going to make goal" "Yep, I reckon you are!" I forget to account for it being a downwind glide so it's actually really easy. I pull on loads of speed and aim at an imaginary line joining the tops of the two huge windsocks that mark the goal-line. It's hard work without VB but this is supposed to be a race! and, as my total airtime in the whole-wide-world (as pilot "in control") hits 160 hours, I arrive in goal for the first time, shouting my pilot number as loud as I can at Les, who's standing on the line with his clipboard and clock (having been a goal marshall myself, I know that shouting your number really loud is important).

I convert speed to height and do a couple of celebratory hoons over the line and then I remember that I'm over the goal line so I clear out of the way and land. I hear later they had seen me coming and Johnny Carr had suggested that everyone give me a loud cheer when I crossed the line. Someone else had said "Better wait till he's landed safely!". You might infer from that that I have a reputation for 'arriving' rather than landing. I believe I'm a lot better at light-wind landing the Topless 1 now, but my reputation was such that, in the Raglan goal field on the last day of the SE Wales Open earlier in the year, Gordon Rigg, on seeing me approaching goal, is reported to have said "Watch this landing - it should be good for a laugh" only to find that it was Robin Rhodes (also flying an ex-McCarthy Glider) who then disappointed everyone with a perfect landing. I was about 2Km away shooing some boisterous and inquisitive cattle away from my glider, having safely landed with the VB (which had worked that day) still full on - it hadn't jammed, I just forgot to let it off. Anyway, back to the Puimoisson goal field...

I wander around the goal field shaking hands and saying "thanks" to people who are all obviously genuinely pleased for my success and then Les appears and hands me a cold beer - Top Man!

I send a text saying "GGGOOOAALLL!" to Bob, whom I'm hoping is going to bring my car and pick me up. A text comes back with words to the effect of "we can't go to the apartment, it's been surrounded by special forces. They've closed off the road because they've had a report that there's some suspicious powder there." He still maintains that this really happened.

I send a text saying "GGGOOOAALLL!" Ozzie Haines in the UK. A text comes back saying "Monkeys and Typewriters".

I send a text saying "GGGOOOAALLL" Will Greenwood in the UK. He phones me to check - we've tried to wind him up with the "Clive made goal" line before.



GGGOOOAALLL

Shedsy and Jimbo were standing around their gliders in the goal field in a generally incoherent manner, Shedsy was cleaning the puke off of his uprights and out of his full-face helmet - he had come out of nowhere and beaten Jimbo in the lose-your-breakfast race...

Epilogue - It's nice to play the what-if game when the opportunity's there to see what difference small things make and I'm in the privileged position of having access to the scoring software, so I asked it "what if I had waited 3 minutes for the next start gate AND not wasted about 3 minutes missing the turn point?". The fact that I flew past the turn point makes this what-if a reasonable question because it means that, having waited 3 minutes for the later start gate and then not missing the turn point, I would have found the same not so inspiring air once I was past the turn point. The scoring software answered that I would have come 23rd on the day instead of 25th out of the 50 or so pilots that attempted the task and that my overall competition placing would also have improved, making me 18th instead of 20th out of the 27 pilots competing for the title of National Champion. It would also have meant that I was no longer the lowest placed pilot who had attempted all 5 tasks(!)

A classic example of a Shedsy brain-wave. It involved wearing the Green Goblin mask off of the back of a pack of Shreddies and going up to various Brits and asking them if they'd seen Robin Rhodes. You had to be there to stand a chance of understanding and, even then, it was far from guaranteed!

Oh This Year Where Off To Sunny Spain

The famous, no infamous Summer trip is on this year we will be using the hospitals around Peadrowheater, which too the uneducated is in central Spain near Madrid. Anyone can come along, but I don't think many paragliders will take up the challenge as it involves Looking at signs and turning **Right** into Spain.

We are going out on July 11th to the 19th. Interested ? Know your right from your left ? Know the Spanish for **“I would like to buy everyone in the bar a beer”** ? Then phone Ozzie, on 01273 418293 or 07801 514829 if you want abuse and details, or just too buy the decent fellow a beer or three.



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Performance Intermediate
DHV 1-2 · 60-125kg all up

The Windtech team have succeeded in making an outstanding intermediate in the DHV 1-2 class



The independent reviews say it all...

Skywings (No.1 UK) Magazine:

"It is simply extraordinary to get this combination of razor-sharp handling and solidity."

"The Serak possesses that rare quality of being very solid yet very manoeuvrable."

