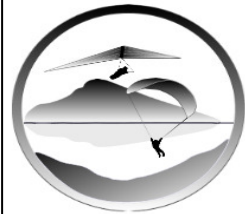


Cumbria Soaring Club

'Spoilt For Choice'

The Newsletter for Members of the C.S.C.



From the Daily Mirror 1 May 2009

After recession, MPs' expenses and pig flu, at last some good news...



"The summer is set to sizzle with above average temperatures and little rainfall, weathermen predict. Met office forecasters expect scorching barbecue conditions throughout June, July and August."

Chief meteorologist Ewen McCallum said: "**After two disappointingly wet summers the signs are much more promising this year.**" We can expect times when temperatures will be above 30C (90F), something we hardly saw at all last year."

Well, that's all right then.

And here lies the reason that CSC members have been deprived of the Summer edition of **SPOILT FOR CHOICE** (the Nation's favourite read) The editorial team spent the long wet months from the LCC to the Grasmere Sports and Show fingers poised over the keyboard of the CSC Commodore 64 in eager anticipation of the much heralded sizzler of a summer. Records would fall, canopies would shrivel in the UV and baked, bronzed pilots would be longing for the calm and cool of a Lakeland autumn. By early September

Autumn Issue - October 2009

it was clear that the nation was the victim of a cruel and malicious stunt to divert public attention from the Parliamentary allowance scandal. Bastards. Thus another victim of the political debacle. The editor of SFC has been fired. The new editor is to be his wife. In keeping with parliamentary procedure his wife will employ her husband as sub-editor, son as proof reader and hamster as roving reporter – all to be charged to the tax payer of course. (They really don't get it do they!).

Well that's enough of that. In spite of the bloody awful weather, this year has been seen an astonishing breakthrough. Mike Cavanagh rewrote the XC book. News that he had edged over the 100 K line was greeted with massive delight but not amazement. Burkitt had been nosing the line and we had expected him, Mike or one of the other top guns to make the breakthrough in the near future. Thus the 100K on July 11th fulfilled expectation (and relief that it was one of our pilots) The problem with winning such a long fought battle is that it leaves an emptiness, a bit of a vacuum. What do you go for now? The answer came only two weeks later. ONE HUNDRED MILES! Now the jaws dropped. This issue of SFC does not do justice to Mike Cav's achievement. He has provided a report of the 100K flight titled with characteristic modesty **“July 11th – a bit of a surprise”**. (We all know pilots who would title an article on the Clough milk run “Clough to Grasmere – how I blew away allcomers –Yeeehar!) Kitt has provided a historical take on the 100km achievement but recognition for the big one will have to wait for the Christmas edition.

Other news is that Lord Andrew of Plimmer has stepped down as Chairman of the Club. Like several fellow members of the House of Lords he has gone into hiding and is refusing to respond to requests under FOI to enable the editor to construct a validiction. Thus in keeping with editorial policy it will be made up. Andy has been Chairman since forever. He combined this role with that of Southern Sites officer. (For Northern pilots, these are sites found south of Dunmail raise, no really they do exist) The great thing about Andy is that he just got on with it, sorted out problems as they arose, quietly dealing with issues much helped by his depth of knowledge on legislation and other boring stuff. He kept us all flying. As Chairman he successfully steered the committee through some fairly choppy waters always managing to achieve a consensus where it mattered. Cheers Andy!

Steve Giles is acting as Chairman pro tem until the AGM in March. Paul Gannon has stepped down as Membership secretary to concentrate on his dairy farm. Again, Paul's contribution was immense, not just on his membership remit but his involvement in everything we do. The full list of committee is included elsewhere in the issue.

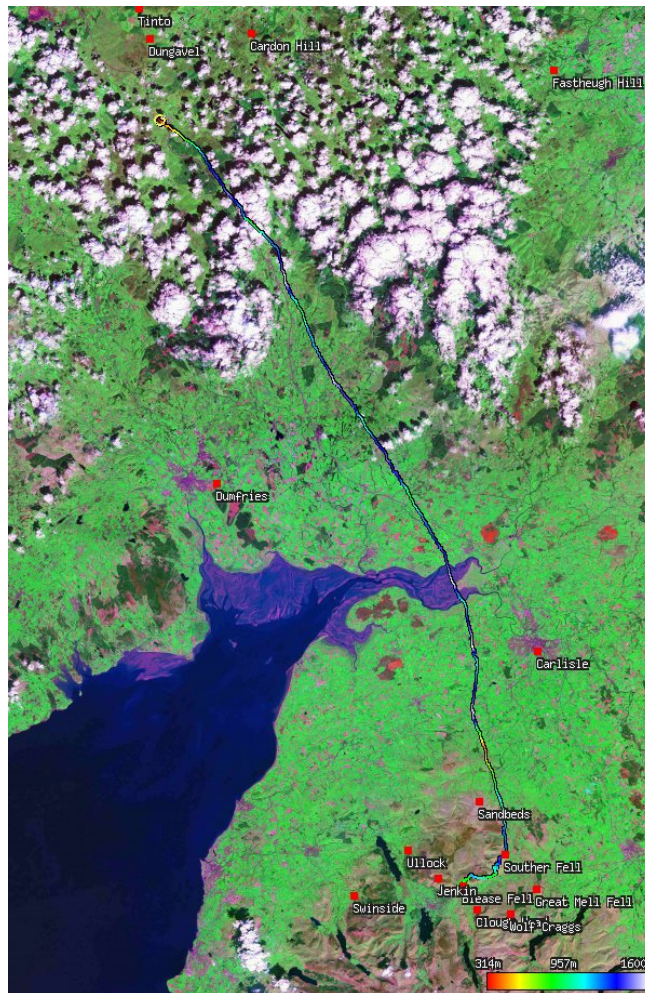
IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Mike Cavanagh's 100km flight**

