

The Avon HG & PG Club Magazine

Avon

June 2004



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Editorial



I would like to thank you all for being patient in waiting for this edition of Nova to arrive on your doormat or in your inbox. For the first few months after the November 2003 issue there was the usual seasonal lull, so with a shortage of news and contributions there seemed little point in producing a March edition just for the sake of it. Luckily for me we don't have any fixed publication dates or deadlines.

This issue is much more newsy than usual, with the emphasis on letting everyone know what has been going on in the club, and what's going to be happening in the coming months. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has contributed.

If you have never sent in anything to Nova before please don't be shy. You don't have to have had an epic flight or be a skygod to have an article featured. What we want is a magazine for all the club members to enjoy. Don't let it be dominated by the same few contributors. If you don't like writing but have an idea for something you would like to be included in Nova please let me know, as there may be someone out there just waiting to be asked!

Cathy Lawrence

*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*

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Cover shot – Tim Pentreath flying in Snowdonia (May 2004) by Ken Wilkinson

Chairman's Waffle

Well it's been a long time since the last Chairman's Chunter, and quite a lot has been going on since then, not least the amount of flying we've all been doing! We've flown 1,690km in the pg xc league, the furthest ever at this stage in the year, with 1,022km flown in April alone! During a BCC round at Talybont in April, Avon pilots flew an amazing 723km with numerous personal bests. Needless to say Avon won the round – well done all concerned!



Those pilots who made the recent trek up to Snowdonia were treated to UK mountain flying at its best - seven consecutive days flying, with great conditions every day. I had fantastic flights both days I was up there – 8 hours flying over the UK's most stunning scenery can't be bad :-). Thanks to Stephen for organising the house (and the weather)!

Back in February/March I had an amazing two weeks flying holiday in Brazil. We flew at five different sites in the states of Sao Paulo and Minas Geras, and because we were travelling round with Brazilian guides we got much more out of the trip than if we had just spent two weeks in GV. The Brazilian people are friendly, the countryside is beautiful and extremely pg friendly (once you've been briefed about the wires, long grass and swamps!), and the food and booze delicious and cheap! I WILL get around to writing an article for Nova about my trip, but I'm afraid I've missed the deadline for this issue! Sorry Cathy... So if you're thinking of doing a foreign holiday I can thoroughly recommend the Flybubble/Brazil Adventours trip I went on.

On the subject of Nova, if you've had any good (or even not so good) flying holidays/experiences/flights recently then can I encourage you to put pen to paper and send them to Cathy for inclusion in Nova – without them it gets very thin!

So what else has been going on? Ah yes, the thorny issue of sites, and access to them, in particular Westbury. For those of you who have not joined the avonhpgg SmartGroup, I'll explain very briefly what's been going on. At the end of April, English Heritage, who manage the land to the NW of the road, erected a fence thus enclosing the area we normally take off from, and put some sheep in it. Initially this fence was barbed wire, but they very quickly realised their mistake and had the barbed wire removed. Access for pgs is no problem, but getting a rigged hg over the fence is an issue.

Needless to say there were some strong opinions voiced on Smartgroups, which is fine, but there were also a few messages which were completely over the top, which is not fine. Fortunately, the email exchanges have all been resolved apologetically and amicably, but the fence remains. The committee's stance is that we'd like the fence removed, but that we have too much to lose by taking a militant and aggressive stand on this issue. We'll be offering our support to Westbury Town Council in their discussions with English Heritage, but until the fence is either removed or better hg access is provided, can I ask everyone to help hg pilots get their gliders over the fence. If we all do this then the impact of this fence (apart from the sheep shit) will be minimal. Printed elsewhere in Nova is a more detailed description of the Committee's thoughts on this matter.

However there's one thing that I only thought about after I'd written those notes, where we as a club can show that we make a definite positive impact on the land we fly from, and that's with the issue of litter. Whenever we fly from Westbury and other more high profile sites, and in fact every site, (well maybe not Merthyr etc :-)) can I ask everyone to pick up any litter they see rather than just walking past it. As the only organised group of users using these sites we CAN make a difference and will be able to use it as good PR should push ever come to shove. If we all do our bit then it's not a big job...

Well that's enough of that, let's look forward to some fantastic flying during the rest of the summer, and specifically to the 2004 Mere Bash which will be held on the 4th/5th September. We want to make it bigger and better than last year and have booked "Soul Commotion", the excellent band we had at the 2000 bash. So please make a note of the dates and cancel any existing engagements as this will be a big one! Tickets are likely to be £10 per person (children free) in advance (more on the night) with the same BYO BBQ formula that worked well last year. So spread the word and make sure you're there!

Rather sooner than that, June's meeting is going to be at The Rockery again, on Thursday 24th June. We'll be having a buffet and some non-flying entertainment (definitely non-flying this time :-), so please do ask your other halves to come along too! More details to follow...

Well I think I've pretty much run out of things to say, except that is to offer congratulations to Alex and Jo on the birth of their daughter Francesca on Monday 24th May – fingers crossed this will give a few more people a stab at a pg xc prize in future :-). Congratulations are also due to our expat pilots Marcus and Charlotte, who will be tying the knot in Bath on Saturday 5th June. Apparently there's a new "king" on the way too! It must be Spring!

Good flying

Tim Pentreath

The Avon Social Diary

The club meetings this year have been superbly well attended. We have had a great variety of speakers, including a St. John's ambulanceman complete with resuscitation dummy; Nev Almond demystifying the GPS; and Ken and Tom arguing the merits of their different cross-country styles!

Many thanks to everyone who has taken the time to do a talk this year, and also to Steve Chiles, Chris Jones and Tim Pentreath for their excellent tutorials for the Pilot exams.

There is plenty to look forward to over the summer, aside from the flying of course. Please do come along to the club meetings at the Compass Inn, Tormarton, which are usually the second Thursday of the month. If you are new to the club, it is a great opportunity to meet the other members and find people to show you the sites or share lifts.

For the newly qualified pilots, you'll usually find Stephen Chiles and Tony Moore there, our low airtime contacts, who will happily assure you that the weekend is going to be superb, all for just the price of a pint.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no meeting on Thursday 10th June, as we will be having the Club summer drinks party at the Rockery, Bath on Thursday 24th June.

The summer diary looks like this, all club meetings will be confirmed on Smartgroups (<http://www.smartgroups.com/groups/avonhgpg>), on the club website and by email.