"The Serak's ability to change direction in the twinkling of an eye and its high trim speed make for a delightful glider."

"It's quite simply one of the most responsive 1-2s about." "you can simply dart about and make the most of it."

"You'll also be able to turn inside those who fly too wide in thermals without any stress or effort."

"The Serak offers large amounts of manoeuvrability without the need to constantly control the glider in pitch, one of the drawbacks of some other nimble gliders."

"In the air the glider strikes you straightaway as very agile." "energy retention is excellent."

"... speed range on the brakes is very good..." "Energy retention is also very good and the glider feels very solid."

"Brake pressure seemed ideal (even flying slowly with plenty of brake isn't tiring)..."

"... even at the very bottom of the weight range it is capable of running rings round a good majority of gliders."

"It feels very quick on full bar even when flown at mid-range weights; several other pilots flying alongside commented on this."

"Inflation pressure seems to be high and the only minor collapse I had popped out very quickly without intervention."

"The Serak is up there with all the other high-end 1-2s in terms of sink rate, glide, workmanship and quality of materials used. Where it stands head and shoulders above the rest is in its manoeuvrability, inviting comparisons with gazelles or swifts in the field of nimbleness and agility."

"With the Quax behind them and now the Serak, Windtech are acquiring a reputation for building well-constructed gliders with very good handling."



Gleitschirm (No.1 Austrian) Magazine:

"The revolution is to be found inside the wing..."

"The quality and finish of the wing are altogether excellent, and all the materials used of very high quality"

"... all an obvious sign of the excellent attention to detail and high quality standards that Windtech maintain."

"The launch characteristics are totally well-balanced."

"Flying the Serak there is nothing too much and nothing too little."

"The whole tuning is just perfect for an intermediate."

"... really quite impressive" and "extraordinarily stable"

"The Windtech team have succeeded in making the Serak an outstanding intermediate wing in the DHV 1-2 class."

"... a wing with outstanding security and maximum performance..."

"This well-balanced wing enables XC pilots to reach their goals stress free."



Parapente (No.1 French) Mag:

"The Serak is very manoeuvrable and light on the brakes"

"The Serak handles from the tips of one's fingers, with lightness and with pleasure" "Very solid and very usable accelerated!"

"I even abuse the accelerator in lift, it's such a regal delight"

"Here's a glider that knows how to live: you demand, she executes, without inertia, with precision" "She is very fun to fly"

"Pure performance... the Serak rests in most excellent standards..."

The Pluses: Manoeuvrability; The fun side!

The Minuses: None!

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Himalaya XC course, Himachal Pradesh, October

We are running two ten day trips in October - November. Start saving your brownie points now...Awesome!
Read Snowy's, Ian's & Ulric's magazine articles. Safer flying than Spain! Bigger views than anywhere else on Earth. The background picture to this page shows the mere 5000m peaks overlooking Daramsala. You can overfly the Dali Llama's Temple, but the monks say we should watch out for the power flowing up to heaven... They are not wrong either, it's a great thermal trigger!

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Nova Axon 26	85-105kg	DHV2, Slightly faded	£350
Nova Xyon 24	75-95kg	DHV2/3, Good condition	£400
Nova Xyon 26	85-105kg	DHV2/3, Good condition	£400
Windtech Silex	80-110kg	DHV3, very good cond.	£poa
Airwave Tent	80-100kg	Thin people only.	£poa
Apoa Santana	80-100kg	AFNOR STD great 1st wing	£1100

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Advance Epsilon 5	80 - 100 kg	DHV 1/2
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Intermediate Wings		
Gradient Onyx 26	80 - 100 kg	Afnor Std
Firbird Grid	80-100 kg	DHV 1/2
Windtech Serak (All sizes)	60 - 125 kg	DHV1/2
Performance Wings		
Windtech Quarx 2 (All sizes)	60 - 120 kg	DHV 2 AFNOR std
Gradient Bliss 26	80 - 100 kg	Afnor Perf.
Windtech Syncro 27	85 - 108 kg	AFNOR Perf.
Firebird Hornet & SP	call	DHV 2 & 2/3
Airwave Magic 3	Coming soon	DHV 2/3
Hang gliders		
Moyes Max	-	Hang glider
Moyes Ventura	-	Hang glider

Harnesses

c/w with back protectors &c

Gin Genie II	intermediate	£399
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What about the DIGIFLY EXPLORER, including a fluxgate compass for all that cloud flying! £220



Gin Flight Deck - get yourself organised for those spring XCs £39.99

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Snowdon British Paragliding Cup report by Carlo Borsattino

Just got back from the first round of the BPCup in North Wales which was superb, with some fantastic flying and a great time was had by all!

