

Skywords – September 2022



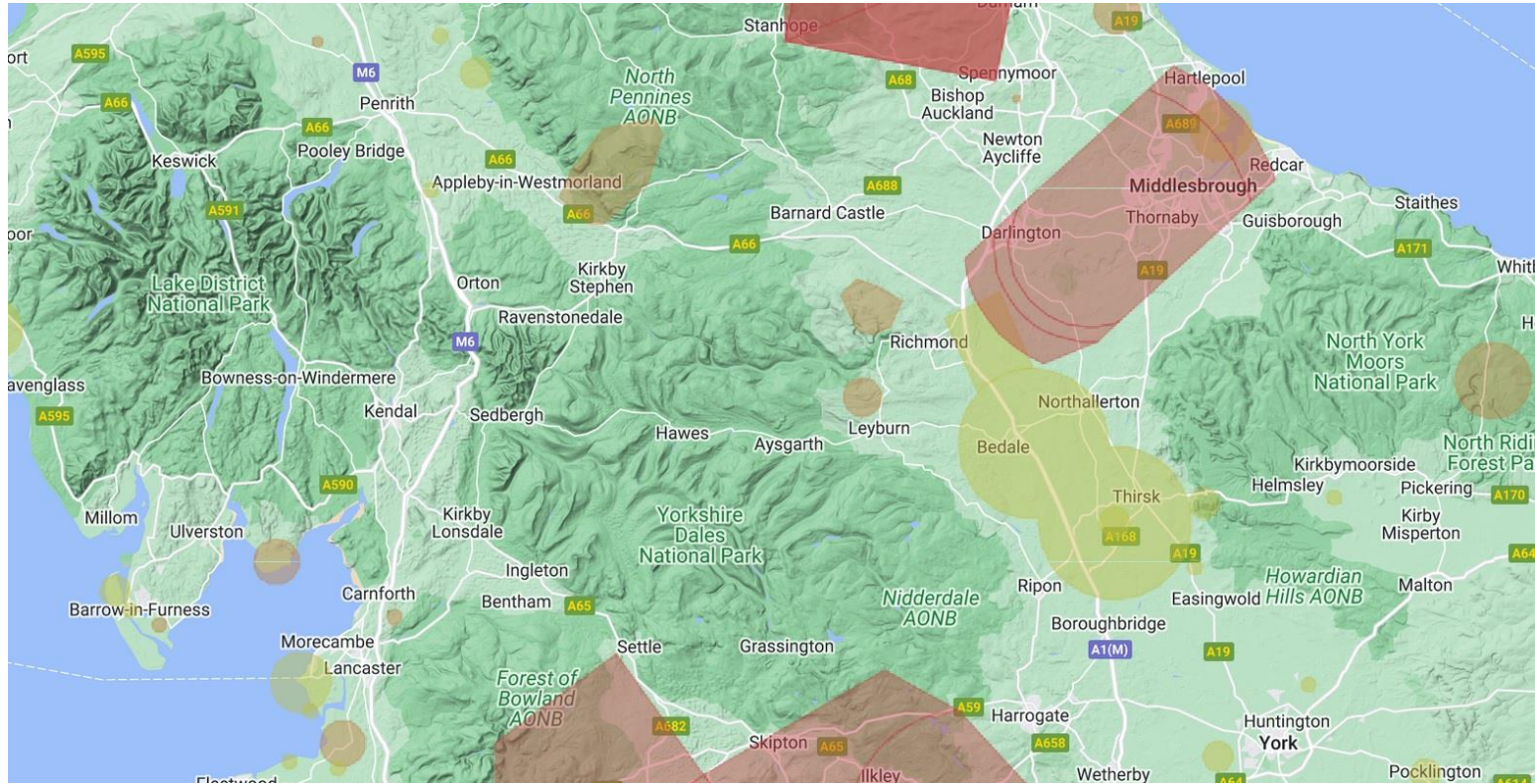
Photo credit: Ed Cleasby

Chairman's Chat

Martin Baxter reports

Firstly, a massive thank you to Joseph for volunteering to step in as editor of Skywords. As you may have read on [the forum](#) Carl was forced to step down due to the pressure of work. Joseph is also the club librarian and, as chairman, I'm not entirely comfortable with a committee member covering 2 jobs, whilst the rest of you take full advantage of what the club offers, without contributing anything more than your subscription. Joseph has made it clear that he is only volunteering on a temporary basis, so the bottom line is that if you want an enduring club newsletter then one of you will have to volunteer as editor. More lobbying from Joseph to follow I suspect...

I've been having an [interesting discussion](#) with the safety team at RAF Leeming over the last couple of months. It all started when a manning shortfall in ATC forced them to reduce their operating hours. I asked SATCO if the ATZ was active when ATC was closed and, to my great surprise, he confirmed that it wasn't. Due to some miscommunication, change of appointments and leave, it took several months to get this in writing, but I did eventually.



Screen shot (from [Flyxc](#)) shows airspace below 6,000' around the Dales. Leeming and Topcliffe ATZ/MATZ are shown in amber near Bedale and Thirsk.

More recently RAF Leeming notified us that they have got a busy exercise period coming up, with an assortment of visiting aircraft. It involves lots of night flying. They have adjusted their operating hours accordingly but, with limited manpower, they won't be able to man ATC throughout daylight hours. Yippee, I hear you say, 'We can cross the Vale of York without worrying about RAF Leeming'. But that is far from true, and the situation is certainly more complicated.

The current operating hours are published by NOTAM up to a month ahead. (They don't benefit from the luxury of 4 working hours' notice as we do with CANP.) This means that their programme is likely to change, and that they may be very busy even at times when the NOTAM suggests that they may not be operating.

The latest communique from RAF Leeming asks us to respect their ATZ (and MATZ) 24/7.

A couple of weeks ago I caught sight of a draft AIRPROX report where 4 x F35s flew underneath a paraglider at a site that had been CANPed. Understandably this caused considerable consternation to the paraglider pilot, the club, and the BHPA. It struck me that the way we feel when a military aircraft flies through a CANP, is similar to the way the military must feel when we point out that we can legally fly through a MATZ.

Just because it's legal, doesn't make it sensible.

Fly safely,

Martin Baxter

Chairman

New Skywords

Joseph Edmonds reports

So you probably noticed this edition is a bit different. We're using [Google Docs](#) which is basically a free online version of Word, with some excellent collaboration features. It's a lot simpler and, most importantly for me, it makes the editing job a lot easier. I have a full time job and 2 kids, so it's important that this newsletter doesn't take too much time to pull together. For that to be the case, I need your help:

Calling all Contributors!

If you would like to contribute, all you need to do is get in touch with myself - Whatsapp is best - find me on the flying plans group. Please get in touch and I'll give you instructions on how to add your content. It's easy enough.

Please don't email me an article, I will just ask you to add it to the document. If you have ever used Word, you should be fine using Google Docs. To set you up with access, I just need your google account email address. If you don't have one, you can [create a gmail address easily](#). If you are running Android for your phone, you almost certainly already have a Google account.

Submit your Photos

If you would like to submit some photos, you can do this directly using this form <https://bit.ly/3pXbaYW>. This form will automatically upload the photos to Google Drive which then makes it very easy to include them in Google Docs.

Photos sent by any other means will be ignored I'm afraid. Please don't Whatsapp me your photos, I won't use them.

Sites and News

Sites North

Simon Tomlinson reports

All tickety boo at present with no major issues.

There is a possibility that Stags Fell can be opened up for XC (over the back) flying from mid September. I will confirm nearer the date.

