

# Cumbria Soaring Club

## 'Spoilt For Choice'

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



Apologies from the editorial team I'm afraid. It had been the intention to dedicate this issue in its entirety to the London Olympics. However, due to pressure from the major sponsors we have had to limit our coverage to free flying events only. Clearly we will have disappointed our readership but sadly that is the way of the corporate world.



Congratulations to Her Majesty on her bronze in the Spot Landing Comp. Moreover, one is delighted to announce that one has graciously signed up for the Grasmere Show when hopefully one won't miss the stadium entirely.

Congratulations are also due to Lord Paul of McCartney who has officially taken over as the Nation's most annoying old scrote from Lord Cliff of Wimbledon. But enough of such things, what of paragliding? Well not much really due to the dire non-summer; this is reflected in this issue of the **Nation's favourite read**. The sensible and well-heeled have taken to foreign climes for their flying fun while those left behind

July - August 2012

have been reduced to watching the Olympics for 30 or 40 hours a day. **In this fun packed issue .....**

- **Rick Livingstone tackles the Wainwrights** but wonders why so few are joining in the fun – Have you got what it takes? Of course you haven't, nor have I but don't tell Rick.
- **Andrew Paulson confronts his demons head on in Annecy** – Take pleasure in his brilliant white knuckle ride from the comfort of your sofa, glass of merlot in hand – yeeeharrrr!
- **There is more to Scotland than midges and tartan!** Join **Chris Scammell** as he and some chums do amazing stuff in the highlands with some scary bits into the bargain.
- **The boys have been back to Laragne** for big thermals and interesting pants – **Peter Askew** reveals all! Not to be missed!
- Spoilt for Choice continues to champion the arty farty brigade. **Our poetry competition** goes from strength to strength. We reveal the winner of the brand new Range Rover – 'well worth the effort' says ex-laureate Andrew Motion.
- **Ian Henderson** provides a membership update welcomes our new members and reveals an exciting job opportunity – don't switch off!

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## The Cumbria Soaring Club WAINWRIGHT LEAGUE

'How many Wainwright summits can you fly?'



*(Ed note: in homage to the great man (Alfred Wainwright not Rick Livingstone) we were going to include a photograph but decided that Julia Bradbury is fitter)*

***Rick Livingstone gives us the lowdown and how taking part could improve your XCs, plus Mike Cavanagh adds some cautious words of wisdom!***

When I first took up paragliding in June 2007 the one big attraction/ambition for me was the tantalising possibility of, one day, being able to fly right over the Lake District. I started to do a bit of proper XC last year and, this year the Wainwright Competition has come along at just the right time. I think it is a brilliant idea and I'd like to infect you with the same enthusiasm..... It will improve your XCs, give you loads of fun and maybe take some pressure off those CSC sites that get flown too much.

It is a nice simple concept in which you can compete, on your own initiative, any time the weather lets you! As a flying competition it's more like the XC League than a race type comp. So risks of impaired judgement due to immediate peer pressure or any need to fly the route fast are lower. You can also land out and it's not the end of your day; in fact, in terms of this league, it's not a problem at all! So the Wainwright competition is ideal for a psychologically challenged person like me - for whom too much competition would probably be dangerous.....(!)

It all works by e-mailing your flight, as an igc file, to our erstwhile CSC webmaster, Ian Henderson – who is scorer and ultimate adjudicator. There are a few rules to ensure it is a flying comp (rather than running or biking). In essence though, it's flying over the summits that get results.

So, seven months from kick off; how is it going?

Well, I'm surprised there's not been more entrants (we only have 10) and that the 'top pilots' who have entered haven't done more summits than they have, I think they're maybe not trying so as to encourage others..... So I'm happy to find myself currently lying in second place at the end of July! I suspect this may be due to a combination of the appalling weather in 2012, combined with me being able to get out more or less anytime! Out of a possible total of 214 summits; Mike Cav's in the lead on 35, I've done 31 and Tony Eadington's third on 21. Chris Scammell keeps threatening to knock off 50 in one go, but hasn't submitted a flight to date.....!! *(All change since the article was written:- Rick leads on 37, Mike Cav still on 35 and Tony on 24 Ed)*

From a less egotistical perspective; I thought it might be worth explaining how it has affected my flying & what I've learnt that might be useful to others.....

- 'The CAVANAGH Mantra':

Good XCs need: Comfort, Observation, Flexibility & Beer!

I picked this gem up, along with other miscellaneous pearls of wisdom, at the CSC 'How to progress your flying' evening in February. Since then I've consciously tried to apply it to all my XCs – all the time!

If you are **COMFORTABLE** with absolutely every aspect of your flying then your anxiety levels will reduce. More comfort = less anxiety = better decisions = less stress = longer flights before you get 'brain burn out' and land earlier than necessary. Put some really careful thought into identifying anything that makes you less than comfortable and do something about it – simples!