I got a lift with Charlie Merrett and drove up to the event from East Sussex on Thursday eve, with another Southern Club (SHGC) member, Mike Parfitt, and stayed the night in a B&B near Telford. We left early Friday morning and arrived mid-morning in North Wales looking for somewhere to fly, as we were definitely gagging for it!

Coming into the North Wales area we were all straight away struck with the amazing beauty of the whole area. A wonderful combination of mountains, big rolling hills and surrounding areas of flatlands - all in all, perfectly made for us free-flyntics! The only drawback is, for us "Southern wussies", that there generally aren't roads to the top, and so a fairly testing walk up is usually involved in getting to take off! Mind you, I guess you can often walk part way up and fly the rest of the way to the top (only if sure it wasn't too strong at the top, mais bien sur!) After running around like headless chickens, eventually we found a lone paraglider soaring around at a site called "Dinorwig" and walked to the top panting and sweating like... very panty and sweaty things indeed! Not quite the same as our small South Downs hills, with roads to the top and pubs next to take off! Anyway, I'm sure it did us some good(?), even if it felt VERY BAD at the time, and we had a very nice flight indeed in the end, our first flight in North Wales. Cloudbase was around 3500ft, with gentle lifty conditions, and we were blessed with amazing views over Snowdon, Caernarfon Bay and the town.

After we had landed and packed up in a nearby football field, we then drove onto the BP Cup headquarters to Merthyr Farm in Harlech, where the round was to be based and met up with everyone there and registered, etc... There was a very good turn out, and eventually 57 pilots were entered into the event - not bad at all! From the SHGC club we had quite a good representation: Mike Parfitt, Charlie Merret, Paul Penning, June Sage, John Stevens, and myself. Strange, I notice that three out of six of us have origins in Southern Africa (Charlie, Paul and myself)!... Maybe the South Africans have more of a sense of adventure than the "Boring old Brits"? Just joshing, old chaps!

The first day was Saturday, and the organization checked the weather, decided which hill was the best for us to fly from, and they pronounced it "Arenig Fach" - which is more than I can do. The para-mob fled from Harlech in a crazed and convoluted convoy and headed for the site, hopefully not terrorising too many sheep, or locals, along the way. We arrived at the bottom of Arenig Fach and surveyed the conditions, which were looking very good indeed. Pilots donned their gliders and made their ascent up the hill, and got to the top fairly quickly - some more quickly than others (more panting and sweating)! I got to the top and was keen to test fly the conditions and see what was cooking, and so wasted no time whipping out my equipment (oo-er missis) and lobbed off to sniff the air. Things were looking VERY good indeed but, as it was the first task of the year, a reasonably easy task was set by the committee, a short 22km race to goal, with the aim of giving pilots a good chance of actually getting to goal - something that no one had managed in the BPCup nor BPChampionships for awhile... But, boy did they manage that with honours this time!

I got our SHGC guys (and one girl) together and did a quick brief, GPS check, and answered a few questions - mainly about GPS' and as always, especially, the dreaded MLR. Window Open - time to take off! Except, mother nature decided to give me an urgent instruction at this moment, and I was forced to

run for cover, whilst I watched first Nico Preston, then Steve Etherington, Burkitt Rudd, Simon Raven and a couple of others climbing up to base, perhaps even in the thermal I had created behind launch(?), whilst everyone else dilly-dallied around as if they had all the time in the world.

It seemed that there was quite a gap between cycles and the rest of us got stuck on the hill for quite some time, occasionally lobbing off to engage in much bun fighting and general failing to get up (or even stay up in many instances), whilst the 3 kings (or maybe queens?) thermalled annoyingly high above our heads! At one point we were even blessed by the sight of Steve Etherington having to struggle to stay out of cloud as he was clearly encountering abundant lift whilst we fought over measly scraps thousands of feet down below. Maybe someone needed to go make another thermal behind launch?... Steve, Burkitt and Simon eventually left us all behind and cruised into goal way before the rest of us charged in later. Eventually, another half-decent climb came through, and we climbed, at first slowly, up from launch and drifted over the back, then encountering very good climbs which took us up to cloud base, at over 6000ft (where it was ****ing cold!). After the long slow struggle to get away from launch, we got to base very quickly in amazingly smooth(!), moderate to strong, thermals averaging around 2 - 4 m/s, peaking at 6 m/s, or so. We then cruised around in the wispiers and joined up with the some convergence (possibly sea breeze front) nicely in orbit, and bobbled along way above the tops of the hills, following the convergence climbs towards Snowdon. The scenery in this area is really breathtaking and, although it was rather hazy, we were rewarded with amazing views all over the Snowdonia National Park.

