

LAT Notes

A series of notes intended to assist newly qualified pilots as they transition from the school to club environment.

This document does not replace the need for pilots to thoroughly read site guides and obtain site briefs before taking to the air.



Wessex Hang Gliding & Paragliding Club



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Welcome to the Hill

Introduction

Although many student pilots look forward to completing their CP rating, once they reach that point many find that taking the next step into a fully unsupervised environment where they must make all the decisions a daunting experience.

Turning up on an unfamiliar launch, not knowing anybody and surrounded by experienced pilots is not easy for the novice pilot and sadly this does lead to some pilots losing interest in the sport.

There are a few things you can do.....

- Try to pair up and fly with somebody with the same level of experience. Often there will be another student who passed their CP rating at roughly the same time. It's a great way to encourage each other and gives you somebody to bounce ideas off of.
- Make use of the club coaches
- Talk to other pilots - Most pilots will be more than happy to talk to you, provide site briefs, discuss the weather etc. If nobody makes the effort to come over to you then please do not be afraid of making the first approach. The only exception to this is if pilots are setting up their gear – many do not like to be disturbed as they prepare.
- Fly as much as possible - “The more you fly the more you will fly” and the opposite is also true. Having long breaks from flying, especially in the early days, results in loss of currency and makes getting back in the air more difficult.

Club Coaches

Club coaches are available to offer help and support with the transition from school to club environment. Please make use of them.

There is a list of coaches on the website and most coaches are active on our Low Airtime Telegram group if you want to make contact or ask questions.

As you progress and start to complete Pilot Tasks you will need to get coaches to sign them off. The coach will require evidence to support the task completion so please make sure you keep a flight log, highlight the pilot tasks in it and carry your Pilot Log Book.

LAT Friendly Sites

Important Notes

The club operates from 24 sites that provide a variety of coastal and inland flying opportunities. Some of these sites are small, may have no bottom landing, be intended as XC launch platforms (no soaring) or other issues that make them unsuitable for low airtime pilots.

The following list is intended to give newly rated pilots a guide to club sites that are best suited for low airtime pilots to gain experience. Sites belonging to adjacent clubs have also been included.

Every paragliding site has its associated risks and dangers. The list contained here is no exception and it is the pilot's responsibility to carry out a site and weather assessment and make their own decision if it is suitable to fly.

It is **ESSENTIAL** that you thoroughly read the site guide and obtain a site brief from a pilot who is familiar with the site. The guides are linked for each of the sites.

All the sites below are open to non-members.

Coastal flying

Coastal laminar air is ideal for practicing ears, speed bar etc. and most coastal sites have enough soaring space to make them seem uncrowded even on a busy bank holiday weekend.

The smooth flying conditions encountered on the coast often makes this type of flying seem safer than inland flying in thermic conditions. The reality is that the club sees as many, if not more, accidents on our coastal sites each year.

Some general safety points to consider when coastal flying are:-

- Increasing wind – keep careful note of the sea state. Appearance of wind streaks and/or white horses indicates that the wind is increasing and it may be wise to consider landing.
- If you are flying with an instrument you can point directly into wind and read your ground speed. Doing this occasionally during a flight will give a good indication of wind strength changes.

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- **Always** fly with your speed bar connected and properly adjusted. On many coastal sites being blown back in increasing wind will give you very little option for a safe landing.
- Know the tide times and ensure you always have sufficient glide to make a beach landing if the wind suddenly drops.
- Orographic cloud can form extremely quickly and in some cases can extend to sea level as a fog. Keep careful watch out to sea for fog approaching and take action if required.
- Beaches, in the summer months, become busy. It is the pilot's responsibility to find a safe section to land in. This often results in a longer walk out but, with kids and dogs etc., running across the beach, it is often safer for all.
- Access – not all beaches are accessible. A particular example is the beach below White Nothe at Ringstead. If choices are limited then landing on one of these beaches will get you to the ground safely but you will require assistance to get off the beach.
- Top landing on sharp edged cliffs is possible with care but there is a high probability of encountering rotor. Beach landing is almost certainly a safer option.

White Horse (Osmington)

Direction – SSW (S-SW)

Club – Wessex

Type - Hill

Rating – Any

Site Guide – [White Horse](#)

Take off is a large, gently curving, grass covered field with stunning views towards Weymouth and the Isle of Portland.



Park at the start of the drove and walk out (10-15 minutes) along the top of the ridge to take off or park in the nearby village and walk out across the bottom landing fields and up the face. There is a small amount of parking available by driving along the drove but there are deep ruts and other debris that make parking at the main road a wise idea.

Great for ground handling and top landing practice, the launch is massive and there is plenty of space.

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The ridge provides plenty of space for soaring and the site becomes thermic in the summer months.

The slopes to the West of take-off have become overgrown with a deep layer of gorse but it is possible to slope land with care around the White Horse (but not on it). The gorse regularly snares pilots scratching too close to the ridge and it is a long and painful process to free a glider from gorse that is above head height in many places. Do not scratch too close and be prepared to quickly turn away and gain ground clearance.

There are numerous large fields suitable for bottom landing and a pub conveniently situated in the nearby village.



Kimmeridge

Direction – SW (SSW-W)

Club – Wessex

Type - Hill

Rating – Any

Site fee payable

Site Guide - [Kimmeridge](#)

A site that was, for many years, used as a training hill but is now rarely flown most likely due to access changes that mean you will have to walk to launch from one of the car parks at each end of the ridge. Historically there have been a number of car thefts in the Quarry Car Park so do not leave valuables in your vehicle.



Walk out along the path until you find a gap in the wall that is filled by an old and rusty gate. Climb over the gate to access launch.

Generally take off from the lower portion of the slope bearing in mind that you will likely be launching the wing into a strong lift band. Be prepared to get lifted as soon as the wing is inflated.

The fields in front of the ridge become strongly thermic and soaring can be bumpy at times.

It's sometimes possible to gain significant height and push forward towards the low front cliffs although getting back to the main ridge may prove difficult.

There is ample top landing opportunities but be aware of the stone wall running along the ridge and the potential for this to generate rotor.



Ringstead

Direction – SW (SSW-W)

Club – Wessex

Type – Hill/Coastal

Rating – CP+10 hours for cliffs

Note the limits imposed by the NT on wings

Site Guide - [Ringstead](#)

Ringstead is one of our most popular sites mainly because of the potential for long scenic coast runs and the convenience of being able to park just behind take off.

There are really two sites in one, the launch ridge which can be soared in its own right and the cliffs leading to the coastal run in suitable wind directions.



The launch ridge is generally used to get off the ground and build enough height to fly forwards (into wind) around 500m to the cliffs. This transition can be difficult and frequently results in even experienced pilots having to land in the bottom fields.

The take-off ridge can be soared but on busy days this will limit the ability of other pilots to take off and will be an annoyance to those waiting especially now that the NT has imposed a limit on wings (see site guide).

Once you have accumulated enough hours to consider flying to the cliffs this video <https://player.vimeo.com/video/164246119> by Sean Staines is **ESSENTIAL** viewing and clearly explains the route to and from the cliff.

If you do fly to the cliffs pay special attention to the warnings in the site guide about going East of White Nothe towards Durdle Door unless conditions are suitable.

Bear in mind, if GH on take-off, that the public is ever present and getting dragged can result in being in the vicinity of the parked cars very quickly



Friar Waddon

Direction – S

Club – Wessex

Type - Hill

Rating – Any

Site Guide - [Friar Waddon](#)

Friar Waddon has been used as a training site for many years and consists of a relatively steep slope on the Western end of a ridge.

Take off is grass covered and gently rounded with no significant obstacles.

The ridge can be soared for approx. 2km in sufficient wind strength.

The Western end of the site was, until recently, bounded by high tension cables and pylons. These have now been buried however there is still a set of smaller power lines in the same location.

There is a large bottom landing field and top landing is relatively easy although care should be taken not to get blown over the back of the ridge in higher winds.



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Eype

Direction – SW (SSW-WSW)

Club – Condors

Type - Coastal

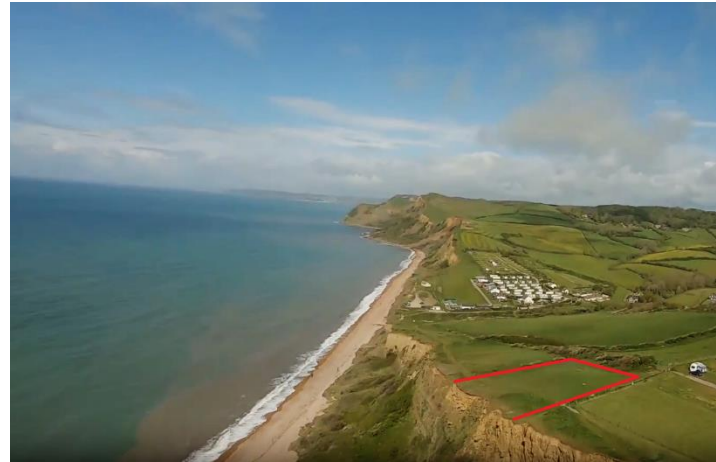
Rating – Any

Site Guide - [Eype](#)

A coastal cliff site that offers stunning views of the Jurassic Coast and long runs towards Lyme Regis to the West and Abbotsbury to the East. A distance in excess of 20km with a number of crossings that need to be negotiated.

Take off is from a small, gently sloping, square patch of grass bounded by the cliff on one side and a hedge and fence on the others.

In ideal wind conditions the take-off is relatively easy however as the wind turns more Southerly significant amounts of rotor can be experienced that makes it difficult to inflate the wing and stabilise it although the cliffs will generally still be flyable if you can launch (with care).



Top landing at take-off is possible but requires good spot landing skills and carries the risk of encountering rotor close to the ground. If attempting to top land always be ready to PLF.

There are beach landing options at almost all points along the coast run and it is much easier and safer to finish your flight on the beach rather than attempt a top landing.