Dales Social and X Dales Hike and Fly Weekend

Tam reports

The 2nd Annual Dales Social

We now have dates for the social w/e. It will take place on 9 - 11 September at the same venue as last year - Lodge Park in Langcliffe, Settle (GE 54.07964, -2.28002). Camping will be available from the Wednesday.

This year, the Dales Hike and Fly will also be hosted at this event, with the 1 day H&F held on the best day of the weekend. Last year's inaugural event gave us a good start, which we aim to build on this year - with a family friendly, flying focussed weekend.

Maybe some informal tasks, some coaching, safety type practice. We aim to have a harness hanger or two this year so you can get your kit sorted out. We have a huge field at our disposal, right on the banks of the Ribble - all welcome in tents / caravans / motorhomes etc.

The nightly gathering around the camp fire produces lots of laid back but informative and interesting (for a spilt second) parabolox! Pets welcome. The toilets and showers are also now working at the site!

With the H&F being based at, and potentially with the finish at the same venue, we should have a great event with lots of club members and visiting pilots around.

Please see the report in Skywords (<https://www.dhpc.org.uk/assets/files/skywords/Skywords%20-%20Oct2021.pdf>) from last year's event for a better idea of how that went.

More detail will be released as we firm things up, but please contact Tam with any questions, or suggestions (secretary@dhpc.org.uk).

Camping charges will be £15 per van/tent for the 1st night and £5 for each subsequent night.

There's (a bit) more info on the website [here](#).

Get yourselves there!!

It's not all about the numbers

Pete Darwood reports

Following a seriously insane spell of flying weather at the start of August, there are some flights and results that warrant highlighting. Ok so the Dales did not feature on that many days, but Dales pilots did, with some making the best of the forecast weather and taking a road trip down south. With a building high pressure, continental-brown landscape and some ridiculous cloud bases across the UK, there was more than enough flying to go round. Sites such as Selsey, Malverns, and the Long Mynd saw much of the action, but the Dales did feature, as did Rutland, a tow-launch venue near Peterborough.

There were multiple 100km-170km flights from Dales pilots, with a smattering of 100km triangles thrown in, and Tesco points (bonus points for pre-declaring the destination or triangle turn points) – seriously impressive stuff. The upshot is that Jake Herbert is currently sitting 2nd in the National XC league with a staggering total of 1575 points. That is the first time we have had a Dales pilot in the top three nationally since 2006.

XC League uk cross-country flying Home | Sign In | Contact

Key | Latest Entries | League Info User: Guest

National League 2022 All Flights

National Paragliding League

2623 flights 143,356.1 points 342 pilots

League: Show: Year: Scoring:

Click the flights to display more details. A green score indicates tracklog data. A blue score indicates storyboard data.

Pilot	Club	Glider	Total	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Flight 5	Flight 6
1 Hugh Miller	Southern	Ozone Zeno 2	1664.4	325.3	301.2	285.1	255.8	253.6	243.4
2 Jake Herbert	Dales	Ozone Zeno 2	1575.4	325.3	302.3	301.2	225.0	216.0	205.6
3 Kirsty Cameron	Thames Valley	Ozone Zeno 2	1492.0	325.3	285.1	235.4	226.6	211.5	208.1

Jake is not alone; the strength and depth of the Dales XC squadron means that we not only have the second largest number of pilots entered in the league of any club (26), but we are also currently sitting 2nd position in the [club league](#) (top four pilots count) and 1st spot in the [XContest UK club league](#) (top six pilots count). Big up the Dales!

[Key](#) | [Latest Entries](#) | [League Info](#)

National League 2022 Club Flights

National Paragliding League



2623 flights 143,356.1 points 342 pilots

League Show Year Scoring

Top 4 pilots score for each club. Click [Show Other Pilots](#) to expand club tables.

Club	Total									
1 Southern	5048.5	Show Other Pilots (21)								Website
1 Hugh Miller	Ozone Zeno 2	1664.4	325.3	301.2	285.1	255.8	253.6	243.4		
2 Andrew Kruszynski	Ozone Zeno	1453.2	300.9	285.1	255.8	253.6	188.3	169.5		
3 James Chancellor	Phi Maestro	1022.0	201.1	191.0	186.9	153.6	150.0	139.4		
4 Thomas Wycherley	Niviuk Artik 6	908.9	206.7	164.2	149.2	149.1	130.4	109.3		
2 Dales	4643.7	Show Other Pilots (22)								Website
1 Jake Herbert	Ozone Zeno 2	1575.4	325.3	302.3	301.2	225.0	216.0	205.6		
2 Richard Meek	Ozone Zeno 2	1248.0	325.3	228.4	216.0	205.6	141.5	131.2		
3 Dean Crosby	Gin Leopard	1033.8	292.3	225.0	161.0	127.0	115.2	113.3		
4 Pete Darwood	Advance Sigma 10	786.5	170.5	150.4	131.4	125.3	105.4	103.5		

🇬🇧 XContest UK 2022

🕒 Flights

- 🕒 LIVE! (2)
- 🕒 Daily score PG
- 🕒 Daily score HG

🏆 Ranking categories

- 🕒 PG Open
- 🕒 PG Performance (Max EN-D)
- 🕒 PG Sport (Max EN-C)
- 🕒 PG Standard (Max EN-B)
- 🕒 PG Tandem
- 🕒 HG
- 🕒 RW FAI-5
- 🕒 RW FAI-2
- 🕒 Flying Clubs

👤 Pilots

📖 Rules

» [XContest UK](#) » [Flying Clubs](#)

Flying Clubs

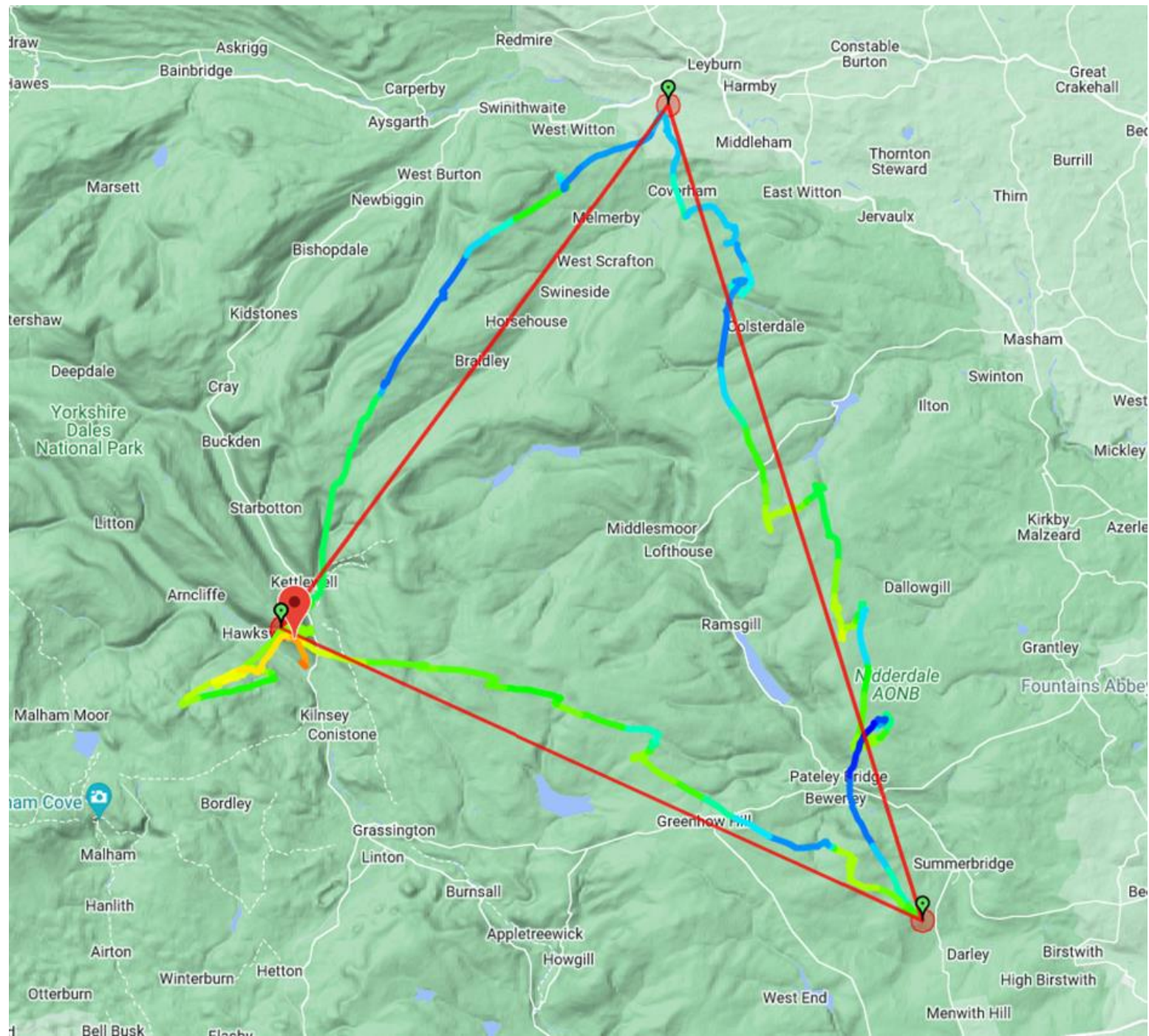
★ [Flying Clubs :: XContest UK 2022](#) ▼