If you **OBSERVE** the right things at the right time there won't be any nasty

surprises! All CPs should know the basics that must be observed to fly safely, add to that the extra XC criteria and then make sure you actually employ that knowledge in the air! Constant assessment is another way of looking at it. Be **FLEXIBLE**, willing to change your mind as necessary to best suit parameter changes during the day and you'll be more likely to make the best of the day. Drink **BEER** with your flying mates after you land to analyse and discuss your flights and, if you're cute, you'll glean all sorts of useful tips/info. Plus re-flying the day in your head and/or on a computer will highlight any problem areas that need to be addressed.

My attempts to fly the Wainwrights have really helped me consciously apply Mike's insightful advice: before, during and after each flight. I strongly commend the mantra to you! If you want to read about it from the horse's mouth see Mike's SFC article here: <http://www.cumbriasoaringclub.co.uk/documents/sfc/sfc212.pdf>

- Planning XC Routes.

The map tab on the CSC website Wainwrights page zooms in to OS 1:50,000 and shows all the summits. The old Lake District '1 inch to 1 mile' map is also useful if you can find one. There are probably an infinite number of ways to fly them, but a good look at the OS map soon shows there are a few possibilities which, given the right wind direction, will bag more summits per flight than others. No reason why you can't do 214 flights, one for each summit – but it's very satisfying to bag a good few in one shot! 'Flying' about in Google Earth is also a superb tool for armchair route planning! Current 'max summits per flight' goes to Mike Cavanagh at 16, my best is 11. I'm amazed at the possibilities I've discovered looking at the Wainwrights on a map and trying to figure out how to fly the most per flight. If you try it I guarantee it will give you new ideas for Lake District XC flight options. Your route and terrain assessment skills will definitely improve.

- Goal Setting

Goals are good for you!! It's sometimes difficult to know what to attempt when you initially dabble your toes in the XC water. Doing the Wainwrights offers you everything from short, simple, 'off piste' flights to cut your teeth on; right through to challenging 'W' shaped flights zig-zagging right across the county several times. With so many potential goals, spread out in most directions, it helps with practising flexibility because there is usually another obvious goal if your original plans get scuppered due to changes during the day. Concentrating on the Wainwrights will help you push your overall skills envelope a little & often.

- Locating & assessing suitable launches and 'start' sites.

Set off with an OS 1:50,000 map, or the '1 inch to 1 mile' map, to identify locations, slope steepness, direction and general practicality. Use the zoomable map on the CSC website Wainwrights page. Google Earth can be useful for identifying surface info/grassy slopes etc. On the day your ability to interpret & apply the weather data will be tested. The competition is brilliant for honing your site assessment and micro-meteorology skills.

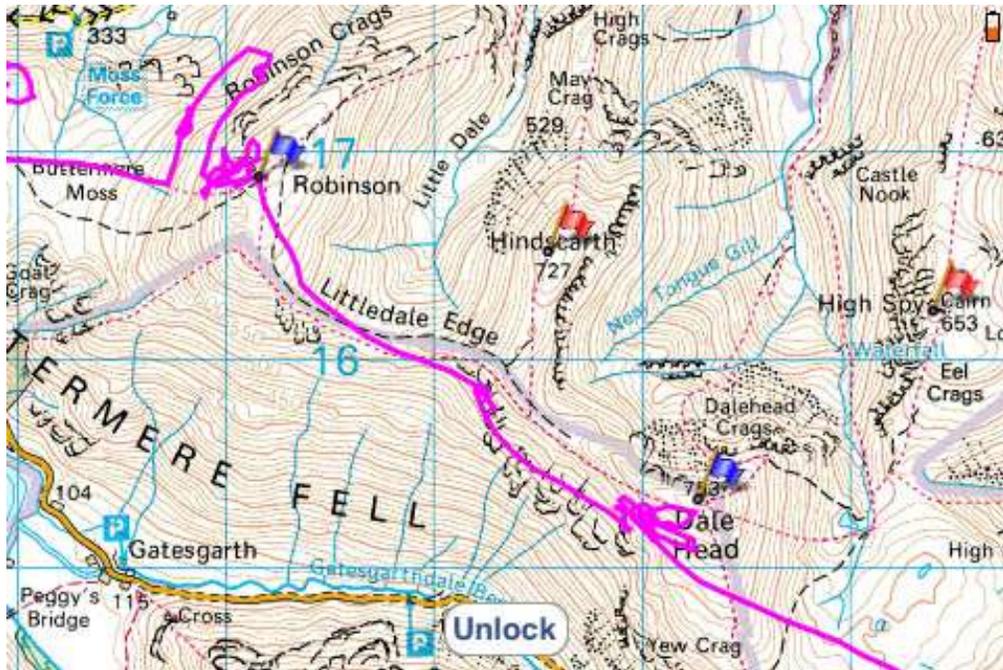
There are literally hundreds of potential take offs/flying sites in the Lake District. Doing the Wainwrights will help develop the skills necessary to identify them and use them. Next time you think: it's an easterly, that means Carrock, or it's a north westerly, that means Clough... Well, if you do the Wainwrights, it won't mean that anymore! You will have great fun flying XC from CSC sites in unusual directions or developing your own sites! Use your common sense so as not to upset land-owners. Taking off from the open fell-side, sticking with the normal XC landing conventions and any applicable CSC site rules should keep you out of future episodes of 'The Archers'!

