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Summer Edition

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The Avon HG & PG Club Magazine

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Club Meetings

Club meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at the Compass Inn at Tormarton (just off the A46 about ¼ mile north of junction 18 on the M4). Arrive at 8pm for an 8.30pm start. For further details please contact Tim Pentreath.

The next meeting is on **September 12th** when Nev Almond will be talking and showing slides of Spain earlier this year, when he and other HG pilots were attempting to break World records.

The meeting dates for the rest of the year are:

October 10th
November 14th
December 12th

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.

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

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Cover shot – Evening flying at Westbury by Simon Kerr

Editorial



It has now been seven weeks since I last flew. That was the day I had my first and last flight at Combe Gibbet. My first flight was on my paraglider. My last flight was in a police helicopter. Having grounded all the other pilots and become the center of attention, I was in the enviable yet unenviable situation of being airlifted off the hill. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience despite being "high" on Entonox at the time. This was the day I had a full frontal collapse close to the ground, falling 20ft or maybe more, before being dragged back 100ft along the ground and into the trees with a broken collar bone and a dislocated shoulder. It was an horrific experience but I am thankful that I am still here to tell the tale. Looking back it was a case of pilot error fueled by an over-ambition to get high and go XC. Only a few weeks earlier I had done the SEWHGPG Novice XC course, and was keen to put into practice what I had learnt. I was hoping for a place in the Skywings XC League table not in the accident report section.

The last seven weeks has been an experience in itself. No doubt many of you that have also had lucky escapes will agree. I have learnt a lot about myself after hours of reflection and analysis. If I had to summarise my realisations it would be to NEVER ASSUME ANYTHING and BE PATIENT.

Anyway I assume you will all be at the Mere Bash next weekend (7/8th Sept). I can't wait!

Finally, apologies for the long wait for this edition of Nova. Thankyou to everyone who has contributed their bits and pieces. Please don't hesitate to let me know if there things you would like to see in Nova, or is there is stuff you would rather not see. Its your magazine. I just stick it all together (preferably with two hands!).

Cathy

Chairman's Waffle



Last weekend I was once again camped at Llangattock in South Wales. Along with the usual motley crew of Avon pilots there were many less familiar faces. It was, of course, the Club Challenge finals that had brought this group together. Unfortunately the BCC finals clashed with the mid-Wales BP Cup. Not only did it mean that some of the pilots that have supported the club team all year could not be there for the final, it also meant that the team was lacking some of our best pilots. Upon arriving at the Saturday morning briefing I was thrust, unexpectedly, into the deep end. Apparently Martin had volunteered me to be the PG task setter for the weekend, cheers mate :-). We all headed off to the NW face of the Blorenge. An annoying delay ensued before I could hold a briefing, as I waited for Jim Hay to arrive at take off to liase regarding task setting and the days flying rules. We were still also waiting for Roger Savery and the Derbyshire team to

arrive. It appeared that no one had thought to make sure that everyone knew where we were going. Eventually we had to go ahead without them present, as the wind appeared to be picking up and I wanted to open a window. An open distance task was set and the PGs got busy. The flying was very bitty and several times people got sunk out in the bracken below take off, and there was an unexpected reserve deployment when someone tried to fly a little too slow and turn at the same time. After a frustrating couple of hours Martin got impatient and drifted back over the bowl in one of the days poor thermals. Despite being lower than Martin I followed him, and we were both on a thermal seeking glide to the ground. That pretty much is all anyone did on the Saturday, with some folk getting a better glide, or leaving with a little more height than others. The day was won by Roger Savery who despite being late for the briefing, managed to do about 8.5km.

Sunday, I desperately wanted to separate the PGs and HGs and with a NE forecast I opted to take the PGs to Pandy, whilst the HGs went back to the Blorenge once more. After making sure everyone knew where we were going we set off for Day 2 of the Final. Again, the task was open distance, and one by one people started to lob off, looking for that thermal. Alan Davies reckoned you only needed 800ft to be able to reach the first ridge behind the hill. For a couple of hours or so all anyone could find was about 600ft at the most. Then it started to get better and a few people got away, some of them were even at cloud base. As I couldn't seem to get that high I went at 400ft, risking a thrashing in the rotor behind the hill. A thrashing I didn't get but I did find a consistent 8 down before I found the big one that took me

to base, and eventually the camp site at Llangattock. Craig Byrne got the best flight of the day at about 16.5km, I think I got the next best at 12km. Of course, had I not copped out, and continued down wind instead of flying to the camp site, then perhaps I would have beaten Craig! That night we couldn't report in because the phone number we had been given was not taking messages. When Steven went down to the pub as instructed, there was nobody there to report to, so all the results were collected in the morning.

Monday morning's briefing started with an apology to the Joint Services hang gliding team. Apparently there hadn't been an adequate task briefing on the hill the day before and consequently, they didn't even know a task had been set. We decided to separate disciplines again and the Hangies went back to the Blorengge again. Whilst us PGers went to Pontlottyn, a site I had not been to before. The task for the day was a race to goal to Mynydd Meio however, it was blowing a hoolie and looked to stay that way. Jim Hay said it was blowing 35mph on take off at the Blorengge, and some of the northern teams were anxious about their journey home on Bank Holiday Monday. After much discussion on the hill it was decided to can the task. I argued to wait one hour to see what happened before giving up, but there wasn't much enthusiasm for it. Even the local pilots were going home. As it turned out about an hour later the wind started to drop off, and I wish I had kept them all sitting on the hill all day. However I have been there and done that, and didn't really want to do it to others when there wasn't much sign of it being worthwhile.

I am not entirely sure what the final scores were, but the finishing order was Derbyshire, Pennine, Wessex, Avon, Thames Valley and Peak. I think. The most important thing was that we all had some good flying and enjoyed ourselves. It is safe to say that the scores were also very close. Anyway enough of my waffle, hopefully there will be some good weather and a good turn out for the Mere Bash next weekend. So I'll see you all at the party.

Simon.

2002 PG XC League

most recent flight 10/08/02

Name	Glider	1	2	3	4	5	6	Flights	Top 6	AvTop6	All
1 Jim Mallinson	Ozone Proton GT	75.8	54.3	46.9	34.2	20.5	19.2	8	250.8	41.8	283.0
2 Richard Harding	Airwave Magic	83.5	41.7	39.1	29.0	25.8	22.2	18	241.3	40.2	368.6
3 Alex Coltman	F/ Planet Whisper	51.6	48.7	48.1	23.8	20.5	18.1	7	210.6	35.1	227.0
4 Mike Andrews	Swing Astral	47.7	24.5	23.1	22.4	19.7	10.7	7	148.1	24.7	155.7
5 Tim Pentreath	Advance Omega5	73.1	25.4	22.8	16.0			4	137.2	34.3	137.2
6 Martin Stanton	Swing Ventus 2	69.1	14.2	12.6	5.5			4	101.4	25.3	101.4
7 Tony Moore	Nova X-Ray	18.4	18.0	17.7	14.8	8.5	8.0	6	85.4	14.2	85.4
8 Stafford Evans	Airwave Magic	20.2	14.7	11.9	10.6	10.3	6.2	6	74.0	12.3	74.0
9 Tom Mayne	Nova Carbon	39.9						1	39.9	39.9	39.9
10 Nico Preston	Ozone Proton	33.3						1	33.3	33.3	33.3
11 Garry Mitchell	UP Blues	22.7						1	22.7	22.7	22.7
12 Jo Eades	Windtech Serak	10.4	8.3					2	18.7	9.4	18.7
13 Merlin Crossingham	Gradient Saphir	15.4						1	15.4	15.4	15.4
14 Simon Kerr	Gradient Saphir	13.7						1	13.7	13.7	13.7
15 Ken Wilkinson	Edel Atlas	11.8						1	11.8	11.8	11.8
16 Robin Brown	Not known	10.6						1	10.6	10.6	10.6
17 Howard Woodward	Not known	9.2						1	9.2	9.2	9.2
18 Marcus King	Ozone Vibe	8.7						1	8.7	8.7	8.7
19 Amy Stanton	Gradient Topaz	7.5						1	7.5	7.5	7.5
Grand Total		622.5	249.8	222.2	156.2	105.2	84.4	72	1440.3	25.7	1623.7

News

Sites - Oliver's Castle

The reciprocal rights with the TVHGPGC to fly Oliver's Castle are temporarily suspended. This is due to a number of pilots not observing site rules, by either landing in crops or soaring the ridge, and not going XC. This is an XC only site and you should be pilot rated to fly there, with 100 hours on hang-gliders or 50 hours on paragliders. The TVHGPGC Sites Officer hopes this will be a temporary suspension until he has smoothed over the problems with the local farmer. Please do not fly here until further notice. I suspect it is not members of our club that brought about this situation, but if we abuse the rules we may lose the rights to fly it all together.