Number of scoring entities in this category: 35

1. Dales HG & PG Club	3155.93 p.	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
2. Southern Hang Gliding Club	2507.96 p.	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>
3. Malvern Hang Gliding Club	2297.29 p.	<div style="width: 70%;"></div>
4. Avon Hang Gliding & Paragliding	2124.12 p.	<div style="width: 60%;"></div>
5. Pennine Soaring Club	1659.85 p.	<div style="width: 50%;"></div>
6. Derbyshire Soaring Club	1612.28 p.	<div style="width: 45%;"></div>
7. Devon & Somerset Condors	1415.11 p.	<div style="width: 40%;"></div>
8. Sky Surfing Club	1118.40 p.	<div style="width: 35%;"></div>
9. South West Wales Soaring Club	1072.59 p.	<div style="width: 30%;"></div>
10. Wessex HG and PG Club	1059.67 p.	<div style="width: 28%;"></div>
11. Thames Valley HGC	996.94 p.	<div style="width: 25%;"></div>
12. South East Wales HG & PG Club Ltd	970.63 p.	<div style="width: 22%;"></div>
13. North Yorks Sailwing Club	740.32 p.	<div style="width: 18%;"></div>
14. Dunstable HG and PG Club	691.76 p.	<div style="width: 15%;"></div>

For those that moan about all the good flying being south of the M62, a geographical disadvantage we have to live with, there was some good news in August as well. On the 8th Chris Kay just about made it to the east coast with a 99km hard-won flight from Dodd fell on a day that many tried. Then just three days later, on a forecast that some thought was not going to deliver, several pilots set off on an ambitious 75km triangle attempt from Windbank. With a highly unusual 2000m cloud base, light winds and bone dry, purple heather-covered moors, Dave Smart, Dean Crosby and Jake Herbert made the declare, and a Dales record, on their helium-powered Zeno 2s. Their route took them from Littondale to the edge of Leyburn in Wensleydale, then south of Pateley Bridge in Nidderdale before returning to tag the start.

Having got round, they all got a bit greedy and tried to extend their triangles as well, with Dave fairing best (just), achieving a FAI free distance of 82.8km! Simply stunning for this part of the country. Dave's [flight](#) is shown below, with the red lines indicating the declared triangle and the track towards Malham tarn at the end where he extended it. Not to be out done however, Charles McDonald showed he has really come of age, figuratively speaking, by getting round the same [triangle](#) on a conventionally-powered Rush 6 (high En B) – big congratulations Charles!



British & Dutch Open '22 Plus Some Safety Lessons

Pete Logan reports

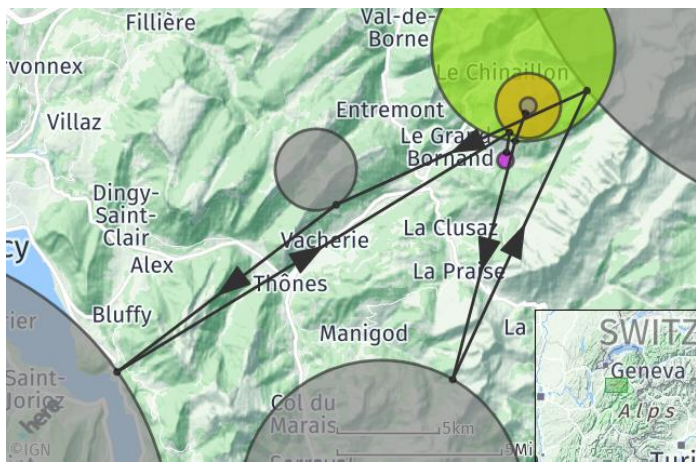
This one is going to be a bit of a double header. I'll go through a couple of the tasks from the British Open in late June and then go through the wing issues I was having which I've since put into an incident report. <https://ehpu-safetynetwork.org/plugins/form/235/en>



Base was Le Grand Bornand and TO was 2000m high on the peak of Mont Lachat. The morning ride up to briefing, parawaiting and TO was twenty minutes of telecabin and open chairlift. Very relaxing. Entertainingly, the valley floor is at 800m and a few of us realised we'd had XC's back in the UK that had not gone higher than the valley floor here!



Less said about Task 1, the better. What I did rack up were four or five collapses on the glide to Dannay, the peak in front of TO. More on this later. So onto... Task 2



3pm start window above Mont Lachat, race south down the Chain des Aravis, back up to behind La Chat take off and then SW out to Lake Annecy. Last one back's a right turnip.

Cloud base was never high over take off which kept the skies busy and, at times, being in the start gaggle reminded me of the bait balls we've all seen on Blue Planet and other Attenborough programs.

to
high



Because the climb to the top of the gaggle was not there was no order to get the goal field and afternoon. The the prevailing all the way across

commitment to launch right at the start of the window in best position. At task start the whole field headed past the straight to the SE side of Danay, still working in the sun is high in June so the fact that the side of the hill is out of valley wind allows plenty of heat to build up. Half bar was on on my Cayenne 5 and I can see myself getting left behind a fleet of Enzos, Zenos & Boomers.

Armada photo.....



The climb on Danay was pretty storming. 3m + and plenty of pilots with indecision on whether they should go left or right. That went straight to base and we could already see the leaders at the top of the next climb above La Clusaz. I topped up there by hugging the upper ski slopes, working the terrain and small, rough thermals. Using the height advantage I now had I crossed the Col de Aravis on full bar. Normally this would be windy but the day had been late to start and I was tracking well in front of the narrow gap.

With very little warning, I had an asymmetric collapse that started a cascade / parachutal. I definitely remember three big movements the wing made. I did think that my counter action was not restoring the wing to flight, let alone maintaining direction. At that point I put my hands up and was able to see and then catch the dive. I corrected my

direction and then gave a long pump to clear a cravat I'd picked up on the left wing. That was a hundred or so metres lost but thankfully still quite a way above the ground. More on this later as well.