20 out of the 57 pilots entered in the round got to goal (From the SHGC - Charlie Merret, Paul Penning, John Stevens, and myself), and everyone was absolutely elated and ecstatic after such a wonderful and amazing flight! My flight was very short (only 50mins) but Charlie had to work hard to get away from launch, and took the slightly scenic route, and so his flight was longer, and he landed with **VERY** cold hands and had a *quiet* 5mins to himself whilst his fingers thawed out, and the "hot flushes" set in. Ouuuuuch! The goal marshals seemed slightly shocked to see us, after two years of no one making goal in either the Cup or the Champs, I guess they were getting used to being left on their own in the goal field for hours, poor sods!

The winner was Burkitt Rudd, who took a risky glide to overtake Steve Etherington, and third Simon Raven - all of them Cumbrian pilots! All those Cumbrian sausages obviously help! I took a glide from 10k's away, but failed to clear a small hill by 50ft only 1.5km's from launch which I then had to ridge soar for 15mins whilst several people flew over my head - despite my protests! How rude can some people be? Even one of my fellow team mates, Paul Penning, came over my head with the extra 50ft and glided straight into goal, and left me behind, cheeky sod!... Whatever happened to team spirit, I ask you!?

I think everyone had a whole lot of fun, and the SHGC pilots who went along learnt a hell of a lot from the experience, not just about competition flying but also about XC flying in general. Many things were learnt about the importance of good preparation (with emphasis on the "pre"!), including knowing how to use one's GPS before one was just about to take off! People learnt a bit about setting up routes using waypoints on the GPS' and dealing with "windows", "start gates", and a few basic tactics for making the best out of one's flight. One important lesson that people learnt was that one has to fly to the 'virtual' goal (where your GPS thinks the goal is), not the 'physical' goal (where people were landing).

The organization of the whole event, under the leadership of Chris 'Calvo' Burns with the help of his superb troupe of amazing volunteers, was, as always at the BPCup rounds, absolutely excellent. Thanks too to Brad Nicholas of Snowdon Gliders for hosting and helping organise the event. These all together ensured that everyone was registered quickly and easily, that good information was always given to all,

we all got to the RIGHT hill at the RIGHT time, and the RIGHT task was set, all leading to an amazing flight! Safety was always of paramount consideration, and the most was made of the conditions, with a good, realistic task being set by an excellent and conscientious task committee (Calvo, Adrian Thomas, and Brad Nicholas). The whole atmosphere if the event was fantastic - very relaxed - and a **great** party was held on Saturday night, and 70 or so pilots had a wail of a time into the wee hours (the forecast was looking iffy for Sunday)!... And, maybe it wasn't SUCH a bad thing it wasn't flyable on Sunday in the end, with many a sore head!

All in all, a fantastic success, I would say!

Useful To Know

Is the battery on your radio knackered (no longer holding charge and so going flat very quickly)? Check out www.strikalite.co.uk . Send the battery to them they will re-cell it. Cost me £11 each for both my Alinco DJ 180 batteries, instead of £50 each to replace them. Well worth it!

Anyone else got any more of these gems of wisdom, let me or Nick know so that we can include them in the mag.

Sky Systems Competition.

Sky Systems are offering a prize of 400 pounds for SHGC members flying XC.

The rules are simple and as follows:

- SHGC Members only
- DHV1 and DHV1-2 PGs only (check first for Afnor-only rated wings)
- Bank Holiday Weekends only (13 days: Easter + 6 days in May + 3 days in August)
- Flights can be anywhere in the UK, but must be entered in - and accepted by - the National PG XC League
- There is no limit to the number of flights and the overall sum of flights will count
- The winner will receive a £400 voucher to be redeemed against the purchase of a new PG.
- Sky Systems' employees are excluded

Coaching Column By Trevor McLoughlin

Well, it looks like you poor unfortunate soles are stuck with me again for another year because the re weren't enough of you to vote me off of the committee – serves you right for not attending the AGM. Maybe if I try a bit harder to upset you this year, you'll come along next year and get rid of me! ;-)

Phone & Email Change

I've said this before, but my phone number and email address have changed, would you please amend your records to the following: 07787 827 754 and trevor@skygypsy.co.uk It's just that some of you are still using the old number and email - they will be discontinued at the end of the month.