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Beer Head

Direction – S (SSE-SSW)

Club – Condors

Type - Coastal

Rating – Any

Site Guide - [Beer Head](#)

A stunning clifftop site with the potential for a coastal run in excess of 12km to the West.

Take off is a large grassy field that curves away to the cliff top. There is ample room to safely ground handle and the site is perfect for top landing practice.



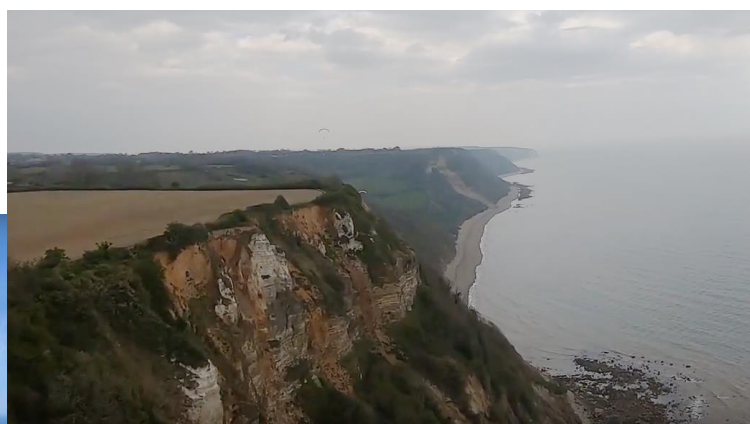
Beware of flying behind the stack (just West of take-off) as detailed in the site guide.



There are a few, generally non-technical, gaps to jump and beach landing is available throughout the run down to Sidmouth.

There is a large pay and display car park nearby.

It is possible to jump Sidmouth on the right day but this becomes a much more technical flight with little or no bottom landing options in some places.



Bell Hill

Direction – NW (W-NNW)

Club – Wessex

Type - Hill

Rating – Any

Site Guide - [Bell Hill](#)

This site has been owned by the club for a number of years and is used by Flying Frenzy as a training hill.

The slope of the hill allows take off from lower down in higher wind speeds and affords ample opportunity to slope land if required.

The hill generates considerable lift and is frequently thermic allowing XC runs towards Swanage or, with a slightly more Westerly wind, towards Salisbury and the New Forest. It is essential, if going XC, to understand the Bournemouth and Lulworth Ranges airspaces that will need to be negotiated during the flight.

Top landing can be difficult as you will be trying to land whilst still in the lift band and it is often better, in moderate to high winds, to push out well in front of the hill to lose height and either slope or bottom land. The hill has considerable influence and it may be necessary to push a long way out as well as use ears and bar to descend on some days.

There is no officially designated bottom landing but the club enjoys a cordial relationship with the farmer who only asks that we do not land in fields that contain livestock. The field directly below launch is the one most frequently used when clear of livestock.



Monksdown

Direction – N (NNW-NNE)

Club – Wessex

Type - Hill

Rating – Any

Site Guide - [Monksdown](#)

Monksdown is a large North facing bowl that had been flown for many years until a change of ownership resulted in the loss of the site. Following a period of negotiation by the club, the site can now be flown again providing the relatively restrictive conditions detailed in the site guide are met.

The restrictions placed on the site may make it less attractive to LATs on days when the site would become busy with pilots wanting to fly XC.

The site becomes very thermic and can be turbulent in higher winds. As it's a bowl, care must be taken that the wind is not too far off Northerly as the spurs will generate rotor.

The fence along the road can make top landing difficult and it may be better to try the slightly flatter area to the East of take-off. There is usually ample bottom landing options available.

The row of tall trees directly behind launch are a hazard if being blown back. Even if you clear them there will be an area of severe turbulence for a considerable distance downwind. Take care in higher winds to stay well forward and avoid being trapped by the venturi close to the hill.



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Westbury

Bratton Camp

Direction – N (NNW-NNE)

White Horse

Direction – NW (WNW - NNW)

Club – Avon

Type - Hill

Rating – Any

Site Guide - [Bratton Camp](#)

[White Horse](#)

The ridge at Westbury is split into two separate sites by a spur that contains the white horse. There is a large, free car park just behind launch.

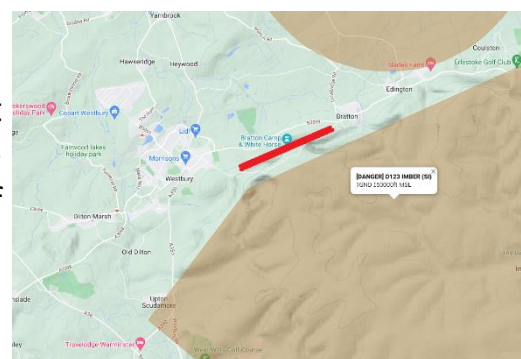
The site is a large grass covered area with ample room for ground handling and top landing above a steep ridge that generates considerable lift.

The site is very thermic and is a common XC start point for runs down towards Dorchester and Weymouth.

The site is located adjacent to the Salisbury Plain Ranges and there is a large Danger area that prevents pilots going straight downwind on XC flights. If purely soaring the ridge then the Danger Area is not a problem but care should be taken, if thermalling, that you do not drift too far back.

There are a number of large fields suitable for bottom landing.

On a northerly weekend this site does become very busy and there is often poor separation if conditions are forcing pilots to scratch low.



Mere Rifle Range

Direction – SE-SSW

Club – Avon

Type - Hill

Rating – Any

Site Guide - [Rifle Range](#)

A large bowl with long spurs extending out towards the town of Mere.

There is a large grassy take off area towards the top of the bowl and slope landing options available in a number of places.

The field behind take off is often used for ground handling.

There is no official bottom landing but there are a number of locations in the fields below take off where landing is possible without disturbing crops.

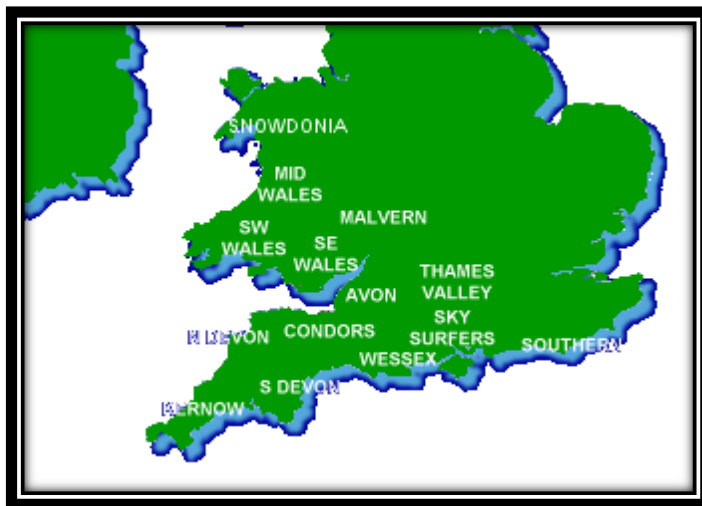


The site is thermic and is used for XC. It can become busy and, on days where pilots are scratching low, poor separation can become a problem.

The extended nature of the spurs makes this site particularly prone to turbulence if the wind is significantly off to either side. Care must be taken to judge the true wind direction and do not rely on the fact that it appears smack on at take off.



LOCAL CLUBS



There are a number of clubs adjacent to the Wessex area. Some sites may require you to be a member and, if you regularly fly another clubs sites, you should consider joining regardless of the site status.

Links for nearby clubs:-

- Devon and Somerset Condors.....<https://www.dscondors.co.uk/node/136>
- Avon<http://www.avonhgpg.co.uk/>
- Thames Valley.....<https://www.tvhgc.co.uk/>
- South East Wales<https://www.flysouthwales.co.uk/>
- Malverns.....<http://www.malvern-hang.org.uk/>
- Sky Surfers<https://skysurfingclub.co.uk/>
- North Devon<https://ndhpc.co.uk/>
- South Devon<https://sdhgpc.org.uk/>

South East Wales (SEW) in particular has a number of sites that are suitable for low airtime pilots and affords the opportunity to fly much larger hills and ridges. Pandy, Bloreng and Hay Bluff are particularly friendly in the right conditions.

COMMUNICATION

Radio

The 2m radios you will be familiar with from training are technically illegal to operate in the UK however the flying community (and others) have used these frequencies for many years without any interference from Ofcom.

The use of radios varies widely between pilots. Many never carry a radio however it is useful to have a means of communicating between pilots to:-

- Call for help in the case of an accident
- Request pilots land if an emergency helicopter is inbound
- Provide warnings of changes to the weather (increasing wind, rain inbound etc.)
- Request advice while flying (landing advice most often on very lifty days)
- If on XC with other pilots, to discuss glide direction, likely climbs etc.

Frequencies for the local clubs are shown below:-

Wessex.....	143.925
D&S Condors.....	143.800
North Devon.....	143.800
Avon.....	143.850
South East Wales.....	143.700

Zello



Zello is a Push To Talk (PTT) app that runs on both Android and IOS. It allows a voice message to be sent between individuals or groups and, providing all parties have a data connection on their phone, is not limited by distance.

The app is becoming more popular with pilots but it does rely on having a data connection. If flying in remote locations or at height, data is likely to become patchy and communications will therefore be less reliable.

There is a free version although the website does not make this particularly clear.

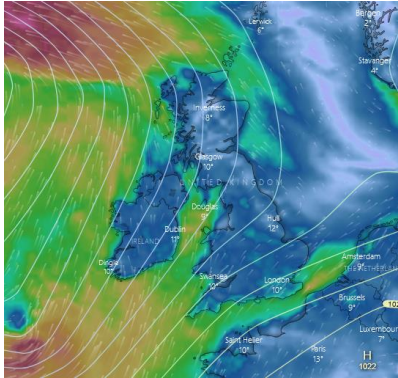
Web.....	https://zello.com/
Android	Play Store
Apple.....	App Store

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WEATHER

There are numerous online sources for current and forecast weather. Many will provide forecasts for 7 days or more however the value of looking more than 2 to 3 days into the future is questionable.