Suitably chastened, I joined my fellow fliers, none of whose wings were having any difficulty whatsoever, in scratching along the mid slopes of the Aravis below the mighty l'Etale. I picked up the first turnpoint a climb or so later and with a $\frac{3}{4}$ the distance still to go I resolved to avoid repeating quite so much drama.

I was in a good bunch of pilots at this point cruising back up the Aravis which is just awesome. No other words to describe it. TP2 in the bag and I find I'm one of just a few taking the shortcut straight back to Danay which helped me make up a whole bunch of time. The 3m climb was still there which left me at base in a buoyant glide WSW over to the Mont Lachat ridge turnpoint. Confusing when there are two Mont La Chats in the same valley. I'm sure we'd never do anything as dumb as that in the Dales ;-) ... (Whernside in case you hadn't picked up on that one).

It's a big ridge but not really in the late afternoon sun that much. There were gliders on the windward NW and lee E sides. I decided on the lee side and to watch those climbing well and take it whatever height I was able to as early as possible. Sometimes big ridges out of the sun just stop working as you get lower down through the tree level. I made the top of the ridge at the north end and was rewarded by just flying straight down the ridge line in constant lift amongst the wispies. Sweet, it's 5pm at this point so I can't really be hanging about.

Wispies photo....



From here to Annecy went really well and it was a welcome change of landscape to pop out over the lake and join the hoards boating about the sky. I needed a climb to get back above Le Lanfonnet so I just go straight to cheating and follow a tandem pilot. They don't mess about.

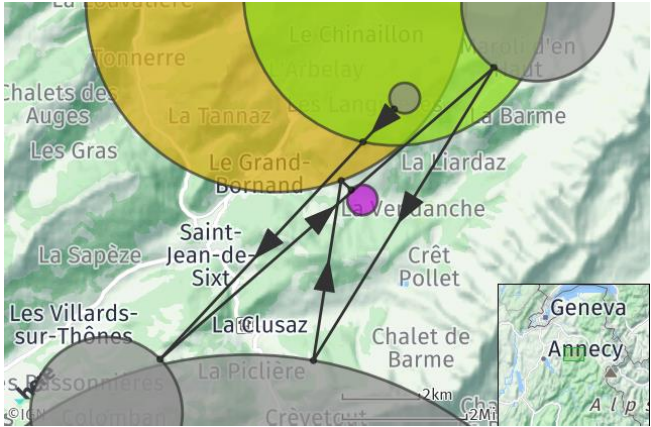
A few climbs later and it's really the end of the day as I approach the end of speed section. I hadn't clock how far back up the TO hill it was and try as I might I couldn't get enough height to bag it. I landed at the goal field after 4h 30m pretty elated and majorly tired. What a great task.

Task 3

You can probably guess the weather hadn't been great for the week. Low bases and rain. Here's a picture of local lad made good Richard Meek from one of the non tasked days that worked out well in the end...



I mention this task, not because it was epic, but just the time it started. I took off at 4.30pm to start the task! We'd waited that long for the cloud to clear.



It was a small cat's cradle around the valley. I minced on this one, too much as it happened. Being late in the day I was thinking I've got to get to base on every climb even when they dropped below $\frac{1}{2}$ m.



My time was slow out to Beauregarde and back to take off but I was able to climb back up, helped by the valley wind and take the TP north of TO. It's real vulture and lammergeier territory back there :-/

I was in the tail enders by now and on the way out to Clusaz we dropped a few more in the fading lift. In the end I didn't get the climb I needed above Clusaz and missed crossing the trees back onto the windward slope of Danay and certain goal by 50m or so. Lesson learnt, get on with it and stop messing around.

Overall I managed middle of the table for Sport Class but not as well as I'd hoped to do. It's a long time since I raced plus with a new job, I haven't been getting out as much as last year so I'm maybe flying below my best. Well done to Dave Smart, who was out with us. 6th placed Brit!

Now onto those safety points I promised. Here's the text of my IR...

The practice task on Saturday 25th involved a short valley crossing from TO to Tete du Danay, 5km south. This is into the valley wind so some sink and turbulence was expected approaching the ridge from the north. No full asymmetric collapses developed as I was able to come off bar and use brakes to keep the wing from collapsing and developing into a turn or dive. I noted that the four or so collapses on the way over seemed to be more from the left side. No other gliders had collapsed on this transition as far as I saw.

Task 2 on the 29th June was when I had a small cascade and cravat. Roughly 100m in height was lost and there were three major motions of the wing before I was able to recognise and catch a dive to return to forward flight, correct my course and clear a cravat on the left tip with a single deep pump. This occurred near La Clusaz on a crossing of the Col de Aravis where it is known to be windy. Full bar was applied at the time of the initial collapse which led to the cascade. John Oliver caught this on video, but too far away to be helpful. No collapses occurred when I was on half bar for the week and I confined myself to half bar for the rest of the tasks. One transition done in calm air on a non competition flight had several minutes on full bar. This did not result in a collapse.

On return to the UK, I examined my wing during a trim check on the 8th July. I found a rod missing from the front upper surface of the left wing. Above the A9 line. Stitching had come undone at the point this crosses the lower rod,



suggesting the rod had popped out of the front. I could not find the rod in the back of the wing so it must have fallen out of the front.

Bob wanting to help with the trim check.

My analysis is that the rod had been missing since before the competition and led to the wing asymmetrically collapsing on the left. I had not flown the Cayenne 5 much before the comp as I had moved onto another wing. So I can't point to a specific time in the UK where it could have popped out. It must have been Dec 2021 as noticed it be fitting facts the cravat on also have led tendency to a trim issue.



What can I a while to were all or which might than just trying to tell me

there for the trim check in The Loft would have missing. However, I might after the event. Clearing the left tip on task 2 could to the rod popping and the collapse on the left may be

learn from this? It took me realise that the collapses mostly on the same side point to something more turbulent air. The wing was something and I wasn't

picking it up very well.

I missed the fact that a rod was missing from my wing aways, maybe more. When I concertina pack, my right every cell to bring them together. With my left, I grab smush them together so I can easily miss anything between. I will pack every cell with both hands from now on.

through several pack hand is faster, so I put it in three cells up and then wrong with the cells in

Breaking news...

Clive Sury reports

Many (if not all) of you will know that David May has gone to live and work in France in the Pyrenees. Lucky David you may say. This also meant that a new Safety Officer for the club had to be appointed to which I've volunteered for the role. David did an excellent job in the role and will be missed for this and many other contributions. In particular I'd like to thank David for his support and his considerable help as part of the coaching team in the delivery of the Pilot Exam evening classes. Without his and the other coaches' training sessions I'd have never had the encouragement or the capability to pass it – thank you.



Another thing many of you know is that at the beginning of summer I had an accident on Windbank, resulting in a severely broken metacarpal in my hand as can be seen in the X-Ray. There is an element of humour in starting the Safety Officer role whilst my hand was in plaster and I'm hoping this is not an inauspicious start!

The main reason for mentioning this though is that it's a highly relevant reminder of the safety aspects of our sport. David's consolatory and sage words to me were that 'no-one sets out to have an accident!' Which is a reminder that accidents can happen to any of us and why we all need to exercise disciplines to mitigate risks in our sport. I admit to feeling somewhat foolish for hitting a rock with the back of my hand as I slope landed and also, considered what I could (or rather should) have done differently. It's also easy to be overly self-critical so it's important to be balanced in any post-accident analysis but learn any lessons and move on.

Another critical aspect is that all accidents and incidents are reported on the BHPA log. This was mentioned in the recent Skywings edition and it's important enough to be re-iterated here in case any of the Dales members missed it. By way of reminder the incident report is on BHPA website under the Documents section – Online Incident Report.

