

Windsock

The Magazine of the Southern Hang Gliding Club

Greetings

Well - it's been a mixed couple of months and seems like years since I got back from my French expedition – a nice XC one day followed by me having a hard arrival at the Dyke the next day. I had to send my harness to the Loft for a bit of cosmetic repair after that one. In late May Johnny Carr showed us all why he was the record breaker and we were not. It was a scratchy day at the Dyke and only the para's were up practicing slope and bottom landings – hardly anyone above ridge height. Johnny waited for the big one with his Airborne Rev. and within minutes was thousands of feet up, where he stayed for the rest of the afternoon! Of course it would have been me if I hadn't been so busy with the slope etc..... I had a couple of non-eventful days at Caburn but a very nice day at Newhaven at the end of June. It was particularly good seeing thousands of gliders fighting for space at Caburn on my way past then arriving to find it smack on less a couple of mph. Thirty minutes later the wind picked up as promised and I had the cliffs to Peacehaven on my own. As I write this I've just seen the weather for the weekend (windy) so changed my plans from flying in Dorset to a walking holiday with Mrs P.

Simon Phipps

In this edition

Dave Lewis tells us about Club Coaches

Steve Purdie shares some thoughts on stalling – this one might save your life one day

Carlo Borsattino of **Flybubble** describes yet another epic XC (with some great pictures)

Matt Pepper gives us some thoughts about joining thermals

Veteran Ace pilot '**Peregrine**' **Molehusband** gives more of his tips from the top – this month studying pre-flight conversation

Special Report on the new BHPA Retrieve Driver training

and much, much more

Coaching in the SHGC

Dave Lewis, SHGC Chief Coach talks about Club Coaches

The role of coaching in the Southern Club is often criticised and often misunderstood. Coaching is one of the most important activities of a BHPA club and I'd like to explain a bit about how and why it works. On behalf of the membership, I'd like to thank our coaches for all their always unpaid and often thankless work.

We foot-launched aviators are in the very fortunate position that, unlike pilots involved in all other forms of aviation, we only have to pay for half of our pilot training. We complete the first part to Club Pilot (Novice) rating under the direct supervision of an instructor in a school. The second part we complete under guidance of BHPA Licensed Coaches for free as members of a BHPA Coaching Club. In the SHGC we have an uphill task looking after around 150 new members each year, but we do have the benefit of around 500 members in the club, including more than our fair share of top class pilots.

All newly rated Club Pilots are issued with a BHPA pilot task book listing about a dozen flying tasks plus an exam to be completed in order to get the full Pilot Rating. The Pilot Rating can be compared to a PPL in that the holder should have enough knowledge of weather, air-law and navigation to be able to fly away from the comfort of a club hill and mix with the other aviators out enjoying uncontrolled airspace. Most people will achieve this within a year or two. Pilots still hungry for knowledge can then go on to Advanced Pilot level after completing some more testing tasks and another very similar exam.

So perhaps our two most important jobs as a flying club are to provide ourselves with sites to fly and coaches to help us continue our training. With sites we need all members to contribute to the cost and follow agreed site rules to the letter. With coaching we all benefit from our wonderful, low-cost training system and should all consider supporting the system by putting back at least as much coaching as we take.

The minimum standard to become a coach is CP + 10 hours, completion of a BHPA coaching course and a recommendation from the chief coach. That may not sound like much, but a newish CP is perfectly placed to assist another newish CP with polishing their basic skills. A much more experienced coach might have trouble remembering what it was like to be a new pilot and his time is perhaps better spent discussing the finer points of XC flight. One of the key skills of a coach is to provide assistance only up to their level of competence and then find a more senior coach to take over from there.

Once out of the school and on the hills, the onus is on the individual pilot to fulfil his desire to progress. We should actively seek out coaches and ask nicely for help. It may not even be clear what you need help with, but a good coach can easily suggest areas for improvement and an action plan to work on. Usually it's a simple case of working out what you're worst at and concentrate on that until it's a good point, then find the next worst thing. Soon "so I've landed within 5 metres of the target, how can I land within 2?" becomes "I've landed after 30km, how can I make it 50 next time?" Private study is not to be overlooked. Until 1000 hours, most pilots will have spent more time reading than flying. All the flying books are available from the library service and time spent reading them is much more useful than reading nonsense on internet forums.

We currently have 45 coaches listed as active in the SHGC on <http://www.shgc.org.uk/coaches>. So there's a very good chance that on any given day you can find several coaches on the hill if you ask around. Most of us don't mind a quick phone call to check your weather analysis and see who's out. With our huge club we always need more coaches on hand, so if you've got at least 10 hours, a CP and are a public spirited sort who'd like to improve your own flying and that of others, please get in touch with me, coach@shgc.org.uk, and we'll see about running another coaching course soon.

Every Sunday morning at 0915 the Red Ribbon Club (<http://www.shgc.org.uk/redribbon>) meets at Airworks for coffee and goes out to the hills hunting for unsuspecting coaches.

Our smaller fraternity of Hang Glider pilots tend to have an easier time coaching each other. New CP's are usually signed out to complete their tasks with a specific coach and quickly get to know who's who. The hangies meet socially for "chess night" at about 2100 on a Tuesday evening in the Snowdrop. Chess is rarely played, but it's an enjoyable evening drinking beer and talking hang gliding. Paragliders could come too, but might quickly tire of VG systems and have to find a separate table at which to talk collapses and speed bars.

On the last Thursday of the month at 1930 we hold the Glynde Coaching Meeting in the Glynde Working Mens Club. In the flying season we usually have one of our senior pilots presenting something interesting and topical about flying. Recently we had myself covering thermalling and getting away. Before that we had John Barratt demystifying soundings. In the winter we usually run a series of lectures for those wishing to prepare for a Pilot / AP exam. Any volunteers for giving a talk are always welcome.



