

# Windsock

The Magazine of the Southern Hang Gliding Club

## The Windsock Arises!

Welcome back to Windsock after a few years absence. The format is new and we have a few new contributors. I hope to bring you a bit of everything – news, inspiration, piloting skills and even an agony uncle. Thanks to all contributors to this June edition. I hope you like it. If you do - then please send me your articles. If you don't – then please send me your articles.



Simon Phipps

## In this edition

**Johnny Carr** talks about his record breaking flight from the Dyke.

**Rob Chisholm** of **Freeflight** shares his secrets for success when psyching his students up for their first XC's

**Carlo Borsattino** from **Flybubble** inspires us ready for the summer with tales of an epic XC

**Simon Phipps** has a mini adventure in the Alps

**John Young** tells tales of terror following equipment failure at 2000ft

**John Turczak** tries some post-CP tandem instruction

Veteran Ace pilot '**Peregrine**' **Molehusband** gives the first in a series of articles giving his tips from the top.

**Ed Bewley** talks about life as the new sites officer

## Welcome back Windsock

Johnny Carr welcomes you to Windsock

It has been a long time since I have seen one so I am really looking forward to seeing Simon's first edition. I don't think he will be short of material as there is a lot going on within the club at the moment. There has been a lot of good flights in May including my out and return flight from the Dyke to Butser and back.



On another flight on my way towards Lydd I met a Paraglider looking like he or she was having a good time near Heathfield. It would be nice to see some articles about XC flights so please send them in to Simon so that we can all increase our knowledge of flying from the South Downs.

If your new to the sport why not send Simon a story of your first flights, we were all where you are now and remember how exciting it was to fly for the first time.

Johnny

# Sites Officer report

**Ed Bewley gives his first report from the Committee**



SHGC Sites Officer: a grand title, but apparently there is no salary, no pension and not even an OBE. Why would anyone want a job like this? Further enquiry confirms that indeed nobody does, and hence the throbbing vacancy. Lack of qualification seems to be no barrier; I have never flown Ditchling, and only once top-landed at Truleigh because there was no other option available. I have learned the hard way about the hazards at most of the other sites, and do not have the levels of skill that would allow me to give others the benefit of my superior knowledge. Perhaps because of this, I can see, from the perspective of the average pilot, that keeping our sites ours and keeping our sites safe are two of the most important things that we must focus on as a flying community. If we have time and energy after doing that, then looking for new sites is probably desirable.

The main reason that persuaded me to be involved in this is the credible assertion by the Committee members that I would be helped and supported by those who knew the history and characters associated with the sites, and who would be available to assist when needed. In short, I would not be alone. David Webb and Chris Aegerter in particular have proved that this is indeed the case, and have been most helpful in making sure that I have all the relevant information to start off with.

I started paragliding in 2003 in Sussex, having moved down from Cumbria. I retired from the CAA in 2009, having spent most of my working life in aviation as a pilot, flying a variety of aircraft from the Trident 3 at Heathrow to the Britten-Norman Islander in Orkney. I still do some consultancy work in safety regulation, which takes me to countries the names of which tend to end in "-stan". I have a house in Lewes, my wife has a house in London and we spend time in both, trying to arrange to be in Sussex when it is flyable. I am also a member of the Cumbria Soaring Club, and try to get there for the 3.5 days a year when it is not raining or blowing a gale. They have a couple of excellent Sites Officers who are always around and extremely helpful: excellent role models.

My aim is initially to spend time getting to know the sites and the people associated with them in much more detail, and making sure that all the site information is complete and up to date. Thereafter, I hope to develop a good working relationship with the landowners and tenant farmers, and to keep them aware of our concerns and interests while reassuring them that we understand theirs.

There are other groups to consider as well, in particular the other users of the Downs for leisure and recreation. We have no more and no less right to recognition and tolerance of our activities than they have, and it behoves us to remember that some of them indulge in activities even more expensive and hazardous than our own (I'm thinking specifically of horse riding). If we expect equestrians to tolerate us, we should treat them with the respect and consideration due to any user of the Downs and especially those who share the label of participation in an "extreme" activity. One of the delights of unpowered flying for me is the lack of noise, and it can be easy to forget that that many of those rambling or running on the Downs are escaping the stress and noise of urban life, and that we can be a source of annoying sound if we are thoughtless and yell at each other in the air or on the ground. But this is beginning to sound like a sermon, and the Committee did not issue me with a dog-collar, so I'll get back to what I hope to be doing over the next year.

A good relationship between the club and the schools is essential to safe flying, and I want to do my bit to promote this and build on the excellent work that the Committee has done on improving the induction process for new members by making sure that the sites information available is up to date, accessible, comprehensive and comprehensible. I'd welcome any feedback on the Sites Guide and any suggestions for how the sites or the information about them could be improved.

Once I have made sure that I know all the site rules myself and made sure that I am following them I shall feel in a position to gently remind others who may appear to be using outdated information of the latest wisdom, though I certainly don't want to spend my time being a policeperson. The rules are generally there for reasons of safety, and while they should be observed, it does not mean that they cannot be questioned. If you think a rule is inappropriate, please let me know, and I'll find out why it exists. Very often there is a less-than-obvious historical reason for rules that is known only by the Elders!

If there is any time left, I should like to follow up the possibility of new sites, especially one that could fill the westerly gap in the wind-rose. But don't expect miracles, because my predecessors have been searching for years.