Reporting incidents is a stipulation of the BHPA insurance scheme. Therefore, it's not just good practice for us all to learn from, it's a compliance requirement too. My particular incident has not been noted in the recent issue and it may be that whoever compiles these didn't consider it noteworthy. However, the report is logged with the potential for further investigation and any learnings if desired.

From my own accident the key lesson I should share with people is this. After I landed both Steph and Jonathan were on hand and asked if I needed any help. My instinctive reaction was to say that I was OK and could manage – which was completely wrong of me. I didn't appreciate that the extreme pain in my hand was evidence of a much more serious injury and how this was actually affecting my physical and mental state. Luckily Jonathan was on-hand for me to call him once it had fully occurred to me that I really did need help packing up my wing and taking a rest. Also, Steph helped to collect me from the bottom of the hill and took me back to the car and afterwards check that I was OK on a general basis. I'm very grateful for Steph and Jonathan, thank you both. But from this experience I'd advise that if you see an incident (accident) and the person gives the likely response of 'I'm fine' then carry on observing them for a reasonable time afterwards. And if your instincts or the evidence states otherwise, ignore their playing down any effects and check they're fully OK.

Closing off this article, I wish you all safe and happy flying.

Clive.

The Baildon Sod '22

Joseph Edmonds reports

Despite not being able to fly due to a broken shoulder, I was obligated to attend the Sod, seeing as its a short walk from my house. Also extreme cabin fever meant that any excuse to get out was greatly appreciated. This years Sod was well attended with numerous entrants and a wide range of wings.

The winner, Andrew, gains extra kudos for outflying Pete who was flying his fancy lightweight D whilst himself only on a B wing.

The conditions were actually quite windy for a Sod which meant that pilots were often gaining a bit of height and able to fly a decent distance. Ground handling conditions were a bit tricky, not helped by the 7 foot bracken that managed to eat one pilot's trainers.

As the sun set we retreated to the pub and pilots feasted on fish, chips and ale.

Photos

Baldon Sod Photos:

Joe, Rahul, Shaun, Pete, Adam, winner Andrew & Tony rehydrate after the exertions.





Photographer being paid danger money.









Cumbrian FAI Record

Richard Meek reports

I'd been chasing the 5-star weather in the Scottish Highlands since 24th April with a pop-up crew of itinerant pilots. Monday/ Tuesday from White Corries and Wednesday from Creag Meagaidh (Loch Lagan). The flights had been stunningly scenic but not the distance I was hoping for. The Wednesday evening forecast review showed increasing showers in the Highlands for the rest of the week, however, the Lake District looked great for Thursday and Friday.

Such is the life of an XC junkie that the forecast was enough to hit the road. It would've been after midnight to reach the Lakes so we, Dean Crosby and Joe Dart were also tempted, laid up overnight at Abington leaving ourselves 1.5hrs drive in the morning.

Thursday dawned clear but clouded over again. We climbed to the top of Blease Fell and waited in the cold under 8/8 cover. We'd all but given up on the day when the sky opened up a little and we enjoyed a 2.5 hour/ 28km triangle with an impromptu SIV session in the sea breeze thrown in for free!

Enjoying a cup of tea after the flight on Thursday, the Friday forecast looked like a 5-star light (<10kph) easterly. I hit the road to Coniston Old Man (COM) whilst Dean headed back home for a good night's kip and would decide in the morning whether to come out to play.

Driving slowly, stopping for a natter with Geoff Crossley regarding other triangle start point options. It was about 19:10 when I came to a road closure on the A593 about 3 miles east of my destination at Coniston village. "Drat" I thought to

myself (OK, drat might not have been the exact phrase) "if only I hadn't stopped for that chat with Geoff I'd have managed to get through". As it turned out that enforced detour was serendipitous.

The delay saw me arrive in Coniston village around 8pm and I bumped into Keith "Bud" Patterson and John "Westie" Westall having a debrief after hike and fly training. As I shared my thoughts on the Friday forecast their eyes lit up. Bud was up for it but needed to get time off work, Westie had work commitments in the morning so would be out later in the day.

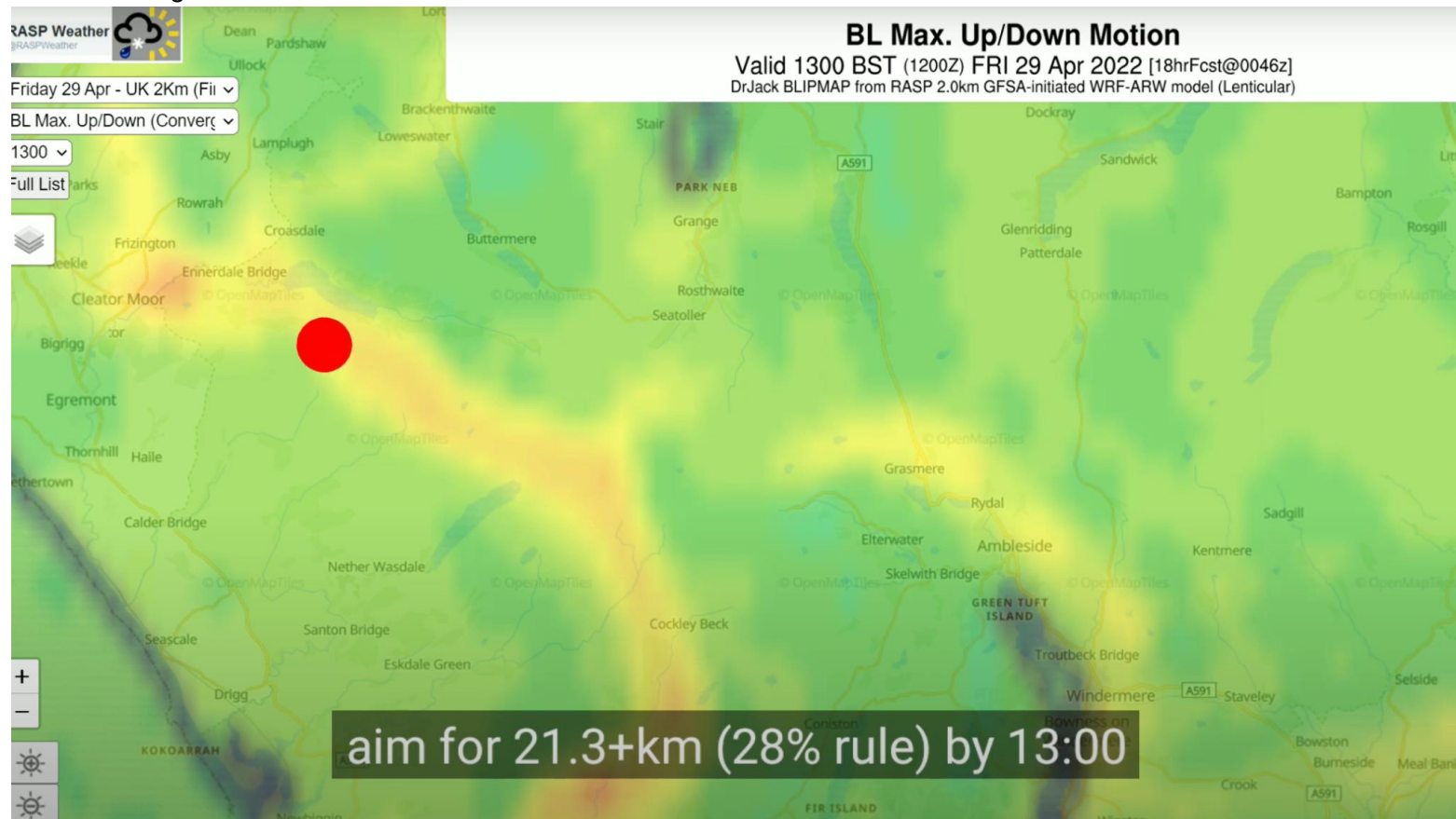
Wednesday evening the messaging apps were furiously pinging. Half a dozen of the regular crew I fly with were planning to be out; the West Yorkshire lot were coming to COM, the North Yorks gang heading for Model ridge/ Cringle Crag. Jake sketched out a 66k COM based triangle, I stretched it to 70k which, when declared, achieves 200 points in the XC League.

