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Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club Newsletter

March 1996



Editors Bit

Hi there, this issue seems to be following fairly quickly after the last one, but I thought I would try and get one out to cover all the info that people have been sending me. The competition season is fast approaching, the first being the novice comp this weekend against the Wessex club. I'm sure it will be great fun so if you are interested give Dave Garbe a call and tell him your interested. If you are more experienced and want to get involved in the club competition scene give Simon Kerr or Neil Atkinson a call, or even better fill out the

form in this mag. Don't forget, we have the dubious honour of having to defend the Airwave Club Championship this year. As well as the club competitions various members will be flying in other comps such as the British Paragliding Cup and Airwave European Challenge, so give Simon or Neil a call if you are interested and I'm sure they will try and help you get in touch with others who are going. If anyone is going abroad and want to share transport drop me a line and I'll put something in **nova**.

Still not much in the way of articles coming in remember it's your mag and without your contributions it won't be that interesting, lots of people have commented how they enjoy reading about other members exploits. Well due to the lack of articles, I've been forced to write one myself, and if I don't get any soon I'll be forced to write another one. **YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!**

Finally a plea to anyone who has World Wide Web pages, I have written a few simple web pages giving information about the Club and NOVA, and I'm looking for some one to put them on their server. Can anyone help if so give me a call.

Anyway, safe flying and remember fly high, stay high, fly far. See you on the hill. ✍️

Marcus

PS. There has been a few difficulties with my email address, if anyone experiences any difficulties you could try the address marcus@avon-plc.demon.co.uk

Enclosed with this mag is your membership renewal form. Please fill it in and send it back with your cheque to Fiona as soon as possible, or you will be at the mercy of Fiona's wrath.

Front Cover Pic: Is from the WWW Paragliding Server, Pilot Kinsley Wong, Glider Nova Xenon.

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Le Hot Gossip

Fiona is following Judy Leden's footsteps, who was recently interviewed by HELLO magazine, by appearing in the April issue of Family Circle, talking about being 'The Mother who enjoys the "dangerous sport" of paragliding.' Fiona is also waiting to film some footage with ITV, the TV channel as opposed to the paraglider manufacturer.

Dave Draper will be talking at the March meeting to be held on March 6th. He should be talking about flying cross country from Avon sites. So be there or be a triangle, or do one, in which case I guess you won't need any of Dave's amassed knowledge.

Novice Comp March 1 and 2, see LAT section for more details.

New flying mag on the newsstands, for those of you that haven't heard there is now a new magazine for freeflying on the newsstands. Sky Sports is a monthly publication and is available from WH Smiths and other newsagents. Looks pretty good at first viewing.

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

**Marcus King
First Floor Flat
21 St James Square
Bath BA1 2TS**
or Email to marcus@avon-rubber.co.uk

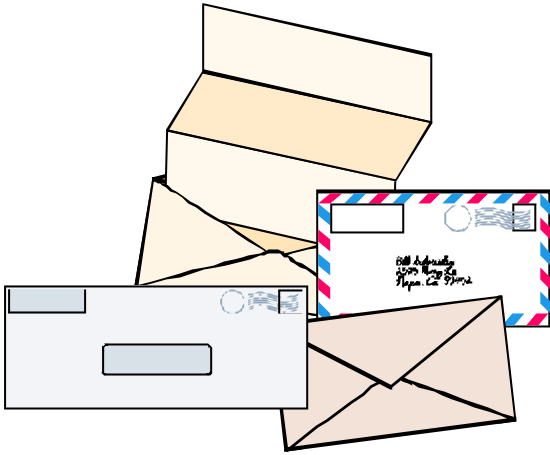
Please get articles for the next issue to me by Feb 20th 1996

Mobile Phones

There has been **little** response to my idea of including a list of people willing to publish their mobile phone numbers so that people can contact them on the hill so here it is again. I want to print mobile phone numbers for all those members who have them and are willing for other members to try phoning them on those flyable days. If you want or should I say are willing to have your number published then let me know. Hopefully this will be a further aid to new pilots who want to know where the experienced pilots, and it will help me when I lose the scrap of paper I wrote somebody's mobile number on. To get the ball rolling here's the list as it stands.

