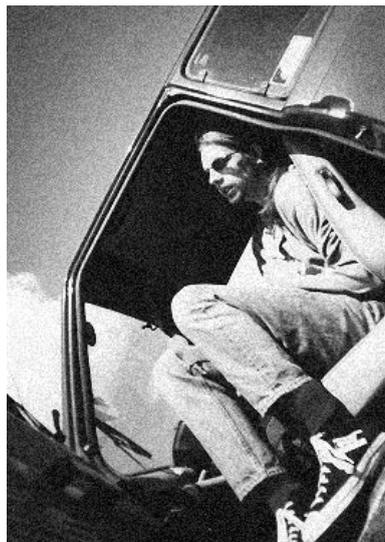


Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club

Newsletter

May/June 1997



Editors Bit

This weekend I disappeared over to SE Wales, where the Nationals were being held. Donna and I got to the hill just as they were calling the briefing. A few free flyers were doing quite well and there were tales of people who had already done XCs and come back to the hill. It was looking like a great day. A task was set of a race along the ridge to Hay Bluff then downwind to Brecon. We decided to let the Nationals pilots get going then try and follow them. The window opened and everyone took off, quite an impressive sight, and as one, when the start gate opened, they all turned along the ridge. After most of them had gone, we decided to fly. On launching I found the wind had moved further to the North and hence the air wasn't as lifty as before, it was pretty obvious that I wouldn't make it far along the ridge. Soon every one was sinking out, I managed to sneak in on the lower takeoff, others weren't so lucky and went down in the bushes and bracken. Lesson number one learned. "If the conditions are good don't hang around, they may get worse soon."

We hung around a while then decided it would probably be worth going over to the Blorenge to have a try there, as the last time the conditions had been like this people had been floating around 3000' above Abergavenny whilst we were sat on Pandy. Just as we had packed up things started to improve and couple of people started to get quite high. I dragged my glider back out of it's bag and took off, the lift was much better now I was soon over a 1000' above, I drifted over the back in a weakish thermal, but kept going beyond the point of no return. It then turned into a very sinky glide, leaving me on the deck after 4km, but not to worry it was the end of the day and the Skirrid Inn was suitably close. From the air the field had looked empty but on final approach I had noticed some cows at the far end, 'no worries' I thought. After I landed I rushed to get the canopy packed away as the cows came to investigate, knowing that they have a liking to chewing the odd canopy. As I finally got the glider into the stuff sack I looked up straight into the face of a rather big cow, and it didn't have udders, but rather large balls. Ahh!!! I grabbed my stuff and threw it over the gate and followed, toute suite. A little later I remembered my radio, and had to revisit the field to retrieve it. Lesson two learned, "Not all things that look like cows from the air are cows!"

We spent the next day up at Fforest Farm where conditions were a little stormy and rough but we managed some pleasant flying before heading back.

As you probably have noticed this issue has been a while coming, thanks to everyone for their contributions. I have also been spending some time giving the Web site an uplift, and it has now moved to <http://homepages.force9.net/skytribe>. We are getting a fair number of visitors to the site.

Marcus

Well See you on the hill. ✍

NOVA



PWC Report - Brazil

15th - 20th February 1997

If you are looking for a 'holiday of a lifetime' can I suggest you consider going to Governor Valderes, Brazil? I was lucky enough to get a place and have the time to compete in the PCW there this February. It was not the most organised of competitions but the friendliness of the people, the constant 'fiesta' atmosphere and the flying far outweighed the frustration of not getting the scores on time - even needing a 'rest day' so as to sort out the mess! There were around 15 Brits in 'GV' as it is known, around half of them were competing officially (including myself) the other half may have had an even better time as they benefited from the whole PWC event without having to worry about how far up/down their name was on the score sheet every day!

You may have gathered that the weather in S. America has not been good this winter. This did not, however, stop us flying everyday for over a week. The take off is one huge hill over looking GV - this hill overshadows everything around at 1100m and constantly forms a huge sink hole around it for about 10 km. Once at cloud base (usually between 1500 & 2000m above take off) getting away can take a fair degree of skill/luck as all subsequent hills are tiny by comparison and useless there are good clouds to help, your dream of flying your fist 100km may have to wait another for day.

Most days we were set tasks around the 90km mark, either race to goal SW down the main road (thankfully down wind) or out and return to the goal field, just the other side of the 300m wide river in the centre of GV (interesting trying to judge that final guide). One day we had a triangle task which involved crossing the river 3 times - even more interesting!

If one did not make it to goal (as I tended not to!) landing out could provide a unique experience - perhaps my most memorable was when I landed in a field of 'something' 2m deep. Landing was not a problem and I just hoped that there were no nasty snakes or spiders lurking. After beating a path to a clearing 50m away and disentwining all those retched microlines I managed to drag my kit walking backwards, to the clearing. Half an hour late it was all in the bag and my GPS indicated that the road (there is only one south out of GV) was about 10km east. I thought I had landed near a path which led to a track which eventually led to the main road - the path turned out to be a dried out river bed and if it had not been for a man on a mule I think I could still be wandering round the tropics looking for a way out today. The man insisted on putting me and the glider on his mule and after half an hour of extremely rugged terrain (up and down hills, over streams, through bush etc.) we arrived at his little house. There, I was greeted by his wife and 2 teenage sons and was given food and drink - by this time I needed it. An hour later, I was sitting on his motor bike, glider on my back being bumped along a dirt track to the main road, another half an hour later I was sitting at the bus top consuming Sprite and ice cream. This is just one example of how kind the people are and exciting the flying (or rather retrieve) can be in Brazil! After that experience I decided to keep nearer the main road!