The London wing meets on the last Monday of the month at 1900 to do a similar thing in the big smoke.
<http://www.shgc.org.uk/londonwing>.

We occasionally hold one-off events. Recently we held a ground handling clinic where a good number of coaches helped a group of pilots in dealing with paragliders in the wind. We've hosted two, soon to be three, outdoor first aid courses, all at cost price for the members. Such things are always published on the website
<http://www.shgc.org.uk/event>.

While Club Pilots are not sufficiently qualified to go XC, it is allowable under the supervision of a Pilot rated Club Coach who can brief about weather and airspace required for the flight plan. Ideally the XC-aspiring CP can find a Pilot-Coach with similar plans for distance and just has to follow.

New for 2012 we are introducing an induction process for new members who are asked to attend a session with a senior coach before either a Glynde or a London wing meet. We'll make sure they've got a sites guide and coaches list, check they've understood the BHPA rating system and help work out a plan to progress towards their next rating. It's also an opportunity to meet the coaches and fellow pilots at one of our regular meets. Those new members will only be issued with helmet stickers after attending a meeting, so while you're keeping an eye out for non-members please don't demand a fiver from the new guys waiting for their induction meeting, but do ensure they're given a thorough site briefing and pointed towards a coach.

I hope that's helped outline the role of coaching in the Southern Club and some of the things we already offer. If anyone has any complaints, or ideas for further improvements, or simply would like to enjoy improving your flying and that of others, then please drop me a line and I'll help you get a coach licence and join our merry coaching team.

Stalls on landing approach

Steve Purdie gives good advice on keeping us safe

There was an incident at Firlie recently whereby a visiting pilot was understood to have stalled his wing while attempting to top land and then to have fallen into the sail. The injuries he sustained were very serious, but he is expected to recover. BHPA advice regarding top landing approaches is quite simple:

- One should approach on the slower beat if the wind is off the hill.
- One should approach with very little brake (just enough to feel the wing - though anyone flying a glider with any reflex would be well advised to use no brake at all)
- Mushing or pumping the brakes is to be avoided at all costs - many pilots have been injured doing that.



If you have managed to full stall your wing too close to the ground, but not so close as to call it a flare, there is very little you can do. You must get into the PLF position, though the probability of managing to do so if you are not already stood up out of the harness is negligible, then prepare to land hard. Releasing the brakes is usually the worst thing you could do as the glider will surge forwards and you have a very high risk of falling into the sail or of just falling into the ground.

There is a possibility that if you have caused your wing to enter a deep stall, rather than a dynamic stall, you could get it flying again but you need to which configuration it has entered as doing the wrong thing will hurt. I think the best advice for most pilots is that, if they have inadvertently stalled near to the ground, maintain a brake position approximately level with the base of the carabiners, i.e., what is known in acro parlance as the 'back fly' position. This should ensure that the glider remains in or enters a deep stall, rather than the more aggressive dynamic stall configuration.

A stalled wing will eventually settle at a descent rate of about 10 m/s (give or take a lot!) In free fall you eventually descend at a rate in excess of 50 m/s... I have witnessed a number of pilots over the years who were too heavy handed on the brakes on approach, actually more often when trying to land in thermic bottom landing fields, resulting in spins or stalls.

The best advice remains to be fully aware of your airspeed and to ensure that you maintain adequate to ensure continued flight until you are near enough to the ground to land safely.

Fly safe!
Steve Purdie



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Himalaya

BOOK NOW, this trip will fill up! For our eleventh year in the Himalaya, we are once more off to that most reliable and mellow thermal paradise, the green and luscious Indian Himalayan foothills.

Each year pilots with differing levels of experience, ranging from absolutely zero hours since qualifying to near Skygods come with us. We always leave with experienced pilots and everyone always wants to go again. Most break all their personal bests! In 2011 we completed a 110 km cross country flight, probably the longest guided group xc of all time...

Session 1 – 29/09/12 – 15/10/12 Learn to thermal and fly XC

Session 2 – 17/10/12 – 02/11/12 XC flying

We aim to operate at a 3:1 student/instructor ratio. To help reduce 'flown-out pilot syndrome', which occurs with two weeks incessant paragliding, we have a non-flying day in the middle of each trip: Non-flying activities include visits to Dharamsala, hot springs, 1000 year old temples and fantastic trekking opportunities.

One of the benefits of our very high instructor to student ratio is that we can ensure the best possible experience for any level of pilot: For the recently qualified and/or low airtime pilot you can expect to become a competent XC pilot, able to identify and use thermal lift to cover serious distances and then land safely in a field of your choosing, perhaps even occasionally the main landing field. Look upon out-landings as an opportunity to meet new friends and have an amazing travel experience and you won't go far wrong; For the more experienced pilot who can already thermal well and is seeking some quality instruction in the awesome scenery and benign thermals of this classic XC paradise, we'll be aiming to improve your skills by guided XC flying every day, perhaps including some of the more dramatic high altitude routes and the occasional vol-bivouac.

What's included for 2012: Bed and breakfast, evening meals, collection and return from the airport to Bir, transport to launch and retrieval from XC, though you will usually find that local buses/taxis are so cheap and quick that it's not worth being retrieved, and anyway the adventure makes it worthwhile!