- Oops- I shouldn't have done that, **Cow Puncher** reveals all about life on the farm.
- Poetry Corner – **TS Eliot** develops the farming theme
- Speed flying – Why would you?? **Groundhog** explains the metaphysics.
- Convergence – **Dave Horne** is converted
- **Lance Greenhalgh** remembers – How can we forget.
- **The Caption competition** – win a trip for 2 to Laragne.
- The Grasmere Show – winners and losers – but at least we had a day's flying!
-And much much more!!

July 11th – a bit of a surprise!

By Mike Cavanagh



The usual indecision was present – to go somewhere in the south lakes – Barkin, Cautley, ...if wind was light maybe the Langdales. Perhaps out to the Dales to Staggs or Semer Water. Luckily the fact that my car was still in the quarry at Clough, after flying from there to Whitestones the day before, and Ben was offering to drive up there rather than

hoping we could fly to it, had us heading north. Kitt came with us as his car was also at Clough having flown to Sedbergh the day before, however he could not come flying as he spent the day nursing it to the garage because it was not firing on all cylinders. Once we were in the north lakes we still had a bit of indecision between Souther and Blease. We saw people high on Souther but when we got to the road end we could only see people struggling on the hill with wind off to the south. Catherine and Katie pointed out the high ones that had a lucky break with a single cloud helping them get high. We still had thoughts of a Dales site where the Pennine clouds looked a lot better before taking the more sensible and more immediate option of Blease.

It turned out to be bang on and in reality quite windy. I was thinking about the usual battling about, to try and work out a triangle, but the wind and a rowdy climb out near the top made me consider a bit of a down winder. So I flew out to Souther where I got quite high leaving all options open. Good looking clouds in the Pennines reached out to Carlisle, so I thought I would glide into the blue and hopefully pick up something that would get me that far. In reality it was nice to go for a nice long glide without having to think about the hills!

Over the lone windmill out in front of Carrock it was starting to look tricky but my last major trigger, a quarry, was still within reach, and beyond something that looked like a chicken farm. Downwind of this it worked and although it was not very organised low down the lift got me back high, the drift not far off where I wanted to go to get across the Solway near Carlisle and where the good looking clouds were still in some abundance. The glide was good and the first clouds worked, I had reached my target and I had a good feeling. There seemed to be nice clouds heading the right way, just about down wind, although they were on the edge of blue sky. There were better clouds if I was willing to track due North, but the thought of the strong wind that I would be slightly cross winding, the hills and big tracts of forests all persuaded me to keep out of the boonies however good the clouds looked.

The line of clouds also kept me closer to the motorway and they worked like the stepping stones you dream about. I took most climbs high rather than long glides and skip them as the climbs were stronger higher up. I didn't drop below 800m all the way to Moffat! And I think the ack-ack guns that I believe the Scottish flyers have put in place to keep us south of the border must have been out hunting haggis as I crossed the border with a smile.

On the way, some wind mills confirmed the south easterly. At Moffat I faced another choice. My line of clouds, close to the wind direction were petering out into the blue, there were very good clouds if I was willing to cross wind a lot and head up the valley towards St Mary's Loch. There was also a third option, between the other two, directly north, but this was a bit blue and went over Devil's Beeftub, an area where I have failed to find any thermals on a previous trip when me and Alex drove up there – I did not fancy that again.

As I was over Moffat I knew it was about as far as people had got on previous flights and although my clouds were petering out, they looked like they would get me the 100km! Tinto was also beckoning and the motorway was on the track! Decision made and off I glided into the roughest of thermals, a bit of a wake up after the nice climbs I had got used to. There was an 8mps lurking around in there which gave me quite a tussle, but ultimately it got me back high. Meanwhile those clouds had petered out faster than I

hoped and my next glide turned into my final one as the last decaying cloud failed me. I thought about heading for a hill to wait, but looked at the distance on my gps saying 98km; hopefully just carrying on with the glide and landing by the road would get me 100km in a straight line. It was bit closer than I expected as I touched down by the pub at Crawford – 101.75km. I had a big grin on my face and hoped the machine was telling me the truth.

Some perfect hitches got me back to my car and home before 8pm. Yeahey – I'm glad we chose Blease today!!

