



Kernow Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association

MARCH 2010

Grand Photo Competition



This month's photo, taken by, Steve Mcilduff shows Pete Coad at Perranporth.
What a great photo on what looked like a lovely day.

Flying on the North Coast? An IMPORTANT reminder:
The first pilot flying at Perranporth, St Agnes or Chapel Porth must **always**
contact the Air Traffic Controller at Perranporth Airfield.
Telephone number 01872 552266

Chairman's Chat

The next KHPA meeting will be held at 8.00 pm Tuesday 13 April 2010 at the Clinton Social Club, Redruth.

The final form of the letter to Skywings is printed elsewhere in this Bulletin. I have had confirmation from Joe Schofield that it will go in the April issue. Coincidentally Joe tells me that March Skywings has a really good Attitude page from the Dales Club along the same lines as our letter. They have withdrawn from the BCC this year for very similar reasons. One of the guys lost at the Mynd was one of their members.

We had an excellent talk and presentation from Graham Phipps about starting to go xc at the last meeting. By the time you read this, the proposed coaching course

on Saturday 20 March will have happened. The KHPA is very lucky that it has within its membership a very keen team of Club Coaches led by Peter Coad. If you want to be coached on cross country flight but don't yet have the experience, these guys are bending over backwards to help. At some stage an xc flight training trip is going to happen, and I know how many pilots were keen to be involved. Let Peter know that you are interested so that he can get an idea of numbers.

Don't forget Steve Hawken's Yahoo Group if you want to find out where people are flying and to let other people know which site you have gone to.

Safe flying.

Mark Woodhams

Below is the letter sent to Skywings:

Dear Sir

This letter is not a criticism of any individual, but it is intended to provoke debate. As an active Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club we support wholeheartedly the efforts of the Competitions Panel to introduce up-and-coming pilots to safe competitive flying.

However, there is a concern expressed amongst our membership that some novice pilots competing in the BCC may not be fully ready for the pressures of competition. Whilst in no way wanting to frustrate the ambitions of new pilots, we wonder if there is some way in which improved airmanship and respect for other competitive flyers could be encouraged more.

For instance should competition be limited to Pilot rated flyers only? And would this help?

Yours faithfully,

*Mark Woodhams, Chairman Kernow Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association.
Peter Coad, Chief Coach Kernow Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association
and Meet Director, British Open Series.*

Kernow Cross Country League 2010

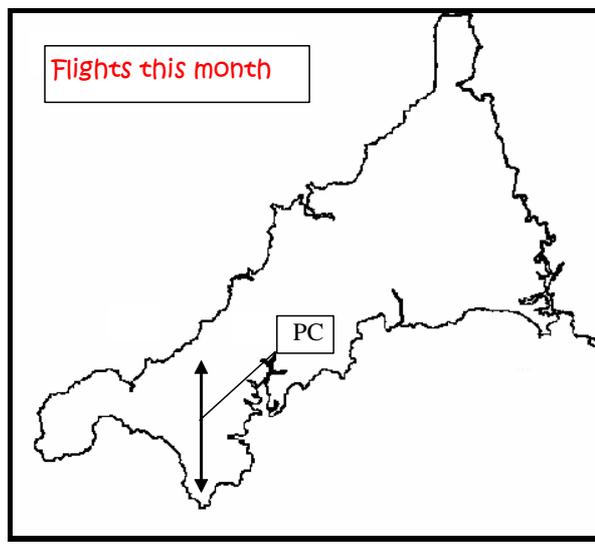
Only one entry this month, but a very encouraging sign from Pete Coad that the season has got under way, with a hard won flight from Carn Brea almost to the Lizard.

KHPA Paragliding Cross Country League 2010

	Name	Team	total (m)
1	Pete Coad	Bulls	20.2

KHPA Hang gliding Cross Country League 2010

	Name	Team	Total (m)
1	Tim Jones	Bears	13.76
2	Graham May	Weasels	12.51
3	Graham Phipps	Weasels	11.95



Thermal XC coaching course

Saturday 20th March was a miserable, wet and windy day, fit for neither man nor beast, but it didn't stop more than 20 eager pilots turning up at the Portreath Millennium Hall for Kernow's XC coaching course. The participants ranged from fresh-faced, low air time young bucks to grizzled old dinosaurs, but we all were anticipating learning new things, and weren't disappointed as we left at the end.