# Bits and pieces

## **Southern Club mourns the death of Paul Millmore**

It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of Paul Millmore recently. As the '70s welcomed the early days of hang gliding, with it came the inevitable problems with landowners and others with an interest in the South Downs. Paul was closely involved with the South Downs in his work and he was one of the main voices calling for the creation of a South Downs National Park. Throughout the '70s and '80s we were incredibly lucky to have such an influential campaigner as Paul in favour of hang gliding. Without Paul we may not be flying the Dyke today. Johnny Carr said "Paul was one of our first true friends and a very nice man. In the early days he was instrumental in negotiating with the Council on our behalf. He fought our corner on numerous occasions to allow us to use the sites we now take for granted."

## **Get up to date**

Please check your personal details on the SHCG website and update them as necessary. Remember to put on a nice photograph as it's a laugh for the rest of us to see what you looked like twenty years ago when you still had hair (you know who you are).

## **Thermalling convention**

There was a request at the AGM to reconsider the right-hand 360 rule. There has now also been a request to reconsider the conventions regarding thermalling & ridge soaring gliders. The problem seems to be one or two pilots who disregard club rules, and thermal left. In nearly 40 years, the thermal right rule has never been challenged on safety grounds. What should we be doing - making it a 'thermal left' rule, or a free for all?

# Recommended reading during the great drought

## **Ed Bewley gives a few reminders to help keep our sites safe**

While the drought begins to bite, with rain beating on the windows and wind rattling the roof tiles, do take a minute to read the eco-thriller "How to Protect our Sites", on page 7 of the SHGC Sites Guide. Like all ancient wisdom, it is mostly common sense, but worth a read nonetheless.

And if you want more of the same after that, here are some modern mantras to meditate upon:

- Please keep the gate to Caburn car park locked whenever there is no imminent movement of vehicles or people in or out of the field. It is much easier to keep non-members out than explain to them why they should not be in!
- Remember that parking in front of Canadian gates (bits of fence that can be opened to move livestock in and out) can cause agricultural high blood pressure;
- It is not only what we do at the site that can upset people, but how we get there. The road from the A27 to Bo Peep is used by horse riders and small children live in some of the cottages adjacent to the road, so, however keen you are to get airborne, drive at a sensible speed for the road and conditions;
- And on the subject of horses, remember that many sites, particularly Firle and Bo Peep, are close to Bridle Ways, and for some reason riders object to being catapulted from their saddles when their mount shies at an unexpected glider inflation or approach.

# Terror at 2,000ft

John Young tells about a battle with the elements at the Dyke

I was under a big cloud street so I moved out to the edge at full speed, and then I felt something was wrong. I looked up to see four ribs had collapsed. As I was looking at it another three collapsed, so all seven ribs have gone on the right hand side now. It was making a horrible noise like a sail banging on a boat. The ribs are hinged in the middle and have a wire running through all of them. You pull the wire tight then anchor at the wing tip with Velcro - it was this Velcro that has come off. At this point the glider almost tucked. I brought it back then it went again. The tail plane on the back was doing its job, I could hear it bashing against the keel, and I looked over to the wing tip and noticed the aluminium tip strut that stops the glider from tucking was floating around in the sail. I slid my hand down to feel my reserve handle but had no intentions of using it - not yet. All future options would be gone. I've got to slow the glider up, so I pulled the flaps down, which stopped the trailing edge moving towards the back of the leading edge, I then opened the harness to fill it with air, hands on uprights then fly out to some blue sky.



This is not too bad compared to what I've been through, apart from the rhinoceros running up and down on my right wing. While I am high I'll see just what the glider can do, I don't want to 360 down in sink with the sail flapping so much it caused a shuddering throughout the glider, can't afford to have it side slip. I just started to think about landing options, when I discovered I can't turn right, not a jot, it's getting to be like the Apollo 13 with one problem after another. At least I'm not running out of oxygen yet (*Ed - and you don't look like Tom Hanks*)! There's a slot in the sail which allows an arm to come up to push the spoiler up. The sail has moved so much the slot is now 6" away from the arm, so no right turns. Things have been happening very quickly up until now; I'm still at 1,500ft so I can now think about landing. There was only two other hangies and they were having a tea break. No paragliders flying as it's too windy. The way I see it I have 3 choice's: I can land down the bottom field, in the paddock, or the big field behind the paddock. Landing down the bottom is dodgy with a small square patch behind the barn. The top field behind the paddock might get rotor behind trees/ fort, plus I've never landed there before. I got the collywobbles



thinking about those two fields and you should always listen to the old collywobbles. So its the paddock then, the only place I feel happy about landing, I'm at 800ft and going round for a dummy run, I came along the north face to the bowl turned and crossed the middle of the paddock, like it or not I'll be down there next time round. No more dummy runs, I fly over the modellers bowl out to the road adjusting height as I go, getting to the north face with 130ft.

I can't go round the back of the paddock and come in square because if the glider turns a bit too much left I wouldn't get it back, I could have hit the fort, so I came into the paddock from the side and started heading for the pub, always needing to turn left. I'm down to 10ft now heading for

the stile, around a bit more, down to 3ft now, pushing out into wind, I've landed, "YES"! Right in the middle of the paddock, been looking at that spot for the last 1,000ft. I started to walk over to park the glider, feeling happy with the outcome, when completely out of the blue I burst into tears!

# Johnny Carr – record breaker

**Johnny shatters UK out and return record.**

Many of you know me as the bloke on the hill that's been flying for ever yet still comes back for more. Yes I have been flying since 1974 and seen pilots come and go, I guess hang gliding is in my blood but don't be fooled by that enthusiasm I do sometimes question why I still do it. In my younger days if I missed a good day due to work commitments I would get a knotted stomach and almost have a breakdown over it. That does not happen any more in fact I find it easy to talk myself out of going flying.