Date	Event
Thursday 24 th June	<p>The Summer Party. Drinks and buffet at Bath's finest freeflying eaterie, which co-incidentally is staggering distance from the chairman's house! This year will feature a non-flying quiz!. Please email socialsec@avonhgpg.co.uk to let us know if you're coming.</p> <p>Venue: The Rockery, Bath. Kick Off: 7.00, quiz at 8.00pm. Final details will be confirmed on the website.</p>
Thursday 8 th July	<p>Club meeting. Barry Pedersen runs a paragliding operation in Cape Town, and will be giving a talk about South African flying, from Cape soaring to the inland cross country epics. SA is a classic flying destination, so this talk is a must for anyone thinking of flying there or looking for an exciting venue abroad.</p>
Thursday 12 th August	<p>Kaz Harland, former British team pilot, instructor and sports psychologist is back from giving jungle training in Belize. She is doing a special talk for the club on Sports Psychology as it applies to pilots.</p> <p>This will be a cut down version of her half-day course, and she will be looking at goal setting, identifying blocks to performance and techniques to overcome them. Kaz is one of the UK's top female pilots, and an expert in this field.</p> <p>This is not just for sky gods, anyone who wants to improve their flying will benefit.</p>
Saturday 4 th to Sunday 5 th September	<p>The Mere Bash</p> <p>The Avon annual party in a field. Fun for all the family, last year featured a bouncy castle for the kids (and big kids!), bring your own barbeque, marquee with bar and a great band until the wee small hours.</p> <p>We also had some superb flying on both days, with site records broken on Saturday (Westbury) and Sunday (Mere). Details to follow, tickets will be around £10, bring friends and family.</p>

Details for the club meeting in the Autumn will be posted closer to the time

News

Avon HG & PG Club Prizes 2003

PG - 4,759km flown by 32 pilots!

XC league – Glass Trophy:

- 1 Tom Mayne (417km top 6)
- 2 Gary Sandell (355km top 6)
- 3 Ken Wilkinson (347km top 6)

Longest flight – Glass Trophy: Alex Coltman (116km)

Longest DHV 1/2 prize – Marcus's Kite:
Tom Mayne (115km)

Most improved pilot – Glass Trophy: Will Price
(last year he had one 18km flight, this year it's 11 flights totaling 131km)

Best newcomer:

- 1 Glass Trophy: Gary Sandell
- 2 Stephen Chiles
- 3 Graham Richards

Dave Yeandle Memorial Trophy (Easter Cup)

Simon Kerr (18km)

HG XC League - 88km flown by 3 pilots:

- 1 Colin Hale (43km in 2 flights)

Best article in NOVA – Glass Vase:

Richard Danbury - "Stephen & Richard's Grand Day Out"

Photo Competition – Glass Vase: Charlie Hedges

Westbury Fence

The Committee met on 20th May to discuss the Westbury fence situation and to formulate a strategy to try and get the fence removed (which is what we all ultimately want) or at least to get decent HG access through it.

These are the facts, or if you like the parameters we are working under:

1. The land in question is owned by the MOD and managed by English Heritage (EH)
2. The MOD lets the farmland to Farmer A, who in turn sub-lets it to Farmer B.
3. EH erected the fence, and own it.
4. We do not know exactly why the fence was erected. Garry was told by EH that it was as a direct result of a June 2004

request by Farmer B to stop dogs worrying his sheep. However Ken was told by English Nature (EN) that it was put up to allow grazing which encourages biodiversity. The area in question is apparently an SSSI.

5. The fence and sheep do not affect paragliding in any adverse way, after all we fly at plenty of other sites where sheep graze.

6. The fence and sheep only affect hang-gliding for second and subsequent flights because of the issue of getting a rigged glider over the fence.

7. We have to deal with EH if we want the fence removed.

8. But as a club we have nothing to bring to the negotiating table, we don't even have an official right to fly at Westbury, it's just something we always have done. But they have acknowledged in the past by moving the fence that was erected at takeoff down the hill 20 feet a few years ago. We're not saying we should try to negotiate an agreement to fly - what if they say no?

9. Westbury Town Council (WTC) has adopted an anti-fence stance and has requested a meeting with EH to discuss the situation. We don't know when this meeting is.

10. WTC is pro HG/PG.

11. We have definitely got EH's hackles up - presumably they weren't expecting any voices of protest.

12. Brent has spoken to Farmer B about padlocks to the gate etc. It's not his gate and EH has only given him one key... Farmer B is not going to give us a key, or let us put another padlock in the chain in the near future. He did ask if we could encourage dog walkers to keep their dogs on a lead...

We can speculate on the following:

1. Farmer B, who's not keen on public access to his farmland, wanted more land to graze his sheep so he gave EH a story about dog worrying - EH then went ahead and put up the fence without anyone at EH actually visiting the site and assessing the impact. Now they are receiving grief about it they are coming up with the conservation argument as a means of justifying it.

2. Members of the public, and dog walkers in particular are against the fence. They see it as removing the freedom to roam that they've always enjoyed. In fact most dog walkers are ignoring the request to keep dogs on a short lead in the enclosed area.

3. We as a club are never going to get the fence

removed on our own. It needs a concerted campaign from other groups too - rambles, dog walkers, day trippers etc...

4. We have too much to lose if we get a name for ourselves as a bunch of militant protestors.
5. We cannot buy any land at Westbury
6. We won't be able to lease any land from the MOD, but there is a remote chance we could lease some land from Farmer A.

The Committee's decision:

1. Work with the WTC (through Brent) - ie. offer our support as a club, and find out from them how they'd like us to help.
2. No more complaints to EH - they know we're upset about the fence, but any more complaints will have a negative impact.
3. If people want to complain/campaign as private individuals then fine, but do please make sure you've been there and seen the fence/enclosure/sheep shit and DO NOT mention HG/PG.
4. If you are not flying, please offer your assistance to HG pilots to help them get their rigged gliders across the fence.
5. To try to win a bit of support from Farmer B by making the public aware that dog/sheep worrying is unacceptable.
6. Depending on the outcome of WTCs meeting with EH, request an informal meeting with EH once the dust has settled to discuss access for HGs.
7. Depending on the outcome of WTCs meeting with EH, ask Farmer B at some stage in the future about putting another padlock "in series" with his padlock.

Our decision is based upon the fact that as flyers the fence is really just a minor inconvenience, nothing more. The wider issues of freedom to roam, dog walking, picnics, tics etc. are not our problem as a HG/PG club, so we should not get ourselves bogged down in them unnecessarily.

We will keep you up to date with progress as it happens, but in the meantime let's just continue enjoying the flying at this great site!

Tim Pentreath

Chairman, on behalf of the Committee of the Avon HG & PG Club

Avon HGPG Club Meetings

We would like to continue the success of our monthly club meetings and are looking to our members for ideas of topics for discussion or guest speakers they would like to hear at coming meetings. If anyone has any comments or suggestions please email:

Diane Hedges on socialsec@avonhgpg.co.uk

100% exam success

In January/February this year we organised three evenings for revision and the pilot exam. The pilot exam is in three sections: weather, air law and flight theory (the advanced pilot exam is just air law). For two evenings at the Compass Inn, Garry Mitchell, Chris Jones and Tim Pentreath did a sterling job of explaining the intricacies of these subjects to about 30 enthusiastic pilots. Having got their flying tasks signed off we submitted the exam papers to the BHPA for 16 pilots and they all passed! So congratulations to: Richard Beckett, Lisa Dodds, Richard Hellen, Mike Humphries, Martin Nicols, Mark Nunan, Laura Pratt, Graham Richards, Michael Rosedale, Amy Stanton, Ken Wilkinson and Richard Zaltzman on getting their Pilot rating and to: Doug Cannon, Stephen Chiles, Stafford Evans and David Tyrer on getting their Advanced Pilot rating. Once the other dozen or so people who also took the exam get their flying tasks signed off then we can submit their papers to the BHPA - hopefully more good news to follow.

