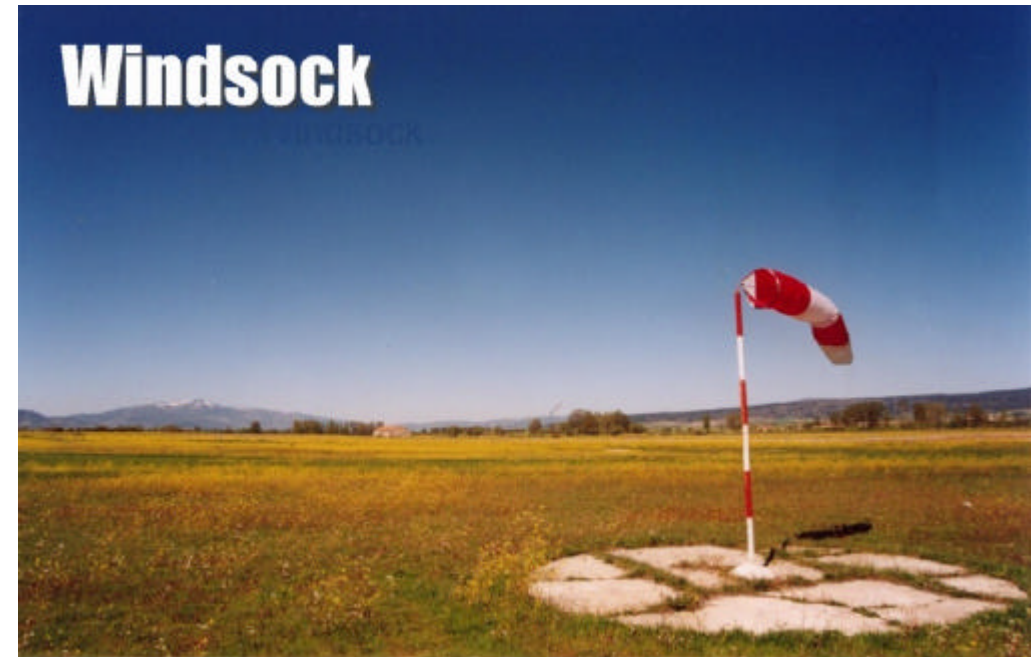




Proudly Presents...back by popular demand!



The Official Magazine
of the
Southern Hang Gliding Club

November 2003

Welcome back...



Hello, I'm your new Editor!!

No, it's not an apparition – yes folks, Windsock is finally back!

Sorry for the recent absence of your favourite flying magazine. We can't apologise enough and by the time you've read this issue, you'll have forgotten that we ever went away.

This is my first issue as Editor in Chief (do you like the job title – I thought of it myself). Since getting involved with windsock a few months ago, I've been chomping at the bit to produce a club magazine with a bit of clout, so here goes.

I'd like to extend a big round of thanks to all the contributors, whom without, Windsock would just be another low-grade rag stuffed full of ads. Remember that this is YOUR MAGAZINE. We want YOUR contributions, in particular articles about:

- Local Site Knowledge
- Experiences here at home
- Your trips abroad (plus how you got there or got back – helicopter or otherwise!!)
- Issues you want to raise
- New products you're particularly impressed with
- Pictures of you enjoying yourselves (you know what I mean)

We couldn't care less if you have one or one-thousand hours. You're a paid up member so you're a part of this and I'm sure you've got something in your head that we'd all like to read.

Note also that the UK XC season is coming to a close and thoughts should now turn to checking and re-packing your gear (especially that reserve – you do have a reserve don't you?). Watch Windsock and the SHGC Email Forum for information about forthcoming re-packing events – in particular the Thames Valley Club's Big Fat Repack in November (no dates yet).

Anyway, send it all to: nick.cresswell@ntlworld.com

or:

NICK CRESSWELL
3B EAST DULWICH GROVE
LONDON SE22 8PW

Chairman's Letter

If you're reading this, Windsock must be back! Thanks to Nick for taking it on.

A couple of weeks ago, I climbed up Mount Caburn in hot and sticky summer weather. By the time I'd landed at the bottom, clouds had arrived over the coast, covered the hill, and it was Autumn. Oh well, so that was it. At the start of the year, I'd been saying 'It must get better this year'. So it didn't. Not exactly the best summer we've had, but some amazing XC distances flown by some, considering how few opportunities presented themselves.

I'm particularly pleased that the XC tables (for paragliding at least) have twice as many entrants as last year. It's nice to see some novices going for it. You can tell who they are by their perma-grins. They have discovered the secret of flying without crowds - leave the crowds behind. That's a good start - let's have all the others entered in it next year, all those who went, but didn't enter. It's the taking part remember, not the winning that matters.

Earlier in the year, the club held a meeting to assess the interest in starting a winching group. As the cynics on the committee expected, there was plenty of interest, but nobody willing to come forward and actually do something about it. Without real commitment, the committee was not willing to back a winch group with money. The feeling was that the money would be wasted, if pilots simply didn't turn up, because it was being laid on for them by someone else. But now this has all changed, and I am happy to report that Dave Perro has come forward, and made the effort, and it now looks like winching WILL happen in the Southern Club. May I thank Dave publicly for his volunteering, and soon we may announce some real progress.

While on the subject of volunteering, the committee is a couple of people short, and would really appreciate volunteers to come forward, and give something back to the sport. Lots of you said that you were willing to help, on the renewal form; now's your chance! Contact any committee member for details.

As it's getting to the end of the flying year (at least the good bit), nominations are required for the club's annual prizes (to be awarded at the Christmas bash). If you think one of your flying mates deserves an award, let us know.

We need nominations for the following:

Paragliding:

Best Newcomer
Most improved
Bag'o'washing award

Hang gliding:

Best Newcomer
Most improved
Ron Steadman award for Outstanding Services to Hang gliding
Bent uprights award

Also:

Andy Napp award for Outstanding Services to Flying
Outstanding Achievement award.



Windtech

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Windtech's complete range of high calibre paraglider wings and accessories are clearly a cut above the rest, carefully crafted and fine tuned by their expert team of designers and highly skilled test pilots to satisfy the most demanding needs of every free-flight fanatic. With all levels of solo glider from school, intermediate, sports, serial, high performance, right up to advanced competition gliders, and also virtuoso tandem and paramotor wings, sophisticated reserve parachutes and other superb para-phernalia, Windtech have just what you are looking for!

