

NOVA

AVON



Hang
Gliding
and
Paragliding
Club

The Magazine of the Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club



Nova February 2008

The cover photo is by Graham Richards and won the best photo prize at the Christmas bash back in December. If you're thinking where are the landing options here? read page 4 to see how the camera does occasionally lie!

Editorial

Back in December at the Club's Christmas party I waved enthusiastically - someone had gestured to see if I'd like a pint. I did. At the same time someone asked for volunteers to become Nova editor. That is how I've come to edit this magazine after Richard was upgraded to Chairman. (I wouldn't mind too much, but I didn't get the pint I'd waved for as I looked round all confused like when I heard "Thank you, Jon, you're hired" and lost eye contact with the guy at the bar!).

Anyway, I've pulled together what I hope you'll find to be a 'Super Nova'* to start the New Year with. There's plenty of reading over the following pages with lots of club updates and useful information. The hardest part so far has been trying to include all the articles and features that have been offered up.

Whilst browsing the following pages you'll notice some random sentences at the footer of the pages. No, these aren't schoolboy editor bloopers or the ramblings of a madman. Rather these footers are part of a competition, with a prize I know you'll want to win. There are fifteen lines from well known songs. All these songs have a link to flying (with various levels of lateral thinking required). I think they are all songs you'd like to fly to!

What I need from you is the title of each song to count as a correct answer. Email the editor@avonhgpg.co.uk address with your details and as many of the 15 song titles as you can recall (or have successfully 'googled'). There's a £25 voucher to spend with ParAvion to the winner (more on ParAvion later in this edition). I expect to announce the winner or perform a draw at the April club meeting. One tip, the song title from this page is NOT 'Orville's Song' but a good rock tune – All the songs ARE popular tunes! I'd like to think that collectively this would be the ideal compilation to fly to.

Hope you enjoy the following features and articles, Happy Reading, Better Flying.

Jon Rose. Editor.

* **Supernova** (plural: supernovae) a stellar explosion creating an extremely attractive and bright object. A supernova may outshine its entire surrounding galaxy before fading from view over several weeks or months.

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 those of the Committee of the Club.

NOVA can be found online at www.avonhgpg.co.uk

Send your articles to the Editor, Jon Rose, at

editor@avonhgpg.co.uk or nova@avonhgpg.co.uk

Copy deadline for the next issue: Monday 5 May 2008

Chairman's Chunter

It was good to see so many pilots at Mere this weekend (8/2/08) after a winter that seems to have been unusually long and dark. It was my first flight since becoming Chairman, and I was disappointed to find out that my new position on the committee hasn't brought about an associated improvement in my flying. But it was great to be out in the sun and wind after so long.

My new role isn't the only change in the committee. There were a few other changes at the AGM in December, and the outgoing members all deserve our thanks for their hard work. Richard Zaltzman stood down after two years as chairman, before which he was social secretary. Last year he ended up doing both roles for much of the time, as the social secretary post was vacant. Richard has worked very hard to maintain and improve the club, and he even put up with my attempts to scupper his political career by publishing scurrilous rumours in Nova! Many thanks Richard for all your hard work!

Andy Bailey also stood down. The post of membership secretary is key in ensuring that the club continues to thrive. The work is largely invisible to the members (except when you get your own renewal notification!) so I think Andy deserves our thanks for all his hard work.

Robin Brown can no longer continue as Sites Officer North as he has moved Airtopia to Montenegro. Robin will be sorely missed as he has put in a huge amount of work for the club over many years. Not only has he maintained excellent relations with the landowners of Avon's northern sites, he has also supported the club in a great many other ways – for example, organising pilot exams, promoting the club to students as they come to the end of their training, giving advice on equipment and technique, and also throwing a wild party now and again! Thanks Robin, you'll be missed, so don't lose touch.

Stafford Evans has also stood down since the AGM. Stafford has been on the committee for quite some years, so he deserves a rest – thanks for all your work Staff!

Let's also not forget the rest of the committee who are staying on; it's great to see so many people willing to give up their time to make this a great club to belong to, and to make our flying safe and fun. And most of all I would like to welcome the new members of the committee. Andre Odinius is Membership Secretary, Ali Lees is Social Secretary, and Jon Rose is now editor of Nova. And we also have two very recent additions to the committee.

Firstly, Chris Jones has taken on the newly created post of Coaching Officer. Chris has served the club in one way or another over many years and it's great to have him back on the committee with the brief of improving our coaching activities. And secondly, thanks to Graham Richards for taking over the financial reins as treasurer.

Another thing I would like to mention the way we use the club forum. I have been disappointed to hear from quite a few people that they are finding the forum less and less useful now. Some have de-registered from the forum completely, and some people simply delete postings without reading them. One of the reasons is the sheer number of postings. Most threads start out with something interesting being said, and then there are a few relevant replies. But then quite often we find that we are listening in on two people talking directly to each other! It's easy to forget that pressing "reply" sends to the entire group, so can I make a plea that we all think about whether our reply is of interest to the club as a whole before we press the send button? If your reply is to an individual, maybe you can avoid pressing "reply" and press "forward" instead?

But more seriously, I would like to avoid seeing the forum used to make personal attacks on individuals. Of course there will be disagreements, but I would hope we can disagree while still supporting and respecting each other. After all, we are a club. That is why I asked Rich Harding to put together some

2. You could have an aeroplane flying...

Nova February 2008

[posting rules](#). Please take note of these; they are not intended to suppress discussion, but they are intended to keep the discussion respectful and relevant to the membership. In that way I hope that the forum can become more useful again.

One last thing to mention is the Will Woodlands charity and Ubley. I had a meeting with the land agent, Dreweatt Neate, just after Christmas. Up to that point, the agent had repeatedly said that the charity had concerns about safety and conservation, while giving no explanation of exactly what those concerns were. It did not take long for me to find out that the "safety" concerns are really about the agent's fears regarding liability. I was told that Dreweatt Neate's contract with Will Woodlands places any liability on the land agent rather than on the charity. But no amount of discussion about this (including involvement of Steve Walsh, the BHPA's sites officer) has established why Dreweatt Neate's view of liability is so different from that of other landowners.

I was told that the "conservation concerns" are about ground-nesting birds and hawks. This makes no sense because a row of trees has been planted across the launch, an area that was previously the type of open land that ground-nesting birds like and which hawks need for hunting.

My follow-up letter made several points and asked for further explanation, but it was met with a reply that simply cut off contact with the club. (That was bizarre in itself, since Steve Walsh reported only days before that the land agent had suggested to him in a telephone conversation the possibility of allowing launching for record-breaking attempts.)

So that's where we stand: Ubley is still not a club site and the charity has broken off negotiations.

But I also have an interest as a local resident, and the poor behaviour of the land agent and Will Woodlands does not only relate to flying. They have misled the local people about what would be done at Hazel Manor, both with regard to the tree planting on launch, and regarding opening up access to the public. I, and a few other people who might be known to you (!), are looking closely at their affairs, so they have not got rid of us just yet!

But enough of this serious stuff. I'll end where I started, by looking back on a great day's flying last weekend, and by looking forward to many more in the coming season. So let's get in the mood by reading a great issue of Nova!

