

# Paragliding & Hang Gliding *in Snowdonia*



Approaching cloudbase over Llechog above Nant Peris.  
(Photo: Snowdon Gliders)



[www.snowdonia-active.com](http://www.snowdonia-active.com)

“ *The complex geology and meteorology of Snowdonia make flying its world class sites both a pleasure and a challenge.* ”

## Introduction

Hang gliding and paragliding are well developed adventure sports worldwide. Nowhere is this more evident than in Snowdonia, an area where many well known pilots have honed their skills. The complex geology and meteorology of the area make flying its world class sites both a pleasure and a challenge.

Essentially paragliding and hang gliding are the simplest and lowest cost ways of flying free, hence the term 'free flight' used to describe both arms of the sport. With portable equipment, a pilot can take off from a hillside or be towed into the air. From there it is possible to soar and thermal like birds, travelling along ridges and circling up to the clouds to travel XC or 'cross country'. This is as close to being a bird as humans can presently achieve, open to the elements with no engine noise to destroy the peace.

Hang gliding is the oldest arm of the sport and uses a rigid structure to maintain the wing's shape and integrity. The pilot 'hangs' prone beneath the frame generating very efficient flight. At present very little hang gliding takes place in Snowdonia because of a combination of the weight of the wing (about 30kg) and a lack of easy access to suitable take off points.

Paragliding is the baby of the sport and is still rapidly developing, flying slower than hang gliders, paragliders are relatively quick and easy to master. A paraglider is essentially a twin skinned parachute which, when inflated during takeoff and flight, takes up a classic wing shape. The pilot sits under this wing in a comfortable harness and provides structural integrity. Paragliders are widely used in Snowdonia due to their low pack size and weight; they also require much smaller take-off and landing areas.

In the mountains all take offs are made by the pilot running down a slope and then flying away from the hill. There is no "jumping off cliffs". Once in the air the pilot can control speed and position using simple intuitive controls and so aim to remain aloft for some time. On a cold still day this may be a smooth and simple flight from a peak to its base, known as a 'top to bottom'. If there is wind then a hill or ridge can be soared using the updraft that the hill creates. On warmer days thermals form and by circling in them a pilot can gain great height and cover distances. Landing is simple too; once trained a pilot can land accurately and with only a gentle footfall. Heights of over 2500m and distances of 100km have been achieved from the mountains of Eryri.

The exhilaration of this activity is particularly addictive, attracting pilots of both sexes from 16 to 80 years young. One only needs to be relatively fit and have time to set aside to learn, surprisingly even those who suffer from vertigo rarely do so in free flight.

## History

Hang gliding developed from work by NASA's Rogallo who developed a method of returning spacecraft to earth using these semi rigid gliders. Their modern counterparts outperform them many fold.

Paragliders started life as modified free fall parachutes which were used initially by climbers to make a fast descent after an alpine climb. They have developed over the past 20 years into the sleek machines that we now see. There is a surprising amount of science and technology ▷



*Flying above Moel Cynghorion  
(Photo: David Gale)*



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*“ Essentially paragliding and hang gliding are the simplest and lowest cost ways of flying free... ”*

in what appears at first glance to be a cloth and string contraption.

Whilst the majority of pilots do so for the sheer pleasure, others compete in national and international competitions, racing around pre defined courses, very similar to sailing regattas. Other adventurers fly 'vol- bivouac' attempting to cross mountain ranges with minimal equipment, often for days at a time and in extremely remote areas. Most recently a sub sport of acrobatic or 'acro' flying has developed with impossible looking tricks being performed in front of large crowds.

### Information Sources:

BHPA - British Hang gliding and Paragliding Association ([www.bhpa.co.uk](http://www.bhpa.co.uk))  
SSS - Snowdonia Sky Sports, the local free flight club ([www.snowdoniasports.co.uk](http://www.snowdoniasports.co.uk))

### Websites:

[www.snowdoniasports.co.uk](http://www.snowdoniasports.co.uk) - more detailed information on flying in Snowdonia, including the club's full sites guide, downloadable as a pdf.  
[www.snowdongliders.co.uk](http://www.snowdongliders.co.uk) - Snowdonia's main free flight business which runs courses and sells gliders and all other equipment.  
[www.bhpa.co.uk](http://www.bhpa.co.uk) - main site for the sports national body.  
[www.mac-paragliders.co.uk](http://www.mac-paragliders.co.uk) - equipment sales side of the Para-Excellence school.

