

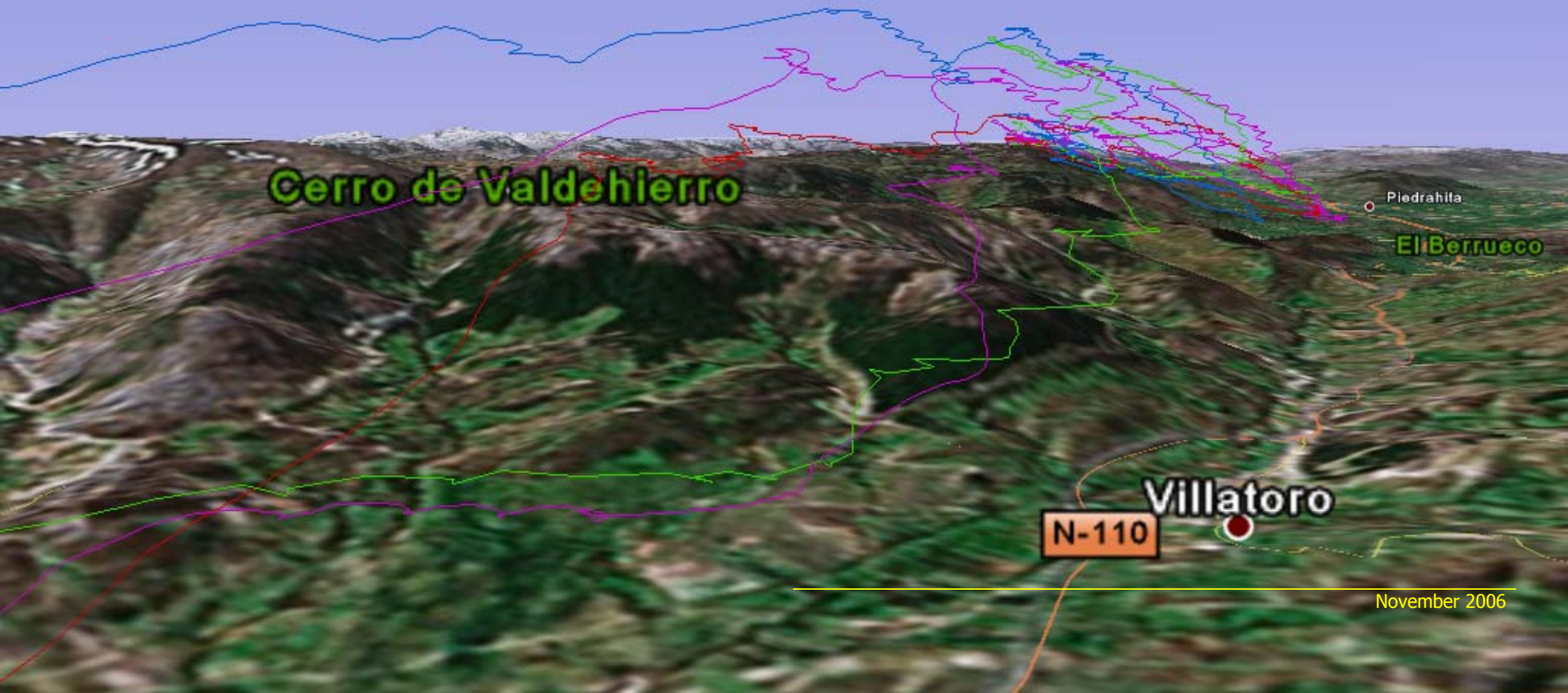


NOVA

The Magazine of the Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club

If undelivered please return to:

The Membership Secretary, Avon HG&PG Club,
c/o Bramble Cottage, Rectory Lane, Compton Martin BS40 6JP



November 2006

On the cover: GPS traces from The Big Day in Piedrahita last summer. Data acquisition: Stafford Evans, Iain MacKenzie, Graham Richards, Nick Somerville, Ken Wilkinson. Data processing and visualisation: Graham Richards. Information delivery system: Google. Digital terrain elevation database: Europa Technologies. Supra-atmospheric geo-orientated optical-wavelength imaging: TerraMetrics.

Editorial

Blimey, I'm already into my second year of editing Nova! It seems like only yesterday that I donned my green eyeshade and made plans to gather around me a team of enthusiastic and dedicated photographers, reporters, columnists, and editorial staff. Well, not all plans come to fruition. But who needs staff when you have a clubful of enthusiastic and dedicated pilots willing to write and take pictures just for the benefit of their fellow aviators?

This issue is no exception, and several of you have contributed words and pictures. It's that time of year when we look back over the flying season and take stock of the achievements of the club, both collectively and as individuals. Yet again Tim Pentreath has written a summary of the club's XC performance over the year. And we also have reviews from Rod Taylor and Ken Wilkinson of the BCC, which we won again this year. And Stafford Evans looks back over the year's finances, and tries to justify the club's profligate spending.

Mike Humphries was in Australia earlier this year, and he has written a fantastic article on flying at Bright, complete with photos from the satellite that he chartered specially for the occasion. Mike has now joined the committee as librarian, and he's actually the only new face on the committee this year. But if you want to remind yourself of who's who, we have a full set of mugshots for you to scare yourself with.

Paul Gilfoyle also went abroad this year. He accompanied a small Avon contingent to Laragne in France, where they competed in the Chabre Open. This competition is aimed at pilots with little competition experience, and is an excellent way to improve your flying skills. Entry for next year has to be booked about now, so read Paul's article, and then get your application in pronto.

While we're looking back on the season, it's also worth recalling the not-so-high points, and trying to draw from them any lessons we can learn. It's been a pretty poor season for accidents, and it's worth taking time to reflect

on the reasons. Richard Hellen, who continues as Safety Officer this year, has done just that in this issue. There are many factors involved in accidents – sometimes pilot error is to blame, sometimes the conditions are a contributory factor, sometimes pilot error is to blame, sometimes equipment is at fault, and sometimes pilot error is to blame. Richard's article looks at two factors that you can very easily improve at no cost, without expending any extra effort, and without acquiring any extra skills. To find out what they are, read on...

And to complete the safety picture, we have an article by Ali Lees, who was on the receiving end of an incident some time ago. She's back on form now, but only after a long lay-off. I think it's important that we remind ourselves that accidents happen, so that we can learn from them if possible. At the risk of making Nova even more dour and humourless than it already is, I would like to publish articles from time to time by people who've had accidents. Hopefully we will learn something concrete, and at the very least I hope that it will keep that all-important element of caution alive in our minds. (In the next issue it's Stuart Padwick, which gives me three months to decide how many of his gory photos I'm going to include!)

So, my thanks go to everyone who has contributed to this issue. Keep the material coming – I'm told that some of the membership actually reads this! And don't forget that articles don't have to be specifically about flying; if you do anything else that you think we might be interested in, write it down.

This is the last issue of Nova before Christmas, but of course there's no need for me to wish you well for the festive season, because you'll all be coming to the Christmas party, won't you. Details are in this issue.

See you there.

Richard

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 those of the Committee of the Club.

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

Send your articles to the Editor, Richard Danbury, at editor@avonhgpg.co.uk or nova@avonhgpg.co.uk, Tel: 01761 221 731

Copy deadline for the next issue: Monday 5 February 2007.

Chairman's Chunter

Welcome to the first Nova of the all New Avon Club Committee, featuring a full cabinet reshuffle, all night wrangling, horse-trading and deal brokering, followed by an intensive and close fought election, which resulted in a brand new librarian! Many thanks to Mike Humphries for stepping up to the weighty responsibility of managing our huge DVD collection. Very grateful thanks must also go to Cathy Lawrence for all her hard work as social secretary over the past year. We have enjoyed a superb series of club meetings this year, and have a great Christmas party to look forwards to, all thanks to Cathy.