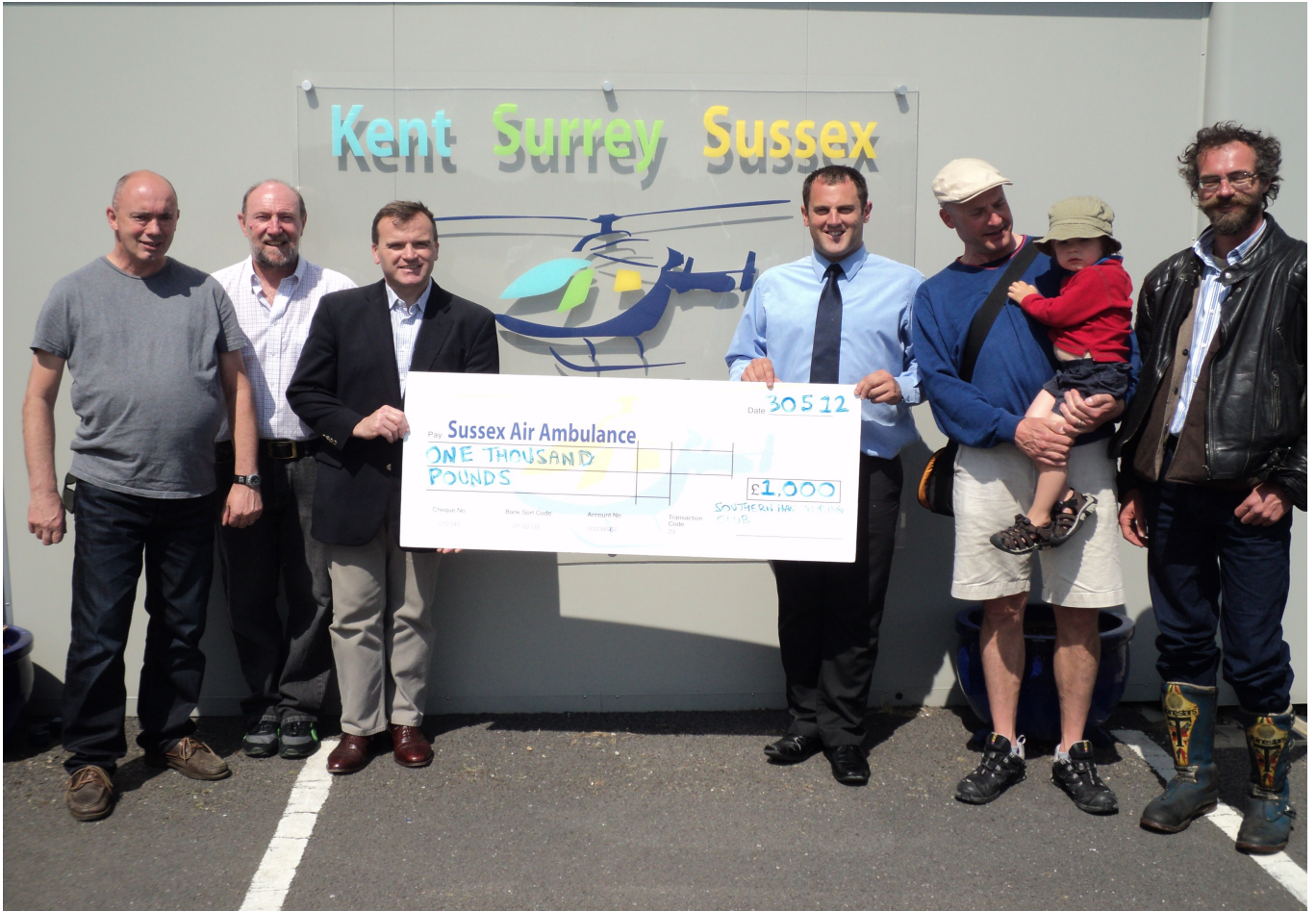
This year, we aim to fly Jet Airways direct from Heathrow to Delhi. We do ask that you get the same flights as everyone else to simplify transfers - otherwise you may have to use public transport to get to Bir. This could mean bus journeys of 16 hours or longer. Alternatively of course, you could take flights that bracket ours and meet us at the airport. I strongly recommend you source your flights through an agency. As such I can heartily recommend Helen, helenwibley@experienceholidays.co.uk, who has provided sterling service in the past! It may cost a few pounds more than booking direct, but trust me it helps immensely to have an agent when dealing with India.

It will be the festivals of Deshera and Diwali while we are there, so we need to book flights before they fill up! The cost of all this is £1399 for each session, plus flights. Those with a more leisurely schedule could opt for both trips for £2399 including free accommodation in Bir for the days in between.

See you soon!

Steve Purdie

Donation to the Air Ambulance



Members of the Committee present the big cheque to Jamie

On 30 May representatives from SHGC presented a cheque for one thousand pounds to Jamie Cheshire from the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Service. The Service is a charity totally reliant on donations such as ours. The NHS funds a doctor to accompany the crew but everything else has to be paid for thorough donations. The Service costs around £5m each year, averaging about £2500 for each callout. Even at this cost the Service can only afford to run during daylight hours due to the expense of installing night vision equipment and paying for additional crews. Jamie was very grateful to SHGC for this contribution and gave us a tour of the base and a presentation of their work. About half of us present had been taken to hospital in the air ambulance after various unhappy landings.

Foot or Flybubble 2012

We invite you to take part in the inaugural Foot or Flybubble Challenge!

Using only your feet or your wing, link every SHGC launch site in the closed circuit. Any day in July counts, between sunrise and sunset. The best attempt wins (longest then fastest around the course).

It's like the X-Alps, only there's no Alps, and it's not nearly that X.

There's no need to run in the rain with a wet glider - you choose the day. Everyone can try it. But that doesn't mean it isn't hard, hairy and a whole lot of fun!

It's a circular route: you may choose any start site and direction, but no zig-zagging is allowed. Your tracklog must show you within 200m (horizontally) of each turnpoint. You are aiming to return to your start point before the day is done, which means the route is 83 km for everyone.