I love the British competition scene and the pilots I meet; I get encouraged by the young keen pilots because I see in them a bit of myself when I was their age. You are probably thinking what is this to do with the out and return record I have just broken. Hang in there - it will become apparent. As I said, I often talk myself out of flying. It's easy to do that in the winter months not least because it's bloody cold or I have lots of house work to do. Feeble excuses I know. That's why I do worry sometimes that I am losing the passion that I have for flying. Then I go to the first comp of the year, away from all the pressures of home and work and get the cr-p kicked out of me by the dedicated pilots. It's then I realise that I really do want to do well as a pilot and the only way I can do that is to get more airtime and push myself to go out and do challenging flights to practice. We are leading up the out and return flight.

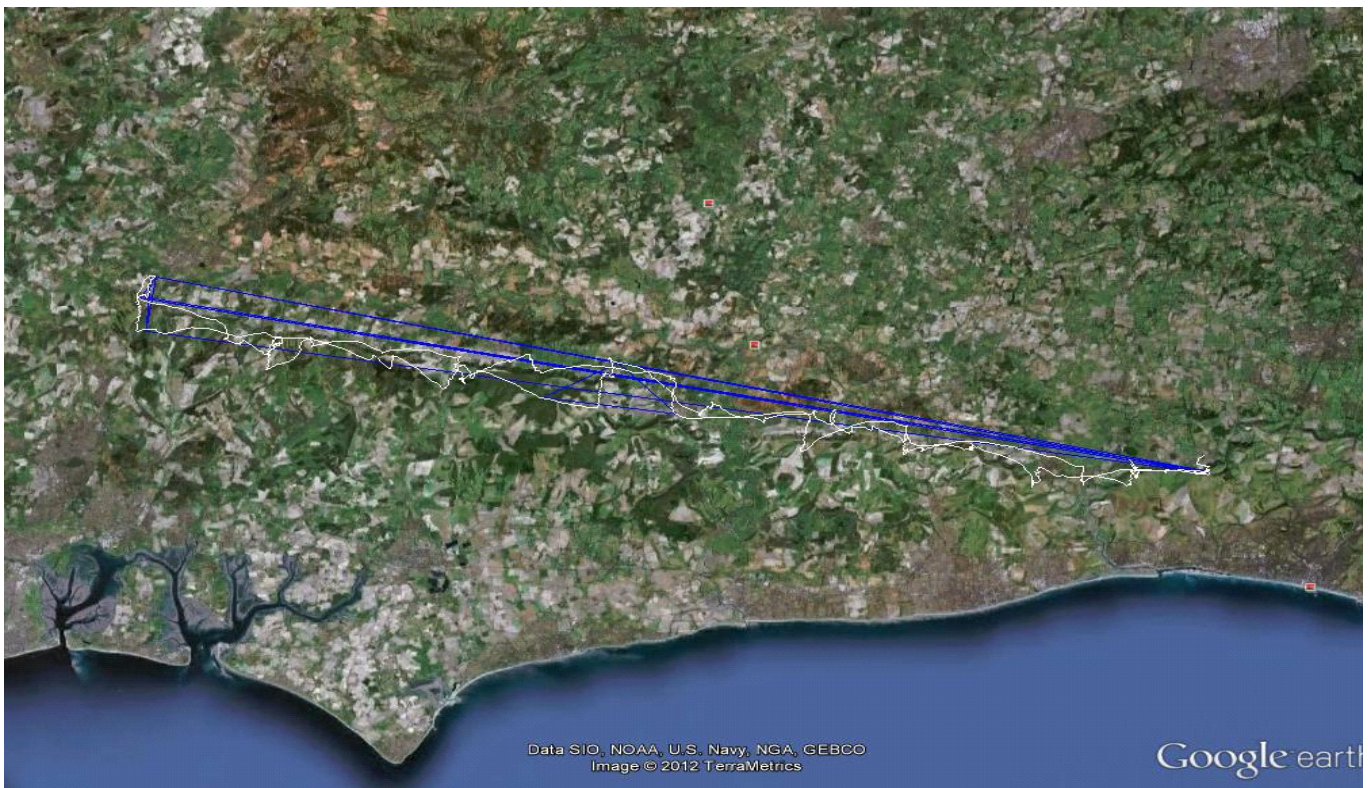
I discussed with my good mate Dave Matthews about loading some local waypoints into my GPS, which he very kindly sent me through and told me how to download them via GPS dump. The forecast for Saturday the 12th and Sunday the 13th of May looked cracking so my partner Fran and I pledged we would go out both days and I would practice and she would retrieve. Saturday dawned blue and had all the feelings of a good day, the glider and car was loaded the night before so I had no excuse to be late. We set off for the Dyke and arrived to see some faces not seen for a while. Ron Richardson was there, Dave Matthews was nearly rigged (well he does live at the bottom of the hill) and Cookie was rigged. We were talking about the possibility of an out and return flight as the wind was NNW. Dave was in the air pretty quick as was Ron. Stevie Cook was long gone (probably miles away by now). I set my route in the GPS to Butser Hill and back to the Dyke it said 54k each way. I had reservations about it as it was pretty windy.