Fly safely, Richard

Mike Humphries' Photo of Mere, 08/02/08



3. And in this perfect weather, We'll find a place together

Social Side

Jocky for position...

Jocky Sanderson will be running a weekend of XC training for Avon Club members on the 26th & 27th of April 2008.

The cost will be £70 for the weekend which will need to be paid in advance. There are only 20 places available so please book ASAP.

If you would like to book a place, please email Ali Lees, socialsec@avonhgpg.co.uk

I will confirm that you have a place by email and send you payment details.

Meet the Guru...

Nympsfield Gliding Club's weather guru, Sid Smith, will be giving his annual Advanced Met Talk on Sat 15th March at 18:00 in the clubhouse bar.

The talk should finish around 19:30. All Welcome.

<http://www.bggc.co.uk/?page=about/howToFindUs.html>

Avon Membership Renewal 2008/9

We will be soon starting the membership renewal process for this year. We are moving with the times and will provide a new web based membership system.

This means in March this year we will request that you renew your membership on our website. We will transfer the existing membership data as far as possible but to ensure we can provide you with the required secure access we need an up to date e-mail address for every member. We collect these on the membership forms every year so if you have not changed e-mail address since the last renewal you have to do nothing. If however you changed your e-mail address or are not sure you have given us the right one, can you please send your new-email address to membership@avonhgpg.co.uk Please make sure you include your first name and surname so we can update the correct record.

The move to a web solution will bring a number of benefits most importantly we will be able to keep the membership data more securely and provide a facility for the members to keep their records up to date without the need to keep sending bits of paper around. We will also provide details to pay via Bank Transfer so you do not need to send in the cheques anymore. However, we are not going to be able to use Paypal or similar this year but we will be looking at this option for next year.

I will provide more details nearer the time.

Andre Odinius. Membership Secretary.

(Editors Note: Please only opt to have a printed Nova if you are unable to view this on a computer – we can make a big saving on printing and postage this way! Thanks).

The camera ~~never~~ sometimes lies.

Graham Richards comes clean about his award winning photo.

It all started out on a lonely hillside, too windy to launch. Waiting, Feet dangling over a cliff top; someone said "We could pretend we are flying; we could take photos of our boots and the valley and it would look like we were flying." The discussion quickly degenerated into how you could just take picture of your feet and then take pictures of... well, anywhere, and pretend you'd flown there.

All you needed was a high vantage point. You could be over the Grand Canyon, Avon Gorge or even inside St Paul 's Cathedral. The picture actually shows the Dutch city of Utrecht taken from the Dom Tower (112m) which got separated from the cathedral when the unfinished and insufficiently supported nave collapsed in a hurricane in 1674. The tower is one that must be visited as you can go in amongst the bells and also see the biggest musical box type mechanism ever.

The trick with this composite was to make sure the vario matched the apparent altitude over the town and the lighting conditions of both pictures were the same (in this case both were taken on dull days). I didn't do it win the comp but thanks to all that voted for it; I felt guilty at first but then I found out that the runner up was also a composite picture.

The editing was done using Paintshop Pro with the 2 images on different layers. The flight deck image had all the picture erased up to the deck etc and then the edge was smudged all round.

How to be a hero!

(The rules about the club awards) Ken W. January 2008.

Well! There has been some confusion about the scoring of the club competitions. I have checked with the various oracles, and pedants and here is the final word, I hope about how to get the gongs. To get scores in the XC league there are multipliers for declared flights. **The overall distance should be the determining factor except in out of ridge lift XCs, out and returns (x2) and triangles (x3).** None of this 'declared XC' bollocks but credit must be given to difficult to fly tasks, like out and returns and triangles. Many are paragliding only, some historically have been HG only, but the art of XC flying on a hangie seems to have gone out of fashion. See below for Tony Moore's generous offer to encourage XC on a hangie!

Longest XC flight.(Paragliding) This is what it says! Maximizing flights with GPS is OK but no multipliers,

XC league (Hang gliding) Pilots can rediscover the delights of XC flight with the incentive of 100 crisp one pound notes (oh! they don't exist any more, a bit like hangie XCs!) from Tony Moore who intends to win his own prize that is for the best placed flexwing in the club league, **this year only**. Pilots must not have submitted flights for other clubs in last year's national league.

XC league (Paragliding) is self explanatory. To get the best scores there is the 3 turn point maximization, which does need a GPS, and use of the GPSDUMP 3.77 program but its National XC rules, UNLESS you are entering as a club pilot, where witness evidence will suffice. You need to enter flights into the national league, with a minimum of 10k for registered pilots and 5k for club pilots. They should be entered within a month of the flight at the latest!

The Easter Cup (Dave Yeandle Trophy). Best single distance over the 4 Easter days for **PG OR HG**. Sites within 50 miles of the center of Bristol city center. If no flights then this is deferred to the next bank holiday weekend.

If there was a problem with GPS and non GPS maximized flights then gentlemen's (or ladies') rules should apply. (i.e. 2 closely scoring pilots, one with a GPS and one without should sort it out themselves, and if they can't, the committee can do it for them.)

Best DHV ½ flight, Same as above, I ceded the cup this year (first time for years!) to Nick Somerville, as although I scored 55k, it was a multiplier from a 37 k competition goal flight, so Nick, who actually covered 48 k got the gong, kudos, and all the supermodel and press attention, which I have grown accustomed to over the years. (wakes up....gets a coffee....)

Most Improved Pilot. Is judged objectively by comparing the current and previous year's XC league scores for every pilot that enters flights in the league. The winner is the person whose XC distance increases the most, BUT this can only be done in your first few years. (i.e, suppose you do 45k total, one year, then 100k, then go back to 10k, then do 140k, you would score best from the 55k increase. Your 'base' would be the highest score in previous years.) ***The committee would have discretion on this one. You can only win this once!***

Best Novice (The Osbaldstone Memorial Cup) HG or PG is for the person who gets the highest first entry in the XC league. Again, with GPS maximisers, any disputes would need to be discussed, with the longest flights being the deciding factors.) The committee would have discretion on this one. **You can only win this once!**

The Mere Bash Cup. (Newly discovered after an archeological dig in Tony Moore's attic) The longest flight, PG or HG on the Mere Bash weekend.

There's also a **best Nova article** decided by committee votes and **photo competition**, decided in a shamefully democratic way by votes from the common people at the Xmas 'do'.

If you think you are up for a gong (or a cup at least), and have paid the requisite 200k to the relevant political party then be sure to mention it to a committee member. If you haven't registered your flights within a month then forget it!

(A reference table of the club awards is towards the back of the magazine).

Nova February 2008

And the Winner Is...

The Hero's of 2007 are:



PG XC league

1st Wayne Seeley (552.2km)

2nd Jim Mallinson (502.5km)

3rd Steve Ham (475.5km)

Longest PG XC flight

Wayne Seeley

Longest PG DHV1/2 flight

Nick Somerville

Most improved pilot in the PG XC league

Nick Somerville

Best newcomer to the PG XC league

Rod Taylor

Best flight during the Easter weekend

Andre Odinius (48.1km)

Best Nova article

Paul Whatley

Best photograph

Grahams Richards

Towards the end of this issue is the table of all the clubs awards for you reference and heroic plans!

