



Kernow Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association

OCTOBER 2007

The day I 'branched' out in my flying career!

Karen Phipps

Standing at the top of Charbre, at over 2,000ft, I couldn't imagine ever running off. I had been here many times over the past 15 years or so but never considered the possibility that I may one day view this mountain from the air.

We had visited the North launch on the way up and I didn't fancy that at all. There is a nicely placed rubber mat to protect your glider from the stones but the slope is very steep and drops off quite suddenly. I imagined if the canopy over-flew you it would mean being dragged off with little chance of recovery. Luckily the wind was coming up the south side which is a little better.

After some encouragement I laid out my canopy and put on my flying suit. Graham decided that I should go first and he would follow. The flight plan was to head straight for the 'fish' field. Some of you may know about this but for those of you who have never been, it's a field shaped like a fish surrounded by trees. It's not particularly big and you need to land near the tail as it slopes away towards the head. (Not the easiest, you understand).

As I stood with the glider laid out behind me my mouth went dry and I could feel my heart beating in my throat. The only forward launching I had done up to this point was from the winch and I knew ultimately that it would pull me. This time I was going to have to inflate and run like hell!

I waited for a little wind to help me and decided to go for it. The canopy came up behind me but I made the mistake of looking up to check it and in doing so stopped for a moment. This allowed the canopy to over-fly me and I ended up being pulled over sideways landing heavily on my hip. I was a bit shaken but I knew what I had done wrong.

I went back for another go. This time I inflated and kept on running. It was a great feeling when my feet left the ground and I was off.



Kaz gets away at Chabre

I reached the field with lots of height, put in a couple of 360s and landed in the perfect position. I was elated and Graham rushed over to congratulate me.

We packed up and got a lift back to the top. I had a chance to reflect and decided that after lunch I would have another go.

By now conditions had improved and the wind had picked up. Graham thought we stood a chance of getting higher, tracking off and landing at the campsite around the corner. This sounded like a good plan and I was up for it. My

first mistake was not having my own flight plan as I had done on the previous flight. I had it in my head that that was what we were going to do together.

This time Graham went first and I followed him. However he quickly went down and I went up. This meant I was on my own but that was fine, I think I even felt quite pleased. I tracked off to the right and found what is known as the house thermal. I was excited and started to go in and out of it. By this time Graham had landed in the emergency landing field in front of take off. As I was still high I thought I would head for the fish field so that is what I did. However I did not take into account the fact that I was now further away and I had a headwind. As I approached I realised that I did not have enough height and by now I had no options (mistake number 2). I knew at this point that I was going to land in a tree and was calm enough to inform Graham as such via radio. I concentrated on what I was doing, applied the brakes and landed head on at the top of a huge pine tree. I grabbed whatever I could and waited for the sail to settle itself in the branches. My first reaction was I'm okay it could have been so much worse. I looked around and realised that I was a long way up, probably 70ft or more. The tree had small branches that looked dry and not very stable. I thought the best thing to do would be to keep as still as possible and wait. To cut a long story short I was up there for 2 hours finally being rescued by a tree climbing expert from the fire brigade (he was cute and by all accounts had a tight bum!) (Is this relevant to the story, Kaz? *Tim*)

By the time I was winched to the ground I was feeling very hot and shaky but glad to be down. My glider was cut from the tree so I lost all the lines but retrieved the sail.

The worst part of the ordeal was thinking about what could have happened. If I had skimmed the tree and caught my legs or harness the glider would probably have over flown me and pulled me into the ground which would have been a lot worse.

Anyway I have survived to tell the tale and pass on what I could never have learned from a book.

I did go on to fly again another 3 times from St Andre which took just about all the courage I

had. I could not see the landing field as it was around the corner, this was a bit of a mind blower as I had convinced myself that I would not have enough height to get there.



Take off from St Andre

The morning I chose to do this was near perfect conditions and there were a couple of tandem pilots getting ready to take off. I waited for them to go and decided it was now or never. The take off was a bit steeper and I would say not much room for error. The wind was light so I forward launched, ran like mad and was off. I felt relieved and elated but still thinking about the landing. I stuck close to the ridge which meant I maintained good height. After tracking along like this for about 5 minutes, I popped out the end and I could see the field on the other side of the village. The view was fantastic and I was higher than I had ever been. As I flew over the village I could pick out several landmarks and by the time I reached the landing field I had more height than I knew what to do with. I flew past and using the constant aspect approach I kept my eye on where I was going to land. This time it worked perfectly and I landed just where I wanted to. I was over the moon and very proud of myself. I went on to have 2 more flights before I went home, both of which were fantastic, I would recommend it to anyone.

