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Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding club Newsletter

May 1996



Editors Bit

Well the season has definitely started now, with quite a few XCs having been flown. First to get away for the club were Tim Pentreath and Fiona Macaskill who flew 22 and 35 km respectively from the Blorenge during the weekend Simon had organised as team get together for the coming season. Graham Steel also got away on that day making 7km. Anyway and Amanda Lawrence-Peckham was delighted with 15km only her second XC since her much famed accident. The rest of us spent a lot of time going over the back and

coming back again, and kicking ourselves. Graham made up for the lack of distance with a 54km flight on the day of the April meeting, flying from Malvern to Hay Bluff. Then this weekend (27th&28th) we had some good flying weather. For me it started with 2 hours of pleasant flying after work at Westbury on Friday night. Evening flying at Westbury is always great fun and all the usual faces were there. Simon, Charlie and I decided to head over to South Wales and the bluff for the weekend, all hoping to get first XCs of the year under our belt. Saturday saw the passage of a cold front (weak) over Wales. This made the day a bit changeable, with some strong suck from the clouds at times and much over development. However Graham again headed over the back and made 25km or so. Late in the day I managed to cross to the Talgarth ride but went down trying to jump to the ridge leading to Llangorse Lake, still it was 7km or so under my belt. The next day was Northerly and so again we flew the Bluff, this time Simon got away and headed through the valleys and four climbs saw him safely landing at Abergavenny. It had been an excellent weekend flying wise with 9 hours for me personally, although it would have been nice to get a decent distance flown.

Anyway enough from me safe flying and remember fly high, stay high, fly far.

See you on the hill. ✍️

Marcus

Have You Returned Your Membership Form to Fiona? If Not Get It (and your money) To Her Soon. This is your last chance and your last copy of nova if you don't pay!!!

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nova on the **Web**

Yes NOVA is Finally on the web so if you have internet access point your browser at

<http://members.aol.com/mkingba1>

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HOME

Le Hot Gossip

Avon member, Clive Lawrence-Peckham, took 2nd place at the first round of the British Paragliding Cup held at the Paramania Fly In. The event was won by Dave Snowden. Graham Steel came close but the final task was not validated.

Charlie Hedges and Alex Coltman are currently leading the way in the Macaskill Cup.

Fiona Macaskill is currently unable to fly, after breaking her leg whilst flying in Uganda.

Things are hotting up on the XC front, get your claims into Tim Pentreath or Neil Atkinson within a month of the flights.

NOVA needs your articles now. I have had many comments on how good it is to read about other members exploits so get sending your articles to:-

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Please get articles for the next issue to me by May 20th 1996

Thanks to this months contributors; Martin Bromage, Bertie Gotrain, Tim Pentreath, Rob Craine and Tim Brunskill and Ellie Milner.

Coming Soon; Dual Flying, Uganda, More Skyfloating, The BPC and more...

Cross Country Experience

I first started paragliding about a year ago and passed my club pilot exam at the end of April.

Having passed my exam I thought I was a competent flyer but as we all know this is only the start of the learning curve. Fellow pilots would talk of cloudbase and of cross country flights but after several hours of ridge soaring and many more contemplating the delights and restrictions imposed by terra firma I was beginning to wonder if this was really achievable. Had they spent so much time waiting on hilltops that they were all suffering from delusions?

Just as I was beginning to think that I had reached a skills plateau Terry (Tree Top) Thomas invited me to go to an Edel fly-in in the lakes. The great outdoors was one of the many reasons that I joined the sport but being a mere mortal I had some reservations about flying with all of the northern Sky Gods.

Three of us left Haresfield late one Friday afternoon. My wife Christine coming along for some more energetic mountain biking and perhaps for retrieve. We found Eagle Quest at some time after midnight and finding no-one awake at this hour we pitched our tents wondering what the following day had in store for us.

Saturday saw us soaring on the back of Clough Head in light winds just strong enough to keep us off the ground. A very short out and return task was set followed by three touch and go attempts and then an open cross country. The prospects of cross country seemed to be less than minimal and with such light winds 8/8 cloud cover. Staying airborne was my main objective. There were more pilots in the air than I had ever seen, 30-40 gliders all scratching close to the hill in a small lift band made me extremely nervous. With about 50' above take off I optimistically set out to fly around the shepherds hut and back to the hill. This would at least help to reduce the overcrowding.

Having turned above the hut I had run out of height and landed at the bottom. By the time I had walked back to the top of the hill the wind had decreased further and the rest of the afternoon was spent trying to soar on the hill. Amazingly John Sylvester had managed to fly cross country and land back at Eagle Quest. When landing he lost his car keys and several people were searching frantically for them in the long grass.