I noticed when I was flying that my altitudes seemed all wrong I felt as if I was a lot higher than my altimeter was telling me. I couldn't handle the thought of attempting a big flight and not be sure of my altitude so I flew back to the Dyke and top landed. Sure enough my altimeter was reading -230 instead of +700. I corrected it and took off again. I could hear Dave Matthews say he was at Parham and wondering what to do as it looked bluer towards the west. I bit the bullet and headed for a cloud over Steyning and was relieved that it worked. I pushed on towards Parham gliding club taking another thermal or two on the way. Suddenly a sailplane appeared underneath me with the pilot all excited and waving frantically, he pointed forward and shot off and soon pulled up to show me a climb. I guessed correctly it was the one and only Will Greenwood as I watched him glide off into the distance. I climbed to just under 5000ft. Cloud base was just under 6000 as I kept under 5500' and never allowed myself to go to cloud base. Any inkling that Will Greenwood may have read my mind and mark the thermals all the way to Butser were soon dashed when he disappeared from view. I glided off towards Graffham where I spotted a rigid circling. The pilot was very low and eventually had to land. Although I encountered weak lift here, I hung around for quite a while before it developed into a nice thermal and allowed me to push on. I could see Harting in the distance and aware that the airspace drops down to 4500' before there I had to keep an eye on my altitude. The sky by now was looking better where I had just come from and less clouds on route to Butser.

I knew that if I could get to Butser and get up the flight back looked possible. I headed over the Harting launch site to see a bunch of gliders rigged on top, someone scratching on the ridge and someone in the bottom landing field. I worked a few bits of weak lift but had to keep an eye on my altitude as airspace is 4500. I am now at about 4000 or just under and the thermal is weak so I pushed on towards Butser a long glide and getting lower and lower I arrived on the north facing slope about 200 ft. hundred feet above the top. The sun was blazing down but no thermal. I had just flown through a lot of sink and was reluctant to turn round and head

back. Instead I headed for a cloud upwind of the hill to the west of the A3. I was very low and I knew that if it didn't work I was down. I looked at the landing options and undid the zip on my harness ready. My vario started to bleep and I said 'please God get me out of here'. The lift was really weak and it felt like it was going to be one of those thermals that tease you into thinking you will get up - but if you make one false turn you will lose it and go down. I glanced out the corner of my eye and saw a Swallow hunting for insects below. I felt a little more reassured. The lift increased and was positively going up during the 360 turns.

I concentrated on picking the right moment to re-zip the harness so that I could concentrate on the thermal even more and slowly climbed out. I was so relieved to see the gorge at Butser with the A3 going through it getting smaller and smaller. I climbed to about 5000' and glided back to Harting. A king post glider with a pink leading edge was thermalling below me. I later found out it was Mark Bennett on his pink and grey Scandal (that Scandal may even have belonged to me at one time). I joined the thermal and climbed for a while before setting off again saying goodbye to Harting for the last time. I headed off north east to the front of the downs as the sky was starting to look pretty good now. I topped up a few hundred feet further along the ridge and headed east towards Cocking where I found my next climb. I was not taking any chances at this stage of the flight. I was looking for any signs of convergence that may be rushing in which could cause me problems nearer the Dyke but all was looking good. I took a climb that drifted me towards Bury and then I glided towards Parham gliding club where I took another climb. I am now feeling nervous as I am aware that I am 2 thermals away from breaking the British record. I want to shout it over the radio but thought 'no don't put the kiss of death on the flight', I'd wait and see if I get up on the next climb which was at Storrington. It worked and as I was climbing I could see a cloud over Stenning the last stepping stone to home. I radioed in to Fran to say that if I get up under this cloud I would have done something special and broken the record. The climb was weak but it was going up. I milked it but I was not very high, my Compeo was saying I needed 10 to 1 to make it. This seemed like a no-brainer but with the record at stake I searched to find a couple of hundred feet more and set off as the thermal had died. Information was getting to me that nothing was happening at the Dyke and pilots were struggling to stay up. I could see 2 paraglider's between Truleigh hill and the Dyke going down. I was getting drilled in severe sink and my Compeo said I was gliding at 9.8 to 1 across the ground. I hunched in and made myself as streamlined as possible and glided the 7km's into what felt like a headwind and arrived at the Dyke with just enough height to top land, which I failed to do. I overshot the top landing. I tried to stay up on the north east face as this was the only option to get another chance at top landing.



I eventually landed 4 hours 33m after launching, un-elegantly at the bottom totally exhausted, but wow what a day.

Glider:- Airborne Rev. 13.5  
Harness:- Rotor  
Pilot:- Johnny

# Pilotage Masterclass

Veteran member and Ace pilot Freddy 'Peregrine' Molehusband gives advice on how to be a better pilot

## Top tip 1:- How to untangle from bushes

You might have read my articles on how to thermal to cloudbase in all weather conditions, planning your XC from Newhaven to John O'Groats, which side of the cloud to fly to get lift to 20,000ft and how to deflate your glider straight into the bag. However it's about time you learned more practical pilotological skills so I will make a start with one close to everyone's heart – untangling.

Demonstration of an intermediate untangle at the Dyke bowl



Untangling days normally start with you feeling very pleased about being such a hotshot pilot. The pre-flight plan is to get to cloudbase even earlier than Carlo and probably land early at Deal. If it's a really good day then you might soar the side of the Newhaven - Dieppe ferry to France. In reality you probably waddle about in the 'down bits' near to the thermal everyone else is in then land somewhere you didn't plan on. This is usually followed by a considerable time spent unwrapping your lines from any combination of brambles, shrubs, thorny things, trees and lumps of grass. To help decide on your strategy for getting back in the air, top experts have developed a series of helpful tactics. Use the pneumonic **PRATT** to help you remember them.



