

# The Avon HG & PG Club Magazine

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**November 2003**

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### Club Meetings

Club meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at the Compass Inn at Tormarton (just off the A46 about ¼ mile north of junction 18 on the M4). Arrive at 8pm for an 8.30pm start. For further details please contact the Social Secretary, Diane Hedges or Richard Zaltzman. Dates of the next meetings are as follows:

December 4<sup>th</sup> - A Talk by Bob Drury with slides/video "Mountain Paragliding in the Himalayas and other exotic places".

December 12<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Buffet/Disco at the Rockery.

There will be no club meeting in January.

*NOVA is the newsletter of the Avon Hang-gliding and Paragliding Club. The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor, or Committee of the Club.*

*NOVA can also be found online at [www.avonhgpg.co.uk](http://www.avonhgpg.co.uk)*

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Cover shot – Tony Moore flying his Classic at Avila, Spain July 2003, by Nigel Martin

# Editorial



It's been a long time since the last issue of Nova – I apologise for the delay and hope that this issue will make up for it, after all I believe in quality rather than quantity. Hopefully you will have been too busy flying or at least enjoying the wonderful summer weather rather than waiting in for the postman or glued to your PC. Tim has done an excellent job of summarising the year's events below, and it will be one to remember for many of you for many different reasons. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Nova. I have endeavoured to publish every article received this year and as many photos as possible to capture the highlights and memories of the Avon Hang-gliding and Paragliding Club in 2003.

**Cathy Lawrence**

## Chairman's Waffle

Well I think we'd all agree we've had the best year's flying ever this year – the weather really started getting good in March and it's only in the last few weeks that it's taken a bit of a downturn. Having said that there've been plenty of good days in October where the hangies in particular have had some great flights. I had my best ever height gain at Westbury at the end of September, some 3,500' above takeoff – what a view!



The club has had a great year too – we won the PG side of the British Clubs Championships – well done team captain Martin Stanton and all those who competed in the qualifying rounds and the final. We've had a record PG xc season with more than 30 pilots flying over 4,700km which is well over twice last year's previous best total. For quite a few of those pilots it was their first year of xc flying so congrats to them all.

This year's Mere Bash was a great success, yet again flyable over the weekend. On Saturday Martin Stanton broke the easterly route PG record from Westbury with his 44km flight, but not to be outdone, Ken Wilkinson got up early on Sunday and with his xc head on, NOT (no moby, no money and not enough clothes), broke the PG site record from Mere with his 73km flight! The byo BBQ worked really well, the band was excellent, and the beer as lethal as ever! Thanks to everyone who made it such a great do!

Sadly though, on the Monday after the Mere Bash, we heard the news that one of the club's longest standing members, Colin Lark, had died from cancer that morning. Colin had been a stalwart of the club for many years and was Chairman when I first joined the club in 1993. Back in the 70's he was winning virtually every hang-gliding comp around, setting new records and appearing in local newspapers at least half a dozen times a year talking about his exploits! He was one original pioneers of the free-flying community in this country and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Thinking about Colin made me think about setting up a club history section on the website using old archive material. So if you've got any old photos, stories, club news, or if you can remember who were the past Chairman's of the club over the years, please send/email them to Rich Harding who will put them on the website.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank last year's committee for all the sterling work they did over the year – it's a commitment which goes largely unnoticed and unrewarded and is done out of a desire to put something back into the sport (and not for the free beers at committee meetings despite what people might think!). I'd like to also welcome the four new members to the committee this year: Richard Zaltzman and Diane Hedges have jointly taken on the challenging job of Social Secretary, Stephen Chiles is the new PG low airtime contact, and Howard Woodward is the new Safety Officer. Thanks to you all for volunteering (letting yourself be volunteered!).

It's great to have some new faces on the committee – we've got some good events lined up over the next few months, which should see us through the long winter nights... I imagine by the time you read this we will have met "WeatherJack" and all be much more knowledgeable on all things weather related. Then in early December we've got Bob Drury again giving another of his excellent talks – don't miss that.

And then finally for 2003 we've got our annual Christmas Dinner at The Rockery on 12<sup>th</sup> December. We're going for a "Christmas buffet" followed by a disco (not the same guy as last year!), and will also be judging the 2003 photo comp and giving out the various awards as usual. There will be a prize for the best-dressed pilot so dig out those party frocks boys and girls! Don't forget to bring your protective eyewear, as peashooters will be provided once again! We're trying to keep the

ticket price the same as last year at £15 per head – they'll be on sale soon, so it'd be a great help if you could buy them early so that we get a good idea of numbers well before the actual event.

Well I think that's about all from me for now, except to say make the most of the winter layoff - complete all those DIY jobs that if you're like me you've put off since the spring, and spend time with your wife/husband/partner/kids so that you can clock up the brownie points (Lisa, if you read this I'm only joking!) ready for hopefully another cracking season in 2004! Good flying.

**Tim Pentreath**

## **Introducing the new Committee Members.....**

### **PG Safety Officer – Howard Woodward**



I have been flying paragliders for four years. Somehow I have racked up around 500 hrs air-time. Sadly, due to my advanced years, learning has been painfully slow in more ways than one. I have had three bumps in my career; all of them could have been avoided had my brain been in gear and had I been flying with safety in mind. Bashing myself on the ground is one way to learn - Lets try a better way. So for the next year I will be bending every one's ear about safety. My first article, in this edition of Nova, is about ground-handling and is aimed at low air time/ occasional pilots.

### **Paragliding Low Airtime Contact - Stephen Chiles**

Is it flyable today ?.....and where ?

If I knew the answers to these questions all the time then I would be very happy. However, having got the answers completely wrong on such a large number of occasions I feel that, learning from my own misjudgments, I can now offer useful advice to those starting out in this great sport of ours. Whilst these are probably the main questions asked of the low airtime contact please feel free to talk to me about any paragliding issues. I'll be continuing the policy of all my predecessors: it's up to the progressing pilot to seek assistance – it's been found that the best use of time is to concentrate on those who want help.



I'm an active pilot myself and will almost certainly be on/above a hill on any flyable weekends and also weekdays when Weatherjack gives a 4 or 5 ([www.itadvice.co.uk/weatherjack/STARS.htm](http://www.itadvice.co.uk/weatherjack/STARS.htm)). I fly a blue and yellow Ozone Vulcan and also drag people (mainly my partner Lisa) around the hill on a blue Gradient Onyx tandem ("as seen on TV").

A great way to find your feet (wings ?) in paragliding is to come away for weekend trips with the club and tag along with the club's BCC team during friendly competitions. We regularly descend en masse to Llangattock campsite in South East Wales and groups of us often go further afield to Snowdonia, Lakes...etc. Low air-timers are always very welcome to join us on these weekend trips. Also, look out for the club's annual week holiday in Snowdonia in May/June and, of course, the Mere Bash weekend in early September.

During the week, feel free to ring me at work anytime from 8 a.m. I try and respond to emails quickly so that's a good way of getting in touch with me. On weekends, try me at home or on my mobile (I'm not a great fan of mobiles but it should be on when I'm traveling to, or on a hill !).  
Happy flying.

### **Social Secretary – Richard Zaltzman and Diane Hedges**

We both learned to fly on the Isle of Wight about 4 years ago. Sadly, due to living and working (too) hard in London we didn't get to fly much for the first 3 years. However, last August we moved to Bristol and things have dramatically improved. We have had a great season with Nova November 2003



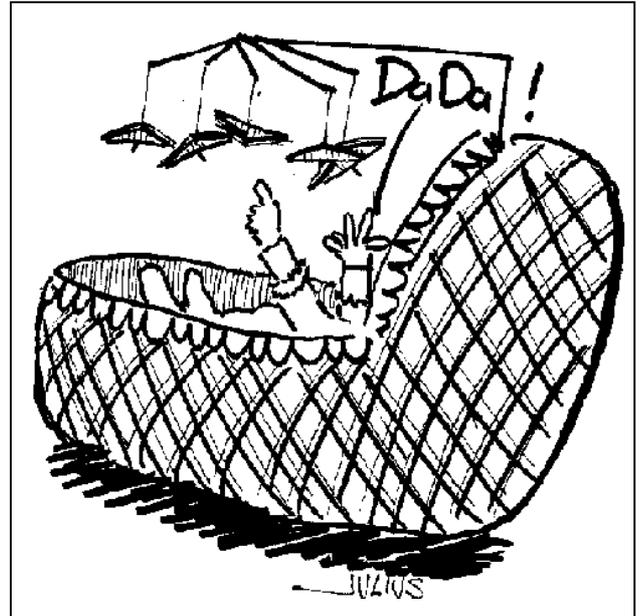
the Avon club and are looking forward to next year and more weekends camping and flying with the rest of the guys and girls!

Joining the club was made very easy by the friendly and sociable people we have met both on the hill and after a great days flying in the pub. We would like to extend an equally warm welcome to all new pilots joining the club and hope to see you at the meetings, on the hill or even out for a winter curry.