### Books:

Several good books on how to fly are in print and are available from both the BHPA and local flying schools  
Touching Cloudbase, The complete guide to Paragliding (Ian Curren, 2004, 4<sup>th</sup> ed)  
BHPA Pilot Handbook (BHPA, Mark Dale)  
H.G. and P.G. Technical Manual (BHPA)

### Videos:

For this highly visual and tactile sport, videos are an excellent way to learn. Check out the following titles:  
• Starting Paragliding, • Touching Cloudbase, • Speed to Fly, • From Nowhere to the Middle of Nowhere.

### Specialist publications:

Skywings - the official monthly magazine of the BHPA.  
CrossCountry - the outstanding international free flight magazine. Check out: [www.xcmag.com](http://www.xcmag.com)

### Where and When to go flying

Most free flying takes place between April and September when conditions are most reliable, but there are plenty of hardy souls up in the air right through the winter. Conditions rarely develop until late morning, hence most fliers do not turn up until around 11 am (sounds good already?).

Snowdonia and the surrounding coastline has flying sites to suit all wind directions & conditions. Some are more suitable for beginners, others for cross country flying. The following sites guide is a general description to help orientate yourself before coming to Eryri. More detailed information can be obtained from the SSS website.

Snowdonia is one of the most dramatic places to fly in the UK and like most mountain locations you should respect its potentially serious and changeable nature. Conditions can change rapidly and some local knowledge is very useful. SSS has an open contact phone number and email for anyone coming to the area (see SSS website).





(Photo: Pete Bursnall)



Flying above the Llanberis Path on Snowdon  
(Photo: David Gale)

“ This is as close to being a bird as humans can presently achieve, open to the elements with no engine noise to destroy the peace.

## Advice for beginners

PARAGLIDING AND HANG GLIDING SHOULD NOT BE ATTEMPTED WITHOUT FORMAL TRAINING. To “have a go” on your own could well lead to permanent injury or death.

In the UK there is an excellent way to learn either flight discipline. The BHPA licenses schools in all areas to teach free flight through an approved syllabus that takes the candidate through Elementary Pilot, to Club Pilot and beyond. You will learn everything you need in a safe and fun environment.

Should you wish to just sample the sport then it is possible to organize a tandem flight with an experienced pilot. Some schools also organize “taster weekends”.

Schools in the Snowdonia area include:-

Snowdon Gliders: [www.snowdongliders.co.uk](http://www.snowdongliders.co.uk) this is a mountain flying orientated school

Para-Excellence: [www.para-excellence.co.uk](http://www.para-excellence.co.uk) this school operates in a coastal environment

## Site List

PLEASE CONTACT SNOWDONIA SKY SPORTS BEFORE FLYING THESE SITES. The contact number / email can be found at the website [www.snowdoniaskyports.co.uk](http://www.snowdoniaskyports.co.uk) , as can the complete sites guide for the area

*Grid references for the following sites all appear on the OS Outdoor Leisure Map No. 17.*

Elidir Fach	NW, W, & SW	mountain site.
Moel Elio	N, NW, W, & SW	mountain site.
Moel -y-Ci	NW & SW	hill site.
Moel Wynion	NW & SW	mountain site
Moel Berfedd	E & SE	mountain site.
Station 4	NE to SE	mountain site.
The Glyders	SE to SW	mountain site.
Viewpoint	SE to SW	mountain site.
Foel Lus	NW & NE	coastal site.
Penmaen Bach	NE	coastal site.
Pen yr Helgi Du	E & SW	mountain site.
Bochlwyd/Cwm Idwal	N & NW	mountain site

*Grid references for the following sites appear on OS Landranger Map No. 123.*

Nant Gwytheyrn	NW	coastal mountain site.
Trefor	N & NW	small 20m coastal site

*Grid references for the following sites appear on OS Outdoor Leisure Map No. 18.*

Tremadog	SW	cliff site
Harlech	NW	coastal site
Harlech Cliff (Llanfair)	NW to W	coastal site

### Elidir Fach (a)

IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO CONTACT SNOWDONIA SKY SPORTS BEFORE FLYING THIS SITE.