[SEE THE ROUTE](#)

"Wow, that's huge," you say. Yes, but it doesn't matter if your attempt is a flop over the back from the Dyke, a humble ridge run at Bo Peep followed by a walk to the Trevor Arms, or even a float along the coast path from Beachy Head. Any attempt counts.

BestFlyingSites.com will sponsor a prize for the first pilot to bag the most sites in one day. Flybubble.co.uk will sponsor prizes for the best video clip, the best image, and the best write-up. The event winner will get a free meal at the prize-giving evening to be held on 4th August, where we'll present media from the challenge.

It's a great opportunity to learn about the Southern sites, to discuss the route choices, share tips, speculate and of course attempt your own inspiring flights and applaud your friends!

Just like the X-Alps, a supporter may bring you sustenance if you want (or you can pop in to the pub), but you must carry your active GPS and all your flying gear all the time. No motors or transport allowed. When you're all flown out and tired of walking, you can 'peg your flag'.

But you know someone might still be scratching along the cliffs at Newhaven ... can you really afford to go home before the sun goes down?

Yes there are tough bits, that's what makes it interesting.

[Foot or Flybubble](#). Are you up for the challenge?

Devils Dyke to Hythe

Carlo Borsattino reports on a classic XC from the Dyke

After a fantastic day's teaching in March, the weather forecasts were looking too strong for flying students safely the next day (a bit too windy, wind off to the west, strong thermals and associated thermal turbulence) but possibly good for going cross country from the Dyke. With a zillion other things that needed to be done 'yesterday' (as always, it seems!) I prepared all my kit the evening before (gathered everything together, charged batteries etc), as a good XC day waits for no paragliding man, woman or beast!

Arriving at the Dyke, most of the 'Usual Suspects' from the Southern Club (SHGC) were already loitering with intent in the car park, checking-in the other pilots as they arrived to see who else thought it was looking like a good day for flying. The hungry XC hounds had greedily ordered lashings of spicy thermals topped with creamy cumulus clouds to feast themselves upon. Although a Friday and only early March, it was clear from the numbers already milling about that the hill was going to be jam-packed and the sky would be serving up a



boisterous baguette crammed full of saucy para-pickles! Eyes like a chameleon, the reflexes of a mongoose, a neck like an owl, and the spatial awareness of an Olympic trampolinist were all going to be highly desirable (if not, then absolutely necessary!) characteristics whilst thermalling amidst the random rabble around the hill...

With the wind forecast to strengthen, and go more and more west (going off the hill) and eventually sea-breeze, it was a race against time to get up and away (as it almost always is) before conditions on the hill became untenable. However, getting away too early might mean that the thermals weren't yet well-formed enough and too few and far between, reducing the chances of staying up and so resulting in an early landing. One of the most important, and most difficult, decisions when flying cross country is when to leave the hill; the problem is that this is rarely black-and-white and we don't have a crystal ball to know for certain how the conditions will develop as the day progresses. We mainly rely on past experiences and our weather knowledge to assess how the day is maturing and decide our flying strategies, which need to be constantly adapting and evolving. Whilst setting up my trusty Skywalk Poison 2, I assessed the conditions and guesstimated (from various factors, and past experience) that it would probably be good to leave the hill at around 12-12:30. Of course I continued to assess and re-assess the conditions throughout the flight but, as it happened, having been in a position to go 'over the back' on a few occasions from around 11:45 onwards (whilst thermalling with someone flying a yellow Nova Factor with an Advance Impress 2+ harness, the same harness I currently have, which I think was Dave Thomas from the Long Mynd club), I did eventually decide to leave the hill at around 12:30. Others left earlier than this, scrabbling off in small broken gaggles, but I felt that conditions were not yet looking quite 'ripe' enough so waited a little longer for things to mature further, and the prospect of staying up looked more consistent, before I picked my moment to exit stage left.

By coincidence it turned out that I left the hill at pretty much the same time as Paul Andon, flying a Gradient Avax XC2, who seemed to be stalking me from behind as I went on my first glide towards Falmer, and whom I ended up flying with most of the time for about the first half of my flight. Paul (probably wisely) carried on climbing as he tip-toed his way away from the Dyke whilst I (probably impetuously) decided to stick my neck out and head off for the next cloud which was above Falmer and where I'd seen someone (I think Simon Steel?) thermalling not long before. I found a good climb over Sussex University whereupon Paul left his climb and glided towards me and the thermal I was marking nicely for him. There was some justice in the end however as by the time he arrived in MY thermal he was a bit below me (ha ha!).



Thermalling with Paul Andon near Sussex University and Falmer

My Garmin GPSMAP 96C showed me that the climb we were in was still beneath the 3500ft controlled airspace there (which we mustn't ever fly into), within a few hundred metres of the edge of it, and so I left the climb at around 3200ft ASL to make sure I didn't get 'lifted up' into it - which is by far the easiest way for paraglider pilots to get 'caught out' by an accidental airspace infringement (poor airmanship).

Paul and I joined up again in another thermal just past Falmer, now under the FL55 controlled airspace (QNE 5500ft ASL), where we took the climb to cloudbase (QNH approx 4000ft ASL) before going on a glide past Kingston towards Lewes and the hills beyond, to the northwest of Mount Caburn. I did a lot better on this glide than Paul and so arrived with more height over the hills and under some scraggy cumulus clouds, where we both found some weak broken climbs to scrabble about in. I noticed at this point that I could no longer see any of the pilots who had left the hill earlier than us ahead which meant they had either landed, they were flying in cloud, or they had sped off into the distance and out of sight. I also noticed at this point that Dave Thomas had also left the Dyke after us and was now climbing over Falmer, a few kilometers behind us.