What the papers are saying:

"Windtech are acquiring a reputation for building well-constructed gliders with very good handling" "head and shoulders above the rest" "an exceptionally accomplished all-rounder" "so much more... than just very good performance figures" - *Skyways Magazine, UK.*

"Windtech has already fully convinced everyone about the great quality of their products" "one of the best finished paragliders I have ever seen" "optimal in every way" "outstanding" "really quite impressive" "fine-tuned handling and superb speed and performance" "outstanding security and maximum performance" "exceptionally well-balanced" "there is nothing too much and nothing too little. The whole tuning is just perfect" - *Glotechins Magazine, Austria.*

"a great many innovations" "the turn is simply delicious" "remarkable stability" "sophisticated, manoeuvrable, fast" "swift and efficient" "amazing qualities" - *Paropente Magazine, Spain.*

"Windtech today belong to the Greats of the paragliding trade" "weaknesses, there are none" "The quality of Windtech is convincing" "excellent qualities" "altogether excellent" "leaves nothing more to be desired" "Launching is pure enjoyment" "a pure pleasure" "extremely good-natured behaviour" "exemplary" "well balanced behaviour" - *Fly and Glide Magazine, Germany.*

"The manufacturing finish is beautiful" - *Aerial Magazine, France.*

"safety and performance... that would have been hard to imagine a few years ago." - *Noel Whittall, UK.*

"state-of-the-art, cutting-edge" - *Bob Drury, Cross Country Magazine, UK.*

"very beautiful sail-making" "a somewhat excellent glide" "a jewel of precision and pleasure" "I love it!" "great precision" - *Paropente Magazine, France.*

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Officials Corner

SHGC Committee meeting 3rd October 2003

Summary

- Nigel Barret has taken over the sites officer post again. Please address all problems to him.
- The club committee needs more help and some fresh blood. We aren't saying specific posts because we want to shuffle things around more, improve communication and get some tasks done more as a team. It doesn't have to be only at AGMs - come along to a committee meeting, see what goes on and maybe offer to do your bit!
- Nick Cresswell is taking over as editor of Windsock.

Matters Arising

Simon has sent a letter resigning as membership secretary. Sue had a couple of people where Simon sent the cheque back because it was the wrong amount/wrong details on the form, and Dave had emailed him asking about it, and he has taken it as an attack. We still want him to do the site guide anyway. Nigel promises to talk to him - maybe the forwarded email by Dave was taken as too sharp. Club coaching still has £2m insurance. It's all tandem that's out at the moment. Court cases are moving in the correct direction for us so far, though, so it may well get better later.

Sites - Dyke bottom landing - Nigel.

Johnny has talked to his mother in law and somewhat smoothed things over. Issue about people landing in the middle of the crop and not paying the landing fee in that case. (£10) He's always going to be irritated by this thing.

Nigel: Last year we paid £200 as a one off payment to do away with that fee. Really this needs to be sorted in some permanent way. But we still need to get people to land properly. Rape Seed is at most £400 an acre cost, so it would need to be a lot of damage for that much. We will still get members landing in crop to pay the fine if farmer catches them. Nigel will talk to Mark/Gary.

We should also check up on the fields across the road, not so good for modern HGs. There is another field that would maybe be usable from the bowl, possibly offload the schools.

Should we authorise Martin to send farmers cheques immediately? Nigel has a spreadsheet of all the site details, those details can be used. We should send a letter with each cheque. Neil said he had delivered a cheque to Chris Williams, Nigel will talk to him.

Fire Estates hasn't invoiced yet... Probably sites officer should be the one to prod them.

Brian - Create a forward Agenda to pay sites in months. July. Actually variable dates on Nigel's info, this needs to come from that.

Really want the bits of paper attached to the cheques. Previously, Martin gave cheques to Nigel and that worked, or paid invoices only after checking.

Beachy, the £50 is for the licence agreement, we really need to get that each year. There was the question about teaching; Next time a letter needs to go with the agreement, and expressing interest in Butts Brow. The ranger said that the main worry would be erosion on the pathway with people walking up. He was happy for us to put our case though. Supposedly there is a report about birds of prey that we should use to get the restriction removed. There are Peregrins at Caburn now even. Nigel will do a latter asking about the schools.

There was nearly an incident recently at Beachy with an HG getting close to injuring members of the public. The HG was coming in on an unreasonable approach, like a PG really. Dave had a talk to the pilot. Is there a need for changing the equipment/rules? Not really conclusive.

Ditchling - used by Green Dragons etc, currently we are not paying anything for it. May now be owned by NT.

Can we get some drainpipe lengths to go over the top of the barbed wire fence at Firle. (4 inch stuff) They lowered the fence in March for us for free, they can't go any lower with the machine? There was some concern about it being above a footpath position. But it appears to be much lower than the current position. Nigel will ask them, see if we can make it safer. In reality people sometimes go down until they find a bush/fence to land in anyway. We would really be happy to pay the friendly tenant. Finding a successor. We should ask in Windsock for a new person to volunteer, they could be helped to learn by Nigel for a few months. We should maybe email the people that ticked the willing to help box.

Communication - Michel

Committee is still failing in our communication between ourselves. e.g. Sites issue. Also communication with members. Windsock.

Wonder about using the committee email more, maybe reporting actual progress of all club business.

Sites/Safety/Membership should be much more common committee jobs, not just for the one member.

More control when someone writes to the committee generally. Brian to always answer at least to those sort of things.

Get more people to assume that rest of committee needs to know the business. Use email to journal all the club business.

Forum - after committee meetings report to them and mention topics for next meeting. Brian.

Andy now has the web site set up to that specific people can be allowed to post news items. He would like to recruit "reporters" to do this. Committee approved for Andy to ask Carlo/SteveU/David Roberts to become reporters.

Finance - Martin

Firle hasn't been paid, Nigel will chase. No other probs.

Aerotow account, while still slightly in red from the new tug, is on course to recover ok.

Sites fund stands around £61k. We should buy a business!

Aerotow group buying a tandem glider is uncertain due to insurance situation.