*We hope to get lots of pilots to the monthly club meetings with a varied selection of speakers already booked. The Avon club is for everyone and we hope that all pilots will feel free to contact us with any suggestions for other events or people they would like to hear speak.*

## Avon HG & PG Club Record of Accounts 2002-2003

	£	
<b>Income</b>		<b>4,962.22</b>
<b>Outgoings</b>		
Compass Inn (Hall, equipment hire & speaker expenses)		653.68
Membership expenses		232.46
Magazine printing		120.00
Videos & books		201.50
Sites & farmers treats		457.04
Trophies		193.10
Others		213.00
Mere Bash	194.95	
Mere Bash Charity Donation	166.00	360.95
<b>Balance in bank &amp; b/society</b>		<b>5,601.76</b>



## It ain't like riding a bike!

### This is the first of a series of Safety bulletins from our new PG Safety Officer

A problem that I see on the flying sites is that low air-time and occasional pilots arrive on site. The wind is too light or a bit strong (its never perfect is it?). If its light they float to the bottom then go home. If its a bit frisky and others are flying they give it a go. Usually they get away with it. But if the mad canopy gets the better of them, then they go home. So some low air-time pilots become occasional pilots. They may persevere, or as some do, they give up.

There is an answer. It is called **Ground Handling**. If you invest the time and effort into getting good at handling your canopy, it is repaid in time not wasted sitting on hills. It is more than repaid if it stops you having an accident at the moment of take off. Big ears, B-line stalls, and collapses can all be practiced on the ground. Arrive on a site when you have 50 hrs ground handling under your belt and flying is fun. Some folks are talented and catch on quick, but for the rest of us Ground Handling is an ongoing commitment that has to be done to be able to fly at all.

It ain't like riding a bike, and if you ain't good on the ground you wont be good in the air (with the notable exception of Garry Sandell).

**Howard (PG Safety Officer)**

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# News

## Avon Paraglider win 2003 British Club Challenge

A superb team effort saw Avon walk away with the PG Club Challenge final, held over the August Bank Holiday weekend in SE Wales. PG Comps Organiser, Martin Stanton, had it as his goal to win this year's competition with an organised, team effort, and a dozen or more pilots have taken part this Summer, the six representatives this weekend being Martin himself, Ken Wilkinson, Tim Pentreath, Stafford Evans, Stephen Chiles and Rich Harding.

Perhaps the most important contributors though were Paul and Chris Whatley, who turned up to Fochriw on Saturday and spent most of the afternoon retrieve driving, including getting Ken Wilkinson back to the hill in time for a second flight that saw him and Stephen post the 15km scores that, together with Rich's earlier 17km, meant we were over a thousand points ahead of nearest rivals SE Wales at the end of the day.

Day Two began a little disorganised, with both PG and HG comps turning up on the Blorenge; a fly down to Castle Meadows for most and a quick switch to Pandy preceded most of the team doing a very fast ridge run before a re-brief where the day was canned. It was suggested that a further brief should be called later in the afternoon and, had it happened and a task been called, we'd probably have won that too, with most pilots making or almost making the campsite and Stafford arriving over it with three grand!

As it was, it was left to a final, unlikely-seeming day on Pontllytyn to seal the victory. Conditions were strong on arrival and a task was swiftly set, as the forecast was for stronger winds later. Tim and Martin left early, Martin making Merthyr and reporting on the progress of the pilots from SE Wales, who were the only team in with a realistic chance of overhauling us. But where was Tim? He had been high but found himself very low over Aberdare, taking an age to make base but setting the standard with a 32km flight. Staff had set off to retrieve Martin for a retry as Ken also spiralled up to base, just over the back of the hill, so he ended up retrieving all three, with Ken making Pontardawe for 38km. With two SE Wales pilots making the 5km minimum, one more pilot would validate the task, and Ken urged Rich, who hadn't been happy with the conditions earlier, on.

The wind had seemingly subsided a little, although it had gone way off the hill to the South, now being mainly ESE, but one of the SE Wales pilots was still trying to get away, so Rich joined him, quickly finding a snorter that put him in a position to get the 5km, before finding a good climb over Merthyr town, where he was spotted by the others returning on the A465. He spiralled off a few hundred feet to land with a SW Wales pilot at 41.1km, knowing we'd won the day and the comp, the first time that the Avon PG team has held the trophy.

We retired back to The Brit, then The Vine, for a superb

meal, and finally the Brit again for the prize-giving, where Rich was delighted to discover that he'd won the individual prize. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the team this year. The BCC is a great competition and next year we may even have a shot at running the finals, although not necessarily on our own sites. Watch this space and come along - we had 25 Avon pilots in SE Wales this weekend and they all had a stonking time!

**Rich Harding**

## New HG XC Website

I've finally got round to doing a website for the HG XC results - it's on [www](http://www). All 6 flights on-line wow! Maybe people will get round to entering a few more flights now. It's noticeable how the loss of Ubley has destroyed our XC record in recent years. Or is it my own apathy in not getting a website together sooner?

**Neil Atkinson**

## Brazil XC 2004 with Carlo Borsattino & Mark Watts

After the great success of the BRAZIL XC 2003 trip (as seen in Skywings June 2003), we're running another 3 week thermalling & Cross Country flying course for paraglider pilots in Governador Valadares, Brazil, flying out on January 30th 2004. Governador Valadares is without doubt one of the world's greatest paragliding locations, offering reliably superb cross country flying conditions in a very friendly flying locality. The superb take-off mountain is an ideal launch pad into the usually blissful, easy thermic conditions and very light winds. Once off, there are normally plenty of divine thermals to be found & climb easily up to cloudbase in, to find yourself surrounded by endless green rolling hills and puffy white clouds stretching out in all directions as far as the eye can see. The very light prevailing winds & usual lack of wind-shear or inversion layers mean that the thermals are not all chopped up, so there is relatively very low levels of turbulence considering the excellent thermic conditions. It's like flying on the best possible UK cross country day of the year almost EVERY SINGLE DAY, but without all the problems of strong winds, annoying airspace, the sea (i.e. running out of land!) and overcrowding. All these things must surely make 'GV' absolutely THE perfect winter destination for British pilots!

The trip is being organised and run by Carlo Borsattino, with expert assistance by cross country virtuoso Mark Watts (top UK pilot and currently leading the UK National Cross Country League by a fair margin). Our comprehensive local knowledge of the area & previous experience of running trips there, together with years of experience as instructors, fly-guides, and accomplished cross country pilots, will ensure that you make absolutely the most of your trip. Flying together on radio with your in-flight guides, with

our own personal driver and retrieval vehicle, you will surely fly longer, further, & safer.

The course is aimed at pilots who have already totted up some flying hours (as a rough guide, CP+25hrs min. with some experience of thermalling), and offers a high level of specialist flight guidance to help improve your general flying & thermalling skills & extend your XC flights. We will give detailed briefings on all aspects of launch, flying, landing, safety, conditions, & retrieve, as well as theory sessions with Q&A. Guidance will be aimed at the individual, covering everything from launching to landing, and all the bits in between. You can be sure that you will learn a HUGE amount from this course, and come back to the UK fully primed and ready to make the most of the British XC season! Everyone in the course in Feb 2003 beat their own personal bests.

PRICE FOR 3 WEEKS: £1200, including: Airport transfer to GV; Hotel with breakfast & air con; our own private transport air conditioned vehicle with experienced retrieve driver; Expert in-flight guidance on radio and full individual brief / de-brief; Theory & questions answered.

#### **Carlo Borsattino**

Flybubble Paragliding XC Trips & Courses

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UK Tel: 01273 84 66 80

UK Fax: 0870 70 61 867

UK Mobile: 07884 49 66 70

## **Watch out for Thieves!**

Just a word of warning. Angus Lacey-Hulbert had his car broken into on Milk Hill (Top parking area) on a Saturday in August. Whoever did it didn't do a very tidy job, scratching the paintwork, denting the door, wrecking the lock and of course stealing some of his possessions. Fortunately none of his flying gear was in the car!!

However Martin Wareham from the Wessex club was not so lucky. In June he had his paraglider and kit stolen from the boot of his car in Wantage, Oxfordshire.

Type: Edel Superspace 27 serial no. # D-4070782  
Colour: Lilac with purple, green and yellow flashes and Edel eagle logo  
Rucksack; Edel light green with maroon  
Harness: SAS II  
Reserve: Apco Mayday 18 (white) in green/black Sup Air holder  
Vario: Fairhaven (analogue type)  
Wind meter: Skywatch Fun (blue patterns)

If anyone sees or hears of this kit being used or sold please contact Mark on 01865 300103 or email [mdsw@reham6.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:mdsw@reham6.fsnet.co.uk)

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## **Farewell Colin**



As most of you will know, Colin Lark died on September 8<sup>th</sup> after a year of a great deal of suffering and pain from his battle with cancer. Colin had been a leading figure in hang-gliding for more than 25 years and was widely

respected for his flying skills and his contributions to the sport.

Those of you that were privileged to have known Colin will have been inspired by his passion, his sense of humour and his positive outlook on life. He was much loved and will be greatly missed. Our thoughts go to his wife Lyn and family.