Put aside 45 minutes for the untangle. Many rips and torn lines are caused by the 'pilot' hurrying. Take your time and have a bit of patience. You might miss a bit of flying but your wing will be in better condition for next time. If it takes less than 45 minutes then consider it a good result

Really make an effort not to look up. About half the pilots will be at cloudbase and the other half are on the way up too. That's where you should be. You will be in a rush to untangle and end up sweaty and dehydrated with a torn glider.

'Ave a look at where your lines are stuck. If it's a thorny thing then you need to patiently move lines one at a time to one side of the plantation. If you rush things you will end up with more tangles. For larger bushes and trees it might be easier to disconnect the harness and untangle one side at a time. You can use a fair bit of force on the lines but if they get caught you can tear the sheathing. In any case they are not expensive to replace (plug Loft). The actual wing can slide over thorns if you pull the right way. If you are unlucky

and get a tear most things can be repaired fairly easily. One can become quite expert in fishing line stitches and sticky tape and I might well cover this in a later Masterclass,

Tell helpful passers-by that you don't want their help. They will rush things and tear your wing while telling you how well everyone else is doing. You will tell them about how well you did once but still end up feeling very inadequate. If you are at the Dyke you might be lucky enough to get the guy with the false leg to help you. Last time he did, it fell off when he was half way up the tree. I don't believe it landed on anyone's head that time.

Take time to plan where you intend to practice your new found skills.

High and Over is well suited to novice untangling. Here you will find lots of little thorny shrubs on the slope that hardly notice when you're flying. If you find yourself losing height here then it is probably quicker to bottom land and walk back up. The alternative is the gentlest of slope landings and you feel very pleased that you've saved yourself a walk up the hill. As the wing descends slowly to the ground you will notice the army of little thorny things around you, waiting patiently to catch your lines. These are especially designed to catch the maximum number of lines per thorn. Say goodbye the next 45 minutes but consider it good practice for you.

Newhaven is best for beginner/intermediate unwrapping while Beachy is for the more advanced. At Beachy the bushes look quite small and cute when you're scratching low over them. There will probably be some good looking students on the path below, out on a geography field trip for you to show off to. A momentary lack of lift/concentration leaves your feet on the ground but your wing just out of reach trapped by millions of thorns on bushes 8-10 foot high. During the retrieval numerous thorn tips will break off under your skin – just a little bit too deep to pick them out with a pin without drawing blood. Don't worry, they will work themselves out painlessly after two or three months once the infection has cleared.

The Dyke trees are for advanced/expert only. I have only limited experience here with only a 15ft tree tangle. If you're up for a real challenge, the modellers bowl has some of the tallest trees in the Northern hemisphere. You may be lucky enough to land in a tree less than four hundred foot high, but probably not. Every emergency service usually turns up for tree landings here, I think we even had a boat turn up at one, After the Fire Service has got you on the ground you can look up at your wing high in the stratosphere. You might as well spend the next 45 minutes looking at it because you won't be flying it any more.

# 25 km XC from Caburn

**Carlo Borsattino inspires us with the possibilities from one of our favourite sites**

The day after I returned from a week of epic flying in Croatia, and with a thousand things to do, the weather had its usual laugh and decided to look rather good for a cross country (XC) flight from Mount Caburn. I decided to put things off for a few hours and go for a fly...



After waiting around on the hill for a little while, taking photos of pilots ground handling on snow patches, things (i.e. thermals) started to happen and a few of us lobbed-off, climbing out in some of the nicest, smoothest conditions I have ever flown in anywhere in the world.

The visibility was unbelievable - probably due to the post frontal conditions and rather low pressure - and I got totally carried away taking loads of photos around launch. I flew over the edge of Lewes and then out front over the river, just taking photos - totally forgetting about the idea of going XC (which I am always keen to do) due to the INCREDIBLE visibility and stunning views.



I've been flying in this area since 1993, and the views were the best I have ever seen from Mount Caburn; the cloudscapes - which were rather on the large and over-developed side - added even more to the breathtaking skyscape. In fact, the only thing that was a bit disappointing is that the clouds down track were clearly getting too big, with precipitation (i.e. rain) falling down to the ground.

I got so carried away with admiring the views and taking photos that I lost the lift, whilst Tefal (Paul Andon) and Simon Steel carried on climbing, and I sunk out, ending up back down on launch once again. Damn. No problem, I thought, I'll just keep trying and I'll get back sup again.

It took me literally over 20 attempts to finally catch a climb that finally got me up high enough to go over the back and try for an XC. I kept watching the sky, looking for any signs of lift, seeing nothing very obvious except for the clouds which seemed to keep forming just too far away for us to be able to reach. I kept trying to reach them, getting very low, running back to the hill, landing half or two-thirds of the way down, ground handling the wing back up, and trying again... and again, and again, again, again, again... I was starting to get exhausted when finally I got a climb which got me up a bit, to then be able to push out further, get up a bit more, then push out further to reach the good looking clouds which were, as I thought, working well.

I drifted over the back, eventually getting near cloudbase (4500ft ASL) almost directly over my house in Ringmer. I then glided along the edge of a line of convergence lift, losing a little height along the way, picking up my next climb to near cloudbase over Laughton. I then glided to Heathfield, losing a lot of height along the way, and got my next climb near Heathfield. Typically, one minute I was scratching down low in masses of sink, then next I got a booming climb (averaging 4m/s) which I had to leave quickly to avoid going into the 3500ft airspace.



