

NOVA

July & August
1999



All Out '99



Meeting June 3

Flying in Jordan

Mere Bash - August 21st & 22nd - See Inside for Details

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Information

For Club Coaches Information See The New Updated List Near The Back Of This Magazine.

Sites

Lulsgate 01275 474441

Weather

Wendy Windblows Call Rod Buck to Subscribe 0114 253 0372
 Avon, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset 0891 500405
 Glamorgan 0891 500409
 Dyfed and Powys 0891 500414
 Airmet South 0891 500693

Send XC Flights to Tim Pentreath (PG)
 Neil Atkinson (HG)

Avon HG & PG Club Diary

Date	Event	Venue	Contact
03/06/99	Club Meeting	The Compass Inn	
01/07/99	Club Meeting	The Compass Inn	
03-04/07/99	All Out / Festival of Flight	Wroughton	Skywings
05/08/99	Club Meeting	The Compass Inn	
24/07- 08/08/99	Club Trip To The Alps	Chamonix/Annecy	Marcus King Simon Kerr
02/09/99	Club Meeting	The Compass Inn	
04-05/09/99	The Mere Bash	Mere	Simon Kerr
07/10/99	Club Meeting – AGM!!!	The Compass Inn	
04/11/99	Club Meeting	The Compass Inn	
02/12/99	Club Meeting – Xmas Meal and Presentations	The Compass Inn	

Mid-Week Flying Phone 0800 515544

NOVA

The Avon
Hangliding & Paragliding
Club Newsletter

July & August
1999

NOVA is the newsletter of the Avon Hangliding and Paragliding Club. The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor, or Committee of the Club.

All contributions should be sent to the Editor of NOVA. NOVA can also be found online at www.skytribe.force9.co.uk



AVON



Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club

Editors Bit



Welcome to the latest issue of NOVA. Rather surprisingly there seems to have been some flying going on recently. Quite a few Airwave rounds have been flown and Avon are through to the semi finals again.

Thankyou to everyone who continues to contribute to this magazine, without you there wouldn't be one. Sorry to Robin whose Romania article still hasn't appeared mainly because I haven't had time to type it up yet, should be in next month though, along with the results of an email survey Tim carried out recently and all the details from the semi finals.

Well I'm off to France in a week or two with Simon, Rich and Charlotte for some Alpine flying, hope the weather is better there than it has been here this year. I will also be attending a Bob Drury XC course, which I will of course write up. Unfortunately I will be missing the Mere Bash, so I expect to hear what a great time you all had on my return, yep an article would be nice. Full details of the Mere Bash can be found in this issue.

Don't forget you can keep upto date with what's going on in the club on the website at www.skytribe.force9.co.uk.

Till next time have some great flying and don't forget when you do, send me that article...

Marcus

Get High, Stay High, Fly Far

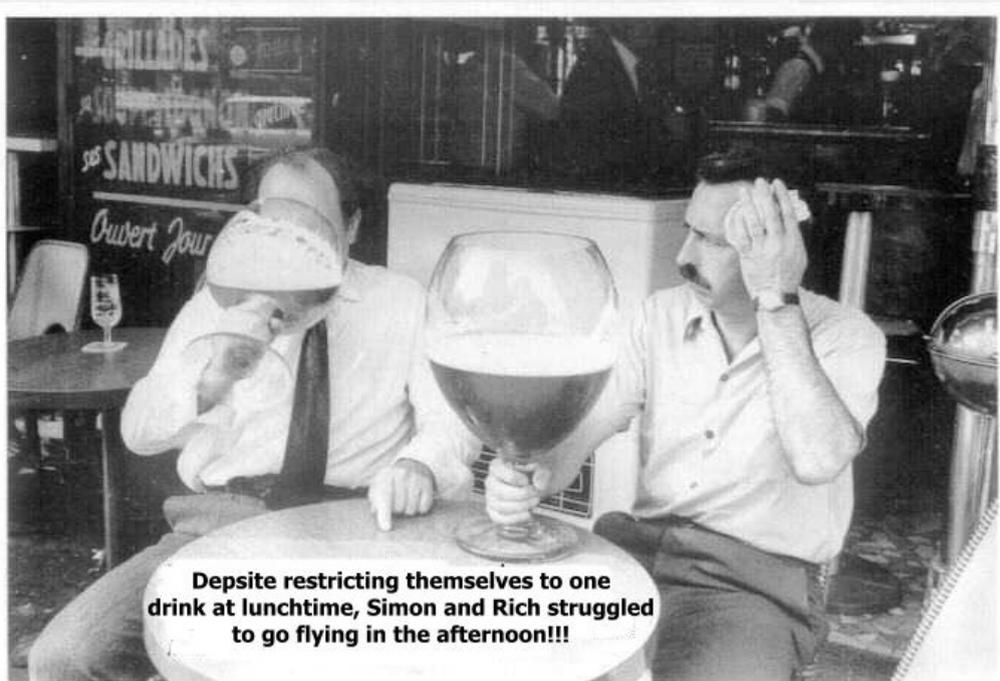
Send your articles to
Marcus King

159 The High Street, Batheaston, Bath. BA1 7DW
or

Email: marcus@skytibe.force9.co.uk

Fax is also possible by arrangement, phone me on 01225 852912

Spot the Difference



Can you spot the carefully hidden differences between these two pictures?

...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Letters...Lette

Dear Nova

There was much 'talk' on europg following a great days flying on Tuesday 25th May. I thought I would share my contribution on the subject with the readers of this esteemed organ!...

Tuesday 25th was an also a epic day in the Avon area too, in particular at a site that is known by the locals as "Wells Road". I arrived at 0850 and had a quick chat over a cup of coffee to a few others who were already there. It was the usual banter - who's been doing what, what's today going to be like etc... Then it was off to unpack and switch on the computer.

At about 0915 the phone started ringing - where are you, what's happening? etc. Yup, the day was starting to hot up, earlier than usual. I was starting to get that slightly anxious feeling when you know it's going to be a big day.

By 1100 I was as prepared as I was ever going to be - I had worked out on the map the route I was hoping to take, and figured that in the prevailing conditions it should take about two hours. I had a quick pee, strapped in, waited for the right moment and was off. It was the usual melee to start with - you really needed to concentrate - but after a while I found myself in a some empty space, and started to relax a little.

I won't bore you with all the details of the trip - but everything went more or less to plan (I find the M4 an excellent navigation aid) although I did have to reduce speed and top-up earlier than planned. I just love my machine though - it's got fantastic speed and it turns so sweetly, but you do have to take care cornering in rough conditions when going fast as you can lose it big time!

Fortunately nothing that exciting happened and at just before 1300 I saw my destination ahead - I had judged it perfectly, and turned gently into a suitable clearing, switched off and gathered my stuff together.

I then spent a couple of hours chatting with the locals - I have to say they were very friendly (no mad farmers around here) - they even offered me food and drink! Then at about 1500 I thought I had better start making my way back. I called my mates back at the site to let them know how it had gone

and when I thought I'd be back, and then headed off.

I have to say the retrieve was a doddle, pretty much exactly the route I'd come, although it did take a little longer. Back at the site, I was quizzed by all and treated a bit like a conquering hero (well, maybe a bit of an exaggeration there!) - but by the third or fourth run through of the days events I was getting a little tired, and so at 1745 I decided to head home to the family.

All in all a fantastic day - I'll certainly remember it for a long while to come!

Yours officebound

Tim Pentreath

Dear Friends:

As the organizer of the World Soaring Challenge I would like to take the opportunity to personally invite you and your club members to participate. The yearlong XC contest is open to all soaring crafts from paragliders to sailplanes (for a copy of the rules please visit the contest's web page at www.hanggliding.org). There are no entry fees or pre-registration requirements so pilots may still enter at anytime.

If you could relay this information to your members I would deeply appreciate it.

Sincerely,

John Scott

P.S. As you read the rules please note that the minimum existing "open distance" and "triangle" site records for hang gliders and paragliders has been reduced to 50km from 35 miles. Also, we encourage you to register your local site records. We have close to 200 record listed so far but most are from the U.S; we would like to see more foreign entries.

Dear Nova

Raphael Lytton is soon to have lots of time off work!! - So I am planning trip(s) down to Larange etc...

Any one interested in a lift or offerring a lift / sharing costs etc please let me know - I also know a couple of potential cheap or free drivers!! So contacting me may not only cut costs but also solve the car/ pick up problems after that incredible XC to the BL.

I would particularly like to hear from anyone going out to Larange (or France) on July 30,31 or August 7, 14 or perhaps 21st [Especially the 7th] Or returning from Larange on the 7th ,8th

with space in thier car for a driver (and or HG) - because I am trying to arrange for a friend to come down for one week while I stay out for two (or more!!)