Stafford Evans, Sites Officer

The Mere Bash

This year the bash take place over the weekend of 7/8th September. For new members who haven't heard of it before, this is an annual party and flying weekend organized by the club for the its members, their families, pilots from other clubs, and anyone who is interested in taking up flying and joining the club. Unfortunately last year's bash had to be cancelled due to FMD so this year we've got even more partying to do to catch up! The event will be held in the field at the bottom of Mere Rifle Range. There will be live music from Skyline Drifters and Twisted (featuring our very own pop idol, Rich), bar (£1 a pint), BBQ, and bouncy castle. The entrance fee is only £8 for members and £10 for non-members. For further information, or to volunteer your services, contact Simon on 01935 425991.

Avon Paragliding Team win BCC Southern Semi-Finals

The semi-final for the British Club Challenge (Southern area) was held on 29-30th June. The clubs who qualified for the semi's were: Avon, Dunstable, Skysurfers, Thames Valley, Wessex, and Southern.

On the Saturday, meet director (Dave Gibbs) set an open distance XC task from the S.E Wales site Fochriw. Although it was briefly flyable before the launch window opened, conditions quickly conspired against us to produce a howling gale of 25-30 mph. After sitting on the hill for most of the day, the comp was moved the

next site downwind (Abertsswg). At 16:00hrs the wind had died down sufficiently to allow the launch window to be opened. Conditions did not look that good with 15+mph NW winds and broken cloud cover with high cirrus allowing only a dappling of sunlight. Despite this, the pilots that did get into the air were greeted by some classic wave lift which provided 2-300ft/min climbs way above cloud-base (2500-3000ft) above takeoff. The views were spectacular and groundspeeds downwind were around 60km.p.h.

Sunday was blown out which produced the following total distance results (These teams qualify for the final where they will be competing against the winners from the semi final of the Northern area):

- 1st place - Avon - 50.4km
- 2nd place - Wessex - 14.5km
- 3rd place - Thames Valley - 6.6km

Best flight of the comp went to Avon pilot Alan Davies who completed an amazing flight using only wave lift to fly 26.4Km landing south of Usk. Congratulations to Alan. The other Avon pilots in the team were: Martin Stanton, Merlin Crossingham, Peter Taylor, Richard Harding, and Stafford Evans.

Avon HG win Southern Semi Finals

Tony Stephens (SkySurfers) made Raglan for 35K and John Jones was just short of Usk at 26K. Thanks to some loan pilots from the Dover and Folkestone club and one from the SkySurfers we won the day with a grand total of 102Ks...Thanks Andy and Barry see you at the finals!

The day was marred by Rob Schwab failing to land on a rugby pitch, dodging some houses, going under a low tension cable and arresting on a corrugated garage. Fortunately after 1/2 a bottle of something and some pain killers he seems to be ok, shame about the glider. Happy Flying, **Neil**

Photo Competition 2002

Entries for this years photo competition may be uploaded on the smartgroup at:
<http://www.smartgroups.com/pictures/openalbum.cfm?GID=268562&AlbumID=2068889>. Please spend a bit of time making your photos "web friendly" - limit their size to 640x480 pixels max, and when uploading them Don't tick the "Scale all Pictures to fit Browser Window " box, it distorts them horribly... If you are not on the internet you can send your prints to the editor (with a SAE if you want them returning). The winner will be announced during the prize giving at the club christmas dinner.

Flyability Auction

We raised £400 from this, many thanks to those who participated, and especially to Robin, who (possibly at the expense of his own business) priced it all up. Big thanks to Steve Wells for donating the kit in the first place. Here's a copy of the text from flyability...

Hello Tony,

>A "retired" member of our club recently gave up his kit for free so we had
>an auction at one of our meetings to raise money for your very worthy
>cause.

Absolutely brilliant, this sort of initiative is the life blood of Flyability and enables us to continue our work. At the moment Flyability tandems are being done on almost a daily basis and we are just about to award six Flyability scholarships at £300 each.

>We now have a cheque for £400 for you,

*Wow, excellent!
Many thanks again to you and your members for supporting Flyability.*

Steve Varden, Flyability Chairman

Flyability is a registered charity (no. 1059197) in England and Wales.

Cross-Country Flying 101

by Will Gadd, with input from many top pilots who patiently and repeatedly answered the question, *"What's important for successful XC flying?"*

The first step toward successful cross-country flying is simply leaving the security of the local hill and venturing out into the wide world. It doesn't matter if a an XC flight ends one or 100 miles from the start point, but that it was attempted. For every flight that ends in a new LZ requires the same basic set of skills: An appreciation of local conditions, constant analysis of immediate air conditions in flight and, above all else, a safe place to land at the end of a flight.

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Flight Planning

The planning of an XC flight is often as or more important than the actual flight. For example, task committees at competitions set tasks every morning armed with the best information they can gather on wind speeds, possible cloud development, barometric pressure, satellite photos and every other scrap of information they can muster. As your own task committee, get as much information as possible before setting your task. There are also days that simply aren't good for going XC; rather than forcing a day to meet your goal, set your goal around the day. Assuming the day looks reasonable for XC flying (no thunderstorms forecast for noon or other large-scale problems), a good map of potential routes is essential, preferably one with airspace restrictions, mountain ranges, major roads, power-lines, railroads and other feature visible from the air.

Information from any local source about XC flying always has to be examined with an eye toward who is giving it, but I like to pump local HG and PG pilots about where they have been and what happened. For example, they may know that a local canyon turns into a death venturi about noon every day, as well as good thermals or areas where the power-lines make landing all but impossible. After establishing the general conditions for the day and area, the next step is to set some kind of goal and state it: "I'm going to fly from Aspen to Leadville." Even if you don't make your goal, you'll still learn something about XC flying, while you're guaranteed not to learn anything if you're boating around with 20 other pilots at the regular hill. XC flying in a group has advantages, but it's often difficult to get anyone to go with you. Break the herd mentality and go anyhow, but try to tell someone generally where you're going in case you don't show up later. In many states, a fishing license covers rescue costs for the purchaser; it's a small investment that can go a long way.

Because paragliders go upwind very poorly, upwind flying should be kept to a minimum. Understanding local wind conditions such as the difference between morning, afternoon and evening valley flows versus predominate winds aloft can be critical. Using Aspen as an example, the wind usually flows down the valleys in the mornings and evenings and up the valleys in the afternoons, often in direct opposition to the winds aloft. If you're flying XC in valley terrain, generally plan your flight to go with the wind aloft, but realize that the wind low in the valleys may be very different. The windward side of a high mountain ridge may well be the lee side of a ridge facing the same direction in the valley and vice versa; it usually only takes getting rotored hard once to appreciate this phenomena.

Say the wind is out of the West, and you're flying a valley that generally runs from south to north, with the top of it at the North end. It's evening, you're getting low and returning from a long XC, and you're coming down the valley from the north. A long spine sticks diagonally out into the valley from the East side, it's in the sun, and it's about a perfect glide from where you are now. You know the wind is from the west aloft, so you head for southwest side of the spine, arrive there very low and get hammered because the valley wind, with a strong valley flow, is pumping down the valley, essential from the North. You get rotoed into the trees, it gets dark, you have a lousy walk.

The Flight

Although it may seem morbid, I repeatedly analyze my current XC flying situation by asking myself, "What's the worst possible thing that could happen here?" This tool helps me choose what I want to do in light of what could kill me. If there is a set of high-tension wires between me and my next thermal source, then it's key to get enough altitude to clear them. Every paragliding flight has numerous situations that could be lethal, but I think being aware of the possible dangers is critical to avoiding them. For example, scratching valiantly all way down to an LZ is a good effort, but not if it puts the pilot too low to glide to a safe LZ (funny how trees tend to get bigger when you have to glider over them).