Governor Valderes is definitely at the top of my list of places to re-visit. The roads are reasonably good, traffic in the town was never at a stand-still - you still see the occasional horse and cart trotting or even cantering down the centre of the street, accommodation is cheep (\$6/night for a single room) in a basic hotel, food is delicious, again cheep, the people are unbelievably friendly and kind and it is totally unspoilt by the effect of tourism. I can honestly say that I felt safe walking round the centre of the town, on my own, in the middle of the night - one can't say that about many towns these days. I never had any trouble hitching a lift back and the children had been taught by the PWC organisation how to behave if they saw a pilot land near them - not to touch anything, help pack away the glider if asked, offer to carry equipment and take the pilot to the nearest bus stop/road (possibly via their house to show them off to mum and dad and give them a drink!). They were more than happy with a bottle of coke (bought at the local store) as payment.

An added bonus of going to Governor Valderes when a PWC is taking place is that there is an incredible atmosphere generated by 150+ pilots from all over the world, gathered to compete and enjoy themselves. I sincerely hope there will be another one there as I will be the first to book my flight - see you there?

Fiona Macaskill

NOVA Letters

I thought you might like this quick note about 'Life in Chamonix' - The first 6 months.

Month	Hours Flying	No of Flights	Total Distance Flown
November	1	2	-
December	0	0	- but skiing every day!
January	5	7	25km
February	20	19	210km (incl S.America)
March	16	10	140km
April	22	16	375km

I wonder what the next 4 months will bring!... I'm off to Italy PWC in May, hopefully China (I've got a place but need funding) in June, then Spain PWC in July, France PWC and British Open in August and if I get a place in the finals of the PWC, Slovenia at the end of August... See you in September!

Fiona Macaskill

Fantastic site

Where is this fantastic place with the white horse? Looks like Australia or Kenia

cool

Andy, Alto 27, Switzerland

Marcus,

I just visited your web site and found it thoroughly enjoyable. It has such a pleasant look and feel about it that I feel like I've just landed after flying around with you guys and am finishing a pint. Too bad I'm in Seattle, WA, USA!!!

Cheers!

Mike Lubrecht
Para 2 (USHGA)
flying an AT Mirage

More Low Airtimers

Here are some more names and numbers to add to your low airtimers list :-

Ian Horne (HG)	01784 254514	(North Surrey)
John Fielder (PG)	01275 343927	
John Holbury (PG)	01275 875140	
Steve Wells (PG)	0117 986 9914	
Alan Gibson (PG)	0117 962 2827	

Holiday Diary

By Robin Brown

Destination Madeira and Porto Santo. Organised by Colin Lark, Simon Stone and Me!

Monday 3rd Feb Get up stupidly early and travel down to Gatport Airwick with Mike Riley and big Barry Wyatt. Arrive 06:00 hrs. Try to check in vast amounts of extra baggage. Meet up with the other seven PGs, 6 HGS and several camp followers.

Air 2000 wants to charge 30.00 pounds per Hang Glider extra, I blame Tim Brunskill, eventually get through without paying despite having personally checked in x4 Paragliders, some 45 kgs of equipment!
Arrive Funchal 11:00.

Exciting landing as runway is only just long enough and Pilot aims directly at mountain before b g sharply on finals. Met by local Pilots with a Bus and a Truck for all our gear. Set off for Hotel, Madeira is completely covered in things...houses, vegetation, cultivation, nowhere to land, nowhere to take off ...

Taken for guided tour of sites, very interesting, experienced Pilots look very nervous, low airtimers go very quiet. Probably flyable on far side of Island but we are out of time. Go out for huge feast, eat and drink far too much and set the trend for each and every night.

Tuesday 4th Feb

05:00 John Fielder gets up and goes for a run.... I don't..

10:30 Leave Hotel to go flying. Eventually stop on the side of the road by a small patch of grass surrounded by cactus. Terry Treetops has a reputation to think of and puts his Edel Energy into the cactus. Decide to take off around the corner as at least it is into wind. Nice little pootle around and then land on small stony beach by the bar.

Various folk fly down but only Mike Riley excels by managing to take out the wind sock and then land inside a wheely bin. Everyone incredibly impressed by his precision flying, search frantically for a camera to record historic moment, but fail. Much ribbing and jokes at Mikes expense during another enjoyable night of fun.

Wed 5th Feb

05:00 John Fielder gets up and goes for a run.....I don't.

06:30 Everyone else gets up to catch the Hydrofoil to the Island of Porto Santo. Pretty rough crossing, reasonable demand for sea sickness pills from my first aid kit,must remember to charge on the return journey.

11 :30 Arrive Porto Santo. Met by bus and hire jeep and delivered to rather nice **** Hotel on beach front. Share room with Barry Wyatt and John Fielder, after complaints about my flatulence I get the balcony to sleep on.

13:00 Zip up hill 5 mins from Hotel to go flying. Unfortunately its blowing 25 mph. Sky floaters have a fab afternoon, Pumpers retire to bar.

18:00 Have to listen to boring tales of there I was etc from the HGs during extremely good meal consisting of large pieces of meat on a sword swinging above the table. Inevitable happens and meal ends in sword fight.

Retire to balcony for a peacefu1nights sleep... woken repeatedly by Cockerel crowing due to street lights, decide to borrow sword from restaurant .

Thursday 6th Feb

NOVA

05:00 John Fielder gets up and goes for a run..... I definitely do not..