Pete Corcoran	0374 742830
Marcus King (pg)	0585 813736

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Letters To NOVA

Dear Editor

Thanks for publishing my letter in **nova**, concerning novice flying. I was encouraged by the LAT meeting held on Feb 1st, led by Dave Garbe. It was good to hear from other flyers with similar experience and to

take telephone numbers etc.

Three of us met at Westbury 2 days later - only one got airborne! Nevertheless, it showed we were willing to cooperate and help each other. We agreed that further meetings should occur soon. So for all you low airtimers out there, look out for the next date and come and join us.

Yours

Alan Gibson

Your wishes are granted. Dave Garbe and Rob Craine have organised a whole host of events for the LATs check out the LAT news for details.

Burning Off the Winter Blues in Cham.

You know what it's like in the winter, continuous gales, gales, rain and more gales, or so it seems. After a few weeks of this and the realisation I had some spare time in January, I thought to myself time to get away from Britain for a week, so I booked up with Paul Williams of Para Venture for a week in Chamonix in January. While it isn't usually thermic at that time of the year the flying can be fun, and anyway I couldn't afford the time or money to go to South Africa.

During the days leading up to my departure the weather charts of Europe didn't seem to promising, and I was resigning myself to the fact that I would probably not get much flying done, still I would get the chance to have a go at snow boarding. So on a blustery damp January Morning I headed over to Bristol Airport for the flight to Geneva after the usual tedium of checking in we settled in for the hour or so flight. Imagine my surprise when the Captain did his usual announcement, it was Tim Brunskill, fellow Avon Member and as I was reminded Air 2000 Pilot. I asked one of the Stewardesses to say hello to Tim for me. After the 'meal' I was asked to come forward to the cockpit. I was lucky enough to spend the rest of the flight up in the front, including the landing. As we approached Geneva the view of the Alps was truly stunning, with the snow covered mountains glistening in the bright sunshine whilst lake Geneva was hidden by an are of low cloud. I was given the privilege of listening to Air Traffic Control as Tim and his co. pilot programmed the approach into Geneva, visibility on the ground was only 300 metres. It is hard to describe the feeling of being up there during the finals as we descended into cloud at about 1000m and flew blind until the runway seemed to jump out at us, far too much adrenaline. Anyway a big thank you to Tim for giving me a brilliant start to the trip.

I cleared customs easily and soon found Paul and the others, we hung around for a while for someone on another flight before heading to Chamonix. Crossing the border we were given a good going over by a nice young lady with a rather impressive gun. Approaching Cham we popped out of the mist that was

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languishing in the lower valleys into the evening sun, bloody gorgeous! To the chalet which turned out to be a five star affair, and I must say at this point the food etc. was really brilliant, but why did Paul buy so many Kellogg's Variety Packs. We hit the sacks fairly early so we could get an earlyish start.

The next day it was decided to go and have a look at Plan Praz probably the most popular site within the main Chamonix valley. Strangely enough when we arrived on take off, after trudging up the ski piste, there were no locals preparing to fly or flying. This is usually a good sign that it is not flyable although it might seem so. As we were sitting there I noticed cloud spilling down the North face of the Grand Jorasses which is a sign of the Fohn wind coming in, which agreed with the forecast of a southerly. We decided to wait around for a while, in that time only one person showed up and flew, going down pretty fast and he seemed to have trouble getting up the valley. For those who haven't been to Cham the view from Plan Praz is pretty inspiring looking over towards the Mont Blanc range. After a while and still no locals showing up we decided to go down and have a look at Plan Joux. We seemed to have made a good decision judging by the way the trees were being thrashed about at one point on the way down. We all hopped in the van and drove down the valley to Plan Joux where the landing field was lost in the fog. People were flying but having to top land and we decided to err on the side of caution and just watch, later that day stories of gliders lost in the trees were circulating. We spent the evening in the Tex Mex in Argentiere owned by Lawrence, who used to hold the world tandem record. By the end of the evening we were stuffed and a bit worse the wear for alcohol.

The next day we headed to Plan Praz where there were for more pilots on take off and conditions were looking good. I took off around mid day and enjoyed over an hours good thermalling with up to 8 ups. The thermals were a bit broken low down over the cable car but opened out quite nicely higher up. There was an inversion at about 800 ft above take off which no one got past, but we were able to go up and down the valley. After an hour or so I joined the others in the large bottom landing field where we decided to head back up for another flight. This time it was basically a top to bottom, although Paul and I managed to maintain for a while at the top. With plenty of height I was able to indulge in a bit of sight seeing over Chamonix town and some fun throwing the glider about a bit.