Typically, a reasonably active pilot should be in a position to take the pilot exam within a year of getting CP. The flying tasks are not very onerous and the main challenge is learning stuff for the exam. You need to get your pilot rating before you start going XC and seeing as that is the best bit about free flying then it is well worth taking the exam. Assuming there will not be such demand for a while, the club is unlikely to run formal revision evenings again this year but we can always make arrangements for people to take the exam. If you're interested then please send me an email at: p gla@avonhgpg.co.uk

Stephen Chiles

Wings over Westbury

An excellent, dedicated website for our Westbury flying site has been created by one of our members, Sarah Ward. The website www.flywestbury.freeuk.com, provides detailed information on the site's three slopes, the site rules, and on flying XC from Westbury. The site also includes a series of photograph galleries showing hang-gliding, paragliding, the weather, the site, and its pilots.

Reciprocal Sites News

Milk Hill

The following email was received from the Thames Valley HGPG Club in April:

Hi All,

As of last Saturday (17th April 2004) the narrow triangular field beyond the 'newish' fence to the right of the entrance gate to Milk Hill is out of bounds to us for most of the concrete track as you walk downhill back towards the barns and has sometimes been used to land and pack up at the end of the day.

I understand from our Sites Officer Alexander Kirk Wilson that it is full of Marsh Fritillary butterflies and that we are not to land in, or walk through, this field. Alexander has placed a sign to this effect next to the gate. He will let us know when this field is open to us again.

Unfortunately, this evening (Thur 22nd April) an as yet unidentified Paraglider pilot was seen to land in this field to pack up. Please look out for new signs and do not assume that arrangements are the same as the previous year.

Regards,
Paul Hutton
TVHGC Membership Secretary

Bell Hill

By the end of last year the Wessex HGPG Club completed their enormous task of purchasing Bell Hill, Dorset's first club owned "free-flying" site. In response to the Avon club's donation Neil Kermodé, the Bell Hill Project Officer, has written to our club secretary to pass on their personal thanks to all our members.

The Wessex club has recently installed a combination lock on the road-gate to Bell Hill. The combination is "1013.

The Dave Yeandle Sheild Winners

This award (formerly known as the Easter Cup) is awarded to the pilot making the longest XC flight over Easter Weekend from any site within 50 miles of Bristol. If it is not XC-able on that weekend it roles over to the following Bank Holiday weekend.

Tony Moore won the HG Sheild this year with his 6.12Km - 30%(Class 5 Handicap!) = 4.28Km flight from Milk Hill on the Spring Bank Holiday weekend. The PG Sheild was won by Rich Harding, who flew 52km from Combe Gibbet on Good Friday 9th April. Congratulations guys!

BCC Paragliding Update

The Avon teams have participated in 3 out of the 4 rounds that have been held to date. Due to the nature of the erratic scoring system and the fact that we couldn't withdraw our teams from one round, we haven't scored as many points as you would have expected from our excellent results.

The first comp was held on the Bloreng in April. The Sunday wasn't flyable and so Avon decided not to fly on the Monday due to many other commitments. But because we had already entered for the weekend (without realising) we didn't score very well on the Monday(not being there). Alan Davies turned up with a few friends and did enter an 'A' team and took part in the 11km xc over the back. The A team came 4th and the B team received points for entering!

Our other two rounds were more successful. On 24th April we held a round on Tal-Y-Bont against 7 other teams and our A and B team came 1st and 2nd, with excellent flights from the whole team including several PB from Mike Humphries and Stephen Chiles. Over 1000km was flown by pilots on this weekend, 395km from the Avon teams alone.

On Sunday 6th may we held a round against the Southern Club on Tal-Y-Bont again. Conditions not as favorable as the last time, but the B team still won the day with 66.2km against the Southern's 62.1km, with the girly team getting some points for attending.

On Sunday 13th June the team went to Merthyr to compete against Sky Surfers amongst others. It was off to the north. Occasionally wind wafted up the slope. Dave (southern chairman) was flying well, and got away for 5.6km. Later Rich, Ken and a Malverns pilot got away, and met a blue hole. Luckily cloud developed as we progressed across it, and Rich and the Malvern pilot got 25km or so. Ken went over Newport at 5000ft and got to Magor services for 37.4km.

The Avon A and B team have made it through to the BCC semi final round on 26/27th June in South East Wales. We need to turn out 2 teams of 6 people, so please could you let me know if you could make it. Preference will be given to those who have supported the team so far.

Hopefully we have done enough to get at least one team through to the semis on 10th July 2004.

Amy Stanton & Ken Wilkinson

Avon HG XC

Neil Atkinson has done a great job setting up the new website for the HG XC results. This can be found at www.avonhgxc.dsl.pipex.com. All we need now is to encourage the hang-glider pilots who fly XC to send in their flight details, photos, and stories.

The Avon club did not enter a hang-gliding team in the BCC this year as there were not enough pilots committed to taking part.



Cathy's first solo at Quest

New Aerotow Syndicate

After spending too many frustrating days looking up at a classic sky we are going to put a BIG effort into setting up an aerotow syndicate, with a view to have it operational next year. The biggest problem is finding

somewhere suitable to operate from. This should be easier than for winching as the runway does not need to be so long (400m). It's very early days but the cost of joining will be approx £350 and then running costs will be somewhere around £125 per year. These figures are based on a syndicate of 20 pilots. If you are interested in joining or know of a potential venue please contact tony_moore@blueyonder.co.uk

Going Bi-Wingual

Congratulations to Garry Mitchell, Pete Taylor and myself, who have recently satisfied our bi-curiosity and learned to fly hang-gliders on aero-tow at Quest Air in Florida. Garry and Pete went in late February, and were very lucky with the weather, achieving their Hang 2 rating in under a week. I went in March and was less fortunate with the weather, spending two very windy, relatively cool, weeks in Florida. However I got two solo flights in at 7.30am on the last day!

Now we just have to get our hill conversion here in the UK. If you see any of us out flying in the coming months please give us a plenty of space!

Cathy Lawrence

BHPA Member Discount

VerticalLimits.co.uk has negotiated a 10% discount for all BHPA member clubs on selected chalet accommodation in the French Alps. This offer has been extended to all individual Avon Club members. For further information see their website or call Stuart Gorner 01385 355553.

Apologies.....

It seems that I've messed up on some of the helmet stickers and some full members have been sent associate stickers. It was a long day! If this is you let me know and I'll send you the correct one.

Tony Moore

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

The Mere Bash 2004

Sat 4th / Sun 5th September

*Fun for Flyers, Family, and Friends
Put this date in your diary now!*

Bar

BYO BBQ

Flying

Campfire

Bouncy Castle



Live Music by Soul Commotion

Soul Commotion is an eight-piece band, featuring powerful lead vocals, perfectly synchronised and harmonised backing singers, an irrepressible horn section and a strong rhythm section. They perform classic soul numbers in their own dynamic style. It is impossible not to dance to this band!



Photos – The Mere Bash 2003: Richard Zaltzman



The Great Escape

by Richard Zaltzman

Living and working in London is not great for your flying. You spend all your time planning weekends away, belting down motorways and sitting on hills. London makes a champion para-waiter, but is not good for airtime. We had been doing this for 3 or 4 years, spending weekends on the Isle of Wight, down in Devon, up in the peaks, and averaging 10 hours a year if we were lucky.