Looking back at Mount Caburn, Ringmer and Lewes

As Paul and I drifted in broken climbs between Glynde and Glyndebourne opera house, we looked ahead and tried to decide where and when to head next. There was a Big Blue Hole (i.e. no cumulus clouds, which indicates a big area of sinking air) the way we wanted to go (north-northeast) and a good looking cloud street the way we didn't want to go - cross downwind towards Bexhill and the Pevensy Bay coastline (see photos). If we headed east towards Bexhill our progress would at first be easy but we would soon get 'squeezed' by the wind (which was on the strong side) and thermal drift pushing us steadily towards the sea (i.e. we would run out of land). We decided to push northeast, cross-downwind past Ripe and try to make it across the Big Blue Hole to the cumulus clouds on the other side, which looked to be about 6-8km away. So many times I have headed off on this kind of glide on a paraglider only to hit big sink all the way to the ground; fortunately this time we were lucky and picked a good time / glide line and arrived at the other side without losing too much height, picking up our next climb over Whitesmith and Golden Cross. As well as luck, which is always a factor in cross country flying (especially on a paraglider!), I think it is highly likely that another reason for our success here (and at many other points in the flight) was that Paul and I were always working together to help each other find more climbs, always taking turns to lead on and search around for better lift. Too many times I have flown with other pilots who just try to 'leech' off you - i.e. always letting you go ahead and take all of the risks, whilst they 'sit back' and drift along in a climb. My experience is that this strategy rarely pays off for the leech (they mostly get left behind), and doesn't help either pilot in their quest to stay up for longer and fly further.

As we drifted in the climb we picked up over Golden Cross I took the time to reassess how the wind and weather conditions were developing. I could see that, to the south of us, the surface of Arlington reservoir was looking quite wind-swept, our drift was generally fairly quick, and the sea in Pevensy Bay was looking quite choppy with some scattered white-horses. It was definitely a bit on the breezy side near the coast, but less so inland. Checking my Flytec 6030 I could tell that my ground speed was not too high on the downwind leg (less the 60 kph) and that into-wind I was going forwards at all times without any speed bar (although my ground speed was sometimes down to single figures). Looking at the clouds, the sky was developing very nicely with beautifully formed cumulus clouds popping up all over the place (classic 3-5 octants cloud cover), with occasional cloud-streets and no signs of over-development (i.e. no foreseeable danger of dangerous Cumulo-

Nimbus clouds forming).

Something that I was really noticing was that, despite the fact that it was a bit on the windy end of what I generally find acceptable, the thermals were on the whole amazingly well formed and generally very smooth; in fact they were so smooth at times that I was occasionally finding it difficult to feel the edges of them, and so letting them slip smoothly - and somewhat frustratingly - through my fingers!

Our climb from Golden Cross was drifting us ESE towards Hailsham, which was not the way we wanted to go, so as we came over Lower Dicker we left it to push crosswind, heading northeast past Hellingly towards Lealands where we found another climb to top up in. We then went on glide towards Battle, finding another climb just north of Herstmonceux along the way, which we topped up some height in whilst admiring privileged views of Herstmonceux Castle and Royal Greenwich Observatory to the south of us. All the while I had also noticed that Dave Thomas was still chasing us a few kilometres behind. I hoped that he would catch us up so that we could all fly together and help each other along; that way we would all have a better chance of flying longer and further! At this point Paul and I were close enough to each other to be able to shout across to one another. He called across to let me know that he had decided to go and land (later he told me that he thought it had gotten too windy for him to feel comfortable, he was concerned that it might become more windy later, and the area we were heading towards was quite hilly and wooded). I said OK but decided to carry on myself as I felt comfortable that things were within my own personally acceptable safety limits (although I too would have preferred if it had been a bit less windy) and totally at ease on my Skywalk Poison 2.



Gliding into the blue with Paul Andon. It's looking tricky ahead No cumulus

A slight comedy moment then ensued when Paul first glided off to the SE, towards Bexhill and the coast (where it was looking much windier!), for about half a kilometre, then realised the error of his ways, turned back and glided back past underneath me again, heading inland (where it was looking less windy) to then go and find a nice big field to go and land in. Slightly ironically (for me) at this point I lost my climb and so headed off on a long sinky glide passing over Bodle Street Green, Dallington, and Pontoons Green, sinking like a stone the whole way, and looking like I was going to be landing imminently myself in exactly the area Paul didn't want to land in - doh! I was sinking pretty quickly (-3 m/s sustained) almost the whole way, which on the plus side told me that somewhere nearby there had to be something going up - now I just had to find it before the ground found me first! I was rapidly running out of height, and therefore time, when I bumped into a broken 'climb' between Ashburnham and Penhurst which at first only went up for about 1/4 of the way round, then 1/3, then 1/2. I wasn't actually climbing but at least I wasn't sinking at 3m/s any more! Then, after some searching and re-centring, the climb was going up for about 2/3 of the way round and I started to climb slowly overall; certainly not home-and-dry yet but at least some progress was being made! Finally, after lots of searching around and re-centering, I connected with the real climb which, as expected from the big sink before it, was a good 'un all the way to 'base - yeehaa! Whilst I was climbing I watched Dave Thomas head out on glide towards me from a similar position to where I had been before but much lower than I was; unfortunately he did not have enough height to make it across the big sink-hole and ended up landing near Ashburnham Place (I later find out Dave was indeed trying to catch me up so we could fly together, which would have been great). This was a shame as

now I was on my lonesome for the rest of the flight. C'est le Vol Libre!