Understanding the dangers in every given situation also forces the pilot to have a plan. I like to think of XC flights as a series of small steps that connect individual points into a line ending at a goal. If you fly with a plan and an attitude of success, you won't get bogged down in indecision until you waffle your way to the ground. Decide what you think will work and then try to do it; if your plan doesn't work you'll at least learn something about what not to do instead of suddenly being on the deck for no good reason.

Once in flight, always have an LZ you can effectively use within an easy glide. While XC gods can get away with diving into areas without LZs, it's not a good plan to start with. Once you gain altitude and go on glide to your next thermal source (cloud, ridge, whatever), switch from your first LZ to a new one. This process will soon become instinctive, but until it does LZs define XC flying. Like driving an unfamiliar road at night, safe XC flying demands an extra safety margin for unexpected conditions.

An often-heard XC mantra goes, "When you're high, fly the sky, when you're low, fly the ground." Clouds are usually the best indicators of lift, so try to get to cloud-base and then work from cloud to cloud, paying

attention that the cloud you're shooting for isn't developing extremely rapidly or decaying. "Fly the sky" just means flying from one cloud or cloud street to another, based on how the clouds are developing or dissipating. It's hard to make the switch from looking at the ground for thermal sources to the sky for lift, but the paradigm shift is essential for long-distance flying.

While thermaling up under a cloud, remember to look at the cloud regularly; it's amazing how quickly you can be hundreds of feet below it one moment and totally whited out the next. Plan your last turns to take you to the edge of the cloud, and leave a safe margin so you don't get sucked into the cloud. If you do get sucked into a cloud, radical spiral diving is often the only effective method of descent in strong lift. As I approach the bottom of a cloud, I like to dump trim, step on the speed bar and, if necessary, pull big ears while blasting out from under it. If the lift is extremely strong, get a bearing on your compass before you hit the edge of the cloud so you can navigate out the side in a worst-case scenario.

While it's important to fly the sky, sooner or later you either end up low or flying on a day with no clouds. First, while you are high and on days with clouds, try to connect the cloud to the feature or area that's causing the cloud. Try to find patterns to thermal development for your area for particular types of days; on days with strong winds, thermals more often come off spines; low-wind days generally result in thermals from bowls, while areas where multiple ridges come together are often very reliable. While every pilot has theories on what works for thermals and what doesn't, it's essential to develop your own models and check their accuracy, because in flight you've only got yourself.

If you get low, pick a likely spot in the sun, one that meets all your mental requirements for what a likely spot is, and wait for a thermal. If you get to a suspected trigger point and find no thermals but zero sink, wait and things will probably get better. You wouldn't leave your local site if a thermal didn't come through in thirty seconds, so treat your likely thermal spot the same way. Ridge soaring is one good but often overlooked trick for staying in the game while flying XC; you can use valley wind flow on a ridge to soar until a thermal comes through, just be careful to establish wind direction early.

Watch the vegetation, dust and trees to determine local wind direction. For example, dry grass leans over in line with the wind, while leaves will flip upside down with the wind. In addition to establishing wind direction, these changes often indicate that thermals are lifting off near the disturbance. Dry, dark areas of ground produce better thermals than wet, lighter-colored areas, with moisture content more important than color. For example, dark, dry fields are usually very active thermal generators while green grass seldom is.

In general, height is safety in paragliding, both in case you put your wing through a manoeuvres clinic and also so you don't land early and watch all your friends fly over your head at cloud-base. Be patient with the day while flying XC, which means waiting for good conditions to develop, and also flexible, meaning that it's not only OK but often imperative to modify your goal as the day changes. Flats generally take more time than mountain ridges to start working, as do deep valleys or shady hillsides. If there's no development for the next ten miles of air, get under a cloud and just wait for the sky to improve. Likewise, unless you're at cloud-base, don't fly over shady areas. Thermals come from the sun, so no sun almost certainly means no thermals, no matter how much try.

Landing

Fight to the bitter end to stay up, but always accept your fate early enough that you can still make a good landing in a safe LZ. Allow more room for error than you would at your local LZ; think about how carefully you looked at your local LZ the first time you flew it, then think about having to establish the hazards and problems of a brand new LZ from the air. Look at the ground for strings of telephone poles (visualize the wires running between the poles both in straight lines and at right angles to unseen poles), ridges that could cause mechanical turbulence, drifting smoke, wind on lakes, dust blowing and any other clue you can find for wind direction and hazards in your LZ of the moment.

When choosing an LZ from the air, pick one shaped like a runway rather than one shaped like a square. All other things being equal, long and narrow is better than short and wide because you can line up on final and not worry about needing to turn near the ground if you get unexpected lift or sink at the last minute.

I like to land fast rather than boating around waiting for something bad to happen, especially in strong mid-day conditions. If I'm landing in a baking field, I usually pull in two lines of big ears and come in hot, only flaring as my feet almost hit the dirt. I've seen too many accidents where people come into an LZ and float aimlessly around, until they get hit with a strong thermal cycle or dust devil close to the ground. Although I'm not sure why, it seems like landing in a field often precipitates thermals out of that field. A wing in serious big ears coming in fast is extremely stable and more likely to simply slam through small, violent thermals than be slammed by them.

If you're committed to an LZ and you suddenly see powerlines in your path, it's better to crash downwind, stall your glider or B-line to the ground than to hit most
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powerlines in LZs. If the electricity doesn't kill you the fall out of the lines will.

Remember to radio your potential landing position while you still have a line of sight or communication with other pilots in the air. Your signal goes much farther from 500 feet above the ground than it will once you have landed.

Equipment for XC flying

A wing you feel totally comfortable on.

XC flying puts enough demands on a pilot's skill without having to learn how to fly a difficult wing. Competition wings do have good glide and speed, but it's more important to trust your equipment in the lee of a big ridge or while landing in a tree-encircled LZ than to glide a little farther.

A map of where you're going and where you could conceivably end up.

Most hunting stores sell these nifty clear map holders you can strap to your leg. I put my cheap compass in this clear case so I can navigate out of clouds should I get sucked into one.

A first aid kit fortified with industrial strength painkillers.

If you crash a long way from a road, your only chance may be to take good painkillers to help prevent shock and keep you clear-headed enough to talk to the rescue helicopter.

Radios, both yours and the chase crew's, should have adequate batteries.

I like to carry a spare clip of alkalines that I can plug into my radio in an emergency. Agree on a frequency and write that frequency down so that if the dial gets pumped you can remember which channel to use.

A GPS is a great tool for judging wind speed, landing position, air speed and distance. Two GPSs are especially handy when flying over featureless areas, one for you and one for the chase vehicle. "I'm over the brown field" generally won't get you retrieved, while Lat. and Long. co-ordinates will.

Cell phones are increasingly useful for retrieval, especially if you fly with a list of numbers for all your flying buddies with cell phones.

Water and food, especially water. You can walk two or three days without food, but you're dead without water.

Matches, a signal mirror and flag tape are also all useful.

Une Histoire du Bois



On the 15th day of our 3 week stay at Laragne we awoke to another seemingly perfect flying day.....

At 9.30am our small group of John Jones, his wife Barb from Chabre, Rod Smith and I, met in their rented apartment for our morning briefing. John felt he wanted the day off flying to go motor-biking with Barb. Rod was very keen to fly again today, and I decided to go up the mountain in spite of a gut feeling that I'd just like to go for a swim in the Gorge de la Meuge.

When we arrived, the wind on the Chabre was from the south at 10 kph. Rod and I rigged at the top, secured to the rock anchors and waited for the usual launch window of 1.30pm - 2.30pm, for the south take-off. The wind died, then started to blow from the north side, and the forty or so hang-pilots shuffled their feet and cursed. A further hour of waiting was required for a north take off because of its later heating up time.

Not being very patient, I noticed thermal cycles start to occur on the south side, and seeing a class II launch successfully I took off and climbed away. Now, whenever a pilot leaves the ground with lots of fellow pilots still grounded, he starts to feel that he's wearing his underpants over his trousers! I flew to Col St Jean 14kms to the west, and back again at base (9000' ASL), noting the lift was much gentler than the previous day. Then I flew south, thinking a trip to Montagne de Lure would make a nice change to my usual northerly route to Aspres. Losing 4000' on a 6km glide soon had me remembering who I was. At ridge height on Crete de Travers a decision to drop onto the tree covered north side of that ridge was made to give me access to the "Fish" bottom landing field of Chabre.