Safety - Michel

Airprox near Newhaven - a Chinook flew 50m out from a PG, collapsed it. We have reported it as an incident.

Also Johnny had a bloke complain about noise from a paramotor flying along the cliffs. We did agree before that as a club we would happily back someone finding a site for paramotoring. That was John Lancaster before his accident. Such people would need to coordinate with existing site officer.

Windsock

Dave spoke to Paul, who has said give it to Nick Cresswell. Paul will email it all to Nick. Nick will go for it.

Nick has a system for that automates putting together Windsock, he will communicate with Andy. A choice of paper or electronic formats will soon be available.

Winching.

Dave Perrott has lost the field he wanted but will talk to Michel.

Christmas do/Awards.

Hardly any XC claims so far. Need to extract from national leagues. Windsock request for award nominations. Get from last year.

AOB

A request for people interested in posts open on the committee - just get people to contact and get people to say what they are interested in - maybe reallocate/split jobs.

Next meeting.

This is to be MONDAY 3rd November **7:30pm** at the Dyke pub.

Home

Tales of the Brighton Run

By Chris Joel

A story of Two Brighton Virgins.....

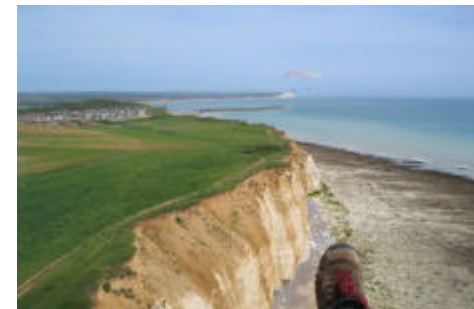
A tale not of vultures and 8000 foot mountains but something a little closer to home.

Saturday 26th April started much as any other Saturday. Waking at about 8:15 and then panicking to get Kelly, my daughter, to her job at Airworks for 9am. Once at Airworks I sit, have a coffee and survey the sky and the trees looking for signs that it might be flyable. Everything is still, so I decide to go to work.

I finished and am home by 2pm. Sitting in the kitchen drinking tea, the phone rings. 'Hi Chris, its Garry Brew, what's the weather doing in Newhaven?' I wander over to the window and look. The sky is relatively clear, the seagulls are soaring at the right height, but some low whisps of cloud indicate the wind is a little westerly. Gary considers this and decides to come over anyway as it is hoolyng at Caburn.

Later I can see one or two wings popping up and testing the air. Others launch but don't stay up. My wife, Mel, suggested we go up to the cliffs to watch and to give the dog a walk. I briefly considered taking my wing, a purple and gold Windtech Serak, but couldn't be bothered to carry a pack half a mile through countryside when I know the wind was too far west. A nice walk ensued and we got to the cliffs to be met by a number of paraglider pilots in different states of readiness. Over the next hour or so people launched, flew a number of beats, each one lower than the last, until ending up on the beach. So frustrating! The wind needed to be just a tad more southwest to be flyable and the tide was way out. So close to a classic Newhaven day.

By 4pm the breeze is still westerly but has dropped to virtually nothing. The general consensus is a retreat back to Caburn and slowly the cliffs emptied of people.



Two guys were left practising their ground handling, Trevor and Mark I think.

Sorry guys if I've got your names wrong. I decided to leave too as I had to get to Airworks to pick Kelly up at 5.

I walked home thanking my cleverness of not taking my wing, I would have been cursing to have to carry it there and back and not had a chance to fly. I put the key in the door and took one more glance at the cliffs. Trevor had launched on a blue wing, I watched, he gained height, I watched, he gained more height, he went round the corner, he shot up to 150 feet above. I ran into the house, used up 200 brownie points asking Mel to pick up Kelly and then jumped into the van to get back to the cliffs fast. My boots and wing are always in there 'just in case!'.

I parked at the fort swung my legs out of the van, ripped my shoes off, almost jumped into my boots, grabbed my wing and off up the path to the launch site.

When I got there Trevor was about 200 feet above the cliff, moving slowly, but moving. The wind had picked up and come a tad further south-west. Mark was preparing to launch. I threw everything down, climbed into my flying suit, stuck helmet and gloves on, went to set the vario, 'b*ll*cks no vario'. No matter I wasn't going back for it now. I checked my parachute pins and checked for knots in the lines. All ok, inflated and turned. Mark was still there so a little right brake to walk round him, then head down, bum in the air and drive against the chest strap to get some air speed. I headed straight for the main cliff edge, turning into wind as I crossed it.

Creeping along the edge just above cliff top height I looked forward for Trevor.

He was still up there and then I decided, target: Brighton Marina. I had not been before and there was nobody to follow, but I have made too many excuses before and it is time to get out of the nest.

As I rounded the point I was immediately rewarded with lift to about 150 feet above the cliffs. Progress was slow though and I got very bored if things aren't happening. I went on full bar and shot past Trevor about 50 feet below him. I stayed on full bar for a while, just taking it off every now and again to feel what the wind was doing. I didn't want to be on full bar and then discover the wind had picked up. I didn't want to get blown back and full bar and a glide to the beach was my safety margin. I flew on happily, waving back when people waved from below. Each time I got down to cliff height I came off the bar, popped back up to 50 feet above, and eased the bar back on.

The next event was when I came up to a yellow Edel? Where did he come from? He hadn't been at Newhaven. Oh well, we waved, passed each other and I flew on to Saltdean. SALTDEAN! I came off the bar and beetled back to the higher part of the cliffs. I thought back to Trevor's Seaford lectures where Chairman Massie and Hairy Dave spent a whole evening talking theory about this very situation. Step 1: get a whole load of height. 'b**cks no vario!' I parked in the lift band shut one eye and watched my risers against the horizon. As soon as the horizon stopped dropping I said to myself, 'right here we go boy' and released the brakes. I followed the lower cliffs for a while before pushing forward. The wind was still more west than would be optimum and I had Dave's voice in my head saying 'don't get caught out by the curve in the cliff on the far side'. I checked my glide. I was going to land three quarters of the way across. I gradually applied bar until my glide target was half way up the opposite cliff. Thanks again guys for those Seaford lectures on polar curves and speed to fly! As I reached the other side I eased off the bar and after a couple of seconds started to climb. 'YESSS' I shouted and half a dozen startled pigeons took off from the cliff face. I knew that was the difficult bit and I should be able to make it now.

