

NOVA



The Magazine of the Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club.



Cover Photo: The cover photo was taken by Graham Richards as we flew around the Snowdon summit and horseshoe during the clubs stay there this May.

Editorial:

Welcome to the May edition of Nova. Hopefully everyone is getting their feet in the air quite regularly. In this edition we have an update from the Snowdonia trip (one reason why this edition is a little late in the month), we also have Ben Friedland's recollection of his first UK XC flight.

For anyone that has had random song lyrics trapped in their heads since the February Nova I've provided the answers to that competition. There is another chance to win a gift voucher from Par Avion with this editions competition – or as I like to call it "Music To Fly To, Vol 2".

One new article I've introduced in this edition is "Reader's Sites". I've written about flying at Beer Head on the Jurassic Coast. I'd love to have your recollections of some not-too-far-away sites that you think other club members would like to visit – please, share the knowledge!. I'd also like some articles for the August Nova with accounts of your summer flying adventures, if you have good pictures as well send them through, don't be shy. Deadline for next edition will be end of 4th August please.

Happy Reading, Jon Rose, Editor.

Chairman's Chunter:

Well, it's good to be writing for the spring edition of Nova after what seems like a long winter. It's the time of year that promises long hot days and long chilly flights, and post-flight barbeques in the balmy evening air. OK, so things haven't quite lived up to the promise yet, but there's still plenty of time - it's not quite summer yet.

Of course, a lot of you will be jetting off to find some more reliable place to get your airtime, and I am no exception. Paul G, Mike H and I have already had our dose of foreign flying, as we've just come back from Peru. We originally booked to do the Cusco Open, a competition that has run for the last two years, based around the Sacred Valley of the Incas. But rather annoyingly the organisers cancelled the comp with less than three weeks' notice. We took our wings anyway, having made contact with a few of the other pilots who were registered for the comp. We also looked up a local pilot who does tandem flights for tourists, and he and his drivers were very happy to drive us to launch, give us advice on the local area, and pick us up at the end of the day. And they even retrieved Paul's deployment bag from the hillside after his rather unconventional landing!

There aren't many sports where you can travel to a new place and find a bunch of like-minded people with whom to spend time and enjoy a shared interest. But flying is one of them, and it was great to get together with pilots from far-flung parts of the world. It was a great trip, so be prepared to suddenly remember a prior appointment when we do a talk about it at one of the club meetings!

So I hope you've made your own plans for a flying holiday, but whatever you do, don't book your holiday for the week of 10 July. That's the date of the club summer barbeque. It's going to be at Nymphsfield Gliding Club, and promises to be very chilled out and rather enjoyable. And if you want to get chilled at altitude, trial glider flights will be on offer too. See the website for details, and while you're at it, please make a note of the date of the legendary Mere Bash – 6 September is the date not to miss.

Holidays apart, I've often thought that paragliding and hang gliding are some of the less expensive ways of spending my leisure time. Club membership fees cost about the price of a couple of rounds of drinks, and even the BHPA membership fee works out at only about £1.50 a week. Once you've bought your kit, the only expense for a flying trip is fuel for the car. But that's where things have changed a bit recently. We may fly the greenest aircraft imaginable, but we still have to get to launch, and I think we're all now

feeling a pain in the wallet when we fill the tank. But I hope you won't let it cramp your style when those puffy clouds appear in the sky. So use that crystal ball on the website to see who's going where, put a posting on the forum to find a lift share, and get out flying!

Do please fly safely though. We all know that flying is risky, but we often push the risks to back of our minds. It was very sad to be reminded that the risks can become a reality when I heard about the death of Alexander Blake, one of the members of the club. My thoughts are with his friends and family. I think that many of us regard flying as one of the most satisfying things that we do, and I hope it is a comfort that Alexander was doing something that he loved.

Fly high and far, Richard.



This photo is of Mike Coupe flying at the Malverns earlier in the year.

The photo was taken by Ben Friedland.