Windy.com

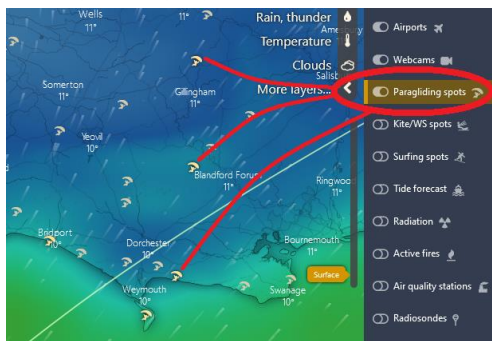


Web..... <https://www.windy.com>
Android..... [Play Store](#)
Apple [App Store](#)

Windy provides access to 6 of the most common forecasts in one place. The forecasts are regularly updated and the interface is highly customisable. There is a premium option for a small monthly fee that, amongst other things, reduces the forecast time steps from 3 hours to 1 hour.

Useful features include:-

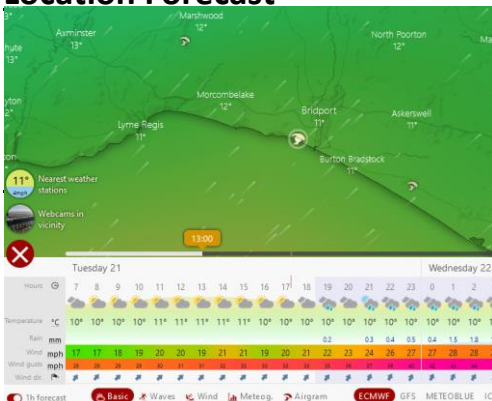
Paragliding spots layer



Turn on the Paragliding Layer to see launches displayed on the map.

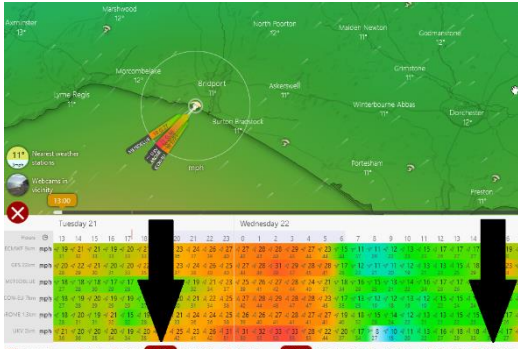
Most launches are correct although there are a few that are no longer current. Check the appropriate club websites for site guide and status.

Location Forecast



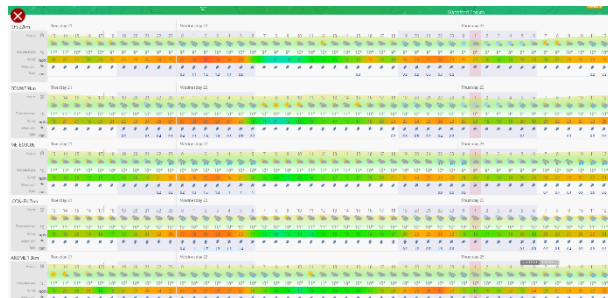
Click on a location to get a 10 day forecast.
The forecast model can be changed if required

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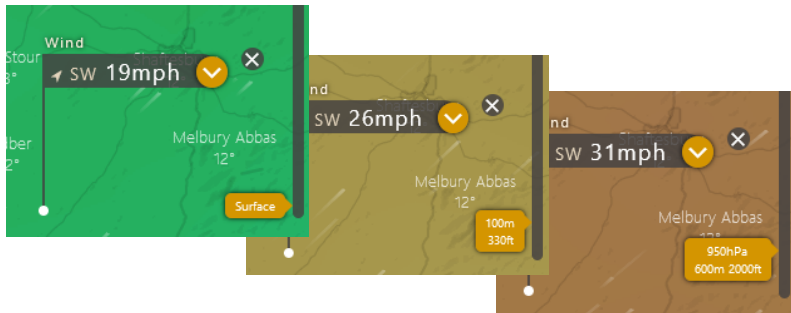


Changing the view from “Basic” to “Wind” will expand the forecast to show all the models in the lower table and on the map for the time selected.

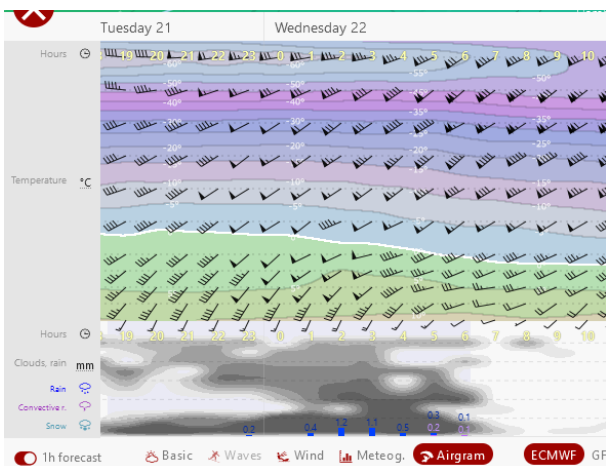
The direction indicators on the map are useful to assess the variation in wind direction between the various models.



A slightly different comparison of the models can be accessed by selecting “Compare”.



Height can be selected on a slider and is useful for take-off locations that are at a significant height.

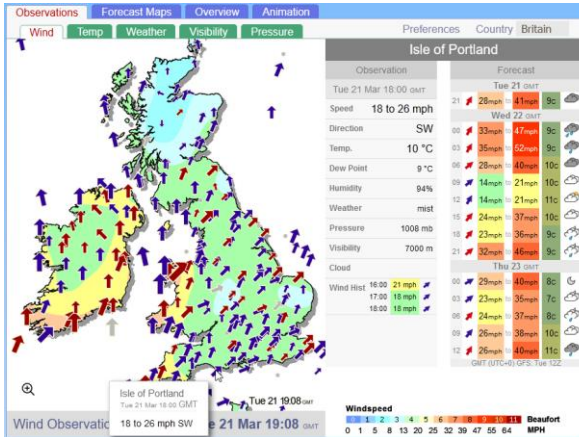


“Airgram” gives a view of the expected conditions at various altitudes at the chosen spot.

This is particularly useful in predicting if significant wind shear will be present in the lower atmosphere and gives a visual indication of cloud cover at various levels.

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XCWeather

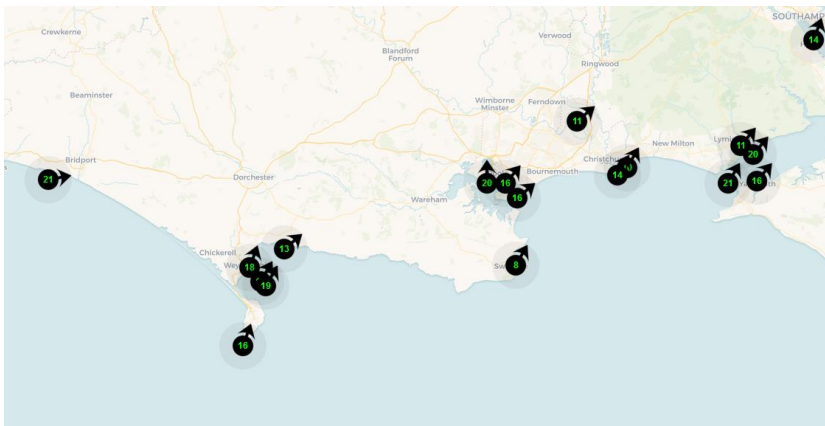


<https://www.xcweather.co.uk/>

This site provides a good overview of the current wind conditions across the country. It also provides a 6 day forecast based on the GFS model.

Most inland data is provided by airport METARs and is updated regularly.

Windicator



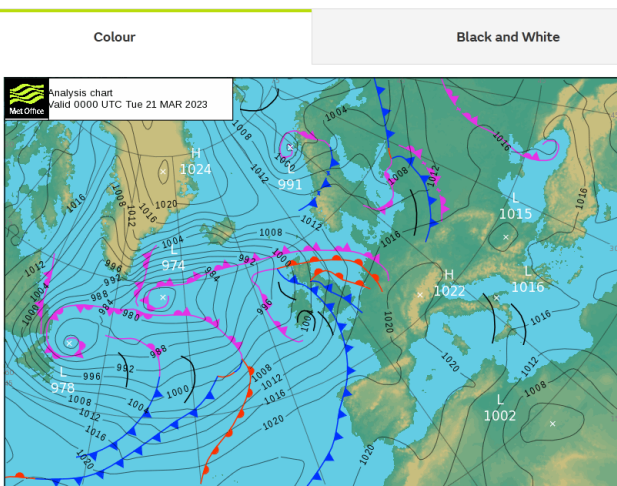
<https://weather.ianmillard.com>

A site that displays wind data from a large number of weather stations along the coast.

Readings are updated regularly and clicking on a location will link to the weather stations site that is supplying the data.

Met Office – Surface Pressure Charts

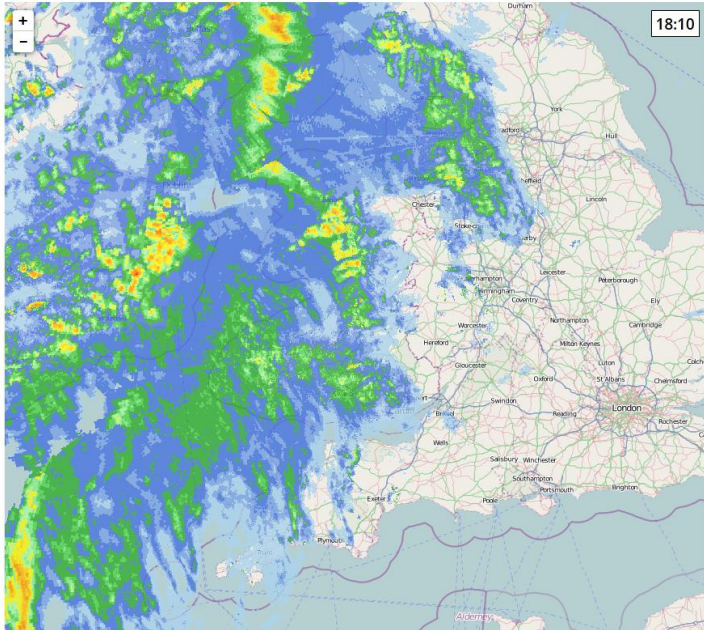
<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/maps-and-charts/surface-pressure>



Synoptic charts covering 4 days at 12 hourly intervals.