The next day we decided to do the Aiguille du Midi, something I had wanted to do for years, with a take off at about 12000 ft and a 8500ft top to bottom. Ideally we wanted to do the south take off which allows you to fly down the Mer de Glace into the Chamonix valley. However the winds meant that we would have to use the North take off which we were told was a bit wild. Anyway confusion over the exact wind direction and perhaps a bit of nervousness lead us to deciding it probably would not be on, so we headed to the Plan Praz take off. Half way up we noticed the first gliders coming off the Midi, agggghhhhh, I hate wrong decisions, still plenty of time we could have a quick flight down then go up the Midi. However, the conditions conspired against us, with a tail wind on take off, no choice but to wait it out. More and more locals arrived and sat around in the warm sunshine, every now and again someone would get tired of waiting and prove how macho they were by attempting to take off with a light backwind, which usually end up with near disaster. When the wind stopped I decided it was time to go so I followed PWC pilot Willie Todd off. As I came round the corner from take off I saw Willie's wing with a 50% tuck trying to go spiral towards the trees, could be rough I thought. It was! It was like one of those spring days where you seem to only have ballistic cores with no outer section. It all felt a bit wild especially close into the cable car station, mind you after a while I started to rather enjoy it. No one was managing to stay up particularly well and we gradually lost height, until I decided enough was enough and headed off to the landing field. The conditions up top had deteriorated again and the others had to wait it out. The eventually came down but too late to go up the midi. We wandered round the town before heading back to the Chalet, happy with the knowledge that forecast was looking good for the Midi the next day. The next day we were able to fulfil our dreams by flying of the south side of the Midi and down the Mer de Glace back to Chamonix, but more of that in another article. It turned out to be a good day at Plan Praz as well with gliders flying up and down the valley, and some making it round the corner towards Servoz and Plan Joux. We celebrated our flight in Chamonix.

The next day conditions were again pretty normal on Plan Praz, and took quite a bit of waiting before we could get off. The others flew down to Bois du Bouchet landing whilst Paul and I, after throwing a few spirals and wing overs for the video landed at the Savoy landing to make retrieving the van easier. The landing site was quite busy with Patrick Holmes and other starts in attendance. Whilst there I saw a

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pretty amazing sight when a guy on the new Omega 4 Proto spiralled down till one of his wing tips was nearly on the ground. He then pulled out and landed, Coo-oi! Soon we were headed up the valley towards Argentierre where we checked out what we thought was the landing field and the cable car times for the Grands Montets. Then it was back to Cham for more coffee and 501 spotting.

We spent the evening exploring the night life of Chamonix, Dave and I had been recommended the Mill Street Bar by two Scottish chalet girls we had met. I think Dave was on a promise judging by the effort he put into finding it. When we did eventually find it, it was pretty dead, well actually it was empty, so we headed to Wild Wallabies a snow boarders bar. A good evening was had by all I think, although things get a bit hazy due to the litres of German Lager that flowed. The next day after getting rid of the after effects of the previous night frivolities we set off for Argentierre and up the cable car to the Aiguille du Grands Montets. On the way up John measured the climb rate at over 8m/s, which he pointed out was equivalent to two two storey buildings every second. At the top after a quick photo session we headed out over the glacier and prepared to fly. I was the first to attempt a take off, but found that deep snow and a slight tail wind make it impossible to get off. We moved the canopies slightly and after half an hours wait tried again this time we set up to take off one after another. John failed to get off, and Glen wanted me to go first so off I went. The take off was easy this time and I was soon out over the valley heading towards Flegere with the Dru to my left. I had a video camera with me so spent some time taking shots on the long glide over the valley, a la Peirre Boullioux. Unfortunately I didn't realise that the zoom button had been pressed and take it from me full zoom through a wide angle adapter looks crap, it was a real shame because it looked like it could have been quite good. I made it to Flegere with plenty of height and managed to maintain on the way down to Plan Praz but by the time I got there the thermal activity had more or less died so I flew out over Chamonix and then headed to the Bois du Bouchet landing field where we had arrange to meet, when I got there Glen had already landed and Dave was not far away. Jerry had gone off to land at Argentierre so he could pick up the van, some old man had a go at him for landing in the field, even though it had a wind sock in it. He threatened to call the Gendarmes so Jerry thought it was best to leg it.