The second day saw us on the other side of Clough Head with a good 12 mph wind and blue sky. A briefing from Pat Holmes in the car park, a chat with Judy Leden and we were off up the hill to the take off point. Judy kindly offered to show Terry and I some cross country techniques. "Just stick with me and stay in contact on the radio". This was an offer too good to be true, 1-2 tuition from a world champion and free of charge! A steep walk up to the launch point about half way up the hill and we were soon airborne. Climbing to 800'QFE almost immediately with amazing views over the hills of the Lake District, this was what I had started paragliding for. We flew higher and higher climbing above the tops of the hills and circling in weak morning thermals talking with each other by radio and receiving tips from Judy. Some eager pilots had already gone over the back of the hill with an early thermal but when they dropped out they found themselves too low to fly back. News came over the radio that one of them had experienced a deflation at 100' in the rotor and crashed into the hill sustaining serious injuries. I couldn't see where the accident had happened but several pilots including Judy landed to give assistance. Many others unnerved by the incident also landed. I wasn't sure what to do, I felt that I should land and help the injured pilot but there were many people at the scene already. Conditions were still good and I felt quite safe myself flying higher than I had ever done before. I soared the slope for a while contemplating my dilemma and I lost some height by pulling big ears. At just below take off height I flew out over a small quarry at the bottom of the hill. I had been told that quarries were potentially a good source of thermals and much to my surprise my vario started to make encouraging noises. I circled in continuing lift and the vario continued to egg me on. Concentrating on circling and the sound of the vario became

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totally absorbing and I was disappointed when it appeared to be getting quite foggy. I would have to land but it had been a good morning. Still circling I checked my altimeter - 3500' QNH I was at cloud base!! It was not as I had begun to suspect a figment of the collective imagination of other pilots, I was there myself, but now what should I do? I was alone at the bottom of a big cloud and still going up.

Do not fly in cloud was the advice that I remembered from training and I soon found out why. Visibility in cloud is just above zero and I felt very nervous. Pulling in the ears I descended back into VMC and noticed a dual hang glider some distance away in the same thermal. Due to inexperience I lost the thermal and flew around aimlessly over the flat land behind the hill in search of lift. Looking in all the wrong places I soon found myself seeking out a suitable landing field. A level pasture just next to a small road seemed excellent and I landed safely.

Beginners luck was to continue, an elderly couple visiting the Lakes for a bridge weekend had watched me land and pack up from a layby. As I climbed the over the fence and onto the road they drove up to me and offered a lift back to the take off.

One more soaring flight with Terry and we all set off back to Gloucester.

Martin Bromage

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Discovering SkyFloating

I can't resist a new toy or a bargain. When I saw the discovery hang glider at last years All Out I had to have a go. After a 5 minute flight off the winch I wanted to take it to the hills. Following a few soaring flights I ordered one. I am now the proud owner of my own skyfloater.

Offpiste Ltd, the makers of the discovery (better known as Bill Paine and Colin Lark) are trying to appeal to three markets: Paraglider pilots wanting to try hang gliding; hang glider pilots looking for something other than the high speed high weight high cost modern glider and newcomers to foot launch flying. The main thrust of Offpiste's promotional blurb is that this is the hang glider's paraglider and the paraglider's hang glider - the one machine to fill all our need in the greatest range of conditions. It could, of course, just be another toy cluttering the roof rack, seldom used in any conditions. Paraglider pilots will have the additional hassle of retraining.

With 300+ hours on paragliders I feel qualified to speak for converts to hang gliding but since I only started hang gliding last year and my experience is limited to 45 hours on Clubmans, Magic IVs and Discoverys my opinions may be less relevant to owners of hot ships. It is worth noting that while I get plenty of opportunities to fly during the week I don't choose when and therefore want to be able to fly in the widest range of conditions.

As soon as you pick up the Discovery it feels different; round uprights, super light weight and flying in a zephyr. In light winds it takes just a few steps and you're off. In strong winds it's easiest to kite it to launch and then clip in as it takes quite an effort to hold it down. I found a nose man reassuring. I'm told that in the dunes you only need to stand at the bottom and push out!

In the air bar pressures are very light and control response quick. At the same time there is plenty of feedback and a reassuring feeling of stability. Those that know say that lightness in pitch feels similar to a modern high performance wing. The Discovery can be turned gently or stood on a wing tip all with the lightest of touch and the minimum delay. In ridge lift I find it difficult to co-ordinate 360s at high angles of bank. I push out, slow down too much and slip into the turn; so I pull in, spiral dive, push out again and so on. In the thermals this doesn't seem to happen as I thought it might. Instead it needs to be held into the thermal and it loves it. The climb rate is as good or better than any other glider.

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The term Skyfloater is a bit misleading, for while the Discovery can be wafted around at min sink pulling on speed is effortless and it accelerates rapidly. With a bit of speed it turns on a sixpence and the rate is exhilaratingly quick. The bar can be held to your hips easily and it goes surprisingly fast. Once above about 30mph height loss is pretty rapid. Slowing down, the bar can be pushed out to arms length without stalling and in stronger winds it's quite fun to fly backwards. This could be a handy technique for small top landing areas.

There is a device for damping pitch and roll which increases bar pressure. It works by effectively lowering the king post hang point. I like the lightest setting at the top, but students and low air time pilots may feel more comfortable with more bar pressure.

Landings, like everything else about this glider, inspire confidence. It all happens much slower than on a normal wing giving you time to think and react. It can be put down in places you wouldn't dream of and save many frustrating bottom landings. An Avon veteran who shall remain nameless misjudged his approach and went down behind a 20' bank at Westbury. We ran over expecting to pick up the pieces but instead found him grinning from ear to ear. I have to admit to breaking an upright purely through being too cocky.

The light handling and quick response can catch the pilot out in thermic conditions or landing in lumpy air. The large sail can easily be turned off line and you need to give the wing firm directions and plenty of weight shift. It's easy to control, but coming in to land holding the bar with two fingers is tempting fate. Likewise in thermals when a wing is lifted it may require full weight shift to get it to turn into the thermal.