Which brings me to a small appeal! We had a very good turn out at the AGM, but unfortunately we were not swamped with a forest of hands volunteering to be the beating heart of our club social scene and step into Cathy's shoes. If you can spare 15 to 30 minutes a month, (yes, month), to help out with the social side, then do let me know, it would be great to have a social secretary on the committee this year.

This issue is a cracker, and needs to see us all through the dark winter months. It has been a mixed season to look back on from a flying perspective. In competitions and the league we have done very well. Avon are winners of the fine BCC trophy for the third time in four years, great results in the league, Avon pilots in the nationals and Bleriot, and a flying diary packed with lots of great flights, large and small. We have also had a full flock of newly qualified pilots into the club this year, taking their first steps to cloudbase.

On the down side, it has been a rather injury strewn year. Best wishes to Morgan for a very speedy recovery following his accident at Frocester. It is amazing how quickly people get back on their feet and it was great to see Stuart at the club meeting having made excellent progress since his nasty argument with the hill in August.

Hopefully we will all have a prang-free winter, and if you manage to get out and about, do respect the potentially fickle winter winds, gusty conditions, and lack of lift. There will be lots more focus on safety in the Spring, when there will be another thought provoking "Broken Bones" safety club meeting. Book your tickets early.

Secure in the knowledge that I am highly unlikely to be flying over the winter, there are a few things that will certainly be keeping the smile on my face, not least a quick flick through the photos from the Mere Bash. It was a classic summer weekend, with a howling gale combining pleasantly with intermittent rain and cloudbase marginally above the hill. It was also the same weekend as the Red Bull air race, or rather Red Bull Monster Jam, converting Wiltshire into one massive car park. And to top it all, we were sandwiched between Blorenge and Homegrown in a fest-tastic summer calendar.

Despite all this, it was a bloody marvellous bash. The Golden Delirious at £1 a pint helped a lot, the band were great, we got the BBQ in between showers and Gary's yurt stood majestic throughout. If you were put off by the weather, or sitting on the festival fence and decided not to come, sorry, you missed a corker.

Of course, you've got Friday 8th December in your diaries already for the Xmas Party. Obviously you already have a ticket, but just in case you missed it, the legendary party is back at Bonghy Bo's in Bath. There is a Santa sack full of fun waiting to be unleashed for this one, including the annual prize giving, massive buffet dinner, photo competition, celebrity DJ, silly dancing, and all for only £10! What more could you possibly ask for? Not much, since this is the cost price of the buffet, so don't be standoffish, get your tickets now, drop an email to socialsec@avonhgpg.co.uk and make sure you're on the door.

That is quite enough from me, put the kettle on, make a decent cup of tea, and give yourself an hour to enjoy this fine edition of your superb club magazine. All contributions welcome!

If the clouds break, fly safely.

Richard.

Diary of Events

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|-------------------------|---|
| Saturday 25 November | Westbury litter pick. Meet 9.55am in the Westbury car park. It only takes about 1½ hours, and it's an ideal PR opportunity for us. There will be a press release from the council so a good turnout will help to keep our use of the site secure for the future. Please make every effort to come along. |
| Friday 8th December | Christmas Party at Bonghy Bo's in Bath. Tickets only £10. Please make cheques payable to Avon Hang-Gliding Club. Pending the search for a new social secretary, please send them to Cathy Lawrence, 112 Prestbury Drive, Warmister, Wiltshire BA12 9LE. |
| January | No meeting – to allow time to recover from Christmas party. |
| February | Club meeting – possible first aid event – to be confirmed. |

The Mere Bash 2006

The weekend of 2-3 September saw the continuation of a great Avon tradition – the Mere Bash

Traffic came to a standstill for 20 miles around as Avon members made their way to the event on the Saturday. There was plenty of weather for everyone, the wind was exactly on the hill for much



Tsk! The kids of today!



Traffic queuing on the nearby A303

All in all, it was an immensely enjoyable occasion!



Hieroglyphics – phworrr!

of the weekend, and several pilots made it to cloudbase during a trip around the bowl. The children were kept amused by the bouncy castle, and the adults were kept amused (and a little hysterical) by three excellent beers from Hobden's Wessex.

There was the usual gourmet byo barbeque, and Gary Mitchell produced a whole salmon from the east wing of his yurt. Everyone jived in a hip manner to a with-it beat combo named This Side Up, and Cathy Lawrence and her Hieroglyphical friends gyrated their abdominal regions in a suggestive and salacious manner, much to the delight of all the chaps.

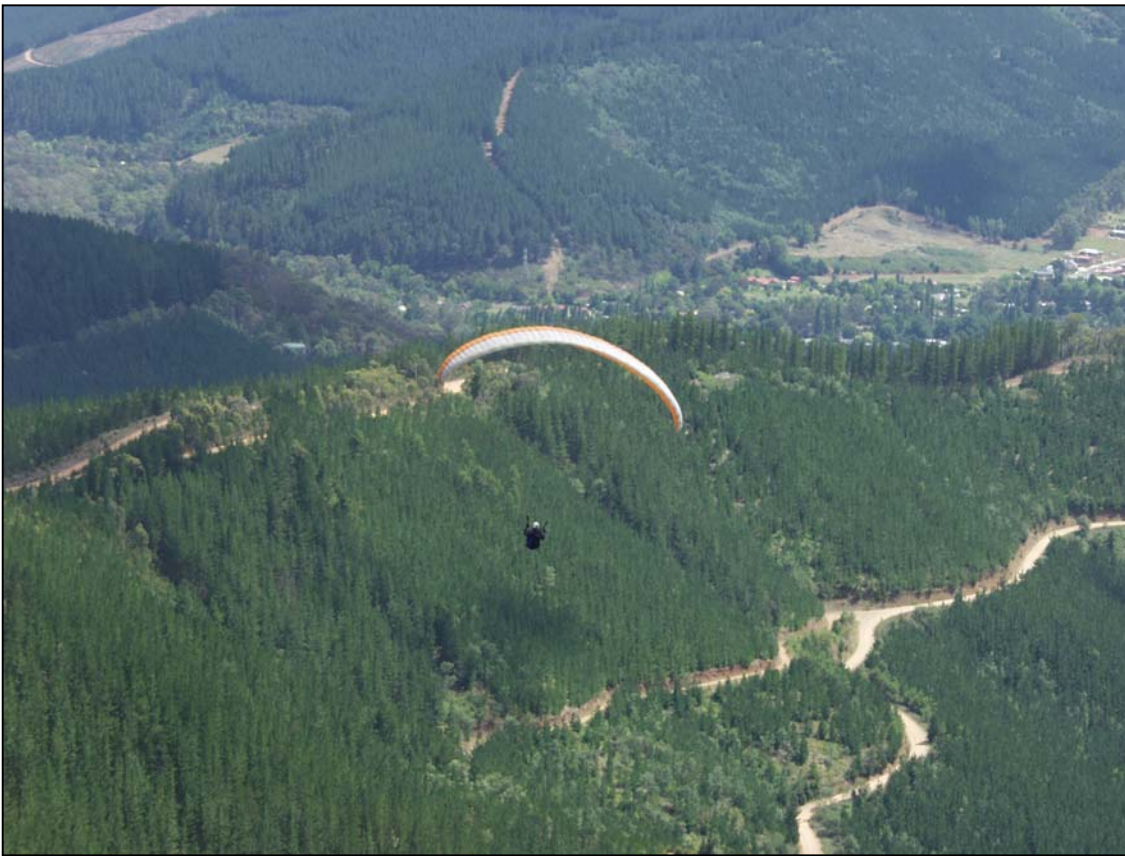


Tsk! The adults of today!

