

FLYING SCOT JANUARY 2003



Fred Robinson on his new Vibe, West Lomond, Fife January 2003

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Chairmans Page

With the festivities behind us, and the sun already starting to climb a bit higher each week, it's time to start getting equipment checked and sorted, and thinking about plans for the coming season. As you'll see further on, it looks like a very full one with a full calendar of Club competitions, 2 British paragliding Cup rounds, a training camp in France, another towing/ winching event, in addition to our usual coaching, first aid, and reserve re-packing events.

These events all require organisation and we (both SHPF and your own Club) always need assistance, so please put a bit back into the sport by offering some help.

Our first event of the season is our Free Flying Day on Feb 15 at Portmoak. Having not got flying last year, its guaranteed to be flyable! We have also got plenty to do if it's not. Its always great to meet up with pilots from all over the country for a chat. Please come along and tell us if we are getting anything right, and bring some ideas as to what we could be doing better.

Have a safe and successful season.

David Thomson
Chairman SHPF

News – Fatal Accident

It's with deep sadness that we have to start 2003 with a report of a fatal paragliding accident. Chris Robson, an Edinburgh based pilot was on holiday in Tenerife with his friend Howard Duthie. Chris borrowed someone's higher performance glider for a test flight in thermic conditions. Only some local farmers witnessed the actual crash. Newspaper reports have contained some inaccuracies relating to the flying site and potential cause of the accident, but the BHPA and Spanish authorities are carrying out investigations into the accident.

Regardless of what the cause of the accident is found to be, our thoughts are with his partner Ursula and his parents and family.

Chris was cremated in Tenerife and there will be a memorial service, Sunday 26th January, 3pm at Canongate Kirk, Royal Mile Edinburgh. Pilots who knew Chris are welcome to attend.

This month's Flying Scot does contain my own tale of Tenerife and indeed, my conversations on the hill with Howard and Chris inspired them to travel out there and escape the Scottish winter. I had mixed feelings about publishing the story, but have been told by his friends to leave it in.

Brian Steele, Editor, Flying Scot

Coach Notes

In the last edition I discussed the crucial question - "How much is it worth doing to avoid an accident?". I hope I convinced everyone that the answer is - **a lot!** But, until we reach a stage that we all feel that we have an acceptable accident rate, it's obvious that we need to do more than we are currently doing. I have also previously discussed exactly what can be done to minimise the risk:

- a) Pick a glider appropriate to your experience level;
- b) Constantly improve your active flying skills to keep your glider in a normal flying configuration
- c) Learn to control your glider in situations when it goes outwith a normal flying configuration.
- d) Allow adequate margins in all crucial decisions to take account of the fact that sometimes you will get it wrong.

TO FLY OR NOT TO FLY

In this edition, I want to discuss a decision which we all make every time we fly - whether to take off. In many respects it is the most critical decision of all because, having taken off into air which is beyond your experience and abilities you have few further lines of prevention. The aim of this article is provide some simple guidance on how to get this decision right as often as possible.

Thinking about my own experience, I have got it wrong on a number of occasions, and got away with it by pure luck, but the take-off decision which I got most wrong (resulting in some broken vertebrae) seems a useful illustration of the factors involved.

I have always used a simple, "count the negative factors" routine during pre-flight assessment, - Is it a new site?, new glider ?, is it ages since I last flew ?, does it look like conditions I haven't experienced before?,etc. If there is one, then I consider all the options to minimise the risk from that factor. I then assess whether that the additional risk is acceptable. If I can count two then I normally decide not to launch. However, on the day I got it wrong, my assessment was completely distorted by my desire to get in the air, given that we had travelled to South Africa, waited for 4 days in too strong conditions, and arrived at a site to see gliders in the air. Clearly my enthusiasm over-ruled any thoughts about negative factors and I launched into a radically turbulent shear layer - and a rather unpleasant and short flight.

This article is particularly relevant to the strongly thermic days we experience in Spring when we see a spate of accidents as pilots lose control of their gliders and hit the deck. We are warned to "be careful" every year but, by its worth repeating that every time you are on a hill your safety depends entirely on your assessment of conditions (and your own current abilities), to get that crucial take-off decision right. How large is the variation in wind speed and direction ? How are any gliders in the air fairing? Is there anyone from whom you could gain more information about conditions?

After a long winter, many of us start with one negative factor, lack of currency. The addition of turbulent conditions could be number 2 and perhaps time to really consider whether some ground handling practice at the bottom might not result in a better end to the day!

Apologies to regular FS readers for discussing the same issue again, but if it contributes to us avoiding one accident then I'm sure it is worth the repetition!

SHPF Free Fly -in and AGM15 Feb 2003

10.00am, Scottish Gliding Union, Portmoak Airfield, Scotlandwell, Kinross.