Sometimes, when you are really focused you can ignore trivial things - like an escape route towards the village of Barret le Bas. Being totally focused on the "Fish" landing field, I kept my course, toes pointed, best estimated glide speed, as I sped at tree top height down and down into the gorge. Halfway across the 6km glide I had sunk below the landing field and was now in the Gorge de la Meuge proper. There was some severe sink out there! About 300' above the river-bed a 1-up blob gave me hope, then despair as it left me. The cliffs, road and river-bed did not look too appealing, so I drifted over the cliffs, turned and flew directly at the steep forested slope opposite. Nice bit of speed, fly up the slope, hard flare!

Suspended 10' above the forest floor, I stood in the A frame, unclipped and dropped down, only to start rolling down the steep slope. Fifty metres of struggling through undergrowth got me to the river, where four men had been calling out to me. In perfect English they said they were the Dutch rescue services, and did I want any help. It turned out they were on holiday and were keen to keep in training! First I thought I should make a 'phone call to the Emergency services, just in case somebody 'phones in after seeing me go into the trees. Mobile 'phones had no signal in that spot so I got driven up to the "Fish" in an air conditioned car, with a microphone in front of me trying to make contact.

We had arrived at the "Fish" by the time I had informed the police that no aid was required for the tree-landing hang-glider pilot. At this point my Dutch chauffeur pointed out that the 'Pompiers' and 'Gendarmarie' were now behind us and wanted to pass. Zut Alors. More explaining but the serious look on their faces soon left, and good humour seemed to abound. (The previous day these services were required to recover the body of a young Dutch pilot who tragically died after crashing on the north side of the Chabre).

Returning to the river-bed the Dutch rescue services helped me extract my glider from inside the forests, a task made possible by felling several small trees with a junior hack-saw. After a 90 minute struggle we were back beside the river-bed, glider nicely rolled up, iced water and sandwiches being served to me by the wife of one of the rescuers. Thanking them for their help, I left to return to the campsite, turning down their offer of a lift. Arriving back at camp after 3 quick lifts I went up to the apartment to tell my tale to Rod, John and Barb. It was now about 6.00pm. Tea was poured. I saw their eyes dim when I started up " You'll never guess what happened to me.....", But they liked my story and insisted on coming with me to collect my glider so they could see the spot and take pictures.

Photo: John Jones

It was about 8.00pm when we got back to camp, and our thoughts had turned to refreshments. We bought pizzas from the van on the camp and sank a few beers, dining on the tables outside the batiment, along side the camp landing field. A lovely ending to a bit of a dodgy day. The mood was only tempered when we remembered the tragedy of the young Dutch pilot.

Finally, Rod or John pointed to the box from which I'd extracted my pizza, and casually asked "was there was any reason why I had chosen Pizza Forestierre?"

That was it I thought, better put pen to paper.

Kevin Winter (August 2000)

Sailplanes, give 'em a go.

Sailplanes aren't just flown by company MD's with more disposable income than the GDP of a small African country, or by green welly toting old 'past-it' fogies. I am neither (the green wellies are hidden in the shed). I learnt to fly gliders with the Air Cadets when I was 18, getting my instructors rating at 22. I love it. So why should you try gliding?

Gliders are fun. Wave soaring over ten thousand feet, gaining altitude at an alarming rate towards cu-nims, ridge soaring so close to the rocks you need a pickaxe! Their performance and speed, technical prowess and ability to glide at least 38:1 (mid range performance) can really blow your mind on a booming day half way through a 300km XC. Sharing a thermal during a comp with at least twenty other determined pilots. Screaming in at 120kts 50ft above the airfield whilst ejecting water ballast all over the spectators! Then throw in a few face tugging aerobatics and you're having the time of your life!



Flying a sailplane is more demanding than hang gliding or paragliding. There's more going on in the cockpit, more instruments and more control surfaces to deal with all at the same time. Launches are many and varied when you're a

nervous student. Winch and aerotow launches will add to the long list of new skills you'll learn. Landings are a bugger to master, picking a landing spot, flaring at the correct height and speed, looking out for others in the air and on the airfield all add to the tension and not only to the student! Stall and spin practice can make your hair stand on end, literally.... and you may need the barf bag, please just remember where it is! The opportunity to fly in conditions that would ground HG and PG's is one of the many advantages.

Most gliding clubs such as the Bristol and Gloucestershire Gliding Club, based at Nympsfield, offer trial lessons (Avon members get a special discount). There is usually a fixed price to get to your solo flight. Check out the BGGC website www.bggc.co.uk and the British Gliding Association www.gliding.co.uk for more information on the sport. Their monthly magazine is Sailplane and Gliding, which can be picked up in most newsagents.

Go on, you'll have a blast!

Penny Robinson penny@theairfield.com

Extending the comfort zone

Disclaimer: this article is no way is meant to encourage pilots to take risks that may endanger them. We all know our limits!

I believe that none of us are so good that we can stop learning so I have tried to maintain some kind of momentum in this area since getting my pg CP in Sept '96 by progressing through the pilot ranking system, flying cross country and learning to hang glide. All of these have involved pushing myself into doing things which a big part of me felt that I did not want to do, yet things that hundreds of pilots had done safely before me.

We all do this for fun but I soon began to look to others and saw that they were obviously having more fun than me! One such memory that sticks in my mind is being sat on the hill at Fforest Farm, Paramania, May 1998 in strong winds watching hang gliders speed by at a 6K cloud-base from a site much further upwind.

I also knew that I was never going to become a great pilot (realist, not defeatist) but saw no reason to let that get in the way of my "career" progression.

One of my biggest watersheds happened last week. Having done quite a few XCs on my paraglider and having gained a reasonable amount of airtime (60 hours) on my hang glider I knew that I had to cut that invisible cord that kept my aluminium tied to the hill. We were on Merthyr and straight after launch I was in a solid climb and I knew that this was it. Landing a hang-glider is much more of an event than landing a paraglider, you need a BIG field (well I do anyway) and you hope it doesn't slope down, difficult to judge from the air that one, but I had to overcome this "comfort zone" barrier.

I got to base at nearly 6K AMSL, turned directly downwind, went on a glide and for some reason as soon as I knew I couldn't make it back to Merthyr I felt no fear, just freedom. About the flight, apart from the outrageous advantage a hang glider has on speed, glide and in flight security, the feeling of being that high is just as mind blowing on a hg as it is on a pg. There is no fear, just a surreal overdose of pleasure.

As for landing out, the hardest bit was having too many fields to choose from. I promised myself that when I wrote this I wouldn't mention flying over John Jones (these class 2s will never catch on) and Kev Winter packing up both in the same field just east of Abergavenny but I just can't help myself. That flight personally ranks as No. 2 in my log- book, No. 1 being a paraglider flight cruising 2000' over Snowdon summit. This too involved a fair amount of "pushing that barrier out", i.e. a 1500' carry up Moel Siabod.

The point I'm trying to make that this is a great sport (hey, we all know that!) but the bigger our comfort zone is the more fun we have. I'm not advocating compromising safety, just chancing inconvenience e.g. had I gone down at Merthyr that would have been game over, or had I landed just downwind of Merthyr I would have had to leave my glider somewhere knowing that some low life may well come along and nick it. Retrieves can be a pain, but for me even a short XC flight will stick in my mind forever, a day spent flying near take off might not and that makes all the hassle worth it.

Tony Moore

Life at Ozone



The red glider above my head is kicked violently sideways. I forget to breath as I counter and haul it into the lift. "1,2,3 right now round we go." The earth starts to rotate and drops away at an alarming rate. The vario screams in my ear as the walls of the gully disappear below and I enter the blue sky.