It's Bright Down Under

Mike Humphries started flying in 2002, and did his CP with Sunrise Paragliding in Pokhara, Nepal. He's now got about 90 hours of airtime and has done many XCs. For Mike, paragliding allows him to combine leisure and work interests in a most enjoyable way. When flying, he's always on the lookout for poo processing plant, and he's spotted works at many of the world's flying sites. Some of his favourites are at Westbury, Abergavenny, Llanberis, and Gstadt in Switzerland. Just as interesting for Mike are the places that don't have such facilities, which include Pokhara (which had a suspicious-looking slick on the lake instead), and Piedrahita (although Steve Ham insists that there is one). During his career, Mike thinks that he has been personally responsible for about 6.5 million tonnes of waste, and he's keen to point out that that figure includes only the solid matter.

Not so long ago Mike went to Australia and flew Manilla (where he spotted an excellent processing facility), and Bright (which appears to do without). Here he gives us more details...



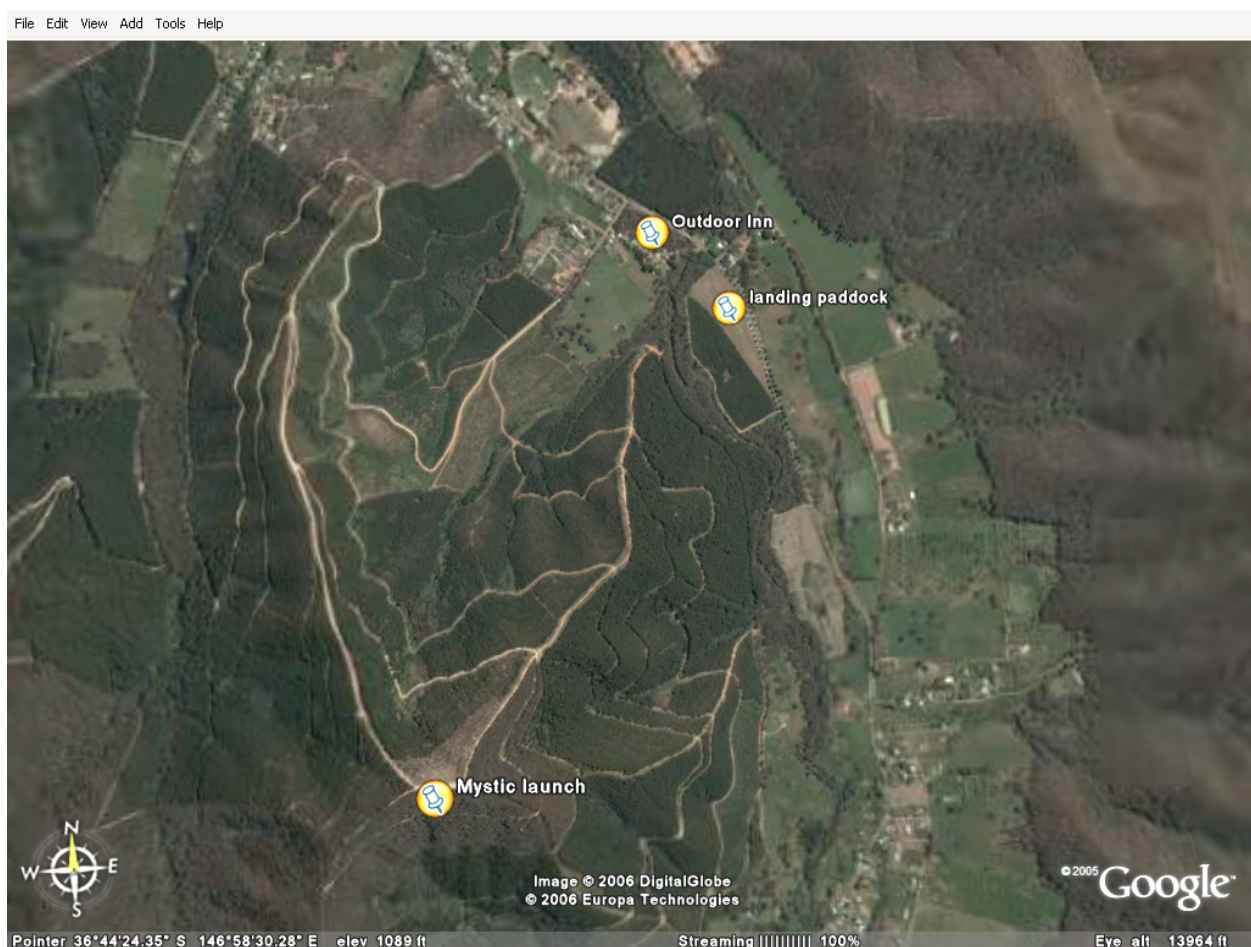
OK Rich - you want to know what the flying is like in Bright? Well it's sublime, launch is at 787m ASL, 460m AGL so at the very worst you get a 460m top to bottom (pleased to say that's not happened to me yet). Mystic is a huge tree covered bowl facing NNE (south of the equator so that's facing the sun) with forestry commission tracks right up to launch. The bowl starts to work after 10 o'clock and creates an anabatic airflow up the face regardless of the direction of the meteo wind higher up, so it can be interesting when you get to where they mix. The bowl is defined by two ridges which meet at an angle of about 30°, launch is at the point where they meet and the thermals pop off the ridges at regular intervals about 12 minutes

apart so you'd have to try really hard to miss them all. The ridges are called Marcus and Emily, don't ask me why but if you say you've just gone down on Emily you get a few polite guffaws.

So you've carried your wing the 100 metres from the car park to the astro-turf launch (no – seriously, it's to keep the dust down!), checked for white tailed spiders, admired the view of Mount Buffalo and had a few quiet moments wondering how you manage to land between all those trees if you run out of lift. Then you open your wing, clip in (remembering to switch on the vario) and turn to watch the eucalyptus trees 200m in front of launch, don't worry they're only little because the area was cleared a few years ago, but they whip around in the lightest breeze and are wonderful indicators of a thermal moving up the face. The vario stutters uncertainly as the approaching thermal draws in the surrounding air then you see the eucalyptus start to move and turn to build the wall, the wind up the face is unsteady so you take a couple of skips backward to bring the wing overhead then turn and dab the brakes just as the rising air comes over the brow, launch drops away with a nice smooth curve so no nasty swirly bits on the edge, throw your weight forward, ease the brakes up and you're flying after three steps.

You are in moderate, bouncy lift but over on Emily you can see the full grown eucalyptus thrashing around and pointing to where the real lift is so you ease cautiously over, gaining height all the time (don't get too low over Emily, she has a nasty rotary backside) then you feel your ground speed drop and the wing starts to fall back as you move into the mass of rising air, the vario stops muttering poc..poc..poc and emits a high-pitched scream, at the same time the wing surges forward and you are into the big one, catch the surge but don't turn too quickly, remember this is Oz and the thermals are wiiide.

But don't go too far across, the vario is showing 8 up (m/s) and if you drop out of the far side the equally rapid down draught will inevitably do something unpleasant to your wing, a couple of the locals join you and shout a cheery greeting "you're goin' the wrong #####g way mate", shit - forgot to check the date, they have this weird rule where you turn left on even dates and right on odd dates (but only over launch). The lift stays strong and steady up to about 1,500m then suddenly the temperature drops, your brakes go slack and the wing makes that nasty flapping noise as it tries to work out which way it should be flying, hands up and let it take care of itself. This must be the shear layer where the anabatic wind meets the prevailing meteo, or maybe it's an inversion; anyway cloudbase is another 1,000m higher so when the wing has sorted itself you open out the turns into a search pattern that eventually locates the thermal 300m to the north, it's a bit rough and patchy to start with but then smoothes out as you rise above the shear. It should be smooth up to base from here, a chance to relax and take a drink, you're moving up into colder air now and you fidget around closing all the zips in your suit, the temperature is down to eight degrees and you get that slightly out of control feeling that comes with cloud suck as the building cumulus gets closer; so where next? It's an easy glide over to Goldmine ridge from here, and you might get enough height over Goldmine to make the Tawonga gap, this is the scary route over to the Kiewa valley. Why scary? Well if you hit sink the only places to land are the strip they cleared for the HV cables or the road (where it's not overhung by trees), apart from that it's all trees. Rod says there are only two types of pilot in Oz, those who've had a tree landing and those who are about to. OK pub suck wins, it's an easy glide to the Wandiligong pub from here and they have a nice landing paddock out the back (if you land in the garden you get a free pint). I'll tell you about the Wandiligong pub and the road-kill barbeque another time...