Next came Rottingdean. I pushed out a little to make sure I was out of any possible rotor from the hotel. It was an easy glide to the far side. Back to 50 feet above and a straight line of white cliffs all the way to the marina. I pushed on the bar and set off. After a little while another lesson was learned.

My speedbar is wider than my boots and kept sliding sideways so that I was applying more pressure to one side than the other. By locking my knees together and pushing my ankles out I could keep equal pressure on, but having flown for so long like this my legs started trembling uncontrollably. I resolved to take a hacksaw to the speedbar and adjust it to the exact width of my boots.

As I approached the marina I started to wonder 'where is the turn point'? Having come this far I didn't want to return for somebody to say 'you didn't make it, you turned too early'.

I came off the bar and surveyed the scene. Lots of large buildings in the marina. Steam coming from a vent in the David Lloyd Centre blowing straight at the cliff. Flags on the golf course 45 degrees across the cliff. This would indicate rotor off the buildings straight towards me. I flew on carefully 'feeling' my wing. It certainly became lumpier but I have had a lot worse at some of our other sites. As I approached the marina wall I noticed an orange digger parked just inside the wall. I decided if I go around that then I have definitely been to the marina. So as I passed it, I pulled left brake while looked down to see a whole load of yacht masts below me. 'Please, please don't get a collapse now I thought'. I didn't need to worry, I turned and positioned myself back over the cliff. My first thought was 'I could do with a cigarette now', my second was 'get back as fast as possible because I will be well hacked off if the wind drops and I cant make it back'. I don't know if these thoughts were interrelated. Again I put on full bar, wobbly legs and all, and found myself singing as I flew back.

I passed Dave the Mechanic on his way to the Marina and a little later passed Dave Webb. I waved and cheered him on as this was his first Brighton run too.

As Rottingdean reappeared I felt a little concerned as I didn't have that much height. However, the hotel faces a bit more west than the cliffs so I hopped over to gain some lift in front of the hotel before passing around it to miss the rotor off the back.

While running back to Saltdean I became aware of some dark clouds beginning to form over Brighton. I pushed the bar just a little harder. I jumped the Saltdean gap with ease passing way below Alison Webb who was building her height for the c crossing

in the opposite direction. Back to 50 feet above and back on the bar. I started noticing the odd white horse on the water but more ominously some dark windstreaks further out to sea. I couldn't press the bar any harder! Approaching Peacehaven, Trevor and Mark were high but right in front of the town pointing out to sea. 'Not a good place to be blown back' I thought. I came off the bar and went to min sink passing about 20 feet below them. I shouted that the wind was picking up and then went straight back on full bar. Trevor peeled off and followed me followed by Mark.

Just before the point at Newhaven I figured there would be little lift from the Newhaven cliffs so I paused to gain some height to enable me to top land. I climbed to about 200 above and then peeled off towards the take off area. To my surprise as I approached I still had 200 to spare. I looked down to see a lone figure standing right in the middle of take off. She waved, it was Kelly who had come out to see me in. Seeing her waving standing in the middle of green windswept grass from 200 above made me think of the opening scene of The Sound of Music. How odd! I forced myself to concentrate on landing. A few small wingovers lost my height and I came in keeping an eye on the wind. I pulling two A's as I touched down just in case it was strong on top, I've seen them brambles before and I don't want to see them again!

I went there and back in 45 minutes but the smile on my face lasted a whole lot longer! Congratulations to Dave Webb on his first Brighton run too, two less Brighton virgins!

Poor old Kelly, she had to put up with my Brighton trip for the rest of the night and most of the following day!

Sorry Brew, I didn't have my mobile on me otherwise I would have rung you. Honest!

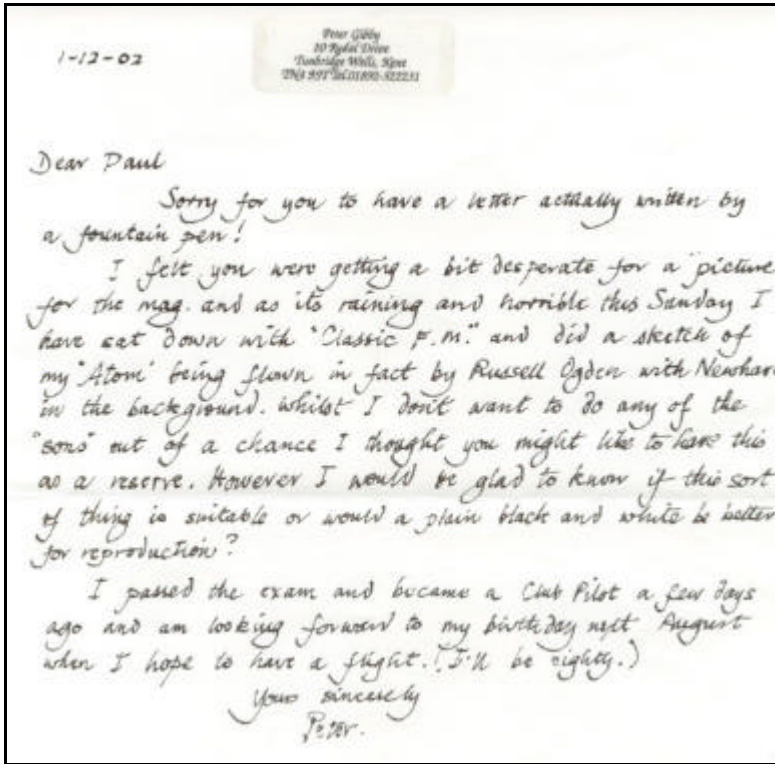
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...thanks to Peter Gibby for this excellent contribution:



BHPA approved school:

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.....dare to deviate.....dare to aviate:

Tandem Paraglider Flights.
D-aviation vouchers by return - special rate for SHGC members.....£55 inc.
 Tandem pilot coaching/tuition and assessments..... p.o.a.
CP - now what!
 Just passed or about to pass your CP or been CP for sometime but the flying hours seem as illusive as ever or perhaps you're just rusty or had a lay off. Busy club sites can be tricky but you probably don't want to return to school. Informal coaching here and abroad could be the way forward. We know the sites, we know the local weather, we are flexible, we have lots of experience and we have the time. Want more airtime - call us and discuss what YOU need.
Trips for 2003/4.
Crete: An ideal late season chance for thermalling and XC flying - Sept 2nd to Sept 9th. This very special Greek island, with its laid back rustic charm, warm sea, sun, mountains and excellent flying record is a must. Choice of accommodation, guiding and car hire.....£399.
Lanzarote: Join us for our fifth year of winter sun, fun, and flying.....27th Nov - 11th Dec. Suitable for all levels of pilot from EP upwards - finish your CP tasks.....expand your soaring and thermalling skills.....go XC or fly 20km along the 2000' Famara ridge - and back! We offer guiding to all levels, luxury villa accommodation, breakfast and car hire.....£425.
Algodonales:April/May 2004.....1000m launches, CP friendly take off and landing areas. Price includes, transfers, local guiding, minibus/car hire and en-suite acc.....£399.
 Tel: Dave Perrin 07769692951 dave@d-aviation.co.uk www.d-aviation.co.uk

THE CLOUD POLICE.



Local Knowledge

*Regular users of **Southern Club** sites will all agree on the importance of local knowledge. In this article, **Carlo Borsattino** unravels the **Convergence Effect at High & Over***

The other day, Saturday, I had again the pleasure of one of those wonderful H&O days that reminded me that sometimes it can be a really rather pleasant place to fly. The effect that was taking place at the site and over the valley, a kind of valley wind 'convergence', was something that I remember used to happen quite often at H&O, although for some reason it doesn't seem to have happened quite so much in the last couple of years. Hopefully it will again!

I first started to learn about this marvellous 'convergence' effect in my early flying days when (surprise, surprise!) watching Dave 'The Mad Farmer' Watts exploiting it; floating about up high all day long at H&O whilst everyone else was stuck on the ground, with little or no wind and no apparent lift, thinking "How the **** is he doing that - there's NO LIFT, so how can he stay up, never mind sky out??" I guess Dave might well have been the first person to put together the pieces of the jigsaw and unlock the wonders that H&O can offer on these magical days. Anyway, I watched...

Then one day some funny looking 'Geezer' turned up, back from his travels abroad, flying some raggedy old dusty wing, and started doing the same kind of thing, closely followed by the Farmer's son, Mark, whom I had already noticed flew in ALL kinds of dodgy conditions and seemed to like turning his glider upside down on a regular basis.

I started getting REALLY suspicious (I had already been keeping a careful eye on the Farmer's every move, as he just always seemed to be able to stay up when no one else could) now when ALL THREE of the buggers seemed to be doing it on a regular basis.

In one year in particular, 96 I think (?), there seemed to be a lot of easterlies and these kind of days at H&O, and it got really rather irritating after awhile watching the three of them boating about up high whilst the rest of us just sat about on the hill. "Bar Stewards", I thought.

So, I made up my mind that I would find out what secret these three were keeping to themselves, and I just kept repeatedly trying, launching, slope landing and going to the bottom, again and again, until eventually I started to put some of the pieces of the puzzle together.

What was happening was that the sea breeze (usually SE'rly) was fighting a small battle (more like a pillow fight) with the prevailing wind (usually ENE-NE) of the day. When this sets up nicely (as it did last Saturday) it makes the area out in the valley very buoyant, with light convergence areas/lines setting up in the valley. This is something that I've observed, and had the pleasure to fly in, many times over the past few years and which I will try to explain the basics of how to get into, and make use of it, below.

The first trick is to recognise that it might be the right kind of day, with the right conditions happening, that might cause this effect. Once you've recognised (or have a suspicion) that this effect may be going on (now that you are aware of it), look out for good signs of a 'lifty' cycle, which could well be one of these areas of convergence setting up, with a thermic cycle going through. Especially look for swifts, as they are usually excellent markers for convergence type lift. Seagulls are less reliable, but then again it's always worth keeping an eye on all airborne objects and animals! Sometimes you may even be lucky enough to get clouds, or haze caps, forming - but not usually.

The first bit of lift (the most important bit, as you don't get the next bit without it) is often the most difficult. It's usually small and broken, but it may be either very weak or quite punchy and 'surge-y'. You need to adjust your thermalling technique accordingly, and quickly, to suit - often changing technique, angle of bank, tightness of turn all the while to try and stay in the best bit of lift. Usually, if you don't stay in the best bit, you get 'dropped' and left behind by the thermal. Then you get to land and watch others floating about for hours whilst you're stuck on the deck!

Once you're up and in the area of lift, you must learn to really 'feel' what is going on through the air (having a glider that is nice and responsive and gives good feedback REALLY helps with this, I find). To help find thermals and areas of lift, I use a combination of 'guesswork' (through knowledge, experience and learning the 'theory' about lift and thermals), together with observation (very important indeed!) and 'feel' (feeling the air through the glider). I also go with my 'gut feeling' and instinct a lot (more and more), which I think one develops more and more over time.

Nowadays in conjunction to observation and feel I also use my GPS to help me find lift - especially thermals and convergence - as a GPS gives me that extra bit of information about what the wind is doing at my particular height and location, though my ground speed, at all times.

All the while you're working hard to stay in the lift and keep climbing, you need to also keep an eye out for signs of your next bit of lift, just in case you lose this bit (or it just fizzles out), or if there are any good signs that there might be another better bit of lift within a (preferably easy) glide. If a convergence line/area is setting up, then almost certainly you will see lots of swifts messing about, perhaps chasing after the insects that have been 'sucked up' into the lift, or it's just less effort for them to stay in the air if they fly about in lofty areas.

Once you've managed to get past the first, low down bit, it's usually much easier to stay up. On Saturday, for example, I was getting up to over 2000ft (2300ft tops) and just hitting bubble after bubble after bubble of lift. I think I had 2 flights of around 1hr30 each, and another flight of around 40mins like this, when a few others got up with Gandhi and I in an easier cycle that came straight through the launch area, so you didn't have to go out and find it. It was really easy to stay up once you were up - but you need to try to keep an eye on the swifts and 'feel' where the 'lifty' area is all the time as it seems to stay in once area for a bit and then move around, maybe to a completely different part of the valley. On Saturday the convergence seemed to me to be setting up to the south side of launch at first, then moving slowly north in a kind of band through launch and towards Alfriston - a pattern which I would say is quite usual from my experience, although on some days it might do something quite different to this.