Grid ref: SH 604 613 Wind Direction: NW, W & SW

Height ASL: 795m, Top to bottom: 700m

**Site Description:** Elidir Fach summit is a rounded, rocky place. From here there is a 700m fly down to Llanberis, flying high over the top of the quarry holes. This is a good straightforward proposition on stable winter days and evenings, and a blast into outer space on thermic spring days.





Flying above Moel Eilio in winter  
(Photo: David Gale)

The quarry area is a massive thermal source – all that dark slate baking in the sun. Flying is serious stuff here – especially at the Garret take-off where launching and getting up and away is not to be undertaken lightly. There can be monster lift with corresponding sink and turbulence so watch out.

**Landing:** Directly below the Garret take-off is a flat area, which is a reclaimed and grassed quarry-hole. This is the 'Bus-Stop' landing field which includes a football pitch. This is a fairly good landing, but care must be taken to avoid power lines. Alternatively if you're going all the way down to Llanberis, there is a large area of grassy fields on the edge of the village by the side of Llyn Padarn. Land by the football pitch that lies amongst these fields (not the football pitch on the far side of the main road) – and then off to Pete's Eats in the village for a brew. There is nowhere to land between these two landing fields.

### Moel Eilio (b)

Grid reference: SH 566 577 Wind Direction: N, NW, W, & SW  
Height ASL: Take-off 350m (Summit 726m), Top to Bottom: 270m

**Site Description:** Moel Eilio is a conical hill overlooking Llanberis to the North, and is strategically well placed for 'XC' flights to Yr Wyddfa and beyond. Top landing is not recommended under strong conditions as the summit is conical and there are cliffs over the back on the NE side. The ridge leading east towards Snowdon is spine backed, irregular and rocky with the associated hazards of strong compression and rotor. The main cause of accidents here has been inexperienced pilots being blown back over the spur and mashed in rotor!

**Landing:** The landing field is the one immediately over the lane and opposite the small parking bay. Do not land in the bowl on the east side of the spur (the one with the lake) and do not take off on the eastern side of the take-off spur as there is no access agreement for either of these areas.

### Moel y Ci (c)

Grid Reference: SH 591 661, Wind Direction: SW, W & NW  
Height ASL: 400m, Top to Bottom: 50m

**Site Description:** This is a small site by local standards and of interest mainly due to its convenience for local pilots. Its small size means a small lift band, thus with more than four or five gliders it gets crowded on a light day. On strong days it can be an excellent jump off point for trips into the Carneddau and beyond. The hilltop is flat and quite forgiving so good for top landing.

**Landing:** It is very important to land only in the triangular heather field by the parking area (unless you're in a spot of bother). This is sometimes possible even when flying the NW side, though it may be in rotor. Otherwise top land anywhere you want on the hill but not below the track on either the SW or NW sides. Beware of the power lines when soaring low or trying to land low on the NW side!

### Moel Wnion (d)

Grid Reference: SH 649 697, Wind Direction: NW & SW  
Height ASL: 580m, Top to bottom: 250m

**Site Description:** A rounded grassy hill with a good flat top offering excellent soaring in NW & SW winds. The NW face is 1km long & 200m high. The southern end of the ridge turns into an open SW facing bowl. Whilst not so steep or long as its neighbour, this SW side is nevertheless a good soarable site in moderate breezes.

Moel Wnion is a very forgiving site by local standards and offers great ridge soaring with good opportunities to hone those top-landing skills. The hill is well used by the local schools, so be aware that you may be sharing the sky with novice pilots.

**Landing:** The landing site is basically anywhere at the bottom of the hill.

Please note the site rules attached to the gate leading to the site as access is only possible through agreements with local landowners & graziers. 