06:30 John Fielder returns and removes trainers, unfair competition... Barry Wyatt joins in with his own dawn chorus, luckily no one smokes. Have very substantial breakfast and get ready for a busy days flying. Bit too windy for pumpers, but OK for Sky floaters we decide to go for a long walk up the other end of the Island and have a look at some of the various sites. Hear a call on the 2m radio that the wind is easing, decide to call up the Jeep to retrieve us, find that it is possible to get 11 people on and in a Suzuki Jeep! Drive through village passing the local policeman who gives us a disapproving look but decides to do nothing. Happy afternoon with everyone flying around as you do and then landing on the beach by the bar, or in the case of one local Pilot, on the bar by the beach! Makes sense to me... Shirley this is how every day should be.

19:00 Evening spent cons g again, everyone ends up behaving like fifteen year olds except Cheryl who is fifteen and behaves marginally better.

Friday 7th Feb.

05:00 John Fielder gets up and goes for a run. I do not. Must remember to get some valium or similar to put into his beer.

10:00 Drive off in trusty, overloaded jeep to different site and try to work out what conditions are like. Flying seems pleasant enough but spot chosen for bottom landing is a big mistake. Terry Webb has a hard landing, damaging his harness, followed by exciting landings for Barry Wyatt and Brian Smith. Hotel looks reachable on a straight downwind glide from above ridge so decide to make for beach and lunch.

13:00 Arrive on beach after experiencing more than my fair share of rotor considering wind is fairly light. Lunch, mmmm. Decide to return to ridge with Gerry Tapstock as rather large cumulus now seem to be breaking up and its going to be just perfect at 17.00. Sky decides otherwise and ominous big things develop out to sea, wind picks up, everyone lands. Everyone except Mike Pearce flying a Harley Free Spirit. This Canopy certainly seems to have a life of its own as it flexes and bucks. White horses at sea now with approaching storm clearly visible, situation not good. Every body waves at him to land by whatever means possible. Then the collapses start. Please don't make me use my first aid kit, I've only ever had to use antiseptic wet wipes before... Shouts of "oh my god " etc. I look back up to see Mike disappearing behind a spine back ridge with a substantially collapsed wing. Rush back up to the top in time to see him landing on the beach by the Hotel. It turns out that I have been a lot more worried by the experience than he was. Mike Riley also has interesting time with rotor behind the Hotel but pales into insignificance in comparison to Mike Pearce!

19:00 Everyone goes out to play again, tonight we play hard as we are all glad that we are still all here. A few beers later and we feel totally invincible, it seems perfectly logical to pile 10 drunken persons on to a Suzuki Jeep and have a reasonably sober 15 yr old to drive us home.

Sat 8th

05:00 John Fielder once again proves that he is not no... Having listened to the bloody chicken half the night I opt for the lye in. Weather looks distinctly windy, very impressive Cumulus build within minutes, shower and go! Go to bar.. Young Lady behind bar gives me a dazzling smile, obviously she finds me phenomenally handsome. Cheer up immediately. Later see same young lady give Colin Lark the same smile, devastated. Folk potter about doing other things like getting dragged around underneath a kite, swim or hang around the bar waiting for there own personal smile. Bar does rather good business.

19:00 Go out and do it all again! This time make the mistake of allowing a drunken adult with a licence try to drive home. Caroline frightens all the people on the roof and most of the people who are still conscious inside the car. Woken up during the night by thunder and a solid wall of water travelling horizontally past my head on the balcony, at least it's shut the chicken up, but unfortunately not the Donkey!.

Sun 9th

Expect John Fielder to have a day off, apparently not.

NOVA

Too about a bit, walk up magnificent beach to bar, walk back again to magnificent bar on beach etc. Watch bad weather and impressive sea and Jerry Tapstock getting all with a camera. Sleep. Go out. Ken Steele arrives with a shirt to die for, Nelson Mandela would feel at home in it and we are all jealous, well I am anyway. Lots more bad behavior and lots more bad driving, I think I may have done some of it but I can't be sure. More Chicken, Donkey and rain.

Monday 10th

Last day and the weather does not look good, well actually it looks great its just blowing 40mph that's all. Go exploring around the Island, sites every where, most very user friendly, some with roads to the top, all very frustrating.

News comes through that the ferry from Madeira to Porto Santo is not running due to bad weather... no ferry back means missed plane home... everyone now relaxes even more with the thought that we could be stranded here for days. Colin and Simon go up to the airport and start to haggle about flights to Madeira, returns to Hotel brandishing fist full of tickets, the bastard, now we really do have to go home. As its our last night and the plane doesn't leave until 10'00 pm we all get a bit squiffy during yet another huge meal. Arrive at Airport, they let us board a 28 seat Shorts S.T.O.L. type aircraft, lucky really as most of us are clearly unfit to travel. Kieth stands up in the aisle to demonstrate the safety procedures. Stewardess makes him sit down again and attempts to do the same, stewardess gives up due to heckling from the back. Vince Hallam, yes 'the Vince Hallam' helps himself to a spare seat in the cockpit, pilot and navigator do not seem to mind. Lots of roaring of engines and we're off. Bit bumpy, but good rate of climb as Brian's vario confirms. Madly chirping vario is tossed around cabin accompanied by shouts of Bomb! Bomb... this doesn't go down too well with some of the Portuguese passengers who do not look well.

Arrive Madeira. Collected by local pilots and whisked off to Hotel in Funchal, Hang Glider Pilots have to go to club house to short pack gliders. Talks with Madieran pilots about transport costs go on until 02:00 am.. Kieth and myself eventually arrive back at hotel to find all rooms have been taken! Eventually share a double bed with Kieth for what remains of night. Scored at last....

