

NOVA



November & December 1999

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

All contributions should be sent to the Editor of NOVA.

NOVA can also be found online at www.skytribe.co.uk

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Lulsgate 01275 474441

Weather

Wendy Windblows Call Rod Buck to Subscribe 0114 253 0372

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Send XC Flights to Tim Pentreath (PG)

Neil Atkinson (HG)

AVON



AVON HANGLIDING AND PARAGLIDING CLUB

Editorial



Welcome to the latest version of NOVA or eNOVA if you are reading it online. If you are reading the paper version, you may have noticed that the layout has changed, this is to make it easier to create from the electronic version which is being posted to all those members who have agreed to receive it in this form. The electronic form is also available on the club website (www.skytribe.co.uk). This first issue of eNOVA has become a bit of a hangliding special with 3 articles on hangliding. Thanks to Ian Dibble, Alex Coltman and Richard Sheppard, thanks also to Chris Jones for the excellent cover photo. Also a big thank you to Rich Harding, Simon Kerr and Tim Pentreath who have acted as Beta testers for the electronic version of this publication as well as all the regular contributors. Let us know what you think of this move for NOVA, it is your club magazine.

There hasn't been much flying recently so there's little else for me to say, so I'll hand over to the new Chairman.

In the meantime I hope you all get some flying in from time to time, and have an excellent Christmas and a happy New Year.

Get High, Stay High, Fly Far.

Marcus

CHAIRMANS CHUNTER



After being a member of the club for six years as an active paraglider pilot and low air time contact for the previous two years. I now find myself in the position of Chairman, after being nominated by our previous Chairman Colin who has stepped down for personal reasons.

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank Colin for the work that he has done over the past two years. He has revitalised the club with his enthusiastic approach, re-starting the "Mere Bash" and "Christmas Dinner" [have you booked your place for this year yet? If you came last year you will know what good fun it was.] The general enthusiasm for club meetings has grown considerably during the last two years many of which have been a great success. Colin is also responsible for moving the club meetings to our current venue the Compass Inn close to Junction

18 of the M4, which has proved to be an ideal location to accommodate club evenings, being less than an hour's drive for most members.

I find myself in the enviable position of having an active committee around me, who are not just there because nobody else wanted the job! They all feel that they have something to offer to make your club good value to you. If all you want to do is turn up on the hill and fly that's fine, you can do that and be confident that the sites officers are working on your behalf so that you can continue to do that. If you want more than that from the club then there will be a full programme over the next twelve months, but remember it's your club and if we're not providing what you want then let us know and we will do our best to organise it for you.

NOVA - The Avon Hangliding and Paragliding Club Newsletter

There are a number of events coming up over the next few months. In January Robin Brown and Colin Lark will be organising a "Parachute Re-pack", moving on a step from last years with a "death slide" to make it as realistic as possible!! This will be similar to the one that the South East Wales Club had at the Blorenge party. If you have not had your chute re-packed in the last twelve months then I strongly recommend that you book yourself in, by giving Robin a call! As someone who has had the misfortune to use my reserve I can't emphasise the importance of regular re-packs enough, it really is your last chance when you reach for the handle!

The club will be hosting a BHPA club coach course on January 15-16th if you are a club pilot with more than ten hours airtime then give me a call, there are 30 places and 15 have already been taken. I especially want to hear from HG Pilots! I am told the course is better if the ratio of HG to PG pilots is the same. The club will be paying the course fee's of whoever attends, it will only cost £8 per person to pay for refreshments and room hire the club will pay £25 per pilot [to the BHPA for running the course] if you wish to attend then let me know as soon as possible.

I have a number of people who have offered to give talks to the club next year, it makes my job so much easier when people contact me! If you have any ideas or topics for future club nights, let me know and I will do my best to organise it.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

and a steady fifteen mph North Westerly to You!

BRENT,

MAC
Paragliders UK
12 Maelgwyn Drive, Deganwy,
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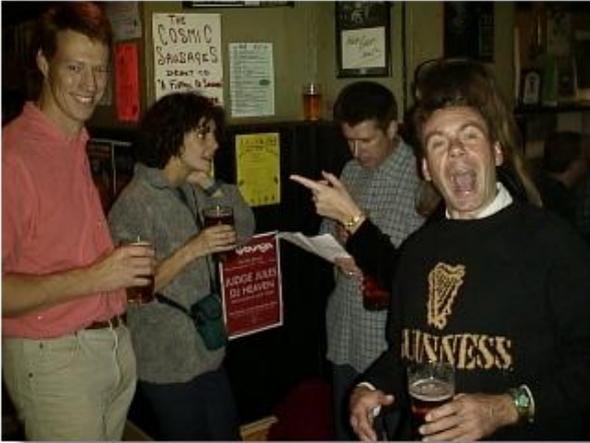
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Letters

Now That's What I Call a Send Off!



September 24th 1999, Bath, England

It's Friday afternoon and surprise, surprise it's not just raining, it's shitting it down! There will be no danger of flying this weekend (how little did he know... Ed). Plan One is instigated by Big Tim P, who emails the team Avon Paragliding Party animals. Captain Fantastic must not be allowed to escape to New Zealand without a suitable send off.

The email reads as follows:-

From tim@pentreath.freeserve.co.uk Tue Sep 21 20:14:13 1999

OK listen up chaps - BRIEFING!!!

1930 Tim B & Simon (if you want to) RV at 168 Bradford Road - four G&T's downed to build up some flying speed

2000 Proceed by taxi to The Bell, Walcot Street, where we RV with Marcus & Charlotte

2010-2125 Drink excessive amounts of fine ale, whilst we listen to Tim B recounting the story of landing on a cricket pitch in the Lake District
2130 Stagger to The Jamuna (corner of High Street and Cheap Street, 50yds north of the Abbey) where we RV with Fi & Angus

2131 Order eight (or more) vindaloos and eight (or more) pints of Kingfisher Beer

2140 Order another eight pints of Kingfisher
2145 Curries arrive

2146 Temperature rises somewhat, so order another eight pints of Kingfisher

2155 Seven of us have finished our curries - Tim B hasn't started his as he's recounting the story of landing on a cricket pitch in the Lake District for the 5th time now

2300 Leave Jamuna without Tim B as he's now recounting the story of landing on a cricket pitch in the Lake District to the waiters and kitchen staff. Leave Tim B with GPS and GOTO waypoint of next drinking establishment

2310 Order seven pints of finest ale

2330 Tim B arrives, looking somewhat the worse for wear having been chucked out of the window of the Jamuna by the waiters and kitchen staff
0000 Street pizzas followed by taxis home

RSVP

Cheers

Tim

Funny eh?! Tim P knows me far too well. It was a fantastic evening but I did not leave the Jamuna via the window. Sadly, I was towed away by my 'friends' whilst in full flood chatting up a real queen sitting on a nearby table! Oh well! No need for hormone replacement treatment just yet. All this solo living and my body is busting with the stuff. I digress..... on to the acknowledgements.

Tim and Lisa, thank you for..... everything! The G&T's, the ePostcards to Elly (you made her cry you rotters!), a home to go to (all summer), morning tea and unrivalled child entertainment. Give them both a big hug from Timmy Cork.

Marcus..... that haircut! Good effort but go for broke next time have a No1 for the millenium and give us all a laugh. Take Richard to the barbies with you.

Charlotte, congratulations! You didn't go to sleep during the meal, even though you were sitting opposite me. I must be getting more interesting in my (old) age.....!

Simon, good luck with the campervan. If there is any money left over from the planned £3000 restoration of it's grill pan, treat the bodywork to a run through the nearest wash'n'wax. But be warned, Simon, if you buy a mini metro we won't even be seen hill sitting with you. Get a proper banger.

Fiona, thank you for driving Tim and me to Le Grand Bornand for the (un)forgettable British Open. I wouldn't have missed experiencing rain like that for.... for.... well, it was a good piss up anyway, but why did we take the gliders?