- Use of electronics in flight.

One of the difficulties I've found is judging whether you're within the actual summit cylinder (200 metre radius). I've missed several tops which I thought I'd overflowed but actually missed by a long way. When you're over 3000ft above a summit cairn, and dodging the clouds, it's hard to tell much about where the bloody top might be! Note that I only got into this fortunate (?) dilemma due to doing the Wainwright League.

Apart from missed tops, some of my 'comfort issues' were: not knowing my exact position & track; not knowing the exact slope direction and steepness of the terrain I was flying towards and not having a simple way of knowing which way I was actually flying (as opposed to which way I was pointing) if I got caught in the 'white room'! All these have been solved by putting the OS 1:50,000 maps into

my iphone!



### Screen Shot from iPhone

As I fly I have a nice purple trace of my route on a good map, instantly showing where I'm going; the Wainwright summits are each flagged on the map and I can see exactly what I'm flying towards. The information is of eminent practical use on any XC flight, not just Wainwright flights. I've found the increase in comfort/reduction in anxiety has been significant! I'm now thinking the system could also good for picking out potential thermal triggers.....

If you want to know more, the iphone maps topic has been discussed at some length on the CSC club forum here:

<http://www.cumbriasoaringclub.co.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=18&t=1567>

Your flights have to be entered as igc files so you will need to tangle with GPS and its associated IT. It is nowhere near as bad as it sounds; don't let your Luddite tendencies stop you! Help is at hand if required! If you don't already do electronic flight records onto a computer - it's maybe time you did! It is a useful thing to be able to do; enabling easy, quality analysis of your flights and thereby improving the results.

In summary: I'd encourage any XC pilot who wants to improve their skills, to have a shot at 'The Wainwright League'. It costs nowt, it's great fun and it will accelerate your progress up the XC learning curve.

Believe it or not, I've tried to keep this article brief. (!) If any aspects raise more questions than answers feel free to get in touch: [islandbagger@hotmail.com](mailto:islandbagger@hotmail.com)

Info on the competition, which is free but currently restricted to CSC members, can be found here:

[http://www.cumbriasoaringclub.co.uk/Wainwrights/CSC\\_WainwrightsHome.php](http://www.cumbriasoaringclub.co.uk/Wainwrights/CSC_WainwrightsHome.php)

*And here's Mike Cavanagh's take on the Wainwright League:*

Rick prompted me to think about adding something to his piece on the Wainwright League. What Rick writes shows how the league is encouraging him to expand his experience and get more from his flying. It is just the same for me and I'm pleased if my 'mantra' of Comfort, Observation, Flexibility and Beer has helped with that process. We all know that preparation for anything usually improves the result and the Wainwright league is a chance to plan and prepare for a flight that we may not normally consider. Not only is this an enjoyable past time/challenge, increasing flying experience, it also gives a chance to learn a bit more about the region we fly - nothing worse than flying over the back of a hill into a new valley and finding there is no pub in which to celebrate your landing!

After first learning to fly I was lucky enough to get together with some great mates and together we used to meet at the Golden Rule in Ambleside, assess the weather and then work out where we might fly. There were the obvious places that were in the sites guide, but often we would go somewhere new to check it out. Sometimes just for a fly down from a big hill, or to fly an obscure bit of coastline on a windy day. It was always fun, and for sure it teaches you a lot. Assessing a site on a map and on location became 2nd nature and that is important if you then think to fly cross country, when fast assessment, on the wing, is much needed.

The Wainwright League provides a bit of a focus to that sort of exploration and experience; and should be interesting whatever your level of ability. It has already encouraged me to go out and check a site I suspected could be interesting for a circuit flight.

The best thing is that it is more a challenge than a competition and to me that makes it more fun. Some Wainwrights will need some very careful planning, some may not be possible to launch from within the zone and require to be over flown on a small XC or by soaring/thermalling from a more appropriate take-off site.

Hopefully the relaxed nature of this league will mean that no one pushes the limits to "bag" a Wainwright. As Rick says, that laid back approach makes it ideal for him. However, putting on the club's Safety Officer's hat (and because I have been actioned by the powers that be to say something) here are some thoughts on things to be careful about (sorry if repeating some of Rick's points)...

You should always be careful when flying somewhere new. Be prepared, check out the map first so you will have some ideas before you get to the hill, but always double check and re-assess when you get there. Just like the take-off area on a standard flying site may change with conditions, what looks good on the map may be out of the question when you see the actual terrain or the wind direction and strength. Keep flexible, be prepared to re-check the area to find the safest take-off. You might be sweaty, hot and short of breath, but take off your sack and go for a wander – see what is around the corner. Take your time – it is not a race – enjoy the view. Be prepared to walk back down again if something is wrong – you still have the beer to look forward to!