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Rain Radar

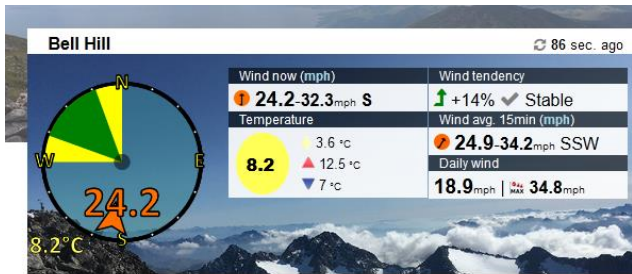


<https://www.netweather.tv/live-weather/radar>

Netweather provide a rain radar view that updates at 5 minute intervals. There are 2 hours of historic data that can be played as an animation to show how rainfall has developed and the direction it is moving.

Don't assume that rainfall will be moving in the same direction as the lower level winds on launch. Boundary layer winds can have significantly different strengths and direction.

Holfuy – Weather Stations



Holfuy are manufacturers of compact, solar powered weather stations that are SIM enabled allowing data to be collected from remote locations and displayed on the web.

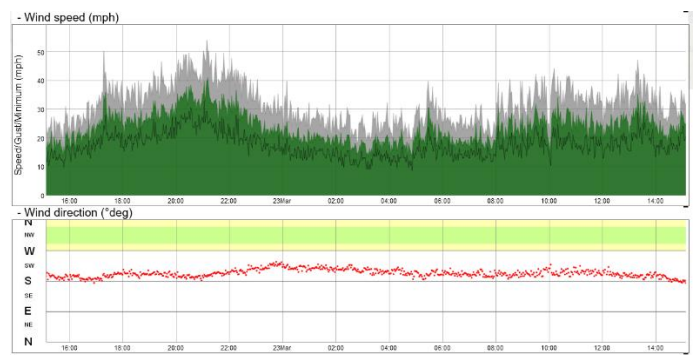
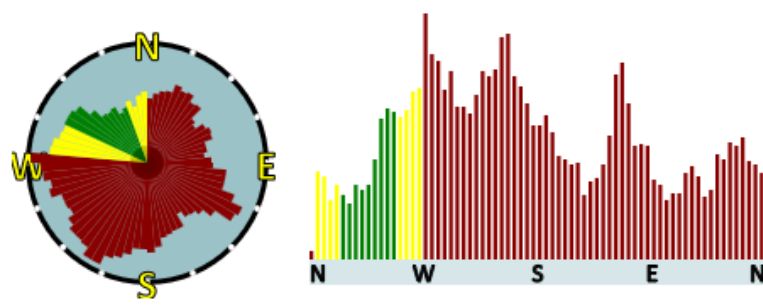
Data is displayed on the Holfuy website and apps are available for iPhone and Android:-

- Web..... [Station Map](#)
- Android..... [Play Store](#)
- Apple [App Store](#)

Averages

Time	12h	12:15	12:30	12:45	13h	13:15	13:30	13:45	14h	14:15	14:30	14:45	15h	15:15	15:30
Speed	18.6	19.8	20.5	19.8	18.6	19.8	19.2	19.2	20.5	20.5	22.9	24.2	21.7	22.9	19.8
Gust (mph)	28.5	29.1	31	30.4	27.9	27.9	28.5	27.9	31.6	31.6	32.9	34.7	31	32.2	34.1
Direction	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗
Direction Deg.	220°	217°	222°	219°	214°	214°	211°	223°	223°	228°	219°	210°	209°	207°	207°
Temp. (°C)	11.5	12.1	12.0	11.4	10.8	10.9	11.4	11.5	12.0	11.9	11.4	11.1	11.6	11.3	

Time	04h	05h	06h	07h	08h	09h	10h	11h	12h	13h	14h	15h	16h	17h	18h
Speed	16.7	14.9	14.9	16.7	14.9	16.1	16.1	15.5	13.6	14.3	16.1	17.4	18.6	19.8	18.6
Gust (mph)	23.6	22.9	25.4	25.4	25.4	26.7	24.8	24.2	20.5	21.1	24.2	26.7	28.5	31.6	27.3
Direction	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘	↘
Direction Deg.	195°	201°	207°	212°	219°	219°	216°	218°	216°	208°	208°	204°	209°	207°	203°
Temp. (°C)	7.2	7.6	8.0	8.1	8.4	8.7	8.8	8.7	8.8	9.1	9.2	8.9	8.6	8.2	8.1



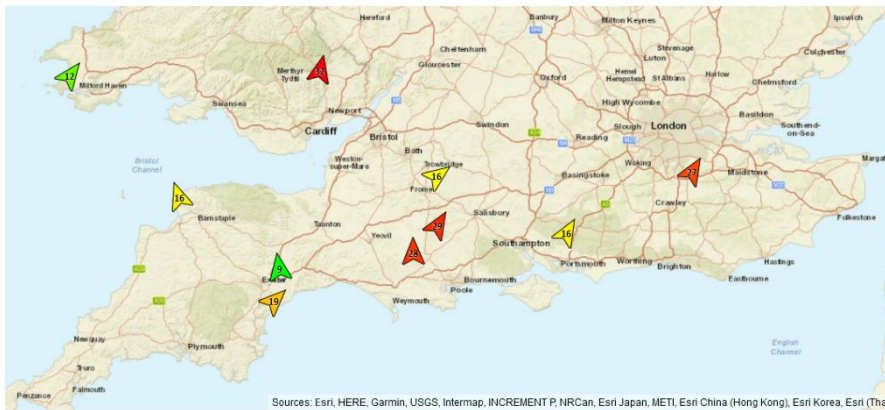
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Wessex have two stations (Bell and Whitesheet) and there are various other locations run by nearby clubs.

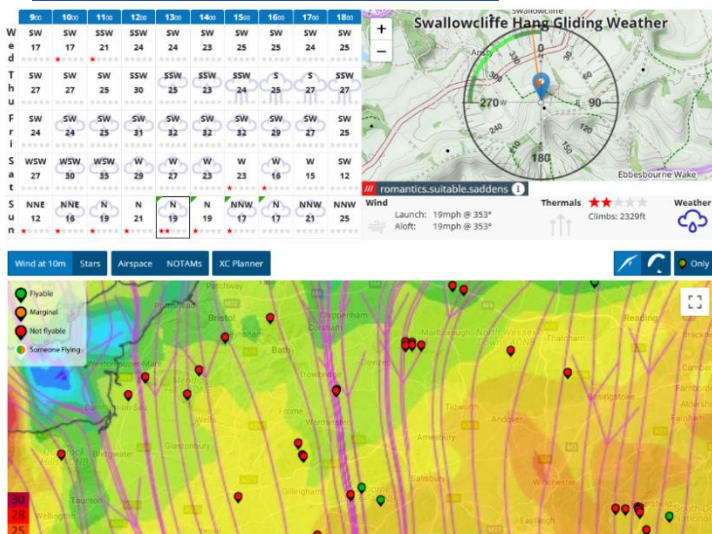
Links to the most useful local stations:-

- Bell Hill.....[Bell](#)
- Whitesheet[Whitesheet](#)
- Westbury[Westbury \(Edington Airstrip\)](#)
- Mercury[Mercury \(Sky Surfers\)](#)
- Woolacombe.....[Woolacombe \(North Devon\)](#)
- Bloreng.....[Bloreng \(South East Wales\)](#)

Important – Most of these stations are located on take-off and are therefore reading wind conditions in the compression zone. The actual wind speed once away from the hill will therefore be somewhat lower than reported by the station. Direction may also be influenced by the wind being pulled up the hill into the venturi.



Flybubble Weather



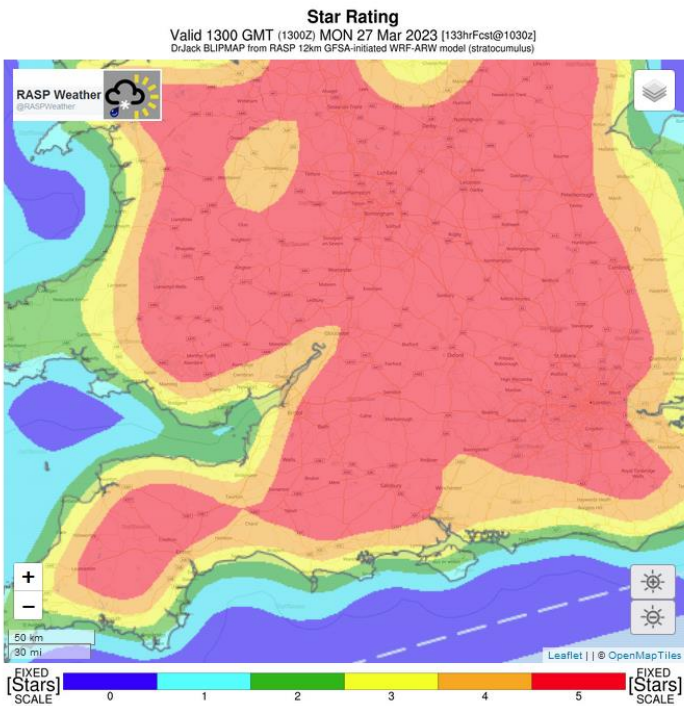
<https://flybubble.com/weather/>

Flybubble weather amalgamates the GFS forecast and RASP to provide a graphical prediction of sites that are flyable and how thermic they may be (star rating).