Angus, I love my picture! Captain Tim as you perceive him eh? Thanks! I hope all your predictions about the Millenium come true otherwise how long will it take you to eat all those rations in the spare bedroom?

Richard we are all delighted you have had the best ever summer, paragliding the seat out of your leathers... only jealous! Spare a thought for the workers. Anyway, well done this year. PS got any tips? (Think about it... or maybe don't!)

Brent you're a brave man! Soon you won't be just talking paragliding. Good luck on that first flight wear

pampers - it will be a boomer straight to cloudbse. Enjoy!

... And me? Well I wave goodbye to the Airbus for six months. Elly is busy arranging alternative employment for me in NZ. Suicide cycling in Christchurch city centre delivering rush parcels at rush hour; isolated mountain hut warden hidden away deep in the boonies to name but two ideas. Charming! Elly, I thought we were friends?

See you all in April 2000. Thanks for a geat night out. You know it's been a good one when the kids recoil from you're breath and the yellowing won't scrub from our fingernails.

So long and happy new year.

Tim B (Email elly.tim@inet.net.nz)

... by the way did I ever tell you about the time when I landed on Ambleside Cricket pitch.....?...

To Big Ear or Not...

There seem to be a few uncertainties about when to or whether to pump out big ears on an approach to land through a fear of entering a deep stall. A modern certified glider when flown within the weight range should not enter a deep stall simply when you pump out the ears. What can be important is when to pump out the ears. There is one common scenario when there is a particular point in your approach when it may not be advisable to pump out the ears. If you are making an approach against a headwind into a bottom landing field you will experience changes in the windstrength as you descend. During sudden drops in windspeed your airspeed will also momentarily drop. As you descend from say 750m to the ground away from any compression one of two things will happen. If you are in the UK flying in a prevailing wind the wind will get less as you get lower (bottom landing). If you are in an alpine environment the wind will be probably light at altitude and then you will descend into an increasing valley wind which then decreases in strength sometime in the last 5 to 30m. The critical part of a descent against a headwind is the last 30m. The problem is that the wind generally remains fairly constant or decreases gradually from 100 to 50m but just as you get closer to the ground you can get a VERY sudden drop in the windspeed at around tree top height. Even if there are no trees close upwind of you you will still usually notice a marked drop in the windspeed around this height. The physics are dead simple. Here's an extreme example but not uncommon. Pilot on approach with ears in with an airspeed of 20mph. Headwind of 18mpg. Groundspeed therefore 2mph forward. At 25m altitude the windspeed drops suddenly to 5mph (strong wind gradient). Momentarily the glider still has only 2mph groundspeed and now only 5mph windspeed. The gliders airspeed therefore drops to only 7mph. Not enough for decent lift. It's important to know that the glider will not stall at this point unless you have some

brake on. It will stall with less brake than at normal flying speed though. So what happens. Keeping the brakes off the pilot simply starts to descend much faster giving an apparent airflow of probably 60 degrees to the ground. The glider simply dives forward as you drop in order to align itself to the new apparent airflow, once it's up to flying speed again it starts to level off and you swing back under the glider with a new groundspeed of 15mph instead of 2mph but having lost a fair bit of height suddenly. This almost always happens but to a considerably lesser degree. Usually it is barely noticeable. There are two risks. One that it happens badly and very low and you are unfortunate enough to hit the ground before the glider levels off. (usually down to a poor choice of landing field with tall obstacles close upwind). The second is choosing just the wrong moment to pump out the ears, ie just as you go through the sudden wind gradient. Pumping hard to get the ears out always slows the glider, pitches it back a bit and increases its angle of attack. Not normally a problem but just at the moment your airspeed drops and the apparent airflow changes can be enough to either stall the glider or make the ensuing dive worse. The moral, simple. If you approach in big ears don't pump out the ears around tree top height. Do it either above or just before you touch down at about 1m or less (just let go the ears and flare normally they come out as you flare). If the glider does dive badly without the height to level off just let go the ears, prepare to PLF grab a wrap and flare really hard just before you hit. If you come in without ears it's obviously important to come in fast with just enough brake to fly actively rather than making an approach on deep brake with zero groundspeed. Doing this also makes going through a strong wind gradient worse for the same reasons.

Sorry it was all a bit long. I didn't want to give a half hearted explanation.

Ian Blackmore.

Hello and Farewell

Dear Editor

I'd just like to say a big thankyou to Charlotte for taking over the mantle of Membership Secretary. As past holders of this role will know, it's no small undertaking!

As some of you know, my day to day work involves using databases and spreadsheets all the time, and the spreadsheets I set up to run the membership database seem straight forward to me, but to anyone else they will definitely take some getting used to, so bear with Charlie whilst she gets up to speed with them...! and when it comes to renewal time please don't put it off, renew straight away and save all those reminder letters!

I've enjoyed the post over the last couple of years, meeting lots of new faces and learning (and

forgetting!) lots of new names, but the time has come to pay for my membership again!

Whilst I'm at it, I'd like to thank Colin too - under his Chairmanship the club has developed into one of the best clubs in the country - the letters, emails and phone calls I've received bear testament to that - and I'm sure that it will continue to develop with the new committee. Please give them your full support, after all, they run the club for your benefit.

Anyway, that's enough for me - see you on the hill!

Tim Pentreath [tim@pentreath.freeserve.co.uk]

Local Flying

Marcus. how are you. Still paradangling.? (obviously !) Its been ages since I left the fold and I have to say that even after three years away from hang gliding, I still crave the thrill on a constant basis. I understand from the likes of Martin Tillet that hang gliding has gone into recession and I can understand that but it doesn't stop me from remembering how feckin ace it was to be hurtling up towards cloudbase on a good day at Pandy etc,etc.....

Anyway, back to the plot. I now have a PPL and am keen to build up the hours, (currently standing at 75), by taking people with me for jaunts around the locality. I fly from Filton in Piper Warriors which have a cruise speed of 120 knots, so in an hour it is possible to get down to Compton Abbas and back or Oxford, Brecon, you get the picture. It costs me £75 per hour to hire these aircraft (which are well maintained, comfortable and fully airways equipped) and so naturally, sharing the other three seats with willing aviators brings the cost down to as little as £18 per hour each.

Want to see the Avon sites from 3000 feet. Guaranteed !!!!! call Dave Garbe on 0117 9040765

to come flying from Filton in a Piper Warrior. Various dates booked over the next few months. The aircraft is a 4 seater so if you can find two other people the cost will be around £18 each, we can either fly to any of the local picturesque airfields, land, have a drink and fly back or fly over the Bloreng (cloudbase permitting), Pandy, the Malverns or Westbury.

Give me a call on the number above to discuss, or e-mail, david.garbe@virgin.net

Happy flying. Dave Garbe

Another Year Over...

To all that have made the club what it is. I would just like to say how impressed I have been with our very enthusiastic committee and the high standard of work that has been contributed to organising and running the various club events throughout the year. Fortunately as a club we are blessed with several PC whiz kids and I am sure that I speak for every club member in congratulating the professional manner in which Marcus, Richard and Tim have constructed and maintained their web sites throughout the year.

Although I could not make the Christmas Meal in time for most of the festivities, from what I did see, it looked like it had been an excellent evening with fun had by all. I will make sure I do not double book myself next time. Anyway I was most grateful to receive my prize for best newcomer to the XC league, it meant a lot to me, and I hope it will encourage many budding XC virgins to have a go next year. Its a shame more prize nominees did not turn up to collect their glassware. Anyway, a big thanks to everyone who made the evening what it was: Simon, Tim, Brent, Rich, Colin e.t.c.

Lets hope next year will be the big one!

Peter

Taylor

News

The Avon Paragliding Team came 2nd in the finals of the British Club Challenge. More details in the Comp News Section.

The Club Christmas Dinner was a great success. A great evening was had by all. To see some images of the night check out the website.