We finally broke away from the big smoke and moved to Bristol at the end of the summer in 2002. What we didn't know then was that the best year for ages was about to bless the UK free-flying community and that we were in just the right spot to take advantage of it. Moving to Bristol and getting to know the pilots in the club and the sites helped us break out of the para-waiting cycle, and enjoy a superb year of flying.

March

If you're living in London, the prospect of 3 hours on the motorway, followed by some freezing flying, a wet and muddy wing to dry out in a small flat, and a long drive back at the end of the weekend does not really seem that tempting. Bristol however is a completely different prospect. We found ourselves less than an

hour away from Abergavenny, and the heart of flying in SE Wales.

In mid March we went to Pandy on the advice of Rich Harding, then the low airtime contact. Having been to a few club meeting through the winter, we knew some names and faces, and were helped along superbly by a several other club members. We were told to wait by the Skirrid Inn and a bloke in a van would pick us up... Welcome to Wales.

Pandy, for those who have never flown it, is a fantastic ridge site. It takes a NE wind, which works well in Spring, and if you are lucky you can run along the ridge for about 12 km. If it is working there will be other pilots there, and plenty of wind dummies or guides along the way. It is also a great place to get back into things after the winter. There is so much space that it does not get crowded, it is an easy top landing and there is a good field at the bottom in case you don't stay up.

Boating along the ridge was superb, I followed someone I thought I knew past the Black Darren crags about half way down, and well out of site of the take off. He turned out to be a complete stranger, but I was half way down the ridge by now, this was the closest I'd come to cross country!

Landing to get some life back in my fingers, I realised this had been one of my longest flights in the UK, and it was only March. The year was looking good already.

April

We had another great day on Pandy at the start of April, this time with a bit more sun and some stronger lift. I thought I had done pretty well getting to the end of the ridge and back, only to discover that others had done it twice in the same time! I clocked nearly 3 hours in the day and realised I had half of my previous year's airtime in a couple of weeks.

It was also a good warm up for Piedrahieta in April. We decided to go out to Steve Hamm for a week and see what it held for low airtimers. Steve assured us that it would be fine, and the group was pretty low airtime overall. The booming, buttock-clenching classic Piedrahieta conditions don't kick off until the end of May, we would be fine.



Piedrahieta in April: Richard Zaltzman

Steve was absolutely right. We had a week of great flying, despite marginal weather conditions. Steve is a superb guide, who made Herculean efforts to get us off the ground. We had 2 non-flyable days where rain stopped play. Steve has his own white water rafts, so off we went to the local river. This certainly beats the usual mooching about and cloud-watching, and made us realise that cold in the air is totally different to really freezing cold and wet in a river.

We flew 5 sites during the week, moving around as the wind changed. The conditions were generally smooth, and with expert guidance from Steve and Puri, we were helped along the road of thermalling. By the end of the week, I'd done my first hop over the back, scudding downwind to land in a bull-free field, Diane had been to cloud base (albeit under big ears and radioing for advice on how to get down) and overall we had a brilliant week of flying, eating and relaxing.

May and June

Piedrahieta had stoked up the desire to fly. Unfortunately a combination of weather and work unstoked it slightly, but there was plenty of flying to be had. Gone were the days of para-waiting on the Isle of Wight, amusing ourselves with ground-handling obstacle courses and top to bottoms.

The BCC kicked off at Nant-y-Moel in Wales. This is a large SW site, with a big bowl in front, and a forest on the top of the hill. We got there and it wasn't raining, which seemed to take the locals by surprise as they didn't turn up until 12.00. The brief was open distance, and I revved myself up for what was surely to be my first proper XC.

There wasn't much thermic activity, and there were a lot of pilots soaring the ridge. After an hour or so, I was getting pretty stressed by the close flying, something I wasn't used to at all. I decided to head into wind, down the ridge and just relax for a moment. With the wind now quite strong and at 45 degrees to the hill, this gave me a couple of minutes of straight, hassle free glide. As I neared the end of the ridge, I looked over my shoulder to start a turn. At the far end of the ridge, rising up in a large column were half the gliders on the hill. Bugger. I blasted back towards them, but by this time they had broken away, and there wasn't any lift left on the front of the hill.

I swore a lot and landed, determined to make the next one. There wasn't to be a next one, as the wind picked up, although there was a close shave on big-ears and standing on the speed bar, trying not to get blown back into the forest.

The XC bug had bitten, but it was to take me until August to get away properly. June had some great flying, on the Glydders in Snowdonia, Hay Bluff, Westbury and Mere, all new sites for us. Hay Bluff was fantastic, and my first proper taste of thermals in the UK; a rather rougher experience to the Spanish counterpart in April, and an interesting lesson in vario-speak and wing behaviour.

July, August and September

The UK started to cook in one of the hottest summers on record. The old me would have probably have been on a cliff somewhere, hoping that the sea breeze might stir the air a bit, enough for some ground handling at least.

Now, we were marching up some bloody big Welsh hills to try to beat the inversion. Sweating up Tal y bont on the second hottest day of the year was not an experience I'll forget, but it was worth it for the soaring and fun to be had. The conditions came on in the late afternoon, and the big SE bowl was working well. You could fly into the middle, practice mini-

wingovers (wobbles really), swoop about and just fly to the back of the bowl for a lift back to the top.

In August we left the UK high pressure behind and went to the Austrian Alps for a week in Mayrhofen. Here the conditions were much more unstable, too unstable in fact for us to fly much. Kelly, our guide for the week would warily point out the foetal cu-nims above the mountains, warning us of extreme valley winds and the consequences of leaving it too late to fly.

We had some flying during the week, but I'd probably have been better off in the UK!

Back to the UK, and in the last week in August, I finally went over the back at Pandy, drifting down the valley towards Crickhowell at the end of the day, for a record smashing 8km. A week later I found myself

with Stafford and Rich Danbury going to Crick the other way, from Hay Bluff via Lord Herefords Knob. I didn't make it, but the flight and the hitch back in a Scooby van were both great!

September kept it coming, and by the end of the month we had flown 9 weekends in a row, and I finished the year on Westbury with another small XC.

All in all it was an amazing year. All personal bests were broken, Diane doubled her airtime and I'd almost doubled mine, and I was well and truly bitten by the XC bug. Flying changed from a sport I was ready to give up in frustration, to a passion over the course of the year. Everyone we met at the club were a fantastic help in getting us going, showing us the sites, and for enjoying the social side with. Bristol is an excellent place to be, when you have to compromise between work and play. I feel sorry for all those para-waiters still stuck in London, roll on Summer 2004!

Westbury - 25 years later



Well almost. 25 years ago this past Easter, at the tender age of 17, I ventured across to Crickhowell to learn how to fly hang gliders (this, of course, was many years after long-term locals like Geoff Rogers, Kev Winter, Derek Target, etc). And 25 years later, I'm still sneaking out early from work to get a few hours now and then, and Friday 27th Feb was no exception. Snow everywhere, my car only just able to creep across the ice to the hilltop. I'm barely able to rig (no cars, no windbreak), and needing a passer-by to clip me in. Luckily, he realised (attempt number 1) wasn't going to work with my hang-strap wrapped around the upright - at least the incident report would have been entertaining reading.