If this looks familiar you've probably seen it in the May Skywings caption competition that has had something of an Avon monopoly of late.

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

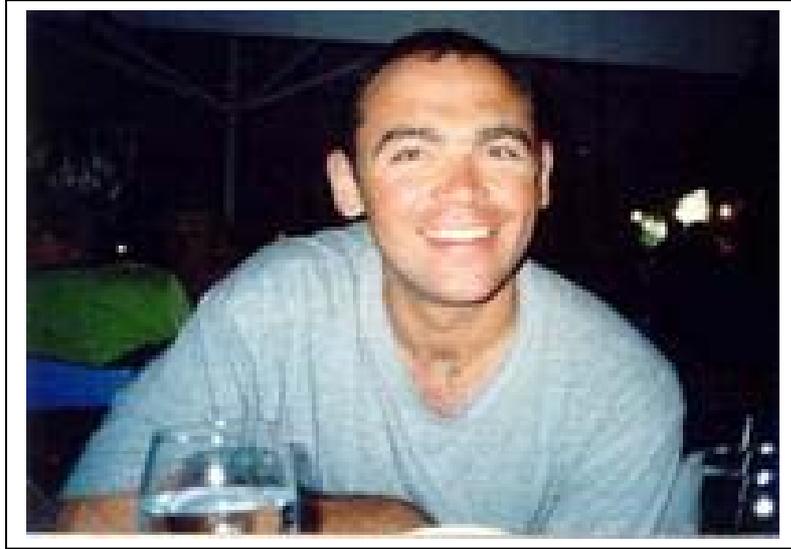
Send your articles to the Editor, Jon Rose, at

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

Copy deadline for the next issue: Monday 4 August 2008

Alex Blake was tragically killed while paragliding in Spain on an Army expedition on Wednesday 30 April 2008.

He flew regularly at Avon sites and will be sadly missed by those that new him. The picture and words below come form an MOD news report.



Major Alex Blake [Picture: via MOD]

An Ammunition Technical Officer, Major Blake, aged 35, had served with distinction and pride in Northern Ireland, Bosnia , Kosovo and recently in Iraq. He was Secretary of the Army Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association and had once stated that he felt privileged to be one of the first generation to have access to the relatively modern sport of paragliding.

Major Blake was full of zest and life and enjoyed his time on earth to the full. He died doing what he particularly loved – flying. He was a wonderful father, a brilliant husband, and will be tremendously missed by all his family and friends. His family felt he was "the best of everything".

Major D Wilson MBE BEM Rifles, Chairman Army Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association, said: "As the Chairman of the Army Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association I sit here stunned and numb with grief at the loss of a very dear friend and fellow paragliding pilot Major Alex Blake. I have known Alex for many years and flown with him both socially and against him in competition. Our last flying encounter was three weeks ago at Combe Gibert near Hungerford, he could almost see where he was brought up from the top of the hill.

"An Ammunition Technical Officer, he had just returned from an operational tour in Iraq and was as ever desperate to pursue his passion for flying at every opportunity. Our first competition together was flying against the Navy and RAF in 2002 in the Inter-Services Paragliding Championships in Wales. We were in the intermediate class and he narrowly beat me to take first prize. He reminded me of this every time we reminisced about our early flying days. In recent years he represented the full Army Team and always flew with skill and determination."

"He was Secretary of the Army Association and nothing was too much trouble for him, gladly giving his time generously to anyone in need. He was always upbeat and buoyant with an endearing nature and caring character. In all the time I have known him I rarely saw him without his trademark smile. His ever present good humour would drive me to distraction at times. All who met him were touched by his friendliness, charm, infectious enthusiasm and thirst for adventure."

"He was a proud family man and our thoughts and prayers at this time are with his wife Vicki and children Tom and Lola. It is hard to express how highly he was thought of in the paragliding world, Alex was a true gentleman and a generous friend, I will miss him terribly."