Well that was it the end of a brilliant weeks flying in January. The locals said it was one of the best January weeks they had had for 5 years. As for the snowboarding and skiing I didn't get a chance because the weather was just too good. I'll be heading back there in the summer, so if anyone is intereste give me a call.

Marcus King

French Trip this Summer

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

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Committee News

Just a few snippets of news from the recent committee meeting.

There was a long discussion about what to do about a 'new' site negotiated by a member near Weston-Super-Mare, it turned out the site is already registered to the Devon and Somerset Condors and is flown by local hang glider pilots. It was decided that we could not enter into the agreement that had been negotiated with the farmer as we do not think we could police it.

Better news is that a new site is still under negotiation in the northern part of our area.

The bounty of £200 pounds for negotiating a new site is still available for members, but remember is subject to the site being accepted as a full Avon site. If you do have a site in mind we would advise you to give Chris Jones a call, he can give you advice and probably tell you whether a site is already in use.

It was decided to buy a pair of radios for use by the LAT group.

Dave Garbe asked if the club would underwrite a stand at the Bristol Balloon Festival, Chris Jones is going to try and make sure funds are forthcoming from the BHPA. Dave is also looking for help with manning the stand and also for help with the balloon drop he is planning, give him a call if you can help.

Simon Kerr informed the committee on the progress towards holding a round of the British Paragliding Cup in this area. There hasn't been much progress and the lack of sites has led Simon to start looking into running the event as a towing comp. If you can help give him a call.

Finally there are a few cash flow problems due to not being able to find a signature for the deposit account, so get your membership fees in promptly.

Bassano 96

Fiona Macaskill is going to Bassano for the annual competition. If you are going and you want to share transport give Fiona a call.

New Airwave Club Dealer

Clive and Amanda are now club dealers for the entire range of Airwave products including both Hang Gliders and Paragliders. Look out for details of 'Test Weekends' in March and April.

For further details phone 01222 704864



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At last, some news from the competitions front! Spring is approaching and Easter will be upon us soon, bringing with it a new round of competitions for the coming year.

As usual, the season begins with the Easter Shield. The rules are simple: You must launch within a 50 mile radius of Bristol and fly as far as you can. Held over the Easter bank holiday long weekend, it was won last year by Tim Pentreath with a flight of approximately 7km (Westbury to Warminster). It's the ideal opportunity to air out that crumpled canopy and start the year by landing elsewhere, so have a go and phone in your flights to me. Don't forget to let Tim Pentreath know as well if you want your huge XC recorded for the Avon Go For It XC league.

I have received notification of this year's Airwave Challenge and already embarked on organising some qualifying rounds to be flown before 10th July. As in previous years, we must fly against 5 other clubs, but to gee us up a bit this year, we also have to score points. 100 points will be awarded for each team beaten at each round. I.e., if a heat is held between 4 clubs the winner gets 300 points, second place 200 etc. There is already the possibility of an early round against Wessex and Sky Surfers to be held over Easter, so if you're interested in flying for your club then please phone me A.S.A.P. Don't be put off if you're a low airtime pilot or novice. It's a great learning experience and I promise lots of fun and hopefully lots of good flying. There will be at least another 2 or 3 qualifying rounds so I'll try to make sure everybody gets a crack. If you are a low airtime pilot or novice and interested in improving your flying or taking part in the Airwave Challenge this year, I am also trying to organise a training weekend to be held between 16th March - 2nd April, hopefully in S.E. Wales with some friendly competition and coaching on competition flying conditions and tactics. Again, if you would like to take part then contact me without delay.

Further news: Mark Drake, having had a fine season in '95, leading the Avon XC league throughout the year, producing an exemplary performance at the Airwave Challenge finals, and narrowly missing the Tailbridge Belcher of the Year trophy, has been offered another place to fly in the '96 Nationals (his second offer of the year). Once again he has declined, restating his wish to devote his time and effort towards flying at club level.

Last but not least, this year sees the debut of the British Paragliding Cup. A series of competitions flown throughout the year where points will be awarded for every task flown, and accrued towards eventual ranking at the end of the season. This is the ideal opportunity for ordinary pilots to make their mark in the British competition scene, so get out there and go for it!