The hill I had been idly sat on 10 minutes ago enjoying a chausson au pomme, drops away. I look to the North, there's the next ridge and yes there's a possible landing field if it doesn't work. Bang a tip deflates reminding me to keep in the core. Approaching the inversion it slows up for a turn or two before the vario screams again. Too soon though it's breaking apart and it's time to move. No clouds to show the way so let's head to that ridge. Big sink now, 10 down haven't experienced that for a while. Not sure we will make it, but there are landing possibilities so stick with the program. Over the village and up the slope and the reward is another climb, but not so strong this time. This one doesn't make it through the inversion so I head to the Peak Chamatte, again not sure if it will go, but there are big enough fields down there, just hope the valley breeze isn't too howling. I make sure my track goes over a small bump in the valley and the glider rocks over into another screamer. Now which way to go, weather looks crap to the North, loads of cloud, and this wind is getting up. OK keep heading on, but we'll keep the options open. Another climb and I reckon I can make the SE face at St Andre, "it must be working in this wind." "Yep here we go climbing hard again, wish I was on a glider my size this one's a bit big to pull round in these tight cores." Off along the ridge, but where to? I'm not getting enough height to feel comfortable about going into the big mountains in this wind, and anyway the weather over there is crap. Indecision takes over for while before I eventually decide to head back to St Andre, where I know there is a retrieve. Ground speed down to a few kms per hours at times but making

progress. Out over the valley I'm falling out of the sky in 12 down sink, if this keeps up I won't make the landing field! Finally I'm over the landing field and I touch down in a brisk valley breeze, relieved to be safely on the deck. Retrieve is with me before I have finished packing up, and it's off home we go.

That's a taste of the free time but what about the job? For those of you who don't know I was offered a job with Ozone who are based in the South of France last year, and after about 5 minutes of deliberation I accepted it. I moved out here last October and was followed out here by Charlie, my girlfriend, in January. So I guess you want to know what it's like working for a paragliding company, well that was Cathy's brief for this article. First off it's not all flying like the tale above, I guess I thought I would have done far more XC flying than I have done before I got here. Work is basically 9 to 5, 5 days a week, and we have been pretty busy since I got here. So most of my flying has been done at weekends. Of course it has been the winter, but now the season has got underway I'm often in the office when visitors are off doing nice flights, hey Tim? Tim Pentreath flew 57km for Col de Bleyne on a day I was sat in the office designing stickers. Having said that the boss is pretty amiable to flying then working other times, ie when it rains, so I do get out occasionally mid week. But it's not the amount of flying some people seem to think I get. Charlie, though, is getting more in and has got well over 50 hours already this year.

Working for Ozone is pretty interesting, it's great to see the sport from the other side. I have been lucky to see the Vibe go through much of its development and watched and flown some of the prototypes during the trimming stage. These days the gliders are very flyable straight off the computer. They are then trimmed to get them ready for certification. It's not a quick process though as the guys will try various ideas before getting to the design they start trimming. It usually takes about a year, but that includes lots of test flying, which is one of the reasons Rob and Bob have taken prototypes to India and Nepal in the past. It's also been a bit of an eye opener seeing the videos of the tests, now they are proper tucks that the guys pull in a test and the accelerated asymmetric is pretty spectacular. With CEN looming the future will be interesting.



I'm also lucky that when I do go flying I go flying with the some of the best flyers in the world. Whilst they may not out thermal me, or other club pilots, their canopy control is impressive, especially when something goes wrong. I've also been exposed to quite a lot of acro flying, with Dav Dagault helicoptering, tumbling and SATing at just about every opportunity. We recently flew Monaco with Mike Kung, an Ozone sponsored pilot famous for balloon drops and acro flying. Watching him and Dav put the new Mutant through it's paces from the best seat in the house, an Octane directly above them, was pretty impressive. The parachuting inspired routines that the Ozone Rengades put their gliders through have to be seen to be believed.

It's also interesting to see different people's ideas on flying and our gliders. Part of our job is monitoring the various mail lists. Some people, particularly Americans seem obsessed with glider performance figures. I read a posting from one guy who had written a program to model gliders to give performance figures, and based his purchase on the glider which came out best without even test flying it. Luckily I don't think this is an affliction of UK flyers particularly. As a company Ozone don't measure performance, of course we fly alongside other wings, and make sure we have similar performance, but the main push is to produce safe, sweet handling gliders.

When I came to Ozone I was a web programmer, but most of my work is now design orientated. My role includes maintaining and building on the website, but also designing the adverts for the glider and kite businesses as well as brochures, stickers, clothing etc. I've also been involved with Bob in creating the promo videos, which has been a great experience, even if it meant a few late nights in the basement of Maison Rouge in front of a computer. So I'm leaning lots of new tricks, which hopefully I will continue to use.

The office is pretty busy, with lots going on all the time. Rob Whittal and Dav Dagault work on glider design and do the test flying, Rob also does the kite design. Matt Taggart runs the kite side of the business and area which is growing, with our traction kites doing well and work progressing on surf and snow kites for the next season. Dav also looks after the distribution of the gliders to the various distributors throughout the world. Bob Drury and I look after PR and the marketing side of the company, with the input of the others from time to

time. Bob jokes that we are at school together as our desks adjoin each other. Mike Cavanagh oversees us all and looks after the company finances. When all six of us are in, it can get pretty manic, with ideas flying round the room.

As well as the office in France there is a factory in Vietnam, run by David Pilkington, who once upon a time was an Avon member, and was often seen flying his Trekking Miura at Westbury. The factory makes all our gliders and kites, and is being kept very busy at the moment what with the new Vibe and the new kites. Rob has been out there twice recently to give David a hand and work on new prototypes.

As for life here in France, we have an apartment in the village of Cipieres which is in the mountains inland from the coast about half an hours drive from the office. Bob and Claire Drury also live in the village with their two children so we spend quite a lot of time with them. The villagers are pretty friendly and will often chat in the bar, although our bad French is a bit of a barrier. It's a spectacular place to live with the Chieron mountain



looming over the valley and the spectacular Gorge du Loup, heading out to the coast. We are surrounded with great walking and mountain biking countryside, and there is lots of good climbing around, not that we have done much. The drive to work is down windy mountain roads in full rally mode meaning you get there with a smile on the your face, even though I drive a Panda Dance (Rallye). Mind you we're getting through tyres and brake pads a bit quickly. You have to be on your guard driving after dark as you often

come round a bend to come face to face with a deer or a wild boar, there has even been a wolf seen in a garden in the nearby town of Vence. The downside is there isn't much nightlife, we have to go to Antibes or Nice for any action, which are both about an hour away. It's also been a bit weird not being in a flying club, the local flyers are friendly but is not really the Avon club. We get a fair few visiting British pilots though, but I miss sitting in the pub with mates after a good days flying, telling tales over a pint or two.

If anyone fancies visiting the area, we can give advice and maybe a floor to stay on, although there are B&B options in the area. I can be contacted at Marcus@skytribe.co.uk or you can phone us on +33 493 599 381.

See ya all, **Marcus**

Pilot Profile



Colin Lark

Full name?

Colin Lark (Larky)

Home?

Dursley

Occupation?

Hang Glider Manufacturer

Aircraft flown?

Too many hang gliders to list but currently, Discoveries, Doodlebugs, Micro-lights, Sail Planes and any thing else I can get my hands on.

How long have you been flying?

Learnt to fly Hang Gliders in 1977

Rating?

Air Head, Bivverak

Where do you usually fly?

All over the place, in May I was bivvy flying the Doodlebug around Scotland, our equipment ended being trashed by a herd of bullocks near the Isle of Mull. In June Terry Treetops and I flew in the Round Britain Race, we got thrashed in the Scottish mountains when the wind picked up to 40mph and July a Bivvy trip in a Micro-light around France, we flew 1800 miles in 10 days, we crossed the English channel below 2000 feet due to low cloud, my passenger did not speak a word during the crossing, neither did I.

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What was your best flight?

That's a hard one to answer, a whole string of them come together in my mind, how can you Choose? Scottish wave at over 10 grand, and above the clouds with a view of both the East and West coast, or flying for 6 hours around the French Alps hopping from peak to peak, flying 100 miles plus, first XC, I'm pleased to say that I'm still getting my best flight ever experiences.

What was your worst flight?

The very first, I was scarred s---less but could not wait to walk back to the top and do it again.

What was your luckiest escape?

There's loads of lucky escapes, here's a few but please don't be put off. Not being axed to death by the mad axe man of Crickhowell after doing a perfect landing in the top of his tree. Being cut away from a balloon drop that all went wrong. Surviving after not attaching myself to the wing. Looking back on some of the narrow escapes it's not so surprising, I have been able to fly almost any day I like due to the fact that flying is my living, add in 10 years of competition flying and your bound to experience some very lucky escapes.

Who has most influenced you in the sport?

All those pilots that have a positive attitude for flying, the ones looking for new horizons and new challenges, my first hang gliding instructor (Gerry Breen) showed just how much was possible, his ability and confidence has had an un-dieing influence on me.