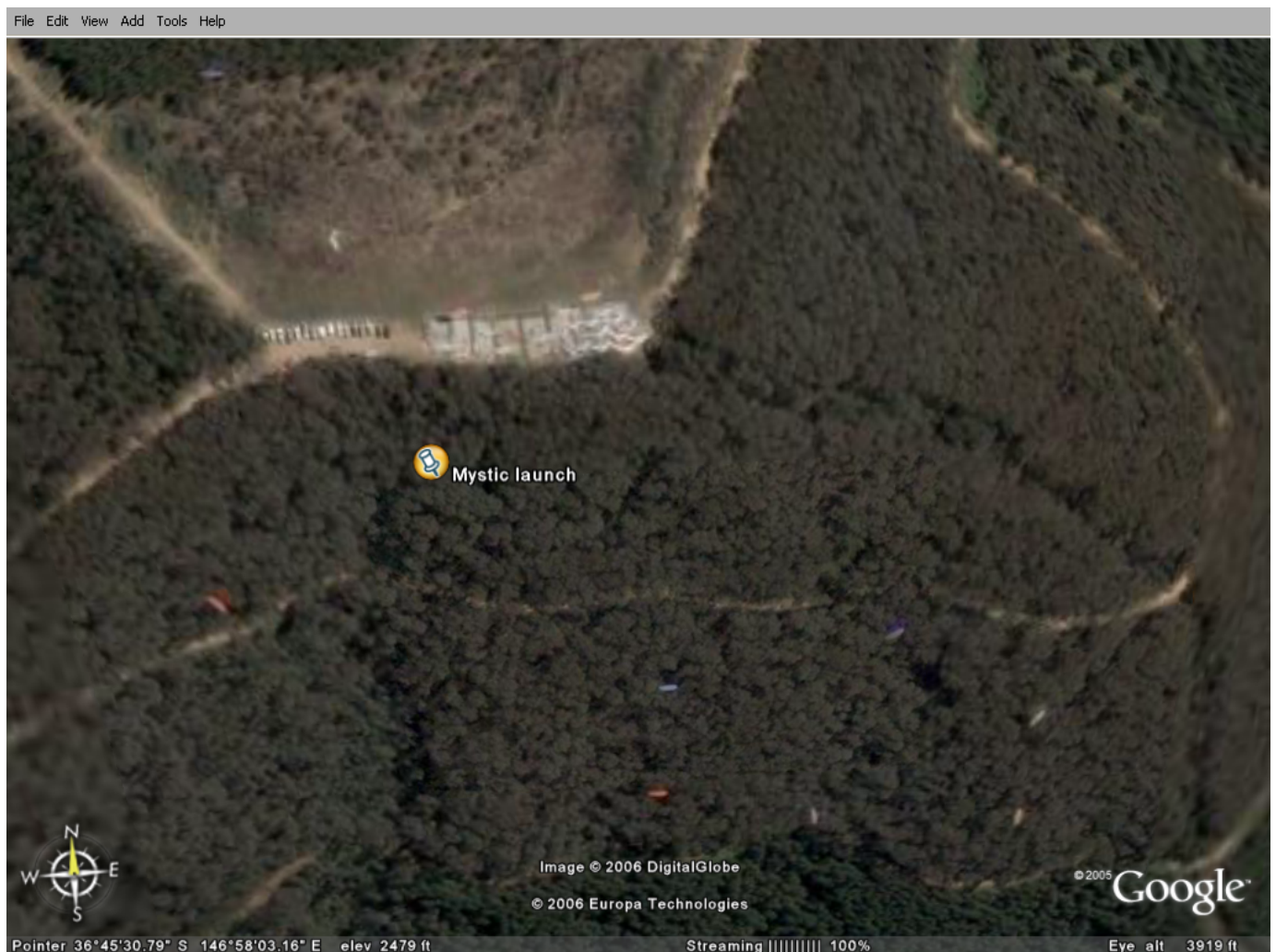


The lie of the land

How did I come to be flying in Australia? Well I guess the chain of events started at the time of the last foot and mouth outbreak, I was getting so frustrated at not being able to train for my CP that I booked a course with Adam Hill in Pokhara (ok I know that's not Oz, it's Nepal but be patient), then went back the following year because I enjoyed the flying so much.

And it was on the second visit that I met an Aussie called Rod Oldfield who set about convincing me that Pokhara was pretty average compared with his home site which was Bright, or with a site just up the road from him called Manilla; well I was still fairly new to the sport and thought that Manilla was the capital of a small pacific island while Bright just didn't register.

Now one of the hazards of flying in Nepal is the stocky brown men in leather jackets who sidle up to you on launch offering brown paper bags full of brown crumbly stuff at a very reasonable price. So even if you don't buy your own you end up passively stoned in the bar every evening, and I think this may have contributed to the good feeling I got listening to Rod banging on about the flying in Oz. Whatever the cause, it turns out to have been entirely justified, the flying is excellent, the people are friendly and sometimes I even think I can understand the language.



A close-up of Mystic launch from space. Mike's glider is the orange one at bottom centre

Bright is in NE Victoria, I know this because I have to pay the NE Victoria HGPGA for the privilege of flying there, if you have Google Earth then the co-ordinates for the town are 36°43'49.23" S, 146°57'40.18" E and the co-ordinates for Mystic launch are 36°45'25.24" S, 146°58'36.52" E. It's worth a look, if you zoom in you can see the hangies parked neatly at one end of launch while the paras are randomly scattered at the other end or circling over the back, it's the same the whole world over...

If you want to get there it's a day's travel by train and bus from Melbourne, and in OZ the buses link up with the trains, all on the same ticket. It's great!

Safety Review of 2006

It was a big day recently at Nova Towers when the Central Office of Information gave permission for Tufty himself to visit us! Tufty, cleverly disguised as Richard Hellen to avoid the attentions of adoring fans, gave us some sage advice about staying out of trouble.



There are two things we all know about paragliding:

- a) it is a fantastic sport that brings you into contact with wonderful locations and quite tolerable fellow flyers
- b) it can be a dangerous sport that may bring you into hard contact with the ground followed swiftly by the emergency services

The trick is to maximise the first and eliminate the second. At the end of my first year as your club's paragliding safety officer, I am deeply concerned that we seem to have had an excessively large number of serious accidents, at least **eight** that I know of. Furthermore, many of these involved some of our more experienced pilots.

So what's going on? Just bad luck? Well s**t does happen, but when those involved in these accidents reflected on what went wrong, nearly all of them recognised the presence of pilot error as a major root cause. And in several cases the error started with the decision to fly in the first place.

When I first went to find out about the sport, I was fortunate enough to be sitting on Selsley alongside Wayne Seeley's dad, Barry. The words of wisdom he gave me have stuck clearly in my mind ever since and they were, "If you want to enjoy a long and happy flying career, the secret is to know when not to fly." He must have drilled this into Wayne, because that is pretty much what he says whenever we discuss safe flying.