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I hung about near the edge of a cloud, and the 3500ft airspace, looking down track (towards Royal Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone, Ashford) at a line of big black clouds with lots of precipitation (rain, sleet & snow) falling down from them all the way to the ground, reaching across all the way into the 2500ft airspace, deciding what to do next. I remember thinking to myself: "I wonder if Tefal has been desperate enough to fly into that?" Yes, I heard later, he had been - landing near Headcorn, about 30 kms further on (and then getting an airplane retrieve the jammy sod).



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The decision I had was either: 1) Fly towards the big black precipitating clouds (BBPC); 2) Cut across to avoid the BBPC and fly into the 2500ft airspace (with cloudbase at 4500ft+; or 3) Try make the most of the sky that wasn't full of BBPC and was in the FL55 airspace. Unsurprisingly, I decided to go for no 3. But how to have the best flight possible? I decided to simply fly to wherever it was looking best and at the same time try and complete a triangle of out-and-return.



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I cross-into wind towards Hailsham, getting near Hellingly which was near the edge of the Sea Breeze Front (SBF); going any further would have meant flying into the blue - pretty certainly dead sea air (no thermals) and landing shortly afterwards. So I decided to head back towards Mount Caburn, pretty much straight into wind. Things, unsurprisingly, became a LOT harder at this point and I spent a while taking 3 steps forwards, 3 steps back, 3 steps forwards, 2 steps back, trying to use the SBF to aid my progress upwind, until I eventually ended up landing near Laughton, very tired and VERY happy! :-)

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# flybubble

PARAGLIDING

Team pilot Tracy tests the Gin Sprint Evo. Zillertal, Austria.

## Prepare the Virgins

Freeflight's CFI Rob Chisholm shares a few secrets on psyching up his students for their first XC

I cover many areas when preparing a Student for their First XC. The first thing I do is use the tandem as a training tool and make sure that we start on a site that is familiar to the student. No point in turning up in a completely alien environment to teach thermic XC. They will have enough to think about rather than worrying about top and bottom landings zones. Too much information overload! I use the tandem flight, while I have the controls, to explain, what is actually going through my mind and how I interact with the air flow. For me climbing in a thermal with a post CP student and sharing this knowledge is quite refreshing from teaching EP and CP as I can interact with the student without worrying about explaining the basics. For me it is very fulfilling and enjoyable and it rubs off on the student. It is all about building confidence. I quite often start with something easy like a small XC from the Southern Club's Devils Dyke site to the Carden Park Asda Supermarket. The Dyke takes a NW wind direction and here is an example of a typical flight from the site:

[http://www.freeflightbrighton.co.uk/Pages/Slide\\_Show/DD/Devils\\_Dyke.html](http://www.freeflightbrighton.co.uk/Pages/Slide_Show/DD/Devils_Dyke.html)

This is only a 6km flight and going this relatively short distance means that I can usually fit in two flights a day; doubling the teaching experience. Before the flight, I discuss the flight plan with the student, then we take off and I show the student why and when to leave the hill and eventually we arrive at the target location. I then repeat this again by both of us taking solo wings. This helps to reinforce what the student has learnt. If the student is not Pilot rated I normally take them on a tandem flight along the "Truleigh Run". We start on the Dyke and head West along the Truleigh ridge, over the power cables and arrive at the end just in front of the antennas. We then push out away from the lift band with the objective of catching thermals out the front. You don't have to wait for the thermals in the Spring/Summer this can be practiced even in December and here is an example:

[http://www.freeflightbrighton.co.uk/Pages/Slide\\_Show/Truleigh\\_ridge/Truleigh\\_Devis\\_Dyke.html](http://www.freeflightbrighton.co.uk/Pages/Slide_Show/Truleigh_ridge/Truleigh_Devis_Dyke.html)

What I am doing, with this exercise, is getting the student used to leaving the comfort of the ridge and ridge lift. If you push out front away from the ridge and the lift band and are unable to find a thermal you can always fly back to the ridge. As this is a downwind leg you arrive back at the ridge pretty quickly (watch out and keep an eye on your ground speed!). Whereas if you simply fly over the back you're going to use all your forward speed just to get back to the ridge. So for me pushing forwards out of the ridge lift and learning how to use thermals out front on tandem is no harder than swimming out on a surf board to where the waves are breaking! The problem for a student is that they cannot see the thermals and this is where the tandem really works. I point and say: "They are just in front of us. You see the swallows and swifts!" Students often cannot see what I see and then when I point it out eventually they see it and say "Oh yeah now I see them!" By this time the tandem trimmers are up all the way and I am getting my form drag down as much as I can. Once we are in the thermal it all becomes so much clearer and the post CP student can now relate to what I am talking about.

### The Importance of the Solo Flight

Once the tandem flight has been completed I try to get the student into his own wing straight after. This then allows for another session with me on the ground and then I talk to the student on the radio and become his eyes for picking out thermals whilst he repeats the exercise and pushes out from the ridge. My favourite site for doing this exercise is the Southern Club's South South Westerly site; Caburn. It has a large landing area and great thermal triggers out the front. Not too long ago I had the site to myself with Simon G and Dean B and on the day unusually it was working on an East at 4 mph! With no one in the way we were able to 180o and 360o to our hearts content. This is Dean B's flight pushing out over Glynde village:

[http://www.freeflightbrighton.co.uk/Pages/Gin\\_Evo\\_Sprint\\_Nova\\_factor.html](http://www.freeflightbrighton.co.uk/Pages/Gin_Evo_Sprint_Nova_factor.html)

The winds were light which meant we had plenty of speed (remember paragliders are so so so slow). There was no dynamic lift band with such a light wind and direction (Caburn is a South and South Westerly site) except for thermals which meant you could fly out and catch thermals and then make use of them. Which we did! XC is not so much about thinking distance its more about using what you have on the day and picking the site that suits you're flying skills. Above all there is a need to be focused on the flight and not having to worry about other air traffic is important. A mind that is focused with clear insight of what their goals are will have greater rewards and a far safer flight.