Mountain flying above Crib Goch



Coastal flying at Foel Lus with the Great Orme & Llandudno in the distance (Photo David Gale)



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## Moel Berfedd (e)

Grid Reference: SH 652 557, Wind Direction: E & SE  
Height ASL: 480m, Top to Bottom: Landing field 280m

**Site Description:** Moel Berfedd offers good soaring for the non-XC pilot. For the XC pilot it is a serious mountain-flying proposition. The eastern faces of the Snowdon massif are complex and unpredictable, with the area being the meeting point of three major valleys. The thermals can be strong and rough and the winds prone to sudden changes in direction as the valley winds fight for supremacy. It is not unusual in summer, whilst soaring in a pleasant Easterly wind to suddenly find a strong North-westerly sea-breeze spilling up and over Pen y Pass. If inexperienced and intending an initial XC flight it may be prudent to seek a little local knowledge first. Landing in this area can be interesting even for experienced locals!

The S/SW take-off side of the hill is well known for being more than 'a little rough'; beware of wave from Snowdon and sea breezes spilling up the Llanberis Pass from the right.

**Landing:** The main landing site is situated down by the Pen y Gwryd hotel, in the area directly over the road from the ladder you climbed over.

If you go XC towards Snowdon & can't get back, the landing field is in the bottom of the Gwynant Valley, in the campsite fields immediately beside the lake. There are no landing areas between Moel Berfedd & this lakeside field. Do not get caught short or you will seriously jeopardise the good relationship we have with the farmer. The trip to the lake field is a mini XC in itself & a great first XC - but don't fall short!

## Station 4 (f)

Grid Reference: SH 648 548, Wind Direction: NE, E & SE  
Height ASL: 360m, Top to Bottom: 200m

**Site Description:** Whilst not a soaring site in itself, Station 4 provides access to 'The Pump'. From here it is possible to gain height up to Gallt y Wenallt and, subsequently, the main Snowdon arena. If possible gain height above take-off, then fly right past the pipeline, beyond which is a large crag sticking out into the valley - this is 'The Pump'. Gain height here and have a nice day.

**Landing:** If conditions prove to be lighter than expected, either top land on the high plateau between take-off and 'The Pump' or fly down the valley to land in the camp site at the end of the lake. Beware of any rotor behind 'The Pump'. The campsite is attainable on glide from the top of 'The Pump' for most gliders - do not lose too much height searching for a save. **DO NOT LAND SHORT.**

## The Glyderau (g)

Grid Reference: SH 663 566, Wind Direction: S & SE  
Height ASL: 400m, Top to Bottom: Landing field about 260m

**Site Description:** The Glyderau is a pretty fine launch site for exploring a couple of miles of the South facing slopes of the Glyderau. There's good thermal flying as well as soaring, though the terrain can be committing at times. There is XC potential over the back towards Conwy, as well as mini XC trips along the ridge to Capel Curig. This is not quite the gentle place it appears, and has had more than its fair share of accidents.

**Landing:** Down by the lay-by, on either side of the road. Watch the little lake and don't climb the fences.

## Viewpoint (h)

Grid Reference: SH 659 542, Wind Direction: S & SW  
Height ASL: 250, Top to Bottom: Not available! Top landing only!

**Site Description:** This is a tiny site that provides little interest for ridge flying. Due to the necessity to avoid landing below the road at all costs, it should only be used as a launch point for XC excursions. It is only soarable in a S/SW wind direction, at which time The Glyderau offers a better alternative site. ▶



Soaring on Moel y Ci



Looking down on Llyn Idwal  
(Photo: Davd Gale)



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**Landing:** Landing below the road is to be avoided unless a total necessity. Top land above the road only. During any no-fly agreement, landing below the road is definitely a no-no. Failure to comply with this will jeopardise our agreements. If you are not confident of going XC then leave this site alone during lambing.

### Foel Lus (i)

Grid reference: SH 733 763, Wind Direction: NW & NE,

Height ASL: Take-off 250m (Summit 360m), Top to bottom: Landing at sea-level

**Site description:** Just over 1000ft high, Foel Lus can be soared in both NW & NE winds. It offers good soaring and the limited opportunity of ridge runs along the coast, though there are some tricky 'jumps' and some nasty power lines about.

**Landing:** Top landing is possible but can be tricky in lifty conditions. It is OK to land on the rough ground in front of the football pitch at the Little Chef. Another landing is at the campsite at the base of the spur, on the other side of the road that joins Pen and Dwygyfylchi, pay the farmer £1 and you can park and land all day. Do not land on the Golf Course. If you are intending to land on the beach, keep an eye on the tides - high tide means no beach.