*"Colin has been a fantastic friend to Angus & me over the past 13 years. He found us our first instructor (Andy Shaw), sold us our first gliders (Airman XCs) and has supported, encouraged, directed and generally helped us over the years. Colin has been a particular encouragement to me with regard to my competition flying - his wisdom, experience and maturity were priceless. He gave without holding back and he will always be remembered for his generous spirit & enthusiasm for life."* **Fiona Macaskill**

*"I first met Colin on Selsley common not long after passing my basic hang gliding qualification in the early 80's....very nervous about the flying, I was even more nervous when I realised what sort of people I might be getting involved with! Luckily Colin was unique, always enthusiastic, always helpful, always a load laugh..."*

*Colin taught me how to drink properly...how to smoke huge quantities of dope properly, how to drive very badly, how to chase woman continuously, how to party, in short how to give it your all, whatever the situation...I could never manage the levels that Colin achieved despite my best efforts...in recent years whilst most of us have had to calm down, due the physical toll of that sort of life style, Colin refused to give in...Zest for life, he had it in bucketfuls. Party on Colin."* **Robin Brown**

## **Pilot Exam**

In January/February the club are organising revision sessions and the exam for those wishing to get their Pilot rating (everyone should achieve their Pilot rating typically within a year of getting Club Pilot). Once arrangements have been made details will be circulated to the low airtimers email list and to the club smartgroup. Any Luddites interested in this but without email please contact Stephen Chiles (01225 469132).

## The Mere Bash 2003



### It's not all about flying !

For those of you that are new to the club the Mere Bash is an annual party/camping/flying weekend held in the bottom field at the club's Mere Rifle Range site. This year's event was

organized rather at the last minute but as usual it was a great do. Thanks to Tim for his excellent team co-ordination and to all those individuals who pulled together to make it happen.



## The Avon Christmas Party 2003

Tickets will be on sale for the Avon Christmas Party at the next club meeting on Thursday 4 December, when Bob Drury will be the guest speaker. If you can't make it, tickets can be obtained from Diane (07786 244478) or Richard (07776 131 090) the Social Secretaries. See you there - it's going to be a great evening!



**Come to ...**  
**the Avon Christmas Party**

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 7 pm**

**The Rockery, Combe Down, Bath**

**Christmas Menu Buffet**  
**followed by Disco!**  
**Only £15 (including a glass of wine)**



# Hang gliding with the Clampetts

By Tony Moore

Well that wasn't so good. I park my glider, tie it down and get out of my harness as quickly as possible before I boil over. A glide from 2500' with hardly a beep from the vario. It's the last day of our 3-week aerotow holiday in Florida, and I was hoping for a good flight to finish on. Time for a cold drink. I walk upstairs into the clubhouse and help myself out of the fridge. After a while I feel a bit cooler and take a look out of the window, it looks a bit better, there's even a cloud building south of the airfield.



The tug landing

Ok, time for one last try, it's 3:30 so the day is past its peak but we have had some great late afternoon flying. I put the glider on a trolley, hang the harness etc over the keel and wheel it all down to the take off point. T-shirt, fleece, helmet and harness on. Now I'm sweating, it must be touching 30 with hardly a breath of wind. The tug pilot lands, and taxis to position in front of me. I clip in, get prone, the ground crew do their checks and attach the tow bridle. At my OK I see the wiggle of the tug's elevators, signalling that it's too late to change my mind and we're off.

The tail of the glider rises and as we pick up speed I release the trolley and up we go. As I feel the welcome rush of air cooling me down we gain height but he's taking me the wrong way, away from the cloud..... At 1000' he turns round and soon I can see a glider circling ahead and

above me. Looks good. I see the tug rise and turn, I follow for a while but soon get off as it's obviously all going up here. I centre on the core and the vario sings the 4 up tune I'm getting to like the sound of. After a couple of 360s I see that it's Ron circling above me, nothing new there. I look down and the tug pilot has switched his motor off and has joined us in the thermal!



Dave taking off

Up we go and the tug dives down for the next tow. 500' from base and I'm alongside Ron, still climbing on the south edge of the cloud. Up I go, waiting for that magic moment we all love. Here we go, the ground is no more. I straighten the glider out after a couple more turns, head south and pop out the side of the cloud into the sunshine, still climbing, hitting 5000'. Oh yes! This is living all right! Let's do it again. Keep flying south, lose a few hundred feet and turn round. Ron is now 500 metres or so away to the west. I dive back under the cloud and do it again.

After the third go I can tell the thermal is fading so I fly north, over the airfield to a wispy that's forming. And so on, each time I find lift it's weaker and weaker, looking at the length of the shadows I can see why. Eventually I'm down to

500', tired but happy. Time to land. Let's not spoil the flight by whacking in. Ok, final approach, plenty of speed, out of prone, climb up the uprights, keeping speed on. The ground approaches, slowly bleed the speed off..... FLARE! Yep, after 30 tows I've finally sussed how to land. One step nil wind landings can be done on a hang glider.

What a great feeling, a fantastic flight, shared with Ron, a great landing, and a fitting end to a great holiday. Now it's beer o'clock. One of the tug pilots shot a wild pig the other night so it's BBQ, beer and band tonight, all compliments of Quest air. I might just join the volleyball game first for a while.

I can't recommend this place enough, whatever your level of experience. It must be the best way to learn how to hang glide, and a great way for the more experienced pilot to hone their thermalling/XC skills. If you have the skill and the inclination then 100K+ flights are well achievable. If you don't want the hassle of XC then just cloud hop near the flight park. The people here are great. The skill of the tug pilots is awesome. Imagine a community that's a mixture of hillbillies, hippies and first class hang glider pilots and you're not far off the mark.

Cost? Well, \$830 bought me aerotow conversion (4 flights, 2 on a tandem), 27 further tows using my glider and 21 nights in the bunkhouse.

The flight over there was £400 including glider transport and I guess about \$500 spending, we ate out about 50% of the time. You don't need a car but it's useful. We paid £500 for 3 weeks. In total the holiday cost me <£1500. Check out [www.questairforce.com](http://www.questairforce.com). You won't be sorry!

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## One Spaniard and a half in the Cotswolds

We were getting bored thermalling above our high mountains, too much sun, too much swimming pool. We decided to book a ticket to visit Robin and friends at Airtopia.

Arrived late past midnight, Robin brought us to his mansion in Stroud. We looked at weather forecasts back home, so flying this week ??? maybe, maybe, ... It happened and how! On Monday we got to Frocester where everybody was rigging for XC. At the house we were already briefed about airtraffic restrictions (two Alicantinos frowning their eyebrows). All pilots with GPS, airmaps, big notes ready to hitchhike back.

We were a bit surprised to see our semi-local friend Steve Ham at take off. We shook hands, he – very surprised to see two Alicantinos from southern Spain on his hill. Sensing competition Stevie?

We all took off and fought, concentrating on the tiny thermals, + 0.2 , + 0.5 . It was amazing how thermals which we ignore back home, were of the most importance up here. After some time, our local guides advised us to go to Selsley. Up there again, a lot of activity. A bit later, back to Frocester. By that time the news came in that our dear Stevie made a 170 k flight !! Where does that guy live ? He must have learned it somewhere.

More days followed, 5 days of flying, 5 different sites. One of them was Nibley. Hmm. From minute one it didn't feel like, ... , you know. High trees in lines just before take off. If low you fly above a dip, etc... . Anyway, we all rigged, after all they brought us up here to fly didn't they? Rafa took off first, who else. I

am used to see Rafa and his glider everyday. This in rough, smooth, any conditions. At this site his Bliss was pitching quite heavily though. Hmm. The local took off. Half of his glider collapsed just after take off (rotor from those trees maybe?) and slope landed. After some time I tried to take off, but my glider was dancing all over. I knew this was a bad sign, it always is. Had three attempts and couldn't take off. Hmm. For a second time the local took off again. Frontal collapse, asymmetric, he headed down for landing dolphin style, severe sink, up and down. Met the local near his car and asked him if he ever flew this site before ? Yeah on a hangglider, never on a paraglider. Would you fly here again ? No, never again in thermic conditions. Hmm.

The most fun we had was on Westbury White Horse. Tried out our spin-landings on the soft and long grass. I think ready to do it safely on our rocky terrain in Alicante now. The most memorable moment was when Rafa did his SAT in Frocester and the White Horse. Sighs and wows were heard.

Listen guys, this week has been a week of flying, fun and friendship. We had BBQ, fish and chips, curry, warm beer, pubs closing at 11 pm, blues concert(!), Avon club reunion and lots of sun. It has been great. We are heading back for Alicante, and we hope we can give you a good time at ours some time. Special thanks to Robin, Hugo, Howard and to all those we know. You were fantastic, and you made us feel like home, honestly. Hasta luego,

**Nick y Rafa**

[www.doyouwanna.net](http://www.doyouwanna.net)

## **STEPHEN AND RICHARD'S GRAND DAY OUT**

"I've repaired my broken lines with sisal", said Stephen when I landed in Glen Nevis. It turned out that sisal is that hairy string you get from Woolworth's. Seeing as Stephen is an ex-boy scout I thought he meant that he'd woven some kind of fibre from naturally occurring vegetable resources culled from the verges of the landing field.



It was on the Avon Club trip to Snowdonia in June that the idea had first been floated. Over one of several boozy evening meals in Harvey's house, there was talk of doing the paragliding three-peaks challenge. Being in my cups, I readily agreed to join in (Stephen doesn't have the same excuse, he doesn't drink). I initially said that I'd do it next year (sufficiently far in the future not to have to think about it too hard), but Stephen later persuaded me to do it this year - he must have caught me in a weak moment. This meant doing it soon; it was already close to the summer solstice, and we were going to need all the daylight we could get.

So what is the paragliding three-peaks challenge? Basically it involves climbing and flying off Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike, and Snowdon (the three highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales) all within 24 hours. It's usually done in that order, presumably to tackle the hardest climb first whilst one is fresh; Ben Nevis is the highest peak of the three and you start walking virtually at sea level.