Anyway, hope someone found this of interest, and someday of maybe even of use!... CARLO

BRAZIL XC 2004

After the great success of the **BRAZIL XC 2003** trip (as seen in Skywings June 2003), we're running another 3 week thermalling & Cross Country flying course for paraglider pilots in **Governador Valadares**, Brazil, flying out on January 30th 2004.

Governador Valadares is without doubt one of the world's greatest paragliding locations, offering reliably superb cross country flying conditions in a very friendly flying locality. The superb take-off mountain is an ideal launch pad into the usually blissful, easy thermic conditions and very light winds. Once off, there are normally plenty of divine thermals to be found & climb easily up to cloudbase in, to find yourself surrounded by endless green rolling hills and puffy white clouds stretching out in all directions as far as the eye can see. The very light prevailing winds & usual lack of wind-sheer or inversion layers mean that the thermals are not all chopped up, so there is relatively very low levels of turbulence considering the excellent thermic conditions. It's like flying on the best possible UK cross country day of the year almost EVERY SINGLE DAY, but without all the problems of strong winds, annoying airspace, the sea (i.e. running out of land!) and over-crowding. All these things must surely make 'GV' absolutely THE perfect winter destination for British pilots!

The trip is being organised & run by **Carlo Borsattino**, with expert assistance by cross country virtuoso **Mark Watts**. Our comprehensive local knowledge of the area & previous experience of running trips there, together with years of experience as instructors, fly-guides, and accomplished cross country pilots, will ensure that you make absolutely the most of your trip. Flying together on radio with your in-flight guides, with our own personal driver and retrieval vehicle, you will surely fly longer, further, & safer.

The course is aimed at pilots who have already totted up some flying hours (as a rough guide, CP+25hrs min. with some experience of thermalling), and offers a high level of specialist flight guidance to help improve your general flying & thermalling skills & extend your XC flights. We will give detailed briefings on all aspects of launch, flying, landing, safety, conditions, & retrieve, as well as theory sessions with Q&A. Guidance will be aimed at the individual, covering everything from launching to landing, and all the bits in between!

Organised & run by **Carlo Borsattino**
Fly Guides **Carlo Borsattino & Mark Watts**
January 30th – February 20th 2004

You can be sure that you will learn a HUGE amount from this course, & come back to the UK fully primed & ready to make the most of the British XC season! Everyone in the course in Feb 2003 beat their own personal bests here are some quotes from them about the 2003 trip:

Mike Parfitt: "I bettered, then doubled my previous best XC distance and achieved 4x the XC total in 3 weeks that I had achieved prior to that." **Bob Brown:** "Daily flight organisation retrievals, site & flight briefings, in-flight coaching over radio - all really very good indeed!"; "I achieved far more actual flying than on previous trips." **Crispin Rose-Innes:** "I learnt an enormous amount, far more than I expected." **John Stevens:** "The course and trip was even better than I expected! Not just good but excellent!" **Grita Rose-Innes:** "The best trip I have ever had, beyond anything I had hoped for."; "Everything was great: well organised, fantastic flying..."; "The course was brilliant! (Very very good)."; "THANK you both SO MUCH for your brilliant guidance and instruction!" **Abigail Barr:** "The course was fantastic."; "I learnt what is possible, what I am capable of, what I need to do to achieve it, why I love it and why everyone should do it."; "My success this season (2003) has its roots right there in GV with you guys. It's all your fault ;->"; "Thanks very much guys - real quality time!"

PRICE FOR 3 WEEKS: £1200, including: Airport transfer to GV; Hotel with breakfast & air con; Our own private transport vehicle with experienced retrieve driver and air con; Expert in-flight guidance on radio and full individual brief / de-brief; Theory & questions answered.

To book your place, or for more info, contact:

Carlo Borsattino or Nancy Elliott

Tel: 01273 84 66 80 Fax: 0870 70 61 867

Mobile (Carlo): 07884 49 66 70 (Nancy): 07775 895 495

carlo@flybubble.co.uk or nancy@flybubble.co.uk

www.flybubble.co.uk

A Member's Diary

Malcolm Lamming recounts a recent trip to Chamonix....and the merits of Pink Floyd's earlier works (ed: I always preferred Frank Zappa myself)

Pre Amble:

I mentioned the basic statistics of this story to a gathering of SHGC flyers sitting on the ground around a limp windsock at Beachy Head on *Sunday 10th August*, while I ate my packed lunch and Dave Massey altruistically poured my water bottle over a fellow pilot's neck. Yellow air under an inversion drifted over Pevensey Bay and Hastings; maybe the Normans were having another go with updated weaponry. Regardless of this, conversation had drifted to the relative merits of Pink Floyd's earlier and later albums, and Syd Barrett's individual flying technique (didn't stop him crashing and burning, bless him). I mentioned I had spent the last weekend in Mieussy, a small village in France with one food store and two paragliding schools.

Saturday 2nd August 2003:

Set off from Geneva on the A40 to Chamonix, with friend N. in a Renault Twingo with the windows open against the heat, via Decathlon Annemasse to buy some tennis balls in case of no flying, in the general direction of Morzine. I am a mere CP+35, plus 90 hours in Cessnas, but I have learnt that mountain winds are more driven by temperature than isobars, hence a strategy of keeping going until we see someone flying, rather than consulting the French Wendy (Vanessa?).

Mostly blue sky, kilowatts per square metre, and some promising cumulus.

(Am reminded of Alexei Sayle sketch: "I was in Hyde Park, and this geezer said, 'It's a nice day, eh?'. But there was one small cloud in the sky, right, so I reckoned this geezer was being sarcastic, right, so, right, I smashed his face in. Yeah. Right. You know.")