After the great success of our "new" AGM format for the last 2 years we are planning a similar type of event for the 2003. We hope that the standard pattern of it being the first excellent flying day of the season continues, but we have a range of activities planned to make the most of whatever type of weather we get on the day.

The AGM will start at 4.00 (although we may delay for 'epic' flying conditions) If you have any issues which you wish added to the Agenda, please send them to the Secretary - Bob Matthews, Noble Lodge, Ballencrieff Toll, Bathgate, EH48 4LD

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE HAVE A GOOD IDEA OF NUMBERS FOR THE MEAL SO PLEASE PHONE **Bob Matthews (01506 654433)** AT LEAST ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE TO BOOK YOUR PLACE.

The exact programme will of course depend on what the conditions are like but these are some of the options we are planning -

Photography Competition

Printed photos will be displayed and given numbers. Throughout the day votes can be cast by people attending the fly-in. There will be 2 categories which will receive excellent cash or gift voucher prizes.

- Best photographic print – 'Scottish Free Flying' 1st 2nd and 3rd place
- Best photographic print – 'Scottish Free Flyers abroad' 1st, 2nd and 3rd place.

Format: 35mm and APS only , no digital pictures and no 'Glamour' category, this year at least. Bring all pictures and accompanying notes to Portmoak, or mail them to **Brian Steele, 2 Tyne House Haddington, EH41 4DA.**

FREE 'Bring and Buy'

A chance to sell, swap or buy 2nd hand equipment. A hall will be set aside for this. Gliders and equipment should be servicable and sold only to people with appropriate ratings and experience. *(The SHPF and its committee cannot take responsibility for the quality and safety of the items on sale).*

Reserve Re-packing Event

Most manufacturers recommend every 3 months ! when was yours last packed ? We will be continuing our strategy of informing our Club Coaches about reserves with John Galloway's excellent presentation on What to buy, How to throw it, What not to do with it, and how to repack it.

Contact **John Galloway (01349 866316 to book a place)**

Paragliding and Hang gliding Fun Competition

Depending on weather conditions we'll have a "taster" for the coming season. A fun task from one of the local hills, with prizes.

Sailplane air experience flights

If we are blown out then Portmoak is offering dual flights to pilots as long as you book in advance (**SGU 01592 840543**)

The Scottish Raptor Centre, Turfhill Kinross.

This falconry centre is located within 3 miles of Bishops and has a superb collection of birds of prey. Flying displays take place throughout the day. If we can't fly, and the sailplanes can't - these guys can !

SHPF Free Flying Day Continued...

Aerotowing

Our Aerotow Group will be operating a Portmoak, during the day.

Dinner

(Remember to book) In SGU club house Restaurant around 5 p.m. with the remainder of the The food is great value and quality from filled rolls to 3 course meals, and the Club house bar is open till late.

AGM and Trophy Presentations.

Accommodation

If you want to stay over, The Club House accommodation is basic but clean and comfortable. Contact [Irene at Portmoak 01592 840543](#) to book.

SCOTTISH NATIONALS 2003

Portmoak(AGM) 15/16th February Logan Nisbet

Arran open 17/18th May Zabdi Keen

Borders 21/22 June Tommy Bryson

Tinto bbq 16/17 August Phil Reoch

Aberdeen 13/14th September Matt Church

Ochils 11/12th October Logan Nisbet

SMPC are also considering running a fly in. Details of date and venue to follow.

ABERDEEN CLUB'S 25th Birthday bash.

This is not the average age of the club members, but the age of the club. Provisionally this will be held in 1st or 2nd week in June subject to use of an airfield at Aboyne. Details in next Flying Scot.

Give your Flying some 'Va va voom'.

Flying Fever and the SHPF are organising a French Paragliding Training Camp for SHPF members. 8th-15th June. Over to Zabdi....

Flying around the high mountains above St Hilaire there are fantastic cross-country circuits to be flown. We will be prepared to travel to hunt out the best flying sites and weather. We will work on the theory and practise the techniques, and have a fun competition. We have the backing of the French paragliding school Les gens d'air. They network with all the other schools and we are prepared to travel to find the best flying conditions. Normally St Pierre de Chartreuse, where we will be based, gets the most flyable days in the Alps!

Theory and guidance on thermalling, competition and cross country flying. One hours thermalling and cross country experience on tandem with Zabdi or local french instructors.

£295 includes 7 nights Accommodation, Transport (not airfares!), Breakfast, 5 evening meals including comp barbeque! SHPF will be able to contribute a subsidy towards costs for Club Coaches wishing to go on the camp.

10 places available - If you are interested, contact [Zabdi at www.flyingfever.net](#)

Aerotow Group - Fly-in 18/21 April

The aerotow club is hosting a "fly-in" during the Easter weekend, running from Friday 18th April through to Monday 21st at Thornhill.