Coach Course

I have several people willing to go on the next available coach course, if you'd like to join them then please let me know. You don't have to be a brilliant pilot; you just need to be willing to help others and try and make our coaching meetings on a reasonably regular basis. Give me a call and we can discuss it.

New Meeting

It's been suggested on more than a few occasions, that we try and get a meeting going for a more central part of the south. I think Hayward's Heath and East Grinstead are easy to get to by both road and rail. The Seaford and London meetings are getting more and more attendees, so the interest is there. If you live in a more central area like those mentioned and you'd like to help get one going, then please get in touch and I'll give you a hand if you need it for the first few. Ideally, you'll want a pub function room that you can get for free.

Seaford Meeting

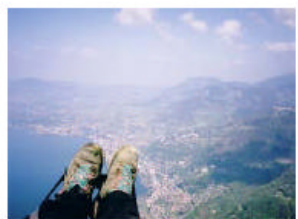
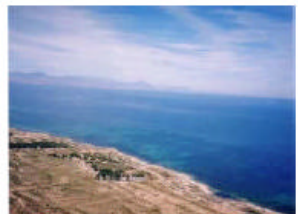
The May meeting will see the return of John Barratt, HG instructor and well-known pilot. He will be talking about stability in the atmosphere, with a look at lapse rates and how important they are in predicting whether it's going to be a good day for flying or not. This is a fascinating subject and an absolute must for anyone interested in XC flying. It's on Thursday 29th May in the Wellington as usual – we'll start the talk at around 8:30. Don't miss it!

For the June meeting, we will be discussing the success or failure of our new marshalling system at the Dyke. Has it been a success or a dismal failure so far? Can we improve on it? Do you prefer the new or the old system? We will also be talking about flying some of our other sites and how our airmanship can be improved in our crowded skies. Bring along your enthusiasm and ideas – Thursday June 26th in the Wellington, start time same as always.

London Meeting

These are held at the Blue Post in Newman Street, just off Tottenham Court Road, London. It is an excellent venue (a large room over the pub with its own bar). Future meetings will be on the last Monday of every month (except May and August bank holidays – they will be a week earlier). Contact Dave Roberts on 07867 537 957 for further details.

SKYGYPSY Paragliding



Paragliding Holidays in Europe, Coaching Trips in the UK & Pilot Theory Courses.



Skygypsy Holidays For 2003

Alicante, Spain in May – 16th to 30th

Obviously, we're all out there now, I'm afraid you missed out on this one - think of us all having fun.

Anney, France in July – 11th to the 18th

Anney is the paragliding Mecca of Europe. This is where the Sup-air factory is based and where everyone wants to fly. The life and surrounding scenery is beautiful, it has to be seen - simply breathtaking. We'll fly to Geneva where we'll be picked up by our guide and collect our rental cars. Then it's about an hours drive to our accommodation.

As it's summer there will be two prices for this trip, one for staying in B&B and one for camping. The price will be around £550 for B&B and £395 for camping, but this is to be confirmed. If you want to join us, then I will need a £200 deposit by the 1st of June.

St. Hilaire, France in September – 17th to the 21st

This is to visit the Coupe Ice festival. My intention is to go out on the evening of the 17th, that way you only need to take two days holiday off work. The price will be around £450 for B&B, and £300 for camping, but this is to be confirmed. If you want to join us, then I will need a £200 deposit by the 1st of July.

Alicante, Spain in October – 17th to the 31st

This is the usual repeat of the May trip.

If you want to join us, then I will need a £200 deposit by the 1st of August so I can get your flight and travel insurance. The balance will be payable by September 13th.

Australia & New Zealand in December – 28th November to 12th December

More details will be posted soon. Cost should be around £1400 - £1600 for two weeks, but is to be confirmed once all the details have been finalised - watch this space.

Pilot Course

Check out the details on my new 'Pilot' courses on the website. They're great value; you get a lot for your money.

For more information take a look at www.skygypsy.co.uk or email me at trevor@skygypsy.co.uk. If on internet? The phone me on 07787 827754.