The afternoon began with an introduction by Pete Coad. With a mixture of personal anecdotes and his own hard won experience, Pete showed us the importance of preparation if we are to maximize our chances of successful cross country flying, and pointed out how much of the hard work of a XC flight can be done at home, the night before. Studying maps, being familiar with airspace, hazards and landmarks along our likely track, and making sure all instruments are charged and ready will make the actual flying so much easier. He also emphasised how important it was to have a positive attitude, going out with like minded pilots, and always setting challenges. He finished by reminding us that we were all perfectly capable of flying some good cross countries this year, if we really wanted to.

Following this, we split into two groups. One group had a very useful introduction to maps and navigation with Mark Butler, and the other got tips and techniques for successful thermalling from Graham May.

Mark's session covered the use of Ordnance Survey maps for navigating in the air and especially on the ground after landing, and gave useful practice in using grid references for aiding retrieves and for logging flights for the XC league. He also covered navigation using a compass, explaining the differences between Grid North, Magnetic North and True North, and practicing following a route using bearings.

Graham's session covered the theory of the shape of thermals, how to centre on them using our variors, and how to maximize our climb rate. He also talked about how to extend a cross country after the first thermal, when to leave the thermal and how to select the route to fly.

Pete drew things to a close at the end of the afternoon with mention of identifying the best cross country days, other forms of lift, such as wave, and touching on meteorology as it affects our flying. He had wanted to talk about GPSs, but running short of time, Mark offered to write an article for the bulletin.

At the end of the afternoon, everyone felt they had picked up useful tips, and were anxious to put their knowledge in to practice. There was a lot of enthusiasm for club trips, and everyone agreed that the weekend of 10th to 11th of April would be an ideal opportunity to go to SE Wales for some practical coaching and XC flying. So if you're at all interested in extending your flying experience, and enjoying some cracking post flying fun, then ring Pete on Wednesday 7th to check on the details.

As we all left the hall, the sun was shining, and everyone was full of enthusiasm for getting in some good flying. And would you believe it; the very next day produced some lovely flying conditions at Freathy, and even gave some lucky folks a taste of that elusive wave flying!

Many thanks to Pete, Mark and Graham for their invaluable input, and to Graham for arranging the use of the Millennium Hall.

How To Use Your G.P.S. Receiver

By Mark Butler

Introduction

Global Positioning System

The GPS, or Global Positioning System, is a system of 24 satellites in orbit above the Earth. The satellites are divided into six groups of four satellites, each group travelling on a different orbital track. The orbital track for the satellites is roughly 20,000 miles above the surface of the earth. That allows them to cover the most area possible with their radio transmitters. Because the satellites operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, GPS data is always available to those who have a receiver. The satellites completely surround the planet, and can provide location information anywhere on the planet to within a few meters.

What do the Satellites do?

The satellites send radio signals down to Earth. The signals contain information about each satellite, including the precise time. The GPS receiver, which can be either a hand held unit, a vehicle-based receiver or a static ground station receives and decodes that signal. These receivers were, until the early 1980s, only available to military personnel. The system was designed and implemented by the Department of Defence in order to coordinate attacks with large numbers of troops. While the system is still in use worldwide, manufacturers such as Garmin and Magellan rose to the top of the industry by offering quality civilian units. While the civilian units are very accurate, often to within just a few feet, the military models, which sometimes use multiple antennae, are accurate to within inches.

How Does it Know Where You Are?

The time code included in the signal is compared to the precise time kept in the ground unit. By comparing the data contained in the transmitted signal to that stored in the unit, a location can be determined to within 10 to 20 meters. With a secondary antenna, or another receiver slaved to the first, accuracy can be reduced to inches. As long as the GPS receiver can contact at least three satellites on the GPS network, a position fix can be determined; of course the system is designed so that at least three satellites are above the horizon at any given time. The more GPS satellites that a receiver can detect, the greater the accuracy. Often, as many as 8 or 10 satellites can be detected, and the civilian units can offer near one meter accuracy

The Basic Functions of a GPS

Give a location: A GPS unit accurately triangulates your position by receiving data transmissions from multiple orbiting satellites. Your location is given in coordinates: latitude and longitude or Universal Transverse Mercators (UTMs) or British Grid, (Ord Srvy GB). Acquiring satellites to provide reliable navigational information, including your position, a GPS receiver needs to receive good signals from at least four satellites. To "acquire" satellites, turn on your GPS and go to the Satellite screen. This will display the current

configuration of the satellites and the strength of the signals. It may take several minutes for the GPS unit to lock in to the satellites, so be patient.