Ken McAlpine is organising the weekend and can be contacted at: ken-mcalpine@beeb.net

Details will appear on the aerotow website at a later date

<http://www.scottishairsports.com>

SHPwing - Winch Group

We are also arranging for Airways to bring their winch for a weekend towing training and practice for paragliders and hanggliders. If possible, this will coincide with the Aerotow fly-in, but the date is still to be confirmed.

With our Scottish winch group almost up and running, but needing pilots to complete their winch training, this will be a great opportunity. If you are interested in doing your tow rating and joining the Winch group [Barry Evans](#), [Alistair Bowman](#), or [David Thomson](#).

Scottish Paragliding Open 17/18 May 2003

This year the Open will be based in Fort William. This will also be a round of the British Paragliding Cup. We will be hoping for the classic conditions we have seen in mid May in the last few years. Scottish and British records have been set from Aonach Mor and Glencoe and pilots enjoying cloudbases of 7.500ft... lets hope for some of that! Details in next Flying Scot

Celtic Cup – Dara Hogan

It's Ireland's turn to host the Celtic Cup this year and we're running it on Mount Leinster, County Carlow over the weekend of 24th & 25th May 2003. The Celtic Cup is the world's longest-running International Hang Gliding Competition. It's a hard fought annual team event between the bloodthirsty Celtic clans of Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Isle of Man, Iceland, Brittany (France) and Cornwall (England).

The competition will be based at Graiguenamanagh, County Kilkenny, 9 miles SW of Mount Leinster. It's a pretty little town sitting on the banks of the River Barrow with good views of Mount Leinster and the Blackstairs mountains. Most importantly, there are 13 pubs serving the 1,300 residents! The Celtic Cup is primarily a HG event but there will be a parallel PG competition and pilots from all countries and from both disciplines will be most welcome.

Interested pilots can e-mail celticcup@ihpa.ie or keep an eye on the Celtic Cup page on our website at www.ihpa.ie where we provide further details.

REVIEW OF 2002

We have seen the fuss over the Golden Globes and soon the Oscars will be kicking off, but all that is of minor importance to those in the know. The sartorial elegance witnessed in Hollywood is generally overshadowed by the free flying fraternity in their finest zimbabalooba, Goretex and Oakley combinations. I for one am looking forward to Dave Thomson's moving and tearful acceptance speech at Portmoak.

HG XC League	- Donnie Carson
PG XC League	- David Thomson
XC League Club Award	- Lanarkshire and Lothian
PG Nationals Trophy	- Tony Spirling
PG Nationals Club Trophy	- Lanarkshire and Lothian
HG League Trophy	- No events
HG Federation Trophy	- Donnie Carson
PG Federation Trophy	- David Thomson
SHPF Longest Distance Flight	- Ulric Jessop

SHPF PARAGLIDING TROPHY SCORING

The scoring of the XC League, Scottish Nationals Series, and Scottish Open are combined and calculated in a manner to single out a PG pilot who has both flown consistently well and supported the Federation events by participation. The scoring system is intended to encourage participation in all events.

An element of weighting was introduced in 1998 to recognise that the difference between 1st and 2nd is bigger than between 24th and 25th. To achieve this, points are allocated for your position each of the three "events", (Scottish Open, Scottish XC league, Scottish Nationals Series), using the identical scoring system to the British Nationals - (it may look a bit strange but is based on a graph giving an even drop off of points with position.) The Federation Trophy will go to the pilot with the most points from the sum of the 3.

Position	Points	Position	Points	Position	Points
1st	200	17th	31	33rd	5
2nd	178	18th	28	34th	4
3rd	159	19th	25	35th	4
4th	141	20th	22	36th	4
5th	126	21st	20	37th	3
6th	112	22nd	18	38th	3
7th	100	23rd	16	39th	2
8th	89	24th	14	40th	2
9th	79	25th	13	41st	2
10th	71	26th	11	42nd^d	2
11th	63	27th	10	43rd	2
12th	56	28th	9	44th	1
13th	50	29th	8	45th	1
14th	45	30th	7		
15th	40	31st	6		
16th	35	32nd	6	257th	1



SHPF XC LEAGUE – Brian Steele

After 2001's lay off for FMD it was great to go exploring with our wings again. There have been some excellent flights, taking off from sites as far afield as Applecross and Tinto and the Moorfoots in the south. Well done to all of the pilots, from the 'Skygods' to the one- thermal wonders (*and I count myself in the latter !*) Speaking of Skygods, we have only one border crossing so far, thanks to Ex British champion Steve Senior. Ever hopeful, I have included the rest of the UK in the above picture so that you all have something to aim for next year!

Huge thanks to Ulric Jessop for maintaining the excellent site which allows us to view and register these flights as part of the British XC League and as a distinct Scottish comp.