Readers' Sites - Beer Head

Last October I flew a site that blew my mind. It was at Beer Head, on the Jurassic coast in Devon. What was so amazing was to fly a good 8 miles along cliffs and beaches, and then turn around and fly all the way back! It was so nice I did it twice, totalling about 30 miles in the smoothest air with breath-taking views.

I don't know how Avon club members know of this site? If you've never been, go, soon. The site is one of the Devon and Somerset Condors', when I went the local pilots were both friendly, knowledgeable and helpful. It's only about 1 ½ hours drive from Bath, so it's no problems to get there and back in a day, but why not camp over, there are several campsites around Beer. For all the site details the link is at the bottom of the page.

The view back to take-off.

HG's and PG's happily share the air and take-off.

Photo: Nick Berry.
21/10/07.



I'd recommend the site to both floppies and stiffies (PG's and HG's were happily sharing the air when I was there). There is something for pilots of all experience levels, it was easy to stay high back in October, a moderate southerly conditions were ideal. With 8 miles of cliffs to share there is plenty of space so over-crowding wouldn't be a problem when conditions are right. The only slight challenge was traversing the gaps in the cliffs where rivers meet the ocean, but if losing height were ever a problem a glide down to the beach shouldn't pose any problems beyond a few miles walk back to the car park.



The view from the far end of the 8 mile coastal run along the Jurassic Coast.

A landslide and a ship-wreck are just visible.

Photo: Jon Rose. 21/10/07.

British Open Series (HG) update from Tony Moore.

Yes, that's right, HG! Believe it or not Avon had a strong representation at the first meeting of the B.O.S. This was a five day comp over the mayday bank holiday weekend, based near the Long Mynd. The Avon "posse" consisted of myself (Tony Moore), David Tyrer, Paul Whatley, Kevin Winter and supported by Chris Whatley. We flew on 3 of the 5 days, one of which was a short top to bottom at Corndon, which wasn't scored as no-one reached the activating distance.

There were 2 scoring days, both from Bache Hill near Knoghton. This is a magnificent SE site with few hazards and an easy bottom landing field. It is however intimidating to go over the back due to the big hills and forests, in fact you fly over Radnor forest as you leave the hill.

Our first visit there was when a "50K race to anywhere" was the task. Team Avon decided that it would be better to have a bottom landing contest, as none of us really managed to get in a position to go over the back. Good to get in the air though.

The second visit was on the last day of the comp, and a race to Bala lake was set. (77k slightly crosswind). This time 3 of us went over the back and survived. We all beat some pretty big names, mainly because they were racing to goal (bad sky) and we were drifting downwind (good sky). We all got decked when we decided to correct our track, I was lucky because I left it quite late to make that decision. In fact I'm sure I could have flown to the coast, the sky was looking great. But after about 50K I duly changed course from cloudbase and was on the ground 5 minutes later. 8 pilots out of a field of 48 made goal. 3 Avon pilots were in the top 50%.

We certainly didn't win but, if there had been a prize for who had the most fun I'm sure we would have been in contention. We all intend to enter the SEW round, over the August bank holiday. If anyone else is interested in joining us then please let me know. (Big thanks to Chris Whatley for driving!).

Position	Pilot	Total	Flight 1	Flight 2	Glider
1	Tony Moore	53.7	53.7	-	AirbornC4
2	Kevin Winter	33.2	33.2	-	Wils Wing Talon
3	David Tyrer	26.9	26.9	-	Wils Wing Talon

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.



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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, nr 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

February Nova Song Lines. (or Music To Fly To, Vol. I).

Congratulations to Steve Morgan who identified all 15 song titles and won the voucher for Par Avion.

The next lines, song titles and performers are listed below:

1. I wish that I could fly, Into the sky...So very high, Just like a dragonfly.

"Fly Away" LENNY KRAVITZ.

2. You could have an aeroplane flying...if you bring your blue sky back.

"Sledgehammer" PETER GABRIEL

3. And in this perfect weather, We'll find a place together...Fly on my wind.

"The Zephyr Song" RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS.