The Club AGM was held at the October meeting, various changes happened to the committee. Brent Pullen has taken over the post of Chairman from Colin Lark, who felt he had too many commitments. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Colin for all his hard work for the club, the club has gone from strength to strength over the last couple of years, we hope he will stay involved in the club. As part of his role as chairman Brent will be organising the monthly meetings, so if you have any ideas or

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contacts let him know. Also leaving the committee is Tim Pentreath, but he will still run the XC league for paragliders so you won't escape those statistics completely. Charlotte Hedges has taken over as membership and is currently trying to come to grips with the monster that is the spreadsheet that Tim has created. The Low Airtimer posts have both changed with Simon Kerr taking on this role for paragliding and John Jones for Hangliding, I know there are plans a foot for various events, more details as they are sorted out. If you want to know more or just want to know where to go flying give them a call, or any of the committee. As Simon had pulled out of competition flying Alex Coltman had taken over the running of the paragliding team for the British Club Challenge, he will be aided by Pete Taylor who will step in when Alex is competing in the BPC. The final

change to the committee is the club library, Fiona Macaskill will be looking after this and adding to it. If you have any ideas for new books or videos let her know. Please make sure you return items that you borrow, or your name will be published in the hall of shame. the other posts on the committee will continue to be held by the normal faces.

Brent Pullen has organised a Club Coach Course for 15 and 16th Jan, this is open to all pilots both pg and hg. There is no charge for the course as the club pays for any members that take the course, although there will be a small fee to cover refreshment.. If you are interested please give Brent a call asap.

Robin Brown has organised a parachute repack in Bristol for Jan 8th. You will need to book to get a place on this and there are a limited number of places. Please contact Robin for further details.

Tim and Elly have managed to have had a bit of a prang out in NZ on the Tandem. Apparently they clipped a bush whilst trying to abort a flight and swung into a bank. Luckily for Tim he was cushioned from the impact by Elly, unfortunately for Elly all this work as an airbag resulted in a broken wrist. All the details in the next issue, as Tim has managed to use a keyboard and send an article in.

Simon Kerr has joined the age of the internet with his new website 'Flying VWs', check it out at www.golddust.force9.co.uk. He is keen to hear from anyone who flies paragliders or hanggliders and drives a VW camper.

French pilots are using a new wonder substance to coat their gliders. Gibolin is supposed to give up to

an extra point on glide. For those that feel the need more information can be gotten from gibolinformation@francemail.com, but there again it could all just be french misinformation :-)

Brett Janaway (Devon and Somerset Condors) has broken the UK Paramotor altitude record, with a height of 2956m (9698 feet). He was flying a Reflex glider with a Zanzoterra 320cc motor. The record was set in the Welsh Borders in far from ideal conditions.

SEW Pilot Richard Haines is setting up a dealer network for French PG manufacturer Flying Planet. Richard says some sponsorship is available for PWC, British Champs and BPC pilots. Trade-ins on comp rated are also offered. Call Richard on 01443 403531

Recent Paraglider releases include Advance Epsilon 3 (Std), Flying Planet Sirius (Std), Gin Bolero (DHV1), MAC Diva (Std), NOVA Phelix (DHV1) with a wicked max speed of 50kmh, Trekking Speed. MAC's Eden 27 also achieved DHV 1/2 recently, all Eden's are Std rated.

Bob Drury should be arriving back in Britain about now after his most recent trip to the Himalaya. He has been filming a bivouac flight with the BBC. Keep an eye out for the program in the new year. And yes we are already booking him for a club talk

The Avian Rio has now passed the C of A.

Steve Senior is the 1999 PG Champion and Steve Cook the 1999 HG Champion.

Site News

The Wessex club have decided to end their reciprocal agreement with several clubs. Their main reason is that they have seen a marked increase in pilot numbers at their sites to the extent that they felt that their members on occasion have felt unwilling/unable to fly due to crowding in the air. This crowding is also putting extra strain on relationships with the farmers. From now on all Wessex sites may be flown by Wessex members only. It remains to be seen if this has any effect on the numbers at our sites, only time will tell. The Avon club has always been against excessive site restrictions hence our Associate membership scheme which allows us to keep people apprised of site rules and changes without the need for excessive charges to visiting pilots. For this to work we do need our members to make sure visitors are given the forms hence are member get member scheme, this gives you a reduction on your renewal or every member you recruit. Hopefully this will enable us to keep our sites open.

Crook's Peak We have now lost the bottom landing as it has been taken over by a anti flying farmer. Do not fly this site unless you are sure you can stay up or undertake a side landing.

Draycott Sleights We have not been able to negotiate agreement, so please try not to undermine our work if you are approached on the site.

Thames Valley Sites, as you may know Thames valley have withdrawn their associate membership, and some of our pilots flying on their sites has caused some discussion between the two clubs. At the club AGM the situation was put to the membership, in a vote the club decided not to offer particular sites in an exchange agreement or to try for a full reciprocal agreement. Thames Valley members will be encouraged to join as associate members. In the meantime we have been asked to publish the following by the Thames Valley Committee.

The Thames Valley committee have asked us to stress that to fly their sites (this includes Olivers) pilots must be members of the TVHGC. In

addition they point out that **Olivers is potentially a very unforgiving site and should be only flown by experienced xc pilots (ie. Pilot rated, 100+ hours).**

Finally Richard Harding is currently working on a replacement site guide, although he may have been too busy on europg recently to have done much :-)

Comp News

Avon Paragliding Team Comes 2nd in Club Championship

The Club Championship or Airwave Challenge as it has been know was finally finished in September. After 2 weekends of wind and rain we awoke to more wind and rain, not to mention hangovers as it was the morning after Tim B's leaving curry. Off we went to SE Wales where the teams gathered, our team consisted of Alex Coltman, Rich Harding, Pete, Taylor, Tom Mayne, Gary Mitchell and Myself. After various discussions about the future of the competition we were sent to Merthyr. So off we went in the 'Team Avon Bus' courtesy of Gary. To say no one was keen when we got to the hill is an understatement, but eventually a few people took off and it seemed ok so we all took to the air. Alex and Tom were soon off over the back from down near the quarry, and made 281m and 24 km respectively, not bad for a crap day. Pete and Gary made it over to Fochriw, whilst Rich and I got trapped on the hill by deteriorating conditions (and hangovers), we didn't

want to just flop as we had 4 over the back but were waiting for a goodish thermal, unfortunately all that came along was the rain. The next day was even more dire, with a stronger wind so we went to Abertwysyg. We meandered for a while but then a task was set and people went for it in appalling conditions. Graham Steel was soon away to fly a staggering 58km. For our team Rich got away to do about 15km most of which was flown through rotor, when it looked like Rich had validated the task, Alex Coltman was worked up into a frenzy and followed Rich into the rotor to do 10 km, the rest of us sensibly got in the van. In the end we were beaten by SE Wales who had a 40km form Julian Brown on Saturday and 58km from Graham Steel on Sunday, but I think we came a credible 2nd. Now let's look forward to next year, and a new PG comps secretary Alex Coltman. If you want to fly either PG or HG contact either Alex Coltman or Neil Atkinson

1999 - What a year!



Well, the 1999 season has come and gone, and for many pilots it was an excellent year with many personal bests. In particular the battle between the top three has been fascinating to watch, with Tom Mayne, Alex Coltman and Jim Mallinson all jostling for the top spot. It ended up with only 11km separating them...

In fact up until early October Alex was leading, with Tom needing a 30km flight to overtake. And then along came Monday October 11th, a glorious day

with over 150km flown by six Avon pilots, one of whom was Tom who flew 32km from Frocester... What an end to the season!

And so onto the prizewinners, where this year, if someone was on for a second prize, we decided it should go to the next person in line.

In 1st place, as we've already seen, is Tom Mayne, with a consistently high standard of flying both in everyday xc flying and in various Airwave Challenge rounds. In particular, his 53km from Hoel Senni down to the Gower Peninsular on 10th July sounded epic.