Thanks in anticipation....

Raphael Lytton -
Bristol England
Tel (44) 117 973 1078

Hang Glider Pilot,
Ballroom Dancer,
Surfer and general
Epicurian.

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STOP PRESS THE EDEN HAS NOW GOT DHV 1/2**

A Surevy of Cape Town Medical Services - Brent Pullen

In February of this year myself and R Tone (Tony Moore) set off for Cape Town, South Africa for a two week paragliding holiday. We planned to spend our time with Rob Manzoni of Airbourne paragliding tours. Rob has a reputation for providing fun packed flying holidays , his understanding of the sites and weather conditions in the western cape are second to none. He has recently purchased a large house in Porterville which he has turned into a bunk house for pilots. He also owns the take off at Dasclip Pass the best site in South Africa.

We left the UK on Feb 14 arriving at Capetown via Joburg the following day, and headed straight to Porterville as the conditions there had been good for about three weeks, flyable on most days. I don't think we had three weeks in total in 1998 at home! Porterville has a reputation for being a bit wild at times and I was a bit apprehensive about flying here, it's known locally as the small town with the big sky!

We had planned to spend about a week flying at Porterville (Dasclip) and then head back to Cape Town to fly Table Mountain and the other sites on the coast. In the week that I flew at Dasclip I flew 5 out of 6 days in conditions varying from smooth to very challenging. The first couple of days were quite smooth with thermals averaging about 2 metres per second and were very enjoyable to fly in. On the third day R Tone took off as usual before me and rocketed towards the heavens in a 5 meters per second climb screaming "ya hoo" over the radio, he soon disappeared out of sight. I took off about half an hour later into the roughest air I have ever experienced, lulled into a false sense of security by the previous two days flying. From the moment I took off it was a battle to keep my wing above me, I



had a 50% deflation 75 feet above take off I decided to fly out away from the mountain and look for some smoother air, there wasn't any! I was now about a kilometre out in front of take off and had eight deflations and was being swung around all over the place I had enough of this and decided that it was time to come down. Slight problem, my vario was screaming at me I was climbing at an alarming

rate looking down at the bottom landing field I could see that the wind sock had changed direction and was now parallel to the mountain . I decided to turn down wind and look for some sink, yes sink! By this time I was kacking myself 3K later I was finally descending with big ears. Anyway, I finally got down in one piece another twenty minutes in the air and landing would have been very tricky as the wind was gusting at up to 30 mph .

The next two days were totally different with smoother conditions and enjoyable xc's, at the weekend we were invited to fly in a competition between two Cape Town clubs. The Saturday turned out to be a bit of a let down with only 15 pilots out of 60 managing to launch in strong crosswinds, the rest of us chose the swimming pool and cold beer as a safer option. On the Sunday we were back at Dasclip in much more favourable conditions. A task was set 25 k along the ridge past Porterville to a turn point and then back to the field behind the bunk house at Porterville .

I chose to launch early along with about ten others and we soon found ourselves in the bottom landing field waiting for a lift back to take off. We could see that the rest of the competitors had started to disappear along the ridge still not to worry it wasn't a race to goal and you were aloud 2 attempts. By the time I had clipped in for the second time most of the 60 pilots had launched and were well on there way. I launched and was soon climbing above take off I gained about a1000 feet before setting off along the ridge towards Porterville. I could see small cumulus starting to appear along the edge of the mountain range, after about 8 K I got in a good solid climb and could see the cloud developing above me at 5m per second this was as strong as I had ever thermalled in and soon gained 2500 ft before gliding off along the ridge looking for the next trigger point. I had now done about 10 k and was about 500ft above the mountain I hooked into a very strong thermal and started to 360 my vario started to scream this was a strong one as I went around for the second time my glider folded above me and all hell broke loose I struggled to hold onto what was left of my wing with little success. I tried to correct the situation, the inputs from the brakes had no affect , I then put my hands up hoping that the glider would recover on its own no chance by this time I was rapidly running out of sky. I didn't think twice about my next decision and reached for

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my reserve, as I threw it I shouted out load 1, 2 and on three I was jolted backwards by the force of the reserve as it filled with air. I can remember thinking for a split second "o shit what have you done?", My glider then surged forward and re-inflated in front of me obscuring my view of the ground I reached forwards and tried to pull in the glider before hitting the ground feet first

It did not take me long to realise that I wasn't in a very good situation. I was very dazed and in a lot of pain from my lower back and ankles, it took me about 5 minutes to get myself together before radioing to the comp organisers that I had come down on my reserve and was injured. South African national's pilot Greg Hamerton radioed back immediately to say he had heard my call and was on his way. It was over half an hour before I could see his glider above me looking for somewhere to land. It was not very long before he was crashing his way through the scrub to get to me, 45 minutes on a mountain with a broken back seems like a life time when your on your own. We soon realised that the only way off was by helicopter and the call was made, the helicopter was 45 minutes away by air and it was over an hour before he was hovering above looking for somewhere to land by which time another pilot Rob Smith had arrived to help. The helicopter disappeared over the top of the mountain with no where close to land, another twenty minutes passed before two paramedics and the chopper pilot arrived. They estimated that it would take about two hours to carry me to the chopper not a nice prospect in 35 degree heat. The chopper pilot was carrying an axe and said he thought he could chop out a landing area about 50 m above where I had crashed. It was an hour and a half before I was put into the chopper which was perched precariously on a ledge facing into the mountain with the wind behind. The pilot later told me that it was the most dangerous landing he had ever attempted. .

I was soon checking out the medical facilities in Cape Town. The first question I was asked as I was wheeled into the hospital was who was I insured with? No cover no treatment and there not embarrassed about it. By the time I had been x rayed they had determined that I was covered, I was wheeled off to the ward with a prognosis of three compression fractures to my spine and badly bruised ankles with the prospect of a few weeks in

hospital. I got away without an operation, but will be off work until the end of May!

After being in hospital for 9 days I had a phone call from R Tone to say he was on his way into visit me as usual but there was the possibility that he might have an evening flight on a site called Lions Head. I had another call about an hour later to say that the Lion had bitten and R Tone was laying on the side of the mountain with a suspected broken leg. It was broken all right "Tib and Fib". The following day Rob Manzoni called to say he had arranged for me to be moved across Cape Town into the same hospital as R Tone. By the time I arrived R Tone was just coming out of theatre where he had just had a steel bar put in his leg youch! Five days later our survey of the Cape Town medical facilities was complete and two ambulances arrived to take us to the airport. I had the luxury of a stretcher for the flight home we were finally on our way!

Apart from the obvious we had a great time in South Africa, put Porterville on your list of places to fly. Rob Manzoni has a great set up and he is totally committed to his guest. The exchange rate is

so good that you will struggle to spend 300 quid in a fortnight.

If I have learnt anything from this experience it would be don't think twice about throwing your reserve, it's definitely your last chance! I have no doubt it saved my bacon, I was about 50 feet above the deck when it inflated with no time to enjoy the view. The £25 I spent in January having it repacked was money well spent. If you have not had your glider repacked in the last twelve months it might be a good idea to get it done before you fly again! If you are considering flying abroad don't go without repatriation cover, my total bill came to over £13,500 for a £46 premium. I have not been put off by this accident and hope to be in the air sometime in July if all goes to plan.

Thanks to everybody who phoned me and Jill whilst I was in hospital and on my return, it's nice to know that I have some good friends in the AVON Club.

NEWS etc...

SITE NEWS

Sites News North

Draycott Sleights

Please do not fly Draycott Sleights (a.k.a. 'Unofficial Draycott') until further notice. Whilst flying there this afternoon, I was approached by one of the Wardens from the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation, who manage the land from which we fly, and we discussed wildlife and other issues. The Warden has no wish to stop us flying the site altogether; merely to regulate our use of the site, in the same way that use of all our official sites is regulated.

My intention is to negotiate the site jointly on behalf of Avon and the Devon & Somerset Condors, many of whose members also use the site, and with whom we have a reciprocal agreement, as you will be aware. John Fielder, who negotiated Crook Peak on behalf of both clubs (with the National Trust) was

also present and concurs with this. Condors pilots will also be asked not to fly the site until negotiation is complete. The Warden has been further made aware that certain non-BHPA members also fly the site and that an agreement would therefore be beneficial to regulation of site use.

To avoid any confusion, this does not in any way affect flying at the official Draycott site, as featured in the paper and online Sites Guides.

Thank you for your consideration in respect of this notice and please do pass the message on to pilots without e-mail or non-Avon members to whom this may likely apply.