We must all be aware of the warning signs. Picture this; there has been a run of bad weather or something else has got in the way of your aviation addiction, the day looks good(ish), you go to the hill and you are going to fly that day. This is compounded by the knowledge that the weather will be crap for the next week. A steely eyed look of determination appears on your face and yet a little niggling voice in your head is saying, "Bit gusty really, haven't flown for three weeks, maybe I should wait till it gets better." But your mates are there, some looking on at you preparing to launch, some of them may be in the air – even though they may not actually be enjoying the experience. But you take off, straight into a strong thermal that gusts you straight up to 50 feet. You are on the edge of being blown backwards, but you risk applying speed bar and push out. Whew! Now, do you stay up or keep pushing out for a bottom landing? At this point you note that the others in the air have moved out and are heading for a bottom landing. Decision made – sometimes group think is a good thing. But would you have made what would have been the safe decision for you if the others were still gale hanging?

All the above could be summarised by one word – *attitude*. Don't take my word for it. Wikipedia says, regarding paragliding:

"It is sometimes said that the factor which most affects safety is pilot attitude. A large proportion of accidents involve over-confident novices failing to heed advice, or pilots flying beyond their limits – often in a competitive context."

Bet you didn't think that paragliding came with an in-depth psychology section, but it does.

Oh and what about your mates in that scenario I just painted. How many of them were thinking, "God, he's not going to take off in these conditions is he? Ohmygod he has!" Maybe a bit more clear indication from those who have chosen not to fly just now that they do not want to be impressed by your bravery, as they have plans to fly later on (weather permitting) and this will not be possible if they are calling out emergency services for you. Besides they'd kind of like your company for the rest of the flying season.

I'm sorry for the lecture, but someone has to say it and it is my job for the year. At least I don't come up and hit you if you don't get your feet down early enough in your landing approach, a method used by one of your previous safety officers. Speaking of the legs down early enough landing thing – how high would you say you should be doing this? Just try to imagine how hard it would be to get your legs down if you suffer a full frontal and get chucked about the sky. Probably 100 feet above the deck I'd say, certainly at 50 feet. Treat this as an opportunity to practice control just using the brakes. Maybe this is a topic for discussion – but the point is to get it right into your consciousness as you approach landing.

So please let's get our attitude right – then we can continue to enjoy altitude.

Lord of the Wings - The Challenge

In a hitherto unknown sequel to the well-known heroic tale, Avon's very own Hobbit, fRodo the Taylor, recounts the terrible challenge he endured this year, and his eventual triumph over the forces of darkness.

In the beginning fRodo is asked to help return the precious to its rightful place. He is guided by the great wizard Kendalf, the Grah. and his magic Staff, the Odiaious and the Rich of the Shire. They set out on the perilous journeys, which will take them over treacherous mountains and Thames valleys to reach their Goal. They are joined on their quest by Alanagon (where is he? He's gone), one Legorless, so known because of his fight with an Ent at Westbury, only escaping by burying himself in the hillside, and g'Iainly MacKenzie, Middle Earth's tallest dwarf.

Our brave men have to do battle with the Joint forces of Orks, Kernows with their strange pungent odours, and the hoards of Wessex and their statuesque women. Kendalf leads them through the mountain of Bloreng in a triangle, fighting off the fiery Red Dragon whilst the fellowship is scattered to the four winds.

Regrouped at Nantymoel only three escape the clutches of ridge suck and take flight. Seven days later fRodo almost loses his life at the mountain of Doom, the Bont of Tally, but was saved by the one ring which he kept clenched all the way to the valley floor, and shouting aloud the magic spell 'Mummy!'

The final day is spent at the Mountain of Fochriw where the mighty forces of nature help to defeat the hoards, and it is here that Kendalf, his work done, plants his trusty Staff to stand guard. He flies off into the sunset, and the precious BCC cup is returned to its rightful place in the trophy cabinet in Avon. Until next year...

Special Feature - the Making of The Challenge

As all aficionados know, in the original epic the lead role was taken by a bearded ancient, close to decrepitude. Well, those involved in the sequel saw no reason to change a winning formula. Ken Wilkinson provides his own behind-the-scenes account of the making of The Challenge.

We entered the BCC this year hopeful of doing better than the year before, when a helicopter rescue spoiled the competition (though the pilot who was hurt was OK apparently). Previous years had seen victories in 2003, and 2004. We had a good crop of pilots to pick from, oldies who always give their best and a few newbies eager to prove themselves. Decide for yourself who fits in which group!! Pilots were picked from Iain MacKenzie, Graham Richards, Rich Zaltzman, Mike Andrews, Rod Taylor, Nick Somerville, Mike Coupe, Stafford Evans, Andy Bailey, Andre Odinius, and myself.

The usual start-of-season enthusiasm meant there were several cancelled competitions. I have to admit we cancelled a couple of tasks that could have been flown, due to my input mostly, which I regretted, but we got several tasks done in the end. The new format, online entry, and a clear set of rules meant that even the northern clubs were preparing for battle - a great improvement.

May 28th saw a windy day on Merthyr and we all debated the wisdom of flying while an Onyx with red ribbon floated in front of us. Merthyr really suffers from compression, though this didn't bother Mike Andrews who quickly got off in a lull then drifted over the back in an excellent sky, doing 44km. Others went to the lower take off and I quickly followed Mike across the valleys to land the other side of Chepstow, which with turnpoints came to over 60km. Mike Coupe, taking off from the top got blown back on an Omega 6! Short flights from the SE Wales Club meant we easily won.

June 3rd looked a very light NW, so as we are not allowed to have a comp on Hay Bluff we went to the NW face of the Bloreng. Any scoring task was called, and gliders maintained and side landed, carrying up, hoping for a cycle. Al Davies, Graham Richards and I got good lift and left the rest cursing on the hill. They went towards Raglan and did about 15km. I did the Skirrid/Sugarloaf/Bloreng triangle and scored 65km. Later a convergence line set up and loads went to Raglan, but in the dead sea air maxed at 15km, with Rod Taylor doing 9km. Again full points to Avon.

June 4th, and again Merthyr was the choice. Good lift saw many going over the valleys but as is so often the case, we all dropped out on the other side of the mountains. Tim Johns of SE Wales got the furthest at 30.5km, with eight other pilots over 22km. Kernow, a very keen club who always go for it, won the day. SE Wales came second, and we hobbled into third position.

June 17th, from Nant y Moel. Iain MacKenzie did his best of the year with 35km, and Andre Odinius did 17km, but the ever-competitive Kernow had two pilots over 50km (John Trewartha, and Mike Ashton Smith) and a couple of 25km flights. Tim Johns and Mark Pearson led the SE Wales lot to between 35 and 40km so we were beaten back to third place again! Drat!

July 1st had us toiling up to Talybont on a windy cloudy day. We sat it out for ages and I wanted to get down to watch the England match in the world cup (when we got knocked out). The wind abated for us to flop over the back for between 8 and 15km. Our four scoring pilots meant we maxed on points again, with SW Wales and Kernow just behind. I got to the pub just before the extra time, to see the England team let themselves down again!

That left us in first place in the League, with Kernow second, and Cumbria Border Raiders 3rd. We tried to fly a final on 29/30 July but the bad weather continued so we could not hold a task. We tried again at the Blorenge Party and saw an excellent sky on the Sunday. It had 100km written all over it BUT it was blowing a gale on Fochriw so Stafford (who was doing the Meet Director thing) wasn't prepared to risk an accident. I gave up at about 3.30pm and decided to fly anyway, and got away under a dying sky for 43km, to Monmouth.

The presentation was made on the Monday, and of course dear reader you'll have gathered we won, on league position. The cup is worthy of a Grand Prix victory!! (Thanks to Martin and Amy Stanton (and Zoe) who came along to do the deed, and many thanks for their hard work in setting up the website). One pilot who was not there was Mike Andrews, who has reluctantly decided to give up flying. He has had a few injuries in recent years and was a victim of his own competitiveness, and didn't want to risk his time with his lovely wife Janet by getting badly injured. In view of his sterling efforts I made sure he has got a cup as a memento.