Trevor McLoughlin
BHPA Senior Instructor
SHOC: Chief Coach

The dates of the next meetings are as follows :-

30th June 2003
28th July 2003
18th August 2003
29th September 2003
27th October 2003
24th November 2003

Hogging Thermals

I appear to have had some success at getting more of you through your pilot rating and keen to fly XC. Unfortunately, this has a downside: It's up to you to find a thermal – one of your own! Please stop diving into the same thermal as our regular XC hounds. These guys have been doing this for years; please ask them for advice by all means, I'm sure they'll be glad to give it. However, **STOP CROWDING THEM OUT!** Look for lift by using your eyes; look for birds circling, movement in the trees, students doing top to bottoms getting lift etc. What skill are you developing if you simply follow everyone else like a lovesick lemming? I'm not saying don't join other people in thermals, but **DO** allow them to climb a bit and get in underneath them. **Don't** make it harder for them to climb out. If you're one of these offenders, may the fleas of a thousand camels infest your armpits!

Pilot Lectures & Exams

A rather embarrassed and sheepish looking pilot told me on the hill the other day, that he would be re-sitting his 'Pilot' paper with Steve Purdie at Airworks, rather than with me on the 15th. Please guys; don't feel embarrassed about this sort of thing. Remember I do these Pilot Lectures and exam evenings for you, not for me. If schools and other people are going to follow my example – bloody marvellous!

All I want to see is you; my friends, students and fellow pilots improve your knowledge and skill levels. I started doing these lectures years ago because no one else could be bothered – the more people that help me to achieve this goal, the better.

For those of you that have asked me when I'll be doing my next series, just email me to let me know that you're interested and once there are enough of you I'll arrange some more dates. I imagine late summer would be a good time, maybe sometime around October or November – it's up to you.

Congratulations

To the following people who have just passed their 'Pilot' exam:

Hang Gliding - Neil Ewins

Paragliding - Tim Donald, David Wright, David Webb and Trevor Hurt.

* The British Club Challenge – 2003 *



Hang Gliding teams needed:

This is a competition amongst UK clubs for experienced & non-experienced pilots, to put their skills against each other while furthering their own potential... Even though competitive, it is also about having some fun, learning from experienced pilots, and team playing - which altogether makes the sport more enjoyable. So - don't be that hang-glider pilot left on the hill, come and satisfy your cross country desires!! Take up the airwave challenge and do something for your club. You don't have to be pilot rated...



“...The Southern Hang Gliding Club needs you!”

Dates:

Preliminary rounds to be completed by:	2nd June 2003
Semis to be held on weekend beginning:	28th June 2003
Finals to be held on the weekend beginning:	23rd August 2003.

Please email paul@homemaintenance.co.uk to enter - giving us your full name and contact tel. number.

Alternatively you can call Paul or Sara on 01273 401179 or 07957 207 152.

Thanks and Regards,

Paul Cryer.

Competitions Officer

For more info – check out: www.ukbcc.co.uk



So You wanna tow eh?

Following a recent meeting in the SHGC a proposal was made to start a winch tow group, along similar lines to the successful aero tow group.

Having been involved in tow groups I thought I would put down some jottings to hopefully answer those nagging questions that you may have in regard to this “alternative” method of getting airborne. If you have any further questions regarding towing just drop me a line on the forum or via Windssock, and if I cant tell you the answer I “know a man who can”. Although this article is written from a paragliding standpoint (my area of experience), there is no reason why the information is also not pertinent to hang gliding.

Why tow?

Overcrowding 1 – Ever thought “wouldn’t it be nice to take off and not have to worry about those thirty other gliders flying towards you”.

Yes I’m sure you are all aware of the overcrowding issue on SHGC sites. In towing there will usually be between 1-4 gliders in the air at any one time (although I have heard of more). How? Well there are two tow lines operated one after the other, but if people have stayed up they are now thermalling way above you or they have gone XC.

Overcrowding 2 – Ever thought “wouldn’t it be nice to core into a thermal and not have to worry about the Zoo descending on me”. The Zoo just ain’t gonna be there...your very own thermal, now how much is that worth?

Low airtime? – The beauty with tow is that you usually have anything between 500-1000 ft of clear airspace....no hills to hit, no other gliders...ideal for building confidence/trying new techniques with a safety barrier. Some tow schools can have their Day 1 students doing 360o turns, every seen that in a hill training school?

More flying (Hooray!) – Nil wind day? Sitting on the hill? Don’t wanna risk trying to catch a thermal with only 400ft Max to find it? Can’t face the walk up?

The alternative is to release at 1000ft and if you miss out land where you took off from...simple eh? And not one bead of sweat!

Social – Ok not what we are in the sport for, BUT, some of the best flying days I have had I’ve not flown on just helped others, had a good laugh (often at my expense) and gone to the pub afterwards.