And 25 years later it is still a privilege to do what we do. On this particular day, it was circling up in early season 6 up's, 90 minutes from sunset, with split loyalties between winding up neatly in early spring lift, and trying to record the event on a small magnetic disc.

The buzz from flying is still as good, and the gliders are now a bit less floppy, more refined, and very well behaved. Certainly when reaching a few thousand feet and then pulling forward a few miles into a 15mph to take these photos, I ponder on what toys we'll end up with in 25 years time - as whatever's around, I do hope to be using them.

Nev Almond

June 2004

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The Avon XC Files - www.avonpgxc.co.uk

After such a good year in 2003, can 2004 be any better...?

You know the situation, you get back at midnight on Sunday after an epic weekends flying, then it's straight to work in the morning. You download all the digi pics onto your work pc and relive the flying from the previous two days. And it was so good you really want to talk about it and show everyone the pictures and talk to them about flying over the top of Snowdon in and out of cloud, and tell them about the big thermals, the rock faces, the views, getting stupidly high, but you can't because they just can't comprehend what it's all about, they just cannot imagine the feelings and emotions you experience, because it's completely outside their terms of reference. And they think you're barking. Only fellow free-flyers can possibly understand what it's all about...

Tim Pentreath 4/5/2004

2004 PG XC League (most recent flight - 24/6/04)

Rank	Name	Glider	1	2	3	4	5	6	Flights	Top 6	Av Top 6	All	Av All
1	Alex Coltman	Airwave Magic	88.1	68.8	45.6	32.1	21.5	15.3	6	271.3	45.2	271.3	45.2
2	Jim Mallinson	Gradient Avax RSE	78.5	43.2	37.3	36.1	29.3	15.2	6	239.5	39.9	239.5	39.9
3	Ken Wilkinson	Ozone Vibe	60.2	37.4	21.6	21.0	19.3	15.4	8	175.0	29.2	194.8	24.3
4	Garry Sandell	Ozone Vulcan	44.6	35.8	32.1	30.6	20.2		5	163.2	32.6	163.2	32.6
5	Tim Pentreath	Advance Omega 5	49.3	27.6	24.4	18.3	17.5		5	137.1	27.4	137.1	27.4
6	Wayne Seeley	Advance Omega 5	41.1	24.8	19.2	18.6	16.2	15.0	6	135.0	22.5	135.0	22.5
7	Graham Richards	Gradient Aspen	47.0	25.3	23.1	14.9	10.7	7.0	6	128.1	21.3	128.1	21.3
8	Alan Davis	Gradient Saphir 2000	67.5	33.2	15.7	9.4			4	125.9	31.5	125.9	31.5
9	Stephen Chiles	Ozone Vulcan	59.4	29.3	11.7	11.6			4	112.0	28.0	112.0	28.0
10	Richard Harding	Airwave Magic	52.0	49.9	8.5				3	110.3	36.8	110.3	36.8
11	Stafford Evans	Gradient Aspen	57.9	22.0	10.4	9.1	5.5		5	104.9	21.0	104.9	21.0
12	Hugo Makin	Gradient Aspen	25.7	23.3	22.9	21.8			4	93.7	23.4	93.7	23.4
13	Richard Zaltzman	Swing Mistral 2	24.7	23.8	18.0	17.2			4	83.6	20.9	83.6	20.9
14	Mike Coupe	Ozone Vulcan	26.0	23.1					2	49.1	24.5	49.1	24.5
15	Mark Norley	Airwave Wave	27.7	16.9					2	44.6	22.3	44.6	22.3
16	Mike Humphries	UP Kantega	44.5						1	44.5	44.5	44.5	44.5
17	Martin Stanton	UP Trango	35.4						1	35.4	35.4	35.4	35.4
18	Iain MacKenzie	Airwave Sport	23.4	5.6					2	29.0	14.5	29.0	14.5
19	Pete Douglas	Windtech Synchro	26.4						1	26.4	26.4	26.4	26.4
20	Cath Hutchinson	Edel Atlas	25.7						1	25.7	25.7	25.7	25.7
21	Mike Rossdale	Advance Epsilon 4	14.1	9.6					2	23.7	11.8	23.7	11.8
22	Howard Woodward	Gradient Aspen	11.6	7.2					2	18.8	9.4	18.8	9.4
23	Richard Hellen	Ozone Vibe	14.1						1	14.1	14.1	14.1	14.1
24	Tony Moore	Nova X-Ray	10.1						1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1
25	Stephen & Lisa	Gradient Onyx	9.8						1	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8
Grand Total			964.8	506.8	290.5	240.6	140.2	67.9	83	2210.8	27.3	2230.6	26.9

29/03/04 - Rich Harding, 49.9km from Tal-y-bont

Date: 29/03/04

Glider: Airwave Magic M

TO: SO 054 186 (Talybont, E face of point above car park)

LZ: SN 556 219 (Caeaunewydd, A40 W of Llandeilo)

Launch Time: 13:25

Duration: 3hrs 30mins

Distance: 50.3km

Hi Peeps,

Particularly Howard - I sincerely hope you either didn't go to The Malverns today or had a bloody good time! As you may have noticed, I wasn't there - I noted the time it was taking for the forecast wind to materialise (it never did) and that it was supposed to die off later anyway so, repeat after me, everyone - "If there's no wind, go to Talybont". No ifs, no buts, no whinging about the walk :-). It never takes me more than half an hour up on to the point and I smoke and always stop at the stream for a drink! Alex once did it in 21 minutes!

Anyway, after a nice, bridge-toll-free blat over to Powys on the Bandit, I arrive in the car park and have a nice chat with two blokes camped up there in a huge van, foraging for thirty-foot dead tree trunks for the biggest tee-pee you've ever seen (the *model's* bigger than Bad News' Stonehenge!), helmet and leathers locked to bike and yomp up to the point. There's no-body there: no pilots and not even any walkers, but there's a steady trickle up the SE face so I sit down for a look at the view.

Eventually two walkers turn up just as I get the glider out, so it'd be rude not to test the air for their camera :-). There is no sun at this point. I can see some down near Cardiff and more over Brecon but the Beacons (note from taxi driver later - don't ever call them The Brecons!) are covered in cloud. But there's no prevailing wind and a semi-constant 6-8mph breeze, so there must be thermals.

I fly round into the corner where the river runs down through those big slabs of rock, push out and back in, out and back in (this bit probably courtesy of the fact I'm listening to the title track of Pulp's This Is Hardcore as I type :-)), come in really close for a photo, turn back and, ooh, that's strong :-). How does this work again? Oh, I remember, when it gets stronger, turn tighter :-). The averager never goes below 600ft/min all the way to base, with some turns at 1000ft/min plus.

Er, um, well there's no sun, so I'm not going all the way over the Beacons, as I did four (I think) years ago, but all the bowls to Pen Y Fan are into wind, so let's go and have a look at that - maybe I can come back too! Not a very good glide leaves me three or four hundred feet over the highest Beacon on arrival but the house thermal isn't working properly so I soon lose that and have time to chat to the walkers next to me as I scratch the lip, waiting for what seems an eternity. I think about landing. Nah!