If you see only a few satellites and weak signals, then don't rely on the GPS' directions. A clear view of the sky gives you the best opportunity for an optimal satellite lock. Tree canopy, canyons and tall buildings that obscure the view overhead or of the horizon can impede reception, so look for a clearing or a high point where you can get a stronger signal.

Point-to-point navigation: A location or destination is called a "waypoint." For example, you can establish a starting waypoint at a trailhead by using the location function. If you have the coordinates for the destination you're headed for (taken from a map, resource book, website, mapping software program or other source), a GPS can give you a straight-line, point-to-point bearing and distance to your destination. Since trails rarely follow a straight line, the GPS' bearing will change as you go. The indicated distance to travel will also decrease as you approach your goal.

"Route" navigation: By combining multiple waypoints on a trail, you can move point-to-point with intermediate bearing and distance guides. Once you reach the first predetermined waypoint, the GPS receiver can automatically point you to the next one or you can manually do this.

Keep a "track:" One of the most useful functions of a GPS unit is its ability to lay a virtual "breadcrumb trail" of where you've been, called a track. This differs from a "route," which details where you're going. You can configure a GPS to automatically drop "trackpoints" over intervals of either time or distance. To retrace your steps, simply follow the GPS bearings back through the sequence of trackpoints.

Reading Coordinates: To simplify map navigation, a system of coordinates is used. Coordinates divide the map into a grid and identify a particular location by listing its relative position north/south and east/west. To choose a coordinate system, simply go to the Preferences screen. The most common coordinate systems used in GPS navigation are:

- **DMS (Degrees/Minutes/Seconds):** This is the standard way of listing latitude and longitude:
Example: N47° 37' 12" W122° 19' 45".
In this example, N47° 37' 12" indicates that the north/south position is 47 degrees, 37 minutes and 12 seconds north of the equator; while W122° 19' 45" places the east/west position at 122 degrees, 19 minutes and 45 seconds west of the Prime Meridian (at Greenwich, England).
- **British Grid (Ord Srvy GB):** This is the standard way of listing Eastings & Northings
Example: SW 73543 BNG41478
In this example, you are given a 10 figure grid reference so you will only use the first 3 numerals of each set to give you a six figure grid reference. The "SW" indicates which 100km square of National Grid you are in . Without the letters, the numeric reference would be repeated in every 100km square across the U.K. Grid North varies from True north except along the meridian 2° West (at Greenwich, England).

Your GPS receiver can automatically display whichever of these coordinate systems you select. It can also convert coordinates from one system to another. This is helpful if you're given coordinates for a location in one system (e.g., British Grid), but want to actually navigate in another (e.g., DMS).

Memory: In addition to some GPS's having preloaded maps, many GPS units allow you to download more maps using CD-ROM software (available separately). Some GPS receivers give you even greater flexibility by using removable microSD memory cards. These cards are available preloaded, or you can download maps from your computer to a blank card. If your GPS unit uses memory cards, it's easy to organize your maps for maximum efficiency and ease. All GPS have the function to down load waypoints from your P.C. to the unit. This is very useful if you need to input a number of waypoints.

Batteries: Make sure they're fresh at the start of your trip, and carry spares. Consider turning off non-essential features such as auto-routing and backlighting to conserve battery life.

Tip: Lithium batteries are the best choice for GPS receivers due to their long life. However, when brand-new, these batteries have a brief power spike that adds unwanted horizontal lines across some GPS screens. To solve this, simply use the lithium batteries on another electronic device for a few minutes and then insert them into your GPS unit.

Navigation Skills

Entering Waypoint: Plotting a route with waypoints is easy. Simply press the MARK button (or, on some units, press and hold the ENTER button). If you're marking a waypoint where you stand, you can often do this with the single press of a button. You can also add multiple levels of detail: a name (e.g., "trailhead" or "waterfall"), the coordinates, the elevation and even a short note. This is particularly helpful if you're marking waypoints for the trail ahead, perhaps before you leave home.

NOTE: Whenever starting a hike, add a waypoint where you've parked your car.

Following Waypoints: With waypoints in place, your GPS receiver can guide you from point to point. Use the FIND or GOTO button to identify a particular waypoint target. Then switch to the Compass screen where the GPS receiver will give you a bearing and estimate the distance and time of travel.