Monday, 13 July 2009

The Lake District's flying 'Holy Grail' unlocked.

By Burkitt Rudd



I first began my flying obsession in the Lake District nearly 20 years ago and have been lucky to fly with some of the sports luminaries as well as many of what I consider to be 'top draw xc hounds' who have visited the area. During this time, while other areas in the U.K began clocking distances over the Magical 100km; the Lakes area continued to hold off giving up its main prize; till last Saturday.

Nigel Page was first to come close in the early 90's, clocking an impressive 90 km flight from Jenkin fell, this record stood for over 10years as the area's longest Pg distance; Untill Ali Guthrie made his strong wind flight from Great Mell Fell which lies on the edge Of the main mountains of the Lakes in 2005. Only to be caught out by Newcastle airspace.

For me this flight of Ali's seemed to provide a bit of a key for achieving such a distance from this area; As lovely as it isto be flying amongst the hills and dales of this area,

progress through this terrain can be painfully slow, as you need to often battle with either the prevailing wind; terrain orientation; as well as, the often technical influences of sea breeze which surround the county on three sides. The key for me, seemed to be, to take off near the edge of the hilly area similar to what Ali had done, and so began my obsession with sites like Brigsteer and Barkin, as both these provided easy access to the flat land terrain, taking away some of the added complication which appeared to make achieving better distances from this area just that bit more tricky.

In 2007 I was lucky enough to lay claim to the longest straight line distance from the lakes (flying from Brigsteer) with 3 flights each a little over 95km (completed on consecutive days.) and although one of these, through the turnpoint xc rule, took past the magical and invisible 100km line The xc score, in reality was still short of my 100km straight line holy grail.

The following year I was again fortunate to extend the longest flight distance claim by another km and achieve the UK's earliest 100km xc score in a season (19th March) but again this was achieved through the now standard turnpoint flight claims. More annoyingly this could well have been the 100km straight line distance holy grail, if I had been better prepared with regard to knowing the actual restrictions of the Leeds Bradford airspace. I had chosen to turn north in an attempt to circumnavigate the approaching airspace. However, If I had simply chosen to fly straight, stepping down my height as I past over Skipton and accepting this as my final glide I could have achieved my ambition. But in reality, flying for me it is really about continuing the great experience of free flight than simply laying claim to a first.

Later that season, flying initially in the company of my good friend Mike Cavanagh, I made another attempt at my Holy Grail; this time from Barkin, but again with no avail. Landing a frustratingly few 100metres short of the Scottish border and again only a couple short of that elusive 100. Ah-well, the search will continue next season.

On the 11th July the day after a great but painfully slow late afternoon/ early evening xc. We headed North once more to collect our vehicles where I chose to get my vehicle to a garage for some much need TLC, as on the journey to site the day before my car started to not fire on all its cylinders. While Mike and Ben Keayes were able to in the enviable position to be free of any such burden they simply had to decide which site they should fly from - finally selecting Blease Fell.

Blease is an interesting site as it is a very much a mountain site though in a position which is on the edge of the main fells and adjacent to Jenkin – the site of the areas first big pg distance claim. It appears that Mike managed to do what Nigel had previously done, by slipping off the side of the range with not that much height he carefully made good progress over Calbeck then Carlisle, crossing the Solway and the Scottish Border and more importantly into a much improving sky. Following the M74 Mike made a steady track northwards passing the old Victorian Spa town (Moffat) at the 80km mark, knowing now he was in a good position for the 100km distance. This is what Mike had to say.

“As I was over Moffat I knew it was about as far as people had got on previous flights and although my clouds were petering out, they looked like they would get me the 100km! Tinto was also beckoning and the motorway was on the track! Decision made and off I glided into the roughest of thermals, a bit of a wake up after the nice climbs I had got used to. There was an 8mps lurking around in there which gave me quite a tussle, but ultimately it got me back high. Meanwhile those clouds had petered out faster than I hoped and my next glide turned into my final one as the last decaying cloud failed me. I thought about heading for a hill to wait, but looked at the distance on my gps saying 98km; hopefully just carrying on with the glide and landing by the road would get me 100km in a straight line. It was bit closer than I expected as I touched down by the pub at Crawford – 101.75km. I had a big grin on my face and hoped the machine was telling me the truth”.

Although this Holy Grail may have alluded me, I will continue my quest to fly 100km (straight line) from the lakes. I must say a Big Congratulations to Mike. Who unknowingly to me had this this also as a goal for his XC flying as well.

“It was a bit of a holy grail for me to, I am amazed it had not fallen earlier. I was starting to think the lakes were too difficult to get that far. So maybe the fact that from there you can escape the mountains very quickly is key (I've always had that in the back of my mind), although you often have more sea air to contend with”.

Mike has continued to be a great xc sparing partner since the early days and he's a great sportsman who has helped me to greatly improve my own flying as a by-product of our friendship. - What should our next ‘Holy Grail’ be Mike; the 100mile distance?

August 2009: Just reminiscing

By Lance Greenhalgh

Safety Warning: Make sure you are sitting securely – my stories often send a glass eye to sleep.