NOVA



No real competition news at the moment, the paragliding teams hasn't managed to fly due to weather, other comps and the IRA. Hopefully we will be out on a hill and securing our place in the semis. You should have got your entries in for the Easter comp by now, the results will be published next month.

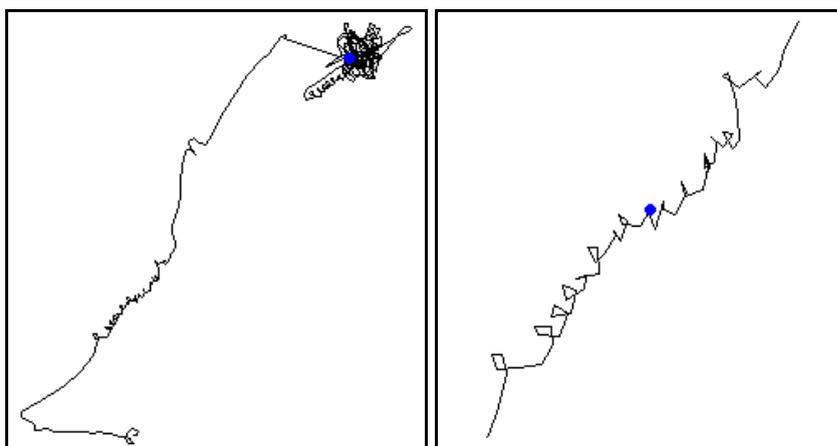
1997 PG XC League - 28/4/97

All sites/All pilots league (as at 28/4/96)

Rank:	Name:	Canopy:	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:	Total (5):	Total (all):	Avg (5):
1	Tim Brunskill	Nova Xyon	88.6	13.4				102.0	102.0	51.0
2	Marcus King	UP Soul	14.6	9.7				24.3	24.3	12.1
3	Clive Laurence-Peckham	Swing Nimbus	22.8					22.8	22.8	22.8
4	Amanda Laurence-Peckham	Swing Ventus	6.6					6.6	6.6	6.6
5	Tim Pentreath	Nova Sphinx	5.1					5.1	5.1	5.1
6	Elly Milln	Airwave Voodoo	3.1					3.1	3.1	3.1
Total								164.0	164.0	20.5

Well, the XC league has got off to a cracking start (well from Tim "we are not worthy" Brunskill at least!). At this stage last year we had 87.9 km in the league, so had it not been for Tim's epic 88.6 km flight from Ubley on 20th April we would be about where we were this time last year. Anyway, I know where I'll be next time there's a NE blowing (and it's not going to be Wales!) At the time of writing Tim's flight was the longest flight made by anyone in the country so far this year, so hats off to Tim.

I'm off the mark too, with an unimpressive but very enjoyable late afternoon flight from the Bloreng on 12th April. I'm afraid I'm now a fully qualified GPS nerd having bought a Garmin GPS 38 at the Boat Show earlier this year, and just to prove it, here are a couple of traces from the days flying. Unfortunately I didn't have it switched on at the beginning of the xc flight as I was flying down to the landing field and was almost there before I found the thermal that took me over the back. So the blob in the top right is from earlier in the day. The second trace shows a thermal that I was in for 6 minutes just to the north west of Blaenavon. I covered 1.3 km in it, which by my reckoning equates to a drift of 13 kph (8mph).Yawn!! - the fun you can have with a GPS!



Anyway, next time I hope I've got more than 5.1 km to bore you all with!

Just before I sign off, here's an amusing little story which came to my attention the other day:

NOVA

"A 50 year old American man was refused permission to learn to fly on account of his poor eyesight. Undeterred, he built himself a homemade flying machine consisting of a chair attached to 13 helium filled weather balloons. Having strapped himself into the chair he untied the tethering rope, and armed with an air gun, the intention was to fly across his garden at a maximum height of 30'. Unfortunately the airgun failed to burst the balloons as planned and he was eventually rescued by a helicopter at 11,000' !!!"

Who needs thermals eh?! (I'm assured this is true - apparently it was reported on Radio 4 Today programme recently).



Just a quick reminder of the rules:

1. Flights must be entered within 30 days of making the flight
2. A flight can only be entered if you are a full Avon member at the time of making the flight
3. Airspace restrictions must be observed during your flight - study an airmap before the flight and use one during the flight
4. Flights can be made from any UK site
5. Flights must be over 3km
6. 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.

Contact me : Tim Pentreath
at : 168 Bradford Road, Combe Down, BATH, BA2 5BZ
home 01225 832922 (phone/fax)
work 01225 447003
fax 01225 318997

Hang Gliding XC League

Only one entry so far, but I know others have flown XC so get your entries into Neil Atkinson 01225 754152

Colin Hale	5.96	14.92	Total 20.88
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The Easter Weekend saw some good flying, with several people going XC from Selsey on the Friday, although no one has attempted to claim the Avon Easter Shield for any of these flights. Colin Hale escaped from Westbury on the Saturday for a 15km flight, which takes the Easter comp, Congratulations Colin.

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:-

**Marcus King
159 The High Street
Batheaston
Bath
BA1 7DW
or
Email to marcus@skytribe.force9.net**

NOVA

1996 PG XC League Analysis

1996 was an incredible year for the Avon XC league with over 50% more kilometres flown compared to 1995. Whilst this can be attributed to 50% more people entering the league (in 1995 only 13 pilots entered the league - last year it was 21) it does indicate that the depth of skill in the club is increasing which is very encouraging. Importantly the league last year was not dominated by just two pilots as was the case in 1995 (in 1995 there were three pilots who flew more than 100 km in their top five flights - last year there were six).