The site does not update frequently and some sites shown on the map are not actual paragliding take offs. It is worth cross referencing with other forecasts and checking that the site exists before committing to travel.

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RASP



<https://rasp.stratus.org.uk/>

Regional Atmospheric Soaring Prediction will probably be of less interest to newly certified pilots but it does provide a wealth of forecast data and is the most widely used resource for predicting thermal activity and a days XC potential.

RASP and its interpretation could fill a whole document on its own but some of the more useful features are:-

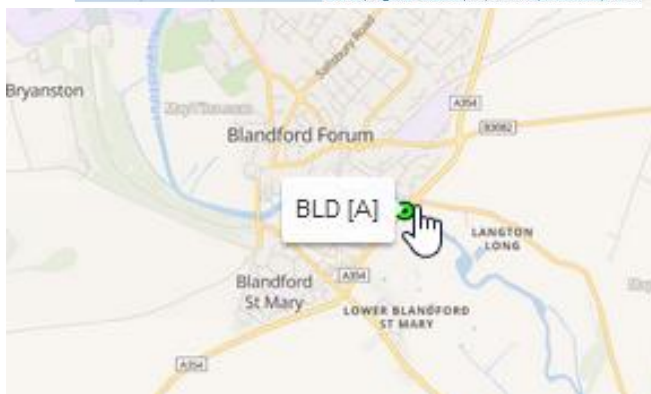
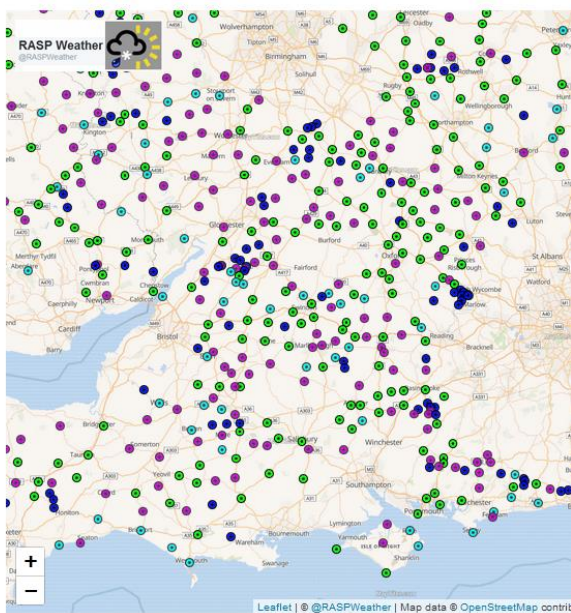
Star rating – You will often hear pilots talking about a 5 star day and they are referring to the system used by RASP to grade a day by thermal activity and flyability. It takes into account a number of factors to grade a day (and location) from 0 to 5 stars (0=poor – 5=excellent) and display the information on a map as coloured areas.

Custom Soundings – these are only available by BGA turnpoint (Sailplane turnpoints). Go to the “BGA Turnpoint Map” and zoom in to the area of launch and identify the nearest turnpoint. Hover the cursor over the turnpoint and a 3 letter code appears. On the “Custom Sounding” page use this three letter code for location, select day and time and then Get Turnpoint Results.

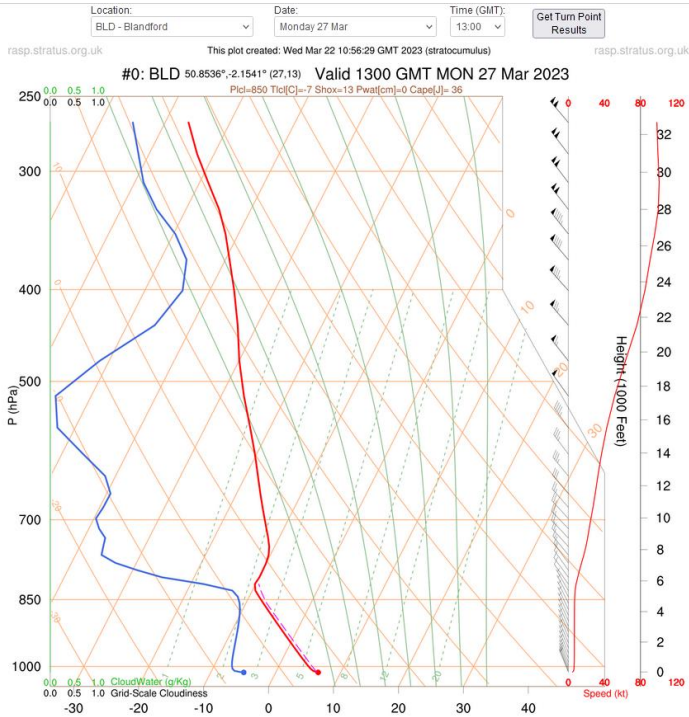
For example – a sounding (also known as a Skew-T) for Bell Hill (Blandford turnpoint) on 27th March at 13:00 is shown here. The graph provides a look at how the temperature, wind etc. changes as you ascend through the atmosphere.

BGA Turnpoint Map

This page provides a zoomable map of BGA turn points for 2022. Click on the TP icon for more details.



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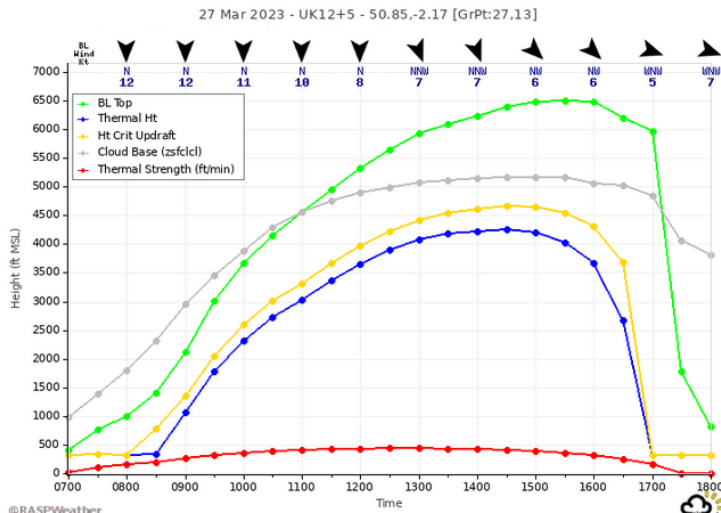
Interpretation of a sounding is beyond the scope of this document but an excellent video by Sean Staines is available on vimeo:-

<https://vimeo.com/435281693>

There are also various videos on YouTube that will assist you in interpreting a Skew-T.

Skew-T's and their interpretation is a requirement for the Pilot Exam so it's worth spending some time to understand how they work and how to use them effectively.

Town & City Forecasts – Fortunately RASP is able to take the sounding predictions for a full day, at a particular location and display most of the important information on a series of graphs.

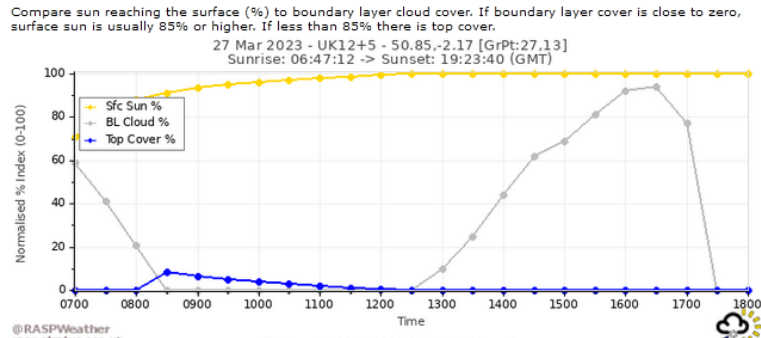
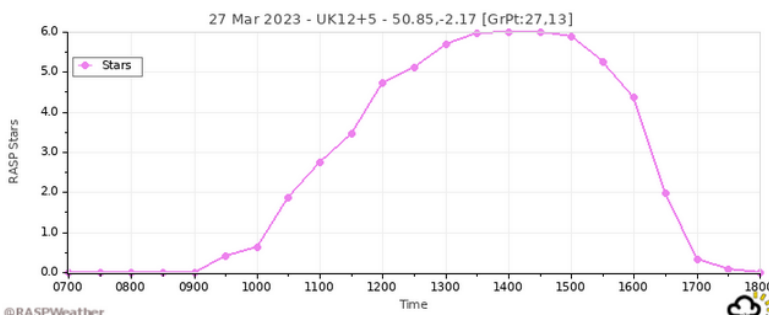


This functionality is arguably the most useful display of information on RASP.

Choose the nearest town from the list and the relevant day and RASP will generate 10 graphs.

All the graphs are worth studying but the first graph showing predicted thermalling height, cloud base and thermal strength is particularly useful.

The graphs shown here are for the same day as the sounding for Bell Hill shown above. A potentially very thermic day and a candidate for good XC flying



Other Sources

There are a variety of other forecast sources available on the internet or as phone apps. Some of these are listed below. Some of these may require a subscription to access the most useful information.

- SkySight [SkySight](#) – very visual. Popular with pilots
- Lazy RASP..... [Lazy RASP](#)
- XC Skies..... [XC Skies](#)
- Meteoblue [Meteoblue](#)
- Windy.App [Windy.App](#) – don't confuse with Windy.com
- Rain Alarm [Rain Alarm](#) – useful for giving warning of rain approaching
- Windfinder..... [Windfinder](#)

NOTAMs

Introduction

Notice to Airmen (or Notice to Air Missions) are intended to provide a method of relaying information of a temporary or short lived nature to pilots that could have an effect on flight planning.

You **should always** check for NOTAMs that could affect the site you intend to fly and, if intending to go XC, on your intended route.

These notices are often related to temporary hazards such as tall cranes, military operations, model aircraft flying, active parachuting drop zones etc.