Full flight details are available via www.pottyplace.com/comps

TOTALs in **black**, individual flights in **blue**,

1. David Thomson	LLSC Nova Xyon	221.3	90.9	39.3	27.7	24.8	23.8	14.8
2. Ulric Jessop	SMPC Gin Boomerang	176.4	91.4	34.4	27.0	12.3	11.3	
3. Phil Reoch	LLSC Nova Xyon	163.6	91.1	21.3	14.6	13.5	12.9	10.2
4. Andy Jackson	SMPC Swing Arcus	127.9	47.7	33.2	22.2	13.4	11.4	
5. Stewart Rogers	SMPC Swing Mistral	116.4	46.4	24.5	16.4	15.9	13.2	
6. Johan Kritzinger	SMPC Windtech Silex	81.1	33.9	25.8	21.4			
7. Robert Matthews	LLSC Ozone Electron	73.6	19.7	16.4	12.7	11.2	7.1	6.5
8. Donnie Carson	Highland Avian Java	71.0	43.2	27.8	(Hang Glider)			
9. Julian Robinson	Aberdeen Mac Eden	62.0	16.6	16.3	8.8	7.3	6.9	6.1
10. Steve Senior	SMPC Ozone Vibe	52.8	52.8					
11. Bruce Poll	SMPC Edel Response	46.8	46.8					
12. Brendan Reid	LLSC Ozone Electron	40.4	12.0	10.1	9.8	8.5		
13. Moira Reoch	LLSC Ozone Vibe	30.6	7.1	6.3	5.8	5.7	5.7	
14. Brian Steele	SMPC Gradient Saphir	18.0	11.7	6.3	(Hang Glider)			
15. Stewart Reid	LLSC Icaro Laminar	17.9	17.9					
16. Iain Wallace	Peel Park Pro-Design	16.7	16.7					
17. Neil Potter	SMPC Airwave Sport	14.0	14.0					
18. Mark Harrison	SMPC Firebird Matrix	11.8	11.8					
19. Logan Nisbet	Extreme Nova Axon	10.6	10.6					

SHPF Paragliding Federation Trophy - Results

Combining the XC league scores with the 2 valid Scottish Nationals tasks detailed in the last Flying Scot gives us the following table. Its encouraging to see some new pilots scoring so highly both in the XC league and the Scottish Nationals. Hopefully this year there will be more valid BPC Scottish Open and Scottish Nationals tasks as this year's scores seem very skewed towards a single event, the Aberdeen Open.

PILOT	Club	Nationals	XC League	Total
David Thomson	LLSC	40	200	240
Brian Steele	SMPC	178	50	228
Tony Spirling	Extreme	200		200
Julian Robinson	AHPC	89	89	198
Phil Reoch	LLSC	25	159	184
Ulric Jessop	SMPC		178	178
Matthew Church	AHPC	159		159
Moirra Reoch	LLSC	100	50	150
Andy Jackson	SMPC		141	141
Simon Lucas	AHPC	141		141
Stew Rogers	SMPC		126	126
David Fletcher	Extreme	126		126
Bob Matthews	LLSC	22	100	122
Brendan Reid	LLSC	50	63	113
Johan Kritzinger	SMPC		112	112
John Newton	AHPC	112		112
Logan Nisbet	Extreme	45	31	86
Beth Galloway	LLSC	79		79
Steve Senior	SMPC		79	79
Mark Robson	LLSC	71		71
Bruce Poll	SMPC		71	71
George McGhee	LLSC	63		63
Adam Bednall	LLSC	56		56
Iain Wallace	Peel Park		45	45
Neil Potter	SMPC		40	40
Taco Viets	AHPC	35		35
Mark Harrison	SMPC		35	35
Brian Sandison	AHPC	31		31
Kenny Cooper	LLSC	28		28
Douglas Bain	LLSC	20		20
Alan Douglas	Extreme	18		18
Bruce Barrack	LLSC	16		16
Pete Fottrel	AHPC	14		14
Ian Ross	LLSC	13		13

If you think you can do better in the comps or XC leagues just come along to all of the events held in Scotland in 2003 and find details on how to log all of your XC flights at www.pottyplace.com/comps.

Scottish Nationals 2002 Review – Logan Nisbet

2002 turned out to be a poor year for the Scottish Nationals in terms of validated tasks, due to the consistent bad weather throughout the year. Being my first year acting as co-ordinator this was very disconcerting. Although we had poor weather a consistent number of pilots, 25-30 per round turned out to try and make the best of it at all the rounds. Although these did tend to be the same faces and only approximately 10% of the pilots registered with the SHPF.

However this was more than made up for by having a great weekends flying up at Glenshee and Braemar in the last round which was hosted by the Aberdeen club.

Friendly competitive flying is a very good way of expanding your flying envelope. It involves a number of activities ranging from pre flight equipment checks, site, weather and hazard assessment, flight planning, airspace and team tactics to name a few. Newer pilots may have previously relied on instructors for this information. Also, people who do not fly as frequently as they would like will also not have practised these regularly. The opportunity is there for the individual to learn how to take more responsibility for themselves and their kit in a safe and fun environment.