Initially we were thinking in terms of timing the 24 hours from launch off Ben Nevis to launch off Snowdon. But the walking version of the challenge is usually timed from starting the walk up Ben Nevis to finishing the walk at the bottom of Snowdon. Also, Simon Kerr told us about a 1997 attempt organised by Dave Snowden in which the rule was to start the clock at the bottom of Ben Nevis, and stop it on landing after flying off Snowdon.

Then there's the question of exactly where you fly from. It's not feasible to fly from the summits themselves, so how far from the summits could we launch and still deem the challenge to be valid? Dave Snowden's rule was that the flights had to be at least 2000ft descent. We decided to dispense with this and simply fly off the highest points we could, although it turned out that we did comply with the rule - just!

We kicked around various ideas of how to arrange transport and what size of party we should have, but eventually we settled on Stephen and I chauffeured by Stephen's dad Barry in his rather comfortable car. Many thanks to him; he did a great job and got far less sleep than we did. Thanks also to Stephen who also did some of the driving; I was let off the hook completely as I wasn't insured to drive the car!

Toward the beginning of the first week of July the forecast was looking reasonable for the weekend: a ridge of high pressure over the UK with a generally light westerly-ish flow. This was good, we didn't want much wind (we were going to be high!) and if there was going to be wind, west was good - it's not really possible to fly off the other sides of Ben Nevis or Scafell. The only snag was that the air-mass was going to be moist, so cloud was likely. The forecast didn't change much during the week, so on Thursday we decided to go for it in spite of the possible problem with cloud. If we didn't do it now other commitments would mean that our next opportunity would be in August, when daylight might be too short.

We stripped down our kit to save weight - no reserves and no instruments (although we took various with us in the car in case we felt like doing an XC from Ben Nevis (which we would be flying around mid-day) - dream on!

After work on Friday 4 July we set off from Stephen's house for Scotland. Having driven through the night (pausing only to elope to Gretna Green) we arrived at Glen Nevis at 2.59am Saturday morning. Time to get some sleep - me,

Stephen, Barry and several hundred Scottish midges. We had decided to start the walk (and start the clock ticking) at 7.00am that morning, so before 6.00 we were up and getting ready.

Here's our planned schedule and our actual times for comparison:

<b>Ben Nevis</b>			
Local sunrise 4.35, sunset 22.13			
	Planned	Actual	Altitude
Arrive Glen Nevis	-	02.59 Sat	
Start walking from Glen Nevis	7.00	7.00	66ft
Arrive Ben Nevis summit	11.00	9.35	4409ft =4343ft ascent
Launch off Ben Nevis	-	10.30 - S 11.30 <sup>1</sup> - R	3937ft
Land	-	10.45 - S 11.45 - R	66ft =3871ft descent
Leave Glen Nevis for the Lake District	12.00	12.00	

1. Two hours to launch? You try untangling about 200 lines from rocks that jump out and grab them when you're not looking.

As expected, it was overcast and the top of Ben Nevis was in cloud, but at least that meant we wouldn't fry under the sun as we walked up. As we got higher up we started to look for possible launches. It's pretty rocky up there but we decided we could probably get off from a flattish area relatively near the summit (and just below the cloud). The size of our packs caused much amusement to the other walkers, and after about 2 ½ hours of enduring their taunts we were at the summit. After a brief stop to take photos, we walked down to our chosen launch area. We laid out for a reverse launch as there was a slight breeze. Stephen was first to try to inflate. That was when we realised that the rocks were not going to be friendly to our lines. After another go and more snagged lines, Stephen decided to climb back slightly higher up where the gravel path sloped gently downhill, thinking that the gavel would be kinder. After trying to get off myself, and getting my lines hopelessly snagged, I joined him. The path faced a slightly different direction, with no up-slope wind, so a forward launch was going to be necessary. Eventually Stephen got off by laying out his wing in a tight horseshoe in the 6ft width of the path. As he ran down the slope his trailing edge looked somewhat misshapen. It turned out that he had broken or damaged eight lines, and he could only turn one way because he had very few brake lines on one side!



I also gave it a go from the path, but got snagged again. So I opted for the safe option and walked quite a long way down to the first useable grassy patch. By the time I forward launched from there, two hours had passed since we reached the summit. The flight down was smooth and uneventful, except that I was sure I was in cloud-suck initially, but having no vario I couldn't be sure. To be on the safe side I big-eared for a while.

In retrospect, we should have just walked down to the grassy launch straight away. However, we had made good time on the ascent, so I was on the ground 15 minutes before our planned time for departure from Glen Nevis. Fortunately my delay in launching had given Stephen time to do his makeshift line repairs with string his dad happened to have in the car. After packing up quickly, we were on our way on the dot of mid-day.

We drove away wondering why we had come to such a beautiful area, and spent so little time taking it in. However, we had an appointment in the Lake District, so on we drove...

...Only to get snarled up on the M74. We lost about an hour sitting in the jam and trying to find alternative routes, so when we arrived at Wasdale Head at the foot of Scafell it was 18.30, exactly the time we

had planned to start the walk. We had lost all the advantage we had gained on the ascent of Ben Nevis, and we now had to make good time as daylight was limited. We were also worried that the cloud would drop too far, it was well below the summit. We piled out of the car, got ready, took a quick photo, and were walking up the path two minutes

after arriving. Or should I say running - I've never walked up a hill so fast in my life! Stephen's pace had to be seen to be believed!

<b>Scafell Pike</b>			
Local sunrise 4.46, sunset 21.50			
	Planned	Actual	Altitude
Arrive Wasdale Head	-	18.30 Sat	
Start walking up Scafell	18.30	18.32	230ft
Arrive Scafell Pike summit	21.30	20.11 <sup>2</sup>	3209ft =2979ft ascent
Launch off Scafell Pike	-	20.45 - S 20.50 - R	2231ft
Land	-	21.00 - S 21.05 - R	230ft =2001ft descent
Leave Wasdale Head for Snowdonia	22.30	21.25	

2. Blimey, I've never walked up a hill so fast! Trust me to go with an ex-boy scout! Maybe I should have read Baden Powell's seminal work "Scouting for Boys". I must have somehow misunderstood what it was about.

We walked up feeling rather lonely, as there was no sign of all the three-peaks walkers we had seen on Ben Nevis. (However, it turned out that most of them were behind us, and we started meeting them on the way down.)

It took us 1hour 40 minutes to reach the summit. Stephen was still in superman mode, so we quickly got someone to take a photo of us by the trig point, and we immediately started down. We had seen a gently sloping grassy area on the way up, and it was just below the cloud. We wanted to get there quickly in case the cloud-base dropped. We got there at about 20.30, and it was just getting slightly misty – we didn't have much time. After rigging, it was even more misty, and we couldn't see the valley. Stephen launched into it first. I thought of walking a little way down to see how thick it was, but decided that the cloud would just be even lower by the time I was ready if I did that, so I just launched into the murk too. As it turned out, it wasn't very thick, and we soon dropped below the cloud, and had a nice float down to Wasdale head where there was a very useable landing field next to the car park.

Because of the pace set by Stephen "human dynamo" Chiles we had landed well before the light faded, and we had gained over an hour on our planned schedule. We had six hours to get to Snowdonia, plenty of time. We piled back into the car and set off for Wales.

We hadn't been driving long when Stephen started to feel queasy, and noxious odours started to drift from the back of the car. It wasn't long before there was a shout of "stop the car!". The door was open even before the car came to a halt, and Stephen disappeared into the trees moving even faster than he had up Scafell. Was there no stopping this man? He returned at a more relaxed pace and pronounced himself to be feeling much better. We didn't enquire as to what had happened in the trees.

I don't recall much more of the journey to Snowdon, as I woke up shortly before we arrived at Pen-y-Pass. It was just before two in the morning, and pitch dark. We were over an hour ahead of schedule, but we decided to start walking straight away. We gave ourselves a leisurely 15 minutes to get ready though. We also checked the forecast on the notice board. It was predicting light SW winds, so we started making plans to fly off that side toward Bedgellert.

Fortunately we had both brought head-torches. We had debated whether it was worthwhile, and decided to take them in the car just in case. In the event they were essential, it would have been much slower picking our way up the Pyg track in the dark.

As we ascended we could see the light of other head-torches on the Miners track. We weren't alone. Shortly after 4.00am we arrived at the "finger", and it was just getting light enough to see. The sky was clear – this was going to be the first summit where we could see the view from the top.

The wind was light but it was actually north-westerly, so we revised our plans to fly down to Llanberis. Fortunately there is a nice grassy slope on the NW side near the finger. But first we had to visit the summit, which was a short walk away. We walked past the café, with its throbbing diesel generator shattering the peace of the dawn, and as we stood by the trig point the sky was lightening, and the street lamps below were slowly going out. We had completed a total of 9705ft of ascent.

A couple of three-peaks walkers took a photo of us, and it was time to walk down to our launch. A light breeze gave us our first reverse launch of the trip, and we were soon gliding down above the mountain railway feeling smug that we didn't have to walk down like so many others.

It's over 5km to Llanberis, so the glide felt a bit touch and go until we were close to the town. It didn't help not having a vario; there certainly was some weak lift in places, but telling it apart from turbulence off the ridge was difficult. In the end we both arrived over the football field with plenty of height. Stephen landed at 5.20am and me at 5.30am, giving at total time of 22 ½ hours, not bad considering the difficulties we had had on Ben Nevis, and the traffic driving south.