Keeping a Track: If you take a spontaneous side trip from base camp or in any way venture into unknown territory, one of your GPS receiver's most useful features, "tracking," comes into play. When you enable the TRACK RECORDING feature, the GPS unit will automatically set trackpoints as you go, essentially laying a breadcrumb trail to show where you've been. You can adjust trackpoints to be laid at specified intervals of time or distance. The shorter the distance between trackpoints, the more accurate the path back. For example, trackpoints set every 100 yards allow a greater risk of you wandering off course versus trackpoints set every 10 feet. The intervals you select should depend on the presence of a marked trail, the terrain, the weather and other conditions that you find. In addition to this essential guiding feature, tracking also allows you to record time and distance travelled.

Additional GPS Sensors

Barometric altimeter: All GPS units provide elevation as part of the information gleaned from the satellites. But the advantage of also having a barometric altimeter is that it operates independently of this signal. So if the satellite signal becomes too weak to be reliable, the barometric altimeter can still give you an accurate elevation. And since it measures air pressure, it gives you an idea of approaching weather changes by displaying a chart of barometric trends. Not all GPS units have the barometric sensor but will still give you height reading which is not as accurate as a barometric reading and should not be solely relied upon when flying.

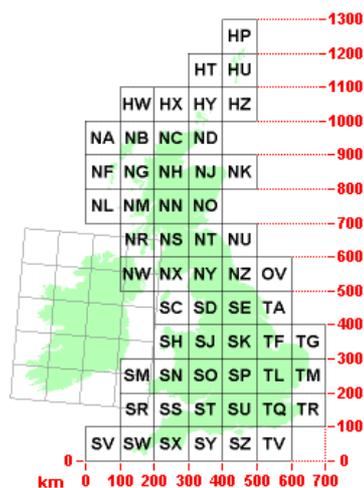
Magnetic compass: The magnetic compass works in a similar manner to your traditional capsule compass. Since you're still carrying the latter compass (and a hard-copy map), the magnetic compass is somewhat redundant. So if you need to conserve the GPS battery life by only using essential functions, you could turn off the magnetic compass and just use your capsule compass. This will not affect the navigational functions of the GPS receiver, which rely on satellite signals. Not all GPS's have a Magnetic Compass but they all have a compass, the difference is a magnetic compass will indicate N while standing still.

As a reminder of Mark's talk on grid references, here's a reprint of an article I wrote in the bulletin three or four years ago. Go away and practise and send me your flights for the XC league.

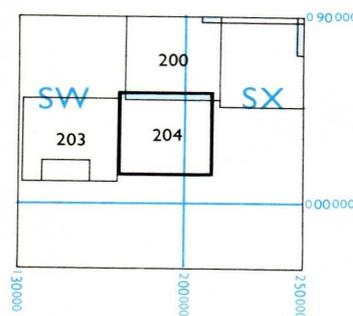
Now, where was I? Some advice on working out grid references.

In these modern days of GPS it is very easy to forget the ancient art of plotting grid references; that is if you ever paid enough attention in O level geography to learn the art in the first place. So, I thought it might be a good time for a little reminder, to encourage people to plot their XCs and enter them in the league.

The National Grid, as used on Ordnance Survey maps, is a grid of 100km squares laid over the whole of the UK. Each square is given a two-letter reference, and these form the first part of a grid reference. The squares covered by an Ordnance Survey map are shown on its key, normally under the heading 'The National Grid Reference System'.



The diagram at right comes from an old 1:50000 sheet 204, of the area around Truro and Falmouth. It shows that the Western part of the sheet is covered by the SW square, but the Eastern part is in the SX square.



These are the letters you should quote at the beginning of your grid reference.

Each of the 100km squares is divided into 1km squares, and the grid lines are numbered from 00 to 99. The Eastings are the numbers along the bottom and top of the map, the Northings are the numbers up the sides. When you give a grid reference you always give the Eastings first. Do you remember "Go along the corridor before going up the stairs"? ie. Give the numbers along the bottom first, then numbers up the side.

On this map, X marks the landing spot for a certain epic flight. To work out the grid reference, I can see it is in square **SW** (it is often marked somewhere on the map). For the Eastings, I find the vertical line to the left of the point, and see that it is **70**. I then have to estimate how many tenths into the square the X is. I would say it is about **6** tenths into the square, so my three digits for the Eastings will be **706**.