If you are going for a fly down make sure you have sorted a good landing zone – good for the farmer and good for you. Check that your glide will get you to where you thought; that the wind works for the direction you were intending. Have some back options in mind. Be prepared to change plans if things look different from the air.

If you are on a flight and intend to add a few Wainwrights whilst on route then do it carefully. Keep high to avoid getting stuck on the wrong slope or on the leese. If in

doubt leave it to another day. 200m radius sounds quite big, but is quite small – or rather some summits are quite big and wide. If you are clever enough to have put the cylinder in your GPS do not get fixated by it. Your vision should be your only judgement. Turn away as soon as you think it looks dodgy.

The main thing to remember about this league is that is just for fun and has no time limits. The hills are not going anywhere so we all have plenty have time to play with this, in all seasons too.

As with all flying, doing it with your mates makes for more fun and also adds to the safety – two, or more, minds are usually better than one. Having some keen flying buddies is a sure fire way to increase your flying time, experience and enjoyment – most importantly it means you have someone to do the beer bit with *aprez vol*.

The CSC intends to have some sort of shield in the Sick and the Wrong to list pilots who manage to tick them all off (this may be some years off at current bagging rate). The committee has also talked about some small yearly prizes. You may choose to do it for just your own personal amusement, but I always think it is best to share your experiences and Ian's website work means you can see what others have done – check out their route, take off location etc.

Hopefully see you on an obscure hill somewhere and be careful – all drinking should be done in moderation! And I hope I haven't overplayed the drinking part!

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### Laragne 2012... “a little bit of what you fancy”

*Peter Askew tells all!*

This year at “Chez Giles” there was something for everyone, or so it appeared. Let's start with the important stuff first. Driving through France to get to Laragne, there were thunderstorms and rainy conditions all the way down towards Lyon... Was the English summer going to be joining us? Hurray... the Sun came out and stayed out for pretty much the whole week. Smiles all round. Conditions this year seemed to be a little more benign than in previous years. It certainly didn't seem to me to be a sky full of aggressive thermals. On the first week, there was flying for 6 out of 7 days and, as well as Chabre, we had excursions to Sederon, and St. Vincent les Forts. Obviously (for those that know me), I didn't do any long distances, but I really enjoyed the conditions, and easily got 1000 ft. or so above take off at St Vincent. Steve G and Dave B managed the best XC trips during week 1.



**St Vincent - just after launch**



**Mike R - Sederon Landing Field**

For those that know Chabre, the potential to make a “hash” of your take off, is always there. This year was no exception. No, it wasn’t me!!!! Richard J. ended up with a monkey puzzle comprised of risers, lines, twigs, leaves, lumps of wood, and various other bits of flora and fauna. After a mammoth “un-tangling” session, he was up and off, as if nothing had ever happened....



**How did that get in there??**

There's been lots of talk about the need for "Brave Pants" when in Laragne...well, this year, someone (who shall remain nameless), appeared with an "official" pair of said same apparel. Various acts of individual heroism saw the stylish garments passed onto a new recipient each evening; to be worn with varying degrees of pride, incredulity, excitement and embarrassment. For some unexplained reason, the provider of the BP's, also presented a set of alternative undergarments for everyone else to wear. Certain male members (no pun intended!) seemed, scarily, to be more than comfortable wearing women's' underwear.



**Faces obscured to protect the innocent**



**..he wears his pants with pride!!**

The usual post-flying debauchery was, this year, replaced by a more “high-brow”, dare I say, cerebral experiences. A moment to thank Ray and Beryl, for organizing an evening with a local ex-pat, Olly Penrice, who as an avid Astronomer, delighted the crowd with descriptions of stars, galaxies, nebulae, comets, and the rest; all witnessed firsthand through his hilltop observatory. I would urge the reader to check out <http://ollypenrice.smugmug.com/> to see some incredible imagery.

All in all another great week, with good company, lots of laughs, brilliant conditions...As always a big thanks to Ray and Beryl. Bring on 2013!

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**Newsflash: Demons discovered slain in Annecy. – aka Andrew “Ondroo” Paulson’s Wing Control and XC week in Annecy with Passion Paragliding.**

Picking up from where I left off in my Pulitzer Prize winning article SFC Autumn 2011 (by the way Editor – I never received my prize-money (I spent it. Ed)) where I recounted my experiences on the Stevie Giles Laragne extravaganza 2011. I left you good readers with the certain knowledge that I had bitten off more than I could chew and scared myself sh\*tless in the strong conditions encountered. To say that I spent the remainder of 2011 with “the jitters” would be an understatement. Flights were short and any hint of turbulence sent me scooting for the landing field, not good.