4. Don't leave me high,don't leave me dry. *"High & Dry"* RADIOHEAD.

5. Birds came flying from the underground...if you could see it then you'd understand?

"Speed Of Sound" COLDPLAY

6. We're flying high, We're watching the world pass us by...Never want to come down, Never want to put my feet back down on the ground.

"Never Let Me Down Again" DEPECHE MODE.

7. She packed my bags last night pre-flight, Zero hour nine a.m...And I'm gonna be high as a kite by then.

"Rocket Man" ELTON JOHN.

8. I'm like a bird,...I'll only fly away. *"I'm like a bird"* NELLY FURTADO.

9. And I can feel it coming in the air tonight...oh lord, I've been waiting for this moment for all my life.

"In the Air Tonight" PHIL COLLINS.

10. How many special people change, How many lives are living strange...Where were you when we were getting high?

"Champagne Supernova". OASIS.

11. Above the planet on a wing and a prayer,...My grubby halo, a vapour trail in the empty air.

"Learning to Fly" PINK FLOYD.

12. Goodbye to the sky, I know I can't fly, but I feel love do you know how I feel?you are my achilles heel. *"Achilles Heel"* TOPLOADER.

13. I get up, and nothing gets me down...You got it tough. I've seen the toughest around.

"Jump" VAN HALEN.

14. Actin' funny but I don't know why... 'scuse me while I kiss the sky.

"Purple Haze" JIMI HENDRIX.

15. I walk so tall ascending I stand so high, earth below me revolving above the sky...I feel no fear to be here is oh so fine, shining brightly like sunlight inside my mind.

"Move Any Mountain". THE SHAMEN.

My first UK XC by Ben Freidland.

After many visits to UK hills I despaired of ever doing a cross country flight here. I reckoned it impossible and those who had claimed to have flown "XC" were evil taunting liars. Yes, I'd seen Ken take off at Selsley and, yes, I had picked him up in Marshfield on the same day, but surely mid-air Alien Abduction was a more likely explanation!

The morning of the BCC is overcast and wet. I want to stay at home, but I've mistakenly promised Ken a lift and as he is organising the event, I can't wriggle free. We arrive in Wales and the decision is to head for Talybont - a hill that had vowed never to fly because of my knee problems. Very generously Tim, Rich and Paddy offer to carry up much of my gear, this is rather embarrassing but much appreciated.

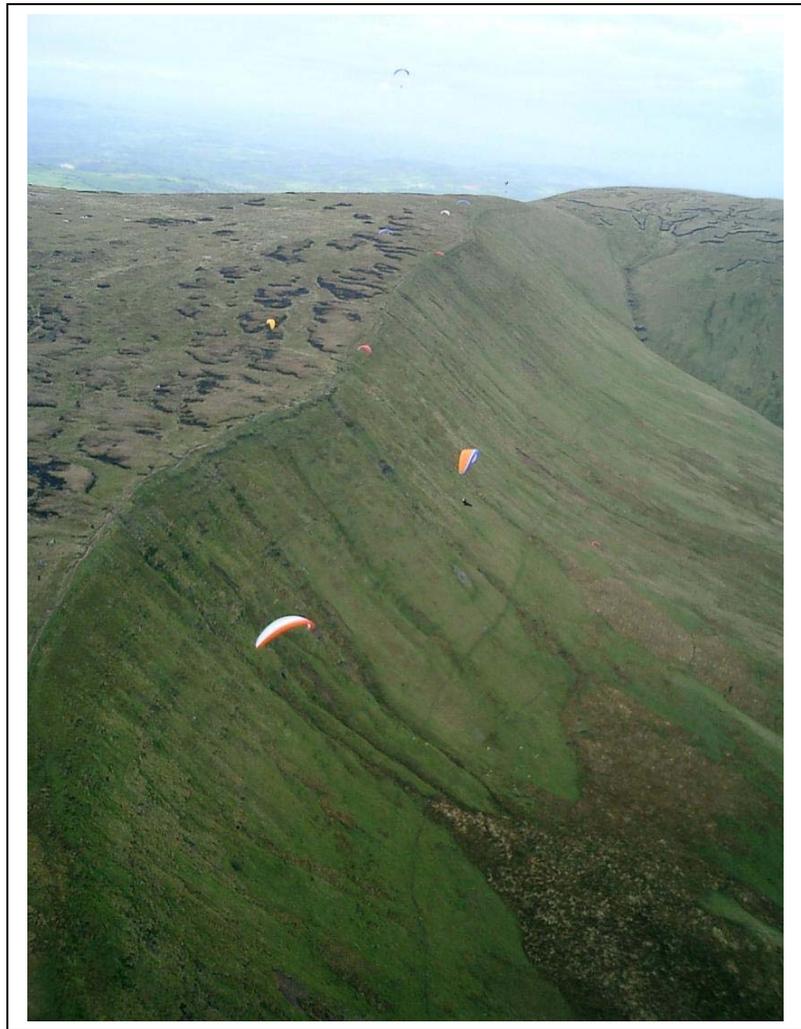
The setting is beautiful and it's great to be flying with friendly faces. The comp is binned, so yet again I won't do my first XC, but it's a fab day out anyway.