The BCC has grown this year and many are very keen on what it has to offer. Kernow even got sponsorship!! Other clubs (Malverns, and Thames Valley) seemed to have been less enthusiastic. Hopefully we will spur them on to get involved again. Yet again Avon can throw down the gauntlet! Fly further than us, IF YOU CAN!!

My Very First...

... time on the hill.

As someone said during the Q & A session at a recent club meeting, when you attain your CP it's rather like passing your driving test – that's when your learning really starts. This series of articles aims to help recently qualified pilots up the learning curve. This time we look at what to do when you find yourself out on your own for the first time.

Of course, you won't really be on your own. If you've gone to the right hill there are almost certain to be other pilots there too. If you really are the only person there, you've probably gone to the wrong hill for the conditions! This is where the club's low-airtime contact can help. There's one for PGs (Iain MacKenzie) and one for HGs (Neil Atkinson). Their contact details are in this issue, and on the club website – just drop them a line and they will be able to tell you if it's likely to be flyable and they can help you choose the right site. Iain MacKenzie also sends out an email on Fridays giving an assessment of the likely conditions for the weekend. Just ask him to put you on the list.

The other thing you need to do is to read the sites guide for the site. This will tell you where the launches and landings are, and will tell you if there are any hazards or difficulties.

So let's assume you've arrived at the hill, and there are other pilots around. Start by making your own assessment of the conditions. You'll know something about site assessment from your training, so it's time to start putting it into practice. Can you identify the landing fields? Are they usable? Is the wind on the hill? Is the strength right? Is it gusty, and if so why? Does the weather look as if conditions will deteriorate? What did the forecast say? Is there enough lift to stay up? Is the air too crowded with pilots? Is no-one flying, and if so, why not?

This is a lot to think about, so don't just rely on your own assessment yet. Ask other people what they think. But you need to make sure you're talking to someone whose opinion you can trust. A good way of doing this is to ask if there's a club coach around. It's very likely there will be one because the club has a large number of them. The coaches have all been trained by the BHPA in how to provide good advice, and they will try to find out what your experience is and to tailor their advice accordingly. Don't be surprised if they keep asking you what you think – it's a way of helping you to learn while also finding out what you know. Make sure you ask about anything that concerns you, and don't be reluctant to ask someone to watch you fly – you can learn a lot from having someone debrief you after your flight. So once you're confident that the conditions are right for you, and you have a flight plan, go and fly!

You won't be able to get advice so easily when you're in the air, so keep a special lookout for changes in the conditions while you're flying, especially if you have been in the air a long time.

Once you have landed, get a debrief, and start discussing your next flight!

Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining

Ali Lees lives in Bristol and works as a non-practising psychiatric nurse, an office job that allows her to avoid any contact with the unwell. After training with Robin at Airtopia in 2003/04, she became a non-practising paraglider pilot one day at Bossington, but bizarrely she didn't use it as an excuse to avoid contact with members of the club. Her favourite sites are Woolacombe, Nant-y-Moel, and in spite of it being the scene of her demise, Bossington. Her non-flying interests include rock climbing, trampolining, and yoga – in fact, any means of getting her feet off the ground when it's not flyable!

I managed to do everything in my 1st six months post CP that you really don't want to do. The first incident, putting my glider in the barbed wire at Mere was easily fixable if very annoying. However, the second, sustaining an injury, was not so easily fixable. Of course I couldn't just do something sensible like break a bone that would mend, no I snapped a ligament, which like snapping an elastic band was gone forever.



It was a typical scenario of over complacency on my part. Having flown at Bossington earlier in the day, the wind had picked up a bit and I thought the worst outcome would be that I'd have a bit of a drag through the gorse – been there and done that before. How wrong I was.

The doctor said I'd snapped my ACL. This is the ligament in the knee that connects the femur to the tibia. That explained then why when I stood up after it had happened it felt like my upper and lower leg bones were no longer attached. I was offered the options of a sedentary life or knee surgery to reconstruct the ligament. "Oh – thank you very much, I'll have the surgery." I said. My mind was whirring with "how long am I going to be grounded". Nine months on the waiting list and then nine months of rehabilitation afterwards. I was told I couldn't fly, even in a leg brace and no amount of jumping up and down – well hopping on the good leg was going to make any difference.

So off I hobbled home to moan "what I am I going to do for a year and half if I can't fly?" My husband Stu said, "Fly something else." He knew I'd be unbearable being housebound, he knows I hate housework. My initial reaction was that I didn't want to fly anything else but his only other suggestions for knee-less activities were sailing or knitting! He soon had all the details of how to start gliding and it was not as pricey as I'd anticipated - only £550 from 1st flight to solo. I did still think "I won't like it as much as paragliding but it'll keep me out of mischief until my undercarriage is mended."

So off I went to Nympsfield. The first flights a few weeks after the accident were a mixture of joy to be back in the air and sadness at flying above the paragliders at Frocester - "I'd rather be down there with them" I thought.



Everyone at the gliding club was really friendly and felt that having come from a flying background I'd pick it up fairly quickly. Personally I felt it was like being told you'd be able to ride a motorbike when all you'd ever ridden before was a pushbike (with stabilisers).

The first thing to grasp was the winch launch. How was I ever going to get the hang of flying while being rocketed up into the sky? (Contrary to the opinion of friends and family, I do not do adrenaline sports, I just like flying!) The instructors would regularly remind me to breathe when we got to the top of the launch. So that's why I was feeling weird then; I wasn't hypoxic due being at such a great height! It was certainly strange to start the flight higher than I'd ever been on a paraglider.

During the training with an instructor I had some fabulous flights. I flew a cross country up to Cheltenham and was told how to pick suitable fields to land in as we scraped along a ridge. I also had a flight in wave up to 8000ft ATO. The day was so rough on the ground that I flew none of the launch or landing. In fact my head hit the canopy as we came down through the rotor on landing (lesson is; always re-tighten straps on way down). The flying though was just magical, like being parked in a smoothly ascending elevator, picked up from a grey turbulent day into a world of bright sunny blue skies and rolling white fluffy fields. My favourite manoeuvre was loops, I never thought I'd be a budding acro pilot, but I loved the world being inverted, it made me laugh out loud.



There are all sorts of tasks that have to be signed off prior to being deemed safe to be let loose on your own. Other than being able to launch, fly about, and land you have to know about and recover from stalls; in straight flight and thermalling; spins; spiral dives; launch failures at different heights, when the cable breaks or the power fails.

The first flights on my own were brilliant, with no one in the back muttering "string!" (a piece of string is attached to the canopy so you can see that you're flying with rudders & aileron co-ordinated, so as not to yaw). Though unfortunately I started shouting "string" at myself!

The flying I've done this summer has been great. Hopefully I'll get to a level where I can go cross country next year but for the moment it's amazing how far you can pootle about the skies from whatever base is (5000ft ATO -5700ft ASL was my best height gain) and still see the airfield.

Stu has learnt to fly as well, which is great as I never was going to persuade him to climb big hills with a bag of washing. Having two flying-obsessed people in the family is far better than one; need to work on the kids next.

My only problems now are; finding the time to do it all, I am back paragliding, if somewhat rustily. And what can I learn to fly next? Anyone got a balloon I can borrow?

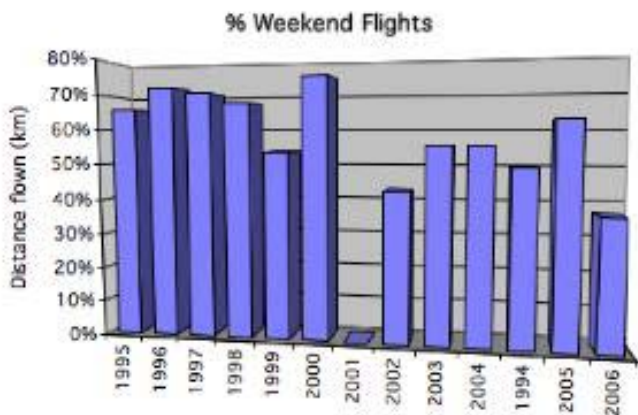
Paragliding XC League 2006

Tim Pentreath has been running his fab Avon paragliding XC league website since he created it in 1993. If you've never seen it, take a look at www.avonpgxc.co.uk. Tim has amassed a wealth of statistics on the club's XC performance over the years, and here he reviews the 2006 season.