But sure enough, another strong thermal comes through and I decide to follow a plan I've hatched to take it over the back and onto the ridge that runs east of the A470. The thermal is, though, very rough and I've forgotten how steep the southern face of Pen Y Fan is, and I end up gliding for the ridge, intending following it back South and then jumping back towards Talybont. When I hit another snorter...

...which takes me back close to base, approaching the A470. The sun has just reached the scraggy, steep, into-wind bowl just before the sharp bends at the top of the A470, so I head for that, partly because my hands are bloody freezing, I don't have thick socks on and my thin ones are no longer comfortably around my trouser legs. For the second time in the flight, I'm low, level or below the lip, and I think I'm going to have to fly out and land by the road.

When I first got there, a buzzard flew out at me and I wondered if I'd disturbed a nesting site. Ten minutes later and he's trying to lure me north, onto a shallower but sunnier slope. Er... okay then - and of course, there's another gorgeous thermal there. I admit, I actually started chuckling at this point - this was payback for all those times I've glided somewhere that should have worked and it hasn't!

This thermal takes me properly back to cloudbase and I then glide effortlessly over Heol Senni (just south of the site itself). I'm wondering whether I have the height to make the bowl on Fan Gihyrich when I find something that's going

slightly up; then I see the two red kites just to my north and a few hundred feet below going *very* up, in tight circles. It'd be rude not to say hello :-)

Now, I'm really having fun, even though I'm thermalling on a couple of fingers per hand, in snorty stuff, so I can shake some warmth back into the others! One reason I'm having fun is that I can make The Black Mountain, and I've always wanted to do that :-) And I can see that if it doesn't work (there's no sun before Swansea / Carmarthen!), there's a steep ridge that I can soar back down to The Gwyn Arms. Over we go then, circling at base over Crai Reservoir, which is the last time I'll see the sun today.

As I get to The Black Mountain, I catch another lovely thermal, and I'm only 1000ft below base anyway; this one speeds up on its way and, after big ears still drags me into the wisps, I spiral probably the hardest I ever have to avoid whiteout when I can hear jets playing over Sennybridge Danger Area. I hang around at base and dolphin fly to the next into wind bowl with a lake at its foot. I know it's getting on and, with no-one else on site, I'm thinking about my retrieve, so I carry on with the very slight drift instead of staying over the high ground - a reasonable climb will keep me high enough to make it across the first, populated but off the beaten track, valley and into the one where I know the A40 runs; I don't know which town is which (!) but I know where they are :-)

And so, on this day when I set off for a bumble and found an XC, I find a climb - not brilliant but pretty much to base again and I'm easily going to make the town at the end of the A40 valley, which I now know to be Llandeilo. I catch my last glimpse of Pen Y Fan in the distant murk and glide over the sodden river flood plain, turning occasionally and making efficient progress - so much that it's clear I don't have to land by the big roundabout but can follow the road towards Carmarthen.

I'm tired and shivering now, but I don't think I'm missing much, lazily gliding along at a consistent 1.5 down - the only big sink I had in the entire flight was over the A470, a long way back. There's a thousand foot gain to be had over Llandeilo, and I gladly accept, so it's more that I know I'm near the end than that I don't want to try - there is still no sun and the weak sea breeze front-ette would take another big thermal to reach - Fishguard, here we come!! Nah :-) Nothing doing except a lovely final glide, eking it out along the road, picking new potential hitching spots more than landing fields, as the options for the latter are seemingly endless :-)

A lovely rhythmic approach and I'm down. Grinning from ear to ear :-) I call a greeting to the man by the main road and the family in the car and pack up, chatting to my mate Niels who happens to call just after I switch the phone on and bemuse the woman in the house I flew over on landing, who appears, to ask, "Excuse me! What are you doing in the field?!". She's sweet :-) It's five o'clock now - three and a half hours in the air to the minute - and I need to get back to the bike!

Unfortunately, as I answer to Alex, who was stuck in a blasted meeting(!), I'm not wearing my Welsh rugby jersey :- (Hitching is a bit of a bitch at times and this is one of them - I really thought I was going to get stuck in Llandovery, which smelt terrible ;-) And was full of chavs in souped-up novas with lurid, go-faster mudflaps, auditioning for "teenage pregnancy of the year" ;-)

But, with a couple of half-hour nail-biters, and three chatty lifts later, including the last with a farmer in a Fiat Panda Dance, Marcus!, carrying a cage of chickens, I finally make Brecon, a little after eight. It's dark - taxi is the only way; fifteen quid; cheap at the price. I'd have been sweating a bit if the bike had been on its own, but the tee-pee chaps will be there, and sure enough they are and invite me in for a welcome coffee. I give them the baccy I bought, 'cos I forgot to pack mine and bought some in Llandovery, and wish them well. They've collected sixteen tee-pee poles.

Needless to say, I'm dead chuffed with a 50km flight (that last glide was well worth it :-)) at the end of March - my third longest UK flight. Technically, the main point of interest was the regular nature of the thermals, whose shape, behaviour and surrounding air became easier and easier to divine as the flight progressed - definitely a case of learning how the day is behaving; along, I guess, with the combination of 'ground feature' and 'sky' flying when the sky isn't giving many clues. Attitudinally it was about having big goals in mind but concentrating on the sequence of little ones that combine to produce the end result; and being convinced that the day is such that there is no reason to have to land. Emotionally, it was about going out for a fun flight and having great fun! And some fantastic views and landscapes that I hope will come out well, on at least some of the seventeen shots I took. The blat home was cool too :-))

Advisory: Collaps-o-matic Productions would like to certify that not so much as a tip-flutter was encountered during this punchy spring thermals flight :-) Although I did go weightless a couple of times :-)

I love my Magic :-) It's soon to be joined by a Vulcan - it's got a lot to compete with :-)

Rich

Snowdonia Highs revisited - May 22nd/23rd

It was exactly 14 months since my last visit to Snowdonia with Simon and Stephen & Lisa in March 2003 – could it possibly be as good? Well yes, and then some!

Nicolas Zurlidan and I had travelled up on Friday evening to join the Avon gang staying for the week in “Harvey’s House” which nestles at the foot of the Glyders. We met up with Ken, Iain and Rich for a curry in Llangollen to break the journey, then drove the remaining hour in increasing excitement at the prospect of some great flying on Saturday. When we got to the house we heard that Stephen had had a great flight that afternoon – flying from Moel Eilio over Snowdon to land back at the house – this only made me even more excited!

On Saturday morning Stephen had us up and out of the house by 10am and we had walked up Moel Eilio and were flying by 11am. Initially the wind was pretty light with only gentle thermals, but by lunchtime there was a good breeze and some nice strong thermals coming through. Stephen was the first to leave Moel Eilio, dashing eastwards towards Snowdon. However I could see he was having problems and he eventually top landed a couple of km away from Moel Eilio unable to penetrate in the stronger breeze. Next to go was Graham Fisher, who had no such problems. As he was now almost at Snowdon I resolved to follow him next time I got high...

And once I did it was an easy run over to Snowdon where I spent about an hour playing in the clouds waiting for Ken to make it over. Ken hung around for a bit before heading off and as I was the only one around I decided I’d top up my height in the cloud over Snowdon – 15 mins later and 1000’ higher I popped out of the cloud dripping wet near Yr Aran, about 3km from where I’d entered the cloud! Fantastic things these GPS’s!