Name	Best 5 Flights		All Flights		Distance
	Distance	Average	Distance	Average	
Graham Steel	204.8	41.0	258.6	36.9	53.2
Robert Davis	191.8	38.4	191.8	38.4	79.9
Martin Bromage	157.7	31.5	173.5	24.8	52.1
Mark Drake	118.0	23.6	150.3	18.8	45.5
Tim Pentreath	110.9	22.2	130.5	18.6	26.9
Marcus King	101.1	20.2	128.3	14.3	37.0
Simon Kerr	87.7	17.5	125.0	11.4	24.4
Fiona Macaskill	89.0	17.8	98.6	14.1	35.3
Tim Brunskill	69.2	17.3	69.2	17.3	25.0
Nico Preston	60.5	15.1	60.5	15.1	22.6
Martin Tillett	51.6	17.2	51.6	17.2	26.6
Amanda Laurence-Peckham	45.0	11.3	45.0	11.3	15.2
Wayne Seeley	37.6	18.8	37.6	18.8	25.3
Elly Milln	28.9	14.4	28.9	14.4	19.8
Mike Andrews	23.4	11.7	23.4	11.7	14.8
Dave McCarthy	23.0	23.0	23.0	23.0	23.0
Donna Pinker	16.5	8.2	16.5	8.2	9.2
Clive Laurence-Peckham	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5
Tim & Elly	10.3	5.2	10.3	5.2	5.3
Charlotte Hedges	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6
Richard Miller	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
Grand Total	1454.5	25.5	1650.0	18.3	79.9

Table 1 lists all the flights made in 1996 - top of the list by over 25 km was Robert Davis with a superb 79.9 km flight from Selsley Common.

Table 1 - All Flights

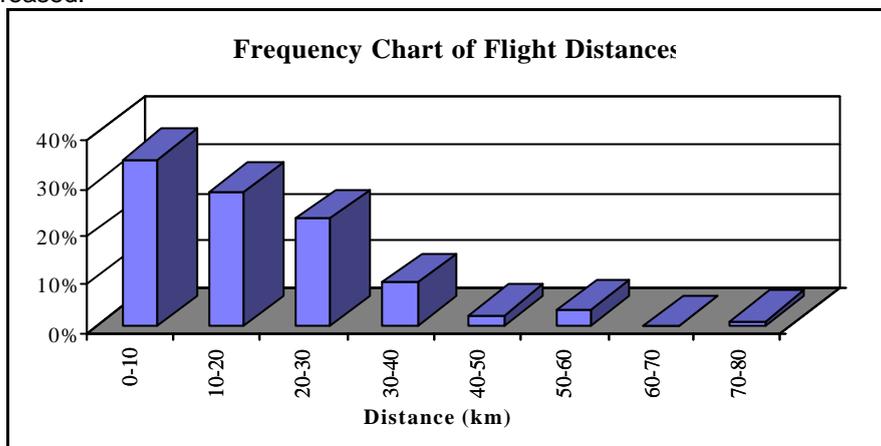
Rank	Name	Site	Date	Total
1	Robert Davis	Selsley Common	31/8/96	79.9
2	Robert Davis	Kettle Sings, Malverns	12/8/96	54.2
3	Graham Steel	Kettle Sings, Malverns	3/4/96	53.2
4	Martin Bromage	Selsley Common	13/8/96	52.1
5	Graham Steel	Roel Gate	7/7/96	47.3
6	Mark Drake	Selsley Common	12/6/96	45.5
7	Graham Steel	Forest Fields	5/5/96	37.4
8	Marcus King	Forest Fields	4/5/96	37.0
9	Fiona Macaskill	Bloreng	30/3/96	35.3
10	Graham Steel	Grove Head	21/6/96	34.6
11	Martin Bromage	Selsley Common	12/6/96	32.3
12	Graham Steel	Abertyswg	17/6/96	32.3
13	Martin Bromage	Carrock Fell	4/5/96	30.8
14	Mark Drake	Selsley Common	31/8/96	30.7
15	Graham Steel	Merthyr	13/4/96	28.6
16	Tim Pentreath	Merthyr	8/6/96	26.9
17	Martin Tillett	Selsley Common	10/8/96	26.6
18	Wayne Seeley	Leckhampton	6/4/96	25.3
19	Robert Davis	Leckhampton	27/5/96	25.3
20	Graham Steel	Hay Bluff	27/4/96	25.2
21	Tim Brunskill	Merthyr	20/7/96	25.0
22	Tim Pentreath	Merthyr	20/7/96	25.0
23	Simon Kerr	Merthyr	20/7/96	24.4
24	Robert Davis	Leckhampton	24/6/96	23.3