What would be your best advice for a new pilot?

Make sure that the first wing you buy is one of mine, other-wise a wing that has good low flying speed capabilities. Learn to fly it until it feels like an extension of your arms, once you have

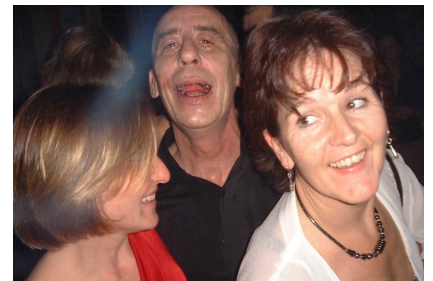
mastered it and know it in all conditions you will then have the confidence and skills required to safely fly almost any wing. Don't get suckered into up grading your equipment until you know your own it inside out.

What would be the perfect end to a perfect flying day?

Sharing it with the ones I love, along with good food, champagne and music.

What do you do if its not flyable?

Hang around shop doorways begging...and don't forget your rehearsals for the remake of Michael Jackson's "Thriller". Ed.



What's your favourite pilot's picnic?

Having a bag of Murray Mints surrounded by female pilots.

Which famous person in history would you chosen to have been?

The person who invented Murray Mints, what a silly question.

Who/what makes you laugh?

Any one with a sense of humour, bank manager, weatherman, or someone going through a couple of up rights (as long as they don't hurt themselves of course).

What's your greatest fear?

Losing my Murray Mints before take off.

What's your biggest regret?

Never having a spare bag of Murray Mints.

What's your motto? You can't take it with you when you go.

Flying Diary

This is a selection of the most interesting and amusing diary entries over the last four months.

4-May-2002 - Putsborough, North Devon

NNE 10-15mph

Three wonderful hours coastal soaring in perfect conditions above this stunning 2km long headland. Sunshine, a steady breeze, family and friends on the beach below, and later on thermals topping out at 2000' asl - what more could anyone want!

Tim Pentreath

8-May-2002 - Robin's Site "X"

NNE-ESE 12-18

After a painful journey arrived to find it blown out but it later eased so Garry & myself managed many flights and 1 hour airtime each on our new toy, both getting signed off for our dual rating. Result.

Tony Moore

11-May-2002 - Gourdon, France

Not a lot of wind.

10 minutes at base then we took off for up to an hours playing in the thermals climbing up and into the white room. Clouds too low for XC but bloody good fun...

Marcus King

11-May-2002 - Selsley

N 10-15mph

A good day on selsley for change, a bit blowy but managed to get off and went straight up to base, landed 1:45 hr later 34km from take off, which was nice!

Wayne

11-May-2002 - Tremane (Fforest Farm)

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NW Varied between 18-20 and 0-5 mph.

Last task of the Bleriot cup, A race to Castle meadows at Abergavenny. Blown out at first then dropped to very light as sea breeze approached(?). All took off and most drifted with sea breeze till a glide to Talgath was on, then finished with milk run. BRILL

Alex Coltman

12-May-2002 - Gourdon, France

Not a lot of wind.

Base was at or below TO height, we did see whole of the ridge in a hole. All took off quickly. Lost Bob D in cloud so headed out front, worked down to Kennedy where I climbed back to base. Tim P last seen heading SW, others scattered round valley.

Marcus King

13-May-2002 - Col de Bleine

SE light, thermic

Big Monday - after two days of low cloud-base today was the day...! Cloud-base @ 9,200 asl, and a 57km flight over some of the most spectacular scenery I've ever flown over (*photos and a story on www.fly.to/avonpax. Ed*).

Tim Pentreath

17-May-2002 - Col de Bleyne

ESE Bit Strong

C off first quickly got high, I followed, hard to get away, wind along ridge. Finally got enough to drop onto ridge behind. Made it to St Andre with picnic on Teillon on way. 14up max 12 down max, no clouds, not huge height, so pretty hard work but fun

Marcus King

19-May-2002 - Parlick, Lancashire

SSW 15

A good site with enormous potential if you're ever in the area. Easy flying, sharing airspace with sailplanes. Light rain stopped play.

Alec Linton

27-May-2002 - Draycott Sleights

WSW, 12+, affected by Sea Breeze With Alex, trying to use a strange and sometimes concerning sky. Couldn't stick with anything over the back so, after an hour or so, tried along the ridge towards Wells. Unfortunately neither of us could stay with the thermal we found so didn't make Wells

Rich Harding

31-May-2002 - Grand Bornand, France

Thermic

Practice Day, British Open. Bob D on Tandem with Clare soon off. As soon as I got high I followed to Aravis. Climbed spur and met up at top. Crossed round La Tournette into Annecy valley, where crowded and no sun. Landed at Planfait.

Marcus King

1-June-2002 - Grand Bornand, France

Thermic

1st Task Open, TO a bit late to avoid crowds. Got high flew to Aravis arrived at base. Flew along range avoiding cloud to TP. Got to base again just before Tournette, flew over summit, past preDents and Dents in rotary air. Landed Parmelan in head wind.

Marcus King

1-June-2002 - Mere (RR)

ESE/SE mod

Turned up at 3'ish to find people leaving - off to the east and rough. Waited for an hour then took off and enjoyed an hour's flying in smooth conditions. 600' max ato. Thought it'd be fun to fly the Union Jack from my glider - has anyone got a photo?

Tim Pentreath

8-June-2002 - Grand Bornand, France

Who cares

Flew Bob's GT down, from a cloud covered launch with the rest of the Open. Tried pulling asymmetric tucks on way down. Then watched various acro moves from others, such as Russel with a great SAT nearly to the deck.

Marcus King

12-June-2002 - Weston Super Mare

WNW

Arrived at draycott to find it blown out so tried the dunes at Weston S Mare - Got there at 2.00 and played around there in perfect conditions until 9.00 when the wind went a bit too southerly. Managed to get about 5 hrs airtime. No other gliders.

Will Price

15-June-2002 - West Bay

SW 15 - 18 mph

Dave McCarthy drove 3hrs to meet me for some coastal flying. Waited 3hrs for the wind to drop and started flying just before it started to rain. 30 Mins later or so we landed on the beach completely sodden, never have I got a canopy so wet. Dohhhh!!!

Simon

19-June-2002 - Merthyr

wsw 8-30 mph (2 hours after Mike took off)

Serious thermals on the hill, climbed up to 4k3 ATO in about 10 minutes. John J, Kev W, Nev A and myself all got away, Nev did best with about 115K. I was well pleased with 30.2k as a first HG XC. (made even better by flying over John and Kev packing up)

Tony Moore

19-June-2002 - merthyr

14/30/16/10mph

First off, climb to base with Mike A on Swing but hit Ebbw Vale after massive full-bar collapse trying to catch him. Lift back and same flight again! Another lift back, same again but missed Ebbw Vale by 500' and landed at Pandy. 14k, 13k and 32k!

Tim crow

19-June-2002 - Merthyr

Common

WSW 10-18 k

Great day. Punchy small thermals 15 sec integ 5.9m/s. V Cold. Three and a bit took me to the cemetery

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at Abergavenny, but I decided the Blorengesh Bash field would tempt fate less. 23 k.Swing Astral.

Mike Andrews

19-June-2002 - site - XX (Robin's new site)

WSW

First XC!! 4.5km. Fun days flying with Rich and Alex. Should have been at Merthyr looking at other entries here!

Will Price

19-June-2002 - somewhere in Wales.....

W

I had a very bad case of catchathermalitus, so took a day off work to recover. Felt much better once at cloud base. About 16k, very pleasurable flight. Looks good tomorrow, I do hope I am better by then...Cough cough. .

Merlin

20-June-2002 - Frocester

Light W

Very light on take off but after a few flights down got a nice climb out to 4800ft and had an enjoyable hr or so.Landed by Birdlip,about 15km i think(gps went flat).

Wayne

20-June-2002 - Long Mynd

5mph w going sw

0-5mph at midday, launched straight into a solid meaty thermal so cranked it up to base at 5500' and then blundered around/under/in large dark raggedy Cu's before managing to hit the ground N of Telford for 41km.

Tim crow

20-June-2002 - Fochriw

10-18 WNW

Arrived 15.30 as everybody left. Wind soon dropped. After 45 mins gentle soaring got to cb at 4700 and followed sea breeze convergence well S of Blorengesh and then ENE to LLangarron 47.5 km, (a pb) landed at 18.30. Beautiful flight and lots to learn.