It's my birthday this month. It would be politically incorrect for me to tell you how old I am. That's the new anti-ageism laws for you! As a guide, I arrived in this world the year after my Dad had survived 5 years in a Nazi salt mine. In 1940 he missed the boats at Dunkirk.

July 2007: Gordie Oliver presented me with a red ribbon to tie to my harness. I removed it after 10 hours airtime in the ‘summer’ of 2008. Since then, I have managed another 40 hours - most of them this year.

So there you have it. I have survived more than two whole days floating about on planet Earth's atmosphere. Those airborne days took at least another 40 ground-borne days, talking to experienced pilots, finding and getting to sites, studying the weather on t'internet, reading books, magazines, forums, site guides etc. And, of course, I have attended every CSC social meeting in the hope of learning something useful. A total of at least £6,000 has been spent on kit, petrol, memberships, courses, books and magazines and the occasional, essential pint of beer.

My dad's birthday present to me of his remarkable 'survival genes' have been well spent too.

The lessons of CP+50h follows. It's my birthday, so please, humour me – read on. 'Weather' often changes as you fly

CP Training, Bewaldeth. Whilst practising top landings, the wind increased to 'gale hanging' proportions. Contrary to Gordie's radioed instruction to land at the bottom of the hill, I decided I should try one more slope landing – only to find I was drifting backwards at a great height. With no experience of using the speed bar, the only way down was to use the friendly rotor found at the back slope of Bewaldeth. Gordie also had to rugby tackle me as I landed going backwards.

Note: Do as you are told!

CP Training, Clough: I did my last CP task (speed bar) with Cu Nims rumbling in the distance. After completing the task and climbing back up Clough, the rumbles were much louder. Gordie gave crystal clear instructions to 'fly down quickly and directly to the car park – no soaring'. I took off, found some lovely lift and proceeded to show off my new found 360 skill. Strangely, my radio started vibrating. 'Fly down you *****'. Within five minutes of landing - a gust front almost blew me away.

*Note: Do as you are '*****' told!*

CP+ 4h, Souther Fell: It is well known the SE wind on Souther often veers S (usually around 12:00 UTC). I was happily whizzing about with lots of 360's above Mousethwaite Comb. Unknown to me, the wind had veered S and my height quickly began to melt away. Executing another 360 to take me close to the ridge to seek lift, I suddenly realised there was no lift (in fact it was rotor) and I going to hit the ridge. The SupAir AltiX air bag earned its corn that day as I used it to land on at >25mph. I had to walk down - the wind direction was parallel to the ridge.

Note: Keep checking the wind direction and strength, clouds and airspace – especially in Lakeland.

CP + 15h, Cross Fell (High Cap): XCWeather forecast 10mph until 12:00 increasing to 15mph early afternoon. I took off (alone) at 11am. Within minutes I found myself going backwards into the gully between High Cap and Man at Edge. By fully deploying the speed bar I avoided disaster – but I literally, landed on the fully deployed bar.

Note: In general, you are advised not to use your speed bar at less than 500ft AGL. Avoid flying low in gullies.

CP + 17h, Cross Fell (Radar Masts): Took off in top end conditions – happily soared Melmerby Scar for 30 minutes then observed all the other pilots were hastily landing by the A686 (most flying DHV 2/3). Following the flight path of the last pilot (but I was at a lower height), I experienced massive turbulence due to the undulating shallow slope. Several minutes of 'Yo-Yo scrubbing' shook me up before I managed to land on full speed bar going backwards with power lines 300 metres away.

Note: Be careful of who you follow and beware of landing on undulating shallow slopes.

Rushing to take off

CP + 2h, Bewaldeth: After the first dragging through heather, mud and stones (there have been many others), I brushed myself off then hurriedly took off to take advantage of a lull in the wind. Soaring happily well above the hill, I noticed my reserve handle dangling a foot below the harness – ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

Note: Pre-Flight check - testicles, spectacles, wallet etc, etc

CP + 6h, Clough: Clough Knotts is strewn with many sharp rocks. On launching I managed to snag a brake cascade line. It was only at 2500ft I noticed the severed cascade line – ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

Note: Check your wing and lines carefully before launch.

CP + 30h, Barkin Fell: Due to the ‘fresh’ wind, I ‘posyed’ my wing and moved downhill to join a group of experienced pilots. Clipping into my harness I omitting the pre-flight check and took off with my speed bar looped through my harness T strap. In strong mid-air conditions I had to unclip completely to release the bar – minutes later I was using full bar to cope with the well known Barkin wind gradient.

Note: Take your time. There will always be another day.

CP + 47h, Chabre France: Strong +30degC thermals, irregular nasty dust devils, a 2000ft cliff only 10 metres behind the take off – all tend to make you feel a little nervous at takeoff. I managed to fluff 5 out of 5 takeoffs by hurriedly ‘jumping’ into my harness too early – rather than continuing to run hard and get lots of momentum. Result: partial collapses on every takeoff.

Note: You cannot do too much ground handling and alpine launch practise.