For the Northings I find the horizontal line below the X. this will be **13**. Then I estimate how far into the square the spot is, which is about **2** tenths. So my three digits for the Northings will be **132**.

Putting all those together, the grid reference for my landing spot will be **SW706132**!

Now as a little test, see if you can work out the grid reference for the point where the pilot SHOULD have landed for maximum distance from St Agnes! The answer is given at the bottom of the page.



Now, go out, fly XC, work out your take off and landing co-ordinates, AND SEND THEM TO ME!

Answer: SW705115

'The Art of Para-gliding not Para-lysing'

By Wanda Summers

"Can you feel my shin bone poking through my suit?" I asked.

"No, nothing is poking through. Your leg doesn't feel broken".

Shit, I thought to myself, I've broken my back.

I was airlifted to hospital, off the towfield, from an appropriately named site called 'Hell's Mouth'. This is very close to what hell must feel like I thought.

At the hospital, the first thing they wanted to do was cut all my clothes off. Not my paragliding suit – no chance! I stubbornly wiggled out of it; it had a sentimental attachment as my grandmother had bought it for me. When my Gran had found out I was paragliding, she ordered herself a copy of 'Touching Cloud Base'. As a surprise she ordered the suit for me from an advert in the back pages. She died before she ever got to see me fly.

The nurses were grumpy with me by now, as they had realised they had an awkward patient. I let them cut the rest of my clothes off as a compromise. They left me alone while I waited over an hour for my X-ray, I hadn't had any pain relief as they had only offered intravenous morphine, and I had a terrible fear of needles.

Being bumped around on the trolley bed wasn't much fun. In the X-ray department I remember telling the Radiologist that I was a Personal Trainer and he asked me for training tips. I also said how I was a long distance runner and of my plans in June to run 154 miles across the Gobi Desert in China with all my food and kit on my back. It seemed really stupid to be saying all that, as I knew I wasn't in a good way. I wasn't able to move my right leg.

His face said it all through his forced smile, when I asked him how bad it looked. He wouldn't tell me anything; he just said good luck with my run and attempted to sound cheery.

Below is my first X-ray taken on 22nd December 2008.

PATIENT: DINOXIA, WANDA
Patient Name: SUMMERS, WANDA, L32208 CID: R00004270 Sex: F
Study Description: CT Spine Lumbar (L3-L5) DATE: 22/12/2008
Birth Date: 01/05/1970 EXAMINATION DATE: 22/12/2008



I can picture your readers' faces; everyone has the same disguised look of,

'Oh my God, she's had it', when they first see it.

My L4 vertebra had burst into pieces. There was a piece of bone lodged in my spinal canal. I wasn't too sure I would be running that desert this year. Everyone I showed the X-ray, wasn't too sure I would be doing much at all this year, or ever.

I was taken by ambulance from Treliske hospital in Truro, to Derriford Hospital in Plymouth. The journey was 3 hours long. Every bump felt like a gunshot to my spine. My needle phobia was too great for the morphine and they wouldn't give me any oral medication. Once at Derriford Hospital, the Paramedics dropped me on the way out of the ambulance, which was almost funny if it hadn't hurt so much. I remember looking up at the grey sky for what felt like the last time, and wondering if I would ever again feel

the elation of my legs dangling out of my harness as they left the ground.

I was wheeled to a room eventually to have an MRI scan. Sometime later, the surgeon came to see me in the ward. He said he had booked me for my first operation for the 24th December. The word "First" made my spine shudder, metaphorically that is, as I couldn't feel my spine by now.

"What if I don't have an operation? What are my chances of walking again?" I asked weakly. The Surgeon looked at me as if I had punched him. "Everyone has the operation", he exclaimed crossly. "In the first operation, I go through your back and take out the burst pieces of vertebrae, and then a few days later I will go through your stomach and hip in the second operation and fuse your L1 vertebrae to your L5". I pondered this for all of a minute, fuse my L1 to my L5 – my entire lower spine together? How on earth will I ever run or fly again? "No thanks, I said, "I would like a second opinion".

The Surgeon stormed off, irritated that I wouldn't listen to him, with his twenty years of conditioned methods and no case study to tell me about the outcome of someone who hadn't had an operation. He walked off stating that the chance of me walking again after the operation was slim, so the chance of me walking without an operation was almost nonexistent. "But there is still a chance though, isn't there?" I argued. "If you can call it a chance", I could hear his mutterings amongst his heavy, echoing footsteps in the distance. I rationalised to myself, I can still feel my foot, so therefore I will get my legs back. Whatever happens, I thought to myself, no one is going to take my flying away from me, I don't want to settle for a spine full of metal with risks of infection and not being able to move the way I want and be told it will never take the impact of a landing again.