IMPORTANT NEWS - UBLEY EMERGENCY BOTTOM LANDING

An enjoyable weekend on Ubley, for many pilots, was slightly spoiled yesterday evening by a phone call to Geoff Rogers (Site Officer) from the farmer of the

emergency bottom landing field(s). He was unhappy at:

1. The number of paraglider pilots who had landed in the emergency bottom landing over the weekend
2. The amount of his grass - which is a crop the same as any other - that had been flattened by pilots packing their wings where they landed.

This is particularly concerning as this farmer has a record of being very, very supportive. We appreciate that in thermic conditions, with the large patches of associated sink that were in evidence at the weekend, people are sometimes going to find themselves going down in a fairly unavoidable fashion. However, please could all pilots bear in mind the following:

1. Please remember that the Sites Guide describes these as 'emergency landing fields'. Your decision to fly (or to not fly) should be made upon similar considerations to those used to decide whether or not to launch at Westbury. We really don't want this to turn into another (antagonistic) Westbury-style situation - your consideration is required *now* to prevent this. In fact, please re-read the Ubley sites guide entry now.

2. If you're not an experienced pilot you shouldn't be flying Ubley - but you know that because you've just re-read the rules - haven't you?

3. The landing field currently in use is the right-hand (easternmost) of the two shown in the Sites Guide. (If you don't have a full Sites Guide, are you a Full Avon Member? - If not, why are you at Ubley?)

4. At the northern end of this field there is a substantial area of partly-grazed land (noticeably lighter in colour from the air). Please try to land in this part of the field, if at all possible. Yes, it's a little mucky, but you pays your money, you takes your choice.....

5. If you do land in the grassy (=crop, remember!) area of the field, please carry your glider either to the partly-grazed area or back to the entrance (from the road) to the field to pack up.

On a related note, both Geoff and I were perturbed to see the number of vehicles (ten, at least) that were brought to the site yesterday, most of them singly-occupied as far as pilots were concerned. I could name all but one of the pilots on the hill and cannot think of any that don't regularly fly with at least two of the others. Please could people start sharing transport to the site itself on days when it

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is so obviously going to be busy - there are places to (responsibly) park in the villages below the hill, for example - before this also becomes a serious issue. The site rules still say 'A maximum of six gliders' and it only takes a complaint about the number of vehicles for us to have to rigidly enforce this. It's a long drive to Abergavenny - please act on this *now* if you want to avoid it!

Many thanks, in advance, for your consideration and co-operation.

Rich Harding Avon Sites Officer

Further to the above message, when I went to put a notice on the gate about the emergency bottom landing this afternoon I had a long and very pleasant conversation with the farmer at the top of Ubley.

Whilst he had evidently been greatly amused by someone losing most of their wheel trim attempting to cross one of the cattle grids at breakneck speed (go on - own up - who was it?!) he'd like to suggest that we moderate our progress closer to, say 20mph max! Sheep do escape from the fields onto the road - apparently they're the madder-than-usual Welsh mountain variety too - and the avenue of beech trees will quite successfully hide them from view until the last moment before they jump in front of your vehicle. It might be worth considering whether your insurance company would pay up for any mishap that might occur on this private drive.

Again, this is a perfectly reasonable request from a really nice bloke, who actually told me he wouldn't mind trying our sport for himself, so please can we all take heed.

Thanks Again,
Rich Harding Avon Sites Officer

Other News

Found

Found at Westbury: Black X-trem sunglass bag containing a pair of amber coloured lenses. Contact Pete Corcoran on 01225 335301 / 07971 651676.

Stolen

STOLEN from queen st. kingswood Bristol May 31st. Helmet open face yellow with nova 99 sticker and DIY microphone link. Harness also yellow Keller sport with pulled apex chute. Flight suit gray & pink.

Any Information please contact Sean on Bristol 01179 353268.

Mere Bash 21st / 22nd August

The date of this years Mere Bash has been moved to the weekend before the August Bank Holiday, my apologies for this which is due to an unfortunate clash with the (Airwave?) Challenge Finals, further complicated by several of the organising committee who will be flying in said competition (we hope). The good news is that preparations for this years Party are well underway. As last year the event will be in the bottom landing field of the Rifle Range at Mere, with camping and facilities on site. Once again the Marquee is being provided by White Horse Marquees, our official sponsors for 99' (Thank you Bertie!!!). Weather permitting there will be LOTS of flying with the three local sites, Cowards Bowl, Long Knoll, and the Rifle Range itself, further to this it is hoped to have permission to fly the North Westerly Face, which is currently under negotiation with the National Trust and offers great X/C potential. In addition to this the Mendip Tow Group will once again have their Winch present, situated on top of the hill for that extra bit of height. As a bonus this year Geoff Rogers will also be offering Winch Endorsements for those wishing to get their Tow Ratings signed off, this applies to both Hang Gliding and Paragliding. If you wish to avail yourself of this opportunity then please let Me or Geoff know before the event because places will probably be limited. There will be X/C competitions and or hill soaring tasks, with real prizes generously donated by the several traders on site, who it is hoped will also have a number of Demo Wings available to try out. There will also be tandem flights available for Partners, friends, and Family. In the event of the British Weather claiming another victory, I can promise you a plethora of alternative distractions such as, Kite Flying, X/C Seminar, Quiz Time, Video Game Rally Time Trials, and heaps more silly pursuits, for which prizes will be awarded if no

flyable tasks are possible. The Bouncy Castle will be making another appearance for the Children amongst us (strictly under 45's only!!!). If this isn't all enough, then there's always the evening Party in the main Marquee. I'm pleased to announce that the Pound a Pint Bar will be making a come back, this year the guest beers on offer are Danish Dynamite and Pigs Swill coming to you courtesy of Stonehenge Brewery. There will of course be the BBQ, which this year will offer FOOD, ON TIME!!! (YES, last years caterers are NOT invited), the fare on offer will consist of a wide selection of cooked Meaty and Veggie things, with a choice of several Salads and Bread things to put them in. Last but not least of course is the Entertainment which will be brought to you once more by Once Bitten Twice Shy (obviously we weren't) who last year played a splendid set which had most people up on their feet, Last years surprise guest backing vocals, The Paratettes in the guise of Rich Harding, Mark Drake, and Rich Taylor have so far declined a definite booking, but pressure is being applied!!! This huge Party will be happening on the Saturday night, so organise your retrieves now to be sure you don't miss out.

What's all this going to cost? I hear you say. Once again The Club is dipping into its pocket to subsidise the event and we are happy to announce that Full Flying Members and Associate Flying Members will gain entry for the exquisite sum of £5.00, where as Non Members will be asked to cough up a delightful £8.00 ticket prices include food. Wives, Partners, and Children will be welcome FREE, so bring the Family, although a small charge of a pound or two may be asked for those Non Ticket Holders wishing to eat.

All that remains to be said is come along and have a good time, or to put it another way, BE THERE OR BE SQUARE!!!!

Simon.

Paragliding XC League

Sponsored by System X, MAC UK (ParaExcellence) and Sky Systems

Latest XC News from Tim

Apologies if your flight isn't mentioned below - see the XC database online for details of all flights...

Summary (written on Tuesday 30th June)

Lots of flights entered over the w/e and the back end of last week...

Saturday 26th June

Airwave Challenge heat at Pandy - questionable choice of sites given the conditions (SE), but Avon come 2nd - with my 6.5km flight (the only flight that started with a thermal!) being the second furthest of anyone on the day, you can see that conditions weren't ideal!

Friday 25th June

Marcus, Alex and I do short flights (11km) from Talybont at the end of a frustrating day when over-development shut off much of the thermic activity over the Beacons.

Thursday 24th June

Three flights from the Pandy region, with David Huxford's 19.1km from the Skirrid the best of the bunch.

Friday 18th June

In the Nationals a 90km task is set from Long Mynd - Nico manages an epic 78.6km to make him 3rd overall - well done Nico!. Click [here](#) for more details. Fiona Mac (not competing I believe) joins in by flying two 13km flights on the same day! Jim Mallinson (also not competing) flies [22.5](#)km.

Thursday 17th June

Another one from Tom Mayne - [24.0](#)km from Selsley this time. He's now top of the league with 121km flown. Meanwhile at the Nationals Nico Preston flies 23.4km.

Wednesday 16th June

Fiona Mac is down in Wales today, and she clocks up another 21km. She's on a mission at the moment!

Sunday 13th June

Avon wins the Airwave Challenge heat (is it still called the Airwave Challenge?) with some [great flights](#) from Rich, Alex, Peter Taylor and Merlin Crossingham. Meanwhile Fiona Mac flies 17.9km to break Guy Anderson's old Westbury site record.