### Devils Dyke to Steyning Bowl

Recently I suggested a flight from Devils Dyke to Steyning Bowl to some post CP and Pilot rated flyers. I emailed them two days before with a possible flight plan to fly to Anningtons Ridge (a distance of 8km) and then beyond if we could. I asked them first to do some research using Google Earth and look at the way the land lies, determine how each fold in the hill faces in a Northerly and of course know where exactly the Annington ridge is! There is no point in just dribbling around in the air without a view of where you are actually flying to. That would be like getting in a car, drive around and then get the map out to work out a place to visit and then check the fuel gauge! To have planned ahead will save you time and give focus to your flight. This needs to be done several days in advance, whilst continuing to check the weather! I sent out an email two nights before and explained that we were to meet at Devils Dyke at a spot away from the other regular pilots. This way we would be calm and relaxed without the distraction of the "para talk on the hill". Above all we arrived early so no one felt rushed and had time to prepare. Thermals in a Northerly can jump up big time and I wanted to cross the gap from Truleigh to Steyning Bowl at an early stage before the winds picked up in the valley. So with a quick brief in the Devils Dyke car park and with a clear goal we set off. Keeping out the front of the ridge catching thermals was the way to go and crossing the gap between Trueligh and Steyning Bowl was the hardest part. Only JP followed. The others either turned back at the end of the Truleigh run or got caught out in the valley. JP and I arrived at Annington ridge with not a lot of height but managed to sit back, glide in and catch another thermal on the ridge and land out in the ample landing area. A pleasant walk into Steyning, then tea and a lift back to Devils Dyke from a friendly local followed by a debrief in the Devil Dyke car park. A great little XC! Above all the key elements to flying XC is start small, go through your flights and analyse your reasons why you made certain decisions and very important of all have fun and stay safe. Improve upon these short hop flights, never be in a rush, stay calm and focused so you can achieve realistic goals in you're flying career.

Rob Chisholm CFI for Freeflight paragliding  
FREEFLIGHT SPECIALISES IN ADVANCED PARAGLIDING TUITION  
"Keep it safe dudes!"

**If you want to build on your post - CP skills then give Rob a call on 01273 628793 or 07958 440519**

# Alternative Annecy

**Simon Phipps reports**

I messed up the timing of my leave from work so I missed the SHGC pilgrimage at the beginning of April. I settled for the end of April booking three weeks away in the passion wagon (if you see it rockin' – don't come knockin'). I heard the club trip was a bit washed out so I was hopeful that all the rain had gone by now. I booked an early tunnel and it poured down all the way to Dover. I did get some nice sunny spells on the journey but it rained even harder than the UK in parts. I took the auto route down to get on the hill a bit quicker but was shocked at the price. It cost around ninety euro's to use the motorway and in hindsight I would have taken the long route if I'd known.

I headed for the landing field at Doussard but all I saw was ground handling as it was too windy to fly. I spotted a GB car and spoke to the Ukrainian couple from Yorkshire inside. They were at the end of three weeks and the weather had been so bad that he was reduced to ground handling to relieve the boredom. I settled for a bike ride up to Plan Fait and back past Forclaz, Unfortunately the road was closed half way down due to a landslide. The workmen didn't mind me climbing over the mud to save the slog back up the mountain.



The road up to Forclaz

The only way around was over the barrier by a sheer drop. I still ended up to my knees in mud and had to stand in a freezing cold stream to wash my bottom half.

When I got back to the van there were a few flying at Plan Fait but it didn't seem worth the effort up again for a top to bottom. The weather was better the next afternoon although not many flew. I think everyone had talked themselves out of it as it had been bad for so long. I hitched up to takeoff and had a nice evening flight with just a couple of others.

After a few days I rumbled down to St Hillaire to meet a couple of hang glider pilot friends Andy and Tony. Strong winds grounded us for a couple of days but it was mostly hot and sunny. One afternoon we walked up the mountain behind St Hillaire and speedy Tony left us behind. I bottled out when the path turned into a near vertical scree slope but Tony was already at the top. He shouted that he was going along further but Andy and I went down. Chatting later at the bottom a local told me that no-one should be at the top today as there was avalanche warning and the weather was changing. Five hours later still no sign of Tony and the weather was now atrocious. We really didn't think he would survive so we called mountain rescue. We were just planning on who was going to tell his wife and how, when he turned up – shaken, stirred and tales of near death. Very lucky!

The next day it was time for some flying. You can top land at the car park in St Hillaire but if you go down you can get the funicular back up for 9 euro's.



I found the conditions here fairly rough at times but this wasn't as worrying as some of the other pilots. It seemed as if the norm was to show your non-flying mates how to inflate the wing by the car park then chuck them off the 2000ft launch and hope for the best. I was concerned about pilots just aiming for those doing quite well in the lift and assuming the more experienced pilot would get out of the way, After a bit I learned the trick was to look at the legs of the other pilots. If legs were crossed or in a cocoon harness then they were probably safe to be near, The worst ones were those with legs apart or swinging about in various forces with seemingly no idea what to do next. Cue to get out of the way!