From my max height there of 5,758’ I headed off in a general SSW direction with no real plan. Three thermals later I was nice and high again but the sky to the south was completely clouded over so I decided to maximise my glide by heading for the lowest bit of land – ie. the coast! So from about 5,300’ I glided about 15km down to Harlech, flying right over the castle, landing on a football pitch almost on the beach!

Getting back to the house was surprisingly easy, and after a great meal (thanks Richard) I was wondering how Sunday could beat this 3.5 hour 27km flight!

But beat it it did, and to cut a long story short - Cathy’s only got one page in Nova to fill – I had another cracking flight, this time from Elidir Fach, above the old slate quarries overlooking Llamberis. Ken had taken off first and as the quarries were obviously working I lobbed off after him. A short while later I was at base (and higher :-) over Elidir Fawr so I headed east towards the Glyders. Here I got stupidly high (6,342’) after climbing a good 2,000’ in the white room and headed over the house towards Moel Siabod, where I scratched around very low until I found a lovely climb which got me back up to 5,000’ again just to the west of Capel Curig. From here I bimbled slowly along under a rather unpromising sky for about 35km where I finally ran out of luck and landed after another fantastic 3.5 hour flight, this time flying 49km!



So what an epic weekend – needless to say I’ve been totally high on it ever since!

Tim Pentreath

XC Retrieval Tips

by Andre Odinius

I sat at my PC feeling a little sad that I had missed a great day at Talybont Wales late in April 2004. But I then thought of how I would be able to get back to the car after an epic day, being stranded in the middle of Wales, especially as the last couple of XC's in 2003 were rather arduous when it came to making my way back to the car. Anyway, I quickly posted a message on EUROPG and the AVON CLUB forum and had many responses with in hours. There were lots of good ideas and many I had not thought of. Thanks to Tim, Rich, Nev, Raphael, Andrew, Will from the Avon forum and Neil, David, Michael, David, Matthew, Fergus, Helen from Europg for your contributions. – Apologies if I have forgotten anybody.

See below a list of Tips consolidated from my own experience and the many e-mail / messages that have come in. Most of them are common sense, but it sometimes difficult to remember the most obvious things to do. I hope they will make your journey back to the car easier and maybe get you to fly again on the same day.

Planning

- Ensure you have a local map of the area you are likely to land in.
- Have a list of Taxi companies for the area you land in but more importantly for the town / village near your take off site (where your car is parked)
- Make sure your mobile is fully charged and you have credit - phone boxes are much rarer than you think.

Landing

- Don't fly the last 2K if you know you are not going to make it, especially if it takes you away from a main road, you just have to walk it back.
- Try and land near people and strike up a conversation, they maybe able to tell you where you are more accurately and where there is a good spot to catch a lift, or with a bit of luck give you a lift some of the way.
- Landing near children will mean that parents are likely to be near, also the children are likely to call them over to see the strange person that has just fallen out of the sky and may offer some help.

NOTE: Please make sure you always land safely away from livestock and people so you don't endanger them.

Public Transport

- If you are happy to try public Transport, find out where the nearest bus stop or train station is, it may get you part of the way back to the car. Remember your air map shows railway lines and train stations.
- Make sure you have enough money on you for Train, bus or Taxi fare. £20-£30, the old plastic can come in handy too. If you don't spend it you can always buy yourself that hard earned beer, cider or cup of tea ☺

Hitch Hiking

The majority of us no doubt will use this method to get as close to our parked car as possible and possibly supplement it with a short Taxi ride as necessary. Try any or all of the following ideas to improve your chances of getting a lift, in no particular order:

- Always show your glider bag
- Have a sign saying Glider Pilot, and /or a destination sign (Pen & Paper may be required to write a sign to where you want to go for each leg of your journey, or have them pre-printed for you favourite flying sites.
- Take off your sunglasses
- Smile at oncoming traffic and mouth the word please when they can see you.
- Try and look reasonably clean and tidy, nobody will take you if you look like a smelly / scruffy tramp.
- Show how happy you are, after all you just had a good XC (even if it was only 5k)
- Stand relaxed, with an open stance
- Make eye contact when ever possible
- If you happen to walk, and it is towards oncoming traffic, walk with a little wobble in your step, this will help them to see you and slow down, you can also get the sympathy vote for carrying that heavy glider bag (sorry hangies)
- If you walk past people that are getting into a car strike up a conversation, they may offer you a lift.
- Try wearing your flying suite, this makes you look more interesting

- Always position yourself somewhere where the traffic is slow, near a roundabout or 100 ft after a corner are good positions. On straight roads people tend to go too fast to stop. Bus stops and lay-bys are good positions too.
- Petrol stations are another possibility; you can stand at the exit or even ask people filling up, but be careful some proprietors don't like it.
- If you don't mind going on a motorbike show your helmet.
- Don't look too needy while waiting, maybe read a book.
- Once in the car, be safe, make a quick phone call (pretend if you want) telling a friend you have found a lift and are on your way. You can always text car details to a friend too.
- Once in the car be enthusiastic and polite but don't bore them to tears, they may not be interested in flying.
- Also don't be too pushy to make them go out of their way; if you are humble they will more likely take you that extra mile.

Walking

- Well, we all have legs, so use them, especially to get to better positions. You are better off investing 20 – 30 minutes to walk to a good spot on a road than stand somewhere where you are unlikely to get a lift.

Andre Odinius

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Tree Landings – How to do it Right!

So you can not make it to your normal landing zone and you are over a forest. Don't aim for that narrow road in the forest with tall trees because your wing tips will catch the branches, collapse your wing and make you fall to the road. Also beware of power lines next to mountain roads. Instead, pick the biggest, softest looking tree, face the wind, cross your legs (to avoid cutting a vein) and close your arms, then flare to land right in the center of it, reducing your forward speed to zero. Keep braking until you can hold on to something.



If this goes well you will end up suspended in the tree by your wing resting on the forest canopy, but you will not have a big fall to the ground. It will take time to untangle and maybe some repairs (at least an inspection), but you will have saved your bones from a fall. You can use your reserve as a "rope" to help you down. Look into your emergency kit. To get your wing out of the tree, detaching the lines from the risers can make it easier.

Consider leaving the wing in the tree to return with climbing equipment and free the wing using both hands while being secured to the tree. If the wing is caught in 2 trees, have a friend simultaneously free it from the other tree as just cutting down one tree could rip the wing. If your weight was partially or totally suspended from your wing while in the tree, have the wing and lines inspected.

Betty Pheiffer www.highenergysports.com

June 2004

Nova Pilot Profile

**Full Name?**

Kenneth Roy Wilkinson

Home?

Bristol

Occupation?

Teacher (part time at last!)

Aircraft Flown?

Vibe ML at present, Atlas before. In my Hang Gliding days I flew Aces, a Magic 3, a Cherokee, and a Midas E, which nearly killed me when I rigged it wrongly. I also built a trike, to no real plans, which flew to 300ft before the silencer fell off into the propellor, in about 1982.

How long have you been flying?

I started hg in approx 1980, and gave up in 1987, when I got bored with it. I was doing a 55 mile race to goal, cloud jumping,

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up to 6000ft, and all I could think about was what was on the telly that night. Time to do something different, and I went climbing again (my second reincarnation in this area) which lasted till 2000, when I got bored with that. Started paragliding after my wife told me to get out of the house in 2001.