If you are a novice like me and are planning a trip like this, just learn from my mistakes, but carry a whistle and some dental floss just in case!

April fools, or serious aviators?

I was dozing in the depths of an old leather arm chair, in the opulent surroundings of my gentlemen's club in Mayfair, sipping a post-prandial brandy and idly leafing through the Saturday Telegraph, when my attention was caught by an article in one of the many supplements. I didn't know whether to believe it or not, but it seemed genuine enough.

The article was accompanied by these photos, seeming to show the ultimate paramotor! They admit the small one is a computer generated image, but could it ever fly?



Apparently the aim is to drive/fly the contraption through France and Spain, across the Straits of Gibraltar, and across the Sahara to Timbuktu in January 2009.

Sounds a bit far fetched, doesn't it? It seems they are still trying to get sponsors to pay for it all, and it's not even clear as to whether the thing has flown at all yet, but what a splendid way for Mark and Wanda to get back across the desert after their Marathon des Sables adventure!

Fun & Frolics in France

Graham Phipps

Following Old Alan's 80th Birthday party it was off to Dover to catch the Ferry to Dunkirk, before taking the long road south across France to the southern edge of the Alps at Laragne. Just over 1000 miles later we were there, pulling into the campsite in time to see some of the day's fliers landing in the fresh conditions.

The usual meeting of various flying friends took place, some of whom were stopping off like us on their way to the British National Championship the following week in St Andre, and others who were staying there or just passing through on a trip around various sites in Europe. It's always good to catch up and hear what pilots have been up to, with the added benefit that you may just get enthused enough to visit some of the sites they have been to, and so further your own flying.

Rain caught us on the first day, but then things improved and it wasn't long before we were off up the hill to get Kaz her first taste of flying off big hills in Europe. The views were spectacular from the top with fresh snow on the distant high Alps and low cloud bands in the valleys in the early morning. I'll leave the description of her flights to her.

Next it was time to get the Hanger out, and having "teamed" up with a couple of guys on Aeros Phantoms (Paul and Darren) who wanted an introduction to flying the area we set off on a tour of the Laragne valley from 8000'. The flying was good and it wasn't long before we had worked our way 2/3rds of the way around, but then some high cloud moved in and began to shut things down. A 17k glide saw us back at the camp site for beers and olives, before derigging by our tents. The next day we planned to fly down to St Andre, or as far as we could get via the third of the valley system we had missed out the previous day, and despite the forecast head wind it looked on. Climbing out quickly from the Laragne ridge (Chabre) was followed by a good glide across the valley to the south and onto the next ridge where a super climb saw us at cloudbase. It didn't take long to get to the Sisteron ridge which was soon behind us as we flew over the town and into the bigger stuff. Route selection here becomes quite critical, but with things going well it didn't look a problem. However flying into a high mountain valley and onto a good soarable ridge proved our mistake, as despite our best efforts it proved not to be an easy place to move on from. Watching the Paragliders launching below

and ridge soaring but not thermalling confirmed my suspicion that this was the same valley that several pilots had got stuck in many years ago when I was flying a comp in the same area. After two hours of beating up and down, and with the high cloud back, I elected to scoot along the back ridge to land just north of Sisteron to make an easier retrieve. Picked up by Paul's wife Carmen we headed off to find Darren who had landed south of Sisteron in a huge field, but had unfortunately twisted his ankle in a bad way, so curtailing his flying for the rest of the holiday.

A late arrival in St Andre found Kaz with the tent up, dinner on the way and cold beers on the table. What more can you ask? Nearly all the comp' pilots were there, including those recently back from winning the Team Gold at the World Championships in Texas, so there was plenty to talk about.



[Aging hippy spotted tampering with rival's glider](#)

Saturday dawned looking good, and the hill was busy with pilots wanting to get some last minute practice in. I launched safely and it was good to get that first climb out from the St Andre ridge to look at the amazing views across the valleys and mountains. Joining up with a couple of other pilots we headed off towards Digne which is a route often used in competition and includes a couple of long glides across dubious territory. Making it to Digne was not a problem but once there, things were not so good, so after catching a climb off some low hills I scuttled back to the "Coupe" which is a cracking ridge with no bottom landing but loads of lift before heading back to St Andre to land, all in all a nice day.