The combination of good handling and reassuring stability make the Discovery a winner. It is just such good fun to fly even on cold grey winter days. As a paraglider pilot I really enjoy wangling about which isn't possible on a floppy wing. Scratching is a blast and landing is looked forward to rather than dreaded. For a first glider this is miles better than a Clubman. If it has a problems it's that it can make you over confident and be too much fun.

Comparing performance with other gliders the Discovery flies well above the competition paragliders on the ridge in all but the lightest of wind. It can fly further from the hill and it's speed leaves them standing. It feels stable in rough air and won't fold up. With hang gliders the sink rate appears about the same or better, but the glide is definitely not in the same league. In light conditions it's easier to work small patches of lift. At my level of experience it enables me to fly with confidence in a wider range of conditions than a Magic IV. Having flown in 8-24mph winds you can get more air time on this wing than any other single glider, hang or para.

As far as construction goes; basic is the word that springs to mind. This is a cheap light glider and I think that it would be fair to say that it's pretty rough at the edges. The composite battens are flimsy, but combined with the radically stepped-down leading edge are what gives it superb handling. The rubber end caps wore out very quickly and have now had heat shrink plastic retrofitted. I'm not crazy about the Velcro holding in the battens though have to admit that it works. On the plus side there is nothing wrong with the quality of the tubes and wires and the sail looks well cut and put together apart from the dreadful Clubman type nose Velcro. I like the way the under surface is attached so that you can inspect the whole leading edge and cross boom but it's a shame that it occasionally flutters in flight. The bottom line is that if shiny airfoils and mylar are important this not the machine for you.

Rigging is straight forward and quick with only 12 battens to stuff and funny little wickard hooks for cross-boom tension and nose catch. The glider has two breakdown lengths. Care need to be taken when rebuilding to ensure that the outer leading edges and the webbing loops that they attach to are the right way round. I prefer the longer of the breakdowns for it's simplicity. It's also great as the glider can be carried on a roof rack without a ladder or tip support and makes it easier to carry and store.

The glider comes with two hang loops and a spreader bar. Offpiste also supply the Supron, prone/supine harness which I have used on a couple of short soaring flights. I have not yet tried the

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handles which are offered as an extra. I can confirm that it is simple to rotate from prone to supine in flight but I only felt comfortable in smooth air. The additional cost and hassle of transferring my reserve have put me off for the moment. I think it deserves a separate review.

Many of the current crop of hang gliders have been designed by and for competition pilots. My kind of flying is about getting in the air, staying in the air and having a good time in the air. How many of you race round trying to be the first back on the ground? This is a wing for those of us that fly for fun and there is more good news: Although I enjoy the relative novelty of flying prone, I am looking forward to trying a paraglider harness with the Discovery; Small Avon sites like Coward's Bowl and Long Knoll which I thought were only suitable for paragliders should be fun for skyfloating; A dual Discovery is nearly in production and there are rumours of a power unit. It won't be long before the other manufacturers catch onto this skyfarting lark.

So is it the glider for all occasions? Well yes and no. I was thinking of trading in my paraglider for a new high performance canopy, but went for the Discovery instead. I got more performance and was able to keep my old canopy for the same money. If I was only allowed one toy I think that it would be the Discovery. It's never going to beat the convenience of a paraglider or the glide at speed of a modern hang glider but what the hell: The Discovery is fun. Ok it has shortcomings but who cares when you are floating at cloud base. Especially when it's too windy for paragliding or the hot ship flyers are still trying to decide whether to rig or not.

Bertie Gotrian

Mobile Phones

The list is slowly growing, so cut it out and stick it by your phone, and if your not on it and want to be, drop me a line.

Pete Corcoran (pg)	0374 742830
Marcus King (pg)	0585 813736
Tim Pentreath (pg)	0421 398343 (weekends only)

Tim Brunskill has suggested that I publish a list of people who are happy for people to phone them in the morning on flyable days to discuss which hill to go to etc. I think this is a good idea, so if you are willing to have your number published drop me a line. I will start it next month.

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A PERFECT PLACE - AN IDEAL STATE

Gliders;

Things are happening at **Kemble**, we have seen and flown the new **Freex** gliders and they are tasty! Demo gliders are always available from **Trekking, Apco** and **Airwave**....

Watch this space for the new Gliders from **Harley**.

Harnesses;

Scorpio and **Woody Valley**, two very different concepts, both available from basic model to top specification. The new **Sensation** harness from **Harley** is bound to cause a stir, all singing, all dancing for a Retail Price of just £339.00 pounds....

Cold hands! You need **DINO MITTS**. . . Permenant warmth fixed to your brake handles, so simple and so effective, I just wish I'd thought of it before **System X**.

A whole range of equipment is now available, from flying suits to varios, helmets to harnesses.

Thinking of trading up? we are always looking for good quality S/H intermediates , do call.

Airtopia is a **BHPA** registered foot launch Paragliding School operating out of:

Hangar M1, Kemble Airfield, Cirencester in Gloucestershire.

Contact: **ROBIN BROWN** on **01453 753002** or **0973 844449**

ALL - OUT '96 15th and 16th June.