### Penmaen Bach (j)

Grid Reference: SH 748 781, Wind Direction: NE

Height ASL: 230m, Top to Bottom: 230m

**Site Description:** This is a large headland with a 1/2 mile soarable face. It is possible to go right, along the northerly faces to Conwy when the wind is right.

**Landing:** Top landing is possible on the open moor land behind take-off, but serious rotor has been experienced. Bottom landing is on the beach. Do not leave it too late to break away from the hill as there's a lot of serious stuff to fly over - roads, railways and campsites.

### Pen yr Helgi Du (k)

Grid Reference: SH 698 630, Wind Direction: SE & W.

Height ASL: 833m, Top to Bottom: About 500m

**Site Description:** A 2km long ridge, generally flat topped, leads South from the summit of Pen yr Helgi Du. This ridge is flyable on its W and E sides. The West face becomes very turbulent in moderate winds. The summit is rocky and descends steeply on the North side so don't risk getting blown back.

**Landing:** There are good clear areas in front of the ridge face making easy landings for inexperienced pilots but please keep away from any areas of livestock in the lower fields, and the area of the farm.

### Bochlwyd/Cwm Idwal (l)

Grid Ref: SH 655 595 Wind Direction: N & NW

Height ASL: 550m, Top to bottom: 200m

**Site Description:** This is a true mountain site in magnificent scenery which given the right conditions can provide stunning "alpine" flying. Wind conditions need to be spot on however as severe rotor can be found in cross wind conditions. Essentially the wind funnels up the valley in front and there are numerous large thermal sources close by. From this site you can explore Tryfan and the Glyders, XC from here is largely unexplored but the potential is eXcellent with the Moelwyns a few km behind.

**Landing:** GR653 599 (the flat grassy area passed by on the walk up), Please do not land in the bottom of the valley or near the foot of Tryfan.

**Restrictions:** This site is to be flown at weekends only due to being on the low level jet route during the week. An incident between the RAF and paragliders here could have a severe impact on free flying in the area.





Gliding down Nant Guynant (Photo: David Gale)



Soaring above Glyder Fawr (Photo: Pete Bursnall)



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## Nant Gwytheyrn (m)

Grid Reference: SH 350 444, Wind Direction: NW  
Height ASL: 300m, Top to Bottom: 300m

**Site Description:** A series of hills and cliffs bisected by a narrow valley giving a large site of great panoramic coastal soaring, with the option to make a few 'jumps' and do a touch of exploring. One recorded incident of a direct hit from a Buzzard attack!

**Landing:** Top land with great care. Normal landing on the beach but be extremely aware of the tidal state as there's no beach left at high tide. There is a cafe down there in the summer. Don't land right by the buildings.

## Trefor (n)

Grid Reference: SH 388 474, Wind Direction: N & NW  
Height ASL: 20m

**Site Description:** This is a small mud-cliff, 20m or so high, providing interesting soaring when low cloud or high winds preclude flying on mountain sites. The cliff edge is soarable for several kilometres along the coast in moderate breezes. On a hang glider it is possible to jump back to the hills behind, from where a spectacular coastal run is possible to Nefyn and back. Watch out for rotor at the cliff edge.

## Tremadog (o)

Grid Reference: SH 555 408, Wind Direction: SW  
Height ASL: 130m, Top to Bottom: 120m

**Site Description:** This is a rocky cliff with a restricted and rather tricky take-off area. Once airborne the cliff provides good dynamic soaring as well as being very thermic considering its proximity to the sea. If the wind is off to the south it can get pretty turbulent.

While XC potential is good, the terrain downwind is distinctly mountainous.

**Landing:** Top landing for paragliders is in rough area immediately west of take-off, where the cliff edge rounds off. Bottom landing is in the field next to the road. There is no safe hang glider top landing.

## Harlech (p)

Grid Reference: SH 595 315, Wind Direction: NW  
Height ASL: 200m, Top to Bottom: 200m

**Site Description:** This is a ridge about a mile long running from Harlech to Talsarnau. It is also possible to connect with the next ridge and waft off to Barmouth. There is good thermalling in Spring at this site, but it's prone to sea breezes in Summer.

**Landing:** Landing is in the Secondary school field (SH 579 315), by the main road, whenever possible. If forced to land below take-off choose a sheep free field. Top landing is tricky due to severe rotor.