In 2nd place comes Alex Coltman, with some fantastic flights this year including the second best flight of the year - 56km from Talybont. Alex would have won the most improved pilot prize too, had we not had the one prize only rule. Last year he flew two flights totalling 17km - this year it was 18 flights totalling 374km!

In 3rd place is Jim Mallinson, with some wonderful flights mainly from Thames Valley sites. Jim makes it all sound so easy in his wonderful descriptions of his flights!

Nico Preston wins the prize for longest flight for his 78km flight during the Welsh round of the Nationals.

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No one completed the 90km race to goal on what was a totally blue day.

As for most improved pilot, this goes to Rich Harding who flew 254km in 19 flights this year compared to 96km in 9 flights last year. The average for his top 6 flights has gone up from 13.1km to 24.0km.

Pete Taylor wins 1st place in the newcomers league with some excellent flights - his 5 flights average 18.6km, 93km in total.

In 2nd place is Mike Andrews who's 32km flight from Selsley on 11th October ensured his position. Mike also reckons he wins the prize for oldest xc pilot, a claim which I can't confirm!

In 3rd place is Andy Summerskill with what sounded like a super flight - 23km from Merthyr on the weekend of the Bloreng party.

Finally, Tom makes another appearance, this time for his modest (his own words!) 6km flight from Haresfield over the Easter weekend. It was however

the best flight of the holiday weekend, so well done again, this time for winning the Easter Cup.

I've thoroughly enjoyed running the xc league this year, although being the first person to hear about epic flights when I'm not flying is a bit of a double-edged sword! I gave the website a major revamp in the middle of the year, and I intend it to be a permanent archive for the achievements, however great or modest, of Avon pilots. So if you want your flights to be "immortalised" on the web send me some narrative (and photos)!

Anyway that's enough from me, congratulations again to all the prizewinners, and also to everyone who's entered the league this year, especially the newcomers.

Here's to xc 2000!

1999 PG XC League (most recent flight - 11/10/99)

Rank	Name	Glider	1	2	3	4	5	6	Flights	Top 6
1	Tom Mayne	Nova Vertex	<u>52.8</u>	<u>41.9</u>	<u>37.9</u>	<u>33.3</u>	<u>32.2</u>	<u>24.2</u>	11	222.4
2	Alex Coltman	Nova X-Ray	<u>56.3</u>	43.9	34.7	28.5	28.0	26.3	18	217.8
3	Jim Mallinson	Edel Response	<u>48.3</u>	<u>47.9</u>	<u>32.7</u>	<u>30.0</u>	27.9	<u>24.9</u>	9	211.8
4	Richard Harding	Firebird Flame	<u>33.6</u>	<u>27.9</u>	23.7	22.2	<u>19.6</u>	16.9	19	143.9
5	Nico Preston*	Ozone Proton	<u>78.6</u>	35.0	23.4				3	137.0
6	Fiona Macaskill	Advance Sigma 4	24.5	23.7	23.2	21.1	18.8	17.9	10	129.3
7	Peter Taylor	Advance Epsilon 2	21.4	20.6	20.0	<u>18.3</u>	<u>12.8</u>		5	93.1
8	Tim Pentreath	Advance Omega 4	<u>27.8</u>	<u>12.7</u>	11.2	10.7	7.9	6.5	7	76.7
9	Simon Kerr	Gradient Saphir	28.6	<u>27.1</u>					2	55.7
10	Marcus King	Mac Eden	<u>16.6</u>	11.4	7.5	7.4	6.7		5	49.6
11	Mike Andrews	Swing Astral	32.1	<u>7.1</u>					2	39.2
12	Merlin Crossingham	Gradient Saphir	18.8	5.7					2	24.5
13	Andy Summerskill	Gin Bonanza	<u>23.2</u>						1	23.2
14	Dave Yeandle	Gradient Topas	8.4	8.3	3.7				3	20.4
15	David Huxford	Gradient Saphir	19.1						1	19.1
16	Robert Bilson	Firebird Genesis	9.0	6.7					2	15.7
17	Jean Christophe Schrotter	Advance Sigma 4	15.3						1	15.3
18	Charlotte Hedges	Flight Design A4	9.2	4.5					2	13.7
19	Martin Stanton	Apco Xtra	11.7						1	11.7
	Grand Total		535.2	324.5	218.0	171.4	154.0	116.9	104	1519.9

Monday 11th October

A pretty amazing day for mid October, with over 150km flown in six flights. Alex and Rich head to Hay Bluff and fly about 17km each - (actually Alex's flight couldn't be allowed - rumour has it he might have landed rather close to an army camp!) Meanwhile Mike Andrews and Fiona do 32km and 25km respectively from Selsley, and Tom Mayne and Frank Trunks get away from Frocester to do over 30km each. It was Frank's first xc on a paraglider so special congratulations to him. This also means that Tom moves up to the top of the league, overtaking Alex and Jim. The best I can manage is a distant glimpse of people flying at Selsley and Frocester as I drive back down the M5 at 1545 after a business meeting in Birmingham...

Monday 4th & Tuesday 5th October

Alex sneaks in a 7.8km flight from Westbury on Monday, but on Tuesday (which looked glorious as I drove back to Bath from York), he spent 4 hours on Pandy for a total of 15 minutes flying - in his words *"See life as a mid week flyer is not all roses!"*

Saturday 25th & Sunday 26th September

Airwave Challenge Final weekend in SE Wales - despite the weather some good flights were made. Alex and Tom flew 28.5km and 24.2km respectively from Merthyr on Sunday, and 10km from Abertyswg on Sunday. Rich flew 16.2km on the Sunday, but despite winning the day on Saturday, Graham Steel's 48km flight on Sunday meant Avon dropped to 2nd place overall. Still, an excellent achievement - well done all involved. (I believe there may still be some more flights to be entered from the weekend...)

Wednesday 15th September

Rich and Alex head to Merthyr to fly 43.9km and 22.2km respectively under a fairly weak sky - Alex's words were *"very slow, hard, but great fun flight"...* Meanwhile Jim heads to Oliver's again and after a "short" flight to ParAvion, takes off again at 1630 and flies 30.0km to Coombe Gibbet - unbelievable!

With these flights entered there's only 9km separating the top three pilots - Alex on 213km, Jim on 211km and Tom on 204km - with a over a month to go there's still plenty to fly for!

Monday 13th September

Jim flies a storm from Oliver's - 47.9km - base was at 5200' from where Jim could see Wales, the Solent and Didcot at the same time - it sounds wonderful!

Sunday 12th September

Dave Yeandle seems to be the only one to get away from Westbury with a 8.4km flight. It looked like a nice day - I was recovering from a hangover after a good party at a friend's wedding! Actually I've done some serious thinking about my flying and where I'm going with it - as a consequence I'm now much more relaxed about missing those epic days. I'm not giving up, but just don't expect me out quite so often! Read my letter to EuroPG about it [here](#).

Monday 30th August - Sunday 5th September

A triplet of flights from Rich adds another 26km to his total - that's now 16 flights entered in the league this year Mr XC!

Sunday 29th August

Jim Mallinson has a better flight (27.9km) from Golden Ball (nr. Milk Hill) than he had during 3 weeks of flying out in the Alps!

Saturday 28th August

Andy Summerskill makes his first appearance into the league with a 23.2km flight from Merthyr during the Bloreng party weekend.