Geoff joins the chat and reports the largest non-declared Lakes triangle is 75.51 by Chris Scammell back in 2011 with the largest declared at 75.01 by Mike Cav in 2017. The gauntlet was thrown down, I picked it up and proposed a 78.4k triangle to beat both records. (Declared triangle have 2.4k subtracted covering turnpoint cylinders; I learned the hard way by missing out my first 200pt triangle last year.)

Thursday night was cold, Friday morning dawned clear and still down by Coniston Water. But the forecast was showing stronger wind, possibly too strong for a triangle, I reckon more than 10kph and you're better off with a down winder. The phone starts pinging; the West Yorks lads are to join with the NY contingent heading to Cringle Crag for a down wind blast towards Liverpool. It was a good plan, had I been nearer I would have joined them.

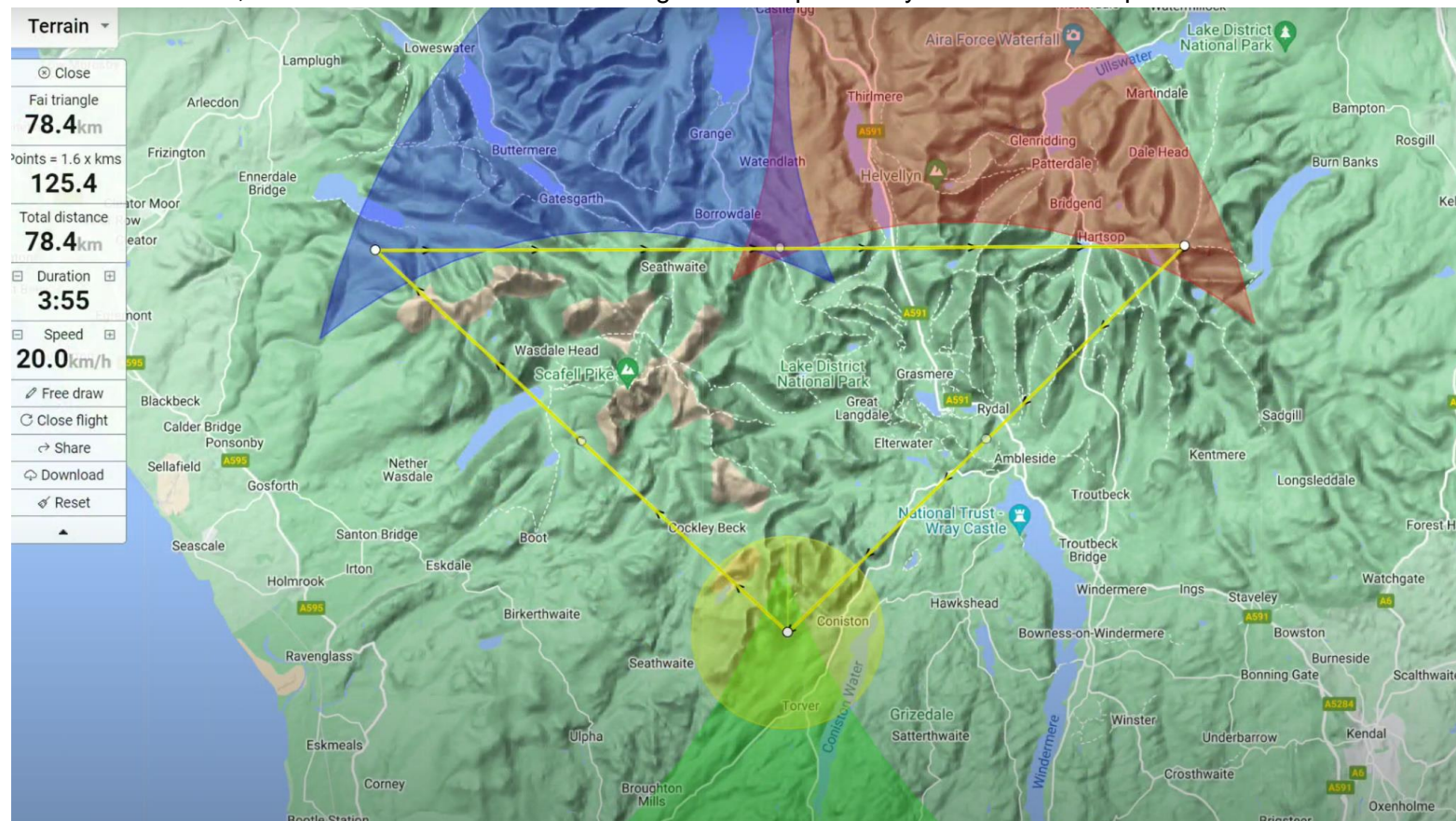
Bud messaged that he'd got the day off work then reports came through that Mike Cav was going for a 100km triangle from Cautley Spout in the Howgills. I reached out to Mike but Chinese whispers were at play; he was thinking of 100k from Cautley but an out and return rather than triangle. That made all the difference, Bud and I committed to COM, the drive to Cautley didn't seem like it was worth it.

Looking at the convergence forecast, I tweaked the shape of our triangle to move TP1 from east of Grasmoor to Boathow Crag south of Ennerdale Water.



To keep the FAI shape/ distance TP2 had to move about 5km NNW and was placed 1km north of High Street to the west of Haweswater Reservoir. I don't have vast experience of flying the Lakes so I overlay previous flights to identify

where I've climbed; TP2 moved from where I'd had a good climb previously to an unknown spot.



There's a video on Youtube which runs through my planning for this flight and in the description I've listed the web sites I use <https://youtu.be/wHcdKSKXDx0>.

My camper van isn't suitable for driving to the Walna Scar car park so I had 30 mins walk from the village plus the usual walk up the hill. It was my first visit to COM in 2022 and I had in mind a long and arduous climb but was pleasantly surprised to find myself at the launch above the old quarry in 50 mins at 10:30. And that's with a 28kg pack, no lightweight hike n fly kit for me, no sirree.

At launch I took a few minutes to cool down, relax and enjoy the fabulous views across Coniston Water and the southern Lakeland fells. The sky was still blue with a few wispy Cu's beginning to form to the east. Wind seemed bob on, light if anything, with regular thermal strengthening.

Meanwhile, Bud had caught up with another group of pilots walking up the southern face. A minor mis-communication saw him go all the way to the top (a further 120m vertical) by 11:00. There seemed no great rush until a cheery "Hello" from a Skywalk pilot soaring overhead showing that it was already working.

Launching straight into some nicely lifting air, and the start cylinder, at 11:30 gaining 1,000' and clear of the summit inside three minutes. Bud launched around 11:45. The air was lifty but we were topping out about 3,300', around COM it was still blue whilst to the north wispy Cu's were starting to form. XCTrack was reporting wind at 14kph at ESE - bit stronger than I would have liked. From previous flights I've realised that COM is slow to start and when the Skywalk led out and showed Swirl How was working to the north we followed.

The Skywalk led out again, crossing in front (east) of Wrynose but didn't connect with any lift and was last seen low in Little Langdale. I've been stuck on Wrynose and the Pike of Blisco before and had in mind to climb higher on Swirl How to enable an easy crossing to Crinkle Crag. Bud led out from below 3,000' and showed we could make it straight across. Despite that, I stopped in a weak climb for a couple of turns halfway, probably making the crossing more difficult than it needed to be.