For the rest of the flight I kept trying to push NE on each glide, then being drifted towards the E or ESE whilst I tried to climb as efficiently as possible in each thermal - which is not as easy when you're on your own! I passed just to the north of Battle with fantastic views of Battle Abbey, picking up short climbs over Whatlington and Sedlescombe then a much better climb over Peasmarsch, just north of Rye, where I took the chance to take some photos all around. After topping out on the climb from Peasmarsch I tried to push more to the northeast, as I was gradually being pushed closer and closer towards the coastline, but it was becoming apparent that I was fighting a losing battle with the wind. I found another climb, but was being drifted quickly ESE towards New Romney and the sea, so left it to try and push crosswind again, hoping to make it across another blue hole to the next cloud-street; the sky was looking very good ahead! I didn't find another climb and so glided (see photos 32 - 35) all the way to the ground, landing comfortably and without any problems just past Burmarsh near Hythe.

Shortly after I landed, a really friendly fellow (Mr Carmichael) came over to see if I was alright and needed any help; soon after another lady arrived, also wanting to check if I was OK. I explained that I was fine and what I was doing. Mr Carmichael very kindly invited me back to his place for a cup of tea and a lift to somewhere more convenient for me to hitch from. I packed up all my gear and walked to Mr Carmichael's house, where he and his wife were incredibly friendly and hospitable to me. They made me a very welcome cup of tea (I'd been flying for 5 hours and not drunk anything!), plied me with biscuits and delicious homemade pickle and cheese sandwiches and made phone calls to train stations to see which the best route back to Brighton was for me. Mr Carmichael then drove me to somewhere which he said was less "camel dung country" (or words to that effect) so I could hitch to Ashford train station. Thank you very much Mr & Mrs Carmichael!

What an amazing flight, and what a fantastic day!

flybubble.co.uk



adventure

awesome is just a flight away
we'd like to take you there

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Our team

Our instructing team of **Simon Steel, Nancy Elliott, Greg Hamerton** and **Carlo Borsattino** have a combined 60 years experience. Together with our XC team, we can get you higher. We love flying!

Carlo & Nancy

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South Africa

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Get the advantage of experience and **personal attention**.

Team pilot Tracy explores some XC possibilities at Porterville, South Africa.



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PARAGLIDING

Joining lift

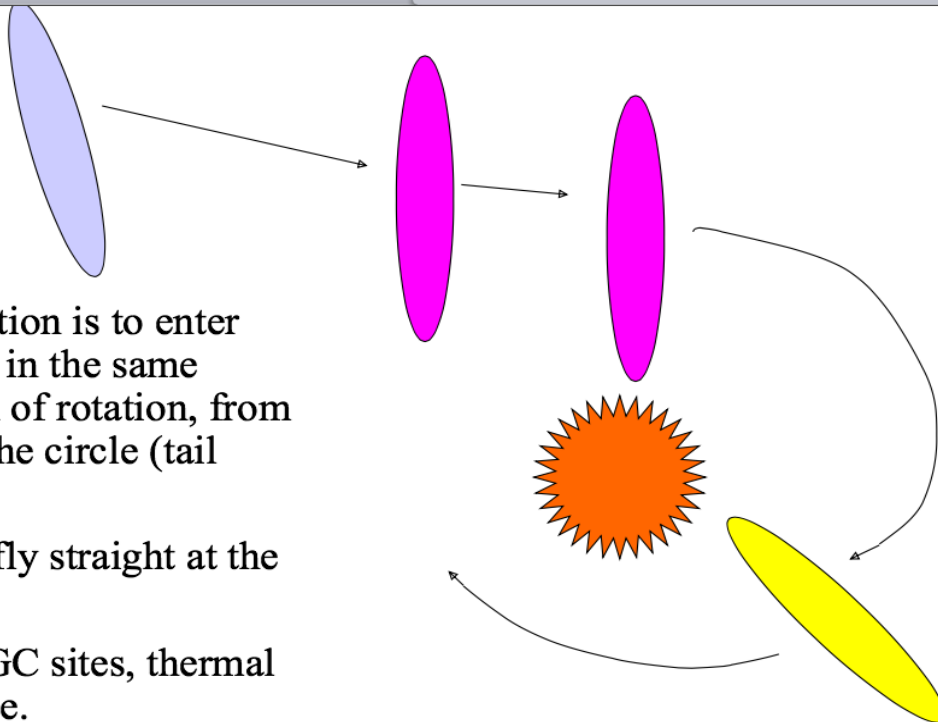
Matt Pepper gives good advice on thermalling

Thermalling away from a hill, tuning into the core and reaching cloud base is a rite of passage for all gliding pilots. It is one of the most exhilarating and unique experiences and sets us apart from the ground dwellers. I still appreciate the experience when I look down at the ants scurrying in their cars going about their lives. Sharing the experience with other pilots makes it all the better - but mixing it up with others requires you to fly considerately and safety. So here are some tips to help you join a thermal safely.

It's important to join a thermal 180 degrees to the circling pilot at all times so there are no surprises for anyone. It also makes working the thermal together easier.. This allows you to safely adjust the circle to make the best of the lift looking out everywhere - left, right up and down down down! If it is not possible to do this immediately then wait until you can. Slow down a bit, come in wide and make sure you have eye contact. This is not just a case of courtesy for the pilot who found the thermal, but for safety. For example, if I'm looking to join a thermal firstly I check either side of me. Is it clear? If so, I will commit. I don't want to find myself in a situation I can't escape from because another glider is blocking my exit. If all is clear and the pilot is circling right turning round to face me as I approach, I look left (life saver look). I then steer left and away to the side. I give them room and slot in, going right also and 180 degrees to the other pilot. The reverse if their turning left obviously.



- Convention is to enter thermals in the same direction of rotation, from outside the circle (tail follow.)
- Do not fly straight at the core.
- On SHGC sites, thermal clockwise.



If you are following a pilot and you have no one either side of you and you start to rise, look for signs to indicate which way the other will turn. The roll of their glider or other pilot's weight shift are your first indicators. If you are in open air and the other glider lifts on one side, it is fair to assume they will turn towards the lifting side. We don't always HAVE to turn right. If the pilot brakes right, look left and move left immediately and wide, to allow the pilot to complete the turn. Looking to slot in 180 degrees to the pilot with eye contact.