Snowdon Gliders BPC 99 - Simon Kerr

Saturday 12th June saw the UK rounds of the British Paragliding Cup get underway in Snowdonia. Marcus, Charlie, and Myself arrived early morning at about 1:00am after a brief stop over in Llangollen for last orders. I was doing my usual, i.e. skipping out of Airwave Challenge duties, which I had fobbed off on Rich Harding for the weekend. Marcus was unable to drive due to wrecking his back the week before, but hoping that the conditions would be smooth enough to risk flying, he had brought his sweaty neoprene girdle along. Charlie who was not actually flying in the comp had come along hoping to show us how it should be done. Following registration and the morning briefing, there was the usual scramble to the cars as everyone raced off in the time honoured

manner to regroup at the days venue, an unofficial site at Merthyr Farm, on the ridge running NE from Harlech . Funnily enough this was the goal field at last years Snowdon Gliders event, which Tim Pentreath knows well as last year he arrived there before anyone else. At the next briefing it was announced that there would be another briefing in an hours time, (yes the BPC is trying hard to maintain it's standards) we were however told that the task would be open X/C along an axis, taking us directly downwind of launch. At least this was the plan, but first we would have to wait until the huge clouds in the mountains behind had moved on allowing us safe passage



Looking out from launch across Porthmadoc Estuary towards Snowdonia.

One hour later, the clouds were still menacing and the briefing was put back by another two hours to 4:00pm. Time to go and have a coffee, or go and free fly to see what is happening in front of the hill. I opted to do both, the coffee however must have addled my brain because as I climbed out from the hill feeling slightly uncomfortable I realised that I had launched with my right hand riser rigged through my right hand shoulder strap. I quickly concluded that the glider was behaving itself and took my time getting a bit of height and setting up a safe top landing before doing my pre flight check rather late!!! Back in the air again I soon settled in to the wonderfully buoyant conditions flying well out from the ridge and climbing back over launch in some lovely thermals, I was quickly joined by Charlie and we had a pleasant hour cruising around before I had to big ear down in a hurry with several other pilots, to land only minutes

before the briefing . With clouds still threatening mega suck city over the back the task was now changed, and a race to goal around two turn points was called. Turn point one was Harlech Castle with the second turn point being a small cross roads on the far side of launch from TP 1 and goal in the bottom landing field directly below launch. It was to be an air start with the window opening shortly after the briefing. At this point I stopped listening to the briefing, as I was busy trying to remember how to programme my GPS. This was not a good idea, as once launched I started to wonder how I would know that the task had been activated, ahh well I thought I'll just have to watch the other pilots, and when they all race off towards the first turn point go after them with maximum speed bar. As I suspected when this happened the lead gaggle left me well and truly behind, rumour has it that several pilots jumped the

gun, being the wrong side of the start gate when the task was activated (but that's another story). Anyway I jumped on the speed bar, pushed out from the hill, and turned left heading straight for the Castle. This worked really well, many of the others had opted to stay on the ridge, I got to the turn point ahead of most of them, and with a lot more height. Feeling rather chuffed with Myself I took a photo and turned back to race to the next turn point, once again staying well out in front of the hill. Cruising back past launch by now in about 4th or 5th place I was starting

to feel a bit cocky, little did I know what lay ahead. I could see that people were having great trouble trying to push forward to the second turn point, whereas I was already well out from the hill and feeling confident. All I needed to do was get onto the ridge in front of me, and I was nearly there. It was about then that I flew into the Mother of all sink holes, I looked around me to find everyone going down over quite a large area, Ohh Bugger I said whilst setting up my landing approach.



Turn Point 1 Harlech Castle.

About 15 minutes later there were 7 or 8 pilots all standing at the side of the same short stretch of road, trying to hitch back to base. We did have a little consolation in watching several other pilots bomb out in the same few fields that we had (the sink hole was not being picky). Eventually Howie Travers came by in the retrieve van and took us all to the pub in Harlech, where we further consoled ourselves with several beers each. Somewhat later on it became apparent that nearly 3/4 of the field had gone down in or around the same few fields that had decked our group of unlucky pilots. So there you have it, some initially good decisions were written off by flying into an unexpected sink hole. Only two people made it to the goal field, and I was placed roughly half way down the score sheet.

Marcus in the mean time, who was stuck on the hill for ages after I launched due to the window being temporarily closed, flew past the sodding sink hole and beat me, going down just short of the second turn point, and needless to say Charlie got more flying in than either of us. We both sat in the pub for

some time trying desperately to get in touch with Charlie, who was at launch with our transport. despite many attempts to contact her on the radios we had no success, so eventually I scrounged a lift off Howie, arriving at launch to discover Charlie sat in the van having been trying for some time to get it out of first gear so she could back it out of the field. It seems that we had been talking on crossed frequencies, as she had been trying just as hard to raise me, I guess we both changed to the alternative frequency at the same time, but they never overlapped.

In true BPC tradition, Sundays task was canned due to it blowing a hoolie, so we set off for South Wales and had a pleasant hour or two punting up and down Hay Bluff before heading home. I didn't go home without learning one good lesson though, because later in the year at the Scottish Open I found another sink hole, and with the Snowdonia experience under my belt, I used it well and was soon once again on the deck !!!! Ahhh well, it's a laugh isn't it.

Features

The Big Wave

Ian Dibble

A tale of flying in wave during the British League in Debyshire.

Qualifying

Alex Coltman

Due to a previous lack of hangliding articles some paraglider pilots have converted. This is a shot article on his last day in school.

Venezuala

Richard Sheppard

Richard's tales of competition flying in Venezuala, with big skies and those latin women...

THE BIG WAVE Ian Dibble



I've been lucky enough to fly in wave 3 times before. But August 27th was something else. The wind on Wether Fell was about 25 mph and 40 degrees off to the South. I was expecting a pretty rough take off on the shallow slope. Sure enough I was bounced about for the first 10 feet, but then the flight smoothed out into a constant steady climb out, just like any other climb into ridge lift. The only difference was that this 'ridge lift' went on and on. Ten minutes into the flight and I'm still climbing above take off. Past the base of the cloud forming behind at 3500'. A few more minutes and I get my first peek above the cloud tops forming at 4500'. The lift is a steady 2 up and I'm still over take off, now at 5000' and still going up. Above the sky is blue with streaks of cirrus, below a mass of cumulus and lenticular clouds. I loose all track of time concentrating only on the incessant chirp of the vario. Now at 8000' and still going up. The view is incredible, more like the scene from an airliner than from a hang glider. All around me are other pilots. The meet director had said we wouldn't need cameras having declared open XC. Funny how everyone has their cameras out. At 8500' the lift

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suddenly stops. Below is the most amazing view. The Yorkshire Dales have turned flat with cotton wool clouds arranged in rough lines across the landscape.

We set of on a glide together to the next wave bar down wind. The sink is smooth but not too strong. After only about 4 miles, the vario chirps again and as one we turn back into wind to start the next climb. The wave bar is far below and by mapping out the best lift we climb up into the blue this time topping out at 9000'. Some have already set off and are climbing in the third bar another 4 miles downwind. VB on, arms in, toes pointed for the sinky glide. Arriving at about 6000' we again point into wind to commence the climb into orbit. This bar is a little less well formed and we glide off as it gets weaker somewhere over 7000' (Funny how 7 grand can feel low.)

I've now spent over an hour above the clouds getting hypoxic on the view. The others fly slightly cross wind to the next lenticular to maximise the distance potential to the East Coast (which is still some 60 miles away). I decide to fly perpendicular to the bar, then once in the lift fly along it to reduce my time in

the sink. The plan works well as I connect still way above the cloud tops, whilst the other appear to struggle only just above the tops before getting a good climb. The bar seems to wander up wind so my glide along it takes me back towards launch. I loose the lift and watch the cloud below me dissolve and form more strongly upwind. I now find myself in 6 down sink heading the smooth top of the lenticular upwind of me.

The headwind is strong and I only just make it over the top of the cloud to the upwind edge where the lift is bound to be. I can see from how the cloud is forming where the lift is. It's like a wave breaking upwards. I'm flying through the wisps but still in sink. I fly down through chasms of cloud with the sun casting a halo around my shadow on the sheer white walls. I can see the mist swirling up the edge of the cloud, but I cannot find any constant lift. It's all getting rather depressing as I seem to have managed to loose 4000' without making any progress downwind. Not only that, but the cloud is now blocking my route downwind. I have to wait until I'm at cloudbase before I can glide off under it out into the sunshine beyond.