<b>Snowdon</b>			
Local sunrise 4.57, sunset 21.44			
	Planned	Actual	Altitude
Arrive Pen-y-Pass	-	1.57 Sun	
Start walking up Snowdon (by the Pyg track)	3.30	2.15 <sup>3</sup>	1178ft
Arrive Snowdon Summit	6.00	4.25 <sup>4</sup>	3560ft =2382ft ascent
Launch off Snowdon	-	5.00 - S 5.10 - R	3314ft
Land	6.59 (!)	5.20 - S 5.30 <sup>5</sup> - R	328ft =2986 ft descent
<b>ELAPSED TIME</b>	<b>24 hours</b>	<b>22h 30min (or 22h 20min in Stephen's case)</b>	

3. I'm glad we've got head-torches!
4. It's almost light now!
5. Arse, Pete's Eats doesn't open until 8.00!

We drove round to Pete's Eats in the hope that it might open early, but the notice said 8.00am opening. A bit of a shame as I had been sustained on the walk up Snowdon by the thought of a pile of egg and chips!

Would we do anything differently next time (if there is a next time)? I would take a vario (maybe a lightweight sound-only one). I felt lost without one, and it might have been nice to extend the flights if we had had time. It would certainly have made the glide to Llanberis less worrying. We would also go straight to the grassy take offs on Ben Nevis; it's a bit of a walk down but it would save time messing about on the rocks. And lastly, it would be a good idea to check the traffic reports; maybe we could have avoided the delay on the M74!

So, there's plenty of scope for improving on the time of 22 hours 20 minutes, so if anyone wants to take up the challenge...

**Richard Danbury**

## .....In-Flight Cramps.....

The following is a copy of an email to the smartgroup by Simon Kerr on 25.3.03 with a reply from Cathy Lawrence:

With Tim going on and on about his marvelous flight on Sunday. I thought I'd relate my experience, you could say that it's a cautionary tale.

Having been to the top of the zig-zags but found it too windy in the compression, we had descended a bit to find a patch of steeply sloping grass to launch from. Eager to get some good flying in I was keen to go first, so didn't delay in laying my glider out and lobbing off. I got hovered up very nicely and headed off towards Crib Goch. The air was very active in a rock & roll sort of way, demanding quite a bit of concentration. On top of this I also had cramp in my right leg. The combination of the two made it a bit difficult to get  
Nova November 2003

comfy, but I was gagging for a good flight having missed out on it the day before. So I decided to ignore the cramp (which had now spread to both legs) and get some height before trying to escape the rough air by pushing forward onto Snowdon summit itself. Following a 10 up climb I was 500ft above the summit and well on my way to some smoother air. Just as I was beginning to feel a little happier the canopy decided it was going to pack itself into it's bag and go home, as it re-inflated and surged in front of me it really put it's foot down and tried again to tell me that it really didn't want to fly today. This all happened in the space of a few seconds, and as I was wondering just what sort of state my underwear was in, both my legs went into what I

can only describe as spasm. They locked into place underneath my harness and announced themselves with the most excruciating pain. I immediately knew that I had to descend as quickly as possible and land, so I set off towards the Pen Y Gwryd where I knew I would find a welcome pint to sooth my agony. As I was passing over Llyn Lydaw I flew into some 8 down sink. This was bad because I couldn't straighten my legs out, and therefore couldn't use my speed bar. Eventually I was getting so low over the lake that I had to grit my teeth and try for the bar. Screaming in pain I managed to get the bar on, and my legs promptly locked into place again, this time with the bar full on. I can't really remember how I got the bar off, only that it hurt like hell. It was obvious by now having lost so much height over the lake, that I was not going to reach the pub. So I decided I was going to land on some grass near the lower part of the Miners Track. As I flew low over the path I called down to some walkers, and asked them to watch me as I came in. Explaining that I couldn't use my legs and was uncertain how I was going to land safely. I think instinct took over as I came in, as much to my surprise I managed to get my feet down. Needless to say they promptly collapsed and left me lying there helpless with tears of pain on my face. The walkers I had called to were quickly with me and while an angel of mercy massaged my legs (Mmmmmm) they helped me unbuckle my harness. Helping me to my feet they seemed quite bemused when, still unable to stand, I fell over again. I was tempted to say "more massage please" but movement was gradually returning by now and five minutes later I was virtually completely recovered.

This experience has left me wondering what the hell was going on. I can only surmise that after the long two hour slog up Snowdon, the lactic acid from the exertion caused the initial cramp. Which was then exacerbated by the adrenaline which must have surged through me following my mini SIV course near the summit. I'm also wondering if anyone else has ever suffered this unkind fate, or can shed any further light on what may have caused it.

**Simon**

*Hi Simon*

*What an horrendous ordeal - but thanks for sharing it with us, and glad you're safely recovered from it. Cramps of the legs may precede cramp of the heart which could stop the heart muscle from contracting, which doesn't bear thinking about. I will now take off my editor hat and put on my Nutrition Consultants hat in an attempt to explain what may have happened. Quite a few people have responded to your email and the ideas floating around are all along the right lines.*

*The strenuous exercise of carrying a PG up Crib Goch on a warm sunny morning will have caused lactic acid to build up in the blood. A small change in acidity can have a profound effect on body function e.g. muscle contractability declines and hormones like adrenaline increase. [Note that smoking causes acidity of the tissues as well]. In an attempt to regulate pH alkaline mineral salts are required (potassium, magnesium, calcium). Magnesium is needed for proper functioning of the "sodium pump" which controls the acidity of the cells. How is this linked to cramps? These minerals are also important for muscle contraction and relaxation. Calcium is needed for contraction, and magnesium for relaxation. Blood tests on people with severe cramps have been found to be deficient in potassium and magnesium.*

*The stress of your glider trying to pack itself up would have no doubt also caused an increase in adrenaline into the blood. This in turn would cause a rise in blood sugar levels and subsequently an increased demand for minerals to regulate the metabolism, therefore compounding the problem. You did the right thing by having a good breakfast of protein and carbohydrate (I assume - if you had eggs, bacon, toast etc). However tea and coffee cause the body to excrete calcium so not a good idea to have lots of that before a long hike. As you say yourself it would have been a good idea to allow your body to recover before rushing to unpack and take-off. This would have been a good time to refuel on say a healthy snack e.g muesli bar, some fruit to replace minerals e.g orange, banana, and some nuts or seeds to essential fatty acids.*

*So what's the best way to prevent acid tissues and low mineral status?*

- 1. Don't smoke.*
- 2. Eat at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day (at least 3 veg - not counting potatoes).*
- 3. Supplements of mineral salts or wholefood juice concentrate (see me for details).*

*Emergency treatment?*

- 1. Land near a gorgeous woman every time for a leg rub.*
- 2. Carry a supply of alkaline mineral salts such as Alka-Clear from Higher Nature 01435 882880 or a good healthfood shop.*

**Cathy**

Healthwise Nutrition & Well-Being  
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[www.healthwise.uk.com](http://www.healthwise.uk.com)

**Do you want to be more in touch with what's happening in the club?  
Are you on the internet?  
If so, then join the avonhgpg smartgroup**

Members that are connected to the internet are reminded that the club has its own smartgroup which enables members to communicate with each other.

Register at [www.smartgroups.com/groups/avonhgpg](http://www.smartgroups.com/groups/avonhgpg)

# Oh! What a Perfect Day

By Andrew Hancock



Getting high over Four Lanes TV mast, Cornwall

The weather on the morning of Saturday 27th September looked promising. A weakening cold front had passed over Cornwall from north to south during Friday evening, bringing along cold arctic air with light 10mph Northerly winds. These are the conditions UK cross country pilots dream of.....

After discussing possible sites to fly for the day with John Trewartha, it was agreed that conditions looked suitable for the Carn Brea ridge above Camborne.

The sky looked fantastic. Nice little white puffy clouds popping up everywhere, some forming defined streets! I arrived at Carn Brea at 11.30, and stuck my flag in the ground at the ridge edge in front of the monument and took wind readings for 45 minutes whilst waiting for John and others to arrive. Para-waiting was soooo frustrating as everything about the days conditions and choice of site looked perfect, but I stuck firm to my rule of never flying a new site on my own, or before watching others fly it first. John arrived and took off immediately, the air appeared bumpy tossing him about as I would expect from an inland thermic site but the ridge was obviously perfectly soarable. I took off around 12.30 and scoured the ridge for lift. Several thermal cycles passed through allowing us to climb to 600ft ato tempting us to go `over the back' before gliding back out front to wait for the next thermal. Thickening cirrus-like top cover from the west obscured the sun, and generally the clouds started spreading out and banking up on the coast decaying the thermals. John and I scratched the ridge for 45 minutes to wait this out before the sky opened up once more back to blue, and things started to happen again....