Kemble Airfield, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

What ever you do this summer, go to the All - Out event.

Nothing I describe here can prepare you for the splendor of Kemble, it makes the Trooping of the colour look like a shift change at Group 4, it makes Glastonbury look like a Pop Festival, it even makes the Celtic Cup look like a Flying competition.

Here is a list of just some of the things we have lined up for you.

- Paragliding, Hang Gliding and Paracending competitions.
- BHPA Test Rig in action at over sixty miles an hour.
- Abseiling
- Paramotors, Microlights, Gyrocopters and motorised Hang Gliders.
- Wind Buggies and Land Yachts.
- Bungee Jumping.
- Reserve deployment testing.
- Real Ale Bar, Real Glasses...
- Real Food... Quality catering.
- Camping and Caravanning.
- Historic Glider Display.
- Young Pilot Awards in all Disciplines.
- Second Hand Glider Mart.
- Live Bands on the Friday & Saturday nights.
- Wet weather program.
- 25th Anniversary of Hang Gliding celebrations.
- The largest HG & PG Trade fair in the UK.

This is the big one. . . we aim to get as many people in the air as possible over the weekend. The air will be black with all sorts of craft, remember it does not get dark until 10:00 pm.

Party time. . . complete ecstasy without purchasing anything illegal!

It all goes on into the small hours, after all no one can hear you screaming in space.

Endorsements. You will be able to get a Towing or a Aero - Tow endorsement on Friday 14th as well as during the weekend.

We are also hoping the BHPA will be able to sign off winch operators as well.

Experience. Air experience flights will be available for friends and foes in all types of Powered and non Powered craft.

Finally If you feel like giving a hand on the gate or at the event office for even part of a day you will get a **FREE T SHIRT.**



For all info concerning ALL - OUT call Robin Brown at 844449

on 01453 753002 or 0973

French Trip this Summer

Rob Craine and Marcus King will hopefully be going to France at the end of August (Aug 24th - Sept 8th). The exact details are yet to be sorted but Chamonix, Annecy, Laragne or St Andre are all possibilities. If you fancy coming along give one of us a call.

Spanish Fly!

by Tim Pentreath

6.30pm on Sunday 25th March 1996 found Geoff Moss and me wandering around the arrivals' hall of Malaga airport in search of our luggage and the "little people" - Tim Brunskill and Elly Milln - who had arrived ten minutes earlier on a different flight. We found Tim and Elly almost as easily as our gliders since they're about the same size! (And probably about the same weight!)

An hour later we were in a brand new (not for the town of Vallee 60km away. Now leave a little to be took almost two hours this did have its through the town of a case of "eyes right three of the shortest seen! Sorry Elly, but Actually Tim allowed chap for the holiday, an undoubtedly overjoyed her!



Geoff, Elly, Tim B & Tim P looking cheerful despite no flying on the first two days

So at 9.30pm we rolled up outside the local paragliding school/club run by a chap called Eduardo. Gear was unceremoniously dumped in the hall, then we legged it to the nearest bar for muchos beers and noshos!

On our return to Eduardo's who should open the door to let us in but a fellow Brit paraglider pilot called James, whom Geoff and I had first met two years ago in Chamonix, and whom I had subsequently bumped into at Mere last year. It really is a small world! It turned out that there were three others in their party, two of whom I had met last year at Long Knoll of all places. And they're not even Avon pilots!

After much story telling we hit the sack in high spirits hoping for great things tomorrow. I think its amazing we woke up the next morning at all, the smell was so bad! Eleven of us in a small room with the window closed - well, you can imagine what it was like!

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Monday dawned bright but unfortunately breezy (inside the room as well!) so the day was divided equally between hanging around on the hill watching the griffon vultures soaring effortlessly in the 30mph wind, and hanging around in bars eating and drinking! Ordering food was interesting when there were no menus and no English spoken. Still, we didn't go hungry and the "kaios" (?) was excellent although I think the meaty bits (actually that's being kind - I should say gristly bits) were only in it for flavouring! We left the bar at 5'ish and followed Eduardo to another bar about 20 minutes away at the intersection of the three lakes that run round the north and west of the mountain (called Sierra del Vallee de Abdalajis). I don't know whether it was the alcohol, the beautiful late evening sunshine or sheer frustration that made us think the wind had dropped, but if Eduardo thought we might get a late evening flight in, then so did we!

A 10 minute white-knuckle ride up the track from hell found us at the NW take-off with what felt like a nice reverse launch breeze blowing smack on the hill. Directly behind us rose (300-400') some pretty impressive cliffs where we had seen the vultures earlier. Undeterred by the sign which said if its blowing 15kph at take-off, its 40+kph on top, we all got our kit out. Fortunately for the rest of us Tim was off first with a nice launch and... ..and lots of height gain and virtually no penetration! On came the big-ears - no difference, so on came the speed at least going forwards! After 5 packed up!) we all breathed again back down the hill. It was dark by landing "field" and met Tim who the ground in one piece. After this "Condor Man" after the name of only the birds flew that day.



*Looking back towards the N take-off
from above the NW take-off*

Phoning Lisa later that evening I had a glorious spring day with

Tuesday was bright but again too drink and a good hike up to top of off, and after another call to Lisa have been an epic paragliding day this time with the window open!