We cycled up to the abandoned TB hospital one evening and flew over it the next. A fantastic building completely smashed up inside with every nickable bit nicked.



Great if your glider needs a wash.



I had to pick up Mrs P from Geneva after a couple of days so I stopped at Plan Fait en-route for a nice flight. Conditions good and cloudbase high.



After a few days sightseeing we went back to St Hillaire for more days flying then back to Annecy. The flying was classic Annecy with all routes open and flying up to around 8000ft. I had an unplanned landing at the base of La Tournette and had to walk up a bit for an otherwise uneventful take off. I was so hot that I took my flying suit off and planned just on flying to the landing field. I changed my mind when I was up and had another

couple of hours touring around.



I got sucked to the top in just shorts and tee-shirt and had to land when I got cold.

All in all it was a great trip with lots of hours clocked up. Flying in the Alps is a great place to go XC and practice all the theory about thermal flying. Go on - give it a go.



# Going the distance

John Turczak shares his experiences with the Flybubble Distance Learning Academy

Following on from the initial briefing by the Flybubble team several weeks ago I had been keenly watching RASP looking for a day that had good potential for getting high, wind in the correct direction and strong enough for the tandem flight. The 16th May looked like a good day for the Dyke, NW winds, right sort of strength, critical updraft height around 4000 ft.

The flight was booked and I met Greg at the Dyke around 9 am. Pilots were already in the air and it was starting to look thermic. Greg went over the plan for the day and what we could expect. We looked at the conditions, cloud formation, wind direction. Checked out the map and went over the general plan of action. With this all under control it was time to take to the air. The wind was strong and there was an inversion as a result of the cold night and this proved to be pinning quite a few pilots close to the hill.

Greg worked the ridge looking for any lift. Where we found it we would push out away from the hill. The aim was to get enough distance away from the hill so we could thermal without flying back over the hill too low. As we flew Greg pointed out cloud formations and would ask me what I saw, what I thought that meant in terms of the flight. Greg would also point out clouds approaching the hill get me to look at the direction they were travelling and work out the best approach for possible lift.

We worked the ridge repeating the procedure of looking for lift, push out from the ridge, test the strength, run back to the ridge if it was not enough. Meanwhile we could see a couple of pilots had broken through the inversion and were now getting an easier job of going up towards cloud base.

Greg spotted Carlo, and told me to watch where he was finding lift. We used other pilots as thermal markers ( and sink markers). The main things I learned from this stage of the flight is how to look at everything that can help identify thermals, to keep persisting despite the feeling of not going anywhere. To not get frustrated with the continual lift and sink and to keep pushing out looking for the lift away from the hill. The other thing Greg pointed out was using the full range of the speed system of the glider to make the most from the lift and sink.

All this persistence paid off. And we hit a decent thermal that went through the inversion layer. The other thing that was helpful was the way Greg worked the thermals. Lower down where the thermals were tighter Greg kept the wing tightly banked to work as close to the core as possible. When we got higher he eased off and widened the circle as the thermals spread out more. We topped out about 550 meters above take off. You can see from the flight profile the amount of time spent working the lower lift to get through the inversion.

Once we were at the top of the lift we wanted to head in an Easterly direction and not drift towards the sea over Brighton. Ideally we needed a bit more height to get to the next thermal. But from where we were it was decision time. Go for it or head back to the Dyke bomb out there.



We decided to go for it and the final flight path was about 7Km. This was a very good day, with lots of input from Greg. I discovered the amount of patience required to get into the thermal that will get you up, how to keep working the small lift until you get there.

I also found that sheer joy of being free from the hill and going on an XC. I totally recommend an instructional tandem flight. Now for the next time I can get out there and go for this myself.

# Dear Peregrine,

**Ace pilot Peregrine Molehusband takes time out of his busy schedule to give advice on your flying issues.**

Dear Peregrine,

Our beloved chairman Dave's neighbours are giving him lots of grief late at night, what should he do?

*Peregrine replies: I'm having the same trouble. My neighbour knocked on my door at 2:30am this morning. Can you believe that - 2:30am! Luckily for him I was still up playing my bagpipes.*

Q. Have you any tips on dealing with flying accidents

*Peregrine replies: Yes - I once saw a poor hang glider pilot who was on the ground after a bad landing. At least I think he was poor as he only had £1.20 in his pocket.*

Q My wife says I spend too much time flying and she's going to leave me if I carry on, what should I do?

*Peregrine replies: Hmmm tough choice. My wife went missing for three days and police told me to expect the worst – so I went to the charity shop and got her clothes back.*

Q. We are concerned about some pilots taking drugs then flying. We think one has even become addicted to drinking brake fluid, how should we deal with it?

*Peregrine replies: Don't worry – they should be able to stop at any time*

Q. Will you be flying at the Seoul competition?

*Peregrine replies: Yes - it should be a good Korea move*

Q. My girlfriend thinks I am seeing someone else with all my time away flying. I'm not, but how do I get her to understand?

*Peregrine replies: I know what you mean. My old girlfriend thought I was a stalker. Well she wasn't exactly my girlfriend yet.*

## The end

Once again thanks to our contributors for this edition. Please excuse the wobbly format in this edition – it should improve with experience. If you have any ideas for articles then please send them to the editor at [simon.phipps3@ntlworld.com](mailto:simon.phipps3@ntlworld.com) preferably in MS Word format with a picture or two. Peregrine has agreed to answer questions sent to him via the editor provided he is not away on any top secret missions. School adverts will be included free in exchange for an article.

Fly safe

Simon