The second opinion was useless, I had wanted a different suggestion of surgery but the reply was from a Surgeon in Exeter who just said it would be advisable for the patient to have the surgery. He also stated in the letter that I could go to see him if I wanted. Obviously that was an easy option, I will just see if the train fits a trolley bed...

I didn't have the surgery. I lay flat on my back for 12 weeks. I couldn't even sit up. The surgeon flung the curtain open on me a couple of times and would ask, "Have you changed your mind yet?" This made me really angry. I lay on my bed, alone, with the curtains drawn around me and tried to have a tantrum. I attempted to throw something within reach of me. The shock of not even being able to lift my arm up instantly hit me. I was determined to sort myself out. I made a mental training programme for myself for the next 12 weeks. The first thing I need is to practice throwing, and then I need some dumbbells, some exercise bands and a pedometer...

I used rolled up socks to throw with and I practiced trying to lift my legs for hours. My left leg was weak but I could move it. My right leg however, was like phoning Australia with a time delay. I would tell it to move and then a few seconds later, it would weakly respond. I worked on this, in secret, as the Doctors had told me, "Under no circumstances move your legs". I just didn't move my pelvis, I figured if I didn't move my legs at all the muscle wastage would be so great, my recovery could take months, even years; besides, I very carefully monitored any change in sensation in my legs, if the pins and needles or numbness got worse, I would stop.

After only a week my legs had shrunk by almost half their normal size and my right leg looked like a shrivelled twig. There was also the risk of losing the nervous links to my leg altogether. I just kept visualising myself running again. After about ten days, I could bend my knees and bring my heels up so they were flat on the bed. I could lift each foot up by a couple of centimetres. This is where the pedometer came in. I clipped it to the compression sock and set myself a target number of steps to lift my legs up and down, whilst imagining myself walking. I have to remind you this wasn't an easy task. It took all my will power and I still hadn't been to the toilet.

I discharged myself from Derriford after two weeks, and got transported back to Treliske Hospital in Truro. They argued there would be no specialist care there, but as they weren't doing anything with me apart from taking my blood pressure, temperature and injecting my stomach every night with the anticoagulant, Clexane. I figured the staff at Treliske Hospital would manage this. This meant I could be nearer my two boys, who despite living 60 miles away, came to see me every day with their dad. Their dad did everything for me as I couldn't sit up and could only reach things within my arm span. Although we hadn't been together for years, he was still my best friend and gave up all his free time for three months to bring me food and do things like massage my legs. Being alone was awful as I felt so vulnerable, I would think about 'what if there was a fire, who would push me out?' I scared myself with thoughts of strangers coming into the ward and attacking me and I wouldn't be able to move. I mentioned this to Steve, (the kids' dad) and he said that only happens in films. During my last night at Derriford Hospital, the nurses had to lock us in the ward, because someone had wandered in and none of us in the ward could get up.

In Treliske Hospital the ward I stayed in was hell. I had no window and the room was full of dementia patients. My friends put up pictures of me paragliding off Macher hill in Lanzarote, on the walls to try and cheer me up. I stared at them constantly, day and night as the lights never went out. The nurses were noisy and shouted at all of us, as most of the patients were deaf, and it was habit for them, they also looked annoyed at the pictures but they never took them down.

I went for three days and three nights with no sleep at all and I reached breaking point. It was all too much being trapped and not knowing what the outcome would be. The Doctor there said that it was likely my spine would crumble when I tried to sit up once the 12 weeks was up, as there were

so many bits to knit back together, it was very doubtful it was possible. On top of that I still hadn't been to the toilet and the nurses said I may have bowel paralysis. I got over my wallowing once I changed wards and had a window. I could only see a bit of sky, but it was comforting and I dreamt of flying again, if only so that I could paraglide past the window and stick my fingers up to the lot of them.

After six weeks I had truly had enough of hospital. As I wasn't supposed to be moving my legs, I had very little physiotherapy as there was nothing for the Physiotherapists to give me to do apart from clench my quadriceps muscles and this really frustrated me. If I attempted to show them what I could do with my legs, they would panic. They even tried to ban my dumbbells, so I started to plan my escape.