A bird's eye view of the wings at take-off.

Eventually it's time to head down to the cars, but over the landing field is one last thermal. If nothing else I might provide some entertainment for the walkers returning home. I quickly find myself just a bit too far from the landing place and decide to go for it. I'm now drifting deep over the valley and onto the next ridge. The next stop is the spectacular Pen Y Fan, topped by walkers, hopefully looking my way!

After that, a close-up with a Buzzard, then a rather unsuccessful attempt to join up the clouds followed by a landing at Sennybridge. After some good luck with hitching I'm back with the others at Talybont. So, quite a few firsts: my first UK XC, my first flight at Talybont, my first BCC and apparently I'm to get an "Easter Cup" too! Thanks again to all who helped on the day.



Views from either end of the ridge at Talybont.

Song Lyrics Competition. (or Music To Fly To, Vol. II).

I've trawled the airwaves and the InterWeb for more flying related tunes. It's a little easier for you this month – all you need to do is email the song title or group / artist to each of the ten songs below. Again, there is a £25 voucher for Par Avion up for grabs. (email to editor@avonhpgg.co.uk) deadline is 10th July.

1. Picture yourself in a boat on a river, With tangerine trees and marmalade skies.
2. Sail away with me, To another world, And we rely on each other, ah ha.
3. Julius Caesar and the Roman Empire couldn't conquer the blue sky.
4. On a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair, Warm smell of colitas, rising up through the air.
5. Maybe I'm gonna have to get high, Just to get by.
6. I feel so extraordinary, Something's got a hold on me, I get this feeling I'm in motion, A sudden sense of liberty.
7. And now she's waiting for the right kind of pilot to come, and she'll say to him.., I would fly you to the moon and back.
8. In a sky full of people, only some want to fly, Isn't that crazy?
9. I'm learning to fly, around the clouds, But what goes up must come down.
10. I wish I had the wings to fly away from here , But my, my I feel so low, my, my, where do I go?



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The advertisement features a large background image of a yellow paraglider over a rocky coastline. At the top, there is a white line-art logo of a person with arms outstretched. Below the logo is a row of eight small square images showing various paragliding scenes: a purple canopy, a person's back with a harness, a person on a cliff, a red canopy, a person in flight, a red canopy, a blue canopy, and a yellow canopy. The text 'Windtech UK' is written in a large, white, outlined font across the middle of the banner. At the bottom, the contact information is provided in green and white text, with a smaller version of the white line-art logo.

The Snowdonia Diaries

This year was the 10th anniversary of the Avon club organising a trip to Snowdonia, and we were treated to a week of good weather and some great flying. We had a house-full over the weekend with a mix of veteran experts and low airtimers all helping each other out. All in all we had six straight flyable days, below is a brief flying diary of what we got up to.