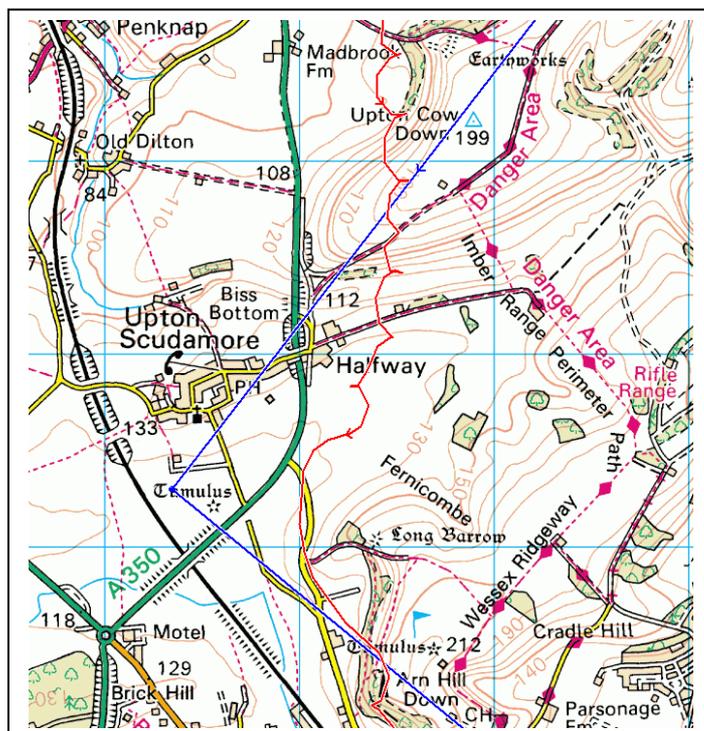
7. She packed my bags last night pre-flight, Zero hour nine a.m...

Pigs Can Fly by Nick Somerville.

The British winter can certainly seem a protracted sentence of frustration to the homebound free flyer and unless you are happy enough to drag yourself up your local slopes dressed in a dozen layers of survival gear, for some ridge soaring, then dreaming of being in your first thermal of the year is the only real solace.

By mid March of this year I reckon I was pretty knotted up with the anticipation of a decent flight and my expectant visits to Weather Jack were not providing me with the news I wanted. However, on March 19th WJ predicted a 5 for the 21st with classic northerly conditions following a cold front. So armed with this news I designed a cunning escape from the classroom for the afternoon and by the time the sound of the school lunch bell had finished ringing in my ears I was scampering out to the car park. Arriving at a breezy Westbury, the sky looked promising out in front of the North ridge but immediately to the West it was worryingly blue.

I had arranged to meet my mate Paul Ebbert and he was already soaring when I took to the air. A cycle came through after a couple of beats and we worked this up and around to the west. It was still looking pretty blue towards Warminster but there were good clouds further south and to the east. The thermal we were in seemed the only hope of getting beyond the danger zone and with the lure of the cloud streets beyond I stuck with it. Paul was quite a bit lower and rightly was making avoiding the zone his priority. Sadly this took him down at 15km, but nevertheless he was delighted with his first UK XC.



A good climb out at the edge of Upton Scudamore had me up to 5300' following a very useful cloud street at temperatures well below freezing. I was able to push hard until I was the other side of Compton Abbas when everything seemed to fizzle out. A few miles short of Blandford I hooked a useful low save over a grubbed up field full of pig huts and circled back to 3500' where for a while I shared the thermal with a sailplane. I had a bit

Nova February 2008

of a top up over Blandford and then a glide to the deck for a PB of 56km. Delighted and then gutted to find out that I had clipped the pesky danger zone and the flight would not count on the league.

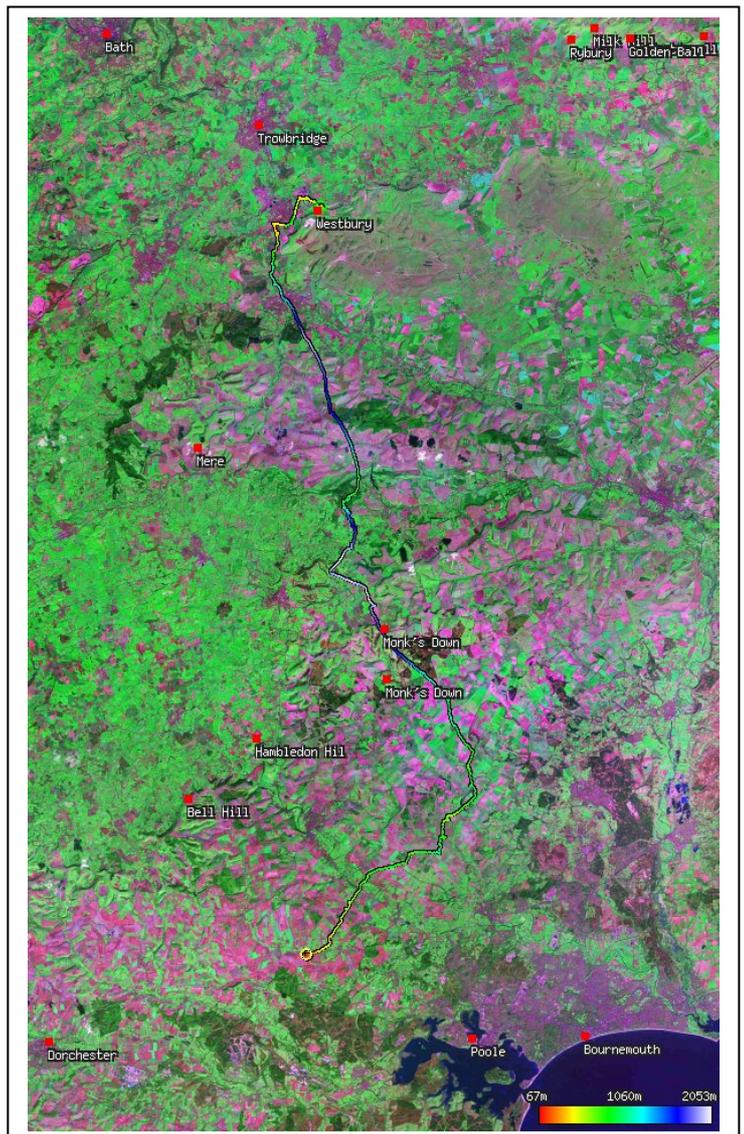
Having learnt my lesson regarding airspace infringements I was hopeful of another chance to repeat the flight, but then 'pigs can fly!' I had to wait until August until conditions were on my side. For the 8th August Sid (Bristol Gloucestershire Glider Club) had forecast a late start of 3pm with base rising to well over 5000'. I arrived at Westbury at 3.30pm to find a whole bunch of pilots strewn along the North ridge and some in the air. Obviously I'm not the only one who takes time off work! The sky was starting to look epic and I launched into a strong cycle that hoovered me straight up to 3000' ato. I used the height to get out over the cement factory and then drifted back over town where my next climb had me up to over 5000'. This time I was tracking well clear of the zone and I was able to relax and enjoy the view of Centre Parks over at Longleat.