More pleasantly, leave the autoroute at Cluses, notice specks in sky to west of Taninges, so turn left. Approach little village of Mieussy. First sight is paraglider landing in field, which turns out to be run by "Choucas Club" (see FFVL website). Miss turn-off to club, do 180 at next roundabout, my passenger N. exclaims alarm that an other paraglider appears to be about to land on the

road, which I suppose does happen sometimes, but doesn't now.

Choucas Club briefs me with detailed photographs of its landing site and an other one closer to the "centre" of Mieussy, just south of some tennis courts. Negotiate 4 euros for lift to take-off at Pointe Perret, 3000 feet higher up. Choucas explains the site is private, but strangely refuses to take money for use of it.

Within 5 minutes of takeoff, have gained an other 1000 feet, on my Airwave Logic, very pretty scenery, shame about the cracked seat panel. The 1000' was all my own work, am slowly overtaken by French pilot in a mountain harness with no back protection and no helmet - "Jacques - you don't have a helmet!..." "Oui, I forgot it." Realise Mieussy, Les Gets, Morzine, what's the difference, they are just teleports, and decide to land before I get lost and disappoint N. And maybe Jacques will be meeting Syd soon.

Sunday 3rd August 2003:

Flight 1 not so good, descend at 250 feet/minute to Mieussy, until am directly above village (at legal height), when sink rate drops to zero over whole of village area from gentle thermals. Feel like I am in a Cessna again, doing circuits. Lazily lose height over babbling brook to land on what I assume is the other landing site. Notice large brown-robed figure in shade of only tree in the field. Worry that I have got it wrong, am landing in monastery, and am about to experience non-violent direct action by large monk.

Monk, with modest sunglasses, introduces himself un-self-consciously as Frere Christian, and asks where the launch site is. Explains he has about 40 hours, all from Guinea in Africa where he was stationed. Then a tandem lands, and the instructor explains all to Frere Christian. (The instructor is with the other Mieussy school, "Mieussy Parapente Systeme").

(Actually, since in France a first flight on a tandem is called a "Bapteme de l'air", or "an air baptism", I start to become slightly confused about the

relative roles here).

Flight 2 also bad, apart from some redemption from another 10 minutes spent hovering over Mieussy. Flight 3: 5:30 pm, wind nil with occasional thermal at Pointe Perret take-off. Blue sky, baking hot, wing laid out ready for launch. Leading edge flops down. Frere Christian appears out of nowhere, and kindly arranges it correctly. Launch, make decision to get out of Cessna mode and really work any available lift. Dance with thermal momentarily, good, then bomb out towards cliff edge anyway. Vario announces minute lift, was not there earlier, presumably restitution. I work it as promised, vaguely conscious that a slope landing is out of the question, but on the other hand height is safety, allegedly.

Follow the vario beeps along ascending cliff edge to NW, over the Foron gorge (which the Tour de France went up this year to "Sommand", graffiti still covering the tarmac), reach Pointe de la Rovagne at 1792 metres, and 3km away from launch. Hear an alarming animal barking noise which I realise is a deer. Hear a pilot shout: "Hep! C'est mon cerf!" ("Hey! It's my deer!"). Watch a pilot venturing "downwind" of cliff edge have major collapse (and recovery). Gain some height for better view (of scenery), then decide to head back to Mieussy while I am ahead, Syd might be round the next cliff edge.

Play tennis with N. in cool of evening. Fresh water is available from a cast-iron pump which has a handle you have to turn around several times to get the flow going, and it keeps going a while when you stop, it is delicious.

Reflect on Frere Christian touching my wing, and the subsequent best flight of the weekend. Feel humbled. It was a good Sunday.

ENDS:

I didn't take my camera, but in a separate email (in case the file size stops this one getting through) I will send a photograph taken the previous year in the same area, of a Romulin Warbird. Seeing is believing.

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Away

Parklife

By Nick Cresswell

Part 1

It's no secret that many in the flying community believe Hang Gliding has been in decline in recent years. Unofficial estimates state that there are approximately one-thousand hang-glider pilots in the UK, compared with many thousands of paraglider pilots. This is an obvious testament to the convenience and portability of the paraglider wing. But where does this leave the future of hang-gliding? With many pilots switching from hang-gliding to paragliding for the convenience factor, it's surely time that the hang-gliding movement claimed a few converts of its own, as well as promoting itself as convenient, economical and fun. Sounds barmey? Well that's exactly what the folks at Aerotow.com set out to do. And have they pulled it off? Read on.

I first heard about the Aerotow.com project in February 2003. Having been recently made unemployed, I was in need for something to look forward to and signed up to their HG-PG Aerotow conversion project in Spain. I didn't really know what it was about, but it seemed like a chance to quickly get the hang of aerotowing, in a hot place with a few familiar and trusted faces around. After a few weeks, it became clear what project pioneer, Mark Taggart and his team, were trying to achieve. The idea was to promote hang-gliding in Europe by setting up an air-park, where pilots and their partners & friends can come tow (or learn to tow), hire gliders, receive expert local XC knowledge and basically fly themselves silly. Sounded great!

Our visit to Aerotow.com was as part of the opening event of the park. A key part of this event was to convert around five paraglider pilots to hang-gliders within five days.



Admittedly, at the time, this idea was a source of a few giggles amongst the hang-glider pilots, especially when we discovered that they'd be flying class-five fixed-wing gliders (we sat back and imagined the repair bills!). Still, our lucky PGs were to be taught in tandem hang-gliders by the likes of Judy Leaden, Chris Dawes and Mark Dale, so who were we to mock!

So, on May 3rd, the Southern Club contingent boarded the good ol' Easy Jet from Gatwick. Our party consisted of Will Greenwood, Ron Richardson, Nigel Power, Darren Blackman, Paul Cryer and myself. Will and Nigel had come out to develop the towing operation and keep us in the air, while Ron was on hand to keep the budding XC puppies in line and the rest of us had come out to drink Spain dry!

Approaching the airport at Madrid, we wondered at the conditions outside and each speculated at what height cloud base was. Seven grand was the consensus – should be great holiday then. After a fairly swift transfer to the air-park in Avila (courtesy of the guys at Aerotow.com) we got our gliders rigged - no thought for where we were sleeping or when dinner was! We were more interested in the big hanger where we could keep our gliders rigged all week – wow.