John cored a beauty and shot up to 1000ft ato and left the ridge to start his XC. I was in the same thermal but dropped out the bottom and flew back to the ridge to catch another. So there I was scratching around whilst John was quickly disappearing over Four Lanes TV mast.....now it was time for me to get my sh\*t together and focus on finding lift! Paddy took off below me and almost immediately entered a nice thermal. We both connected with this 4-6up, and were able to climb out but Paddy lost it at 1000ft and I think he landed at Carnkie? I fought on and stuck with this thermal to 1650ft and drifted downwind directly south over the TV mast, then Four Lanes, and Stithians Reservoir. I took some amazing photos, the views were simply awesome as I could see Mounts Bay, St Ives Bay, and

Falmouth at the same time! I thought 'Lizard here we come baby – yeah!!!' I was feeling as high as a kite buzzing on adrenalin with a silly grin on my face ;-). Once over the reservoir I was losing height slowly on the glide but covering ground quickly as the drift was good, but was now down to 500ft ato. I hunted around for more lift downwind of the high ground and Aerial masts, and above buildings and brown fields and was eventually rewarded with a 4-up. I couldn't stick with this for long as it was fragmented and I lost it after several 360's. Another glide and I could see the A394 Helston – Falmouth Road. I glided on and landed in alongside this main road at Carnbone Farm. A distance of 9.5km (5 ¾ miles). My first XC in Cornwall!



I had heard horror stories about Carn Brea, that it's a 'gnarly' and turbulent site, and tucks and collapses are not uncommon. Conditions had to be absolutely 'spot on' or else it was un-soarable or blown out. Guess we chose the right day for it to work well for us. I would stress that Carn Brea should only be flown by confident pilots with experience, as take off is small and tricky requiring friends to help you inflate and launch. The ridge is strewn with boulders and thick gorse so side and top landings are a no-no. The two bottom landing fields (football fields out front) are large, flat and visible but you must leave the ridge at take off height on glide to make it safely. Distances are deceptive, and you need to clear the power lines! This is an inland site and the air can be a rough ride where you need to be on the ball and react to the twitchy wing.

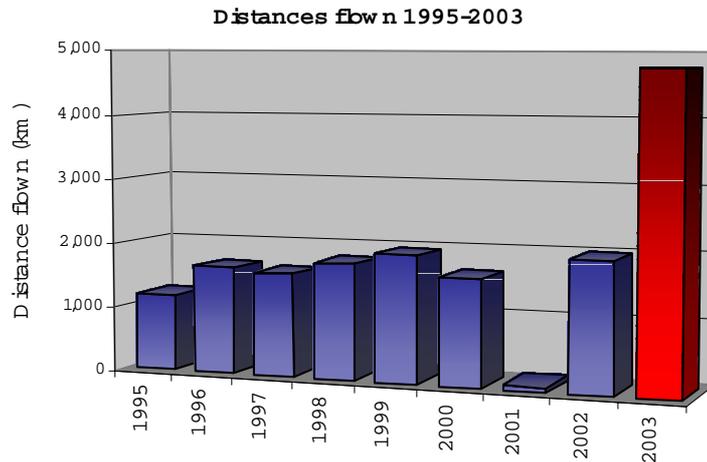
Big thanks to John for the excellent choice of site for the day, and giving me the incentive to go XC. And to Paul and his Renault Traffic van for retrieving us both.

John – sorry mate but I just had to get my own back on you by going that bit further to beat you, after you thrashed my XC distance in Spain. ;-). Better luck next time oh mighty skygod Trewartha!!!

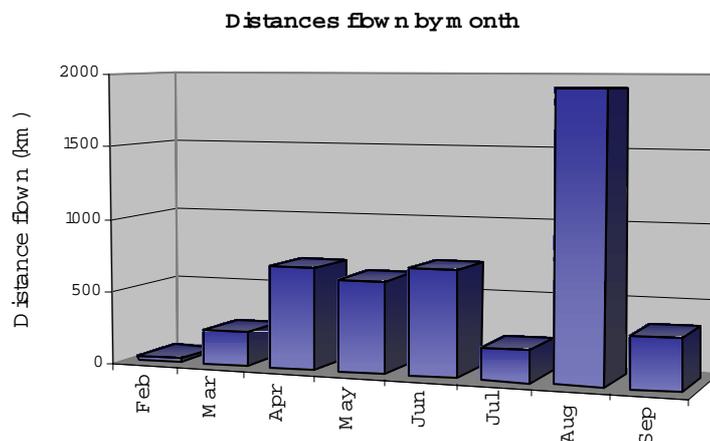
**Andrew Hancock – Advance epsilon 3 Tigerrrr!**

## PGXC Review 2003

Well, the xc season has been and gone now, but what a year it's been! With 4,759km flown by 32 pilots, the figures speak for themselves... They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so check this out:



Last year we had 22 pilots flying an average of 90km each, this year the average was 148km. Last year the number of flights entered was 91, this year it was 198. Last year the average flight distance of people's top six flights was 25.4km, this year it was 30.1km. Which ever way you cut it, it has been an exceptional year - with both more xc days and better xc days.



August was the exceptional month with an amazing 1,909km flown - only just less than the total for the whole of last year! It more than made up for a disappointing July...

But in amongst all these stats there have been some quite exceptional individual performances. Last year Tom Mayne flew one 40km flight, this year he flew 462km, averaging 66km in his 7 flights (417km top 6), including one of 115km. And he doesn't just fly well, he tells a good story too - if you want to improve your xc flying you could do worse than reading his flight reports on [avonpgxc.co.uk](http://avonpgxc.co.uk) (his report of the 115km flight is reproduced later on).

And then there's Garry Sandell - in his first year of xc flying he's shot to 2<sup>nd</sup> place with a massive 485km across 14 flights (355km top6) including one of 86km and two more 70km+ flights. OK, so he gave up work to fly, but that takes real dedication (and an obliging partner!) But what a summer to take off...!

Then closely following in 3<sup>rd</sup> place is Ken Wilkinson who only entered one 11km flight last year - this year it's 483km also across 14 flights (347km top 6). OK, so Ken's a teacher and had plenty of time off, but even so it's no mean feat!

It's the first time in years that Jim Mallinson hasn't been in the top three, but this year he's 4<sup>th</sup> only 25km behind Ken. Jim was out of the country for much of the summer so he's done well considering.

Alex Coltman in 5<sup>th</sup> place flew 401km in his 12 flights (303km top 6), and gets the prize for the longest flight with his 116km flight from Leckhampton with Tom - what a cracker, well done!

The best newcomer, as we've already seen, is Garry Sandell with his incredible 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the league.

Other notable first timers are Stephen Chiles with 128km, Graham Richards with 114km, and Pete Taylor with 104km... Well done to you all!

The most improved pilot (apart from Tom and Ken I guess, but they don't count :-), is Will Price - last year he had one 18km flight, this year it's 11 flights totalling 131km, putting him in 10<sup>th</sup> place overall. Well done Will, keep it up!

There's too many other people to mention individually, but well done to everyone who's entered the league this year, even if it's just been a 5km flop over the back. I remember my first xc, 4.3km from Fan Gyhirych many years ago, and the sense of achievement was massive. As a contrast to Tom's flight report, make sure you read Penny Robinson's account of her first ever xc, an 16km flight from the Malverns - it shows just how good it can be!

The final positions are as follows:

Rank	Name	Glider	1	2	3	4	5	6	Flights	Top 6	Av Top 6	All	Av All
1	Tom Mayne	Nova Carbon	115.2	71.6	65.7	58.8	58.6	47.5	7	417.5	69.6	462.6	66.1
2	Garry Sandell	Ozone Vulcan	86.4	74.5	73.3	68.8	26.1	26.1	14	355.1	59.2	485.0	34.6
3	Ken Wilkinson	Ozone Vibe	77.2	73.8	63.1	49.3	44.4	39.4	14	347.2	57.9	483.7	34.6
4	Jim Mallinson	Ozone Proton GT	80.2	66.9	51.3	44.8	39.7	38.7	9	321.7	53.6	394.7	43.9
5	Alex Coltman	Gradient Aspen	116.7	45.1	42.6	35.9	34.1	28.6	12	303.0	50.5	401.8	33.5
6	Eddie Colfox	Firebird Hornet SP	69.5	59.3	52.3	38.1	28.4	19.0	8	266.5	44.4	301.0	37.6
7	Richard Harding	Airwave Magic	85.3	41.6	29.3	28.8	17.6	16.8	16	219.4	36.6	316.0	19.7
8	Stafford Evans	Airwave Magic	57.8	42.8	26.4	19.5	19.4	18.2	15	184.0	30.7	276.8	18.5
9	Tim Pentreath	Advance Omega 5	33.9	32.4	25.3	22.2	19.2	14.1	7	147.1	24.5	153.0	21.9
10	Will Price	Gradient Saphir 2000	31.8	27.3	21.5	19.2	16.1	15.5	11	131.4	21.9	189.1	17.2
11	Stephen Chiles	Ozone Vulcan	34.8	27.0	25.9	16.1	13.8	10.6	14	128.1	21.3	186.5	13.3
12	Graham Richards	Ozone Electron	32.8	22.1	20.0	18.0	11.7	10.2	9	114.8	19.1	140.2	15.6
13	Peter Taylor	Apco Bagheera	42.6	22.2	20.3	19.7			4	104.9	26.2	104.9	26.2
14	Jo Eades	Windtech Serak	37.0	20.9	14.2	12.3	11.2	5.2	8	100.7	16.8	109.0	13.6
15	Alan Davis	Gradient Saphir 2000	36.1	28.8	15.4	12.6			4	92.9	23.2	92.9	23.2
16	Howard Woodward	Gradient Saphir 2000	19.5	18.7	15.3	15.3	11.3	6.2	7	86.2	14.4	92.4	13.2
17	Tony Moore	Nova X-Ray	39.0	28.8	12.5				3	80.3	26.8	80.3	26.8
18	Mike Andrews	Swing Astral	20.9	14.3	12.7	11.7	10.5	6.7	8	76.9	12.8	87.0	10.9
19	Pete Douglas	Windtech Synchro	22.8	16.9	15.3	10.0	5.5	4.3	6	74.8	12.5	74.8	12.5
20	Richard Danbury	Gradient Onyx	18.2	15.4	11.6	9.0	8.8	5.5	6	68.5	11.4	68.5	11.4
21	Fiona Macaskill	Aerodyne Shaman	23.6	19.3	13.6				3	56.5	18.8	56.5	18.8
22	Martin Stanton	UP Summit 2	43.9						1	43.9	43.9	43.9	43.9
23	Simon Kerr	Gradient Saphir	18.7	8.1	6.8				3	33.7	11.2	33.7	11.2
24	Paul Whatley	UP Makalu	20.1						1	20.1	20.1	20.1	20.1
25	Cath Hutchinson	Edel Atlas	18.7						1	18.7	18.7	18.7	18.7
26	Richard Miller	ITV Meteor Gold	17.3						1	17.3	17.3	17.3	17.3
27	Penny Robinson	Ozone Vibe	16.3						1	16.3	16.3	16.3	16.3
28	Hugo Makin	Not known	14.8						1	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8
29	Cathy Lawrence	Advance Epsilon 3	14.0						1	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0
30	Nico Preston	Ozone Proton	11.3						1	11.3	11.3	11.3	11.3
31	Stephen & Lisa	Gradient Onyx	8.1						1	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1
32	Simon Chippendale	Ozone Vibe	4.9						1	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9
	<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1269</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>3881</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4760</b>	<b>24</b>