A few miles east of Shaftesbury a really big cloud drew me up to an amazing 6742 feet at which point I bottled and flew out to the fringes. From there I could see the Bristol Channel back over my right shoulder and Poole harbour and the south coast ahead, stunning. The sky began to blue out and I was heading up towards Bournemouth airspace. I started tracking west to avoid it and as I was now getting low I starting scanning the ground for possible thermal sources.

Not far from Kinston Lacy I spotted a pig field and drifted over it remembering the low save on my last flight. To my amazement this one was working just as well and I was soon happily topped up enough to continue on my way around the airspace. I drifted on to land near Bere Regis at 6.40pm for 66km, a new PB for both distance and height gain.

Both flights had been on predicted very Good flying days and a look at the national league shows that loads of pilots around the UK posted good flights on the same days, many of them much longer than mine.

So if going XC is your thing my advice would be to keep an eye on the weather gurus, plan your escape from work with the cunning of a fox and when you're in the air but getting low, look out for those pigs!



9. And I can feel it coming in the air tonight...

The Competition Scene explained!

By Ken Wilkinson

Right! So you've got your pilots rating, and now you want to try to compete a bit to see what you can do!

Well here's a review of what and how you can compete, The trouble is it gets quite committing after a while although competition flying can really get in your blood. It also is a way of bringing your standard up very quickly. I always reckon the best flying and certainly the most interesting occurs away from the hill so this is a way of getting you on your way on your journey into XC flying....

First, the lowest level of competition is the **British Club Challenge** or BCC (shortly, I hope to be renamed the Airwave Cup, as we hope to get sponsorship from Airwave). This is a national series that has teams of 6 pilots competing. The best 4 pilots score and the team gets points based on cross country distance. (Its pretty well always open distance XC).

There are multipliers to reduce the scores of higher rated pilots and higher rated gliders, so an advanced pilot on a competition wing would score $0.8 \times 0.8 (=0.64)$ of the distance of a club pilot on a low grade glider. The big advantages are that its FUN! costs zip, once your club has paid the fee, and it gives the budding XC pilot the incentive to leave the hill. We have had some great days doing this, its club flying that commits you to doing your best and is great training for anyone who wants to do XC. In truth there are a lot of very experienced pilots who do this and who probably should not but they bring on the newer pilots with their experience.

GPS not needed, as we actually believe pilots who declare where they got to. There were 54 competitions around the country last year but only 7 were flown due to the appalling summer weather. There is a final which this year will be at the Long Mynd in mid or late August. I'm the club captain though I also organize the series and we have won the series a number of times. See me if you want to get involved. It's a great laugh. Recommended as soon as you want to go XC. Check out <http://www.flybcc.co.uk/> and <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FLYBCC>

Then there's the **British Paragliding Cup**, (BPC) which has 5 comps around the UK. This means traveling the length of the country for a load of rubbish weather at times, so it needs commitment. Cost works out at 15 pounds a day for 2 and 3 day comps and you do get T shirts and there are proper prizes and the like. Scores are based on distance for a part, and on timed sections, so fast gliders benefit. Many pilots only do a few of the rounds. Sounds like fun if you get the weather, and you will need a GPS for tracklogs. Much more organized than the BCC. Recommended as soon as you feel up to it, after a year or two of BCC? if you are ambitious... Check out <http://www.bpcup.co.uk/>

The top series is the **British Open Series**, (The Nationals) which attracts mostly the big boys, and has a high standard of competition. Three competitions a year and they cost a lot (over 200 pounds) and 2 of the three comps will be abroad so this is not cheap. You need to have experience to be accepted into this series as they don't want beginners messing up tight thermaling. GPS and all the kit of course, and you could be declared

Nova February 2008

British Champion if you do this! Most pilots are on Comp wings which are very good and fast though there was even some idiot on a DHV ½ this year (me).

See <http://www.pgcomps.org.uk/>

The **Club XC league** needs you to send your flight to the pgcomps site above, and you don't need to pay 5 pounds or even have a GPS provided you get witnesses for the take off and landing coordinates. Its associated with the **UK XC league** which needs a 5 pound entry fee, pilot rating and a GPS and you download your tracklog to a central database, so cheating is out if the question.

Finally there's the PWC (Paragliding World Cup) which has several comps all around the world and you have to be a Sky-God on a wing that is thinner than Kylie Minogue's knickers to even contemplate this, and of course the European and Worlds but somehow if you are going for these I don't think you will need to read this article!!

See me to get in the BCC team. We will put in 2 teams this year, as always, (A and B) and there's always room. Its normally SE Wales so we have some great weekends here camping, and socializing in the campsite in Llangattock. See you there!

WHITE HORSE MARQUEES

Sponsors of the Mere Bash

Why not try flying something different in 2008 like Bertie's new open-cockpit microlight (below left)?

Full training up to NPPL given in this fantastic fun flying machine!

Or how about flying on water with a Sky Ski Hydrofoil (below right)?

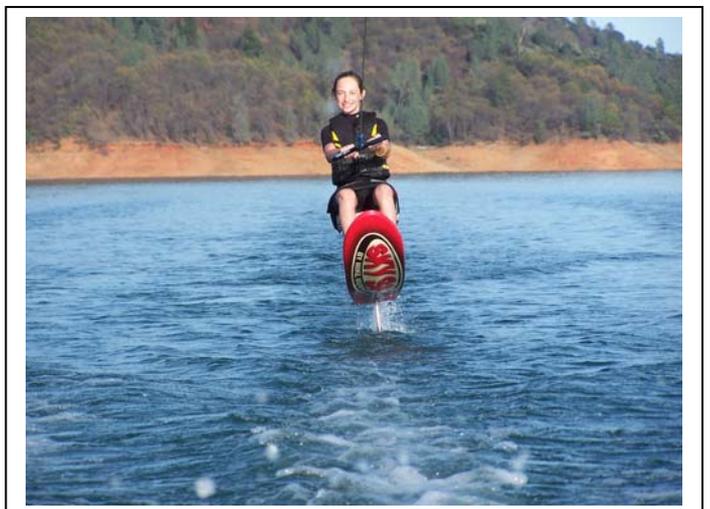
Trial flights by appointment.

White Horse Marquees

Tel. 01985 840705

whitehorsemarquees.co.uk

foilflyer.co.uk



These Things I Know...

Chris Jones shares a few 'home truths' with us.

1. The number of flyable days is inversely proportional to the number of days you have free to go flying.
2. Conditions will always look better than they actually are when seen through the office window.
3. You can't go flying when you want to, you HAVE to go flying when it is flyable!
4. If you never rig it / get it out of the bag, you are never going to fly it!
5. They'll always be another day to fly, so don't fly if the conditions are beyond your personal limits.
6. Just because somebody else is flying in those conditions it doesn't mean you'd enjoy it. (Or even that they are enjoying it!)
7. Better to be down here wishing you were up there, than up there wishing you were down here.
8. You haven't landed until your feet touch the ground...for the final time.
9. The conditions will always get better 10 minutes after you leave if you decide to go home early.
10. If you are late, conditions will inevitably have been better just before you arrived on the hill, so get there early.
11. If you can find one thermal the chances are you can find another one, just learn where to look for them.
12. You have to actually be in the air to catch a thermal.
13. And finally....There really IS no place like cloudbase!