I hope that more people will be encouraged to take part in the nationals. We operate in a very friendly format and tend not to take things too seriously. The emphasis is on having FUN, meeting other pilots and flying their sites in safety. This means that when we go to a site that is new to you, a site briefing can be obtained from local pilots. For people who may have other questions relating to techniques or equipment, seasoned pilots and club coaches are available to offer help and encouragement all you need to do is ask.

If the weather turns bad we try to have indoor events such as re-packs, equipment adjustment sessions, interactive talks or discussions on topics raised by those present. Hiring of a hall is sometimes required and there is a cost associated with this. A small charge per pilot may be required, but generally this can be subsidised to keep this to a minimum. What this does is provide a central focus for the event, regardless of the weather.

Any pilot wishing to take part in the nationals this year, should register their interest early. This allows the hosting clubs/club coaches and myself to better organise the events and avoids delays on the day. This includes administration and provision of transport this is especially the case in Arran where if you do not register early then transportation to sites becomes a major headache for Zabdi.

Under the federation rules you need to be at least club pilot rated and a current member of the BHPA.

This year we will have safety related prizes.

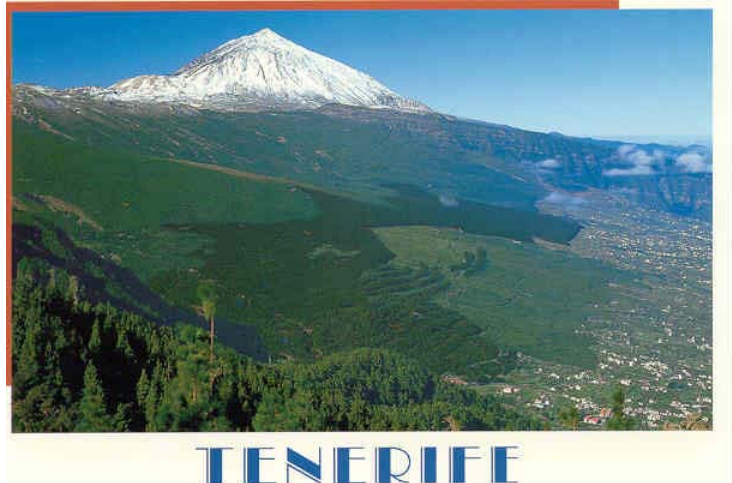
Please send feedback on 2002 and suggestions for this year, volunteers to me / SHPF committee

I would like to thank all the nationals hosting clubs, and in particular Zabdi Keen, Phil Reoch, Tommy Bryson and Matthew Church . Without their help, last year's nationals would not have taken place.

Registration 2003

Please provide your name, BHPA number, rating, e-mail, club affiliation and contact phone number. This will allow me to keep you individually informed of any changes or nationals news. You can get a copy of the Nationals regulations from me by e-mail

e-mail scotnats2003@logan.nisbet.btopenworld.com



Brian Steele and Julian Robinson.

Sitting in my grey office with cup of expensive, but rancid, coffee, I glanced at my holiday card and realised that I had to use 6 days of holiday before December 31st. Where could I escape to that would be sunny and flyable at this time of year yet cheap and easy to get to. Lanzarote sounded ideal, but from some reports it was a little too windy and more suited to hang gliders. After a bit of trawling on the web, myself and Julian from the frozen wastes of Aberdeen settled on bargain basement charter flights to Tenerife from Edinburgh and Aberdeen respectively.

Leaving the Forth Bridges shrouded in mist I fell asleep for most of the 4 hour flight and when I awoke and glanced out of the window there was an enormous snow-capped peak looming out of the clouds. This was Mount Teide, the highest mountain in Spanish territory and truly spectacular. If you asked a 7 year-old to draw a mountain, it would look something like Teide. As our plane banked and circled to lose height near the island I could see people on the beach, a desert area and higher up into the hills, miles of lush pine forest followed by extensive tracts of lava.

Armed with our 'off-road spec' Corsa a map and minimalist directions, we sped off into the hills in the dark to find our guesthouse. The map showed a surprisingly straightforward 45 minutes but left out the detail of the (approximately) million hairpin corners. After finding the sign for our guesthouse we bumped along the darkest, most eroded track known to man. We agreed this was only passable in tank, 4x4 or on bad days, a corsa.

We were met by our smiling Austrian hosts, Andreas and Carmen and immediately ushered into a warm little wooden chalet. The place glowed with candles and the rosy glow of a few tanned ex-pat brits, who seemed to be several drinks ahead of us. It didn't take long for me to get out of corporate mode and relax into holiday mode.

The Flying

The first few days saw us flying at a site called Jama (*Hama*). We found the conditions to be similar to a really good strong XC day in Scotland, but with more plentiful thermals and fairly obvious spines and spurs to mark out the likely sources of lift.