Determined to beat the wind, we and were at the NW take-off by perfect! Except for one thing - it gods of paragliding are conspiring was analysing the weather and stay or go to the South side, Geoff and I were tucking into cornflakes and jam sandwiches, having not had the time for the usual eggs and bacon in our favourite bar. By the time we had finished the loaf the wind had backed quite alot so that it was blowing from the E or NE. "OK" said Condor Man, "let's go to the north take-off".

bar as well - still going up, but minutes (during which we all (including Tim) and headed the time we reached the was pretty pleased to be on flight Tim earned the nickname his canopy, and also because

discovered that the UK had puffy white Cu's! Hurrumph!

breezy so after much food, the cliffs above the NW take-off during which she said it would at home, we all went to bed,

got up early on Wednesday 9am. The wind was light - was blowing down the hill! The against us! While Condor Man trying to decide whether to

Arriving at the bottom of the track we disembarked people and canopies in order to give me a slightly better chance of getting up the worst of the track. But to no avail! I completely bottomed the car on some really deep muddy ruts. Oh well, we'd have to walk up. Still, the exercise would do us good (who was I trying to kid?) Geoff was suffering from a headache (he swears it was nothing to do with last nights session) so he decided to sit it out by the car for a while and let us check it out at take-off. 30 minutes steady plodding later and we were there, and guess what, the wind was blowing from the NW, completely along the hill! By now Condor Man was getting seriously frustrated, but we persuaded him to hang around a bit longer as we all thought that once the sun warmed up the ground in front the wind would be pulled onto the hill.

An hour later (1pm) we were still only getting the occasional thermic puff up the slope, and Condor Man was getting more and more convinced that the NW take-off was the place to be. He was going to fly

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down to Geoff and hack back to the NW take-off. I decided to stay put here. Elly (you can't be serious - you mean you bought a second-hand porous Voodoo off Amanda Lawrence) was off first with a good forward launch. Things weren't looking too good initially, but all of a sudden she was maintaining, then gaining height. Good work more minutes she was above Condor Man was off next, with having rapidly binned his plan to height loss and struggle, he too about 1000' above take-off. By later the lift was stronger and I



Condor Man above the middle S take-off in a classic looking sky

Pretty soon we were all (except track) cruising around at (4000' amsl). I won't bore you except to say that it was bloody months off! The flight did have thermalling no more than 30' half a dozen circles was a with the thermal after he'd left day - 2100' ato. With this height cliffs above the NW take-off yesterday), some 6-7km in front (Meanwhile Condor Man and way back to take-off on foot after back to the N take-off, but so headed for the official bottom

a couple of hundred metres. Still, at 5pm and after 2:40 hours in the air I wasn't complaining. I made it back to the car just as Elly was touching down nearby. Meanwhile Condor Man was losing height overhead with some gentle spirals down. Our first day's flying was celebrated with an impromptu mix of whisky and orange by the car, then more beers later (surely not!) When I called Lisa later, she told me that the weather had taken a turn for the worse back home - and not before time too!

Voodoo Child! After a couple take-off and out of trouble. another good forward launch, fly down! After a similar initial made it up to the top of the hill, the time I took off a few minutes had no trouble getting up.

Geoff, who was half way up the between 1300 and 1500' ato with all the details of the flight good to be airborne after four some special moments - away from a griffon vulture for wonderful experience. I stuck and got my best height of the I easily made the crossing to the (where we had climbed to and to the left of the N take-off. Voodoo Child had made their landing out). I tried to make it realised I wasn't going to make it landing which I failed to reach by

On Thursday the wind was from the south, and after a bit of driving around we managed to find the track (quite a good one this time relatively speaking) up to take-off. There are actually three take-offs here, one from the car park, one a 10 minute hike up the ridge overlooking the car park, and the other a 45 minute expedition up to the top of the ridge overlooking the town. The 10 minute climb seemed the best option. Needless to say, Condor Man was the first off into the very nice looking sky. However, the lift wasn't abundant and he eventually headed out of sight to land somewhere down in the valley towards the town. Being the decent sort of chap I am, I drove down to save him a possible 45 minute walk back up. Imagine my surprise to almond tree trying to it's clutches! It turned out invisible power line chosen landing field and brake to avoid frying the lesser of two evils so being about 2' longer than able to liberate his damage to the tree!



Looking East from in front of the N take-off

Back at take-off it was Energy Man (one of the just as I returned and

since! Geoff took off and cruised around fairly cautiously not wanting to gain too much height (it was his first flight of any significant length since crushing a vertebrae at Easter last year). By the time I took off it was starting to over-develop and I spent the last 15 minutes of a 1:20 hour flight flying with Condor Man in fairly persistent rain! Not what we came to Spain for!

see Tim halfway up an extricate his canopy from he'd spotted an almost running across his had had to bury his right himself! So the tree was to speak. With my reach Tim's we were quickly canopy with only minor

definitely happening - other Brits) had taken off hadn't stopped going up

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We both landed down by the town, Tim successfully avoiding trees and power lines this time despite having reduced visibility on account of the fact that he couldn't remove his rain-splashed Adidas wrap-around shades! Back at Eduardo's we got stuck into the beers and watched some great flying videos whilst we waited for the rest of the team to make their way back.