If you know some 'things' about flying that you wish to share, perhaps you can write a similar article for the May Nova?

Email to the editor@avonhgpg.co.uk

Nova February 2008

Triple X Free-Flying Festival



Website: www.leavesleyaviation.com

Info on the venue: www.walcothall.com

When: 20th - 22nd of June.

Where: Walcott Hall, Lydbury North, close to the Long Mynd

The Triple X Free Flying festival will be held at the weekend of the 20th – 22nd June 2008 at Walcott Hall, Lydbury North, Shropshire. This is the inaugural event in what is hoped will become an annual event. Held near the legendary Long Mynd flying site, there will be plenty of opportunity for flying, whatever level of experience pilots have.

The festival will to be an event for the whole free-flying community, with flying and non-flying activities planned for each day of the festival. Activities confirmed to date are:

- Free-flying trade fair with major exhibitors and manufacturers
- Aviation car boot sale
- Acro display from multiple world acro champion Raul Rodriguez
- Model aircraft displays
- Ground handling seminars
- Free flying films
- Beer tent sponsored by the famous Three Tuns Brewery
- DJs, bands and lots more.

Whatever the weather, the festival promises to be fun for all attendees!

Organiser Mark Leavesley says: "We hope the event will be MASSIVE! It should be the best free flying event this year."

Costs:

- (before 1st April 2008) Full festival pass 3 days £40
(after 1st April 2008) Full festival pass 3 days £50
Day pass £15
- Aviation car boot sale stand £20 for 3 days
- Children under 12 years old – free
- Trade stand (bringing your own tent) £200
- Trade stand (in provided marquee) £250

All profits are going to the local children's hospice

Contact Details: Mark Leavesley, 01588 630253 or info@leavesleyaviation.com

British Gentlemen Triumph Overseas

In the August issue of Nova last year, Andre Odinius told us about his experience when twelve Avon pilots travelled to Laragne in France to conquer the infamous Chabre ridge. Pilots over the years have visited Chabre, some making great achievements and some finding themselves daunted by the awesome spectacle. But there was a time when no Avon pilot had ever made the arduous journey involved in reaching such remote locations to fly in the wide-open skies of foreign lands. This article provides the historical perspective by looking back to the very first expedition. (With apologies to W E Bowman).

I had initially hesitated to take on the responsibility of leading a team on an expedition to the mountains of southern Frankistan. I knew that such a task would not be easy, and that I would be heavily dependent upon my team if the expedition were to be a success. But the Chairman of the Gentlemen's Association of Flying Machine Enthusiasts of South West England was very persuasive, and I eventually agreed to accept this great honour.

My first task was to pick a team of men whose knowledge and technical abilities would complement each other, whilst also ensuring that they would be agreeable companions with whom to work and take whatever leisure the exigencies of our mission would afford us. After much deliberation and soul searching I selected a team of twelve, myself included, who I felt would give us the greatest chance of success. I am pleased to report that their magnificent efforts lived up to all of my expectations, and they were undoubtedly responsible for the splendid success of our expedition. The team members were as follows:

Stafford Effings was our Transport Officer. His occupation in a steam railway enterprise would fit him well to plan our means of locomotion on our long journey to the southern highlands of Frankistan. He had been high.

Graham Bachwards had a keen interest in modern navigation instruments, and was to be our Navigation Officer. Had been higher than most.

Richard Barding was to manage our supplies using an automatic calculating machine of his own devising. He was also renowned for providing sung entertainment. Had been as high as most.

Iain McFrenzy, the expedition Risk Manager. We would be dependent on his safety assessments throughout our journey. Had been nearly as high as most.

Paul Tinfoil, was to be our translator, and was the only Frankistani speaker in the team. Had been high enough.

Dr Michael Rashpale was the expedition Medical Officer. Was rumoured to have been high.

Andre Odiferous was our Logistics Officer. Was expected to go high.

Rodney Taylspin was to be our security man. He would be responsible for securing our

supplies against theft by the local Frankistanis, who were thought to maraud abroad. Would go high if called upon to do so.

Steuart Hardwick was to be our scout. He would go ahead of the main party and make arrangements with the local people to prepare for our arrival. In civilian life he also had extensive experience as a carpenter, and would be able to make shelters for us if the need arose. Would go high enough if required.

Michael Dumpfree was our Sanitation Officer. In civilian life he was very experienced in matters relating to disposal of waste products. His skills would be tested to the limits on the expedition. Intended to go high if his duties permitted.

Mark Noshnaan had travelled to the Subcontinent and so was experienced in foreign travel. His knowledge of local cuisine and its effects on the Anglo-Saxon constitution would be invaluable. Would try very hard to go high.

Effings had advised us that transport was very primitive in Frankistan, and that we would not be able to rely on the infrastructure of our host country. We decided therefore to travel in a number of charabancs which we procured in England. These vehicles would carry both us and our flying machines. Our journey was uneventful, and we arrived at our destination late at night. We had been hoping that Hardwick would be there to direct us to base camp and to introduce us to our porters, but there was no sign of him. So we erected our tents as best we could in the darkness.

We prepared a meagre meal, since most of our provisions had been sent via a different route. Odiferous assured me that they would arrive in the morning, and so Barding began tinkering with his calculating engine so that he could account for the supplies when they arrived.

After consuming our sustenance, Barding produced his guitar and sang to us. But after one song the team became concerned that he may consume his energies in advance of our attempt. They begged him to stop, and Bachwards went so far as to remove his instrument from him. Such concern for a team member, and such dedication to the success of our mission, gladdened my heart. It was gratifying to know that I had chosen such a well-matched team.

At that point a group of Frankistani men approached us making unintelligible utterances. I summoned Tinfoil to translate, and after he had awoken from his post-prandial doze, he listened intently to what they had to say. After some minutes he told me that they were speaking a local dialect with which he was unfamiliar, but that they were probably begging for money. At that point Effings spoke up. "You &*%!@ idiot," he said, "they are our porters."

There followed a frank discussion between Effings and Tinfoil in which both sides fully aired their views. I congratulated myself on having such men in my team, as it is very important that no misunderstandings are allowed to occur on an expedition such as ours.

Early the next morning I was rudely awoken at sunrise by the roar of a locomotive passing close to our encampment. Having woken Effings, who did not seem to have heard the commotion, I expressed my surprise to him. He stated that the railway had probably been

Nova February 2008

recently constructed for the Frankistanis by a foreign government, and that news of its construction had not yet reached civilised countries. I accepted this explanation with relief, as it showed how thorough was Effings' knowledge of the world's railway systems.

I also received another surprise. In the light of the dawn I could see that all around our encampment were many other tents. We were not alone! I could only conclude that rival expeditions had heard of our attempt, and mounted their own in a quest to wrest glory from the British. This of course made me even more determined that success should be ours. This meant that our attempt would have to take place this very day.