Accuracy practise – Ever wished that you could land exactly where you want to, rather than drifting in somewhere near your landing spot. Watch regular tow pilots, they’ll land almost to the cm of their desired spot...Why? Well usually tow groups have mini “nearest to the spot” competitions each day by throwing a pound in the pot, and when moneys riding on it everybody becomes competitive!



Teamwork – Wing tipping for somebody makes launching in nil wind easy, although with those cell openings (Tow canopy) the glider almost launches itself!

How do I get started?

If you are Club Pilot rated or above you will need to do a conversion course. This will usually take a day and will involve learning those skills that are not taught as part of a hill pilot's syllabus. The basic areas covered are: -

Pre-Flight- Laying out you canopy/checking for line overs, wing tipping for others, the use of weak links, commands used between pilot and winchman.

Launches –Forward/Alpine launches, when was the last time you practiced these? Forward/Alpine are only used as to try a reverse could lead to a number of dangers including a tow yoke getting caught!

Post Take off – Keeping you canopy “on-line” when on tow (this will maximize the height attained), releasing etc. This will also “iron out” any bad habits you may have developed (Hill pilots often apply brake to lift off, this can cause a line brake).

Emergencies – What to do in a line brake situation, What to do in a release jam.....and of course plenty of PLF's (the best back protector money can buy!).

Tasks – Completion of basic flying tasks (tow's to various heights, 90o/180o/360o turns, landing within designated areas and demonstration of emergency skills)

The cost of a conversion course will be approximately £60, this will include your first 10 tow's (additional tows to finish tasks are approx £3 each).

The beauty of a conversion is that to get your rating will only involve the signing off tasks, NO EXAM!

What will it cost me?

The initial cost of a conversion (see above for details) will be around £60. Once rated the only equipment needed is a tow yoke (£35-40) and the cost of tow's (£3-4).

In addition to this will be your time if you operate as part of a group/syndicate. In this case people will expect you to help unpacking/packing up at the beginning/end of the day, and also retrieving lines (usually with a motorbike).



Launching a Hill flying canopy – a lightweight release is used at the pilot's end (the release loop can be seen on the pilots right-hand side). Note, a weak link is fitted between the release and the tow line

What will it cost the club/group?

An initial outlay for a Koch static winch is about £4000 (second hand, about £2000).
The cost of a suitable site? The club rents hill sites for between £600-1000 per year.
The petrol for a day usually runs to about £30.

What is involved in a typical Tow day?

People will usually gather at the equipment store between 8-10 AM (depending on how keen they are), and arrange who will take what equipment, and where.

Once on site, launch/winch positioning is decided (allowing for changes in wind direction) and equipment is checked/fueled up.

A test flight is then performed (usually by the most experienced pilot) and feedback given to the group in a short briefing. This can also cover any hazards to be avoided.

The group then divides their labour, and flying proper gets started. A manifest is then kept of every flight. At the end of the day this is tallied up, and people pay up. In a good day you can usually get about 70-80 tows in.

How much time is dedicated to each aspect of this procedure is dependent on how much people "gas" and how willing they are to get involved. Towing is all about TEAM WORK, if you are not altruistic forget it, people will soon tire of the selfish and you will be made to feel most unwelcome.

A good tow site?

The ideal site would be as open as possible (no rotor), at least 1000ft to allow for a decent tow, open to all wind directions, clear of hazards (pylons/overhead cables, water etc), self draining so allowing operation throughout the wetter months of the year and cheap. Often some compromises will have to be made!

It has been suggested that a static winch could be sited on top of the downs. This has a number of advantages: self-draining, great height potential i.e. 1000ft tow plus hill height. The disadvantages: access at some sites, exclusion of/danger to the general public.

A good winch?

The towing vehicle could take one of three forms:-

A fixed line behind a vehicle (usually a 4 wheel drive) with a tensiometer at the vehicle end, release at both ends and a weak link. Advantage=low cost of set up, disadvantage= longer field needed.

A static winch (imagine an engine in a frame with two drums of cable where the wheels would be). The drums usually pull in the cable, but can pay out. Advantage= More controlled tow, disadvantage=initial cost and storage.

A pay out winch usually fixed to the back of a vehicle or boat. As the car pulls away the drum slowly pays out the cable. Advantage=Lower cost than static winch, disadvantage=reliant on vehicle and terrain.

The way forward?