Remember that looking out is not for taking in the scenery - that's for when you are gliding. You must look below for pilots who are climbing better than you ... your eyes should be everywhere. You also have to control the glider, choose your next decision, check altitude for airspace, tune into the core with other pilots. Lots of things to do! This is why it's a good idea to get some tandem experience. It's a small financial outlay for a tandem flight next to all the fuel, time and energy you put into this sport.

Remember that thermalling is not just about going round and round, you need to appreciate airspeed, angle of bank, be able understand what pitch roll and yaw is telling you and be able to use this information to core the thermal and control the glider. If you can't do the latter your going to get a roughing up, or worse have an event in close proximity to other gliders in the gaggle.

Do you know about spin recovery? Just picture yourself spinning down through the gaggle for a moment. Dip your toe in gently if your new to it and seek good advice.. A tandem flight on joining a thermal safely will help you no end, it's coaching in real time.

Retrieve Course

You might be aware that over the past few months three clubs have been trialling the new Retrieve Driver Training Course. The results are now in but have been mixed. Terry from Thames Valley told his wife that in addition to retrieve driving, she had to do his weather forecasting and the navigating by herself. He reported that it took a couple of flights before he saw any results, but on the third flight he landed and she was already there, she then packed his wing away, and everything was done satisfactorily.

James from SHGC gave his mistress instructions that she was to do all the driving, navigating, and the weather forecasts too. He reported them that for the first flight he didn't see any results, but the next flight he could see she'd done a bit better. His third flight was XC from the Dyke to Caburn. When he landed she was waiting at the landing field, had organised the post flight drinks, negotiated with the landowner for a reduction in site fees and installation of a chair lift then packed the wing away . 9/10



Suzie keeps a careful look out to make sure the beers are ready in good time

Steve from Glasgow Aerotow told his girlfriend that her duties were retrieve driving, navigating, weather forecast, post flight meals, harness servicing, radio charging and retrieve vehicle cleaning every day. He said the first day he didn't see anything, the second day he didn't see anything, but by the third day some of the swelling had gone down and he could open his left eye a little bit, just enough to fix himself a bite to eat.

Pilotage Masterclass

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

Top tip 2:- Pre-flight chat

After my last Masterclass giving special techniques for untangling lines I have received many letters of appreciation. I was pleased to see so many of you having fun practising some of my intermediate moves at High & Over a few weeks ago.



Having lots of fun with an intermediate untangle

Anyway back to my class - in the days long past, before I was an expert pilot I spend many hours on the hill waiting. Waiting for the wind to pick up/calm down/veer/back/stop raining, snowing or just waiting for daylight. It was during these years of training that I perfected my skills in the vitally important skill of flying small-talk. My skills have enabled me to coach others to take part in conversations and help shape future gossip. By the time you have completed this Masterclass you will never again have to stand on the hill in silence wondering what to say to your fellow pilots. This need for chat is usually caused by pilots being far too optimistic when checking weather forecasts. No matter how much wind and rain at they see out of the window, they check a few different forecasts and persuade themselves that the best one is actually going to develop. It is very disappointing to then spend thirty pounds on fuel just to stand around feeling guilty you had reported sick for work.

Using this guide you will avoid be able to join in and even start conversations leading to discovery of the latest club scandal. In time, using more advanced techniques you can make up your own incidents. Imagine the satisfaction when your very own made-up story is repeated to you some time later - you can pretend to look shocked and disgusted. Nowadays I do not experience wasted flying days, having chosen my epic flight conditions to perfection using methods which need not concern you at this time. Nevertheless, I still enjoy the occasional conversation with less able pilots and the following guide will help you to converse with other pilots and I.

For pre-flight small talk there are normally four levels of conversation you will need to master. For your ease of learning I have entitled these 'levels 1 to 4':-

- Level 1 Junior
- Level 2 Novice
- Level 3 Standard
- Level 4 Bore

L1 conversations are suitable for those days that are likely to get flyable pretty soon. No-one will want to spend too much time talking because they will need to get their equipment ready for a quick take off. Good opening lines for L1 conversations are normally kept to less than six words and should provoke responses of two syllables or less. Anything more and the recipient will avoid eye contact next time you meet and your name will be all over the SHGC Forum flagged as some sort of weirdo. My personal recommendations for opening L1 conversations are 'Hi - how are you doing?', 'should be good later eh?' or 'how long's the plaster on for? If your target responds with more than two syllables then you should consider moving onto L2 if it's still not flyable.

L2 interactions can move into discussion about any of the following: when the rain might stop, your recent epic flight, whether pilot X has a compound or spiral fracture or for more fun you can exchange accident histories. It is useful to find out the airtime/experience of your conversation partner at an early stage so you can determine how much exaggeration you can get away with. If you are speaking to a student or member of the public you can generally triple your maximum height or distance travelled without being found out. If you are lucky there may be pilots trying to get away from the huge cu-nims, which were forecast in any case. You can discuss their various emergency descent techniques and speculate on the pilots' identities and likelihood of survival. This should pass a bit of time nicely before calling for the ambulance.