‘Scratching’ and Landings

CP + 6h, Jenkins: Determined to remain airborne in very light wind conditions I scratched using maximum brake to maintain a high angle of attack. 30ft above the ground I pulled a turn, stalled and dropped rapidly, fortunately landing on my feet. No damage done but was I surprised?

Note: Stall turns are dangerously easy to do.

CP + 7h, Jenkins: In the early CP+ hours, several top and slope practise landings have been painful. I twisted an ankle by stepping on a clump of sedge grass whilst landing too fast. I was landing and taking off using my left foot for months afterwards.

Note: If the landing approach is not right – go round and do it again.

Next flight, Scales Fell: Within days of the above flight I landed out at Wallthwaite, miss-judging the rotor effect of trees and descended quicker than expected whilst fixating my eyes on a farm gate. Naturally, I smashed into it. Ouch then hospital A&E, X-Rays and all that. To this day, my knee often reminds me of the pain.

Note: Watch out for rotor and always look where you want to land – don’t stare at the problems

CP + 15h, Binsey Fell: Determined not to give up and land safely at the bottom then walk back up the hill, I scratched the ‘lower slope’ of Binsey. After successfully dodging two hawthorne trees a third tree ‘just stepped out in front of me’ (honestly). The memory of the feeling of relief whilst hanging upside down with my head 4ft from the ground and all essential tackle in one piece still brings tears to my eyes – lucky me.

Note: You can fool yourself to thinking you are a sky god some of the time but not all of the time

With such an inept ability, poor judgement, lack of talent, etc, no doubt you are left wondering why I bother to continue with paragliding.

I do it because I absolutely love it. I enjoy the fresh air, endorphin flushes climbing the hills with 20Kg on my back, blasts of adrenaline, good companions and most important – it’s fun.

What next? Cross Country flights are all the rage. I'll settle for smooth take offs and landings and occasionally touching cloud base. Maybe I should try aerobatics? I hope to be able to let you know how I am getting on next birthday month.

(Afternote: the Editor is delighted to report that Lance has proceeded onto XC. SFC welcomes articles from less experienced pilots, a vital component of the flying community. Let the editor have your articles, photos and views. A simple conversation on the fell side can be sufficient to get your ideas into the Club magazine. We welcome unsolicited, anonymous and salacious gossip.)

Caption Competition

Loads of pics sent in for this issue's popular caption competition. All of them were of our social secretary auditioning for **Strictly Come Flying** at Chabrè last summer. Suggestions invited for dancing coach Steve Giles' thoughts as Lance demonstrates his *grande battement en cloche*. Hmmm Nice!



Interesting Facts No 19

More practical advice for the fairer sex: Finally my dear lady, please, please, please do remember, that because you are doing something foolish people consider unconventional, it is wholly unnecessary to make a guy of yourself. Some men do and succeed. They seem to glory in a collarless, unshaven, unbrushen, Weary Willie appearance – and no one thinks any more of them for such eccentricities. Do not, I entreat, imitate these. Start neat, at any rate. Whether you return neat is in the lap of the gods. (*British Mountaineering. CE Benson. 1909*)

The Aviator's Alphabet: 3 C is for Sea breeze – and Convergence

By Dave Horne

Time was – head full of school theory and of wind blowing up slopes – that half an hour's boating around a ridge somewhere was a beautiful thing. And the Lake District has ridges all over the place so sometimes this actually happened. Sure, there were strange beasts called "thermals" that could get you up high and swallow you up or spit you out but I generally just felt sea-sick as I heaved into one side and then fell out the other. In time (quite a lot of it actually) oh joy the beast became the elevator.

But then the next scary thing came along – sea breeze, a snake in the grass that "comes over the back". People landing 15k backwards along Bassenthwaite, getting a good drubbing on Jenkin, nasty curly clouds all over Clough, oh yes you didn't want to play with that. The two C's though, well that's a different matter, sea breeze convergence is the latest beautiful thing.

Easter Monday, south-easterly, went to Barkin - blown out (yet again), but a decision to head for the Northern Lakes is rewarded with a nice flight from Scales along Blencathra, pootling around over Blease for a while and landing in time for afternoon tea. I was going to call it a day, but was persuaded to walk up Scales again, thanks to Chris Little. Soon gained height and nipped off along the ridge, overtaken by "Café Treff" Robinson and "S&W" Giles whilst topping up on Blease, may as well follow them down to Portinscale.

But they sniff out a snorty thermal just as we're lining up to land and soon we're all circling up in our individual little whirlwinds – 1k, 2k, 3k. Takes a long time for the penny to drop in my case, all that cloud around (where did it come from?), but soon we're sledging along, bobbing in and out of cloudbase at 5k, the good guys taking the darker stuff inland, me preferring the sunnier side (scared to go to the dark side though I know I should). Bassenthwaite, Bewaldeth, Bothel, all disappear below from 4k above before the fun ends in the easterly headwind, landing near Mealsgate with a massive grin. Five of us land within a mile or two, including a guy on a S&W demo wing, bet that was the best demo flight he'd ever done (did he buy the wing Steve?). Best of all, Jan Little turns up in the Trafik van and we all get a lift back to the pub.