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Tim B and Andy Summerskill also get away in the same thermal but don't get quite as far.

Saturday 12th June

Jim Mallinson has a lucky escape from the long arm of the law at the start of his [24.9](#)km flight from Uffington White Horse!

Friday 11th June

Rob Bilson does 9.0km from Westbury at 8 o'clock in the evening!

Thursday 10th June

Fiona again with a nice 18.8km from Combe Gibbet.

Wednesday 9th June

Rich again with a new personal best of [19.6](#)km from Hay Bluff. Alex and Richard Taylor were also there - Alex also achieved a personal best of approx 25km (full details when flight is entered officially), and Richard flew about 12km.

Tuesday 1st June

Rich makes steady progress up the league with 13.7km out and return ridge run from Pandy.

Thursday 27th May

I'm not sure whether Fiona will want me to mention her 4.0km flight from Castle Morton (Malverns), but it's too late now!

Tuesday 25th May

Oh dear, Tom and Alex are at it again! Tom makes [41.9](#)km from Bell Hill, with Alex flying [20.7](#)km from Olivers. There were some other good flights in the Wessex region on the same day - I've heard reports of a 90km and 47km flight too (not from Avon pilots though). Meanwhile, back in the office here's my [report](#)!

Thursday 20th May

Tom Mayne does 6.7km from Selsley Common, whilst Fiona does a pleasant 23.2km from Combe Gibbet. I hope you're a TV member Fi!

Saturday 15th & Sunday 16th May

This weekend saw one of the biggest turnouts at Ubley for a while. On Saturday four pilots got away - Charlotte Hedges managed 5km on her now condemned porous A4, Dave Yeandle 8.3km on his NOVA July & August 1999

first ever XC, Mark Aplin 18km (*awaiting exact details*) and yours truly [27.8](#)km. On Sunday, Jim Mallinson added another [20](#)km to his total making that over 100km for the year so far (in three flights). This man can do no wrong at the moment!

Friday 14th May

Alex does yet another XC, but this time only 6.0km from Westbury.

Friday 5th May

Rich Harding sneaks a little one in (fnarr fnarr) during the Avon Snowdonia trip.

Saturday 1st - Monday 3rd May

I gather the May Bank Holiday weekend was frustrating but just about flyable on all three days in Wales, but I don't believe anyone managed to go XC. I hear Paramania was a success, although can it ever beat last year when it was flyable at Fforest Farm on all three days?

Saturday 24th April

Was a classic day with over 100km flown by Avon pilots both in Wales and locally. I managed to get off the mark with 12.7km from Westbury. OK so I was just inside the Danger Area for some of the flight, but let's face it - it's v difficult to avoid it! (click [here](#) to see the GPS trace overlaid onto the airmap). On the same day from Jim Mallinson flew [32.7](#)km from Olivers, and Simon Kerr flew [27.1](#)km from Merthyr. Martin Stanton, Charlotte Hedges, Marcus King, Mike Andrews and Rich Harding all get away from various sites in the Avon region and south Wales.

Monday 19th April

Two flights today - Fiona Mac with 7.6km from Mere and Jim Mallinson's with an epic [48.3](#)km from an unofficial Thames Valley site... I can only sit and gaze out of the office window!

[Tim Pentreath](#) -

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 3 km
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, Turnpoints, LZ grid ref.

Contact me : Tim Pentreath

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home : 01225 832922 (phone/fax)

work : phone - 01225 447003, fax - 01225 318997 (please mark it for my attention!)

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<http://homepages.primex.co.uk/~timpent/avonpgxc>

1999 PG XC League (most recent flight - 26/6/99)										
Rank	Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	Grand Total	Average	Glider
1	Jim Mallinson	48.3	32.7	24.9	22.5	19.9		148.3	29.7	Edel Response
2	Tom Mayne	41.9	33.3	24	14.3	9	6.7	129.2	21.5	Nova Vertex
3	Alex Coltman	34.7	26.3	20.7	16.2	9.7	6	113.6	18.9	Nova X-Ray
4	Fiona Macaskill	23.2	21.1	18.8	17.9	13.8	13.2	108.1	18	Advance Sigma 4
5	Nico Preston*	78.6	23.4					102	51	Ozone Proton
6	Richard Harding	33.6	19.6	13.7	11.9	9.7	5.9	94.3	15.7	Firebird Flame
7	Tim Pentreath	27.8	12.7	10.7	6.5	5.9		63.5	12.7	Advance Omega 4
8	Peter Taylor	20.6	20					40.6	20.3	Advance Epsilon 2
9	Simon Kerr	27.1						27.1	27.1	Gradient Saphir
10	David Huxford	19.1						19.1	19.1	Gradient Saphir
11	Robert Bilson	9	6.7					15.7	7.8	Firebird Genesis
12	Jean Christophe Schrotter	15.3						15.3	15.3	Advance Sigma 4
13	Tim Brunskill	15.3						15.3	15.3	Advance Omega 4
14	Charlotte Hedges	9.2	4.5					13.7	6.9	Flight Design A4
15	Martin Stanton	11.7						11.7	11.7	Apco Xtra
16	Dave Yeandle	8.3						8.3	8.3	Gradient Topas
17	Marcus King	7.4						7.4	7.4	Mac Feeling
18	Mike Andrews	7.1						7.1	7.1	Swing Ventus
	Grand Total	438	200	113	89	68	32	940.4	18.8	

1999 HG XC Table

Class 1 Hang Gliding League

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Flight 3	Flight 4	Flight 5	Flight 6	Total
Bertie Grotram	31.66	3R					31.66
Colin Hale	20.00						20.00
Neil Atkinson	18.78						18.78
John Jones	16.00	?					16.00
Kevin Winter	10	?					10.00
							0.00
							0.00
							0.00
							0.00

Jim and Chris are on Extacy Sky God League (or Class 2 for the boring)

Pilot	Flight 1	Flight 2	Total
			0.00
			0.00

At long last we've had a weekend on Ubley, unfortunately the thermals weren't up to much and only a few pilots made a plummet in the direction of the Somerset levels. John I need you're Co.ords for you're first ever XC.
Kevin I need details of you're Easter XC for the Easter Shield.
Sorry colin I lost the scrap of paper you gave me on Westbury for you're XC a couple of months back.

Airwave Challenge News

Avon are through to the semi finals read how we got there below.

Club Challenge - 12th/13th June - A Stand-In Captain Reports

Introduction

In a slight departure from the norm, all persons depicted in the following article *should* actually bear resemblance to pilots living and known to other Avon members. Names have not been changed to reward the deserving. With Simon Kerr on Parent Duty the first weekend of June, Firefly agreed to deputise as Club Challenge organiser. The weather prevented a proposed heat in SW Wales and, with Simon going to Snowdonia for the BPC, I said I'd co-ordinate again on the weekend of the 12th/13th. A team was assembled in the true spirit of the Club Challenge - Firefly, Alex Coltman, Merlin Crossingham, Peter Taylor, Gary Mitchell and Felix Alcock - Combined Total Competition Experience: 6 Airwave Challenge Tasks. Combined Total UK Personal Best XCs: about 55km! During the week the heat was confirmed for SW Wales, with Nick Roberts organising. Wessex, Thames Valley, Dunstable and Sky Surfers would also be there to make up a six-team comp.

Task 1 - Saturday June 12th - Fan Gyhirych

All six pilots drove over on the morning (well, Pete gave me a lift 'cos the bike was playing up!), arriving at the lay-by below Fan Gyhirych at the specified 10am. The day looked similar to the two previous - partly overcast with sporadic orographic cloud on the higher mountains, including Fan G itself. We piled in the vans and cars, behind take off and where it was very light treated everyone to bowl in rotor, in the a dripping wet glider' drizzle continued to Open XC task was 2pm, with a validation make 5km+. Seeing the whether, if this flights no matter how which he immediately case - certain people

A photograph showing three people in a grassy field. One person in a blue jacket is standing with arms outstretched. Another person in a grey jacket is standing next to them. A third person in an orange jacket is bent over, handling a colorful glider bag. There are other pieces of gear on the ground. A digital timestamp '39 6 12' is visible in the bottom right corner of the photo.

from other teams were later to say that they hadn't realised this and therefore hadn't taken off, to which we suggested that it might be an idea to listen to *all* of the briefing next time. The window opened immediately and was due to close at 5pm. I had previously briefed everyone to make sure they at least went somewhere and suggested flying down the valley as 3 to 4 km would be easily achievable; seeing the increasingly threatening cloud formations I, at this point, changed the advice to "If you don't want to fly then don't" (!) **Yours truly** was first off the hill, followed by Felix and a red ribbon pilot. This was unfortunate as there was almost no lift and none of us could turn in what there was because the others were there. Felix flew round into the bowl and walked all the way back up. It started to rain. I flew out and almost caught something to get me back but fell out again, looked at the, frankly threatening sky and asked myself "What would I do if this wasn't a

competition?"; back came the resounding answer "Fly down to the car park". I thus earned the distinction of being the only pilot not to get his glider wet whilst scoring 1.8km more than almost half of the pilots present.