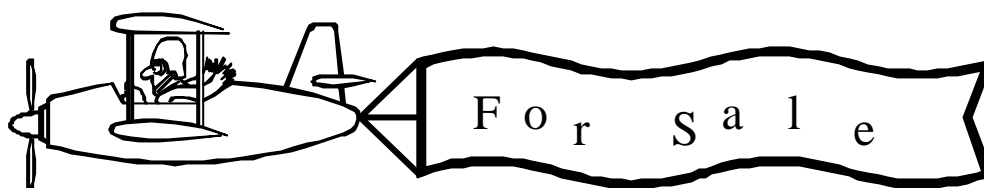
Over the past few months I have been looking at the possibility of hosting, along with the Thames Valley and Wessex clubs, an open comp. to become one of the B.P.C. fixtures for this year. Due to overwork the organisation is badly delayed. However, I have decided after consultation with neighbouring clubs that a foot-launched comp. of this nature is not possible due to a lack of suitable sites. By the time you read this I hope to have spoken to Howie Travers about the possibility of holding a tow-launched XC comp. as an alternative. Watch this space for further news!

That about says it all for this month, except to remind everyone, experienced or not, that many accidents happen at this time of year, brought on by over-confidence or just plain eagerness to get into the air after the long winter lay-off. Let's try not to be the one who adds to these statistics!

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Simon Kerr.

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Gliders & Bits For Sale

Rumour 1, 13.5, 1990 Approx 100 hours, Practically Unused Last 2 Years. Slightly tatty sail but otherwise sound. £300 ono (Must Sell) Phone Mike Bowring on 01453 886087 (1)

Airwave Reggae Small, 24 m2 12 As, 13 hours only. No Bushes etc used by experienced pilot. Perfect for mountains or first glider. £1150 ono Tel 01222 704864 (1)

Flylite Harness For Sale. Front entry, very comfortable. White/Royal Blue and Silver with Fluro Orange foot board. Comes with 26' silk parachute. Suit 6' person. Excellent Condition. I just fancy a change. Phone Dave Garbe on 0117 924 6504 £300 ono

Also Magic 4 155 Full Race. A Little Beauty! Rainbow underside with Mauve leading edge. £300 ono. (2)

K2, C of A, Yellow LE, Green US, Speed Bar, Cross Country Bag. Stored Inside. Pod and Stirrup Harness with Reserve, Map Case, Davron 100 Vario with Diplex Altimeter, Ventimeter and other Extras. All in very good condition. £1150 the lot, Tel 01275 876366 (2)

READY FOR YOUR PILOT EXAM ? Only if you have a copy of PILOT REVISION NOTES (PG or HG). All the info on Met, Air Law etc etc to ensure a first time pass. Send £3.95 to Rick Ware c/o ParAvion, Elm Tree Park, Manton, Marlborough, SN8 1PS. (2)

Trekking Ritmo as new condition. Excellent intermediate paraglider, 12 As, very stable nad comes with speed bar, harness and back protector. £1500 or offers. Call Scott Ellis 0117 073 0031 (2)

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Tandem for Sale, UP Pickup 43. Only 2 months old, very good condition, yellow and red, only 24 hours airtime. The Pickup is the best tandem canopy in the world. The UP Pickup now holds UK (local and National) Distance Records, World Multiplace Straight Distance Record, World Out and Return Distance Record and World Height Gain Record. Only £2100

Firebird Genesis Medium, take-off weight 80-100kg. Very Good Condition, 6 Months old. Brand new sheathed line set. Standard or competition risers. This canopy will seriously increase your XC km's this year guaranteed! The canopies excellent min sink means you will getting away when others are just maintaining on the ridge. Pink/White. Reduced to £1850

Ails de K FlyAir 950, Purple/Red, Small, Suitable for light pilot (total all up weight 65kg-85kg) very good condition. Very stable (one tuck in two years flying), ideal first canopy. Speed bar and harness £600 ono

Call Richard Westgate for a test flight on (01747) 811302 (Dorset) (2)

Adverts will automatically come out after they have been in three issues of NOVA. If you sell your stuff before then, let the editor know so your advert can come out and you will not be hassled by thousands of eager buyers!

And Finally...

Chairman's Bit