Bewaldeth from 4K



North Lakes from Bothel

CSC coaching day early May, a rather unappetising forecast but “Dangerous” Dave makes a good call for Buttermere Moss and after a damp start, the sea breeze arrives and the ridge becomes soarable. Some of us launch and scratch around for a while but it dies off and we’re soon down at the bottom.

Decide to walk back up in the strong sun (not for the faint hearted!). Rewarded by the sight of a line of straggly grey cloud over Whiteless Pike and Grassmoor, I don’t waste much time scratching, instead heading off over the valley for a very pleasant flight at cloudbase along Crummock to Grassmoor and back, with splendid views over to Keswick and amazingly clear views through the sea air to the Isle of Man in the other direction. Some low-airtimers find themselves at cloudbase too, before the very light wind on the ridge starts to turn east making for some interesting tactics by various pilots returning there. Others (well one anyway) get a damn good kicking and need a bit of gentle therapy incorporating all sorts of theories about what might have been going on. A great afternoon and plenty of good crack down in Buttermere village.



Buttermere Moss



Skiddaw from Whiteless Pike

Since then there have been other great days – floating around in front of Blencathra in the evening (restitution or convergence, I don't know?), linear lift into the white room over St John's in the Vale giving a helping hand towards Grasmere.



“Blencathra - evening flying”

Oh yes, I'm in love with convergence. Sea breeze? Bring it on!!

LCC – Not just about ‘US’

Saturday, 20 June 2009

Dear Lakes Charity Classic Organising Committee and Cumbria Soaring Club,

I am writing to most sincerely thank you for your recent donation of £750 to Flyability from the proceeds of the 2009 Lakes Charity Classic event. Not only has the Lakes Charity Classic grown and developed into truly awesome and highly respected event but it is very impressive to see that you are able to raise and pass on such significant amounts of money in the form of donations to worthy causes.

Having just checked back in the Flyability archive, you may be interested to know that it was monies donated to Flyability from the 1996 Lakes Charity Classic that were used to conceive, begin and fund the first two historic Flyability pilot training scholarships. Needless to say, that student 'pilot' scheme was a great success and led to the establishment of the now permanent Flyability pilot training schemes that have been running with many notable success stories ever since. Not only has the pilot training scholarship scheme been extended to subsidise both student and club pilot training courses but the Flyability sponsored tandem flight scheme was also born due to the

success of the pilot training scholarship scheme and its origins in being initially funded by donations from the Lakes Charity Classic.

To date Flyability has awarded 70 pilot training scholarships to people with varying disabilities and since July 2000 Flyability has sponsored and facilitated in excess of 114 tandem flights for people with disabilities.

Many of these pilot training scholarships and tandem flights have taken place within Cumbria and have involved local schools, pilots and members of the Cumbria Soaring Club. Thus, the past and continued support of Flyability by the Lakes Charity Classic and the Cumbria Soaring Club has been instrumental to our success and survival.

In these uncertain economic times when we are seeing a decline in individual donations and with the demise of regular funding to Flyability from the BHPA, your recent donation of £750 to Flyability is indeed very important, if not essential in enabling us to maintain our core aims, objectives, various schemes and indeed some modest development plans.

With sincere thanks for your generosity, to all those that attended or contributed to the event and for all of the hard work that must go into organising such a fabulous Lakes Charity Classic.

Regards,

Steve Varden.

On behalf of Flyability.

Flyability is a registered charity (no. 1059197) in England and Wales.

Oops! I shouldn't have done that.

By Cow Puncher

The following extract has been plagiarised from the private diary of a Lake District pilot – perhaps he shouldn't have put it on the Forum.



Monday 1st June 2009, a new month – heading for Ullock.

One glider laid out on the hill as I approach, a little higher than the usual take-off. Am I chasing a wind which is dropping off quicker than I can climb? A second glider begins to lay out, and soon I arrive at the parking area; Air Ventures vehicle is here already. Unload and sling on the glider, and set off at a quick pace up the track.

I like cows. They have such lovely and appealing big brown eyes. They are full of curiosity, always poking their snouts into whatever is going on around them. The path through the field runs alongside some small and thinly spaced trees. A bunch of cows with calves, mostly laying down, on one side of the trees, and further along another bunch of cows with calves on the other side, also mainly laying down. A few others scattered around. Two bunches makes a herd? Keeping the lines of trees between me and them, I walked past the first bunch of cows, then crossed through a gap in the trees so that I could do the same with the second bunch.

The first bunch, now behind me, began standing up and moving quite quickly towards me, a fair bit of snorting, stamping and mooing going on. Then the bunch in front did the same, making their way through gaps in the trees directly towards me. It was clear those in front didn't want me to pass, so I began moving at a tangent to them, so that I could continue my march up the hill. Then they moved to block my path. The black cow now making agitated moves in front of me didn't have lovely big brown eyes, just mean and

aggressive black ones, staring right at me. At its sides and behind were others, and some quite large calves, all being worked into a frenzy by this demon. OK. Not usually one to give up easily, I realised my error and turned around to head back down the hill. Except there's another of the ugly black brutes pretty close that way too, still approaching and with that same look, and likewise flanked by many others.