Soon after, Pete launched and immediately plummeted - rather unlucky as the pilots who followed him off, including Alex, all went up. Even more unfortunately, as soon as he landed, 300m short of the car park, he was engulfed in his own little microburst and his canopy became thoroughly saturated - he was not amused.

The two of us drove down to the Gwyn Arms to the increasingly annoying accompaniment of a procession of gliders climbing 200 to 300ft above the hill (in rain!) and turning down the valley. Fortunately, four of said gliders belonged to the rest of the team - Alex and Merlin both making 5.4km to a field actually containing a windsock (!) and Felix and Gary making 4km each, Gary crash-landing downwind but unhurt on a stone wall! (In true Team Avon style, five out of six pilots were in the pub by 4pm!) More fortunately, no-one (other than a SW Wales pilot who wasn't in the comp!) even made 10km. One chap landed high in a tree and a video was shot of him being rescued by the Fire Brigade! The sun came out and everyone dried their gliders in the lovely UV in the pub garden. Felix and Gary went home as they were unable to fly Sunday; Alex went home as he hates camping; Pete, Merlin and I spent an enjoyable evening in the pub!

Placings after Day 1 (top four pilots scoring):	
1st	Dunstable
2nd	SW Wales
3rd	Avon
4th	The (Formerly) Mighty Wessex
5th	Thames Valley (Only Adrian Thomas flew - 3.5k over the back and a 2-hour walk out!!)
6th	Sky Surfers (with a total distance of 0km !!!)

Task 2 - Sunday June 13th - Fan Gyhirych

Having done our best to dry Pete's Epsilon (and dispose with everything onto and into which his blackcurrant vodka jelly had leaked!), we met Alex and the other teams back at the lay-by at ten but had to wait for Nick to show with a hire van, as neither Gary nor the other van-enabled pilot was there to ferry people up the hill. By the time the second take-off at gone 11.30, already making top but at the midday XC task was called. The by WSW cloud drift never seen clouds turn steadily increased until it 30km/h on top, with the Pilots understandably and further down the hill to be okay once in the air, off. Three pilots then succession, including Nick Generowicz (Wessex Captain).



shuttle-load arrived on the compression was launches very tricky, briefing another open NW wind (accompanied behind the hill - I've right angles before!) was consistently 25-occasional lull to 10-15. began walking further to launch but seemed so Alex followed them left the hill in quick Roberts and Jacek

When Alex too climbed out with another pilot the task was definitely going to be validated, so Merlin, Pete and I gave up moaning about the wind (I had had a bit of a disagreement about the conditions with one of the other captains - contentious, moi?) and walked 200 to 300 feet down the hill to lay out. Pete and I launched in quick succession, with Merlin waiting a while. I owe my climb out to some moron on a wing that I shall choose not to

identify who did his best to kill me and a Nova pilot by flying straight at us - after that I just kept flying away from the pack and picked up a corker about 200yds out from the hill, which took me and the guy I'd been arguing with (no talking in that thermal!) to about 3800asl before petering out. He followed Alex downwind (tracking SE) whilst I decided to head crosswind to the North to a shallow NW ridge that had been in sun for 30mins+ and above which a cloud was slowly forming. **Two thermals later** Pete followed me over the back but was sinking badly underneath me as I literally hung on, clawing up in horrendous air, until he hooked an absolute beauty that took us up and over towards Fan Fawr (from where we were joined underneath by a SW Wales pilot who had already been forced to land once), soon arriving at base (4500asl) for the first time.

Meanwhile Merlin had also left the hill and was following Alex, who was himself being forced to feed his wing on gnarly lee-siders as he tracked towards Merthyr. When the cloud disintegrated I again headed slightly crosswind to the North, directly towards Pen-Y-Fan. Approaching with about 400ft over the top both Pete and I found separate parts of a thermal again and regained base together about half a km South of that highest beacon. Meanwhile Alex was flying over a pretty little reservoir with a steam engine tooting 'Hello' at him.....

Out from that decaying cloud, another cross-wind track took us towards the back of Tal-Y-Bont, approaching which we found another climb to base, this time making 4800ft into a dome in the middle of the cloud. When that fell apart we separated for the last time, Pete flying off to the northern end of Tal-Y-Bont reservoir and I pointing at the Western edge of Tor-Y-Foel. Whilst circling in zeroes, I saw Pete get decked in appalling sink to land in the clearing at the top of the reservoir. At this point in time, Merlin was landing on the ridge opposite Merthyr and Alex was being watched from the deck by Nick Roberts as he overflew him and caught yet another save from the Ebbw Vale works. He eventually landed at Blaina.

I was only going to make Tor-Y-Foel just above the tree line, if that, so I checked my landing options and set myself up to glide straight across the bottom 100yds of the reservoir. The far side was gnarly - the day's thermals had all been protected by truly vicious air - but I was gradually sinking. On landing approach, deciding between two fields, I felt a little tug on the wing and threw a couple of esses - I was almost straight above the pumping station, watching people buying ice cream and driving past - the blip became a one-up - I had enough height to 360 now - 2-up - I can afford to crab over the ridge as there's a landing option there - 3-up - keep turning and correcting all the way to 3500asl above Tor-Y-Foel! The blue wing came charging across the reservoir to come in below me but not in time to get a decent climb - he'd never got to base with us either - the thermals were getting weaker, with the predicted warm front slowly catching us. At this point I might have tracked over the tops but the valley wind was now quite strong and I could see Crickhowell clearly. As the blue wing was being forced to land at Llangynidr I found one last blue climb to about 2500asl and headed off to Llangattock village from where I almost got another save before flying across the river to Crick, coming gently down into the public recreation field by the bridge. The sky went milky white as the front passed overhead.

The Aftermath

Frantic mobile activity followed - including a red herring report that the Sky Surfers' captain had made Cardiff (he'd actually done 8.5km!) - with Merlin and Alex meeting up for a taxi ride back, Pete getting a lift with a SW Wales pilot and also meeting the chap who had landed at Llangynidr (kept going on about the 'sodding pink glider' apparently - cue smug grin!) and everyone eventually joining me in The Brit' in Crickhowell, including Marcus, Charlie and Simon, who'd come down from a blown-out BPC Day Two to fly at Hay. I was fairly convinced that we must have won the day but knew we would probably have to wait to find out. Also, where would we finish overall? To win the weekend outright we needed to beat Dunstable and SW Wales by a few kms and not be overtaken by anyone else. Celebrations were not, however, muted by this uncertainty as each of us had flown a personal best - Merlin's was his best flight in the UK, Alex and I had both totally smashed PBs that we had only set from The Bluff on the previous Wednesday (!) and Pete had never even been over the back before!!



Avon Tema Flights	
Alex Coltman:	34.6km
Rich Harding:	33.3km
Peter Taylor:	20.4km
Merlin Crossingham:	17.7km

(measured, under the task rules, from the Fan G trig point - actual distances about 0.2 to 0.3km further):

And the final Team positions? Nick Roberts called me Monday afternoon with the news as follows:

Task 2 Team Result	
1 st	Avon
2 nd	The Revitalised Wessex
3 rd	SW Wales
4 th	Dunstable
5 th	Thames Valley
6 th	Sky Surfers

Overall Team Result	
1 st	Avon
2 nd	The On The Way Back? Wessex
3 rd	SW Wales
4 th	Dunstable
5 th	Thames Valley
6 th	Sky Surfers

Parting Shot

Caller: I'd like the number of the Argoed Fish Bar in Cardiff, please.
Directory Enquiries Operator: I'm sorry, there's no listing. Is the spelling correct?
Caller: Well, it used to be called the Bargoed Fish Bar but the B fell off.

Club Challenge - 26th/27th June - A Stand-In Captain Reports Again

Introduction

Once again, all persons depicted in the following article *should* actually bear resemblance to pilots living and known to other Avon members.

Avon were invited by Joint Services to another Club Challenge heat over the weekend of 26th/27th June. With Simon away at the Scottish BPC round, I took on captain's duties again and collected a team containing four of the conquering heroes from the SW Wáles heat - Alex Coltman, Peter Taylor, Gary Mitchell and myself, along with Tim Pentreath and Paul 'Pablo' Cashman. The comp was to be flown on SE Wales sites with two Joint Services teams, SW Wales, SE Wales, Thames Valley and ourselves turning up in the Bus Station Car Park at 9am Saturday. Several other teams (Southern, Wessex etc.) were supposed to show but failed to do so; obviously they were scared!