I found out it was possible to discharge myself. Steve, my best friend, said he would have the hospital bed in his living room and look after me. It took a lot of arguing with Nurses, Matrons, Surgeons and Doctors, but at eight weeks, I was travelling back by ambulance to Steve's house, and then feeling the outside air and savouring every second of it as they lifted me by spinal board, up some nearly vertical steps to the house, which nearly gave one of the Paramedics a heart attack and he was on the verge of having a complete sulk, saying that it was ridiculous and who had allowed this, but whilst I could feel myself sliding downwards and out of the strap of the spinal board, was continually persuading him all was fine and it would be quite easy to squeeze me through the porch etc etc



Once the mission was accomplished (and I won't bore you with the logistics and complications that were involved) I felt much more optimistic about my current state. Naturally we had to lie that someone would be with me all the time, as of course this wasn't possible as Steve worked and my kids were at school, but I had a giant fire extinguisher for company and lots of strategically placed tables and a wireless keyboard so it was all fine. I arranged for Steve to place a mini-stepper at the end of my Hospital Spinal bed, and for six hours a day I would step, step, step, feeling my legs getting stronger bit by bit. Just in case the outcome wasn't what I was hoping, I had Googled (like you do in these situations) a way of flying if I no longer had the use of my legs.

I was impressed to find that someone had already invented a wheelchair that could be attached to a

paraglider wing. That was a relief. At least somehow I would be able to fly again.

Source: <http://www.flyability.org.uk/Gallery/pages/OZ-pg-chair.htm>

When the 12 weeks were up, I sat up and shuffled into a wheelchair, kindly supplied by a friend of mine who conveniently sold them. I didn't wait to see a Doctor. My scan dates were messed up because the Nurse at the Hospital had forgotten to book me in at 12 weeks. The Nurse said I wouldn't get an appointment for another 2 weeks. Another 2 weeks on my back was like another two years.

I was elated to get into the wheelchair. I had been practising for a couple of weeks, tilting my bed up as if I was lying on a see-saw(it was a fancy electric one), to get used to being more and more upright without passing out. My body was very weak, but my back felt surprisingly solid. My friends carried me out of the house and the sun was shining. It was March; I had missed the entire winter.

After about 3 hours of being wheeled around the little village of Porthleven, including 'off road' onto a coastal path, as I had felt it was a sort of rebellious thing to do, Steve and my friend Jeff wheeled me back to the house. Jeff, who was a previous competitor of Cornwall's strongest man, was about to carry me back up the steps in the wheelchair, when I asked him to wait for a few minutes. Without really thinking about it, I planted my feet one by one firmly on the ground, and with the little strength I had in my arms, pushed myself up until I was standing. Jeff went white as a sheet, and I thought he was going to faint.

"Looks like my spine is pretty solid", I said. The two of them were speechless.

After a week, I stopped using my wheelchair altogether. When I went for my scan on the fourteenth week after my accident, the ambulance men had turned up expecting to transport me to the hospital still on a spinal board. I went to Salisbury Hospital for the scan, but they had only arranged an X-ray. The Surgeon I saw said that the way my back had healed was equivalent to winning the lottery; it was a one in a million chance. All the bone fragments had come together and my spine was indeed solid. One week later I was back at work doing my main job which was running a surf shop on Praa Sands Beach. This was my own fault as I had not taken out any Accident Insurance, a tip for all of you.

This didn't mean things were easy, months went by, which felt like years, and I concentrated on trying to walk less like a constipated robot and tried to look relatively normal. I had also started jogging (that was truly entertaining for any onlookers). I still had not had any Physiotherapy from the NHS. At Salisbury Hospital I was told by the Physios that as I was walking before I should have been, there was nothing they could do and I should carry on doing what I was doing as I must have been doing something right. Before the Doctors knew I could walk, there had been suggestions that I go to a Stroke Unit for rehabilitation as there was nowhere else for me to go in Cornwall.



Wanda launching off the ridge at El Cuchillo, Lanzarote

However, all the months of my pain from my self induced rehabilitation had paid off. I had set myself a target that if I could manage a jump from standing, I could therefore take a landing and I would be able to fly. In December, exactly one year later, I managed a little jump. Then, in January this year, I finally flew my paraglider again.