Friday 16th May. As it was likely to be flyable today many made an early journey. When we arrived by early afternoon there was already a few wings in the air, a couple of Avon pilots had already made the climb up Moel Berfedd. With a change in wind direction forecast we started the long walk up The Glyders, a walk we were all going to become very familiar with by the end of the week. Rich Harding and Graham Richards boated around in the light south easterly wind, I couldn't quite manage the same height and had an extended top to bottom, landing just a stones throw from the house.

Saturday 17th May. It was medium to strong easterlies, so we walked straight from the house and up Moel Berfedd. With 14 Avon pilots and a similar number of locals and other visitors it was a busy day of ridge soaring. Ken W was first in the air, joined very quickly by the site Buzzard, who over the next few days tried to get up-close-and-personal with all of us! With an over-developed sky the thermic activity wasn't epic. A few people hopped over the back, nothing much else to report following this with most landing 3km down the valley in a camp site.

Sunday 18th May. After the beers and curry of the previous evening the clamber up Moel Berfedd seemed a bit more arduous than the day before. A similar day to Saturday – nice ridge soaring, some thermic activity, but a fairly overcast day left many itching to get over the back and towards Snowdon and the horseshoe. An asymmetric collapse reminded me that mountain air can do some strange things and that active flying is required at all times!

Monday 19th May. There was an element of 'Groundhog Day' as we trudged up Moel Berfedd again. A clearer sky had us looking over the back and getting a good briefing from Rich Harding for those of us hopefuls who hadn't ventured towards the horseshoe before. Rod Taylor failed to get too many converts to a unique method for the rapid packing of a wing (see photo in caption competition on last page). By mid day there were some good cycles coming through. Rich H and Graham R led the way over to the 'pump' and most were to follow over the next half hour. Some went XC for a good distance, a few of us got to the summit of Snowdon and waved at the walkers. 5 landed down in the campsite and were lucky to find a minibus to get us all back to the house.

Tuesday 20th May. A SE direction stopped us going onto auto-pilot and climbing up Berfedd, today we had the longer walk up the Glyders. A team effort from the full-weekers helped Rich Harding get the tandem up on a take-off the was half bog and half bracken. Some good flying again was had by all. It was either today or Monday? where most of the group took a trip up to the coastal site of Foel Lus and boated about on a sea breeze.

Wednesday 21st May. Stronger winds made flying in Snowdonia unlikely so we headed to the coast to find a flyable site. Apart from a nice picnic on the cliffs overlooking the beach there's not too much else to report, the one flyable location that was found was accompanied by a farmer with a "Not on my land" attitude. Eventually the wind dropped so we headed back to the house and the daily walk up the Glyders. The air went 'strange' soon after several of us took off, it was a little scary for a short while – theories of 'wave' or a sea breeze surging up the valley were discussed, by early evening all was fine and everyone was able to have flown a little.

Thursday 22nd May. As rain was expected to sweep across Wales today most headed home, all with memories of a great week of cracking flying and good company and new friends.

Thanks again to Rich Harding for organising and guiding those who were new to Snowdonia.

Caption Competition.

The response to the February caption competition didn't exactly prompt an avalanche of witticisms. It was left to our Safety Officer, Richard Hellen, to make the following observations. Richard is therefore winner by default!

"Now I see why water landings are dangerous."

"If I can spot land on that log I may just get away with this water landing."

"Oi – don't you know flying without a helmet is dangerous."



May Caption Competition.

If you see nothing funny about this month's picture, and a host of captions, comments and observations don't rush into your mind I'd seek help! Rod Taylor is captured with the results of a rapid pack-up from the previous day at this years' Snowdonia Trip. Paul Guilfoyle is in the background with his pants down! Photo by Ben Friedland.

Please send your witty captions for the picture below to editor@avonhgpg.co.uk