So, what to do? It was the “not knowing” that had kicked my confidence in the proverbial nuts, and I already knew deep down that an SIV would be the right course of

action. “knowledge dispels fear” (who said that?), face your demons etc. It would either put me right, or finish my flying forever! Either way, it had to be done.

I chose Toby Colombe’s Passion Paragliding [www.passionparagliding.com](http://www.passionparagliding.com) , for two main reasons.

1. I’d been to Morocco with Toby in 2010 so I knew him.
2. The course he offered was not sold as an SIV, but as Wing Control that would be tuned to each pilot’s skill levels and personal needs. That’s what grabbed me.

The trip was structured around 3 days Wing Control followed by 3 days XC guiding, based in Annecy France. The Wing Control element was “sub-contracted” to local experts (and they truly were) Fabien Blanco’s Flyeo [www.flyeo.com](http://www.flyeo.com) , whilst Passion Paragliding would do the rest.

At £785, it was not a cheap week, but the cost also included 7 nts B&B, transfers between Geneva airport, plus all shuttling around whilst in Annecy. There’s a cheaper camping/self catering option available next year.

I put a Post on the Forum to see if anyone else might be interested but the only response was from Chris Greenwood who had (days before) booked the same trip, but for the week preceding mine.

Due date arrived (13<sup>th</sup> May) and we met up at Geneva Airport. I also bumped into Chris on his way home and who had glowing reports of his week. I felt my confidence starting to return already.

On arrival, we dropped the bags off at the Hotel before heading off to the SIV landing field alongside the Lake, then to the main landing field behind the village of Doussard and then heading up to Col de la Forclaz. Forclaz would be the site for the Wing Control flights so it made sense to get familiar with it beforehand. We even managed to grab the last bit of thermic energy of the day to make an extended fly-down.

### **Wing Control Course.**

**Day One:** Our group consisted of 8 pilots ranging in experience from Mike and Steph with many years and hundreds of hours, to me with 30 hrs and Asaf from New York & Israel (it’s a long story), with only 4 hours.

The three days would be within a five-day window, so if any one (or more) day was canned because of weather, there would always be a good chance to claw it back later in the week. Obviously this would mean taking a hit on the XC days, but top priority was Wing Control.



First job was to meet our Instructor Tony. Enthusiastic, funny and trying very hard to put our (obvious) nerves at rest, we all took a shine to him straight away. Second job was to check reserves to ensure they would deploy if the need arose. Third job, to be issued with a lifejacket.

Next, upstairs for a classroom session where everyone gave a summary of their flying, why they had signed up, and what they were looking to get out of the course. Tony could then put together a progressive, relevant programme of tasks for each individual. Before



every flight there would be a comprehensive briefing, Tony explaining what we were going to do, why we were going to do it and what we would learn from it. The more experienced pilots were keen to get straight onto the scary stuff as soon as possible. But Tony wanted to have a look at everyone first, suggesting some dynamic turns to get the ball rolling. The rest of us were lined up to do pitch control. Tony explained “EVERYSING in paraglide

begeens and ends wiz ze peetch, you weel see”. We were all told that we would learn to “love our resouss”, Resouss (spelling – resources) being the French word for the ‘pitch



back and climb’ (we never worked out a translation), then learn to damp the surge (quickly on & off the brakes). Tony’s pronunciation of “a” was more like a “u”. So we had to “dump” the surge which raised a smile around the table, especially when Tony explained if you have a big resouss you then have to have a “beeg dump”. We didn’t put him wise, too amusing.

He really wanted to ram the message home that when you have an incident e.g. a collapse; it re-inflates; wing pitches back (resouss) and phew, panic over. “Non, non, non. It is just ze beegening. If you do not dump ze surge you av another collapse, only beeger and ‘poom’ pitch back, zen anozzer beeger still, et voila, all ze way down to ze planet, finish. Allez, let’s go fly”.

Driving the minibus was either Manu or Yanick, Jim was on launch control. All three looked like they were bunking off school, but were indeed top Acro Pilots (true, seen ‘em). Philippe was at lakeshore with the video camera and Tony instructing from his

rescue boat out on the lake. Four people looking after eight students, you can understand where the money goes.

At take-off we were greeted by the Paragliding World Cup who were in town for the week. One hundred and fifty of the world's top Comp Pilots bunching up behind you, so no pressure! We believed we'd made the f\*ckers wait, but it turned out the task window hadn't opened yet.

Jim got us into the air at 5 minute intervals and then Tony took over and directed us into the "box" where the drills took place. Take-off is at 1260m with the lake some 820m below. Not as big a drop as say Olu Deniz, but you still arrive with loads of height to do the drills and it did allow for a quick turn-round back to launch.