I achieved this feat in Lanzarote, whilst on the 'Fly Chaps' (now renamed Cloud9) flying trip organised by Graham and Kaz Phipps. It was a spontaneous decision. Up until the day before the trip, I hadn't even lifted my paraglider bag, I didn't even know if I would be able to carry it on my back. All I knew was that I really

wanted to return to flying and the longer I left it, the less chance I would have of being able to do it, because I would have been too scared.

I owe a great deal to Graham Phipps, who taught me how to paraglide in the first place and for his infectious enthusiasm for the sport which had worn off on me. Nothing in the world makes me as happy as flying does. It isn't an adrenaline rush; it is a perfect sense of contentment that I get, when I am suspended amongst the clouds and the birds, high above it all. I forget all my worries and now I even forget sometimes that I ever had an accident, despite the nerve damage and pain I still get. Flying takes it all away.

I hope that some of you that read this will be encouraged to know that if you want something badly enough and believe in yourself, you can make the impossible happen. Don't be put off by someone telling you it can't be done. Trust your instincts and listen to your body. There is always a way of overcoming an obstacle, there isn't anything you can't do if you truly want it. It helps to be stubborn, in a good way of course. I am intending to complete the run across the Gobi Desert in June this year. I admit I may not be able to run it, .but I will be trekking it, with 12kg on my back, and I will finish it.

NB. The image at right is of the final X-ray taken in March 2009, 14 weeks after the accident. As you can see, although ugly, the vertebra has gone back together.

Since seeing a Chiropractor, my spine is now a lot straighter and the main thing is, it is even solid enough for a nil wind landing.



Minutes for the meeting of the Kernow Hang gliding and Paragliding Association held at the Clinton Social Club on Tuesday 9th March 2010

Welcome Chairman welcomed the 23 members attending and opened the meeting at 8.10

Apologies Steve Dredge, Alan Phipps, Patrick Buxton, Nigel Eagle.

Monthly photo comp' won by Steve Mcilduff.

Minutes of the last meeting Proposed by Dave Stevens, seconded by Pete Coad

Matters arising

Draft letter concerning BCC Chairman Mark said he had received no e mail responses to his draft. He said that he had some reservations about sending it to Skywings since we are not actually involved in the competition this year. However Pete Coad said, as BOS meethead, he would welcome any constructive input into his organisation, so he felt it would be good to initiate discussion, and supported sending the letter. There was discussion as to whether the letter was too direct, or didn't state our case strongly enough, but in the end it was agreed that, with a few minor changes, the letter was at the right level. Mark would redraft and send it off, and Pete Coad agreed, as BOS meethead, to add extra weight to it by co-signing it.

Regular reports

Competitions Pete Reported that the S Devon Brass Monkeys comp had been called off now, and the next one will be the Easter comp, which traditionally suffers from bad weather and is normally abandoned too!

Club Flying: Pete Coad said he was disappointed a couple of weeks ago to find himself enjoying some lovely thermic flying at Chapel Porth, accompanied by only two other pilots. He reminded us how important it is to be at the right site if we want the best thermic and cross country conditions. There had been a good day at Carbis Bay the previous weekend. Lovely conditions resulted in some very enjoyable flying, but we were reminded how vigilant we must be in monitoring conditions by Dave Stevens recounting how he had taken off with the wind on the hill, but within seconds the wind had dropped to nothing, resulting in a sled ride to the beach, then the wind had picked up again, having veered through more than 90 degrees, resulting in a down wind face plant landing!

CHAPS training: Graham reported a few hill conversions and some new trainees on both hang gliders and paragliders.

Incidents: None reported.

Other business

Steve Hawken said he had set up a Yahoo group to allow people to post messages about their flying plans in an effort to improve communication, so he urged people to join if they wanted to be kept abreast of latest developments.

Chairman Mark asked Pete Coad about the previously discussed coaching weekend. Pete said that he had had very little interest shown, which was disappointing. Others began saying that they would be interested, so a coaching session was arranged for Saturday 20th.

Pete Coad said he had spoken to Mr Crocker at High Cliff, who had received our cheque and was happy for us to continue using the site, so Pete urged us to get out and use it!

Chairman Mark said that the big fat repack had raised £285. He said raising money wasn't the aim, but was a welcome side effect, and after paying Bill Morris' expenses, and his side-kick Ross', and buying Paula a well deserved box of chocs for her hard work and welcome, there was the princely sum of £145.05 to boost the KHPA coffers.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.05