The event was to last seven days, but the Southern posse had arrived a couple of days before and were to leave a couple of days after. Looking back, this was a really good thing as it was precisely during these days that we had the best weather. So taking advantage of our early arrival, we spent the first night enjoying the excellent food and plentiful beer.

Day one of training – ooh, my head's a bit woolly! Still, the sun's out and I can hear the tug on the strip so maybe we should get up. After a shower, shave and a bit of breakfast, the night before was just a memory. For those of us new to towing, Will had rightly warned us of how difficult it can be to aerotow in strong & thermic conditions...and he wasn't wrong! Having finally got set and ready for take-off, it was already 11 am and the sky was starting to look very healthy indeed. Still, I attempted a few training tows (with some mixed results). First of all I was flying too low behind the tug (in the prop-wash), then, as I got that licked, it was becoming rather thermic, so just keeping the glider straight on the tow was beyond me. Feeling like I'd never get this towing thing licked, I retired to the club-house for a sandwich, a coke and a sulk.

"You've got to get up early and train before it develops", repeated Will for the second time that evening. "Yes Will", we nodded. "More beer anyone?" Nods all round! So after a few more beers and a mammoth pillow fight in our dormitory, we finally shut-eyed at about three! Still, we're on holiday! Having woken to the sound of Will getting his gear together, I considered the intense throbbing in my head and mentally prepared myself for the usual shave shower and breakfast. To my amazement, my head cleared and my body bounced back as I gulped down my third cup of tea - surely my constitution was living on borrowed time! Still, our plucky band of trainees assembled on the strip at around 9:15 and proceeded to take advantage of the clear skies. I was first off and beamed at how much easier it was to tow in these conditions. Keeping in line with the tug was getting easier and controlling the yaw of my glider on tow was becoming more instinctive. Peering at my vario I saw we were at 1500ft, which was the best I'd done so far, considering it was my third tow of the trip. Then suddenly I lost the tow-line. "What the f...!", I thought. Then I noticed my release mechanism was attached to the line, which was attached to the tug, which was flying away from me. After landing and examining my harness, I noticed what I'd done. I'd attached the release to two canvass tabs, one either side of the top-zip pocket on my harness, which had obviously come away. The actual release tabs were the much stronger (and more brightly coloured) tabs a bit further back. A lucky escape really – I dread to think what would have happened if they'd failed at 10 feet off the deck.

Felling a little foolish, I retired for the morning and went back to the hanger to sort out my harness. As the day drew on, I kept noticing all these other vehicles arriving at the site. Having been used to having the site facilities to ourselves, I'd forgotten that there were supposed to be forty-one of us in total for the rest of the week. So during the rest of the day, the rest of our party arrived, along with the weather.

Continued Next Issue...



- Mark Dale and conversion student, Simone



- The unmistakable Dragonfly, expertly flown by Will Greenwood

Classifieds

Sellers Note: Any advertisements submitted will appear in the next available issue and will only be considered with valid SHGC and BHPA membership numbers (yes, we do check both lists). Repeat submission are available *only* if requested. Please submit any advertising material or repeat requests to the address(es) shown in the editor's section at the start of this magazine.

Buyers Note: The Southern Hang Gliding Cub accepts no responsibility or liability for the condition or price of any item shown or any incident arising from the purchase and/or use of any item featured in this section. (ed:- just so you know)

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Alinco DJSIE 2M Radio, Complete with Charger & Additional Battery Pack £60. Also 2m Helmet Interface (with m.c openface helmet) £25. Also Harness – Sky Systems SAS II with Kevlar back-plate VGC £40. Also Laptop map/instructions holder £8. Also Sylva Compass £20. Call Tony 01903 873924

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Dates for your Diary

Scrub Clearance on West Firle: Sunday November 16th or 23rd (TBC)

Neil Brennan-Wright is organising a scrub clearance day on West Firle. Refreshments will be available for all hard-working volunteers so get in touch with Neil for more information. Email: neil.brennan-wright@virgin.net or Tel: 01424 733720

SHGC Christmas Party: Saturday December 13th or 20th (TBC)

This year's format will be somewhat different with a new venue in Brighton town, seasonal buffet with DJ to dance the night away to. Confirmation of Date and Time, plus how to get your tickets will appear in next month's Windsock. If you want to get in early to avoid disappointment, get in touch with Neil Brennan-Wright: Email: neil.brennan-wright@virgin.net or Tel: 01424 733720

Next Issue

- **Nick Cresswell** shares the final part of his Aerotow.com report from Avila, Spain
- **Christmas is coming (agghhh!!)**. We'd like to hear your official 'Sorry Darling' excuses for missing Christmas Dinner when you suddenly discover that it's flyable on the 25th!!!
- **The Southern Club official Christmas Party**. A revised format this year, so watch out for dates and how to get your tickets.
- **Winter Getaways**. Going anywhere nice during the winter lay-off? Share your thoughts & plans with us.
- Plus lots of other stuff related to our noble past-time.

Send it all in to:

nick.cresswell@ntlworld.com

Or by post:

Nick Cresswell
3B East Dulwich Grove
London
SE22 8PW

..ta ta ;-)

Me Again...



So, how was that?!

Wow, there's a lot more to this editing lark than I imagined. A big 'thank you' to my predecessor, Paul Coidan for help and guidance in getting this thing out to you. After quite a few late nights and a lot of nail biting, I can see why Paul has decided to let me put my money where my mouth is and take over (cheers mate!!!).

Now for an apology or two: Firstly, you've probably noted a few regular bits are missing (did you spot them? Answers on a post card.....on second thoughts, don't bother!). Sorry there's no mug's gallery of the committee; I'm in the process of creating a new one that's up-to-date. Secondly, there are also a number of regular business adverts missing and I can't apologise enough for this. If you represent one of these businesses, then please take this opportunity to send me your latest version of your ad and it'll be in next time (promise!).

You may also notice the new and very slick window envelope that Windsock has arrived in and the fact that YOUR ADDRESS is now printed on the back – all very personal and groovy, I'm sure you'll agree. This is a part of our newly mechanised printing and dispatch method, which means that I don't have to lick four-hundred envelopes each month!

So thanks for reading this far and don't forget:

YOU ARE THIS MAGAZINE – HAVE YOUR SAY!!

.....see ya' on the hill