On the first flight, several dramatic volcanic plugs acted as thermic chimneys and I soon adventured off, hopping from plug to plug on a little XC mission. I flew towards the coast and knowing that beach landings were forbidden, landed in the rough at a golf course near Las Americas. The groundsman sped up in a buggy and I was ready to explain why I had landed on his course rather than one of the not so spacious, debris fields / building sites. I needn't have worried. He didn't encourage me to land there again, but he smiled a lot and enthusiastically helped me pack up. We then headed to the rather posh country club for a little cold beer and a chat about the dangers of golf and flying, before I asked for a cab and picked up Julian for the 2nd flight of the day. All rather civilised!



Apart from Jama there are other great sites including a very dramatic take off. Ifonche 500 metres from our patio at 'El Refugio'. Thermalling around towering rock spires and a tricky lip-rotor take off gave the impression it is not a place for the faint hearted or low airtime pilot. For those seeking smooth flying, there is some great coastal soaring near the tourist resort of Los Cristianos. Normally when I have flown coastal sites I have had a full sized beach all the way along the cliffs, but our site was a large set off cliffs jutting our into the sea. The turquoise water sparkled in the sun and the only noise was the shrieking of the gulls and the horde of whooping wagga French dudes who seemed to love spiralling down to the sea and slowly crabbing back up the cliffs. Thankfully, I hadn't spotted the other feature of the site, a few naked Germans were sunbathing at the bottom of the cliffs. Jules told me about this later, but I have yet to establish how he knew they were German!

The Landscape.

The variety of landscape on Tenerife is tremendous. El Teide is Spain's highest mountain, you can drive half way up to around 6000ft for an immense early morning sled ride flight, but flying from the top of the main 12000ft peak is currently banned as it is a national park. A shame perhaps, as there is a cable car to the top in the summer!

The southern part of the island is predominantly desert-like, with many cacti and intricate terraces. Higher up there is a layer of pine forest before you drive into a series of enormous lava fields and the snowy peak of Teide. On the Northern side of the island there is even a small rainforest area. The only blots on the landscape are Las Americas and Los Cristianos, which look like Beirut but with larger neon lighting budgets. The all day English breakfasts in these places proudly proclaiming "No Spanish food sold here". This had limited appeal to me, but the nightlife was pretty cheap and cheerful, the go-karting was excellent and there were some reasonable restaurants.



Local 'Regulations'

The authorities are generally pretty keen to clamp down on abuse of areas of special natural interest. This could potentially limit flying areas in the future. This may extend at some point to the sea cliffs we had such great fun on. Indeed, the police approached the French pilots and asked them for 100 Euros if they could not produce evidence of a flying qualification and insurance. However, given the large numbers of visiting pilots of varying abilities, its apparent why the local pilots want things to be regulated to some degree. The rule of thumb as for most holidays is to seek local advice before flying any site.

The Met

The trade winds which recently took a young transatlantic sailor into the record books, give the island a prevailing strong North Easterly breeze. This is generally too strong for flying. If you do the 6000ft top to bottom from near the observatory on the lower slopes of Teide, you have to do it very early in the morning otherwise you may not make it to the beach landing. The majority of popular sites we flew were on the Southern and sunny lee side. One morning we awoke and peered out and incredible lenticular clouds above the summit of Teide. If we had seen these in Scotland we would have gone to the pub, but happily there was superb light wind, thermic flying to be had on our side of the island.

Guiding

If you are low airtime or just getting the hang of thermalling, you may wish to join up with one of the many British groups who head out during the UK winter. A quick search on the web or the back of Skywings will yield several options. Our guide Andreas was also our chef, driver and B&B owner but **not** a current pilot. He did offer good safe site advice for experienced pilots, but if you feel you need some extra site assessment and coaching you should meet up with the Sussex club or other PG guides based on the island. The majority of the time we took our hire car to a site and if we bottom landed just shared a cheap cab up to take off. Most of the cabs on the island are big mercedes 190s, which really is a great way to arrive at take off.

Getting there

Charter flights from Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow for £130 or less. Majority of flights are on Fridays.

Accommodation

We stayed with Andreas and Carmen at El Refugio, 3000ft up in the cool mountain air, miles away from the concrete and neon of the coast. Andreas does some great food, including goat and roasted pigs legs. One thing to note – the local rooster wakes up at about 4am, whether you its flyable or not. Check out www.el-refugio.com for details.



Tenerife – much more than a place to get sunburnt.

Thermal Thinking Phil Reoch

A commentary on what goes through your mind as you search for a thermal....

"The vario starts to beep and I realise I've flown into a thermal. I'm well clear of the hill with no other proximity concerns - so my first question is Is it strong enough and big enough to turn in?