Sunday 26th was day one of the Comp and after the normal first briefing it was off up the hill for the normal rigging race. The day looked pretty good although visibility was not too good, and a reasonably large task was set which

included the "Dormillouse" run. Some concerns were raised about the wisdom of using a busy racing ridge on a Sunday, with poor visibility, as it was likely to be crowded with not only ourselves but also paragliders and high speed sailplanes, but these were dismissed. Personally I thought it a little too harsh an introduction to the area for those unfamiliar with it, as once you head off around the Cheval Blanc the terrain can appear rather daunting, although after a few days flying in the area it doesn't appear so bad. Anyway, the task stood, so off we went.

Setting up for the first start gate it was fairly busy with around half the field in position on the edge of the 5 k cylinder. As the start opened, gliders set off, but looking at the sky I decided to hold back and wait for the second gate. Flying back into the cylinder I looked at my instruments to reset them for the second start and on looking back up was confronted with the sight of a glider some 30-50m in front of me flipping over, with bits dropping off it and parachutes emerging from it. Momentarily mesmerised, I couldn't quite work out what I was seeing before reality kicked in, along with the realisation that if I didn't do something quickly I was going to fly into it. A hard left turn saw me miss the wing and one of the parachutes (he had two) by a few metres before normal service returned.

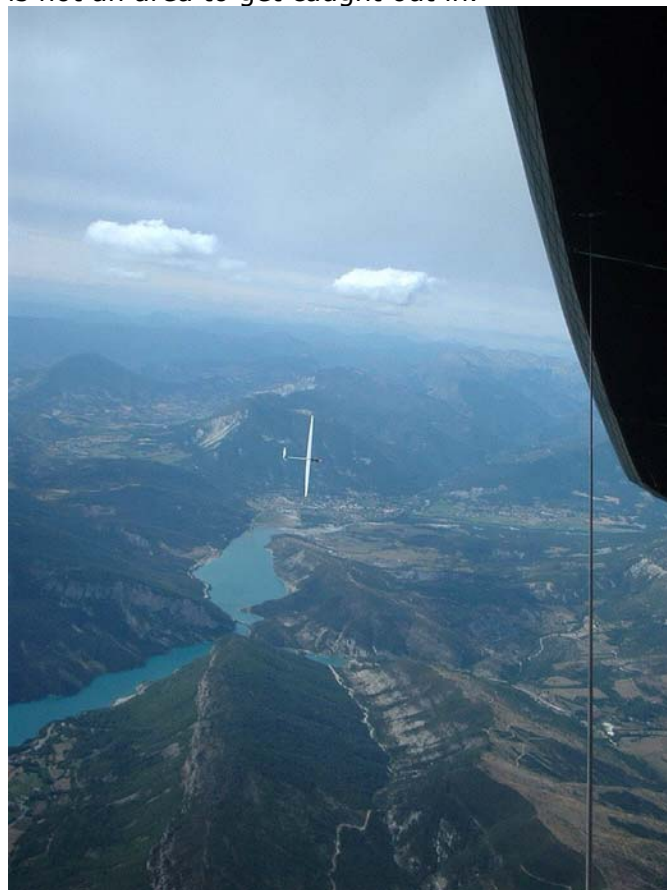
Putting a radio message out on the safety channel got an instant response, and whilst I circled the stricken glider, another pilot flew above to get a GPS location for the ground crew. Lift was still strong in the area and it took a long time (from nearly 8000') for the glider to reach terra firma, landing in some trees adjacent to a field at the top of a valley. Circling lower no movement was apparent, so I informed the other pilot (Steve Green) that I would land in the nearby field to check him out. Steve said he would join me. Landing in the peak of the day is never the wisest thing to do, and it was hard work getting down having to actively search out sinking air.

Landing, getting hold of a radio, phone and GPS, we were quickly legging it up the slope to where the crashed glider hung in the trees, looking like a broken pterodactyl, and strangely out of place and time. To our amazement and relief the pilot emerged from the trees waving and pretty much unmarked, although much relieved, so all ended well. Pedro, it turned out, had rolled over whilst flying in a thermal and having to turn to avoid another pilot, so probably losing his airspeed at just the wrong

time in just the wrong place. He had raised his sprogs prior to flying, although they were still two turns down, which on an Aeros is quite a lot, although this may not have been a contributory factor.