The others manage to stay in the wave and fly out into the Vale of York still in orbit. Meanwhile I am now in thermal mode, looking for my next climb. I head for

a cumulus and find a very rough climb from 1000' back up to cloudbase. The thermal averages 8 up and is definitely wave enhanced.

Once at base I ponder how to get back into the wave that is undoubted still up there. The drift seems oddly slow despite the 25 mph wind. So I glide off to the next likely looking cloud downwind. Again I arrive quite low and find scrappy lift coming out of a quarry. A glance at the map shows that I've got an airspace problem looming and I need a strong climb and quick. I give up on the scraps and head for a thermal marked by a sailplane near Ripon. Bad call. The glider is near base and I'm miles below with too little time to hunt out the thermal. All too soon I find myself setting up a landing next to some very hospitable caravaners.

A few lucky pilots manage to stay in the wave out across the Vale. Some were even wave soaring above the clouds peering down on other pilots thermaling below the very cloud they were soaring. They even swear that further on the wave gave way to thermals, so they found themselves thermaling still thousands of feet above the cloud tops

Clearly I'd bombed out, but what a way to do it!



Qualifying Alex Coltman

"Release" I call and start smoothly accelerating the glider which quickly lifts me off the ground, as briefed I started a gentle right hand turn and found a lovely wide gentle lift band. After soaring for about five minutes I spotted our instructor giving the dreaded "arms up" signal meaning he wanted me to do a stall. The first was a nice gentle one with just a slow push out till the glider started to mush then letting it recover. I came back to the ridge to top up my height and then headed back out to do the real one. We were told to pull on speed then push all the way out, which sounded ok on the ground but felt wrong in the air. Still, it was the only task I had left to do so back towards take off then away from the hill and pull in. The wind noise increased quickly and I held the bar back as long as I dared then pushed all the way out. The glider rounded out really fast then seemed to climb forever. The next thing I notice is the expected loss of airspeed before the wind noise stops

Venezuelan Flying Richard Sheppard

We were sitting in the pub after one of those unexpected but cherished thermic autumn days at Westbury when Toby Quantrell asked me if I fancied going to Venezuela in March to do the La Victoria comp. Not being on the comp scene, I hesitated. Think of all the latin women he said. That sort of clinched it for me although, looking back, I wonder if its possible to sue someone for misinformation; Yes, lots of beautiful females but he didn't tell me we wouldn't meet any... Anyway, the flying was great (even though cloud base was 2000' lower than usual for that time of year); flyable every day, no easy peasy conditions, and - important this - WARM WEATHER. My concerns about taking out an ancient Kiss were unfounded - in fact using an old cheap glider made a lot of sense judging by all the fretting we did over the state of airline baggage handling and the attrition rate of aluminium during the comp!

Thursday Practice day. Goal; Noguera, a race track 70 ks to the west.

I meet up with Toby low over Zuata. He's about 700 feet below me and looks as if he's blown it. I cheekily use him as a thermal marker and maintain our separation. Somehow he manages to hang on to a few rough bits above some unlandable terrain and pops out over the ridge overlooking Casupito. A few miles later things are looking very downish and Toby picks a large cultivated area to land in. Looks good, but at the last second I see he's gone in fast downwind. The glider stops abruptly and turns over. He's OK but has bust an upright. I land ten minutes later into a steady 10 mph wind. And that sums up the landings for this place - Its a bit of a lottery that the wind isn't going to switch on your final approach (or even during your flair!). Henry Blackshaw, Trevor Birkbeck and Andy Wallis have late retrieve and an

altogether and everything goes very quiet, the glider hangs motionless for a second, then rotates fast and starts diving at the ground before pulling out and converting the speed into another climb which I converted into a turn. After another few minutes soaring I start to really relax and enjoy the flight, the waves reflecting the sun as they roll onto the beach and the other gliders all milling around over the bay. To any other paraglider pilots thinking of converting I would say try it, flying stiffies requires more concentration and they are more physical on the ground but the extra control of pitch and easy speed transitions more than make up for it. I'm looking forward to my first thermals and being able to fly on those post frontal days when the sky looks gorgeous but its just a little to strong. cheers Alex

armed escort out of the night-time badlands for a price of 1500 Bolivars (50p each).

Friday Another practice day - goal is Dos Caminos, 70 ks to south.

Lose my map to a dust devil. Having rigged I take the list of turn points back to Henry. An urgent shout goes up, "Dust devil!". I leap on the glider but too late and the wingtip arcs skyward. The glider, along with two others, ends on it's back. I look up to see my map at about 500' and climbing. The smaller bit of paper with it must be the list of turn points - sorry Henry! I take off late and try to catch the others who are jabbering away on the radio. It always sounds as if they are having a much better time of it but in reality they too are agonizing over the next climb, glides across dodgy looking boonies and decent places to land should it all go pear shaped. I lose it near Los Morros, the huge black rocks jutting like rotten teeth above San Juan. Decide to land on a brown and dusty area of grazing land interspersed with small trees. I drop the nose in a cross wind but I'm down in one piece! I drink the last of my water and derig in the hot silence, watched from under the trees by horses and cattle. More uprights broken today - the pile in the lobby is growing fast. Poor Nigel Bray is bed-ridden with a very painful back and is destined to spend the comp in his hotel room!

Sunday First task is; start gate - a race track 10 ks to south to take us away from the military zone - Manuare, Casupito. 114 k.

Get up in the usual, very rough thermal and set off towards the nearest reliable thermal source, the chicken sheds. End up in Guacamaya bottom landing field. Horrible place. Before I land I watch John Aldridge do a downwinder and get arrested on the barb wire fence at the end of the field - another

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upright for the pile. I luck out again and get in while the wind behaves itself. John is pissed off; he landed because his harness zip came undone on his front loader. Ian Dibble lands by the startgate and gets a very late retrieve for only 10 k. Not the sort of place to spend out in the dark. If you want a good retrieve get to goal!

Monday Lomalisa (take off); Belen; Los Morros; Casupito. 100k.

Mid-air 100" above take off between Nelson Franquiz and Emilio Fernandez. Luckily their topless gliders slide off each other and both carry on flying with minimal damage. Gordon Rigg is the only one to make goal. I flop into Casupito enroute to Belen for a measly 18k. A while later I watch rival Kiss flier Simon Headford coming in, also for an 18k landing. His glider seems to be making a heck of a noise. It turns out to be Mr. Rigg whooping and hollering as he dives full speed for the goal line on his Laminar. Gordon is dead chuffed. Unfortunately, it was all down-hill for him from then on! Simon recounts his flight; Not one but TWO low saves out of Guacamaya. On the second he was scratching low over a hill fire. This is evidenced by the black sooty smudges all over his face!

Tuesday Lomalisa to Doscaminos. 67k.

Lots in goal today. Most get up on take off and head directly for goal via "Hairy Mountain" so called because it is the only one covered in trees, though for Jim Page it probably has other connotations. Cruise to Tucutunemo valley at cloudbase (7500') then onto "Hairy mountain". As I glide towards the mountain I realize that I should have conserved height as I am only just going to get over the shoulder and I can't see what's on the other side. Then I see a glider several hundred feet below and start to relax, thinking that he must know a way out. A worried sounding Jim comes over the radio - for it is he. He's stuck in the valley and is going to try and glide out - no chance, not even on a topless! I find a scrappy thermal 100 feet above the trees and work it for all I'm worth in order to avoid a fate similar to Jim's. I circle over a large wooden cross erected on a lonely grassy shoulder and suddenly get religion. Jim is now a white dot flying through the steep valley several ks to the west. I lose sight of him but am relieved to hear he is down - albeit with another donation for the scrap pile! Simon relays Jim's GPS co-ordinates. Simon's pre-occupation with the radio means that he hasn't concentrated on his flying and I glide off in better air. The next time I see him near San Juan he is circling a couple of grand below me. Bye bye sucker I think to myself. When I finally make goal Simon is already there, derigging. You just can't count your chickens in this game! John Aldridge has landed in the boonies. The road he landed next to turns out to be a dry river bed. He spends the night on a chicken farmer's verandah. Puerto Rican pilot Ricardo Leyva knocks himself unconscious landing out, but luckily gets back okay.