## Harlech Cliff - Llanfair (q)

Grid Reference: SH 574 296, Wind Direction: NW & W.  
Height ASL: 50m, Top to Bottom: Down to sea level

**Site Description:** This is a sea-cliff site with an unconventional take-off area. There are risks of rotor on take-off (from the bottom wall). The cliff/slope is soarable along to Harlech itself on a good day, with the possibility of joining the main Harlech site.

**Landing:** Bottom landing is down on the beach. Top landing is in the flat field at the top of the cliff, directly to the left of the take-off field. Beware of rotor when top landing here - there's sure to be some.

**DO NOT LAND ON THE GOLF COURSE AT THE BOTTOM**





Paragliding pilots enjoying evening conditions  
(Photo: Snowdon Gliders)

“ Snowdonia and the surrounding coastline has flying sites to suit all wind directions and conditions. Some are more suitable for beginners, others for cross country flying.

## Codes of Conduct /Access

Snowdonia Sky Sports was set up by local pilots in 1990 to protect the local sites and the interests of pilots flying in northern Snowdonia.

Initially it was only a handful of local activists walking up on to the high mountains to take the huge fly downs the area offers and, at the time, there was little involvement in site management and access negotiation. However, as the sport has grown and sites have become more crowded, there has been a growing need for the club to tackle access issues.

Hang gliding and paragliding are very visual sports. We and many others love to see pilots free flying around the hills but, to landowners and farmers, we can sometimes be seen as an increasing problem and even a threat to their livelihoods. All our sites are in a traditional hill farming area and livestock is almost always present whenever we fly. Conflict between landowners and the free flying community can easily occur in these sensitive areas, and sites can be lost through one unfortunate incident.

SSS now manages the flying sites on and around the Snowdon massif and, in agreement with the National Park, National Trust and the other private landowners; it is the recognized representative body for hang gliding and paragliding in the area. Consider joining the club to support its objectives and to take part in its activities.

Our sites are registered with the BHPA, but site sovereignty goes nowhere without the consent of the landowners themselves. SSS works hard to keep communication and relationships open and positive with the local landowners but this relies heavily on the attitude of the pilots on the hill. Remember that all land that is flown from, is either in private or National Trust ownership and free fliers have no inherent rights, only permission where negotiated. Please do not fly from unregistered sites which may upset the delicate balance that exists within Snowdonia.

Understanding the negotiated agreements for flying in this area is key to the continued freedom we have in these hills. SSS has produced a guide to all the major flying sites in this area, detailing the parking and launching agreements and any local restrictions arranged with the landowners - your possession of this information is in everyone's interest.

Northern Snowdonia is an incredible place to fly and with everyone's help it can remain an open and friendly area to fly. Please respect the information provided in the sites guide and go out and enjoy some of the finest mountain flying in the UK.

## Logistics

Organisation is the key to getting the most out of your free flying. Here is a typical day for a free flight fanatic. Do not forget to find out about the area first, either from the free Snowdonia Sky Sports website or from the contact phone number (also from [www.snowdoniasports.co.uk](http://www.snowdoniasports.co.uk))

- Wake up (not too early) and look out the window. There's some wind, some blue sky and no sign of rain.
- Plan where to go (there are 15 or so sites in Snowdonia to choose from), basing your decision on wind direction and strength.
- Check that you have all your flying equipment, electronics and clothing.
- Drive to the site (with colleagues to save on car use), check that conditions are correct (if not, move on to assess another site) and then walk up the hill to the take-off point (anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes walk up).
- Having had your exercise, lay out your wing, do safety checks and then harness up ready for flight.
- Take off from a slope running down the hill until you slowly rise away from it (no one throws themselves off cliffs!)
- Enjoy your flight(s) whether it is a simple down flight, a soaring flight on a hill or





Going XC in snowdonia with the sea in the distance  
(Photo: Pete Bursnell)



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“ Most free flying takes place between April and September when conditions are most reliable, but there are plenty of hardy souls up in the air right through the winter.

rising in thermals way above the take off point.