Well it's all over for another year...3,631km flown by 30 pilots in 111 flights - that's an average of 32.7km per flight which is better than last year's average of 31.5km per flight. However that's about the only good point of the year, well that and the fact that we had three 100km+ flights (Mike Coupe 133km, Jim Mallinson 115km and 100km). The total distance flown was over 25% down on last year (admittedly that was our best year ever), and the number of flights was almost 30% down.

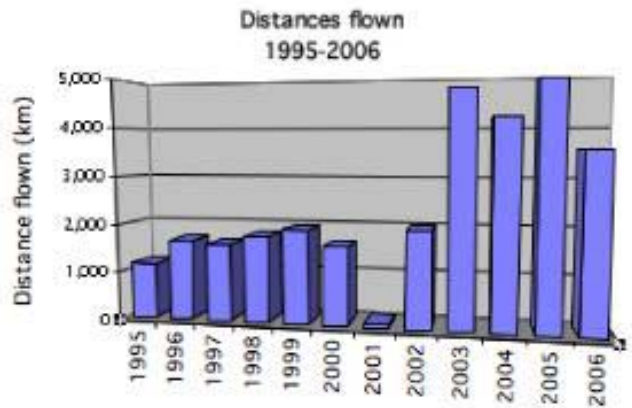
But I think the year was most memorable to me for the lack of decent weekend flying days - all the good days were definitely midweek... now let's see if the evidence backs that up :-)

Later... Yes it does. Only 38% of flights were flown at weekends or bank holidays compared to 57%, 55% and 65% in 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively. This is the lowest ever ratio since I began my records in 1993.



Also, the ratio of average weekend flight distance to average midweek flight distance is the lowest for three years at 0.78 (ie. weekend flights were on average 22% shorter than midweek flights). Now I know that stat is a bit misleading since it's mainly the top pilots who fly midweek so you would expect them to fly further, but even so it all reinforces the picture of a frustrating year for us weekend flyers! Anyway, enough moaning, onto the highlights of the year!

The last time Jim Mallinson won the league was in 2002 when he flew 282km in his top six flights (an average of 47km per flight). Well this year he's flown 487km in six flights (an average of 81km per flight), which is only 20km less than Alex flew in last year's record-breaking



season. So a big round of applause to Jim whose flights included two 100km+ flights as mentioned earlier.

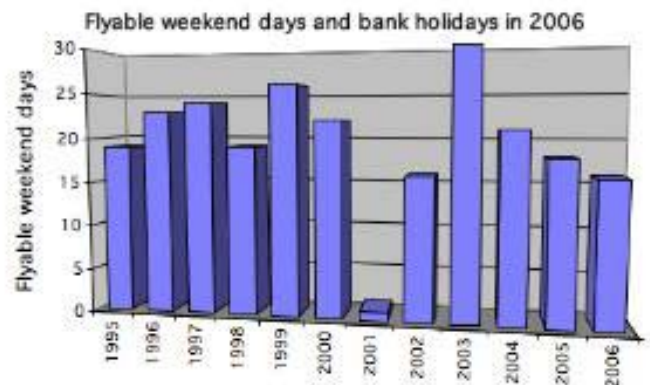
And the battle for 2nd place was pretty intense this year with only 4km separating Ken in 2nd place from Alex in 3rd place. Consistency was the name of the game with Ken and Alex this year; no record breaking flights, but all good!

Mike Coupe missed out on a place in the top three but gets the honour of the longest flight this year, 133km from the Malverns on the hottest day of the year (Wed July 19th). This was the day that Graham Steel got to within a whisker of 10,000ft also flying from the Malverns! Well done Mike on an excellent flight!

And then there's the rest of us - old XC dogs and XC virgins alike, whose flights made up the remaining 55% of the flights entered this year. Notable amongst these flights was Fi's 92km flight from the Malverns on the same day that Mike flew 133km (indeed they flew together much of the way), and Stafford's 75km flight from Merthyr on Tuesday 8th August.

Leading the XC virgins this year is Alan Ng with 49km in his two flights, and congrats are also due to Nigel Doe, Steuart Padwick and Jonathan Rose on their first XCs.

Anyway, well done everyone who's entered a flight into this year's league - let's hope for a better 2007!