We both climbed to around 3,000' on Crinkle and then to 4,000' on Bowfell then tracking around the ridge to Scafell Pike where I found a 1ms climb. It was obviously weak and wind was now showing as 20kph but the drift was directly on course line with the massive Yewbarrow bathed in sunshine within an easy glide so I stuck with it for a few turns. It

wasn't good enough for Bud who hung around Scafell Pike until something stronger came. I could see him climbing much better but there was little point in me trying to push into wind and join him. And that's how we became separated, we were never in sync from that point on.

As it happens I didn't find anything as I cruised 1,700' over Yewbarrow but got back to 3,9 from Red Pike and at 12:50 up to 4,500' on Scoat Fell in the eastern fringe of the convergence which was setting up almost exactly as RASP had forecast along the ridge to the south of Ennerdale Water. The convergence led directly to TP1 which I bagged at 4,300'. Turning tail, I should have paid more attention to track back precisely and re-connect with the convergence but I still managed to get back to Scoat Fell with 500' AGL. The day was beginning to pick up nicely as a 2.5ms climb (20 second average) took me to 5,300'. It's quarter past one, I've been flying 1:45 with 28.3km to TP2, 50km to goal and wind is 10kph ESE - not the fastest ever but pretty reasonable speed for me.

There were now some nicely formed Cu running west to east through the central Lakes just a couple of km north of my position.

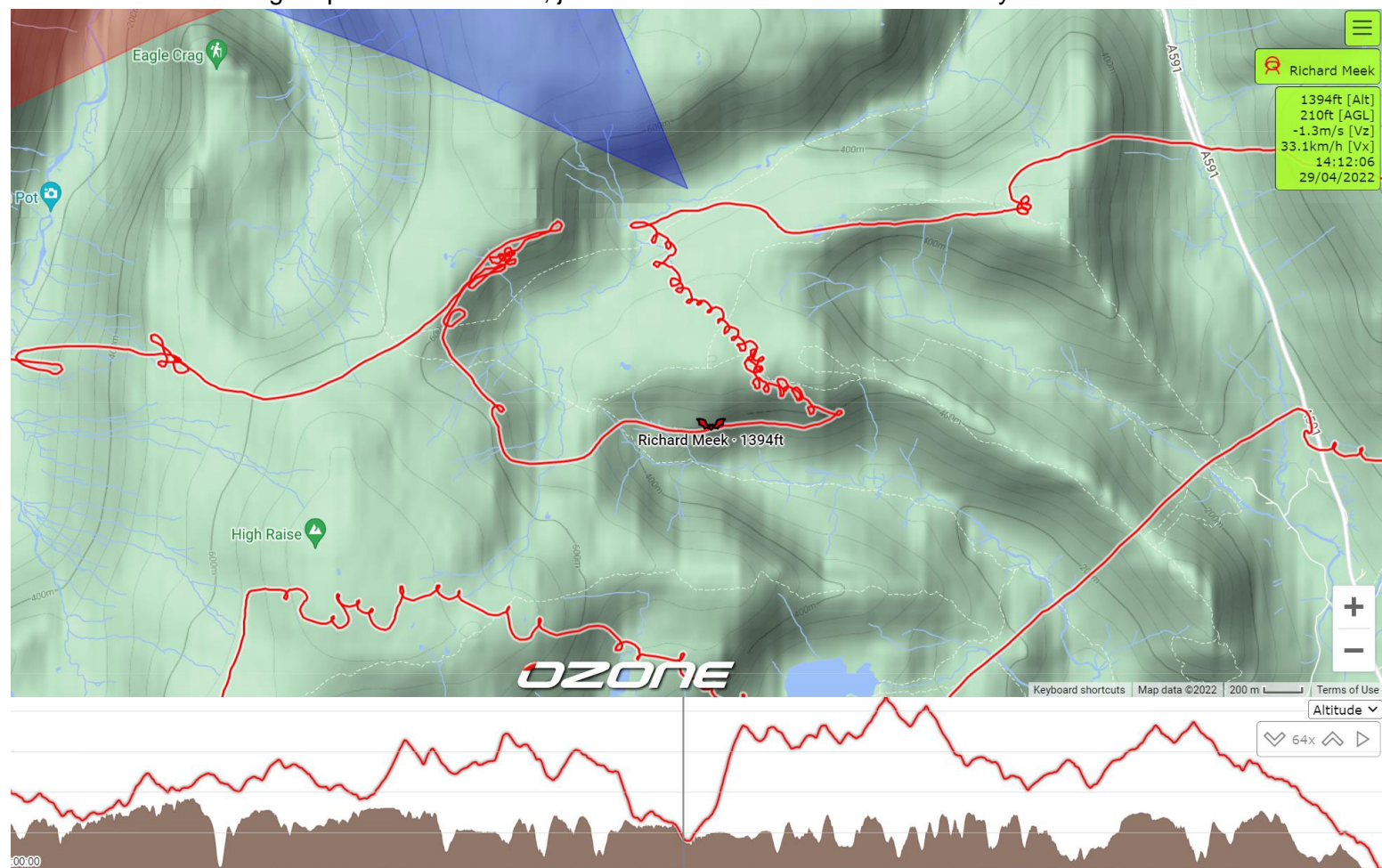


I headed that way following the high ground to connect with the cloud street. The next 45 minutes were straight forward; the course line and the cloud street aligned, I was gliding down to 3,800', climb back to 5-5,500' and pushing on. It was working like clockwork, I'm enjoying this rhythm.

On the stroke of 2 o'clock it nearly went to pieces.

I was in race mode; when in the top third (4 - 5,500' today) I was pushing on when the climbs were less than the best I'd already had. Over two and half minutes the glide averaged 3:1 which took me from 4,100' to 2,200' wind now showing as 16kph ENE. Disregarding conventional wisdom, to change down the gears and take anything when you're low, I pressed on convinced that some parcel of air must be rocketing up to balance all that sinking air. The low point

was 200' below the ridge tops at Pike of Gars, just 300' above the Easedale Gill valley floor.



Quarter past two and I found the boomer. Starting at 1-1.5ms it accelerated to 4ms as it detached from the ground, I rode it to 6,100' leaving a few hundred feet below cloudbase.

Crossing the A591 on to the Helvellyn range I passed south of Seat Sandal and climbed up the side of the clouds to 7,100' weaving along the northern edge, the right hand wing tip occasionally brushing the wispsies.

The cloud street didn't quite lead all the way to TP2, the final 1.5km was into a blue hole with 10kph at 1400 cross head wind. I repeated my mistake from earlier and did not backtrack directly under the cloud street instead pushing a little south to the sunny side. This move did put me back over known territory which gave me small comfort. A couple of other gliders were working weak climbs, heading their way I stumbled into a 1ms above Heron Pike. Wind was showing as 20kph SE which drifted me over the A591 north of Grasmere. It's 15:30 there's 13.5km to goal, XCTrack helpfully reports altitude over goal as -3,000' and required glide of 14:1.

I was beginning to feel positive about achieving the task. I've scabbled my way back from here before and even if I do go down it won't be a massive walk back. It'll be a cross head-wind to get in but that easterly component may help me soar some slopes if necessary.

Coming into Easedale Tarn at 3,400' I find a 1.5ms climb which strengthens to 2ms as I ride it for 12 minutes to 5,900' above High Raise. Distance to goal is now 11.5km almost due south with altitude over goal improved to -1,000'. Another top up back to six grand from Loft Crag in the Langdale valley put me positive for goal with required glide of 6.7:1. Altitude over goal continued to click up as I cruised south on two thirds bar over Pike of Blisco, Wrynose and Swirl How.