It was as I tried to rouse the rest of the team from their tents, that Hardwick appeared from the direction of the nearest village. He greeted me jovially, and apologised for not being present at our arrival. He had, he said, made contact with the local Frankistanis and had established a fruitful rapport with them. So much so, that in the days since his arrival he had taken to making regular visits to spend time with a Frankistani family. He said he had felt the need to get wood every day, and while he was in the village doing so, he had taken to giving English lessons to some of the young ladies, to whom education was denied by Frankistani cultural mores. He had only just returned from the village this morning because the young ladies placed such demands on him, and they had kept him up all night. I must admit that Hardwick's appearance did betray an apparent lack of rest, so I advised him to recuperate his energies, while complimenting myself on having selected such a selfless person.

I then noticed that in spite of the passage of the locomotive, not all of our company was present. I enquired of Effings, and was informed that Rashpale had blood pressure and had prescribed himself bedrest. Dumpfree and Noshnaan had apparently been engaged at the latrines for the last hour. I established that Noshnaan was rather suffering from flux of the alimentary canal and that Dumpfree had the opposite problem.

But no one seemed to know where Taylspin and McFrenzy were, and it was fortunate that I noticed sounds of exertion coming from their tent. After some confused conversation through the canvas, Taylspin finally admitted that he was unable to release the fastening of his tent. He said that he would have been able to release himself with ease had he a full set of the tools of his trade. But he said that to save weight he had only brought with him a set of skeleton keys. At that point McFrenzy awoke, unfastened the opening at the opposite end of the tent, emerged yawning into the late morning sunlight, and slumped into a chair saying that he had a bad feeling about the day.

After a breakfast of eggs sold to us at a surprising price by the porters, we were finally ready to set out on our attempt. It was then that we realised that during our preparations the other teams had left the encampment, leaving all their tents behind. We concluded that our arrival had simply proved too daunting for them. Our meticulous organisation and clear capabilities had dented their confidence, and they had left in a hurry to prevent embarrassment.

We set off for the mountain with Bachwards leading, his pack bristling with instruments. Barding and Odiferous were carrying Rashpale, who had now diagnosed himself as having lymphatic fluid. They were having a heated discussion about who should carry the heavy end. I was pleased that I had chosen two such well-matched men, who were not embarrassed to tell each other their feelings.

Nova February 2008

But I was also puzzled as to why Rashpale was not being carried by the porters. Tinfoil explained that he had negotiated the porters' wages, but that the concept of carrying was not easy to convey to the Frankistani mind. At that point Effings directed some forceful and colourful Anglo-Saxon towards one of the porters, who then reluctantly hoisted Rashpale onto his back.

Some time into our ascent, Bachwards and I caught up with our companions. They had inexplicably stopped and were talking animatedly together. I was pleased to see that they had formed such a tight-knit group, but was rather alarmed when they started pointing and shouting about flying machines in the sky. My vision was somewhat blurred by the effects of exertion at such altitude, and I could not see what they were pointing at. I concluded that their delusions were due to problems of the eye similar to mine, and possibly occasioned by the deleterious effect of altitude on the mind. I told my team in no uncertain terms to keep their minds on the job in hand. Sometimes a leader's role is a lonely one, but lead he must.

But then I realised that it was rather odd to find myself catching up with the rest of the team. Bachwards and I had set out in the lead. At this point Noshnaan emerged from the bushes nearby and grabbed Bachwards' instruments. "You fool," he said, "you haven't released the catch." It seems he was right, Bachwards had led us in a giant circle around the mountain.

When we eventually reached the summit, it was heartening to see Rashpale recover his energies. He jumped off the porter's back, declared himself completely cured, and set about preparing his flying machine. Taking their lead from him, the rest of the team did likewise. Evening was approaching and there was not much time to complete our mission of flying from the mountains of southern Frankistan. I was, however, pleased to see that the large cumulus clouds of the day had dispersed, and that the evening sky was a perfect blue, with the sun making long shadows across the valley. Conditions for our flight would be perfect – we would be able to glide down to our base camp without turbulence disturbing the airflow over our flying machines.

Within minutes we were all ready to fly, and we launched into the thin mountain air. What a spectacle we must have made as our colourful flying machines made the glide down to our landing field next to the camp! We landed in quick succession, climbed from our machines and shook each other warmly by the hand. We had succeeded!

We then became aware of cheering coming from the direction of the camp. It was the members of the other expeditions! Effings said he thought it sounded more like jeering, but I told him that they had obviously returned to congratulate us when they heard that our attempt was likely to succeed. As I bowed to acknowledge the honour, it made me proud to know that the British had been first to fly in Frankistan, and that members of other nations from around the world had been present to see it.

Nova February 2008

"Pick any prize from the top shelf". (The prizes we award in the Club)

Discipline	Award	Prize	Rules
HG	HG XC league	Shield, glassware and £100 cash	The shield and glassware are for the best placed flexwing or rigid in the Avon club HG league. In addition, the best placed flexwing will win the cash award. The prize money is kindly donated by Tony Moore for the 2008 season only. Pilots who have submitted flights in the previous year in the national league with a non-Avon affiliation are excluded from this award.
PG	PG XC league	1 st Shield and glassware	Flights must be entered in the Avon club PG XC league, and the prizes will be awarded to the pilots who are placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd at the end of the XC season.
		2 nd Glassware	
		3 rd Glassware	
PG	Longest PG XC flight	Glassware	The prize will be awarded to the pilot with the longest flight entered in the Avon club PG XC league. No distance multipliers are allowed although 3 turn point maximisers are.
PG	Longest PG DHV1/2 flight	Glassware	The prize will be awarded to the pilot with the longest flight on a DHV1/2 glider entered in the Avon club PG XC league. No distance multipliers are allowed although 3 turn point maximisers are.
HG	Most improved HG pilot	Glassware	The winner will be decided by the committee based on a review of all HG pilots' progress during the year. An individual can only win this prize once.
PG	Most improved PG pilot	Glassware	The current and previous year's scores in the Avon club PG XC league will be compared for every pilot that enters flights in the league. The winner is the person whose score increases the most. Note that this is intended to apply only to a pilot's first few years (i.e. if a pilot's total distances in four consecutive years are 45km, 100km, 10km and 140km, the 55km increase would count but the 40km increase would not). An individual can only win this prize once.
PG and HG	Best novice pilot HG and PG	The Osbaldstone Memorial Cup and glassware	The prize is available to pilots who enter flights in the Avon club HG or PG XC league for the first time. The winner is the highest placed pilot among that group of pilots. An individual can only win this prize once.
PG and HG	Longest flight during the Easter weekend	Dave Yeandle Shield	The prize is awarded for the longest flight made during the four days of the Easter weekend (i.e. Good Friday, Saturday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday). The flight must be made from a site within a 50 mile radius of Bristol city centre (defined as J3 of the M32). If no flight is claimed, then the award is made available for flights made in the three days of the following bank holiday weekend. If the prize is still not claimed, the award continues to "roll over" to successive bank holiday weekends, the late August bank holiday being the last occasion.
PG and HG	Mere Bash challenge	Tankard	The prize is awarded for the longest flight flown from any Avon site during the Saturday and Sunday of the Mere Bash.
N/A	Best Nova article	Glassware	The winner is decided by an email vote by members following publication of the last Nova issue of the year.
N/A	Best photograph	Glassware	Photographs are displayed at the Christmas party. The winner is decided by a vote during the party.