NOVA

25	Simon Kerr	Hay Bluff	28/4/96	23.2
26	Marcus King	Fan Gyhirych	27/7/96	23.0
27	Simon Kerr	Fan Gyhirych	27/7/96	23.0
28	Dave McCarthy	Fan Gyhirych	27/7/96	23.0
29	Nico Preston	Coombe Gibbett	23/6/96	22.6
30	Tim Pentreath	Blorenge	30/3/96	21.9
31	Martin Bromage	Shining Tor	12/5/96	21.5
32	Tim Brunskill	Pandy	15/6/96	21.1
33	Martin Bromage	Fan Gyhirych	27/7/96	21.0
34	Tim Pentreath	Blorenge	21/7/96	20.9
35	Ely Milln	Pandy	15/6/96	19.8
36	Nico Preston	Pandy	15/6/96	19.5
37	Tim Brunskill	Mere (Rifle Range)	4/4/96	18.9
38	Fiona Macaskill	Pandy	5/9/96	17.8
39	Marcus King	Talybont Amphitheatre	24/8/96	17.5
40	Mark Drake	Selsley Common	8/6/96	17.0
41	Clive Laurence-Peckham	Hay Bluff	8/6/96	16.5
42	Fiona Macaskill	Shining Tor	27/8/96	16.2
43	Tim Pentreath	Clough Head	31/8/96	16.2
44	Amanda Laurence-Peckham	Hay Bluff	8/6/96	15.2
45	Martin Tillet	Selsley Common	12/6/96	15.0
46	Mike Andrews	Pandy	6/5/96	14.8
47	Marcus King	Merthyr	20/7/96	14.1
48	Fiona Macaskill	Pandy	6/9/96	14.0
49	Amanda Laurence-Peckham	Fan Gyhirych	27/7/96	12.8
50	Mark Drake	Selsley Common	13/8/96	12.8
51	Wayne Seeley	Leckhampton	4/5/96	12.3
52	Mark Drake	Frocester	11/7/96	12.1
53	Mark Drake	Frocester	11/7/96	12.1
54	Martin Bromage	Kettle Sings, Malverns	17/7/96	12.0
55	Tim Pentreath	Shining Tor	12/5/96	12.0
56	Amanda Laurence-Peckham	Blorenge	30/3/96	11.7
57	Nico Preston	Pandy	15/6/96	10.3
58	Mark Drake	Blorenge	23/6/96	10.1
59	Mark Drake	Selsley Common	24/6/96	10.0
60	Martin Tillet	Tintos	18/5/96	10.0
61	Marcus King	Hay Bluff	27/4/96	9.6
62	Donna Pinker	Aberedw Hill	14/7/96	9.2
63	Ely Milln	Forest Fields	4/5/96	9.1
64	Robert Davis	Leckhampton	4/5/96	9.0
65	Simon Kerr	Hay Bluff	14/6/96	8.8
66	Mike Andrews	Kemble	15/6/96	8.6
67	Simon Kerr	Forest Fields	4/5/96	8.3
68	Nico Preston	Coombe Gibbett	21/6/96	8.0
69	Marcus King	Hay Bluff	14/7/96	7.9
70	Marcus King	Blorenge	22/6/96	7.9
71	Simon Kerr	Blorenge	23/6/96	7.7
72	Tim Pentreath	Clough Head	31/8/96	7.7
73	Donna Pinker	Aberedw Hill	31/8/96	7.3
74	Simon Kerr	Hay Bluff	24/7/96	7.0
75	Simon Kerr	Blorenge	22/6/96	6.6
76	Charlotte Hedges	Hay Bluff	14/7/96	6.6
77	Marcus King	Blorenge	23/6/96	6.1
78	Simon Kerr	Shining Tor	12/5/96	5.9
79	Simon Kerr	Blorenge	23/6/96	5.7
80	Fiona Macaskill	Blorenge	23/6/96	5.7
81	Tim & Ely	Clough Head	31/8/96	5.3
82	Marcus King	Westbury	21/6/96	5.3
83	Amanda Laurence-Peckham	Forest Fields	4/5/96	5.2
84	Fiona Macaskill	Frocester	30/8/96	5.2
85	Tim & Ely	Clough Head	30/8/96	5.0
86	Richard Miller	Mere (Rifle Range)	4/6/96	4.6
87	Simon Kerr	The Myndd	6/5/96	4.4
88	Fiona Macaskill	Blorenge	22/6/96	4.4
89	Tim Brunskill	Forest Fields	4/5/96	4.1
90	Martin Bromage	Clough Head	5/5/96	3.8
Grand Total				1650.0

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I guess **Error! Reference source not found.** doesn't show anything too unexpected, with 1/3 of flights less than 10 km, and almost 2/3 less than 20 km. However compared to 1995, the percentage of 0-10 km flights has decreased whilst the percentage of 20-30 km flights has increased, showing that standards of XC flying within the club have increased.

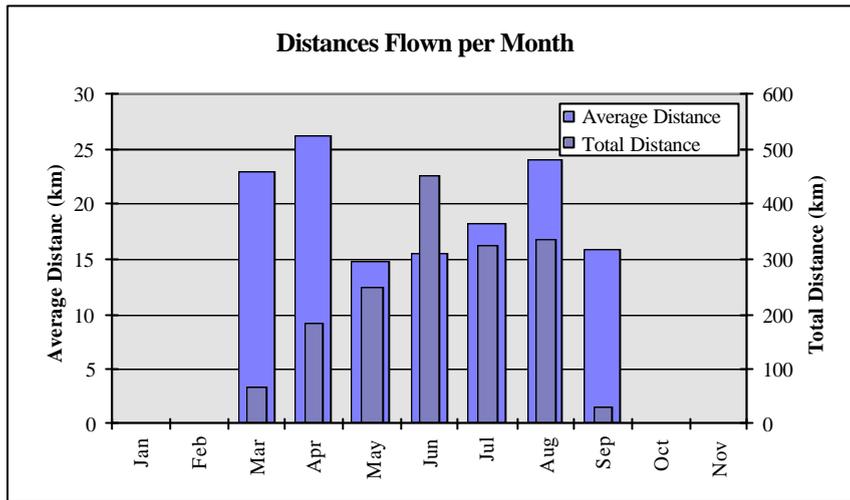


Error! Reference source not found. shows the number of flights, the total distance flown and the average distance flown from both Avon sites and non-Avon sites. As in 1995 Selsley Common (NW-N) came out on top both in terms of number of average distance and number of flights. The Blorenge was the most popular non Avon site, followed by Hay Bluff and Merthyr. Kettle Sings again proved itself a good XC site with a high average distance flown.