Totally surrounded, outnumbered at least thirty to one, and nowhere to go, I stand still. There's a snort, a rush of hooves and mean black bugger number one has charged me from behind, head down, butting me to the ground, right in front of mean black bugger number two, which then charges right over the top of me. Like the ball thrown into a scrum at a Five Nations final. I let out a scream. Not just because whole herd are worked into a frenzy stamping and snorting and I now fear for my life, but because I've also taken a hoof onto my leg. My arms instinctively cover my head. Extremely lucky, I think the glider on my back has made it difficult for them to get properly on top, and as I roll out from underneath I struggle to my feet and look for a way out. I've been rolled closer to the trees and make the short dash, only a few yards. The trees make it difficult for many to get close, and I make a token gesture of climbing onto a tree limb, 18 inches off the ground, releasing the glider bag to stand it between me and one of the many possible attack routes, not a lot of protection. Not more than three feet away in every direction are viscous looking brutes, not a single happy smile among them, just staring and snorting. What have I done? They're now dripping saliva on my hat, still on the ground a few yards away.

Looking down at the swelling on my leg I realise I'm in desperate need of help. If I so much as move it stirs them up some more. Carefully pulling the mobile phone from my pocket, I feel pain in my other leg. When I was knocked to the ground, I must have landed on the phone. Luckily it was already switched on and I called 999. "Which service please?" was the immediate response. "I don't know, I'm surrounded by some very angry cows that have already trampled me. I'm not injured but need some help getting out of here!" Although my leg hurts I know there's no break.

A very tense half hour or so follows, in which it feels like if I try to step off my branch then I'm trampled cattle fodder. While a few of the herd fight among themselves, practicing their "mounting", the rest of them gradually move closer, taking it in turns to put those snouts just millimeters away from me and then snort loudly. This seems to encourage others to do the same. I had expected them to become bored quite soon, but it never happened.

Eventually a rescue arrives. Two police officers approach, and the herd begins to move away. One of the police asks me to make my way towards them, so I do. "Is that your bag?" they ask. "Yes". "Can you bring it and everything else with you?" Damn, I was trying to escape quickly and maybe go back for it later. Seeing a gradual dispersal I become a little braver, collect my bag and dripping hat then limp my way towards the police. "We would have come a little closer but it's too hot to walk that far," one of them says. They kindly share the weight of my pack and carry it back towards the car. I walk down, occasionally looking back, envious of Gordie and the others soaring the hill, but

glad to be alive.

This is a true story, not an ounce of fiction and totally un-exaggerated.

Well not exaggerated as yet but the rest of us had massive fun at Cow Puncher's expense with lots of lowing and mooing during the LCC in particular. Obviously there was loads of advice particularly on the Forum, some of it sensible, much of it seriously taking the mick. However, the event coincided with a spate of cow related incidents around the country and even deaths by trampling. Whilst the common thread seems to be the presence of calves often exacerbated by the intruder being accompanied by a dog there have been occasions when the attack has been spontaneous. This week (early October) a sign has appeared by the Ullock gate warning of cow-on-people action. You have been warned - the cows are out there - be afraid, be very very afraid.

Poetry Corner

- and still on a theme. A recently discovered unpublished poem by TS Eliot (no seriously, full text available online)

*Of all the beasts that God allows
In England's green and pleasant land,
I most of all dislike the Cows:
Their ways I do not understand.
[...]
You may reply, to fear a Cow
Is Cowardice the rustic scorns;
But still your reason must allow
That I am weak, and she has horns.
[...]
To country people Cows are mild,
And flee from any stick they throw;
But I'm a timid town bred child,
And all the cattle seem to know.
But when in fields alone I stroll,
Oh then in vain their horns are tossed,
In vain their bloodshot eyes they roll —
Of me they shall not make their boast.
Beyond the hedge or five-barred gate,
My sober wishes never stray;
In vain their prongs may lie in wait,
For I can always run away!
Or I can take sanctuary
In friendly oak or apple tree.*

Grasmere Show

By Chris Field



I know it's not Grasmere but it is different. (Photo Nick Bubb)

Once again the last Sunday in August dawned bright but with little expectation of great flying weather. The August bank holiday marks for many the end of summer and in 2009 it had been a particularly wet and miserable affair. In the days leading up to the show it was not looking great. The synoptic charts were criss-crossed by fronts and depressions and the showground was being filled daily with water. By Thursday the car park was declared unusable. On the Saturday the landing field was submerged and the chart showed a front poised to cross the North West in the next 24 hour. Marco Stevenson phoned from Chesterfield, was it worth coming? Of course. We will launch at 1007 hours and fly until 1139 at which point light rain will start building into more substantial showers and the wind will pick up whilst backing to the south. Malc Grout will launch in an attempt to beat his son Rob in both altitude and accuracy and will fail to get back to the landing field. We will all have a good laugh and go for a beer. And that was it really.