L3 is the standard at which most of you should aspire to. You can engage promptly into most of the usual conversations. These move quickly through levels 1 and 2 onto the serious Club business. This will include discussion on increasing site fees, shrinking landing fields, analysis of recent accidents and a more detailed report about the scantily clad nymphomaniacs you saw sunbathing on the Downs last time it was warm enough to take off their vests (see photo's p.13-37)

L4 chatters (Bore classification) are best avoided unless you too are at this level or you simply made a mistake by saying 'hullo' to them. The L4 will know their glide ratio, how it compares to every other glider in the air and how much they have to tighten their waffle-sprocket to get an extra half-an-mpg out of their wing (half an anti-clockwise twist of the N-ring normally does the trick). If you question or contradict their wisdom you will miss most of the day while they justify their position and show you their track logs. You will not be having a conversation but merely in receipt of a monologue. If you do find yourself trapped it is straightforward to feign interest using my rule of fives. Every five seconds (or five words if you have the energy) simply nod and say any one of a combination of 'yes/oh/wow/gosh/really'. You don't even have to maintain eye contact as they will mistake your distance stare as concentration. Six hours later you can look at you watch to see that only fifteen minutes has passed – spooky. A diplomatic way to end the conversation is to politely ask if they will be talking for much longer as you have a holiday booked for next February.

Some L4's will pretend to be a L3 but are soon discovered for what they really are. The most common way for these pretenders to be caught out is when talking about sea-breeze fronts. You will have already seen the forecast that everything South of Newcastle is NW backing SW mid-afternoon. These 'experts' will be seen pointing at the sky surrounded by a group of novices. They will be pointing at a cloud, which will look the same as all the other clouds while describing all the 'classic' signs of the SBF. The novices all nod as if they understand. When the promised SW'erly arrives later in the day the expert will give the unfortunate listeners that 'I told you so' sort of nod, then helpfully suggest that everyone packs up and goes home. *Top Tip - leave quickly before they start on something else as Caburn is probably flyable by now.*

The level of concentration you have to put into these conversations will depend on prevailing conditions. If you are first on the hill and it's clearly not flyable then you will have some preparation time and can choose the L3 subject matter. It is quickest to arrive at L3 if you have previously engaged at L1 or 2. My advice for L3 subject matter is to scan the hill for pilots. Choose someone who isn't there and then you can then talk about them for as long as necessary until a new subject emerges or it becomes flyable. For example 'have you heard about X's (insert husband/wife etc) over the side with Y', had they heard that X karate chopped Y or (for adults only) that X is really a Y (insert chromosome combination of choice) but you know better because After an enjoyable time spent raking muck you can then exclaim that you've got all muddled up and probably have been talking about the wrong person so no harm done really! If you're at Beachy you can talk about people jumping off but be a bit careful here ... I once spent a pleasant half-an-hour here with someone I didn't know very well, revelling in jolly tales about the misfortunes of others resulting in 600ft plummets. When I had finished, they explained tearfully how their best friend had jumped off last year.

Eventually you will be able to start and join in conversations seamlessly. I suggest that you practice at Levels 1 & 2 until you are comfortable to move on. After practice you can move on to advanced techniques and one day even speak to that group who sit around the van in a circle of deckchairs or those who fly for the other side. Maybe not - best not rush things.

**Would you fellows like a lift...
Tea with my family?....**

**You umbrella wallas
are very funny, you are
choosing the strangest
vehicle from which to
see our great
country.....**



After a day in the air, we were looking forward to a good curry and a glass of the local champagne, so we gladly accepted a lift in an air-conditioned vehicle. Join us for some great value skylarking in India, January-February. It won't be -4°C, sleeting, blowing a gale or dark in the afternoon. World class flying in luxury, experienced instructors, CP+10 - XC, private retrieve cars, probably no tigers. call: Dave, 07884072536. www.skylarkparagliding.co.uk/

Dear Peregrine,

Ace pilot Peregrine Molehusband finds time between his top secret missions to give advice to our members.

Dear Peregrine,

Are you worried about the economy after the Chancellor's speech yesterday?

Peregrine replies: I don't like namedroppers but I was chatting to the Duke of Edinburgh the other day about this very topic. He told me the Greeks have run out of hummus and taramasalata, proving that it is a double dip recession after all.

Q. Do you have any tips for keeping fit?

Peregrine replies: Yes it's important to keep in top shape (like me). Watch your weight and eat sensibly. I bought some rocket salad last week- but it went off before I could eat it. Also take professional advice on any health problems. I thought I was going a bit deaf so I went to the doctor. He said "can you tell me all the symptoms?" I said "Yes - Bart, Marge, Homer & Lisa". I decided to try a local Yoga class. When I booked the instructor asked how flexible I was. I told her "very, but I can't do Wednesday mornings".

Q. Do you have any pets?

Peregrine replies: I was thinking of buying a Labrador – but have you seen how many of their owners go blind?

Q. Are you in a relationship?

Peregrine replies: Yes I've been happily married for many years and my wife's birthday is coming up soon. I decided not to buy her the diamond encrusted watch as she already has a perfectly good clock on the cooker. I did try a dating agency once but Screwfix wrote back and said they regretted this wasn't their line of business. I once moved in with an old girlfriend but it didn't work out. She had a huge collection of magazines. I left as she just had too many issues. People sometimes ask me what is the difference between a wife and a girlfriend – it's about four stone.

Q. I am thinking of doing an SIV course as I've heard that it might save my life one day – what do you think?

Peregrine replies: Flying can certainly be dangerous for anyone who's not at the top of their game . There's lots of things that can kill you though. I went to an old friend's funeral last week. He died after being hit on the head with a tennis ball - it was a lovely service. Also my local ice cream man was found dead in his van . He was all covered in chocolate sauce and little sprinkles. Police think he tried to top himself.

The end

I hope you have enjoyed this edition of Windsock, which marks the beginning of a fantastic summer with no more rain, loads of lift and post cold-frontal North-Westerlies every weekend. I'm stuffed with work until September due to the minor sporting events taking place so I look forward to receiving your accounts of epic flights and tales of adventure. If you have any stories then please send them to me at simon.phipps3@ntlworld.com with a picture or two. School adverts will be included free in exchange for an article

Be careful up there

Simon