The net result of Steve and me landing "to assist" was that we would receive some weird and wonderful averaging over the rest of the comp depending on how we performed against the task winners. Never did understand it!

Day Two and there was a fair amount of muttering about the previous task and how bumpy it was. With a forecast for good thermal activity but stronger winds pilots were a little edgy, as winds in the mountains are not fun. The task was set via the "normal" start, off up to the north to a beautiful place called Allos, before returning south. The Valley that runs up to Allos does have its pitfalls and in some places is not an area to get caught out in.



This is what it's all about!

Taking the first start I was in a good position heading towards my planned route with things looking good. Passing over the site of the previous day's fun I was pleased to be on route for my first full task.

Hesitation set in as the pilots with me headed further west to get onto Cheval Blanc whilst I was heading to the ridge behind. Decisions

decisions! I wavered, not really going one way or the other, and before I knew it I was in trouble getting low and things not looking so good.

Pushing into wind I ended up on a low ridge in the lee of a large hill getting a good thrashing. After 10 minutes I was ready to give up, but moved further up wind to an even lower ridge, which according to the "Thermalling" book could well be flicking the thermals off before they got to me. Blow me it worked! And whilst it was a rough ride, I hooked a 9up to 9000' and was back in the game. Being only 3k from the start cylinder, I made the decision to get a fresh start time, and this time to follow my pre-planned route, so off I set. Leaving the cylinder for the second time a glider to my left started heading for Cheval Blanc, amazingly I began to go with him! Not for long though! Having the courage of your convictions is not always an easy thing, but there are times when you need them.

Heading onto my chosen ridge, the lift was there and I moved steadily higher into the mountains before getting a rough climb, which at times was a little on the concerning side. Repeating the process across three more ridges saw me at 5 k from turnpoint on the upwind side of the Allos valley, in a good position to take the turnpoint and get back into the mountains, unlike the guys who had taken the "easy" route on the east side. Conditions were turbulent in the mountains and I was pleased to be on my own, so not having to avoid other pilots, who, if anything like me, were regularly out of control in the stronger climbs. In the middle of a particularly rough climb off a rock face the radio cackled into life and the message came through that the task was stopped due to conditions. A mixture of relief and disappointment ensued as your score is given as your position on course, and having taken a later start I would be at a disadvantage. Still, that's competition. Landing safely, Kaz picked me up and we headed back to the campsite for an early shower.

Pilots were in groups discussing the day with the guys who had been on the east side of the valley at 13000', having had a fairly smooth ride whilst the ones on the west in the mountains had very much the opposite. Several pilots had landed before the task was stopped by choice due to the conditions and one (Ron Richardson) had "landed" not by choice, having been tumbled in turbulence on a lee side and ending up in yet more trees, with his parachute neatly wrapped around his wing tip. Ron was ok with only a few bruises and lump on his head to

show, however his shiny new Litespeed RS was less fortunate with only a few parts salvageable.

Day 3 and up the hill things were getting tense, the day looked good but the forecast was for more of the same and possibly even windier. A task was set, the safety committee assembled, two of the committee were absent so I was seconded on. Much discussion, my view was that there was nothing to tell us that the day would be any safer than the previous two and there was a chance according to the forecast it could be worse. Whilst it was thought that it would probably be ok for free flying, tasking in such conditions would be unwise, so on a vote of 3 -1 it was canned. Pilots derigged and headed off for a relaxing day whilst some free flew. Some of those that did fly had a good time whilst others did not, vindicating the decision and making everyone feel a bit better about it. Sam Hull Bailey flew to Digne where, for some reason, he elected to land downwind, ending up in Marseille hospital with a cracked vertebra.

Day 4 Canned due to strong winds and rain. Kaz and I headed off to Gourdon, to check out the sites there, and what a super place it is, although the landings are on the restricted side. We missed the bad weather and returned to clearing skies which was good, as a Pizza evening was planned up at Mark and Helen Taggarts. This was a huge success, with pilots drinking far too much, as the next days forecast was poor. Fortunately, the moon shone bright and by about 1 in the morning I was of the opinion that the next day may not be so bad, so stopped the red wine and started on the water, which proved to be a good move.