Notes: 1) Prizes are awarded annually in December, usually at the Christmas party. 2) Only fully paid-up members of the Avon club are eligible for the awards. 3) League flights are only admissible for the awards if the pilot's primary affiliation is to the Avon club. 4) The Avon club PG XC league consists of flights entered in the national league (<http://www.pgcomps.org.uk>) where Avon is listed as the pilot's club affiliation. Flights can be entered directly with Avon club affiliation via <http://www.avonhgpg.co.uk/timp/avonpgxc2/index.html>. 5) The Avon club HG XC league is at <http://www.avonhgxc.dsl.pipex.com>. 6) Cross-country multipliers and maximisation around turnpoints are allowed according to the rules of the relevant league, except where stated. 7) League flights must be entered within one month of the flight. 8) Where pilots dispute claimed flights they must in the first instance agree which is the better claim between themselves. Failing this, the club committee will decide. 9) Pilots are expected to interpret the above rules in a sportsman-like manner. The club committee will exercise its discretion where necessary. 10) The committee's decision is final in all cases.

Safety Snippets from Richard Hellen

We are all, of course, our own Safety Officer. My role is merely to remind us of this fundamental fact, and to reflect back some of the gobbets of safety wisdom gathered from near and far. So here's a few to waken that cautionary inner voice that will, I hope, keep us all safe with big grins on face over the year ahead.

Get Ground Handling

It's been foul, wet and windy so, apart from a lucky few, we are all creaking with rusty ground handling skills. So why not take even just an hour or so before leaping off to waken the muscle memory of ground handling. And to get inspired, borrow a DVD on ground handling like the one recently produced by the Ozone crew.

Check your Kit

If you haven't recently had the benefit of an annual glider service by professionals, dig back into memory to recall what you were taught in basic training regarding checking your wind – and harness – and put this into practice. And really look for those little nicks and tears in the wing surface and internals. One way of doing this is to get a bit glider proud and give it a wash with clean water – no detergents please. I know, it's going to get muddy again as soon as you go out onto a damp site, but at least you might just give the impression you've bought a new glider.

Gin Speed Bar Weakness in Wire Stirrup

A few of us have had failures of the wire stirrup bit of this model of Gin speed bar. So far this has not resulted in anyone being left pinned without being able to push forward. So if you have this type of speed bar, just check the place where the plastic covered wire stirrup meets the bar. You will see the warning signs of the rubber sleeve splitting. I will probably replace my speed bar, but in the meantime fit a backup basic speed bar in parallel – belts and braces as they say.

Harness Buckle Shrouds

I said at the beginning of this piece that my job is to share useful safety insights provided by others. Here's one from Morgan Nicholas:

Some harnesses come with strap adjusters or buckles that have removable shrouds. The reason for this is to prevent something rather nasty happening just after something equally nasty has just happened. Imagine – you have just hit one of those punchy spring thermals (oh yes, I have to mention them at this time of year), your wing collapses so much that the lines go so loose that they try to wrap themselves around your harness and they find somewhere to grab hold and snag – one of your buckles. There is very little chance of freeing the snagged line, the wing is grossly deformed and you are entering a spin / stall / whatever. Of course your only option now is to throw your reserve and hope. Far better would be to prevent the snagging in the first place.

What I did was to cut strips of a fairly stiff material, leatherette actually, but I expect that thin neoprene would do as well. These are then held snugly round those innocent looking buckles with the ubiquitous Velcro.

So, if you have your own safety snippet, feel free to send them my way for future inclusion in a future Safety Snippets

ParAvion Paragliding Centre

ParAvion is a school and shop run by Trevor McLoughlin and is based in Marlborough.

The shop

This operates from both the Marlborough base and is also on-line. In summer, we're normally open seven days a week between 9.30am and 5.30pm. Occasionally we'll close for an hour or two, so if you're travelling any distance it's best to call us first. In winter we close on the odd non-flying day (especially Sundays) and occasionally we'll close for the afternoon, so it's even more important that you call.

The School

At ParAvion we put our emphasis on quality not quantity. In other words we train fewer students to a higher standard rather than a lot of students to a medium/low standard. To achieve this:

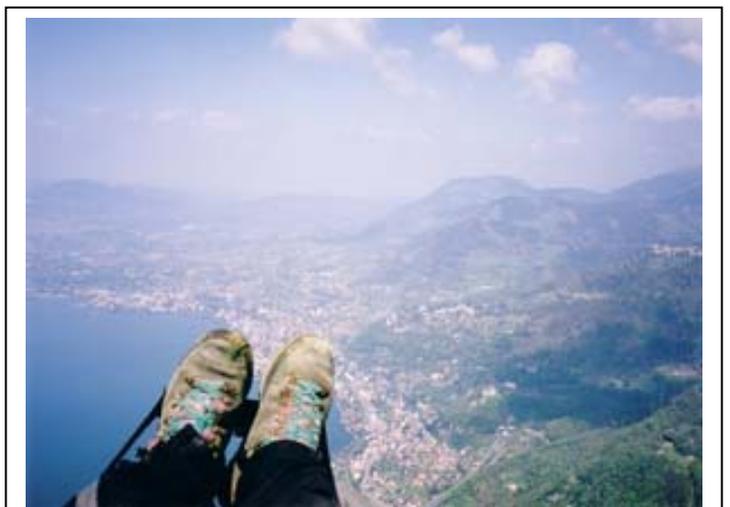
- We have private and exclusive grass covered slopes on which to train (we pay a high price to keep these private).
- We will not teach on crowded club sites (most schools do).
- We will only use the latest, safest and most modern equipment (it is replaced or updated every year).
- We do the first five or six days of your training using a winch launch system

Trips Abroad

There is also the SkyGypsy side to the business that offers advanced flying trips abroad.

Contacts:

Elm Tree Park, Marlborough, Wiltshire. SN8 1PS
Telephone: (01672) 861380. Fax: (01672) 861580
email: office@par-avion.co.uk



Club Coaching in the Avon Club. By Chris Jones.

I've been asked to do a Warren Gatland and try and re-energize the club coaching system in the Avon Club. Over the years it's had some high profile moments but recently it has become a bit too low profile.

Now I've no intention of doing this all by myself so I'm going to be asking for volunteers to help. I'll also be fingering a few people I know who would be perfect for the roles I have in mind. But please don't wait for me to ask ☺

So what's new?

The first thing the club is going to do is to appoint some sites specific coaches.

The idea is that these coaches will be some of the pilots most often found flying particular sites. Their role will be to act as specific contact for newer pilots wanting some "coaching" about flying a particular site. They'll also be encouraged to help get pilot task sheet signed off. Their names, photos (see I've had to do it, so will you!) and contact details will be published (securely) on the web so that they can be contacted by pilots looking for help.

Now these coaches need not be the site guru's, but they should know who the sites guru's are. Their role will be to introduce pilots to the site and help them get the best from their first few visits. Neither will these coaches be alone, the idea is to get as many site coaches as possible and encourage them to work as a team. The aim being to make new pilots feel at home, enhance safety and reduce site infringements. Get more of a club thing going.

Now all this probably happens in part already, all we want to do is formalise it a little and ensure that it is sustained. The idea is to make the club as welcoming as possible to newer pilots and in the longer term to help all pilots advance their skill levels.