Mike AndrewsI

23-June-2002 - Hunstanton, Norfolk coast

WNW 10 - 15

couple of hours coastal soaring on Hunstanton cliff. Very relaxing flying in the gentle sea breeze.

Will Price

24-June-2002 - Frocester

Westish

Nev Almond flew to Ipswich...

approx 145 miles

Tony Moore

24-June-2002 - Oliver's Castle 10-15, W

Wow! Left O with Alex after 10mins and had most enjoyable climb together over Marlborough road, over Milk, A landed at Marl and spotted thermal 4 me, over M4, tour of S Oxon/Berks, thought 2 land at Henley regatta, made High Wycombe. 85km. Double UK best!

Rich Harding

24-June-2002 - Westbury

W-WNW

I planned to go east around the range, but the drift was more northerly than I expected - over Hungerford, then north of Reading. I eventually flew to the edge of my map nr Marlow, and decided to be on the safe side, airspace-wise, and land. 98.6k

John Jones

24-June-2002 - Whitesheet

NW 8 - 12 mph at TO, but

strangely W at altitude

Sailplane joined me at 1200ft ato, we helped each other for 20 mins.Went our seperate ways at base,3800ft.Headed off 2

Romsey,struggled in 100ft/min climbs.It improved at Romsey but had difficult task of getting round Soton ATC.Landed NE Winchester.50.8KM

Tony Stephens

27-June-2002 - Gioia, Italy

Thermic

Went to Gioia, E of Rome with Ozone. Lovely area with some great potential for flying, looks like Wales/Lakes with grassy mountains. First flight of the day had some lurvely thermalling to 2000' or so.

Marcus King

28-June-2002 - Combe Gibbet

NNW light/mod

Had been planning this day off work since Monday! Sky looked peachy when Martin & I arrived but clouded over before too long. Thought I'd blown it when I didn't get up in the thermal that R & A left in, but later M, myself and two others made to the coast! 73km.

Tim Pentreath

28-June-2002 - Selsley

NNW 10-12mph

Launched early before it picked up, but still rough. Took the first available climb and cloud hopped to Lyneham but unable to cross-wind round airspace so decked at 30km.

Tim Crow

28-June-2002 - Westbury

Perfect NNW

One flight, one thermal, big as September. Highest I've ever been, not very challenging, just steadily upwards for 20 minutes. Then 7 down for 1800ft. Surprised by how hills flatten out from a long way up.

Simon

29-June-2002 - Merthyr

WNW ?

BCC. A gray overcast day. Cloudbase was ~2000' ato, but lack of sunshine meant staying with any cloud you reached to get a decent distance. I made Usk Gliding club and John Jones just short of Usk. Avon HG 1st with 102K Joint Services second and Kernow 3rd.

Neil

8-July-2002 - Merthyr

WSW

Nova August 2002

After delayed start at JSHPC, comp went to Merthyr. Open XC Gary Wrydnham made 150k, next best was Colin Hale with 35K.

Neil Atkinson

9-July-2002 - Merthyr again!

W

Rain on Merthyr how unusual.

After wet start. Air was very eneregetic with lots of cunims around. So task was two ridge runs to south end of ridge just short of Aerial. Few managed some turnpoints on 1st run, but rain stopped play. Second run went ok.

Neil Atkinson

10-July-2002 - Merthyr again and again...

WSW

Race to goal at hereford. Lots of CuNimbs around but air was improving. Unfortunately Neil Wreford had an accident just as I finally found the motivation to fly. Despite being heli'd off, turned out he was uninjured...Just looking for a new glider...

Neil Atkinson

11-July-2002 - Bloody Merthyr

W

Race to goal at Hereford. Some good air and cloud streets. Gary won, Colin was third best distance. I blew it totally by flying out of the back end of the first cloud street and not being able to get back or reach anything else active...dooh!

Neil Atkinson

11-July-2002 - Ringstead

sw 15-25

Blue out to sea, cunims forming inland, nude sunbathers on the beach together with 1200' height gains in ridge lift gave a spectacular couple of hours flying

Tony Moore

13-July-2002 - combe gibbet NNW 0-15

a really nice 18k flight after a dead hour on the hill. Loads of gliders

got away but I couldn't catch that 2nd thermal. Day ruined when Cathy piled in after a frontal deflation near the ground, dislocating her shoulder and breaking her collar bone.

Tony Moore

14-July-2002 - Talybont

Was there any? SW-W-NW light... The small SW ridge at the top of the path wasn't working so Rich flew and I walked round to the big SW facing ridge behind - we were eventually rewarded with separate climbs and simply amazing views from base. I made it back to the campsite (22km).

Tim Pentreath

15-July-2002 - Westbury

N 5-10

scratchy at first but made 2k2 ato at 12:00pm where it must have been pretty close to the inversion as it got a tad rough. Landed as Cathy needed to see the bone doctor and being the considerate chap I am I thought I'd give her a lift.

Tony Moore

20-July-2002 - Bell

WNW-NW 10-25+

while I was rigging my HG a few brave PGs +1HG gale hung in thermals and disappeared over the back. By the time I got in the air the wind began to pick up. It was a bit rough but I eventually got close to base at 3500 amsl and made 8.5k.. at least I tried.

Tony Moore

21-July-2002 - Bossington

W 25mph - silky smooth

Beautiful smooth soaring all to ourselves. Simply can't understand why the air wasn't full of paragliders. :) I must have been 1500' above the beach.

Hamish Atkinson

26-July-2002 - Avila, near Piedrahita, Spain

6mph, variable

Another 162km out & return today. My arms are withering. It was beautiful gliding back to our airstrip at 8:30 with the mountains lit in orange. I love my carbon fibre beast!

Nev Almond

27-July-2002 - Cornizzolo, Italy

Thermic ish
Went to the PWC in Cornizzolo, near Como in Italy. Sat was overcast so flying was slow, managed to maintain halfway down hill for a while before giving in. Renegades did Acro show, stacking gliders and base jump from tandem.

Marcus King

28-July-2002 - (home) Westbury

N/NW sea breeze
3 of us had fantastic fun in smooth air made even more interesting by a yellow two seater plane flying underneath me !!!! more in next Nova.

Brent Pullen

4-August-2002 - Castejon de Sos, Spain

Thermic
Less wind than previous day, base not high enough for big distance so stayed in valley. Excellent flying with vultures, see smartgroup for more. Beautiful place, excellent flying, great place, and flying with vultures excellent...

Marcus King

4-August-2002 - Westbury

0-10 NW
Great flying after 17:30 when the sun came out from behind the huge dead cloud. 1000'+ at times from factory thermals. You with the silver helmet please look where you are going, not at the your PG!

Chris Jones

6-August-2002 - Selsley

N light
A very nice flight, took off at 12:45 and got a nice climb to 2000ft

Nova August 2002

ato. Landed 2hrs later at 22km.

Wayne

6-August-2002 - Westbury

On the hill (who's counting!)
Nice social day on the hill - I've had too much XC flying in the last 14 weeks (over 90 hours). Boated around between 3 & 4k ASL for a few hours, overflying Trowbridge, Melksham, and (I think) Westbury on Trym.

Nev Almond

18-August-2002 - Kimmeridge, Dorset

SW light/mod
First time back to this site for 10 years - had an hour's gentle flying before it clagged in.

Tim Pentreath

18-August-2002 - Laragne - France

SW Thermic
The best flight of my PG career, 110ish km through the most amazing terrain, the first 60 were pretty normal, but then we went into sensory overload in the Ecrins, soared Le Barre Ecrins (4000+m) at 6 in the evening to get home... I may come down soon.

Marcus King

18-August-2002 - Mere, Cowards Bowl

SW light/mod
Just had to check out Mere on our (Mark Cousins & I) way back from Kimmeridge... Ended up having about an hour's very enjoyable evening flying. A pint at the Inn in Freshford finished off a most enjoyable day!

Tim Pentreath

18-August-2002 - Westbury

W-NW 5-10
Sea breeze with clouds still from the SW. Good fun for an hour or so, some blobs to 150-200'. I was amazed that it kept us up.