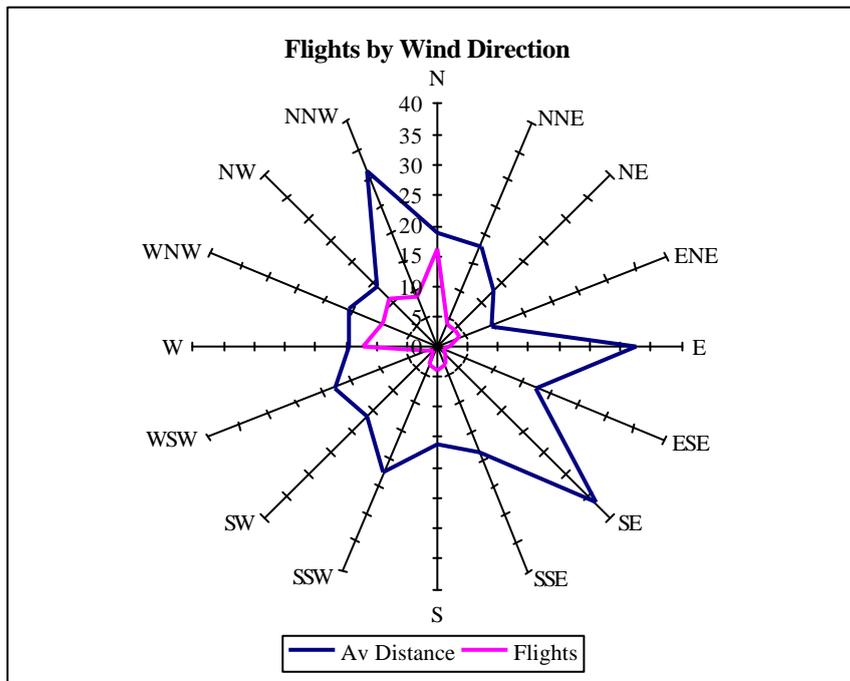
Sites	Number of Flights	Total Distance	Average Distance
Selsley Common	10	321.9	32.2
Mere (Rifle Range)	2	23.5	11.7
Frocester	3	29.4	9.8
Westbury	7	5.3	0.8
Avon Sites	22	380.0	17.3
Roel Gate	1	47.3	47.3
Kettle Sings, Malverns	3	119.4	39.8
Grove Head	1	34.6	34.6
Abertyswg	1	32.3	32.3
Carrock Fell	1	30.8	30.8
Merthyr	6	143.9	24.0
Fan Gyhirych	5	102.8	20.6
Leckhampton	5	95.3	19.1
Talybont Amphitheatre	1	17.5	17.5
Forest Fields	6	101.2	16.9
Pandy	7	117.3	16.8
Coombe Gibbett	2	30.6	15.3
Shining Tor	4	55.5	13.9
Hay Bluff	9	120.0	13.3
Blorenge	12	144.2	12.0
Tintos	1	10.0	10.0
Kemble	1	8.6	8.6
Aberedw Hill	2	16.5	8.2
Clough Head	5	37.9	7.6
The Myndd	1	4.4	4.4
Other Sites	74	1270.0	17.2

Error! Reference source not found. shows how the flights were distributed over the year. Unlike 1995 when flights were spread out from February right through to October, 1996 saw flights concentrated mainly between April and August, with the summer months of June, July and August producing the best total distances, although a few fine flights in March and April helped push those months to the top of the average distance flown table.

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Error! Reference source not found. is really just to show off my Excel graphing skills! Actually it is quite interesting really! It clearly shows that the vast majority of flights (66%) are made when the wind is in the NW quadrant. However that doesn't guarantee better distances - they are split fairly evenly across all wind directions.



In 1995 I made a big thing out of mid-week flying: to quote from my 1995 analysis: *“Finally onto my favourite bugbear - that of mid-week flying! **Error! Reference source not found.** shows conclusively that mid-week flying was better than weekends and Bank Holidays, with average mid-week flight distances almost twice those of weekends! Can't argue against that!”*

	Number of Flights	Total Distance	Average Distance
Mid-week	21	535.3	25.5
Weekends & Bank Hols	42	548.7	13.1
Grand Total	63	1084.0	17.2

Well in 1996 this seems to have changed! **Error! Reference source not found.** shows that the difference is not nearly so marked! In fact not only has the mid-week average dropped, so has the ratio of mid-week flights to weekend flights, so I won't whinge about it this year!

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	Number of Flights	Total Distance	Average Distance
Mid-week	25	512.2	20.5
Weekends & Bank Hols	65	1137.9	17.5
Grand Total	90	1650.0	18.3

Anyway, that's definately enough from me for the time being - if you're still awake and interested then you're a sad bastard like me, if not then may all your flights be short ones!

Good flying this year!



A FEW LAPS IN LANZAROTE

1996 was a bit of a disaster area for me. What with work, weather, illness, injury and family commitments I managed a grand total of one and three quarter hours airtime. In fact I was getting so rusty I could hardly remember how to jump off a hill. What's the answer? Get professional help. No, not psychiatry: coaching.

So in late February it was off to Lanzarote for a week with the Avian package deal (as advertised in Skywings). I won't bore you with a detailed account of every flight, but I thought you might like to know how it all turned out.

For a start I could only manage a week, which at £537 seems a bit expensive. But it does include flight (self + hanglider), accommodation, car hire and tuition. A fortnight would have been £670: a bargain. Eating (mainly out) was cheaper than expected, so I only spent about another £100 in total.