I wait a couple of secs..... It's still there so which way do I turn? Does my glider want to turn all by itself? If so I'll turn the opposite way coz its probably the core that's pushing the glider away. If not - it's a 50-50 guess which way to turn - so just pick one!

Now what's next? - Oh yes - finding the centre and coring it. Remembering the theory, I simply listen to the vario, tighten the turn when the lift decreases and ease the turn as lift increases. That should take me straight to the middle. That's fine - but the vario is bleeping all over the place and it's difficult to keep the climb even. Only then did I think about the effects of my inputs and what the vario might read, were I doing all these varied turns in neutral air. Realising, also, that the glider dives a little and picks up speed when I stray into sink (speed which is immediately converted back to lift) helps to explain some of the unexpected bleeps, and keeping my own movements smooth and minimal seems to minimise spurious information. BUT....I still can't get an even climb all around. If I could identify one side of my circle as being stronger, I'd simply move my circle across, but despite widening my circle to enlarge my search area there is no improvement. Is the thermal perhaps not a perfect circle or is there a hole in it somewhere? Is it just not that big or has it met a weak inversion layer - I don't know

Is it going to improve or is there a better climb close-by? Can I afford to go and look?"

Flying on my lonesome has been an inevitable part of XC - The added degree of difficulty in departing with friends is usually considerable, so I've learned to take my chances when I can. But it's now when I'm sitting in weak lift, reluctant to leave it for fear of bombing out, that I could do with an accomplice to check the wider area in case we are missing a much better climb

"I check my altimeter and see that after 3 minutes of searching I have only just maintained. Decision made, I leave my weak lift, visually logging the direction of my search - so I can return if necessary.

A bravery test and something of a mind-game now "How far will I stray from known lift? I'm now flying through varied sink, including some which seems too strong to be simply the reciprocal of my weak thermal, so I search further, suppressing the need to run back to safety. Eventually the sink dies and turns sharply to lift - strong lift!!

It pulls me forward and up. I allow it to, and wait till the lift peaks before turning.

It doesn't always work, but this time it has - and I'm well chuffed!

This is the best bit - hooking into something when a landing was starting to seem only a few minutes away.

Self congratulations need to be quick, come onnnn! Now lets try getting centered in the thermal - same process as before. This thermal is bigger though and I'm finding that the lift is pretty steady, all the way round - just a small adjustment over to one side, but I know I can't relax too much. I need to keep an ear on the vario and keep those minor adjustments going to stay in the core and the best lift. For smoother, less tiring climb it feels best to clamp one hand (in brake handle) to a riser/harness etc and adjust with one brake only. I am now actually circling smoothly in the thermal. I've tightened my turn, using weightshift and I'm actually in it and climbing steadily- not just going around the outside getting a rough ride, caught between the lift and sink.

If I do no more than just stay here, circling and drifting with my thermal - I should make at least around 15 - 20km. See you in the pub. I'm buying.....!"

Argentina – Zabdi Keen



The sun blasted down at us as we sheltered under a River Plate flag at a football match in Buenos Aires. The crowd roared and stripped off, waving their t-shirts to the chanting. The icicle sellers tripped and stumbled through the rows offering multi-coloured sticky coolness. The ice smoked from their polystyrene cool boxes. We had begged some sheets of newspaper to lay over our toes as sun shields we weren't used to dealing with such heat. Our team started off rather poorly and spent the first half of the match rolling on the ground hamming up injuries but luckily they got their act together and won. It was the first match I had ever gone to and it was fun! We were recovering from a night on the town. We had flown in and gone to bed waking up at 2am, then headed out for the night clubs. These were only just getting going and we danced till dawn. It was definitely a bit different for someone from the Isle of Arran!

We checked out the weather forecast, the area we had planned to head to was in the middle of a huge storm so we changed plans and went to Mendoza because the weather man said the highest chances of sunshine were there, and it had a good sounding name! The reality was well not really my kind of place. It was a bit cloudy for flying and the town was a bit boring by the second day. We decided to get our act together and do something rather than pining for flyable weather. So we went on horseback into the mountains for three days of course we made a packhorse carry a glider in case the weather changed!



When I first got on my horse I got it stuck in reverse! I didn't know they had a reverse gear, British ones I've ridden haven't! I was pulling the reins trying to make it stop and it was going backwards kicking anything that stood in its way! It had some bit of wood caught on its front hoof and with that and me giving it weird instructions it was acting psychotic. So I destroyed the gate at the start of the trip. Luckily when I just let go and hung onto the saddle the horse calmed down, it was thinking about

getting rid of me I am sure! After that we came to an understanding and the rest of the time it was fine!



It was great to ride up from the plains we had two great guides with us that did all the cooking and brought lots of wine. On the last day the wind picked up a bit strong to fly but its more scary coming down the mountain on a horse than by paraglider!