Task 1 - Saturday June 26th - Pandy

With ESE winds at 8.45am and a MetFax and other forecasts all clearly showing a swing to the South during the day, a decision which I shall simply describe as peculiar was taken to go to Pandy (!), despite measured protestations from yours truly. The fact that several of us had spent an enjoyable time (over five hours airtime and three XC's) on Tal-Y-Bont in very similar conditions the previous day made this all the more galling - let's face it, if I'm actually pleading to walk up Tal-Y-Bont for the third time in two days there must be a pretty good reason! The window for an Open XC task was called for 11am to 4pm but few pilots flew straight away, as typically scratchy conditions for late morning at Pandy prevailed - it rarely works before twelve. Unfortunately, when midday came the wind was already at least 45 degrees off to the South, even at the Hatterall Hill end.

Conditions deteriorated over the next hour or so as the wind swung further until we were basically flying in rotor and with pilots in close proximity having very little directional control over their canopies I decided I'd had quite enough, gained about a hundred feet and pointed downwind (NNW!) into the valley in front of the ridge, landing 4.1km away between Clodock and Longtown. I was immediately retrieved by Lisa Pentreath and called the others to tell them to ask the Meet Director, Colin Hermon, if the task was to be validated and, if so, to just do what I had done to score some distance and we'd pick them up. Unfortunately there was a slight misunderstanding of intentions and by the time Pete, Alex, Gary and Pablo flew down, all landing in either the same field I'd used or the two adjacent, we'd gone back to Llangattock campsite (I was hoping to go on to Tal-Y-Bont but had just discovered that one of my glider bag carry straps was hanging by a thread and had to completely re-sew it!) Profuse apologies chaps!

Team hero was Tim Pentreath who managed to eek out a 6.3km flight into the Llanthony valley (the one up to Gospel Pass), before returning to the ridge and trying again, almost beating that first flight. He was the only pilot to leave in a thermal out of the entire field and also scored the second best (I think) distance.

Task 2 - Sunday June 27th - M4 to Bristol

Meet was called for 9am in the Bus Station Car Park again, but when we woke the cloud was halfway down Llangattock hill to the campsite. Pablo and I drove to the meet where we were optimistically informed that a rebrief would happen at 11am on Merthyr Common. Having chased after Pete on the bike as my gloves were in my glider bag in his car, we eventually left the vehicles in the Macdonalds car park at the foot of the hill and piled into Gary's van. Halfway up the track we met Chris Short coming down, saying that it was blowing 35mph so the day was, unsurprisingly, canned.

So, that was it - Apart from: having given him a ten minute head start I rounded off the weekend by passing Gary's van between turnpoints two and three on the M32 into Bristol. That must go pretty quick for a diesel! (Or did at least some of the traffic lights on the motorway roundabouts stay green for you?!)

The Reckoning

When I spoke to Colin on Sunday afternoon, he confirmed the team positions as:

(top four pilots scoring):

1st	Joint Services B
2nd	Avon
3rd	SW Wales
4th Equal	Joint Services A & SE Wales
6th	Thames Valley

Not entirely a satisfying weekend but we're certainly through to the semi-finals, with a grand total of 900 Challenge Points from the two heats!! Thanks to all of the Avon team, for proving that every little counts, and to Lisa for the simplest retrieve ever.

Parting Shot

Police in Los Angeles had good luck with a robbery suspect who just couldn't control himself during a lineup. When detectives asked each man in the lineup to repeat the words, "Give me all your money or I'll shoot," the man shouted, "That's not what I said!"

****** STOP PRESS ******

Despite Tom Mayne winning the day with a fabulous 52.8km Avon PG Team were beaten into 4th place in the semi finals, which probably means that we are not through to the finals. Full details and Final results in the next issue.

***** STOP PRESS EXTRA *****

Team Avon are now back in! It would seem that a member of the 3rd placed team landed in Airspace and has been disqualified, meaning that we rose to 3rd.

Where in the world to Learn to Hang glide ? By Angie Weir



Chris sent an e-mail to people he knew all over the UK and the rest of the world, asking where in the world is the best place to learn to Hang glide (HG). The answer came back from several sources with a resounding "Florida" either Wallaby Ranch or Quest Air. Lookout Mountain in Tennessee was also recommended. All three of these schools teach by aerotow with Lookout Mountain having the added advantage of a Mountain to teach foot launch.

I have done a lot of winching on my paraglider and as I also operate the winch towing up both disciplines, towing to me is second nature. Before going to learn Hang gliding, I'd had quite a few tandem flights in the UK with Jeff Hoer (Devon & Somerset condors) from our winch and some by aerotow at Smeatharpe. The last flight with Jeff was a 45 minute hands on soaring flight at Woolacombe on the coast, to get a feel for the glider on a ridge. I had also had two instruction flights approximately 3 years before with Simon Gillingham with foot landings. I sold my house recently, and as I had the funds to learn another discipline I took the opportunity.

I telephoned the different schools and they told me their rates and why they would be the best school to go to. Wallaby Ranch although well recommended were not flexible in any way on the price. I felt that with the experience that I had already gained both NOVA July & August 1999

as a paraglider pilot, and the number of tandem HG flights that I had done should count for something. I didn't see why I should pay for the standard novice HG training from scratch, Quest Air saw my point and asked me to fax details of my relevant experience from Jeff and they would assess my flying and charge me as I learned. The accommodation was very cheap at \$20 per night for our double room, and they agreed to meet us at the airport.

We arrived at Quest Air Monday 22nd February 9.30pm, and were driven to Quest by Bo, who is a very laid back easy going HG instructor (and surfer). We met the crew, John from Canada and Buddy from Aspen who fly the dragonfly, Connie who was cooking the evening meals which we were soon to discover were fabulous and not to be missed. Bo advised us to sleep in the next day and take it easy to get over the jet lag, and he was right. We got up late, lounged around and then took a leisurely walk around the grounds which are extensive and surrounded by orange groves. The perfume from the oranges and blossom is breathtaking. There are two large lakes on the property, and we've been told that there are alligators living there, they can be seen sometimes when you fly overhead basking in the sun. I really wanted to see one, and later in our holiday we both

faced our fear of being close to an alligator and swam in the lake. There was a rope swing that we were using to launch ourselves into the clear water. We borrowed the two-man canoe and rowed around the lake in the hope of seeing a 'gater but it wasn't to be. One other activity that I enjoyed immensely was shooting pool, I found that I could play, and would play any body who would take me on. There is also a swimming pool and hot tub on the site but we didn't find the time to use them.

I started my training flights early in the morning of Wednesday 24th Feb. I had 3 tandem training flights on an Airwave Double Vision V2, that was my limit I was exhausted. My arms were not up to any more and neither was I. The glider has a slight turn to the left, and if it started to drift off if I was not on top of the situation, particularly on tow it was really difficult for me to counter this and turn the glider to the right. Bo told me that he was going to have to build my arms up, and during all of our flights following that, he put the glider into fairly big oscillations, and I had to get the glider back into normal flight which I just couldn't do to begin with. I was going to bed with really aching muscles, putting tiger balm on to relax them over night. Wednesday afternoon Rob Combs (of Wrigglies Gum advert fame) - Do you remember those cool hang gliding adverts of many moons ago when nobody had really heard about hang gliding, taking off on the top of mountains? Well the star, Rob has been designing and building speed boats with a HG deck, complete with adapted HG's with large floats to land on the water, to sell. He took us out on his boat and I was treated to a go at tandem water gliding as Rob calls it. This was really good fun great fun landing on water, and because the towing was over water it was as smooth as glass.

On Thursday I had 3 early flights and 2 evening ones after the thermic activity had settled down. Bo was making me put the glider into, and get out of the oscillations, I was also setting up and making the landings by this time as well as doing all the flying. Bo did occasionally give me a little help but this was mainly when he thought I wasn't strong enough to get the glider round. He stopped me making sharp, low S-turns when setting up my landing approach, Bo said this was my PG side coming out, and he got me to make more elongated 180 turns.