Day 5 and it was a glorious morning. Kaz got up early and was off up the hill to get her first flight in off St Andre, performing a good launch and a super nil wind landing, two paces from the spot right in front of the briefing at Aeroglise. I had pole position having stayed up the hill, and was pretty much set up by the time the majority of pilots turned up. Forecasts were still variable, with the possibility of changing conditions, so a relatively short task was set with an early start which seemed sensible. The majority of pilots took the first start, and it was quite a spectacle to see the gliders spreading out as they headed south across the lakes to the first turn point. I was going well with the lead gaggle as we got to the edge of the lake, to take a climb before crossing into less hospitable areas. Dave Matthews and I played it a little too safe and dropped off the leaders, which was a costly mistake, resulting in us both getting average times into goal rather than the fast

ones had we been more daring, still we were both in one piece. It was good to see Patrick B on route and arriving in goal with a big smile. No injuries that day except for George S taking the skin off his knees whilst landing.



Looking back to take off from the lake

Day 6 Conditions continued to improve, and a task to Laragne was set with full expectations of getting there. Things went well up to Digne, then it got trickier with a good number of pilots not making the crossing. After a struggle I arrived in the "Valley of Doom", to find gliders dotted all over the ample landing fields. Flying around for nearly two hours and trying as I might did not help, and despite being in "good" company with Gordon Rigg, Shedsy, Craig and Tony Stephens, none of us could make further progress, so finally we joined the earlier pilots. However one pilot did make goal, proving it could be done, and another was close by, both having taking a less direct but more cloud strewn route so there is a lesson there.

Day 7. The final day. Another early morning up the hill and Kaz put in two flights on the Paraglider one off each launch to round off her flying for the holiday on a high. Task was set at 118 k via 5 turnpoints with a land by time of 17.00 to help with an early prize giving. Taking the first gate at 13.40 I was off with the first gliders, taking the route through the mountains I had used previously on task 2. Once again it was good and arrived at the first turn point ahead of the masses. Next, there are two routes to the next turnpoint and I elect for the shorter but riskier one. It's not too bad but not as quick as the longer, safer one, and by the time I get onto the "Chamat" ridge those behind are catching me. Just before the turn point Gordon flies by and I pull in more speed to keep up. Taking the turnpoint, it's a high speed run back towards the St Andre end, dodging the gliders still heading up the ridge before climbing out in

preparation for the crossing back onto the take off ridge. Six of us head out as the lead gaggle, and all make it across, arriving just below take off and quickly climb out. Next it's upwind and onto the "Coupe", which I cross onto easily, unlike on the previous day where I made it with only feet to spare above the trees. Along the Coupe to the corner then climb again before heading out to the turnpoint above Digne. Gordon goes early and sinks out I continue to climb in strengthening lift then glide straight to turn point, getting there with good height, and find a good climb. By the time Gordon arrives I am well on my way back to the Coupe. Another climb and it's time to head for the Thorame Basse valley and the final turn point before an upwind dash to goal. The sky is not so good, with a blue hole over the direct route, so I go north. Sink, loads of it, sees me struggling in the foothills, having to take a 1 up climb to get me out. Gordon flies by straight through a small gap between the ridges and hits strong lift, boy does he know this place, and is on his way again whilst I can at least now move into the better hills. Finally I get the climb I need just as the masses start to arrive and glide off. Approaching final turn point, I need 11:1 glide to make goal, but its into a head wind. Gordon is now pushing back up the valley towards goal but very low. Several gliders have already landed short, some on their way to goal and some to the turnpoint, this could be close. Flying onto the ridge near the turnpoint I catch a corker which goes 9 up, so I hang on to make sure. Leaving it with only a 5:1 glide showing I race out to the turnpoint then turn into wind and towards goal. There is a glider a couple of km in front of me and I am determined to overtake him with my extra height. Flying at 70 mph, he is quickly passing below me and in a matter of minutes I make goal with 1000' to spare, and more importantly 1 minute and 8 seconds before the land-by time, to be one of only 3 to get in in time.

Although a lot of pilots could have made it round the short task, time curtailed the day causing some frustration, but then we all had the same chances.

So ended the 2007 British Nationals, with Gordon Rigg winning for the 8th time, Grant Crossingham 2nd and myself 3rd despite the early problems, so giving me my highest placing in this competition. Maybe next year.