In truth, once again in spite of the forecast Grasmere produced the goods and although the weather looked to be bloody awful everywhere else the micro climate of the valley resulted in light winds and held the rain at bay for just long enough for everyone to enjoy at least one flight at the target. Gordie (with flares and smoke trail) opened the event at 1007 with a flight into the arena for the benefit of the spectators and a big round of applause. Aware of the relative urgency, Dangerous Dave quickly popped the pilots off the launch in quick succession. This year we had the additional incentive of a prize for maximum height gain so although the conditions in front of the launch were unspectacular a few pilots dropped back along the valley to soar the higher ridge. That was how Brian Doub made his 462 feet height gain to win the prize. Rob Grout followed

suit but his only evidence of success was a personal affidavit that he was higher than Brian. Rob had more success by winning the B comp, beating all comers in spectacular style to pocket the £50 pot. (Yes I know he was the only pilot to enter but who cares – you should have got out of bed) Mario won the £50 for the A Comp and both winners received permanent trophies from the Show Organizers. The hard fought Inter-County competition was won once again by Cumbria and the newly inscribed Trophy is proudly displayed in the Sick and the Wrong as a perpetual reminder of the superior flying prowess of Cumbrian pilots and for the Northumbrians the need to get out of bed. (Notwithstanding that scurrilous remark, the support of Dave Horne, Jan Little and her husband Chris Hurtle are yet again very much appreciated)

By lunchtime the rain had set in so the arena ground display was cancelled in favour of the beer tent followed by tea and medals in the car park. Many thanks to everyone who turned up and in particular to Ian and Heather for running the target zone and Dangerous Dave for the launch marshalling and hound avoidance measures.

In addition to the very positive PR the club received £150 from the Show organizers and a great time, as always was had by all. (The full results are on the CSC web site. Gordie's flight is on You Tube and there is a link from the Grasmere Sports and Show web site)

Speed Flying

by Groundhog

(Pics by Patrick Holmes and Lucy Oliver)



You had to be at the September Social to get the full benefit of [Gordie Oliver's](#) take on Speed Flying. As a *dyed-in-the-wool-slowly-enjoy-the-view* pilot the presentation was a major revelation and served to answer that essential philosophical question - why would you? So, here's my take on it (and full apologies to Gordie if I misrepresent him but he has full right of reply of course)

The fundamental is that Speed flying is different from paragliding. That came as a surprise. I had assumed it was the same but the faster and shorter flights made it both scary as well as pointless. As Gordie explained at the start, it was the nature of speed flying that was closest to his earliest childhood dreams of flying. That was insightful.

We all had the fantasies (I think) but how many dreamt of circling 5000 feet above the ground and flying off to Yorkshire? None I suspect and anyway I lived in Hampshire. Most were dream-whizzing around the bedroom, through

the house and hedge hopping around familiar childhood landscape. Thus it is the terrain hugging speed wings like the Bobcat that realize the dream rather than sedate Rebels or Buzzes.

Having explained the primordial forces at work we were treated to the high resolution version of some of Gordie's You Tube videos. No point in describing the experience, check them out. The flight down (note: if it had been paragliding it would be the flight 'from') Ben Nevis was the eureka moment for me. How did a 7 minuteish flight warrant a three or 4 Jenkins walk up? Just watch the video. Breathtaking speed, a blur of rocks and trees constantly within touching, wild manouvering – it was pretty awesome (an overused word though correct) but equally impressive and reassuring was the apparent positive control.

Another attraction of the speed wings, particularly for local pilots, will be that you can soar them in high winds. (Well not me, I tried at Lowca but discretion overcame the primordial forces) This means that on our frequent high wind days you can still get up if not actually up and away. Probably not too hot at thermalling though. Interestingly though, for me at least, this is contrary the spirit of the wing. In soaring mode the speed wing simply becomes an extension of paragliding rather than feeding the metaphysical urges of high adreneline romanticism, a sort of Wordsworth on ecstasy; which is what it should be about.

Next on the show agenda was a short display of the equipment demonstrating another positive – the wings are compact enough to be displayed in a small room. Gordie explained a few technicalities and idiosyncrasies and gave a quick run down on flying technique. Finally he added that he thought everyone present had the skills and qualites necessary to fly a speed wing – No Lance, he was being polite.



So, how about it – have you got what it takes? Who cares? The key issue for me is that speed flying is fundamentally different from paragliding even if the science is similar. There are speed flyers who are not interested in paragliding and paraglider pilots who will always eschew the helter skelter of speed flying and some who will take to both. I'm pretty much on the fence. I love the idea but I don't think I am suited to all that whooping and hollering and as for the compulsory group hug at the end – nah, definitely not.

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....and that is it! The editorial team hope that in getting this far you have found something worth reading or even better you have found it to be absolute self-indulgent drivel and feel the need to raise the game by contributing something yourself.

All the best until Christmas.

Chris Field