There's only one other thing I want to say - what do people think about having a 9-5'ers league, for those people (like me :-)) who have to restrict their flying to weekends and only the odd day off? I reckon it's a good idea...

Finally, although I haven't been in touch with our sponsors about prizes yet, I'd like to thank our sponsors, Nick Mallabar from Swing UK, Rob & Mike from Ozone, Gavin Foster from Advance UK and Carlo Borsottino from Windtech UK for their continued support this year - it's great to have you supporting the sport at grass-roots level.

Fly high, and here's to 2004!

**Tim Pentreath, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2003**

# 30/08/03 - Tom Mayne, 115.2km from Leckhampton

What an amazing flight this was...

Date 30-08-2003  
Glider: Nova Carbon  
Launch: Leckhampton SO960185  
Landing: Near Petersfield SU663272  
Take-off time: 11:55  
Flight duration: 4 hours 24 minutes (XC time 3:50)  
Flight distance: 115.2km

First to arrive at Leckhampton, but due to much faffing didn't actually launch for ages. Flew around on the ridge for what seemed like an excessive amount of time, giving up on perfectly good thermals, and watching Eddie having a monster symmetric collapse. Finally climbed out with Eddie in what seemed like a good thermal, after losing the core and having a bigish asymmetric, I noticed another glider (Alex) climbing well back towards the hill, so headed back that way, the thermal wasn't great, but at least we were going up. Nearly to cloud base the climb stopped and it was time to make a decision, West or East?, the drift was taking us slightly east, but the clouds were better to west. Alex and I decided to carry on to take the Easterly route, Eddie went west but was unable to get round the airspace I later found.

The next bit was a bit weird, Alex found us several thermals completely in the blue, it was very strange climbing with blue sky above, very near to cloudbase, and a cloud just a short distance away. Had a proper thermal (under a cloud and everything just past Cirencester, which took us to base nicely clear of Fairford ATZ, and then on along a mini street over the edge of Swindon well clear of Lyenham.

Next followed the first of several very long glides, I felt at the time we should have gone more to the east (for long term airspace reasons) but decided to follow Alex as pair flying with him was working very well. Had trouble getting to base at this cloud, and Alex again went south to the next one. I decide to stay on, found the lift, then had a good series of clouds crosswind. I met up with Alex again just downwind of Combe Gibbet, and we continued eastwards to try and get round the Solent CTA. We had our last good climb between Andover and Basingstoke, but couldn't continue down the street the cloud was on as it went into airspace. Then we had to big-ear to get below the 5500ft airspace ceiling, I wasn't too concerned though, as I felt sure now than we would make the 100km mark.



The picture shows the track coloured by ground speed; blue is fast (glides), green, yellow, and orange progressively slower.

After another crosswind glide, and we found some scraps below the spread out, but frustratingly we were drifting dangerously close to airspace, and had to leave the lift to squeak round the corner. I was really concerned that we might have the flight disqualified, so was very careful with my map reading.

I needn't have worried, we had at least 200-300 meters to spare :-o. We found a few more scraps, but then with the coast in sight, we glided to the ground. For the first time in the flight Alex's Aspen out-glided my Carbon, and he squeaked over a wood into the next valley for an extra km or so.

A man with a shotgun approached as I was packing-up! but I needn't have worried as he said "Wow, that looks such good fun!" had a nice chat with him, he worked for the land owner, who drove over a couple minutes later, he was also very friendly and gave me a lift to a nearby cross-roads. There I got a lift, within five minutes, all the way to Winchester train station. Bizarrely I met Alex again when he boarded the train (same carriage too) at Basingstoke. Got back home at 9:00pm after a long but easy retrieve.

**Tom**

# 22/04/03 – Ken Wilkinson on an Atlas

## 49.3km from Nant y Moel to White Castle

I teamed up with Mike Rossdale, sporting his as yet unsoared Epsilon 28, and old hands Rich Harding, and Stafford Evans to go to Nant Y Moel on 22/4/03 (the day after the Easter comp closed). Mike was keen to get away on an XC, I'd been priming him for a while on the does and don'ts, and he was definitely up for it. I've done a lot on hangies in the past (PB of 170k), but what I know about XC could be written on a piece of A5 paper. I will try to include some of these in this article. I think the main thing required for XC is:

- a. A belief that thermals do exist, and they can get you from low down to high up, and
- b. Luck!! It really is important, as today will doubtless show.

The day had a magnificent forecast; 5 from Weatherjack, with a 5000 + cloud-base, and lightish SW winds. Normally, the best winds are from the Northerly sector, but the main thing that counts is an unstable airflow. This day certainly had that, with clouds popping up from 10 am. Not necessarily a good thing as it could be a sign it will over-develop later. When we arrived it seemed the cloud-base was really not high at all, so not a good time to go. We all got in the air and I promptly went down. I'm about 7kg over the top on my old Atlas, and sink rate is a real problem. After an hour or so, some pilots started to get high and left, and I was stuck on the ground.

A little later, after several abortive attempts, I landed hoping things would get better (for me!). I called Mike on the radio, suggesting a having break as things were looking naff. He promptly started to go up, along with Stafford, and several others. His first XC finished up about 4 k. Rich had already left. By now, most of the best pilots had gone, and there were just a few left. I tried so hard to connect, and never seemed to be able to. Oh for a better wing! At about 2.30 (still a good time) I finally got solid lift, with a blue Onyx, a tatty white Nova, and one other, and we were hoovered up to cloud-base, now at approx 5000 ft. At least I would get something, after my 44km flight 6 days earlier.

The unknown glider headed off to the next ridge really early, and I think sank out. We stayed with the buoyant air, watching each other for best lift. When it started to decay (this means we stayed with it till we had lost a couple of hundred feet) I headed for a 'gloop point' behind the Rhondda Valley (where the 'honey' would drip from if the land was turned upside down). This was rewarded with a good strong climb back to base, the others following quickly when they saw me going up.

Then there was a large gap before a major area of convection over Merthyr. Again I headed off, questioning my decision when I saw the other 2 behind and higher than me, and happy when I saw them join me from at least 1000 feet below! The Onyx headed North to the Beacons and we lost him, and I followed the Heads of the Valleys Road, trying to cross another big gap. I lost loads of height, and the next 7km were at approx 1000 above the ground, in buoyant air that was being wafted up from the road (often a good 'linear thermal' source). I was under a big cloud but couldn't connect with anything solid. "Hang in there!!" The Nova found a good climb, and I saw him heading off towards Abergavenny. I had pretty well decided to land at Brynmawr Rugby ground, but had enough height to have a last few minutes above the town. Turbulence is great to feel on an XC, as it means something is happening! I bumped into a great piece of lift, which took me nearly to base again. It was VERY cold. My fingers were freezing, even with 2 pairs of gloves on.

There was a stonking cumulus over the Sugar loaf, so I headed for this, losing height rapidly, taking photos with hands off the brakes. To the SW of the top is a long ridge, which I have walked many times and I headed for this. At about the level of the Sugarloaf, I connected again with a solid thermal, and saw the Nova high above, heading for the Skirrid. The day was slowing down, and nearly at base, I did a glide with the wind, over the top of the Skirrid, to land at White Castle. How far did the Nova get??

I said luck was necessary. If I had a better glider, I would have gone earlier, I'm sure. As it was, my (unintentional) delay led to me being in the best air at the best time! Also NEVER GIVE UP until your feet touch the ground! On a good day, thermals can be found very low down, and although low flying is NOT recommended as a way of doing big XCs, many good XCs will have low sections in them.

**Ken**

# 16/08/03 - Penny Robinson, 16.3km from Kettle Sings

Date: 16.8.03

Glider: Ozone Vibe MS

Take off grid ref: SO 769 422

Landing grid ref: SO 608 450

Had a totally excellent time yesterday! Howard dragged me up to Kettle Sings, parked his car at the bottom landing field and drove mine to the top (cunning plan).