The flight out was a bit of a nightmare: drive up to Manchester, with cat naps in the car, doze in the airport then wake up at about five in the morning to (a) pick up the tickets! and (b) pass the gliders through the Xray machine. We finally arrived in Lanzarote about noon. Thankfully we were met at the airport and looked after, and there were no real hitches. Though I was absolutely knocked out for the rest of the day.

Accommodation was at Ray and Josie's farmhouse (also as advertised in Skywings). I can thoroughly recommend this. Not only is it clean and hospitable, but Ray and Josie are both helpful and a real pair of characters. Also Ray is an expert hanglider and windsurfer and knows Lanzarote very well: take his advice on what the wind will do. Unfortunately I (and another guy) were billeted on the Germans next door: friendly but dirty.

The weather was mainly hot, i.e. shorts & T-shirts. I could hardly believe it as February. However the weather was also a bit erratic: no wind on most days, nearly blown out on one day. Still we all (mainly novices) got some flying in. I managed seven flights over 5 of the 6 'non-travelling' days.

In the very light wind and haze (no thermals) some flights were just top-to-bottoms, and on smallish sites too. This was OK by me as a way of getting flying again, but some of the others were not so happy, to say the least. We even visited the BIG site at Mirador del Rio a couple of times, once to look down on the clouds, then again to stand in the clouds. No chance of flying on either occasion.

Luckily the BIGish site at Famara was on for 2 or 3 days. This is about 1400 ft top to bottom (no top landing). The first day there it was so windy I couldn't get into position to stand on the ramp (I'm short and my glider uprights are long): though everyone else flew (with nose & 2 wing men). But the next two days brought very light wind, with a little thermal assistance and I was really pleased to find it soarable. However the take-off (Run Like Fxxx down the concrete ramp to the cliff edge) was a little daunting. It was also fun watching the German pilots. All very skilled I understand but oh so casual. Flying in loose sandals, stepping into the air and going backwards before getting flying speed, etc. etc.

NOVA

Avian were supposed to provide one instructor for every 3 pilots. However they were having a bit of trouble this week and Steve Elkins (just back from competing in Australia) came out himself, alone, to shepherd the other seven of us. Oddly enough he's not actually a 'qualified instructor', but I guess he does know about flying! He was also very careful to talk us all through each site: e.g. we walked the bottom landing before going up. We also got a lot of assistance prior to and at take-off. Steve took the nose on most launches. And each evening we had a teaching session: how to launch in various slope & wind conditions, how to pick a landing site from the air, etc. I found this all very helpful.

Otherwise the whole set-up was quite informal though we all hung around in a group for flying, drinking and eating. With three cars between the eight of us we had to do a surprising amount of driving. The scheme is you leave one car at the bottom and all go up in the other two. Then when a few people have landed, two go up to get another car, and both drive down again to pick everyone up to go back up... etc. etc. Incidentally the roads are narrow and ill-defined with occasional large drops at the edge. Some are only cart tracks. And, of course, the cars are LH drive with gearshift on the right. Other people's driving was by far the most scary part of the trip. Best to go with someone you trust.

Incidentally although the windless days were hot, once in the wind you soon chilled off. On the best day I left off my flying suit in the heat. Big mistake. After an hour I found I was getting cold and had to go down and land.

But even with the odds & sods of flights I was all good experience. The flight at Famara was the first ever time that I was able to turn multiple 360s in thermal lift without being blown back behind the hill. The really odd thing is that I have now found out at long last how to do consistent 360s on the Clubman, viz.: pull on a bit of speed, bank, push out to initiate the turn (all as usual), then hold the bank (i.e. 'low side': don't allow the body to swing back to centre) and gently pull in bringing it (it seemed to me) a bit inboard of the neutral point. Failure to 'low side' or to pull in causes the glider to level off or slow down towards a stall. I guess this only applies to me on my glider: but I have never ever seen such a thing in any of the books. And it has taken me years to work it out for myself. Ah well.

The other good thing about the trip was we all gained a lot more confidence in taking off from strange sites (in strange weather) and, more important, landing in new fields. On the last day, in nil wind, we had a glide angle 'contest' (1400 ft ttb). (Won by Steve, of course, on his prototype topless Java). This was good practice at (a) judging how far you are going to get ("Will I clear those pylons?...") and (b) choosing a landing spot from the air (admittedly in just scrubland, but there were a few obstacles to make it interesting).

So now its back home to English weather. I'm having my glider fixed: to shorten the uprights. This should also make it easier to flare so I might even swap the big wheels for little plastic ones. Cross-country here I come.

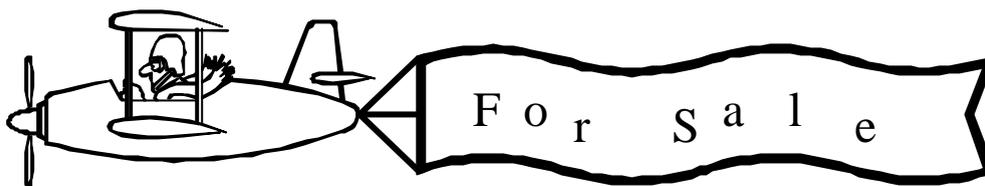
Tim Swann 19 March 1997

Nova on the Web

You'll find an online version of Nova at <http://homepages.force9.net/skytribe> This contains news and up to date XC results as well as some of the articles from the magazine with colour photos. The site is now frame based and includes links to many other flying related sites, both in the UK and abroad. So point your browser at the site and check it out. PS if you have anything you want to see on the site or have something to contribute drop me a line.

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