

Coaching and the DHPC coaching structure

The **Club Coach** plays a vital role part in the safe development of pilot's fresh from training school through to Pilot level rating. As the title suggests their job is to act as guide and mentor, not to teach or instruct, but to oversee, encourage and monitor the progress of low airtime pilot's as they embed into the club scene.

The DHPC is fortunate in having a sizeable number of experienced pilots who have put themselves forward as coaches. They have volunteered to offer their time and skills in ensuring no new pilot should find themselves struggling along on their own. They are there to be used, wherever you are on the learning curve, and to that end we make their names and contact details readily available via the website and each month in Skywords.

Not all coaches are quite the same, but all have undergone BHPA training and been endorsed by the club because we feel they have the right attitude, are approachable and safety conscious. Their experience level and skill sets may vary however. Some could be described as early stage coaches who feel more limited in what they can offer, but may be especially good at empathising with new pilots. They will become the mainstay coaches as some of us get old and fade away. Others more experienced may be able to provide middle order coaching such as thermalling or early xc work. We also have hang gliding coaches -- too few, but very experienced and enough in terms of the numbers of hg pilots we have coming through. Whatever your particular need we have coaches who



can offer sound, professional (unpaid) advice ranging from equipment to more advanced flying skills. If that isn't enough, we also have some of the best schools and instructors in the UK in the area to call on if need be. Many of our new pilots have come through those schools and we know they have had a sound training as a basis for coaching.

As in previous years the DHPC runs a coaching register and the 2014 one can be found on the website under coaching. Not all clubs do it this way in fact we may be a bit exceptional and it perhaps seems rather bureaucratic. The idea is simply to gather some basic background information on a new face, their equipment and better assess their needs and aspirations. It also helps to know a little bit about them as people and perhaps put them in touch with a coach near them. I also strongly feel for safety reasons that we/I must know the names and contact details; I'd prefer not to have the 'tap on the shoulder from a stranger' approach. So please use the registration system.

In terms of the actual coaching. We can offer coaching days, talks and outdoor skills activities, one on one coaching and as of this year 'introduction to xc' days. I've come to regard the coaching days

as more networking, making new friends and having fun/learning together. Being able to tie up with a single coach on a more regular basis (one to one) will probably gain you more airtime and speedier progress. Whatever your particular needs we will try to meet them – but you do need to tell us. Although coaching may be regarded as a voluntary activity, it doesn't mean it can't also be professionally undertaken and all coaches should be aware of their responsibilities and carry them out diligently.

Whilst the club can provide coaches and a structure for them to operate in, the onus still lies with new pilots to make the first contact. It may not always seem easy, but we are a very friendly bunch.

For the coming year we have the following in place – some things remain as they were, a few things are new. Just to briefly go over what's on offer:



- Following discussions with the CSC via Dave Ashcroft their CC, all their coaching days are open to DHPC members and vice versa. We will try to keep them to different days where possible. The aim is to increase opportunities to fly on a coached meet and also to allow pilots to experience different areas. Details will be posted on the coaching sections of both club's websites, in the coaching section of the forums and our shoutbox. I will also mail all those on the coaching register (2014) mailing list. So you need to register.
- Lectures for exam topics don't seem to work, so I hope to provide more broad, generic talks/activities on things such as instrument use, xc planning, groundhandling etc. These may be indoor or outdoor sessions. It will of course depend on the numbers. A minimum of six makes it viable from my point of view preparation-wise.
- XC days being separate from coaching days. This is driven by the increasing numbers



wanting to cut their xc teeth. The idea is to get together with a small number of pilots who wish to begin doing xc's and see what we can achieve.

- Whatever pilots would like me to do. It's not a cop out; sometimes it's better coming from you than me. I can do an introduction to flying in the Yorkshire Dales for those pilots new to the sport/area; but there needs to be a demand. I can arrange to use the

considerable talents of Pat Dower, but again I need to have some indication of need.

By the time you read this the FSC document regarding proposed changes to the training syllabus for schools (homepage of DHPC website) will have reached the deadline for responses to me (unless you get them back to me really quick – 2st March latest.) I will provide a DHPC response to the BHPA, but also write up a synopsis from the returns for the next Skywords.

Coaches: Please check the latest coaches list and that all contact details etc., are correct. I have also updated the photos for most coaches, but there are still some missing. Could you send my your most flattering photo please. I can resize, or if you do it make it 130 x 155. Anyone who wishes to drop off the list also let me know please.

Spring is just around the corner (they tell me) and as if to prove it some decent xc flights (88k) were flown during mid-February down south – so it can't all be flooded! Now is the time to check over your equipment, take it carefully after the winter layoff and to sets some goals for the coming season.

Photos (in order): *A busy August coaching day on Semer Water*

The ever patient works with the ever enthusiastic

Coaching day on Stags