NOVA July & August 1999

Friday I only had 1 morning flight as it was a little bumpy and Bo had to have more input. He said he would take me up in the exxtacy later in the day to let me have some thermalling experience. The exxtacy was something else, steady as a rock, you pulled in and it seemed to have a life of its own and whoosh! you were off. I felt it was easier to fly than the double vision. In the evening I had two more tandem flights on the double vision with more oscillations on tow. Then just before sunset Bo, knowing how eager I was to solo, just having witnessed 'Big John'(another student) do his first solo, he asked if I wanted to have a go. I was ready in a shot, because it was getting late in the day, the tow was only to 1500ft whereas all the previous ones were to 2500. The solo glider was a Wills Wing Falcon, with an extended keel with wheel on it, and large air filled wheels on the base bar. Also there is a fin to help to steady the glider from over correcting the oscillations. The glider was a breath of fresh air on tow, and just as good off in normal flight, and so much easier with just my weight to contend with. Big John had brought along a huge video camera to film his 1st solo and he video'd mine also. Unfortunately, I was having trouble judging the roundout with my face that low to the ground, it was an alien position for me to land in and I bounced up about 5 feet, great video clip! I let go of everything which is the usual drill if you are gong to land heavy, but still managed to hit my hand on the base bar-first HG injury! I didn't notice the lump on the back of my hand until the next day.

Saturday morning I had a good take off and stayed behind the tug, (a dragonfly designed & built at Quest Air by Bob Bailey, Connies' husband), the set up for landing was good but when it came to the round out I must have pushed the bar out rather than letting it go out gently by itself, and I ballooned up again, but nowhere near as bad. In the evening I had a good take off, it was a bit bumpy on tow and I went to 2000 ft, I had more speed on landing and rounded out better.

Sunday was way too windy, Chris and I helped Bo and Little John (as we called him when John the student was around) de-rig the gliders which are usually left rigged and tied down ready to fly.

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Connie, had offered to take us out, we were going roller-blading but the heavens were about to open and we couldn't hire the skates. Instead not to be put off we all took Peaches, Connies' greyhound for a walk along the roller-blade track and got soaked through to the skin but we didn't care. Connie is such a lovely genuine person, immensely talented artistically and culinarily-if that's the word I'm after. During our stay, for a few dollars a head to cover the cost of ingredients she would cook up a fantastic meal. In just a couple of hours, catering for Chris (a vege), baking different flavours of bread each day and making the most wonderful main courses and deserts, occasionally a home made soup as well. On one of the Saturday evenings she held a party night and made fresh sangria to accompany a Mexican main course and a really tasty pinacolada sweet. This was such a hit we came back with the recipe. Kodi the amazing rope swallowing, orange squashing mutt, and Jack the ride-anything-motorised-Doberman are stories for another time, but Quest Air has great animal and human characters!

Monday arrived there was still some wind, but 'Little John' test flew the air conditions in the tug, it was OK but a little bumpy at low level, but this didn't worry me. I was dead keen to fly as much as possible. I had a good take off the wind was slightly off to one side, but as Bo was constantly telling me "imagine you are laying on a ball, if you start to roll off to one side you have to be on top of it as it begins to happen and do exactly the same when you fly". I found this to be very useful advice. I was ready for the rough air for the first 50 ft, it then smoothed out on the tow, and I was released a short distance down wind from the airfield. There was quite a bit of wind at 2500 ft and I knew that I needed to have quite a bit of speed on initially to move forward over the ground towards the airfield. There really wasn't a problem I just wasn't used to being a HG pilot and being able to penetrate in stronger winds. As I got closer to the airfield I reduced my speed to what I thought was best glide. I still had a few 180 turns to do over the airfield to lose height and on my final approach, it was bumpy as expected but I kept plenty of speed on and did a good landing. John apologised for dropping me off where he did but I told him that it wasn't a problem, and if anything it gave me more confidence. Chris bullied me into NOVA July & August 1999

running round the airfield with the Falcon to get used to the feel of it for hill take off's or foot launch/landing and flaring. I wasn't too keen as it was hot, I was feeling lazy after my flights and the uprights were very uncomfortable on my arms, and were bruising me. Another female HG pilot Michelle came to my rescue with a set of 12" upright-pads. I have to say that I 've stolen the idea and made a set of my own, colour co-ordinated of course with my harness. (I am still essentially a PG pilot at heart) Chris was right of course and the 'practice flares' would prove invaluable.

Tuesday I had one flight in the morning with similar conditions but there was some thermic activity, the rough air smoothed out at 2500ft, I made a point of practising turns etc. to get them consistent and smooth. My landing was not so good again, and I start to get mad with myself. In the afternoon I have a couple more flights, the wind is now light and cross on both runways, but this is not a problem. I have flights to 2000ft and 1000ft, but still cannot get that perfect landing on the wheels. I am told that I could do with more speed for the perfect round out, maybe I'm still flying in PG mode.

Wednesday, I don't fly. I think this is the day that Rob and Nylia, who are both HG pilots and work at Disney invite us out to their boat, they have already invited us to go to Disney as their guests, but we declined as it really isn't our thing. Rob and Nylia have a specially adapted small speed boat operation, with winch used in their back garden which is in fact a huge lake. They use this to tow themselves and friends on their own adapted HG. Although they offered for me to have a go, I declined because of my lack of experience, although I would love to have a go now. Instead we were given a demonstration first hand at wake boarding from PJ who runs the wake board camp in Florida. He then taught me to knee board and ride the wake, we did it side by side on our own boards to start with, then when I could get up onto the board at speed, he got into the boat and let me get on with it. I've never water-skied before although I've been keen to, and it must have been Bo's balancing on that ball, but I was up there and I could do it! So I started to bounce back and forth over the wake, it was what I imagine beach surfing

at speed would be like. We were having the time of our lives.

I have two flights the following evening, the wind is light and it is still a little thermic. I am disappointed that my landings are still not perfect and want to start landing on my feet, I am getting wound up, but I actually do two good round outs, still on wheels.

Friday I have three flights in the morning and after speaking to Bo he is happy for me to prepare for foot landing, so on my first flight I have to practice flying out of prone. The second flight it was quite thermic and rough low down, and I do a good foot landing, later in the stable evening the air before sunset I do another good foot landing and feel encouraged by this. I definitely feel more at home coming into land in the prone position it is more natural than having your face close to the ground and easier by far to judge the roundout, and I feel that I have the hang of that now.

Saturday I have the last two training tows of the morning before the wind increased, one was a foot landing in the lighter wind, then the wind had increased and I came down far quicker than I expected to, there seemed to be no time at all for the roundout and I was on the ground, landing on the wheels. I'd forgotten to be on the ball, and wasn't ready to roundout.

Sunday morning was to see the last of my flying in Florida this trip, the air was the roughest I had yet experienced on a HG, but I was very confident and enjoying the trust that Bo was having in me. He was letting me fly when he wouldn't let another trainee. Buddy was flying the tug today, he had been out of action with a really bad back. He had already tested the air and briefed Bo on the conditions, Bo was happy to let me have a go if I was OK with it. There was some rain in the air, the first one was a good flight, I was on top of the NOVA July & August 1999

situation, it was challenging and I was having fun and feeling really great. My second flight was bumpier, so much so that I had a real struggle keeping behind the tug, but I was going to hang on no matter what. The trouble is that when I was signalled to release, at 250ft, it was so rough that every time I went to hit the release I just didn't have the time to do it, and had to grab back onto the base bar with both hands to maintain control of the glider. Luckily the weak-link went taking the pressure off me to release and I flew around a bit and did a perfect foot landing. A perfect ending to a perfect holiday.



Sat 24th April - Simon Kerr

Yesterday it pissed down all day, and tomorrow is forecast to be blown out and wet. TODAY however is looking good, so Marcus, Charlie, Rich, and myself were off to Merthyr. Marcus and Charlie excelled themselves by actually beating Me and Rich to the site, and were enjoying an early bit of soaring as we arrived. Without delay we too joined in the fun, actually there was a slight delay whilst I gave my lines a good verbal seeing to (they really were taking the piss!!!)

For once the sky was looking good and we all had hopes of the first classic day of the year. After the fight with my lines I managed to launch without my flight deck, consequently I immediately found a good thermal and was tracking it back behind the hill at about 1500 ATO, at the same time trying to direct Marcus to the precise point on the hill where said flight deck was sitting, with a request to stash it somewhere safe until I got back. Just as he said "found it" I fell out of the bugger and completely lost it. Back on the hill, this time with flight deck attached, it was time to launch again. Anyway I'm pleased to say that it wasn't long before I found another climb, promptly losing it again in roughly the same place as before. This time however I was able to stay high and fly back to the valley in front of the hill, where I got the real one. I reached cloudbase several km downwind and quickly moved on downwind to get out of the cloudsuck. I could see what looked like a sea breeze convergence to the south and decided that was where I was going, picking up another climb back to base along the way. On reaching the convergence line I once again made it to base, this time at 5000' ASML. Now was time to turn left and head for England!!! Whooping for joy I went cruising, not bothering to turn in anything and enjoying the views. As Newport was approaching and I was feeling cold and thirsty (must buy a camelbak) I was also getting low (must turn in thermals) I picked out a few likely fields to land in. Sink soon put me into another field slightly short of my chosen ones, and with a big grin on my face I packed up and started back to the hill. There didn't seem to be anyone following me, which puzzled me somewhat, as I thought it had been easy and was sure that the others would go somewhere as well.