First flight. So it begins. Radio comes to life "OK Ondroo we do the peetch and stabilisation. Brake, more brake, more brake, head back look at the glider, more brake, look at the glider, more brake and release" (glider surges forwards) "Again brake, brake, more brake, come on Ondroo more brake, look at the glider, more brake? and release" (glider surges forwards even more) repeat a third time then as glider pitches back shout "I love my resouss" as it disappears behind you. Off the brakes, wait, the glider reappears, you dump to stop the surge, the relative wind speed picks up as you swing under the glider and you fly away. Phew, not too bad actually, heart rate begins to settle, radio crackles "ok Ondroo, we go again". Repeat three or four times more then it's a run for the landing field and some good Constant Aspect approach practice in the strengthening valley wind off le Lac.

De-brief in the Landing field over a sandwich, agree next tasks, watch the PWC swarm into the sky, and then back into the minibus.

Second flight. Dynamic turns with controlled exits using the pitch and surge skill to create the speed to get into the turn. A real whoosh as you enter and a big pitch back as you exit, hands up, "I love my resouss", and dump - Whoo-hoo! Repeat left and right, then off to the Landing field.

That was it for day one, no time for third flight, so back to Flyeo for video analysis and (what turned out to be) a daily p\*ss-take from Tony.

**Day Two:** Third flight. Asymmetric collapses. Start off with outer two "A" lines, pull right in, 50% collapse, weight shift steer (and a bit of brake if needed) 360deg turn away from collapsed side, 360 turn into collapsed side and release. Bit of a resouss and a little dump. Repeat each direction.

Intermission whilst at launch, PWC task window opened. It was like a flock of startled pigeons.

Fourth flight. Now thermic, so arrive over the box with lots of height. Big Asymmetric collapses. All the "A" lines on one side, pull 'em right in hard, 70-80% collapse, maintain course, turn 360 deg into, and then 360 deg away from the collapse and release. Resouss and dump. "kin 'ell, did I really just do that?". Repeat.

Video p\*ss-take back at Flyeo.

**Day Three:** Strong winds – canned. Theory session with Toby on thermal flying, then hour-or-so ground handling at Doussard.

**Day Four:** Fifth and Sixth flights. Big Asymmetric collapses with auto-rotation. Tony was at pains to explain the importance of this one particular exercise. As we know, collapses catch you by



### **Arrrrrrrghhhh -Annecy!**

surprise with a surge and dive, so the chance of auto-rotation is always there. Bring down the “A” lines but this time, fall into the collapsed side with as much weight shift as possible. “aaaand poom!” Tony calls on the radio. Your body picks up speed and round you go backwards as if you are in a SAT (yeah, like I would know). A dab of counter-brake to stop the rotation and out you go, hands up, “I love my resouss” and dump. Job done. My low-end 1-2 glider just wouldn’t go into auto-rotation no matter how much I leaned into the collapse and heaved on the lines. So Tony got me to induce a dive to give it some speed. This time it went in and I got whipped round backwards. Yee-hah! Repeat, with the objective to come out of the rotation in the direction you choose. No point recovering the collapse and then slamming into the hill.

Three things learned. 1. How to stop auto-rotation occurring. 2. What to do if it happens. 3. Once in auto-rotation, the speed of the rotation will not increase, but the great panacea of “hands-up” won’t cure it. There has to be pilot input (counterbrake) otherwise it’s a quick trip to terra firma.

Sarni, de-brief and brief.

Seventh flight: Rapid Descent technique - Big Ears and Speed Bar.

I really wanted to learn one proper rapid descent technique, be it Spiral, B Line or this one. We all need our “Get out Of Jail Free” card whatever it may be. Tony recommended “Ears” as it allows directional control so you can escape, there’s no prolonged G force to endure (for us old ‘uns) and it doesn’t over-stress the glider. Plus for the lower airtime pilot it’s all relatively placid. However, not recommended if it’s wet.

Big Ears-UK is not the same as Big Ears-France. The drill: 1/3<sup>rd</sup> speed bar, big pull down hard on two outer "A"s one side, then same on t'other. Stand on the Speed Bar right to the pulleys. With only eight or ten cells open, it produces descent rates of between 8 and 12m/sec. Feels as solid as a rock, so much so that you can mess about with weight shift to get it swinging like a pendulum. Ease Speed Bar back to 1/3<sup>rd</sup>, let one Ear out, then ease off all the Bar whilst feeding out the other Ear, "simples". Video de-brief with Tony's mandatory p\*ss-take, followed by extensive Course de-brief and handshakes all round. End of our Wing Control Course.

Tony's p\*ss-take was naturally all in good humour, hilarious in fact, and done purely to emphasise a point. We all watched each other's flights, had a good laugh at each other's expense as Tony ripped into us, but lessons learned were shared by all.

NOTE: The above descriptions refer to my flights. We didn't all do the same thing, that's the beauty of this course. Other guys were doing other tasks, dependent upon their planned programme, including mega auto-rotations, spins, spiral, stalls, wingovers, etc. However, all exercises were first carried out with Tony's radio instruction and then repeated without radio instruction (unless it all went t\*ts-up) to prove to Tony that we could do it independently, "wee av validation".