That evening, after I had dried out my canopy on the washing line in the back yard, we headed to the small village of El Chorro (actually little more than a railway station, a bar and a dingy looking hotel - but famous for the huge cliffs towering above none-the-less) for eats. It was a long and alcoholic evening during which we managed to get Condor Man seriously worse for wear! Well, he did deserve it after draping his canopy over a tree! During the meal we saw a bit of the news on TV (there's always a TV on in Spanish bars) about Charles and Di's divorce. At the mention of Camilla P-B, Geoff piped up with "muchos shaggos illeagos", at which the elderly Spanish lady running the restaurant roared with laughter, obviously more English than she let on! Geoff! Elly did a fine job of the drunken antics of the knocking the gearstick downhill so that the power came back on -



Looking west over the lakes into the evening sunshine

Just like all the other be "The Day"! However, Light southerly winds site as yesterday, but off to the east, so we and go for the serious 45 minutes later, and a reached take-off. At

one thing there were rocks everywhere, the other was that we were in cloud! Not what was planned! Tim and Elly arrived a few minutes after me on account of their shorter legs - they both took one look at the rocks everywhere and walked back down again! Meanwhile a mad Frenchman, Jean-Michelle, was preparing to launch from just about the worst bit of the so-called take-off - and in thick cloud, and in quite a reasonable breeze, and to top it all, pretty much from where he had been helicoptered off the hill with multiple fractures on a previous visit to this part of Spain! Who were we to question his judgement? So we helped him with his lines, and off he went, disappearing from sight within seconds.

days, Friday was going to like yesterday, it wasn't. took us back to the same the wind was a bit too far decided to bite the bullet yomp up to the top take-off. few pounds lighter, we least we thought it was, for

We decided to sit it out, during which time we made ourselves useful by clearing a half decent area of all sizeable rocks. An hour and one scorpion (imagine that dropping out of your lines just after take off) later we had actually cleared a good area and I was clipped in, ready to go waiting for a suitable hole in the cloud. We were hearing over the radio that Condor Man was in the air, scratching around a few feet above the middle take-off at cloudbase!

A short while later my "window" opened and I was off, not really expecting much in very light claggy conditions. I was losing height from the moment I took off, so I headed left along the ridge towards the town for a possible early landing. The ridge changed to more of a cliff after a while, and I scratched along it, about half a wingspan away in order to maximise what little lift there was. The town itself is nestled at the foot of the cliff at its most eastern end so I had some great aerial views as I beat back and forth along the cliff. I managed to stay up for 45 minutes by gently working every bit of lift, but I eventually found myself too low over the town, so I cruised overhead to the delight of the screaming school-children, and landed at exactly the same spot as yesterday.

It turned out to be my shortest flight of the holiday, but it was just as enjoyable as the other days because of the challenge of flying so close to the cliffs, and the achievement of staying up so long in the very light conditions. So, three days flying out of five so far, would tomorrow be "The Day"?

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Yes, but not well into the afternoon! It looked like Saturday was going to be a repeat of Wednesday, so we headed back to the N take-off. We met the British rally team at the bottom of the track who kindly loaded all our kit into their two Peugeot 106's and thrashed them up the track. (It was their last day so it didn't matter what happened to them back to the airport!) So it up to take-off this time. Anyway, performance of Wednesday - initially. We guessed that the before, and sure enough it did, hours of waiting! Condor Man followed by Voodoo Child in the later. I was next off a few problem getting up - within 15 (3600' ato, 6300' amsl) with a shortly after me. I think if the back I would have gone with though there was good distance superb flying, cruising around for



Formation flying above the NW take-off

We all had our best flying of the hairy half hour when the wind "balls to the wall" trying to get downwards out of the huge few anxious moments watching 1000' ato in a couple of minutes, radios were invaluable for this. Meanwhile, I was well out in front of the hill, speed bar full on, heading for the NW take-off where I had seen a couple of guys having what looked like a really nice flight. This was definitely a good move - the lift was wonderfully smooth (it must have been about 5.30pm by now, and things were quietening down, over here at least), and looking west over the lakes into made even more special after landed (we met them later in the sharing the sky with up to a vultures flying above, below and magical time which I will never



Enjoying the smooth conditions above the NW take-off

I must have been gabbling on wasn't long before Condor Man did - I wanted to share this someone else. We flew together smoothest of smooth conditions above the lakes below. One time so smooth was the lift. We both broke away. Fantastic! By now it for 3½ hours, Condor Man was Geoff were waiting in the bottom from the cliffs, me first, followed later. Flying out over the lakes spiralled and B-lined down to made my holiday. I don't think that flight - what a way to end

the cars as long as they got was a much more leisurely stroll it really was a repeat very light and well off to the west wind would swing round as but not until 2.30pm after 3 was the first to actually stay up, next decent thermal 15 minutes minutes later, and had no minutes I was at cloudbase Spanish pilot who had taken off Spaniard had headed over the him, but I'm glad we didn't even potential, since I had some 3:40 hours in all.

holiday although there was a picked up and most people were forwards away from the hill and areas of lift. Condor Man had a Voodoo Child go from 40' ato to with negligible penetration. The reassurance in a situation like the views were spectacular the evening sun. The flight was the two Danish pilots had bar) - I had the privilege of dozen of these wonderful griffon alongside me. It really was a forget.

about it over the radio, and it made it over to me. I'm glad he wonderful experience with for a further 45 minutes in the getting heights of up to 2500' we actually touched wingtips, let out a great cry of "wow!!!" and was 6.30pm (I had been flying up to 4 hours now) and Elly and landing field so we headed out by Condor Man a few minutes with about 2000' to spare we end the flight, which for me, either Tim or I will ever forget the holiday!