Wednesday Guacamaya start gate; Belen; Potrerito antenna; San Jaun Airport. 80 ks

Another day another bomb out field. I deck t near Villa de Cura to make about 20k. Its a massive grass field and looks much more inviting than the valley leading towards Belen which eventually peters out into the mountains. In the large field we are surrounded by kids and have to be careful to pack our kit away before it gets snaffled by opportunist hands. Gordon splats at Belen. Trevor and Pete Banton hit the thermal of the year above him and spiral up to cloudbase in a couple of "Yeehaa" 360s.

Thursday Guacamaya to Nueguera. 71 k.

The thermals above take off always seem the roughest. We experience off-the-clock lift and wire-slackening holes - some seem bottomless. If you lose it here you have to nip over the pass to the right of takeoff or you can't reach Guacamaya landing field. Whilst still on launch I see Toby low down. It looks like he's overcooked it. He tells us he will attempt a fly-on-the-wall in the gulch below take off. He says later, "...So I set off down that valley, looking for somewhere to land. There was a road, so retrieve wasn't an issue, but absolutely nowhere flat! just steep steep slopes, wires, houses etc. Realised it was time to test the 'could land there if I really had to' claims I've been making to myself for years on glides over dodgy areas...picked a steep grassy shoulder just above the road...went in full speed about ten foot over some telephone wires, and made a perfect landing, just on the crest of the shoulder!". A novel experience for me: Get very low near Bella Vista and catch a rough thermal along with several small vultures. As I'm going 'round a large and apparently short-sighted eagle cuts in front. When it gets within a few feet of my noseplate and a collision looks inevitable I Shout, "Oil!". It turns to face me, wings akimbo, and vanishes over the leading edge. I'm sure I feel it snag my top rigging. I glide off with a squadron of vultures on my wingtip. At their landing field Gordon, Pete and Nelson Franquiz are relieved of 2000 Bs each by Crack addicts. Gordon gives 5000 and asks for change! No chance Gringo! .

Friday Loma lisa, Topo Poterito, Taguanes. 115 k

We are all getting used to the routine by now. Each morning we load the gliders onto the trucks and stop off at an open air food bar; empanadas and fresh mixed fruit. We all agree that we shall miss these healthy breakfasts. Then its up the hill, rig, and have the pilot's meeting with organizer Alejandro and comp co-ordinator Elaine (who also looks after her 4 month old baby whilst doing this!) where we all gather to take GPS co-ordinates and worry about the coming day's excitement. Gordon is late off having had to borrow a glider after finding the tip damaged on his Laminar. I take off at the same time and we both end up in Zuata, about 15 ks away. I can't believe Gordon did such a crap flight without any outside intervention so secretly blame myself for his

downfall as we took the same route! Raphael Dubious...sorry, Dubois, lands within 1k of goal...

Saturday Lomolisa to Belen. 47k.

Jim and Pippa go off to get married at the German enclave of Colonia Tovar. To quote Mr. Birkbeck; "They do the deed today at a civil ceremony in the hotel gardens - which are very nice but vaguely pagan in style. Greater love hath not manetc Jim has brownie points for the rest of his life having given up the last day of the competition to get wed. Nothing to do with the fact that he trashed the Cheetah on Wednesday and a borrowed Stealth on Thursday of course. We understand Pippa has signed in blood committing herself to retrieve for the rest of eternity".

During today's flight I see a glider on a slope in the nasty valley leading out of Villa de Curra. Turns out to be Pete Banton. He leaves his glider rigged on the hillside and climbs up to make radio contact. While talking he watches his glider lift off in a gust and go for a little flight of it's own. Result - one very knackered Laminar. I meet up with John Beckley near Villa De Curra and we spend ages trying to

cross the mountains to Belen. Eventually we are at 7000'+ and I see the race track in the distance so set off into a slight head wind. John gets higher still and follows me. Its a 13k glide and I think I will just make it but hit sink and end up landing 1k from goal! Lady luck finally moves on, and I go in downwind, downslope with ash and smoke from a hill fire swirling around, expecting the worst. See rough hedge at end of field and decide that is preferable to hitting dirt at this speed. Pancake into hedge and extricate myself and glider intact. John makes goal (with 1000"!)and is dead happy. The others carry him and glider around field in a lap off victory before he has time to unclip! That evening we go to the prize giving, held at the local brewery (!) Everyone receives a gift bag full of Denco Rub goodies - Its a skin lineament for strained muscles, so this coming year you'll be able to smell anyone who visited the comp from about 100 yards. It was a fab comp. Brilliant weather, Fantastic people and demanding, adventurous flying. Before it started seven days seemed like a bit of an ordeal but at the end of each day we couldn't wait for tomorrow's task!



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Holidays

Romania Mania...

Once again off to Transylvania, Week beginning 19th of February 2000

This will be a fly/ ski holiday, if conditions are unsuitable for flying then it's on the piste for us...

Previously enjoyed Gliders

Firebird G Sport	L	Complete Kit	1500.00
Firebird Barracuda	L	VGC	650.00
Trekking Espace	XL	Big Boy or S Bi	700.00
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FireFly

Issue Seven - Staying Out For The Summer

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June 25th - Talybont

July 6th - All over the bloody shop!

July 10th - Heol Senni - Club Challenge Semi-Final

July 18th - Merthyr Common

Firefly Index



Introduction

What's this place? Ah, yes, it's my house. Haven't seen it much since the end of April, hence the absence of Firefly from the October Nova. Mind you, there have been various contributions to [The Avon XC Pages](#), the [Club Challenge Reports](#) and the [Spot The Glider Competition](#) to keep you (hopefully) amused - I've only had one correct answer to that one, btw - congrats to Hamish Atkinson for spotting Marcus at x = 245, y = 154 - took me ages to find him in the first place! A pint for you at the next meeting (got off lightly there then!).

As most of you will have gathered, since the beginning of the year Firefly has basically become Fireflyingbum (or something.....). Fortunately a partial rehabilitation program is now underway (including finding out what Choccie Digestive has been up to) and, if the ensuing retrospective leaves you hungry for more, there'll soon be an Ancecy Special, chock full of photos and written with non-fliers interested in the sport in mind. Anyway, enough rambling, what have we here then?

- ?? Advanced Driving Test - Coping with Single Track Roads
- ?? Advance Gliders - Are you colour blind or what?!
- ?? Advance to Abergavenny - Do not collect salary

On the subject of which, much of the summer has been spent in the company of Mr [X-Ray Specks](#), a new character in the [Firefly Hall of Fame](#). Fortunate really, not least for the loan of his spare vario, given that Digifly still have mine over four months after Steve Milsom sent it to them for repair! **I MISS MY AVERAGER !** It would also be quite nice not to have to look down all the time to find out how fast you're sinking.....

June 25th - Talybont



Ginger Spice in the huge, SE combe at Talybont



MacSplittie demo-ing a MAC Eden
The Tree Surgeon & co. in the Garden below

Fed up with the increasing flow of XC submissions into his Inbox, Ginger Spice decided it was high time he caught up the young whippersnappers and took a Friday off, also persuading MacSplittie to use up his final holiday of the year, his having already booked four weeks in a row for our Anney trip and the ensuing British Open.