### **XC Guiding.**

**Day Five:** Rainy, mucky weather. Cleared out by late afternoon, prospect of a flight from Planfait. Arrived to find all of the PWC pilots had had the same thought. Also strong Valley wind and booming thermals, "Nah, leave it in the bag". Beer and Theory Lecture with Toby on local flying.

**Day Six:** Rainy, mucky weather. A patch of blue appeared, skies cleared and we enjoyed three flights (two top-bottoms plus a thermic flight) from Planfait in what were the kindest flying conditions of the week! Then a quick dash across to Forclaz for one last extended fly-down in the evening restitution.

**Day Seven:** Foehn Winds, so Theory session with Toby on Foehn Wind - Geneva - home.

I learned SO much from this week and I never felt scared at any time, anxious yes of course. Tony teaches from experience and he oozes an air of confidence that makes you just trust him entirely. If he'd radioed me to unfasten my harness and show my bare arse, I would have done it.

I only really did four relatively basic skills (pitch, dynamic turns, asymmetric collapses and rapid descent), but key thing was that they are appropriate to my current level of flying, so the immediate benefit is enormous. The course has given me faith in my glider and has shown me the extents to which it can be abused yet can, and will, continue to fly. I know that if I encounter a collapse, it's not "panic stations" and that I have the skills to rectify the situation (almost) at my leisure. I can get down quickly if needs be. I can start to have some fun on my glider. Most importantly "I love my resouss", so hooking into a strong thermal no longer worries me.

Toby did a grand job organising things and was on hand at every brief/de-brief to provide input and deal with any translation problems.

Mike Agnew (Toby's assistant/driver), who besides helping make sure things ran smoothly (especially in the melee at launch), was also a participant on the Course and indeed was doing the more advanced manoeuvres. So he must have REALLY been feeling the pressure. Good lad.

I hope this report might inspire anyone who has found themselves with “the jitters” and who is perhaps contemplating this course. My advice if you are thinking..... stop thinking, do it!

In the words of Ronald MacDonald (or some Yank) “I shall return”.

Stay Safe.

*PS - Given the lousy summer we're having, I'm thinking of going back for some more in late September. Either 3day WC + 1 day free fly (v. approx £630 inc course, squeezey jet flight LPL-GVA, car hire, 5nts self catering, based on four persons) OR 2day WC + 1day free fly (v. approx £490 as previous but 4nts). Anyone interested? Phone me on 07968 234598*

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**(Chris Scammell enlightens us on the attractions of heading north)**

What is it about Scotland that I find so enchanting? Is the sun really brighter, the colours more vivid, the peaks more dramatic? They certainly seem so when airborne over this remarkable landscape.

Every spring there occurs, what is known in meteorological terms, as a singularity. This is a recurring weather pattern that, although not reliable, happens more often than not. One of these is the formation of a zone of high pressure over the north of the UK. From February to May there is an increased likelihood of dry settled weather over this region. 2012 was no exception. Whilst the southern UK was considering growing rice instead of spuds, Caledonia was enjoying another epic flying season.



I made three successive raids to the enchanted land earlier this year and have been living off the memories ever since. These raids generally take the form of an evening drive up the night before a suitable day is forecast. RASP and MWIS are the primary sources of weather info. The first flight was from Glencoe White Corries to the west coast south of Oban. Not a great distance (around 70km) but remarkable for the wild country traversed and the stunning views of the west coast archipelago sparkling in the crystal clear arctic air. I was seeking a committing flight and found it by leaving the comfort of valleys compromised by roads in favour of the wilds around Loch Etive. For the first time since traversing the Alps back in 2001, I got a taste of cutting the strings to

civilisation. Gone were the concerns about long walk-outs or losing mobile reception. It was really quite liberating to just live and fly for the moment instead of planning against every eventuality. I was brought back from my reverie when the dodgy pizza I had eaten for lunch on launch caused nausea and incipient air-sickness. Eventually I couldn't wait to get down and landed next to Brendan, who I shared a climb-out thermal with near launch four hours earlier.

That flight wetted my appetite for Scottish wilderness flying. The freedom that I felt during the flight could not be recaptured whilst flying in the home ranges. I had to have more. The next Scottish adventure saw us launching at Aonach Mor, the ski resort just East of Ben Nevis. We had a vague idea to fly east along the Grey Corries to Ben Alder before retracing our steps for a declared out and return record. The day was largely cloudless and the mountains shone with an intensity rarely witnessed. Me, Mike Cav and Phil Wallbank had a grand old time leapfrogging each other from one stunning peak to the next, occasionally surprising huge herds of red deer whilst scratching low or being weighed up by laser-eyed golden eagles whilst thermalling high over glittering lochs. The flying conditions were smooth and predictable. The air seemed friendly and benign. 40km out to the east of launch we became separated. A 30kmh easterly was visible on the loch below, presumably a sea breeze from the east coast being funnelled down the glen. We rode it high then Mike and Phil headed south whilst I attempted to get back to launch. The fresh easterly bumped into the prevailing north westerly and I, relaxed and confident, headed for the guaranteed convergence. The glider dived violently. I damped the surge too hard and stalled it. I released the stall too late and too early simultaneously. A cascade ensued; my first and hopefully last. The next 15 minutes was spent battling a 35km/h north-westerly headwind to get the right side of Loch Moy, to land leeward of a large hill and tall trees. Three and a half hours of bliss followed by 15 minutes of terror. That's paragliding for you!