Crossing the goal cylinder back at Coniston with two thousand feet to spare I was delighted and used the altitude to push south extending the triangle to 81km before coming in to land at Coniston village.

As I packed away Joe Dart came to congratulate me, he'd had a day on the kayaks with his partner trying to enjoy himself whilst looking wistfully at the sky he was missing. Bud landed a couple of km outside of Coniston a few minutes later and we debriefed over a brew back at the van.

I was asked a few questions about the flight.

Could you have gone bigger?

Yes for the undeclared/ no for the declared based on the forecast and actual weather on the day.

For the undeclared, I could have climbed on Swirl How and Coniston using that additional altitude to push another couple of km SW from COM and back.

For the declare it's not immediately obvious how I could. Start is fixed by geography (could have pushed out maybe 500m from launch). Clockwise direction dictated by sea breeze (later in day). Placement of west TP dictated by the position of the convergence when I expected to get there. With leg 1 fixed I was near the maximum FAI possible.

Given the right conditions I suspect a 100km triangle could be flown from Coniston.

What did you learn?

When under a working cloud street it's worth taking weak lift to stay in the "working zone" rather than dropping out and having to do a bigger climb up/ running the risk of not getting up.

Backtrack to reconnect with a lift line/ cloud street.

Do you have contingency plan(s)?

Yes. I had in mind to either shorten the triangle or turn it into an out and return if one or other of the turn points was not achievable.

How flexible are you if the day is different to the forecast?

This is an area I struggle with, my nature is to focus on the plan at hand and I'm not particularly good at making up new plans on the hoof. On a small scale I'm prepared to deviate from plan (e.g. If there's a blocker on course line) but on the bigger scale I tend to struggle. I was pleased with myself for extending the flight at the end rather than just burning it off in wingovers as is my normal habit.

How difficult was that flight and what was the key?

It depends on your definition of difficult. For me, scrabbling around low, soaring close to rock faces or battling turbulence is difficult. There were only a few minutes during this flight which were in that category; the one time I got really low. Fortunately my Thursday flight had acclimatised me to sea breeze turbulence so it didn't feel particularly rough.

The key to the flight was the cloud street which set up west to east through the central high fells. Otherwise pushing 33km into a 10-20kph head wind would have been very difficult.

How important is planning in achieving big XC flights?

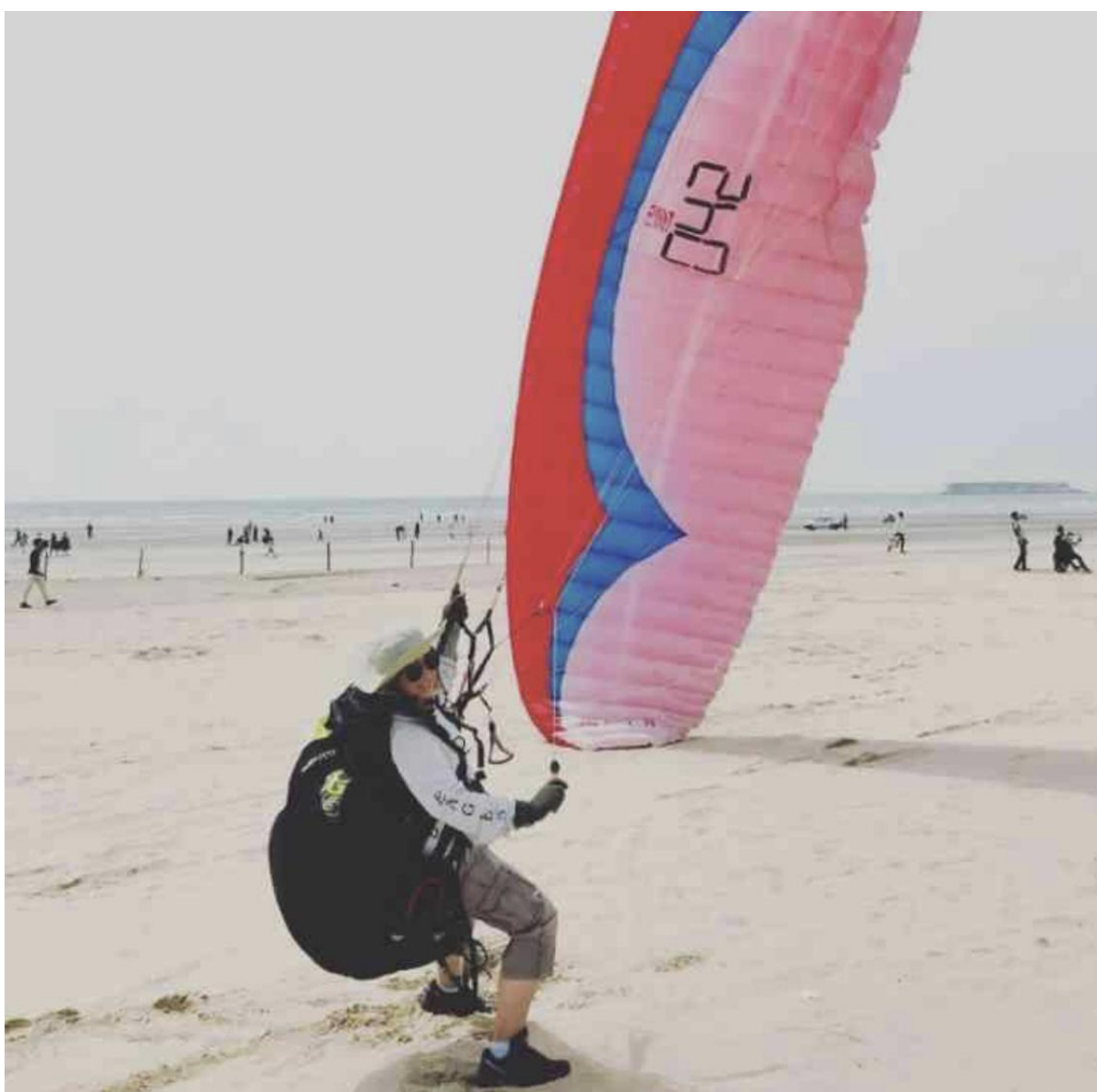
Planning is a huge part of achieving big XC flights, probably 50% for me, but for the real record breakers it's probably 75+% of their game. Selecting a good start point and route taking account of airspace, terrain, macro and micro weather systems - it's complicated!

What's next?

I dream of a 100km triangle in the Lakes

Appeal to help an Afghan woman paraglider pilot to get to safety

Minhaj reports



This is in the picture on a trip to Indonesia

The first woman Afghan paraglider pilot had to go into hiding along with her sister who suffers from glaucoma, after the fall of Kabul last year. She was on the list of evacuees but then the evacuation flights stopped before she could get on one. She has gone from being able to freely soar in the skies above Kabul to being locked in the house unable to work or go out of the house. I am not able to reveal her identity for her safety but if you are interested I can share her details with you on an individual basis. She is available on WhatsApp.

She has been in regular touch with Erica Bernstein, a journalist, Edris, her former colleague and myself since last August. It is sad to see an athlete who represented her country in Asian games in paragliding has her life so severely restricted. She and her sister both in their twenties are more conversant with modern western values than what they have to bear under the repressive regime.

There is a solid plan in place but financial help is necessary. There is a go fund me page which has already achieved more than 10% of the target . This would require help from NGOs and lawyers. Please help if you can by donating. No amount is too small. Please also spread the word.

<https://gofund.me/223010f5>

More Photos Submitted















CONTENT ENDS AT THE LINE ABOVE HERE