Evidently eager, the duo actually beat Firefly to the hill and were round in the massive, SE combe by the time I arrived. X-Ray Specks (probably detained by Helen's Bakery's Highly-Recommended Flap-Jacks at the shop in Raglan) was a little way behind, with Petr Smirnoff. Anyway, a quick (yeah - right!) yomp up and the Flame was

rigged and swiftly in the air above the car park, soon making its way round the corner as the early birds looked as though they weren't going to hang around for long. **The thermals** were rough and strong, with regular gains of 500 to 1000 feet but as soon as you went far behind the front of the hill it became very trashy and the climbs broke up. After the best part of an hour XRay and Petr finally arrived, but we still couldn't find anything consistent to leave with. After over two hours of trying we all landed for a debate. (Okay - and a ciggie.) MacSplittie's GPS said he'd already flown over 60km! Meantime, The Tree Surgeon & Fifi McTavish had arrived with their students, who were now trying not to get hoovered up from the bowl below...

Eventually Ginger Spice crabs forward a mile to the smaller bowl near the reservoir and eeks out a ludicrously slow climb back over our heads and away. Right then! Who's for a glide angle comp? We all take off to fly across to the small bowl. The wind wins. Hmmm. Walk round the corner into the bowl and launch from low down; works for everyone but me. Hmmm. Wind dies completely. %\$@!

Now, this is only the second time I've flown Talybont and, at this point, I'm not too impressed :) I run down the bowl backwards to launch (!) and fly off, across the river to the track back to the car park. As I pack up, MacSplittie flies down to The Tree Surgeon, chats for a couple of minutes and leaves a message on my mobile to say he's flying down to me. As he relights, a huge gust lifts him up and drops him on his backside; undeterred, his glider reinflates and drags him all the way up the bowl and over the back. I then watch X-Ray Specks fly back over from the small bowl, into MacSplittie's thermal and also escape. I am not pleased!

So, what do you do? Well, you either refuse ever to come to the site again or you walk up for a third time (still carrying your bike leathers as you have been all day) and spend the best part of three hours boating around in lovely evening lift, while the others beg retrieves from the other side of Brecon. The choice is yours.....

July 6th - All over the bloody shop!

Mad. The usual early-morning call from my partner in sideways humour and we're at The Bluff at half eleven. Slight problem. They're helicoptering huge blocks of stone up onto Offa's Dyke Path and won't finish until at least half past one. Whoops. Well, we'll have to go to Merthyr then - it'll be quite quick if we go back down the valley. A brief chat with the Joint Services Hang Gliding Competition in the pass ("Yes, we know there's a helicopter. We're flying anyway.") does nothing to dispel the impression caused by the second heat of the Club Challenge. Having said that, how much did the bloody chopper cost? There's a tractor track all the way along the top!



Flying into the sunset I wish I could be

I digress. We're making good time down the valley, following a white van whose driver obviously knows the road, until we get almost to the bottom, where we happen upon a tractor, with Vauxhall Cavalier behind. All three of us pass the tractor. Just past the single-track Crick turning the Cavalier sees another delivery van coming the other way and they both slam on the anchors. Now, the Cavalier has ABS and stops twenty feet from the approaching van; unfortunately the van in front of us is evidently unladen and piles into the back of the Cavalier, pushing it all the way forward into the other van, totalling both ends of the car and completely blocking the road. Oops. Glass everywhere. Cue crying children. Etc.

What to do? Well, leave contact details with each of the parties (the police have rung twice but still haven't come round to interview me!) and slink off along the lane to Crick. Great! We leave Bristol before ten and finally make Merthyr at gone one o'clock! And it's rough as hell! Mindful of an earlier experience here I've landed down on the shoulder when XRay Specks out (runs over the back?). The two hangies who were here when we arrived but still haven't flown (!) have somehow been so engrossed that they don't know whether Alex went down or not. I fly again and almost get rotored in behind the hill, land, stuff the glider in the back of the hire car (oh, yeah - did I tell you the one about the Cinquecento and the bus?!) and drive off to find somewhere dry to pack up on the way to retrieving Mr C.

Obviously, the last thing I expected was to be ambushed by a dozen wild horses while trying to pack up the glider, so it goes back in the boot and I drive somewhere more secluded. Then the call comes through from Alex that he's in Cwmbran. Bastard! I spend the best part of two hours finding my way to him. We have a pint and head back across the bridge. Being suckers for punishment we then go for an evening float at Westbury, where it's Westerly and crap but the sunset is pretty! On the way home we get caught in a traffic jam at Pennsylvania and yeah, it was one of *those* days alright!

July 10th - Heol Senni - Club Challenge Semi-Final



Nice place to land!

The Club Challenge, sponsored by Andersen Consulting, for that authentic 'couldn't organise a piss up in a brewery' flavour, moved back to SW Wales for the first of what should have been two semi-finals (traditionally at least, one would have thought). As it was, seven of the twelve qualifying teams turned up for this one and the other five never flew. Fair enough.

The Piper was back and raring for action and an easterly saw the throng assemble on Heol Senni. The rest of the team were Firefly, MacSplittie, X-Ray Specks, Petr Smirnoff and The Mayne Man. The first decent thermal saw half the field get away, The Mayne Man booting it off downwind and earning first place with 52km. Firefly ended up on Fan Gihirych with Pete, who went down, and MacSplittie, who climbed out before trying to cross to the high ground to the north of Cray Reservoir. As I got a raggedy save from a quarry, Marcus went down and back to the hill for a relight (multi-attempts being the order of the day).

After landing at 23km and seeing The Piper on his way to 28km during my retrieve, I missed a second climb out with Nick The Postman and had to be content with a trip to the burger bar in the lay-by near Fan G. Rumours that I landed on the centre line of the A4067 are well, true, actually. Returning for a third go, the thermal activity had disappeared, although I still ended up leaving the hill again, reaching the Fan G car park. At the end of the day though, we didn't think it was enough - we were in fourth place.

With Sunday canned, due to high winds, we thought that was it. Then The Piper got a message from postie to say that Chris Short of SE Wales had landed in Swansea Airspace. We were third! Then the other semi-final didn't happen and it didn't matter anyway! Then Joint Services (assisted by Andersen Consulting) organised the final in the winter

July 18th - Merthyr Common

Over to Wales again, arriving on Merthyr at 12.15, where Jamie Messenger, his brother Warren and Steve, Donna's Friend :-), were just about to move round to the WSW face. X-Ray Specked out with them as I was launching, reached 12000ft then pulled out and landed, to his own accompaniment of self-critical profanities! About eight Joint Services pilots then arrived and some sharp coring took me above the gaggle for the next, slow but reasonably consistent climb out. Approaching 4000ft (just below cloud) there were four of us - Firefly, X-Ray, Colin Hermon and a yellow Flame, so I let them past so I could take some photos!

Our paths diverged slightly, X-Ray getting a ludicrous save from 100ft above an industrial estate before racing off across the Crick valley with Colin.



Near the top of our climb-out - please incline head 45 degrees to right!



Crickhowell from the air - looking towards Sugar Loaf

I watched them try the Talgarth valley and got a climb from the end of the Bwlch all the way back to base.

Unfortunately the Black Mountains had overdeveloped, with perhaps 75% cloud cover, and we all ended up a couple of ridges in. Steve and yours truly didn't see X-Ray come back over the ridge to land a little way up our valley as we were looking for his misplaced radio in the middle of a huge, bracken-strewn hillside! Neither did we see him walk back up, for some reason, to fly to Longtown! Further still, we had no idea that MacSplittie had flown from Nant Y Moel to Merthyr and could have rescued us all with the Cinque! Well, one of us, anyway ...

In The Next Issue

Winter Flying - Captain Fantastic tests the top makes of balaclava
Sorry - what did you say, Ed? He's gone where?

Winter Flying - Um, someone buy me some balaclavas and I'll test them
How to wangle cheap wings out of importers (I hope)

The Good Flying Beer & Food Guide - Garnished with all the usual silliness !!! Bye!

Oh, Yeah - Parting Thought

If all the world's a stage, where's the audience sitting?

Keep up to date with FireFly at www.tomsawyer.demon.co.uk/paraglid.htm

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