Commercial operators – The nearest winch operation is Andy Shaw/Green Dragons (about 1 hr in the car from Brighton, probably the same once you have got out of London). He operates on most “flyable” Sundays throughout the year, and Saturday/Sunday (May onwards). In addition in the summer months Andy also offers Monday/Wednesday evenings. The advantage is that you wont have to organize yourself (although you will still be expected to “chip in” i.e. line collecting etc). The disadvantage is that your flying time/sites are prescribed by the location of the school

Volunteers!....Yep is no good waiting for others to organize it for you, it will never happen. If it were commercially viable for a local school to do it we would have a winch! For this to happen you will need to organize:-

1. A group together to get their tow rating.
2. Individuals willing to get their winch operators license.
3. A site/sites
4. A winch (This is easy, the club has offered the set-up costs on many occasions).
5. A senior tow coach?

Sounds like a lot, but divided between many hands it could be light work!

The advantages – See Why tow? The disadvantages – a little effort/time/organization....but very little money on your part!

Sussex Hang Gliding & Paragliding

Tollgate, Beddingham, Nr Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 6JZ
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APCO ALLEGRA 85 - 105 Kg. DHV 1/2 rigged. One owner. Logged history. **£690** ono. Contact Ian Grayland 01323 720977 or 07977 910645. You can't get more performance from a 1/2 at any price - ask any Allegra owner, or look up the next time you are flying.

Apco Santana 28 85-110kg including Sky Systems Probe harness, Metamorfoosi Conair reserve, helmet and various maps & books etc. less than 5 hours use and full service in May 02 by Sky Systems. Cost in excess of £2,500 will accept **£1,000**. Had to give up paragliding due to footballing injury! Tel 01444 254189 or email s.mathews@emb.co.uk

"Windtech" Serak DHV 1-2. Small 70 – 90 Kg. Blue & White. Immaculate condition. Almost brand new. Less than three hours. **£1500** Contact Annie on 01273 812331 or 07976 706056

ITV Agena 28. Medium size, suite 75-85 Kg. Good condition, with harness. £350 Steve 01273 770166

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Clutter Clearance ITV Merak 27 (Small) - DHV 2 Paraglider. All up weight 70 - 80 kg. Purple & Yellow. £250. **Airwave Fusion** (Small) - DHV 2 Paraglider. All up weight 65 - 90 kg. Blue.

Excellent condition. £375 Windtech Paragliding Harness. Excellent back protection. Sup Air screw lock carabiners. Side mounted reserve pocket. Excellent condition. £190. Skyline Flying Suit. Unused. Black. Medium/Large. Fully insulated. £100. Contact: Laurence Tel. 07949 088863

Ailes de K Cruisair 29, DHV 1-2/12. A quality swiss paraglider, 80 – 100 kg all up weight range (naked! Weight + 15 – 20 kg.. or 12 stone and you will be bang in the middle of the range) Still crispy (20 Hrs max) £400 o.n.o. **Ailes de K** First seat harness with auto buckles and reserve bridle, excellent condition.

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Dune Du Pyla, near Bordeaux, France. August/September 2003

Suitable for all levels of Pilot, even complete beginners (equipment is provided for those without). Based at the spectacular Dune du Pyla in Western France near Bordeaux, this trip is designed to give an easy introduction to beginners and easy hour-building soaring to more experienced pilots - the perfect location to tick off some of those CP tasks! With the superb beach and sea below, and accommodation right next to the flying base, this can be a great option for non-flying partners or even as a mixed beach/touring and flying vacation.

ONLY A FEW SPACES LEFT FOR THE FOLLOWING DATES:

August 31st – September 7th, September 7th -14th, September 14th - 21st
More info on this trip can be found at: <http://www.skysystems.co.uk/dunes.htm>

Annecy / St. Hilaire Festival 2003. 15 to 22 September 2003

A return to some high Alpine adventure! We will be based in a traditional Savoyard house, with full catering on site, local guiding in the superb Annecy region, with opportunities for some really big flights and skill-building. The course will be tailored to your abilities - you will need to be a proficient post-CP for this holiday.

Annecy is the perfect base for exploring other famous Alpine flying sites such as Chamonix and Mieussy.

Trip price includes accommodation, meals, packed lunches, fly guiding, pickups from Geneva airport.

This Monday to Monday trip includes the famous St Hilaire Festival which is a short drive away. This is a great opportunity to witness the spectacular "masquerade" flying and film festival at one of the biggest free-flying meetings in the world!

More info on this trip can be found at: <http://www.skysystems.co.uk/alps.htm>

Greece / Olympus 8 to 15 November 2003

A return to Greece, this time at a brand new location for us at Thesaloniki ... mellow flying and an ideal holiday for non-flying partners! Sea and Sun!

More info on this trip can be found at: <http://www.skysystems.co.uk/greece.htm>

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