It was a good two weeks with lots of excitement, fun, food, wine and good company. Next year Laragne. Coming??

Kernow Cross Country League the final score

Well, the end of October is almost upon us, and unless we get an unexpected change in the weather, the Cross Country League comes to a rather underwhelming finish.

The new hang gliding champ is that young go-getter Barry Green, who managed to clinch the trophy with just one flight.

Paragliding champ is the irrepressible mad dog Pete Coad. And now he finds himself with unlimited leisure time on his hands, watch out next year, he's going to really set the bar at a new level.

Well done to both our worthy champions.

Team champions for hang gliding are the grizzling Bears, and for paragliding the charging Bulls.

KHPA Hang gliding Cross Country League 2007

| position | Name | Team | flight 1 | flight 2 | flight 3 | flight 4 | defined | Total |
|----------|-----------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|-------|
| 1 | Barry Green | Bears | | | | | 19.77 | 19.77 |
| 2 | Tim Jones | Rhinos | 6.39 | | | | 11.08 | 17.47 |
| 3 | Steve Hawken | Lions | 14.81 | | | | | 14.81 |
| 4 | Roger Green | Bears | | | | | 11.34 | 11.34 |
| 5 | Graham Phipps | Weasels | | | | | 5.78 | 5.78 |
| 6 | Chris Whittaker | Rhinos | | | | | 3.26 | 3.26 |

KHPA Paragliding Cross Country League 2007

| position | Name | Team | flight 1 | flight 2 | flight 3 | flight 4 | defined | Total |
|----------|---------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|-------|
| 1 | Pete Coad | Bulls | 15.3 | 13.11 | 3.92 | | | 32.33 |
| 2 | Jon Trewartha | Lions | 11.35 | 6.89 | | | | 18.24 |
| 3 | Al James | Bears | 11.35 | 6.27 | | | | 17.62 |
| 4 | Graham Phipps | Weasels | 12.96 | | | | | 12.96 |

As one XC year closes, so another inevitably opens. So keep watching out for THOSE days, and have your GPSs and variors fully charged ready to go, so that you can be the first to enter your score for this highly regarded training ground of British Champions.

Team lists and rules for the 2007/2008 league will be published next month.

Minutes for the meeting of the Kernow Hang gliding and Paragliding Association held at the Clinton Social Club on Monday 8 Oct 2007

Welcome Chairman Dave welcomed the 20 members attending and opened the meeting at eight twenty.

Apologies Pete Coad.

Minutes of the last meeting were read & signed

Matters arising

The club coach course to be held at Carnmoggas Holiday Park near St Austell and sponsored by Nick and Paula has been moved to mid-April 2008 by the BHPA.

Emergency Parachute repack course still TBC. Graham P.

Adrian Toase invitation to speak still TBC. GP.

Mark AS is standing down as webmaster as is known, a replacement volunteer is now urgently required before the club loses updates to the website.

The Christmas do will take place on Sat 19 Jan 2007, probably at Sandsifters, to coincide with the frostbite comp'.

Regular reports

CHAPS training

Graham had 11 days on the tow and one on the hill. Tony Tyler achieved his HG EPC, Bill Northcott, Keith Bartlett, Glyn Polington and Chris Hancock gained PG EPC, Mike Stanley and Bill Northcott gained PG CPC. 2 PG and 4 HG taster days plus 2 PG tandems also took place.

Competitions Frostbite Comp' is set for weekend 19/20 Jan 2008.

Club Flying

The Hangers had good days at Carbis & Vault. Carbis was the better of the two. The Danglers had loads of days at Carbis, to the point of being boring.

Incidents

None reported.

Other business

Andy Howard and various friends have been seen flying and socialising at the Carbis Bay and Godrevy sites. At Carbis Bay he had non-flying friends with him in the take off field and at Godrevy his group allowed dogs to run free in fields where livestock graze. The club could lose both sites for these reasons alone. When Andy and friends are next seen it would be useful to have some photos to use in the future. The Sec' will write to the SATCO at Lands End Aerodrome, explaining the situation and asking him to mediate. If this fails, the CAA might be approached for their view on whether his activities are consistent with his employment.

Members who have media, DVDs and books, to lend should send their lists to Kaz.

Member's forum

There being no further business the meeting closed at ten to nine.