Back at the hill, there no sign of the other three, great I thought I'm glad they got away, then I thought, God I hope Marcus hasn't gone further than me!!! After another 30 to 40 mins soaring, during which I was 1800' ATO on the far side of the valley, the other AVON Wanderers started to return. First was Charlie who had gone about 9km landing on the ridge beyond Abertysswg, then the other two arrived together in the company of Mad Clive who had driven up the Merthyr track like the world was about to end, at one point charging straight at someone who was reversing down towards him and careering off the track at the last minute to go tearing over the rough at breakneck speed, Marcus looked decidedly pale.

It turns out that both Marcus and Rich were being retrieved from their second X/C of the day. Their first attempt had only lasted as far as Fochriw (about 2.5km) After a quick retrieve courtesy of Richard Taylor, they were shortly off again. This time they both went down somewhere near Abertysswg (7 or 8km I think). The day was rounded off with some nice gentle soaring on the SW end of the hill as the sun was going down. I opted to watch and not fly, for which I was extremely grateful when I witnessed Mad Clive nearly take out Rich by trying to launch as he was passing low overhead, his leading edge missed Rich's feet by about 12 inches, accompanied by a loud "AAAAAAAAARGH!" from Rich's mouth, closely followed by "****ing hell Clive" on the next beat. I ought to mention that Clive said he was trying to shake a cravat out of his wingtip, and hadn't noticed that Rich had launched again, still it made everybody on the hill gasp!!!

The day finished with an excellent de-briefing accompanied by a couple of pints and some good nosh in the Bridge Inn at Abergavenny, and I went home a thoroughly happy chappie. Well actually I didn't, I was so tired after dropping Rich off that I pulled over in a layby and went to bed, got home about half eight the next morning.

Firefly's Flying Diary



Issue Six

Introduction

Hello All! This may well be the first of two or three editions of Firefly in quick succession now as the summer's here and the time is right for dancing in cloud streets, or something (oh, my giddy aunt, he's totally flipped now.....). In this chart-busting re-release of last year you'll hear:

Crash Test Dummies - Airbag versus Bike Leathers!

Like A Virgin? - Will the new releases get their knickers off - or Simply Wet?

Red, Red Wine - Avon tasting sessions get serious!

Ah - shuduppa your face and get on with it.....

The Colour of Spring - brightening skies filled with punchy thermals and climbing gliders - if you're on La Isla Bonita anyway. Unfortunately, John Kettley is our weatherman (and so is Michael Fish) and we've been Free Falling - well, alright, not quite, but April and May weren't exactly Top of the Pops, were they?! More Cheggers Plays Pop really

Nevermind, if there's one thing this club's good at it's making the most of the hand it's been dealt and we're certainly capable of Fighting for our Right to Party!

XC Virgins Weekend - The Sequel

A week after the first failed attempt to hold the weekend we convened in Aber on the Saturday morning and made our way up the Long & Winding Road to the Bloreng. Half an hour's gentle soaring in the NE bowl later it started to hail! Ginger Spice decided to go home but then came back again and was glad he did - the wind switched round to the NW and we all walked round for a fun afternoon's flying, although thoughts of going XC were rather dampened by the prospect of the usual 10-down sink hole behind the hill. The afternoon ended as we all flew down to the Bridge Inn to escape a Massive Attack of rain that came pelting down the valley from Brecon! It did clear up again but pub suck won the day before everyone decided to Race the Clouds Home to England.



Concerto for a haily day

After a quiet (alright - that's a lie!) night in Llangattock, Sunday dawned better than expected and we summoned everyone back across the Severn to Merthyr. Oops. Well - we had a fair fly around in the morning but it was probably a good idea that there were no low airtimers in the air later on, when the wind suddenly picked up and sent pilots scurrying off in all directions, Firefly ending up most of the way down the hill, glider in a small tree, after yo-yo-ing out under Big Ears. As I walked, knackered, up the last few, very steep feet all I could think was "This is where some b**tard throws a burning car on my head!" **So**, no knickers removed whatsoever, but none soiled either. Better luck next year, I suppose?

April 24th - Merthyr Common



And the boy stood and stared at the hill; And the hill stared back

An eventful day, and the first decent XC day of the year for many, began with the revelation of MacSplittie and The Webmistress making it to the site first for a leisurely fly-around. Soon after we arrived, The Piper contrived to get so hacked off with the tangle his glider was in after the previous weekend that he reached cloudbase without his flightdeck, frantically radio-ing MacSplittie to retrieve said item from the front of the hill! More galling for us was that he landed, took off again and climbed straight back out, leaving the rest of us on the deck in flat calm! He made 27km to Newport, including a sea breeze convergence leg.

MacSplittie & I then fell out of a climb and ended up on Fochriw, feeling slightly guilty at leaving several other pilots trapped there as we immediately flew down for a retrieve, courtesy of Choccie Digestive. On our second climb out with Steve, Donna's friend, we foolishly thought we were going to make it to base but the climb again petered out and we ended up on/below Abertwssyg, whilst Steve somehow made Blorenge - Aaaaaargh!

Clive LP gave us an interesting second retrieve and everyone watched amused as I decided to go and fly the SW face. When I went up they suddenly brought all their gliders straight across, for some reason.... An hour and a half's enjoyable soaring out over the valley then ensued, also including an interesting incident with an invisible cravat!

(Sorry for the absence of piccies here - bit of an argument between my mail reader and The Piper's!)

Paramania / Snowdonia

The weekend started with good omens - Captain Fantastic was flying the end of The Mynd as I passed New Radnor and on to the new heights of civilisation he'd arranged at Fforest Fields, with our very own pub garden-style table! As the evening progressed the camper van coral was slowly built, although sadly missing were Ginger Spice & entourage.

Saturday, saw very light NNE winds, a very long wait on the hill above the site and a mass fly-down at the end. Sunday went South-Easterly and the party split in two - oh, alright - I split from the party because I couldn't be bothered to walk up Tal-Y-Bont (!), where Mr Jet-Tastic spoilt his holiday by falling down a hole on launch, breaking his lower leg - rumour has it he'd been studying Our Tone's launch technique - and then had to fly down and land on the good one. Monday saw a frustrating day at William Hague, with the wind coming right up the spine between the NE and SE faces, the latter having been in the shade of a huge, stationary cloud all afternoon. At least we didn't go to Bache, where the day was canned after an Ozone Proton spun into the hill - much safer, these Serial Class gliders then.



Party Fears Two

Of course, Snowdonia was going to be different, and we moved on up on the Monday evening, Firefly's scouting ahead for suitable half-way stopping points being rendered fairly pointless when The Piper & MacSplittie drove straight past despite much headlight flashing, horn screeching etc.! After breakfast near Dolgellau we reached the cottage early Tuesday, only to find that one of my shock absorbers had exploded, showering my back wheel with oil - nice ;-)

Naturally it wasn't different - much rain, wind, wine, beer, other things; you know. And no flying (except a short evening XC by yours truly), despite two walks up the Glyders - OK, only Firefly, MacSplittie and Choccie Digestive were mad enough to walk up the second time (!) but it was worth it for the view of the lake in the middle of two walls of mist. Third time lucky?

In The Next Issue

The Camera Never Lies - I'll remember to take it out of my flight deck more often!

On The Trail of the Lonesome Pine? How are Laurel & Hardy getting along?

And much, much more !!!

And now the end is near -

(With apologies to Kid Creole & The Coconuts)

"Doris, you can ban me from The Brit"

Doris, you can tell me I'm a twit"

Doris, you can have my Firebird kit"

But Doris don't take my lighter flint."

(Ask The Piper!)

Send E-Mail to: Firefly

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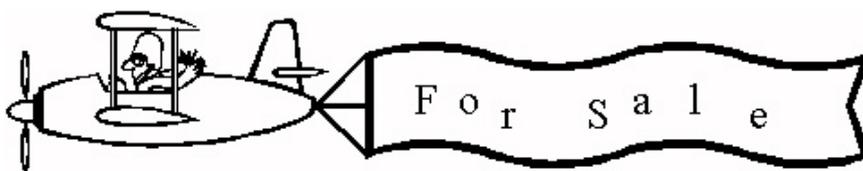
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