Rating?

Pilot

Where do you usually fly?

Best is Frocester/Selsey, for a quick blurt, or any of the big sites in S Wales. Hay Bluff is wonderful, and I really like the Malverns. This is the place to go in an Easterly.

What was your best flight?

The XC from the Bash in 2003. 74k in a fleece top with no preparations made me laugh. It was also really good flying! I've given 4 assemblies on it at my school, and the kids think it's a really good story.

What was your worst flight?

Nearly getting sucked into a massive St Andre thunderstorm in the League in approx 1985. Clouds were forming underneath me and I had a REAL job to get down. HGs don't 'B' line very well.

What was your luckiest escape?

(see above!) Hitting the second storey of a 3 storey house in Chamonix, right at the start of my flying career. It was probably the best landing place on reflection. The glider scraped to the ground and I didn't have a scratch on me. I woke up sweating for days.

Who has most influenced you in the sport?

I've always really respected Judy Leden, for her 'go for it' attitude.

What would be your best advice for a new pilot?

There's always another day! Don't bust your neck just because others go XC or seem to be able to cope with conditions.

What would be the perfect end to a perfect flying day?

A fire in a campsite, with my van, and a really good BBQ, with a load of beer and wine, and mates who have all done a great XC/comp too, so everyone is buzzing!

What do you do if its not flyable?

Walk in the hills, DIY, work on my bike/van, plan trips.

What's your Favorite Pilots Picnic?

Anything

Which famous person in history would you choose to have been?

Tilman, or any of those superbly nutty 19th century explorers, Whympers Scott etc. They were great.

Who/what makes you laugh?

Any satire, Just a minute, The News Quiz, Private Eye, Little Britain. I like comedy, especially Paul Merton and Armando Iannucci.

What's your greatest fear?

Apart from my next landing, nothing much.

What's your biggest regret?

I am happy with most things really. I would like to be rich, so I could do more trips!

What's your motto?

Vitae multitudonum bollux est. So enjoy it while you can.



Second hand canopies

All canopies are serviced prior to sale, lines and sail and stitching are all checked. Prices reflect the age of design and the amount of life we believe is left in the wing. .

Edel Atlas small	fab condition	65-80kg	£395:00
Edel Live small	As new!	70-95kg	£1,200:00
UP Vision classic	good starter wing	90-105kg	£595.00
Ozone Vibe large	Ex Demo	100-115kg	£1,500.00
Trekking Sunbeam	very clean	95-110kg	£875.00
Sky Fides	plenty of life left	95-110kg	£650.00
Gradient Bliss L	fab and low airtime	95-120kg	£1,200:00

Montenegro, **early September 2004**. One or two weeks of flying fun, easy soaring and thermic conditions, land on the beach by the hotel! Ideal family venue, bring your non flying partners for this one, there is lots to do and the flying takes place 2,500ft above the beach resort town of Budva

Call Robin tel 01453 827202

Mobile 07973 844449

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ParAvion Ltd



ParAvion Ltd is delighted to be associated with the Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club.

Fitz and the team would like to thank all members for their encouragement and support both moral and commercial.

The Shop is being stocked up for the new season and we would remind all members that we can quickly procure virtually anything that you could possibly need for hang gliding and/or paragliding.



AdPhone, fax, e-mail or visit us

Tel - 01672 861380

Fax - 01672 861580

e-mail - fitz@par-avion.co.uk

We are UK importers of UP, Brauniger. Main dealers for most gliders and accessories.



Paranover & Hangups

Caption Competition

What is Robin up to now? Send your captions to:

Caption Competition, Nova Magazine, 112 Prestbury Drive, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 9LE. email: nova@avonhpgg.co.uk.

The winner will receive a prize kindly donated by Par-Avion paragliding school. The November winner was Nev Almond with the following caption:



The best of the rest of the entries were:

"Too many sarnies and too much tea - I knew I shouldn't have taken up Hang Gliding" Nev Almond

"I think its just a bad case of trapped wind.....Okay, I'm breathing in, take the shot now" Nev Almond

"Does my bum look big in this?" Nev Almond

"Ok you can airbrush off Hommers shorts now, we are over 18" Paul Sayers

JOB LOT FOR SALE £100

Airwave Magic III (166 size) and Solar Wings S4

Both hang-gliders have a spare pair of uprights. Both unused since 1998 due to pilot knee problems. Stored indoors (up the stairs). The Magic has had a new keel within the last 50hrs.

Various hang-gliding bits including: Podlite Harness (5'10" ex Steve Ham); Parazoot and helmet; Thunderbird Mk III vario, charger and manual. Stirrup harnesses, 2 chutes, LRL & Davron 100 varios, duplex altimeters.

Will deliver a reasonable distance. **Contact Derek Collins on 01454 318972.**



Windtech

www.windtech.co.uk
for the latest news, reviews and info

Windtech's complete range of high calibre paraglider wings and accessories are clearly a cut above the rest, carefully crafted and fine tuned by their expert team of designers and highly skilled test pilots to satisfy the most demanding needs of every free-flight fanatic. With all levels of solo glider from school, intermediate, sports, serial, high performance, right up to advanced competition gliders, and also virtuoso tandem and paramotor wings, sophisticated reserve parachutes and other superb para-phernalia, Windtech have just what you are looking for!

What the papers are saying:

"Windtech are acquiring a reputation for building well-constructed gliders with very good handling" "head and shoulders above the rest" "an exceptionally accomplished all-rounder" "so much more... than just very good performance figures" - *Skywings Magazine, UK.*

"Windtech has already fully convinced everyone about the great quality of their products" "one of the best finished paragliders I have ever seen" "optimal in every way" "outstanding" "really quite impressive" "fine-tuned handling and superb speed and performance" "outstanding security and maximum performance" "exceptionally well-balanced" "there is nothing too much and nothing too little. The whole tuning is just perfect" - *Gleitschirm Magazine, Austria.*

"a great many innovations" "the turn is simply delicious" "remarkable stability" "sophisticated, manoeuvrable, fast" "swift and efficient" "amazing qualities" - *Parapente Magazine, Spain.*

"Windtech today belong to the Greats of the paragliding trade" "weaknesses, there are none" "The quality of Windtech is convincing" "excellent qualities" "altogether excellent" "leaves nothing more to be desired" "Launching is pure enjoyment" "a pure pleasure" "extremely good-natured behaviour" "exemplary" "well balanced behaviour" - *Fly and Glide Magazine, Germany.*

"The manufacturing finish is beautiful" - *Aerial Magazine, France.*

"safety and performance... that would have been hard to imagine a few years ago." - *Noel Whittall, UK.*

"state-of-the-art, cutting-edge"
- *Bob Drury, Cross Country Magazine, UK.*

"very beautiful sail-making" "a somewhat excellent glide" "a jewel of precision and pleasure" "I love it!" "great precision"
- *Parapente Magazine, France.*



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Paragliding and Kite Surfing Equipment

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WAVE'S



The newsletter of the Avon Hang-gliding and Paragliding Club



Cayley Glider 1790

If Undelivered please return to: The Membership Secretary, Avon HG&PG Club, c/o 112 Prestbury Drive, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 9LE