Clubs will frequently request a NOTAM for a flying site if the weather looks suitable a day or two ahead. This will alert other forms of aviation that they are likely to encounter multiple paragliders within the vicinity of the NOTAM.

It is important to remember that, with a few exceptions, a NOTAM does not prohibit an aircraft from entering the area. Aircraft may choose to route around or to cross the NOTAMed area at their discretion but, if choosing to pass through, they should be more than aware that there is

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the potential for the presence of paragliders and they should provide adequate lookout and separation.

Some military danger areas are activated by NOTAM and it is important to identify if the area is active or not before deciding to transit.

Parachute drop zones are a particular danger to paragliders flying XC due to the risk of encountering parachutists in free fall. You should never enter an active drop zone and doing so will invalidate a XC flight if entered on XC League. Some drop zones are permanent and others are activated by NOTAM.

You will also hear the acronym CANP (Civil Aircraft Notification Procedure) which is the primary method of obtaining a site NOTAM.

Requesting a NOTAM

By far the easiest method of obtaining a NOTAM is to use the excellent website created by Chris Williams :-

<https://canp.logans.me.uk/>

After selecting the environment and club you should be able to find the relevant site in the Location drop down.

If the website is down you can also request a NOTAM by phone (0800 515544) or by email (Swk-mamclfcoord@mod.gov.uk). If you request a NOTAM in this way then you will need to provide the following information:-

1. Activity: Paragliding
2. Location: Site grid reference (2 letter 6 figure) or Lat, Long and name.
3. Area of operation: The usual is a circle of radius 2nm.
4. Date and time flying will start and finish (local time).
5. Anticipated maximum operating altitude (2000 feet AMSL is normal).
6. Expected number of gliders (>5).
7. Contact telephone number (ideally a mobile that will work on the site).
8. Contact Email address

The screenshot shows the 'CANP for free fliers' website interface. On the left is a navigation menu with links for 'Send in CANP', '...or call it in: 0800 515544', '@...or email it: Swk-mamclfcoord@mod.gov.uk', 'Try sending a test', 'About & Help', 'Instructions', 'NOTAMs', 'BHPA Policy', 'Terms & Conditions', 'Privacy Policy', 'Usage Statistics', 'Map with site guides', and 'Current/Future CANPs'. The main content area is titled 'Civil Aircraft Notification Procedure' and includes the subtitle 'Alerting military and other airspace users to planned free flying. (See About & Help for details.)'. The form contains several fields: 'Environment' and 'Club / School' (both dropdown menus), 'Location' (dropdown menu), 'Date of activity (optionally click here to select time)' (text field with a calendar icon, showing '23 / 03 / 2023'), 'Contact telephone' (text field with a red phone icon, showing '+447123456789 mobile#'), and 'Confirmation email' (text field with a red envelope icon, showing 'someone@somewhere.com'). At the bottom of the form is a blue 'SUBMIT' button and a note: 'Active time is dawn to dusk' and 'Number of pilots is 5+'.

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It is possible to apply and obtain a NOTAM for the same day however there is a high chance that general and military aviation will not incorporate it into their flight planning. You should try to apply at least 24 hours, but preferably 48 hours, before the NOTAM is required.

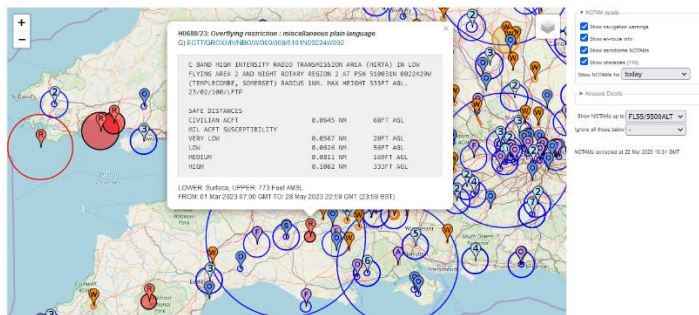
You may be contacted by general or military aviation pilots if they have to fly through your designated area to inform you of their intent. If this happens then you should disseminate the information as best you can on site and on the relevant Telegram groups.

Viewing NOTAMs

A NOTAM is issued by NATS incorporating it into one of their bulletins that are released at frequent intervals throughout the day. With a suitable login it is possible to view these bulletins as text or plotted on a map. This interface is not particularly intuitive or easy to use however it is guaranteed to be up to date and contain the latest information.

A much easier way to visualise NOTAMs is by using the flight planning map on NOTAM Info (<https://notaminfo.com/ukmap/>).

Flight Planning Map: UK



NOTAMs are shown for the following 7 days and can be filtered by day and height. Clicking on a NOTAM will open a box containing the details.

The site is updated automatically from the NATS bulletins but there is often an extended delay between the NOTAM being issued by NATS and it appearing on NOTAM Info.

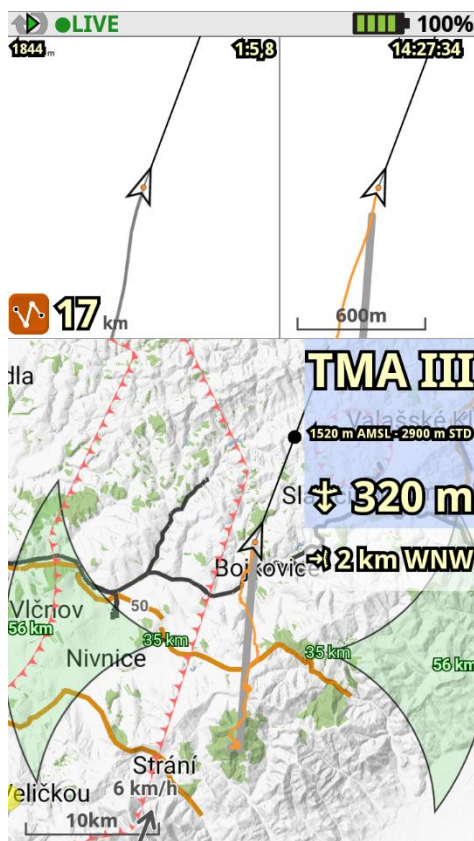
Flight Software

Flight instruments provide the pilot with a huge amount of information, the vast majority of which is totally useless to a novice pilot soaring a ridge (vario is an exception) and only serves to distract attention from flying the wing and keeping a watch for other pilots.

Once a pilot has gained some experience, and certainly if considering XC, instruments become more important if only to ensure that you do not infringe airspace.

There are numerous flight instruments available to purchase however there are some excellent low cost (or free) options that will run on iPhones and Android devices. The more popular options are shown detailed below.

XCTrack



Website <https://xctrack.org/>
Play Store [XCTrack](#)

XCTrack is free, fully functional flight software running on Android devices. It is highly customisable and is actively developed by the same organisation that runs XContest.

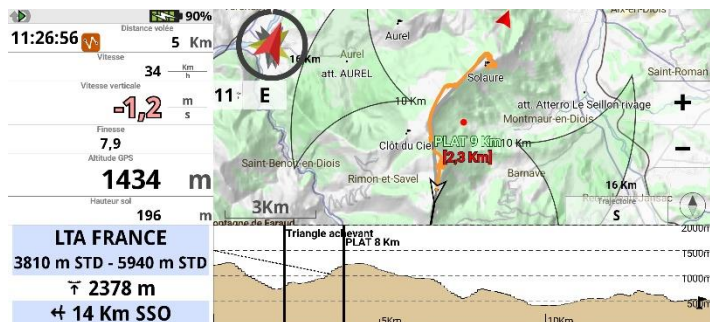
Up to date airspace files are automatically downloaded each time the software is started. A variety of open source map files can also be downloaded.

A pro version is available for a very small fee but the limited additional functionality is not required for most pilots.

The software is able to automatically upload flights to XContest and produces a valid IGC file for XCLeague etc.

An extremely detailed manual is available that covers options for all the widgets and describes how to obtain and install maps and airspace files.

The manual can be found at:-
<https://www.fly-air3.com/en/support/air3-xctrack-manual/>



Cross Country (XC) Flying

The BHPA requires that you are Pilot rated or to have discussed, and agreed, a planned XC flight with a coach before venturing over the back of the hill. Instruments are a vital part of flying XC in order to avoid airspace and danger areas that are a frequent hazard to the XC pilot.

British Club Challenge (BCC)



The BCC is a friendly XC competition that is intended to provide low airtime pilots with an introduction to XC planning and flying.

It runs every year from around Easter to October, depending on the weather, and rounds are run on weekends and/or bank holidays.

Teams consist of six pilots, at least one of which will be Pilot rated and XC experienced. As the competition provides a planned XC environment there is no requirement for the other team members to be pilot rated. If a Saturday and Sunday are flown then each day is counted as an individual round and team members may be different for each day. Once you have flown a round for a particular club you cannot fly for another club in that year.

Rounds can be called by any of the participating clubs with suitable sites but most rounds will likely be in South or mid Wales. The competition is a great introduction to new sites and a chance to meet pilots from all over the country

There will normally be a compulsory briefing in the morning at around 10:00 that covers planning, weather, safety etc. followed by a site brief. Once the briefings are completed you will be free to fly and, if possible, produce a scoring flight. A scoring flight is any flight over 5km when entered as a Turnpoint Flight on the XCLeague (see section later on XC League).

The competition required a lot of manual housekeeping until the 2022 season where a new website (many thanks Tim Bishop) largely automated the process.

The clubs will, before the season start, ask for interested parties to make themselves known and provide information for the coming season. Most clubs have a dedicated Telegram group for interested pilots.