We left Vallee de Abdalajis at 9am the next morning on what looked like was going to be

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another glorious day, with Geoff and I heading back to England, and Tim and Elly off to the Sierra Nevada's for a weeks skiing (the bastards!)

We arrived back at Bristol in much the same weather as we had left it a week earlier - a chilly, grey, breezy day - it would have been a real downer had I not been met by Lisa with Emily on her shoulders grinning at me! What a wonderful surprise!

As a place to go for some great winter flying, I would thoroughly recommend Vallee de Abdalajis. As with anywhere, the weather can be varied, but 4 days flying out of 6 can't be bad (8½ hours total)! What's more it was a very cheap holiday, only costing £350 including flights, accommodation and car hire.

Oh, and by the way, if you're wondering what my nickname was for the trip, it was Sphincter Man, on account of flying a Nova Sphinx! Thanks guys!

And as for the "Spanish Fly" - I'm sure my performance in the air has improved, if nothing else!

Music Review

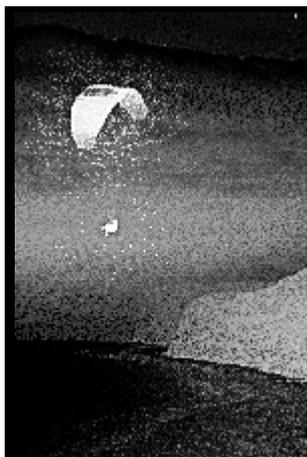
As a bit of a departure from the norm for NOVA here is a quick music review of a band I recently saw at a local venue. You may well think 'what the **** has this got to do with flying?', but read on. It must be said that I was rather pissed at this gig so maybe you should treat my ramblings appropriately, but I do know good music when I hear it.

It was Mr Dave Macarthy that first told me about The Hoax, having seen them nearly a year ago in Salisbury or some other far flung backwater town. He had also seen them, more recently, on 'Later with Jools'. On this occasion Dave had thought to himself 'Where's my beer?' as he often does, but as well as this he spent some considerable brain processing on the question of where he had seen the lead singer before. It was only when he was on some far flung and probably blown out hill, that the answer came to him. Yes, Hugh Coltman the lead singer of The Hoax, also flies a paraglider. Indeed you may have seen his name recently as he was the lucky (or unlucky depending on your point of view) person who won a new sensation harness in the Skywings comp, his brother Alex also flies and is getting a reputation for landing in trees.

Now to the point of these inane ramblings, do keep up at the back. A few days ago I noticed that The Hoax were due to play our local night spot, The Hub in Bath. I decided to go along and 'check em out.' So after the usual pre Hub smiles session in the Bell, Charlie and I headed down into the bowels of The Hub. I must say this band are excellent. The blues pumped out all night. I guess blues influenced music is quite trendy again with all these retro bands around, like the Ocean Colour Scene etc. So don't expect boring old fuddy duddy blue, this is bang up to date, and it's got attitude. The musicianship of the band stands out, and with 2 such good guitarists they must have loads of arguments over who's turn it to play the solo. So at the risk of sounding cliched I'll just say, 'if you get the chance go and see them.'

Finally I just have to say to Hugh Don't give up Paragliding, there have been numerous rumours to this effect.

Party on.



Competition News

NEWS FLASH *** NEWS F

FOR WHAT SEEMS AGES THE AVON PG TEAM HAS BEEN GOING FLYING IN A COMPETITION AGAINST WESSEX, THAMES VALLEY AND SOUTHERN CLUBS, ONLY ONE TASK WAS SET AND NO ONE DID ANY OF IT. THE TASK WAS FROM MERE TO BATH. UNFORTUNATELY MOST OF THE TEAM ARE NOW OFF FLYING COMPS ETC SO NO NEWS OF THE NEXT AIRWAVE COMP.

THE KOKINELLI KIDS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED FOR A RETURN TO THE ISLE OF MAN, THIS YEARS TEAM IS MARCUS KING, PETER CORCORAN, PAUL DAVIES, DAVE MACARTHY AND CHARLIE HEDGES. AN ARTICLE WILL APPEAR

SIMON KERR, WHO GOT HIS YEAR OFF TO A FINE START WITH 25KN FLIGHT, IS STILL ORGANISING THE TOW COMP AS A PRE BPC AS APRT OF THE ALL OUT, I'M SURE HE WILL APPRECIATE ANY HELP HE CAN GET.

THINGS ARE NOW HOTTING UP ON THE XC FRONT WITH CLIVE LAWRENCE-PECKHAM FLYING 44+35+25 IN THE LAST 2 WEEKS, MARCUS KING FLYING 37KM, WAYNE SEELEY FLYING A 25 AND 15KM FLIGHT AND SIMON KERR WITH A 22 KM FLIGHT. MORE DETAILS OF THESE AND OTHER FLIGHTS NEXT MONTH.