Loads of people at take off, which made me slightly nervous, but most people were soaring out and disappearing over the back. Howard suggested that I bumbled around the hill for a bit and to bottom land. Rizz appeared just to check I was ok with the launch.....hot air on back of neck...time to go! Vinny (the name of my Vibe \*blush\*) did his stuff on launch, straight up and no mucking about. Flew straight into the most massive thermal I've ever been in. I could see Howard just below me and as I gained stupid amounts of height at stupid rates of climb I watched him spiral dive out of it..... ok so the cloud was a bit dark but I could see a gaggle of about six other paragliders just down wind having no problems with it.

I'm guessing I got to about 3000' before I bit the bullet and decided that I was just not going to land back at the hill so I turned downwind and made a run for the gaggle a few km ahead. The cloud was huge and I was still climbing well, I put a few 360s in just to be polite! Speed topped 49.2kph on that dash according to the GPS!!!

Near the gaggle I got to cloud base at over 4000' and made a run for the edge of the cloud. Was a bit chilly at that point and my fingers started to tingle. The air was quite rough and I had a small assymetric. My mouth went a bit dry but I dared not take my hands off the brakes to reach round for my water! I was amazed at the amount of rubbish in the air, loads of seed heads, leaves and a twig whistled past me. Sailplanes everywhere, shit they're quick aren't they?!

There was a fair bit of high stratus the other side of the monster cloud and very few sunny patches on the ground but I headed slightly north to get to one and was rewarded by a rather nice climb again. I'd lost everyone at that point apart from a guy on a red Octane who was flying a fair distance from me. I saw a race circuit ahead of me, lots of cars, bikes a dirt track jobby. I was fairly low at this point and thought if I headed towards it I would either land there (guaranteed lunch stop) or catch the thermal which was bound to be downwind of it. Sure enough I got the thermal and climbed out to 3000', my stomach would have to wait.

I flew over a few farms, big stubbly fields, soared with a Buzzard and some Swifts....lovely. I spotted a paraglider landing in a huge stubble field just ahead and decided to watch him land. As I circled over the field there was a punchy broken thermal that I wanted to climb in. But it just wasn't letting me play with it. Got fed up with it after ten minutes with very little height gained.

I looked downwind towards Hereford but the landing options were pretty small, to the south there were large pylons, eastwards I would have had to have flown over a large wood and to the north the land was hilly, had small fields and no roads next to them. Decided that I wasn't going to make it over the wood so I dropped into the field that the other guy was in....closely followed by a red Octane!

I let out a big 'WOO HOO!' as I touched down with a big grin plastered all over my face! Met up with the other two chaps at the end of the field. One of them had just flown his first XC too and the other was an old pro who'd just got back into flying after breaking his back and neck in a paragliding accident, oo err. Phoned Howard for a lift. Bless him, he'd been a bit worried about me and immediately asked whether I was ok. Then he said that he spiral dived out of the lift because the cloud was a bit dark and he ended up in the bottom landing field.

Even if I don't manage another XC this year I'll be happy. I got home on Saturday evening where Simon was raving about a 200km flight he'd just done.... I reckon I had more fun though!

**Penny.....happy bunny**

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# Entering Flights into the Avon PG XC League



The Avon PG XC /league is meant to be a friendly (and competitive!) league for pilots of all abilities. Flights must be entered within 30 days of making the flight, and can only be entered by Full Avon members. Airspace restrictions must be observed during your flight, and site rules obeyed. Flights must be over 3km. Witnesses are not required.

Send the following details to me, Tim Pentreath at [pgxc@avonhpgg.co.uk](mailto:pgxc@avonhpgg.co.uk) (or phone of fax 01225 832922)

Name:

Date:

Glider:

Take off grid ref:

Landing grid ref:

And any description, or photos of the flight you feel like including - it'll all go on the website.

Regarding the grid refs, we're talking about OS National grid refs, ie. In the format AB 123 456. For more information see:

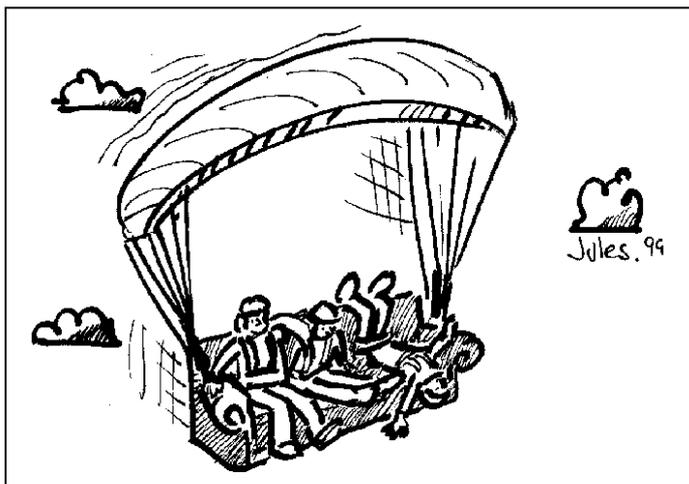
[http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/leisure/site.cfm?display=/products\\_new/natgrid/nghelp1.html](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/leisure/site.cfm?display=/products_new/natgrid/nghelp1.html)

or you can download a pdf booklet here: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/downloads/Natgridpdf/20241.pdf>

To get the grid refs off your GPS if you have one (and let's assume it's a Garmin) you'll first need to check in the Navigation Setup page that the Position Format is set to "British Grid", and most importantly, that the Map Datum is set to "Ord Srvy GB". If this is not done then any OS grid refs you give will be wrong when plotting them on an OS Landranger map. However if you're flying in a comp abroad say, and have turnpoints supplied in Lat and Long format, then you'll need to set the Map Datum to "WGS84" (remember to set it back to "Ord Srvy GB" when you return to the UK), and set the Position Format to the appropriate Lat and Long setting.

When using the GPS in-flight, what I do is press the GOTO button twice before I take off - this sets the MOB (Man Over Board) position to be the take-off position, then when you're flying you'll always have a distance (and bearing) to MOB displayed on the moving map screen showing you exactly how far you've flown so far. When you land, press the MARK button to save your landing position.

Then when you want to get the co-ords off the GPS, go into the Nearest Wpts or Waypoint List pages and select MOB and your LZ waypoints and read off the OS grid ref. NB. The grid ref stored here will be in the format AB 12345 67890, which gives the position accurate to 1m. When giving the co-ords to me I'm only interested in your position accurate to the nearest 100m, so round the figures up or down accordingly - eg. In the example above it would be AB 123 679.



I also upload a database of towns and large villages to my GPS to help with in-flight navigation (my GPS38 doesn't have any built-in mapping database), but that's beyond the scope of this "tutorial"... I appreciate this is old hat to many, but if you're not familiar with using a GPS, or xc flying then it may be useful...

Tim



New Gradient Aspen is the best DHV2  
Airwave Sport is the best DHV1/2

Vol Libre magazine makes the Gradient Aspen its glider of the year... The best DHV2 glider available today, an incredible achievement considering the quality of some other DHV 2 gliders that are also available. After being in production for some time the Airwave Sport is still the best DHV 1/2

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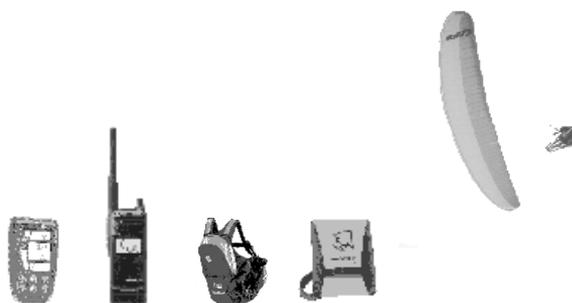
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We are very easy to find, just off junction 13 of the M5, check out the map on the web site....

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# Paranover & Hangups

## Caption Competition

The photo for this caption competition was taken and edited by Nev Almond. Send your captions to:

Caption Competition, Nova Magazine, 112 Prestbury Drive, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 9LE.  
email: [nova@avonhgpg.co.uk](mailto:nova@avonhgpg.co.uk).

The winner will receive a prize kindly donated by Par-Avion paragliding school.



## Dear Howard.... (Nova's new Agony Column)

Dear Howard,  
I think there's something wrong with my equipment. I find that I always need an assistant to get off, otherwise I can't get it to inflate properly. Then when it's above my head, I go off before I'm ready. Is this normal?  
Yours frustrated.

*Dear Frustrated,*  
*You should not need an assistant, and there is nothing wrong with your equipment. There is just no substitute for practice in handling it by yourself. You must go to a quiet place away from other people so you can concentrate. You must pull on it gently so it comes up slowly. Eventually you can control exactly when you go off. I have personally done this for others by myself, and I have found it very rewarding.*  
Howard

Dear Howard  
I often get dragged through the dirt. What can I do?  
Yours soiled

*Dear Soiled,*  
*When you are attached you must think of it as a partnership. If you are always pulling in different directions people will doubt your commitment and they will talk about you. On the other hand, if you work together in harmony you will have a good relationship.*  
Howard

Dear Howard,  
I use mallions to attach my wing to my harness. Is there anything wrong with doing this?  
Yours worried,

*Dear Worried,*  
*It is best not to use mallions. There are better alternatives. For example, I have had crabs for years.*  
Your Howard

**WARNING: For safety reasons the real author of this agony page wishes to remain anonymous, however I am open to bribes Ed.**