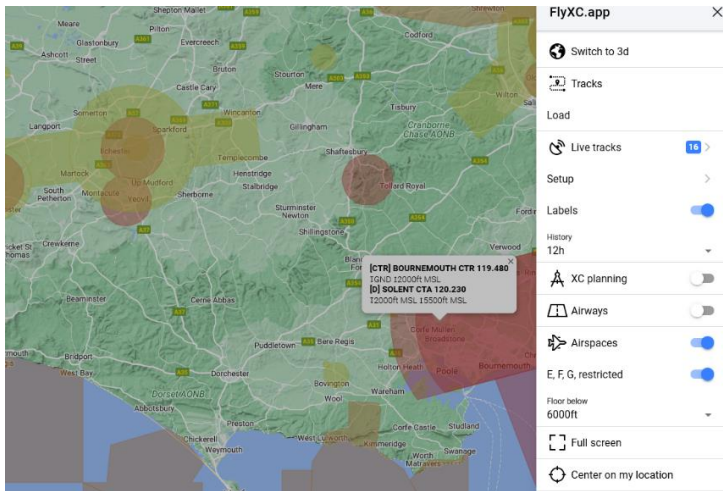
The BCC website <https://www.advance-bcc.uk/> has all the details, rules and joining links.

Skywings, February 2023 carried an article on the BCC:-

https://skywings.bhpa.co.uk/2302_Feb_2023_Skywings/index.html#page=13

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FlyXC



<https://flyxc.app/>

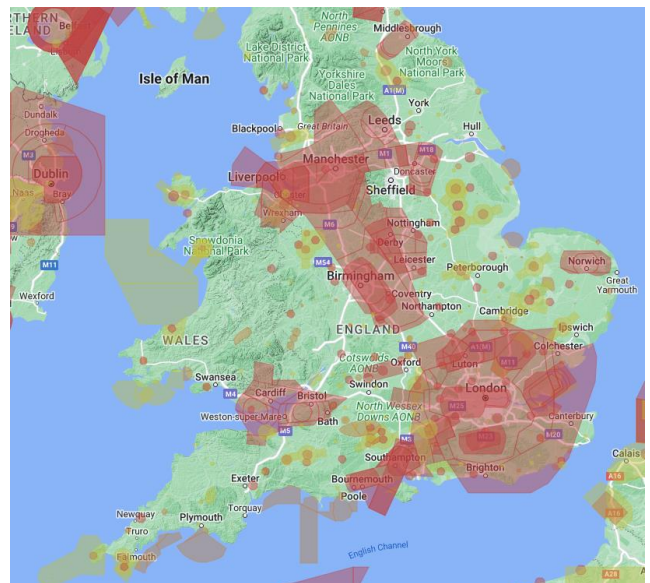
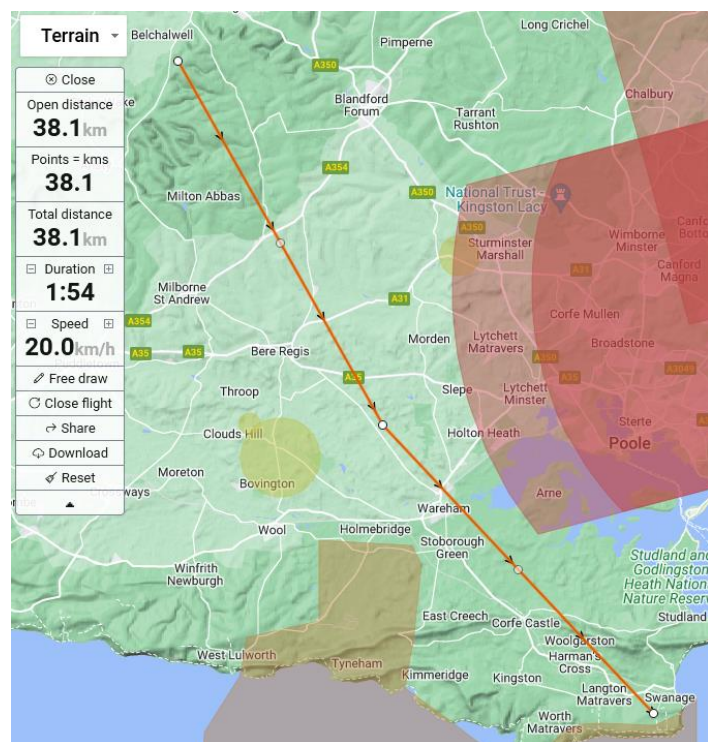
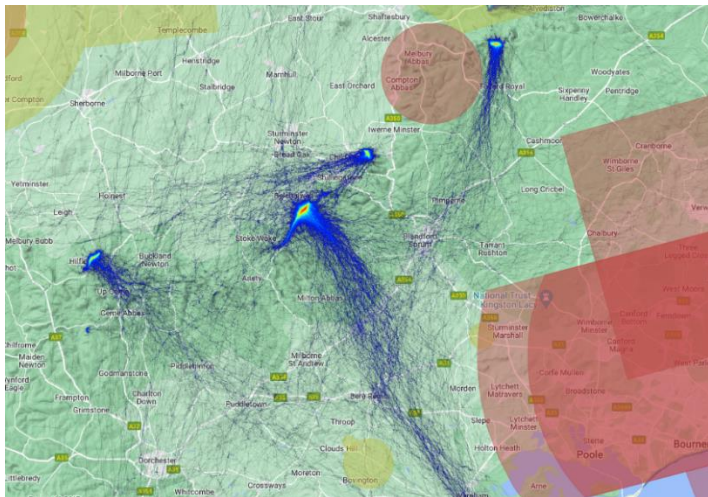
FlyXC provides a map style interface that is particularly useful for visualising airspace and XC route planning.

After turning on airspaces, clicking on an area will give details of the airspace name, type and heights.

Paragliding launches aren't shown however turning on Airways will overlay data from flights that have been uploaded in the past. On the example you can easily make out Bell Hill, Batcombe, Hambeldon Hill and Monksdown together with the XC tracks from each.

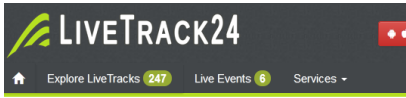
Turning on XC Planning permits a route with waypoints to be laid out on the map. Distance and approx. time to fly is shown.

The route can be shared as a QR code or downloaded in a number of formats allowing it to be imported into any of the popular flight software and instruments.



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Livetrack24



<https://www.livetrack24.com/>

Livetrack24 is a popular method of providing live tracking information that can be accessed on the internet. It is particularly useful for XC retrieve purposes and can be a useful method of locating a casualty in the event of an accident.

Depending on the apps you use to fly, it may be necessary to install other apps to serve flight data to Livetrack24.

Livetrack 24 is also useful for identifying where people are flying and if it is flyable.

Flight Logging & Visualisation

XC League

<https://www.xcleague.com/xc/>

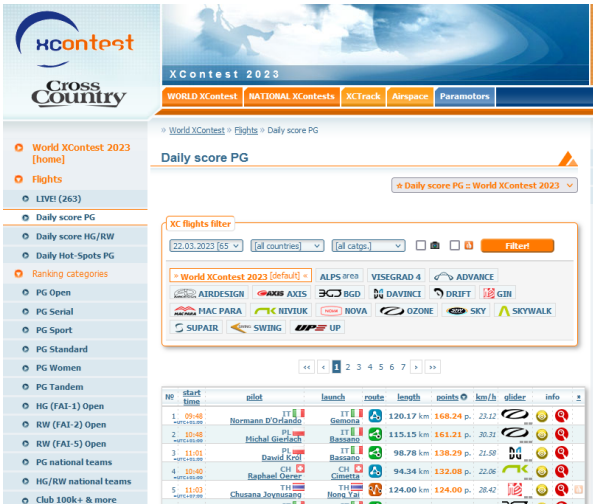
The XC League is used to score flights and provide a league table based on your top 6 flights of the season.

It is free to enter for the club ranking but there is a small annual fee if you would like to be included on the national League Table.

If you intend to fly BCC rounds it will be necessary to have an account and upload your flights to XC League. The free account is sufficient.

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XContest



The screenshot shows the XContest website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'WORLD XContest', 'NATIONAL XContests', 'XCTrack', 'Airspace', and 'Parameters'. Below this, there's a 'Daily score PG' section with a filter for 'World XContest 2023'. A table of flight results is visible, with columns for rank, start time, pilot, launch, route, length, points, km/h, and glider. The top entry is Normann D'Orlando from Germany, with a flight length of 120.17 km and 168.24 points.

no	start time	pilot	launch	route	length	points	km/h	glider	info
1	09:46	Normann D'Orlando	IT	Germany	120.17 km	168.24 p.	23.22		
2	10:48	Michal Gwarda	PL	Baziano	115.15 km	161.21 p.	30.31		
3	11:01	David Kruš	PH	Baziano	98.78 km	138.29 p.	21.58		
4	10:40	Raphael Dierck	CH	Smolten	94.34 km	132.08 p.	22.06		
5	11:03	Chusana Jovnusang	TH	Hong Kai	124.00 km	124.00 p.	28.42		

<https://www.xcontest.org/world/en/>

XContest provides a method of storing flights and also has a live tracking feature with integrates with the XCTrack flight software. XCTrack can also auto upload a track on landing.

Sports Track Live



<https://www.sportstracklive.com/en>

With the demise of Ayvri in early 2023, Sports Track Live has become the best method of visualising a flight as a 3D track.

It is possible to add other pilot's tracks for comparison although there are some limitations without a paid account.

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FLIGHT LOG

Flight logs are an important record of your flying history and can be valuable in many ways, not least as evidence to support sign off for Pilot Tasks. The BHPA states that pilots must keep a log of their flights however they make no recommendation on how you should do this or which information should be recorded.

Pilots choose many methods to record their flights that include:-

- Written – The BHPA sell a log book for this purpose
- Spreadsheet
- Web based log

Whatever method is used, it is important to remember that club coaches will need to see flight logs in order to sign off some of the Pilot Tasks and it is therefore important to record the information required for this and to highlight the tasks completed within your log.