1996 PG XC League (26/4/96)

The first XC's of the year have now been flown at last! Fiona's, Amanda's, and my flights were all from the Bloreng on Saturday 30th March (what an excellent day, albeit bloody cold!) and Tim Brunskill's was from Mere on Thursday 4th April. Fiona found her new GPS system useful as she flew some of her 35km in cloud, 1000' above base - not my idea of fun!

As far as I'm aware no one managed an XC over the Easter weekend, so the Easter comp will roll forward to the next Bank Holiday weekend (4th-6th May) - remember, the flight has to start from within 50 miles of the centre of Bristol - good luck!

All sites league

Rank:	Name:	Canopy:	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:	Total (5):	Total (all):
1	Fiona Macaskill	Edel Energy	35.3					35.3	35.3
2	Tim Pentreath	Nova Sphinx	21.9					21.9	21.9
3	Tim Brunskill	Condor Tornado	18.9					18.9	18.9
4	Amanda Lawrence-Peckham	Apco Supra	11.7					11.7	11.7
	Total							87.9	87.9

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Just a quick reminder of the rules:

1. Flights must be entered within 30 days of making the flight
2. Airspace restrictions must be observed during your flight - study an airmap before the flight and use one during the flight
3. Flights can be made from any UK site
4. Flights must be over 3km
5. Witnesses are not required

So there you go - get out there and give it a go! I look forward to receiving details of your flights - Date, Canopy, Site, TO grid ref, LZ grid ref. (Ideally send it to me on a copy of the Apco Aviation XC league form - see Dec 95 Skywings)

Contact me : Tim Pentreath
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home 01225 424953
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Novice Column

Sunday 21st April at Mere was one of those really annoying days in flying when the weather's not so dreadful that you can just turn the car round and go home but somewhere in between - things might improve if you just hang on a bit...

But 'a bit' can be a long time in this sport and every now and then a hang glider pilot would lose patience and take to the air only to return a few minutes later with tales of it not being a very nice place to be. Eventually, however, the wind did drop to somewhere in the low 20's for a short while and although the direction still wasn't perfect it seemed to be blowing more onto the hill. A number of pilots subsequently took off and appeared to be doing all right so I thought I'd give it a go. That was when I remembered why I'm a novice contact. My 'flight' lasted about two minutes. The first half minute was great, I rocketed skywards before a load of sink brought me back down level with the ridge. From then on, feelings of desperation occupied my mind as I tried to control a wing that was indifferent to my inputs while fighting my way through rotor to the bottom landing field. Boy was I glad to get down. There, with my feet firmly on the ground, I was able to look back at the ridge top and reflect on why perhaps it would have been a good idea not to have left it.

Weatherwise the day before was a bit better, the wind was less and between the rain showers I managed to get some flying in on the paraglider. Better still was the previous Monday afternoon, yet another day at Mere*, with an overcast sky and a steady breeze that made enjoyable soaring conditions for the hang gliding novices and veterans alike. Anyway where am I going with all this? My intention was to write an article urging new pilots entering the club to get out on the hill and be ready for when the right conditions do arrive.

Unfortunately, during the early stages in your flying particularly, the unreliability of British weather means the chances are that you are going to waste a lot of time sitting around in unflyable conditions. Don't despair, the laws of probability should also eventually enable you to fly, so if a forecast looks at all promising, take any opportunity you have to be out there with your glider rigged. When you have a lot of hours, you'll be able to pick and choose your days to go flying with more ease as there will be a wider range of conditions to fly in. My second bit of advice is to make use of the experience in the club. There are some excellent coaches around to tell you where, when and how to fly in addition there are

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league pilots, wise old pilots, flashy dressed pilots and then none of these things - the novice contacts. Unfortunately I'm not going to be able to be a novice contact for much longer as I've stupidly gone and got myself a full time job in Yorkshire just as the flying season commences, but Dave Garbe, who is the leading force of the novice movement in any case, will continue to exert his energies into various low airtimer events, such as:

May 12 th	Low Airtimer Fly In
Sometime in June or July	Long Weekend Away in Wales
June 9 th	Low Airtimer Fly In
July 20 th	BARBECUE at a site TBA
July 31 st	Low Airtimer Evening
August 9 th , 10 th and 11 th	Bristol Balloon Fiesta
August 25 th	Low Airtimer Fly In
Sept 8 th	Low Airtimer Fly In
Sept Sometime	Parachute Repacking in Bristol

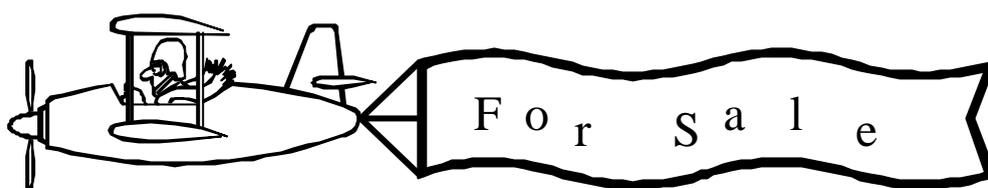
These events are for both hang glider and paraglider pilots so get yourself along.

Finally, if anyone would like to take my place as a novice contact please speak to Dave Garbe or Pete Corcoran. Ideally another paraglider pilot would be useful, but anyone who understands what it's like to be a novice on either type of wing and who regularly flies Avon sites would be fine.

See you out there.

Rob Craine

* What is it with Easterly and South-Easterly winds this year?



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