Now thoroughly hooked, I found myself up there again couple of weeks later to try a new route I had been seduced by whilst staring at the map. Would it be possible to fly north, up the west coast of Scotland, from Loch Linnhe to...wherever we ended up? The terrain certainly lent itself to xc flying. Huge south facing ridges lined up one behind the other for endless miles. Roads were scarce and people scarcer. Perfect!

Six of us launched from Garbh Bheinn around midday. Within 20 minutes we were over the back and committed. The next road down track was 20km and three valley systems away. We gradually got separated. I got stuck low around Glenfinnan for half an hour while the others pushed north into the next wild area towards Knoydart. I was now alone and after eventually climbing out and pushing north, found the solitude



1130 hrs Launch on Garbh Bheinn 1

and commitment I had been seeking. The region felt vast and wild. No cars. No people. Just me and the ancient, enchanted highland landscape. I turned the sound off on my vario and listened to the swish of the lines slicing the air and the distant cascading of water. I was torn between lingering in each bewitching glen or using precious height to edge further north, back towards a road and comfort. A couple of scary moments in leese conditions saw me making pacts with the higher forces to quit this lark if I got away with it this time, but then I joined Ed in Glen Kingie and I relaxed back into the flight. After four hours in the air I was faced with the choice of a landing next to Barney and a main rd or pushing north further, as Mike had, into the next wilderness area of Glen Affric and beyond. I wimped out and landed figuring I had had my monies worth that day.



To view the complete set of photos (as well as Mike Cavanagh's) visit the Forum – Flying Reports – Scottish Adventure 21 May 2012.

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## Secretary's Notes

### New Members

A warm welcome to the following new members of CSC who have joined since the end of March

**Mike Blakey**

**Frank Lally**

**Marc Rigg**

**Ambleside**

**Stoke-on-Trent**

**Barrow-in-Furness**

**Dennis Marston**     **Ingleton**  
**David Armstrong**   **Carlisle**  
**Mark Parnaby**       **Rugby**  
**John Liddie**         **London**  
**Chris Hover**         **Hove**  
**Gerard Edgar**       **Dumfries**  
**Joseph Goodger**   **York**

As of 13 August, there were 215 members of Cumbria Soaring Club

### **Situations vacant**

Chris Scammell has decided to not renew his membership of CSC; **we need someone who can organise entertainment** for the forthcoming winter. If you'd like to put something back into the club, get in touch with any member of the committee.

### **Pilot Exam**

We'll be running a pilot exam again this autumn/winter and may organise it earlier if there is sufficient demand and the summer weather continues the current trend. There's likely to be a revision session before the exam. If you've got the correct log book experience and need to get your task sheet signed off, then look out for the pilot tasks sign off session on 18/19 August when you will need to demonstrate your skills to Dave Ashcroft!

### **Grasmere Show**

Make sure you've got Grasmere Show in your diary - Sunday 26 August. We use this event to demonstrate our sport to a lot of the key people in Cumbria who own the land in which we fly. It's excellent PR for our sport and good fun! Although we hold an accuracy comp, the main idea is to have a good flight and only do the competition when you need to come down

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## **Art and Literature Supplement**

The response to the Culture Editor's call for limericks with an Olympic theme commencing with the line 'A paraglider flew over the park' was so overwhelming the competition window had to be closed early. Apologies to those who found themselves missing out on the big prizes. The winner after a count back is ..... Rick Livingstone!! Here is his effort in full – spiffing!

**A paraglider flew over the park,**

**Twas Mark Lennon, he'll do owt for a lark,**

**For contravening airspace,**

**The rozzers gave chase,**

**Now he only dare fly in the dark!**



Rick can collect his prize, a 2012 Range Rover Vogue in Beluga Black, from Lloyd's Land Rover.

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And there we have it, another Issue of **Spoilt for Choice**, the Nation's favourite read, tucked up under the duvet. Let's hope the weather improves to the point that we don't all have to go to Scotland to fly and Rick finds some company as he floats lonely as a cloud o'er vales and hills.

Please make an effort for Queen, club and country and get down to Grasmere for 26 August. Nowhere else can you have so much fun whilst pushing the cause of free-flying in the Lakes. There's a knighthood in it for the best pilot!

... and of course the usual plea for articles. You can send your articles (or anything really) to **SFC**. I won't tell anyone, honest!

*Chris Field*  
(Editor in Chief)