A spreadsheet format devised by Tim Oatley is shown below and the Excel file may be downloaded from “Wessex Low Airtime Paragliders” Telegram group if you wish to use it:-

<https://t.me/c/1403263507/4124>

Flight Number	Date	Glider		Location	Comments	Duration	Training Exercise	Cumulative Grand Total bought forward ->				10:00
		Make	Model					XC Type	Max Ht	Distance	Annual	Cumulative
1	01-Jan	Little Cloud	Goose Mk3	Barton on Sea		2:05					2:05	12:05
2	03-Mar	Advanca	Sigma 10	Bell		1:35	TP	1500 ft	8.3 km	3:40	3:40	13:40
3												

Sequential flight number. Start at 1

Drop down list if you have multiple gliders. Whatever is listed in column U for make of glider will appear here

Date: just use the short format x/x and it will add the properly formatted date eg 1/1 will be formatted to 01-Jan

Where you flew!

Free text area for comments, met etc

Drop down list similar to make but whatever is listed at column V appears here

Duration: must be entered in the following format: 0:00 (colon separator). for example 1hour 35 mins would be entered 1:35

Training Exercise: if you want to use a flight as evidence for a pilot task, use this column to mark the task for easy identification

XC Type: As per the BHPA logbook:
TP - Turnpoint
Open - Open distance
etc

Max Ht, Distance: what you achieved on the flight

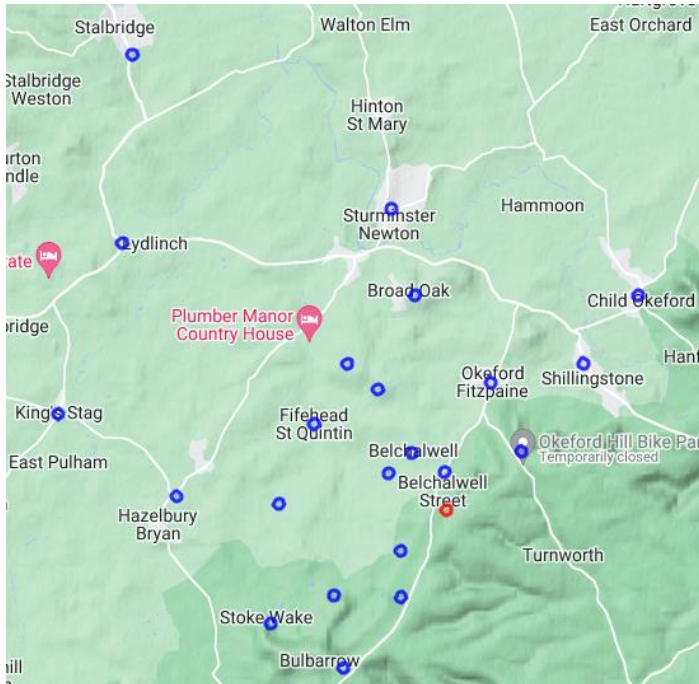
There are various online logbooks and if you keep a record of your flights as IGC files then Paraglidinglogbook.com or similar is a useful way to store these and extract some of the information they contain.

WESSEX WAYPOINT COMPETITION

New for the 2022-2023 season, the Wessex Waypoint Competition is open to all Wessex members.

Taking part will:-

- be FUN!
- get you thinking
- get you flying away from the hill, but not so far that you can't get back
- help you to work out how your GPS works
- improve your flying
- push you to the edge of your "comfort bubble" and thus increase its size



The competition consists of 22 waypoints (100m radius) in the vicinity of Bell Hill. You merely have to fly through the start cylinder and then go and tag as many others as you can before flying back through the start cylinder.

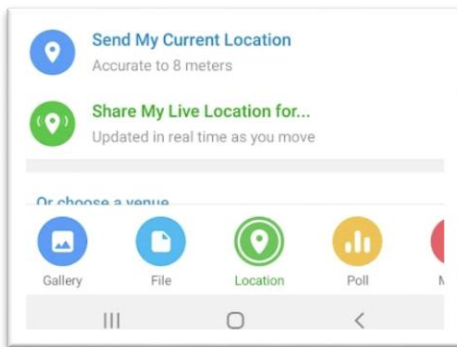
If you don't make it back to the start cylinder then any waypoints tagged will be lost. This prevents pilots going on a kamikaze glide to tag a far waypoint and then landing out from the hill.

The rules and instructions can be found on the competition website - [Waypoint Comp.](#)

Location & Retrieve

Telegram

A useful, but not very visible, feature in Telegram is the ability to share your location with an individual or group.



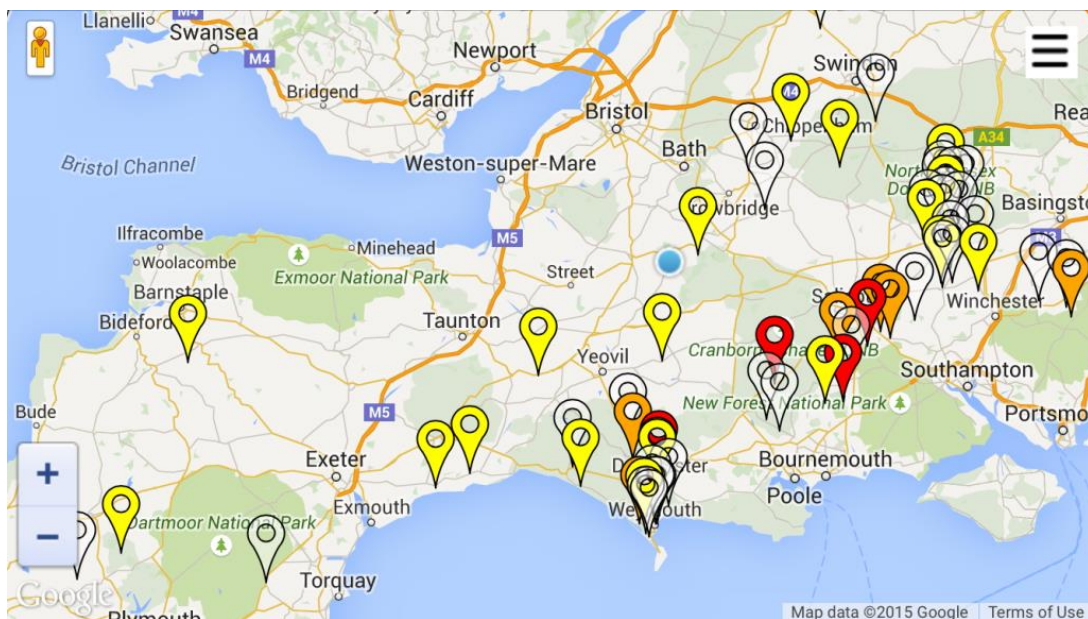
Selecting the Paper clip icon and then “Location” will present you with the option of sharing your current or live location. If sharing a live location you will be asked for a duration to prevent the share from remaining live forever.

If pilot and retrieve driver both share a live location with each other then it is possible to see each others location on the same, live map.

XCRT.aero

Developed by Tim Pentreath and Alan Birtles, xcrt.aero (<http://xcrt.aero/?lut=off&area=1>) is a system used by XC pilots to post their position on an interactive map and to see the position of nearby pilots allowing retrieves to be better organised.

There is a detailed description and setup procedure at <https://flyaszent.com/xc-retrieve/>



What3words



Web.....<https://what3words.com>

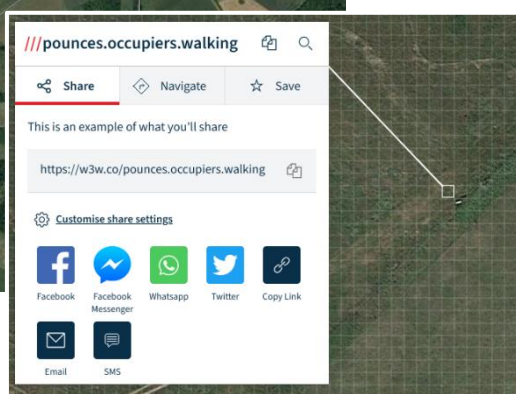
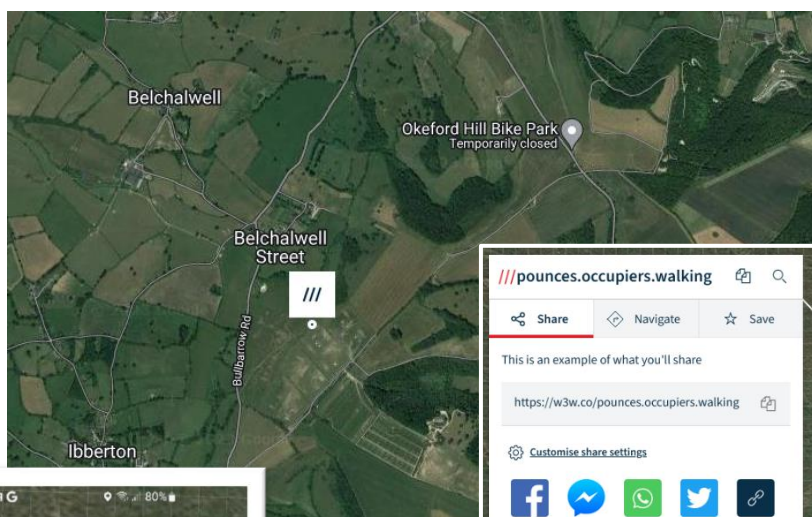
Android[Play Store](#)

Apple.....[App Store](#)

Available for IOS, Android and web, What3words is one of the most useful apps available. It divides the worlds surface into 3m squares and allocates 3 words that can be used to uniquely define the location.

For instance, take off at Bell Hill would be: _

<https://what3words.com/pounces.occupiers.walking>



Most clubs, including Wessex, have incorporated What3words locations into their site guides and the format is recognised by most of the emergency services if requesting their assistance.

The mobile apps allow the option of outputting other formats and you are able to share to social media or to navigate to the location.

It is important to allow your phones GPS to settle for 10 or 20 seconds after opening the app before reading off the location. It is often useful to switch from the default map layer to Satellite view to ensure the indicated location is correct.