- Land safely, pack up and walk, bus or hitch back to your car.
- Drive to the site (with colleagues to save on car use), check that conditions are correct (if not, move on to assess another site) and then walk up the hill to the take off point (anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes walk up).
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- Enjoy your flight(s) whether it is a simple down flight, a soaring flight on a hill or rising in thermals way above the take off point.
- Land safely, pack up and walk, bus or hitch back to your car.

## Weather

Most adventure sports in the UK are at the mercy of the weather. Paragliding and Hang Gliding are no exception but do not let that put you off. At the beginning of your flying career you will find that there are plenty of days to learn the sport. It is only as you progress that you get that little bit fussy.

To fly you need three things to be working in your favour :

- Wind - anywhere between 0 to 20 mph is OK, and between 5-15 mph is ideal.
- Rain - the odd shower is manageable but any serious precipitation wets the surface of your wing which can make it unflyable and dangerous.
- Cloud - flying in cloud is a no no. You will quickly become disorientated and given that cloudbase is often lower than the high peaks impact with the hillside is a distinct possibility.

In summary light wind, no rain, and cloud that is high enough to be off the hill is ideal. In practice 50% of the time it is flyable in Snowdonia, less in winter more in summer. Mountain and coastal sites do afford some flexibility, if it's raining in the mountain it's often fine at the coast.

An excellent source of weather forecasting for fliers is at:  
[www.itadvice.co.uk/weatherjack/index.htm](http://www.itadvice.co.uk/weatherjack/index.htm) or [www.metcheck.com](http://www.metcheck.com)

Others include:

XC weather: <http://www.xcweather.co.uk/>

Snowdon Mountain Forecast:

<http://www.met-office.gov.uk/loutdoor/mountainsafety/snowdonia.html>

Theyr.Net: [http://theyr.net/cg/cny/1168ad3/F=js\\*v\\*EN\\*engl\\_Manchester](http://theyr.net/cg/cny/1168ad3/F=js*v*EN*engl_Manchester)

## Conservation Notes:

Whilst, there are not any well defined conservation issues involved with paragliding, it is worth bearing in mind that crag nesting birds, such as a Peregrines or Choughs could be disturbed by a passing paraglider. It is also possible that ground nesting birds could be disturbed by the shadow of a canopy or even by the direct impact of a landing pilot.

## Countryside Code:

### Respect – Protect – Enjoy

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep your dog under close control
- Consider other people





Checking inflation prior to take-off  
(Photo: Pete Bursnall)

## Snowdonia-Active website

www.snowdonia-active.com provides a whole host of information about local activity providers, instructors and guides, accommodation and campsites, outdoor shops and cafes. Check out the Directory, a geographically specific database covering outdoor orientated businesses in the North-West Wales area. The site is host to a whole range of downloadable activity and area guides written by field experts. It also has links to numerous weather forecasting websites.

## Public Transport

Although the Snowdonia area is well served with a modern road network there are many alternatives to travelling by private car. The Snowdonia National Park, the Llŷn Peninsula & Anglesey are criss-crossed with a network of local & regional buses, and rail links. In the northern part of the National Park the special Sherpa bus service connects the most popular walking & climbing areas to adjacent towns and villages.

## UK Public Transport Information

<http://www.traveline.org.uk> gives links to public transport providers. Click on the map for information about coach, bus, rail, air & ferry services for North Wales & beyond.

## Disclaimer

*The writer and publishers of this leaflet accept no responsibility for the way in which readers use the information contained therein. The descriptions and recommendations are for guidance only and must be subject to discriminating judgement by the reader. Advice and training should be sought before utilising any equipment or techniques mentioned within the text or shown in any of the photographic images.*

*Paragliding and hang gliding are adventurous activity with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement. Snowdonia-Active strongly recommends that you contact a BHPA registered school for further advice.*



www.snowdonia-active.com

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*The exhilaration of this activity is particularly addictive, attracting pilots of both sexes from 16 to 80 years young.*

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## Author Bio: David Gale

*David Gale has been paragliding the Snowdonia mountains for the past 14 years and has lived and worked in the area since 1980. He is also a keen sailor, making the jump from the water to the air when he first saw paragliders floating above the mountains. He has written a series of local articles about how to fly around Snowdonia, the "Biffa Guides" and keeps in touch with the flying scene as the secretary of Snowdonia Sky Sports.*