Chris Jones

20-August-2002 - Westbury

NW - NNW - 5-18

Cleared up around lunch time. Nev flew to the M4 and back (37 miles!), the only HG flying. On the hill it was hard to get high for PGs until around tea time. By supper time it was mostly blown out for PG.

Chris Jones

21-August-2002 - Westbury

NW-N Light/Mod
Turned up at 6pm, in the air 10 minutes later! Lovely warm evening flying for an hour or so. Managed 700' ato in gentle thermals. It was great not needing a flying suit - and that's not just because Mark Cousins was so rude about it on Sunday :-)

Tim Pentreath

22-August-2002 - Leckhampton

NNW 0-10mph
Took first thermal straight after t/o and landed after some riser stretching thermals, 4 hrs and 70km later on Combe Gibbet for a lift back. Thanks Nico.

Tim Crow

24-August-2002 - Blorenges

NW
Open dist task set for BCC PG (&HG). Simon & Martin were first away from the hill but couldn't get further than 4.5km. Later on, Richard & I made desperate glides to the same dist. Alan did the best with 6.8km. Furthest dist of the day was only 8.7km.

Stephen Chiles

25-August-2002 - Pandy

NE
2nd task BCC PG final - open dist. Alan made it to the Blorenges. After a low save behind TO Simon made the campsite. I only managed 6km and the increasing wind left Martin & Richard stuck on the hill. Avon PG - 4th Place (but very few points in it!).

Stephen Chiles

31-August-2002 - Combe Gibbet

NNW gusting quite strongly/Swing
Astral
Managed 2 XCs thanx to retrieve.
First 7.2 only but then to East of
Winchester for 36.3. I found the lift
was weak and the strong wind
made for early commitment both
times. Others made it to the coast.
Note that Combe is now closed for
Pheasant peasants
Mike Andrews

31-August-2002 - Westbury
NW 10ish
XC Westbury to the edge of B'mth
CTR Mega, hangies and danglies
had a good time at base

Sky God Al

31-August-2002 - Westbury
NNW
Left the hill later than I thought,(it
turned out my watch had stopped),
eventually got close enough for
comfort to Bournemouth CTR, and
then landed in a field big enough
to have taken Concorde - so big, I
nearly got lost in the middle of it.
John Jones

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If you are looking to buy or sell a used glider or equipment then check out the SkyAds link on the club website www.avonhgpg.co.uk. To advertise in Nova club members should phone Cathy on 01985 214 579 or email nova@avonhgpg.co.uk

**Do you want to be more in touch with what's happening in the club?
Are you on the internet?
If so, then join the avonhgpg smartgroup**

Members that are connected to the internet are reminded that the club has its own smartgroup which enables members to communicate with each other.

To register at www.smartgroups.com/groups/avonhgpg

Dear Nova.....

THANKS

Many of you will have heard of the nasty accident I had at Wroughton airfield at the end of May. I managed to "high side" a mini motorbike breaking my left clavicle (collar bone to you mate). This was caused by Robin, Riz and Caf cutting me up as I late braked for a sharp bend. Luckily Robin and Riz have been on a 3 day first aid course and immediately carried on racing round the track. However, realizing I was injured they quickly took me to the pub, fed me steak and kidney pie with chips and plenty of beer. This is essential in case one needs medical treatment I'm told.

However when I went white and wobbly, Robin took charge of the situation and rushed me off to hospital. This coincided with the pub closing, of course. After we had dropped every one off at home, it was off to the A&E dept where a 14 year old doctor put my arm in a sling. This character forming approach to first aid certainly stopped me going into shock and so far no flash backs.

So, no flying for me for a few weeks, although Riz did offer to rig my paraglider and pull the "A" risers to launch me off. and Robin's idea to extend the left brake handle to my big toe so that I wouldn't have to go round in right hand circles was a kindness that you only get from truly good mates.

The weather gods have been kind and made sure that the bastards couldn't go flying whilst I recover. Another thing to be thankful for eh?

Howard Woodward

SOLSBURY HILL

Driving home the wind was SW so I thought I'd go climbing up on Solsbury Hill. From where I could see the city lights. The wind was blowing, and as usual when paragliding time stood still.

A Buzzard flew out of the night and thermaled away he was something to observe.

Someone came in close, I heard a voice so we had a chat about training and I gave him one of Robin's business cards.

I popped the wing up standing stretching every nerve, this prat was still chatting I had to listen had no choice.

I did not believe the information he said he'd rather go hang-gliding,

I just had to trust imagination but I couldn't believe it!

My heart was going boom boom boom as a big fat thermal came through and

"Son," he said, "Grab your things, I've come to take you home."

To keepin' silence I resigned listening to my vario.

My friends would think I was a nut flying paragliders.

But when you're a Skygod even turning water into wine is possible.

Still concentrate on the task in hand or open doors would soon be shut.

So I went from base to base, as tho' my kite was in a rut.

'Till I thought of what I'd say, in NOVA for this epic flight.

And which connection I should cut from my prose.

I was feeling part of the scenery I walked right out of the machinery on a half-day great choice.

My heart going boom boom boom and another monster thermal came through

"Hey," he said, "grab your things, I've come to take you home."

Then illusion spins her net and I fly beneath a crappy cloud, I'm never where I want to be.

Still flying free is fab and liberty she pirouette.

When I think that I am free watched by empty silhouettes of hang-gliders below, who close their eyes but still can see, no one taught them etiquette. I will show another me and not swear at them today.

Today I don't need a reserve chute, and when I land I'll tell them what the smile on my face meant.

My heart going boom boom boom

"Hey," I said, "You can keep my things, they've come to take me home."

My retrieve's here.

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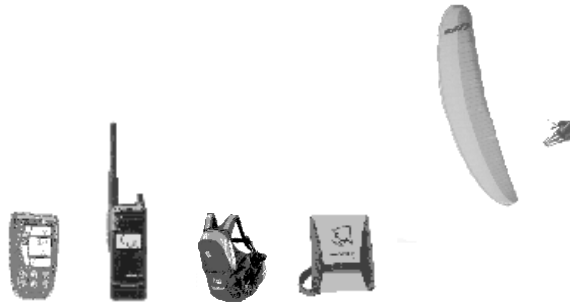
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The Shop is being stocked up for the new season and we would remind all members that we can quickly procure virtually anything that you could possibly need for hang gliding and/or paragliding.



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Caption Competition



It was only five hours later that Rich realised that the TV crew had actually slipped into a coma three minutes into his speech

There was a very good response to the last competition with some excellent captions. First prize goes to Penny Robinson, and had there been a second prize, she would have won that too. Thank you to everyone who took part. Clever, witty or daft captions the Summer Nova Caption Competition should be sent in by the end of September. Entries will be judged by the Committee and will be published in the next issue. The winner will receive a bottle of bubbly kindly donated by Par-Avion.

Send your entries to: Caption Competition, Nova Magazine, 112 Prestbury Drive, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 9LE. email: nova@avonhpgg.co.uk.

Rich had yet to notice that Sooty and Sweep had long since headed for the bar... (LISA PENTREATH)

"You see, ...all I have to do is pull these strings to open my suit and 'WHAM!'...DIY thermals!" (Rich demonstrating the benefits of eating 6 tins of beans before going XC) (LISA PENTREATH)

"... and if you're thinking, "If the pilot had been using the Constant Aspect Approach method, he wouldn't have been trashed on landing." you'd be quite right. (RICHARD HELLEN)

Interviewer from Style Police show: "What on earth possessed you to wear a pink hat with a red and blue suit?" (HAMISH ATKINSON)

So Mr Schumacher, can you comment on the rumoured 15 million pound deal with airtopia.com ? (NIGEL DOE)

*"Tonight Jeremy I'm going to be that geezer from Marrillion, and if you don't ***** like it then **** off" (MARCUS KING)*

"Pregnant man in TV shocker!" (RICH HARDING)

... and I hung on to the tail of the Cessna until it landed. (ANDREW LARKINS)

This was the runner up:

Rich: "Bla bla FMD bla bla crash bla bla".

Interviewer: "If I shove this in his gob he might shut up!"

Cameraman: "If I shove this up his arse...."

(PENNY ROBINSON)



This months photo was taken by Angie at Mere

NOVA The Newsletter of the Avon Hangliding and Paragliding Club – www.avonhgpg.co.uk

If Undelivered please return to: The Membership Secretary, Avon HG&PG Club, c/o 22 New Road, Durrington, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 8EL