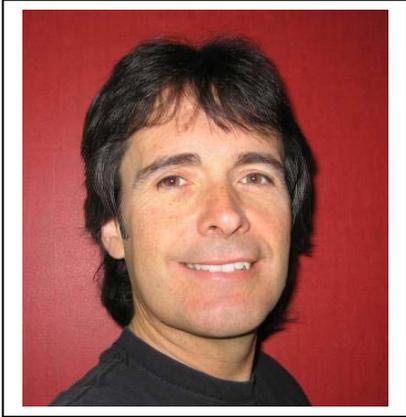
So who wants to volunteer?

I'll be trampled in the rush I expect. If you have a club coach rating why not volunteer to help for your favourite sites. Yes sites, more than one if you like. Chances are you'll be nothing more than a recognisable face to those who have browsed the web site. But hopefully you'll have been able to meet up with a few new pilots and introduce them to the site and your flying mates.

Send me an email at coach@avonhgpg.co.uk if you'd like to help. Or you can phone me on 07966 170014.

Later in the year we'd like to get some more coaching events organised; some away days, local task setting, fun comps etc. If you have any ideas on that front just let me know. What ever happens, coaching should not be a burden to the coach, so if you don't feel you have the time to spare then fine. But I hope that everybody who has taken the trouble to get coach rated will be able to offer some support at some point during the year.

Oh yeah, if you were wondering what I looked like see the photos on the next page.



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Nova February 2008

Avon Snowdonia Trip, May 16th - 23rd.

Many years ago, in the dark mists of time ('98 on - which makes this the tenth anniversary), a group from the club (almost none of whom still both live in the UK and fly!!) started going up to a cottage in the heart of the Snowdonia National Park for the remainder of the week that used to start with Paramania (which used to take place on the May Day Bank Holiday).

Over the years the trip has become marginally more flying and less wine-oriented, although a good time is had by all - nothing is ever guaranteed but two of the last three years we have flown seven days in a row (the other year we flew only one day but it was stunning).

The house we stay in, Hafod Y Gwynt, is delightful, as are its grounds - it is the only other building next to the Pen Y Gwryd, the famous mountaineering hotel that sits at the meeting point of the roads from Llanberis, Beddgelert and Capel Curig meet. You can walk out of the door and then direct to six take offs (that I can think of), the closest being the lower Glyders take off and the Moel Berfedd one (20 mins walk), from where you are just a house thermal from flying up Snowdon. (Grid Ref: SH 661 556).

Facilities:

Pub next door (meals only available at lunchtime).

Bus stop outside makes retrieves easy.

Lovely, spacious house.

Decent cooking facilities.

Payphone in house (mobiles only generally work if you walk up the very lower slopes of the Glyders but service may have improved).

Shops in Llanberis (good Spar), Capel Curig, Betws-Y-Coed.

Need to bring: towels; top and bottom sheets / duvet covers + pillowcases (or use sleeping bag).

We also have a very good knowledge of all the other sites in the area and an excellent relationship with the Snowdonia Club. Last year we even found them a new site, flew it for a few hours and set an initial XC record!

We have moved the trip dates around over recent years. This year we are using the penultimate full week of May, which means it might be an idea to bring camping gear so, if the weather is good, you can stay over the Bank Holiday weekend (although you'll have to move to one of the public sites). The lambing period will be over so Moel Berfedd will be available. The other suitable week is May 30th - June 6th but this is right up against the Chabre Open, which a lot of members (and Snowdonia regulars) will be hoping to attend.

I pay for the house and then we work the cost out based on how many nights everyone stays. It generally costs about 10 pounds pppn, normally including food, which we tend to cook communally. You don't have to cook but, hey, even I muck in so bring a good excuse! The flying is suitable for all skill levels - if you're new, I've twice been PG Low Airtime Contact for the club, so newbies more than welcome. I'll announce this on the

Yahoo!Group and be taking bookings shortly. **Rich Harding.**

Hang on a Minute...

(Summary of the Committee meeting of 14/02/08).

New committee members – Graham Richards and Chris Jones were welcomed to the committee as Treasurer and Coaching Officer respectively.

Membership – Andre Odinius reported on plans to maintain members' details via the club website. Access will be password protected. Members will be able to update their details and renew their membership online. Initially it will not be possible to pay the membership fee via the website, but it will be possible to make an electronic transfer to the club's bank account.

Coaching – Chris Jones is making plans to enhance the club's coaching activities. He is assembling a list of the club's active coaches with a view to deciding whether more coaches are needed. Chris briefed the committee on the BHPA's new scheme by which coaches must be re-validated periodically to ensure that they are active and current - the club's Chief Coach will have to sign a re-validation when the coach's membership is renewed. Coaches will be encouraged to re-attend the BHPA's coach course at least every five years, and the committee will take a view on whether to mandate this. The committee decided that the club would not subsidise fees for coach courses because the cost could be substantial to the club, noting that members who are committed to active coaching are likely to regard attendance as an enhancement to their own flying skills.

Speed flying – The committee discussed the new sport of speed flying. In line with the BHPA's thinking, it decided that speed flying is simply another free-flight discipline that the club should accommodate. Speed-flying wings have flying characteristics that differ from those of hang gliders and paragliders, but the differences are no greater than the differences between hang gliders and paragliders. A parallel was drawn with the early days of paragliding, when the subject of combined hang-gliding and paragliding clubs was debated.

The committee therefore decided to welcome speed flyers into the club. As with all of the club's members, speed flyers will be expected to comply with the BHPA's rules and guidance, to comply with the club's rules and guidance, to show good airmanship and consideration, and to comply with the rules of any site they fly.

Christmas party venue – An alternative venue for the Christmas party will be sought, and the format of the event will be reviewed.

Club awards and prizes – A list has been made of the club's awards and prizes, along with the rules for winning them. This will be published in Nova and on the website.

Club equipment – The committee discussed the possibility of buying a projector for use at the club's meetings and events. It was decided that the expense of a projector of sufficient quality was not justified.

NOTAMs for mid-week flying – The importance of notifying the military of mid-week flying was stressed. It was decided that the "credit-card" Bath Gap notification sheet will be updated to include the procedure for notifying mid-week flying, and made available via the website.

Caption Competition

“Another Paraglider pilot struggles with the basics after converting to Hang Gliding” (sorry, couldn’t help myself!) Nev Almond.

“In his early days of winching, Neville struggled to understand the idea of a launch trolley.”
Richard Danbury.



“The dismantled Ubley corals had been cunningly disguised in a surplus glider bag. However, the rather over zealous use of the wardens car seemed likely to attract attention!” Nick Somerville.

Interesting fact!

Apparently this photo comes from the Ukraine. The photo has a discussion thread on a Ukrainian hang-gliding forum as seen from this link. Oleg from the SkySurfing club sent me the link below which will be of interest to the bi-lingual!

<http://www.nebo-forum.kiev.ua/viewtopic.php?t=4186>

I’ve been told google can translate if you want to know what is being written about us!

Say What You See...

Please send your witty captions for the picture below to editor@avonhgpg.co.uk
Answers will be printed in the May Nova. (Deadline 5th May).