Time passes quickly on a two week holiday and you definitely start to feel pressurised to use the paraglider after lugging it half way across the world. We decided to head to Bariloche which again sounded like a nice place. A 30

hour coach journey sounded horrific but was actually exactly what I needed! Throughout the night the bus raced over flat plains and vast starry skies the moon accompanying the journey. The seats are so comfy and fold down with big fluffy pillows nothing like our coaches. I played bingo to practise my Spanish! In the morning the scenery was superb as we drove through arid red desert with bright blue lakes. Occasional rock formations twisted. The lake streaked with wind came into view with snowy mountains. The real Andes! It looked to windy to fly but very beautiful. We stayed at a paragliding lodge in town as soon as I got there I relaxed. Its so different staying with paraglider pilots! They know what you want and will do the best they can to get you flying! They recommended us to go to El Bolson in the mountains where it is a lot less windy.

We arrived in the mountains we were taken straight up the hill and the locals swept the dust off the takeoff. We went for a beautiful thermic flight on the Tandem. I was flying with Alisdair who was just used to flying in Scottish weather. Giving over the controls is nerve racking for an instructor on a thermic day, but its a great way to learn and it allowed my hands to heat up.



The scenery was stunning with snowy mountains and dark cliffs. We flew for a couple of hours before heading down to land beside their A-frame chalet. It was good having someone else to work out where the landing field was as my navigation is always terrible!

The next day we got a bit of flying in but there was a strong wind so we didn't stay up for long. On landing the kite came out the bag and dragged us about for a bit. We headed back to Scotland the next day Mission accomplished and new friends found!

Tales of the Unexpected – Embarrassing tales from free fliers.

1. Brian Steele – Cacti in Tenerife

After hitting big sink and slope landing on a spur in Tenerife I landed safely but with a shooting pain in my hand. I thought I had broken my thumb and found it almost impossible to move my glider, which was now snagged on a huge sea of cacti. After talking to other pilots on the radio, I managed to most of the walk to the landing field where I was going to get meet them and obtain help with wing. On the way, I removed my glove it turned out I had a huge cactus spine stuck in my swelling hand. Eyes watering, I had it removed by a worker on a building site using an enormous and ever so hygenic wrench. His colleagues gasped as the blood went everywhere. A British CFI who uses Tenerife has been quoted as saying: " *There are two types of flyers in Tenerife, one who has landed and got a spine up his ar*e, the other who is about to*".

Whoops... Cacti. Exhibit A.



2. Julian and the Ram

Julian Robinson of Aberdeen has found the 'real' reason why we are told to avoid landing in fields with livestock.

After a short XC near Lochearnhead, Julian Robinson landed in a seemingly empty field well away from the ones the farmer had asked him to avoid. Job well done, he set about packing his equipment with his wing laid out behind him. He turned and saw two sheep that had appeared from nowhere and were taking an interest in him and his wing. The sheep would not be shoo-ed away from the wing and kept nibbling at the leading edge. When Jules stomped over to shoo the sheep he found that one of them was, infact, a ram. The animal was lets say. 'visibly excited' and had left a small deposit on the surface of his wing as a token of his affection. Jules was picked up an hour later looking aghast. The Ram made no comment.

3. Farmer and the Stag go XC.

An SMPC farmer, pilot and source of many tales was out shooting stags up in Torridon. To drag one animal off the hill he cunningly tied a short length of twine to the beast, wrapped and tied the other end round his person and commenced dragging it down the hill, sweating and panting with the effort. As he approached a rocky outcrop he came up with the labour saving plan of throwing the already dead animal off the 'small cliff' rather than walk a long way to an easier slope. Approximately half a second after heaving the beast over the edge of the aforementioned cliff, he thought "Oh dear I am attached to thaaaat". Needless to say, carnage ensued and he now holds the record for 'Glider-free XC flight'.

Got any Tales of the Unexpected? – send them to Brian.steele@zoom.co.uk

HILLEND – Fred Robinson, SMPC

It's that time again when the new year beckons and you can hardly remember which cupboard your glider is in. However some have already been flying at Hillend, near Edinburgh--- along with a brass monkey looking for a soldering iron. I have spoken with the land owners of Hillend and they are happy to continue last years arrangement of paying a site fee and giving it to charity. So its easy really. If you intend flying at Hillend then:

Send a cheque made payable to FLYABILITY for £5 or more if you like - it is a good charity. to

Fred Robinson
Hamilton Lodge
Linlithgow
West Lothian
EH49 7RJ

You could do me big favour by doing it now and save me chasing around. Flyability have written to me and want to pass on their thanks, so many thanks from FLYABILITY to all who contributed last year.

thanks,
Fred

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Scottish Open Details, more Tales Of The Unexpected, more flying, more sun and more fun. [ALL STORIES, FEEDBACK, PICTURES AND NEWS TO brian.steele@zoom.co.uk](mailto:brian.steele@zoom.co.uk)