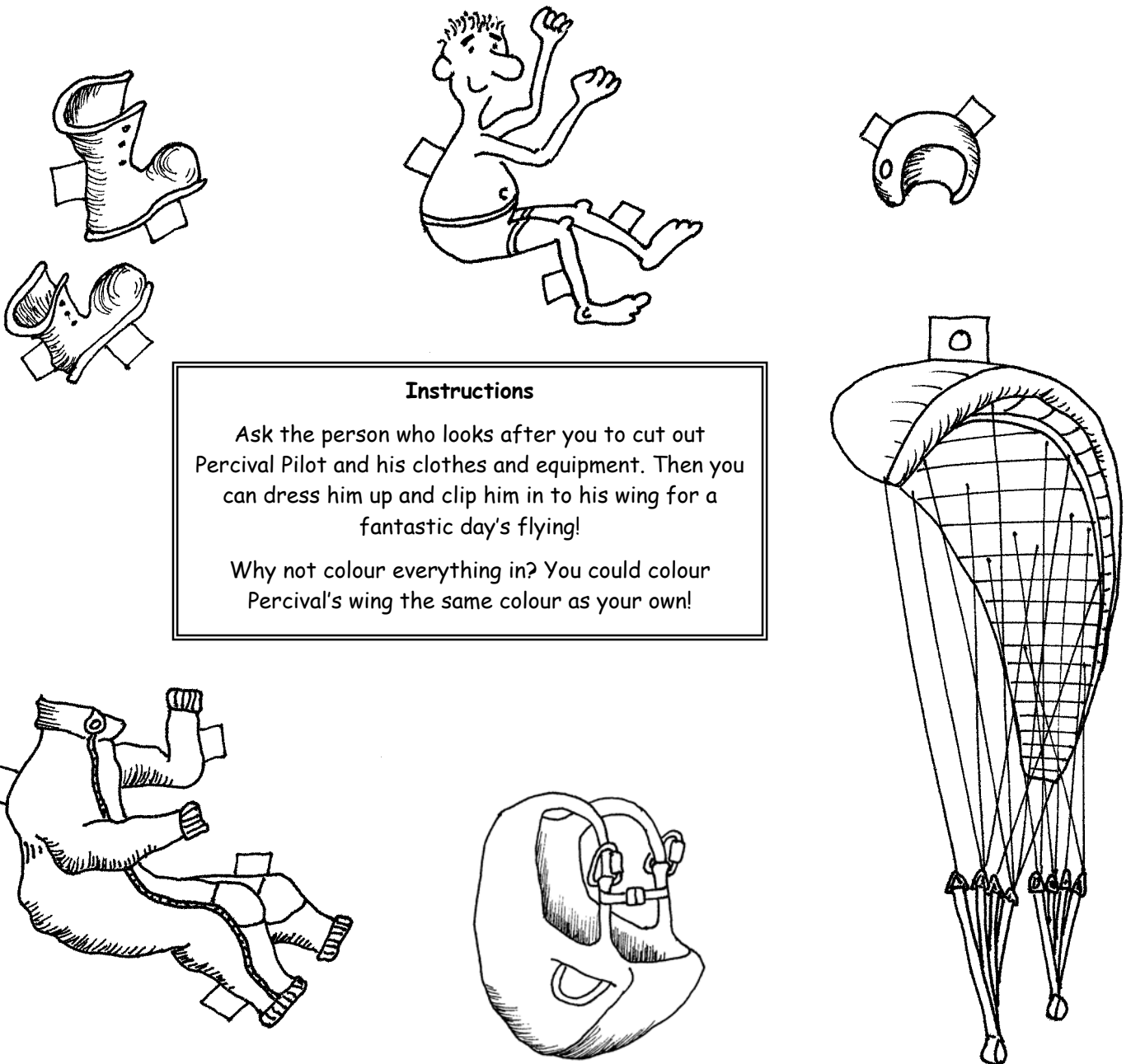


How to Stay Current During the Winter

The staff at the Nova offices know how difficult it is to stay current when the weather is bad and the days are short. That's why we came up with this neat way to keep your flying skills up to scratch. We've brought you Percival Pilot. He's just raring to get out and fly, and unlike you, he can go out whenever you like! You can have fun dressing Percival in his gear, and then you can take him flying round the house. And if you're allowed to play in the garden, you can take Percival out with you!

Why not invite your flying friends round and hold a competition? You can make it more realistic by making clouds out of cotton wool, and you can use radiators around the house for thermals!

And then when you're done flying for the day, you can hang Percival up over your bed. Then you can drift off to sleep thinking about all those wonderful flying experiences you're going to have when the weather improves.



Instructions

Ask the person who looks after you to cut out Percival Pilot and his clothes and equipment. Then you can dress him up and clip him in to his wing for a fantastic day's flying!

Why not colour everything in? You could colour Percival's wing the same colour as your own!

2006 Chabre Open – A Competition Virgin at Laragne

Fancy your first taste of competition flying? The Chabre Open could be for you. Paul Gilfoyle took part this year, and he can't speak highly enough of it.

I started learning hang gliding in 1991, when I was a student at what was then Bristol Polytechnic. The Student Union paid towards the lessons, and the hang gliding club owned two hang gliders – a Clubman and a Vision. However, what they couldn't provide was decent weather, so it was three years before I managed to connect with enough flyable training days to complete my club pilot tasks and get signed off. Meanwhile, a friend of mine had completed his paragliding club pilot training (in about a quarter of the time), and in frustration at my lack of progress with the hang gliding training, I had 'had a go' at a bit of paragliding. I ended up soaring on a paraglider first, and shortly after, managed my first soaring flight on a hang glider. The CFI of one of the several schools I had attended during my Bristol Poly training days was happy to sign me off for both, having seen me fly the necessary tasks. In summary I began 1994 with club pilot ratings in both hang gliding and paragliding, but little money for equipment or time to spend on either activity.

Over the next seven years, I managed to fly a total of around 50 hours on a couple of rather dubious second hand paragliders. This didn't really feel like being current, and in 2001, now having a bit more money and free time, I bought my first new paraglider, a Swing Arcus, and resolved to get a few more hours in. Over the next two years I built up another 50 hours or so on paragliders, including an SIV trip to Turkey with Jockey Sanderson in 2003, where I did my first XC (25km).

In the summer of 2004 I took three months of unpaid leave from work, and spent seven weeks travelling around Europe visiting various flying sites in France, Italy, Austria and Slovenia. My final stop-off was Laragne, where I stayed with David Owen and Rachael Evans in their flying-

oriented B&B, Allez-up. I had a very enjoyable two days' stay, flying 15km each day, and really took to the Laragne style of flying. The terrain is a mixture of rocky ridges and outcrops, and wide flat valleys with plenty of landing options. Unlike the higher alpine sites such as Annecy/Grand Bornand, you feel most of the time as if you are above rather than among the terrain. The wide valleys provide plenty of interesting decision making, having to judge when you have gained enough height over the contours to set off on a long glide to the next thermal generator. The climate is also drier compared to the more northern alpine sites, which means more likelihood of finding flyable weather. Take off, at the top of the 1300 metre Mont Chabre ridge, is around 700 metres above the town. The normal take off direction is down the friendly, if rather rocky, southern side. The northern side has a rather more daunting sheer cliff



The spine-back Chabre ridge

after the initial slope, but this wind direction is less common.

During my stay, whilst chatting to David he mentioned that he was trying to organise a paragliding competition based at Laragne, which would be limited to certified gliders, and suitable for pilots with some XC experience but little or no experience flying competitions. The aim would be to provide a fun, supportive introduction to competition flying for those with little experience, whilst also welcoming more experienced pilots to help spur the newcomers on. A handicap system would ensure that those flying the lower performance gliders could still score well. David had been talking to Ozone and the local council about the possibility of sponsoring the competition, and both were very positive about the idea. I said I thought this was an excellent idea and I would certainly be interested in such a comp. Which brings me (finally) to the subject of this article – the 2006 Ozone Chabre Open.

David succeeded in securing sponsorship from Ozone and the local council, and the first 'Ozone Chabre Open' was held in June 2005. I didn't get it together to apply for entry that year, but heard it had been a great success, and when Mike Andrews posted a message on the Avon board in December 2005, asking if any other pilots were interested in entering the next Chabre Open scheduled for June 2006, I immediately replied that I was, and put my name forward via the Ozone Chabre Open website (address given below). Jo Eades also entered, though there was otherwise surprisingly little interest from the Avon mob - perhaps a few of the likely candidates were 'Birred out'.

This is an open competition, but there are a few entry stipulations. You need to have pilot rating or above, suitable insurance, and to have previously flown an XC of at least 15km. This seems pretty reasonable to me. Although Laragne would be a fine place to do your first XC, it would be better to do it without having to worry about the two dozen other things you have to think about during a comp, such as turn points, GPS, and all those other pilots in the sky. As far as the pilot rating goes, I didn't have this so I dug out my Pilot Handbook, downloaded the excellent pilot exam revision notes produced by Graham Taylor (address given below), and called Robin to check I could sit the exam with him some time before the mid May. I spent probably around ten hours revising the three topics needed for the exam. The meteorology was interesting, the air law was useful, and the flight theory was easy. So not too onerous, and the requirement to have pilot rating for the comp gave me a push to do something I'd been meaning to do for a while.

The comp was scheduled to run from 11th to 17th June, with the first day, Sunday, a practice day - but with tasks set and scored as for the 'real thing' - followed by up to six days of scored tasks, weather permitting. I decided to drive down to Laragne, as it would be useful to have a car whilst down there. I wanted to have a couple of days before the comp to get used to flying the area, so I left Bristol on Wednesday 7th June, staying at Dijon overnight, and arriving at Laragne on Thursday afternoon. During the drive down I was feeling a bit nervous about the coming week, as I had not flown much in the year up to June, and knew that conditions were likely to be fairly strong. I played with my newly acquired GPS - essential for comp flying - to take my mind off my nervousness, setting turn points along the road, creating routes, and getting used to how to set and read the instrument.

I had arranged to meet Mike and Jo at the Laragne campsite, the 'control centre' of the competition. I was going to share a double room with Mike, at a B&B run by some friends of David and Rachael, around 5 miles from the campsite. Jo was staying at the campsite in a caravan. I met up with Jo around 4pm, and found out Mike had had a nasty prang the previous day, after getting caught in a sudden gust-front triggered by a

distant storm. He had landed going backwards, in one of the many apple orchards in the area, and had a gash on his face from the tree branches. Luckily he wasn't seriously hurt, but this was a timely reminder of how unpredictable and sudden these Mediterranean storms can be. Jo had already flown a couple of small XCs, and I was looking forward to getting into the air.

So how does a paragliding competition work? Before the start, a set of waypoints is defined, and every competitor loads these on to their GPS from a PC (or via the website if you're organised enough). Each of these waypoints has an identifying name, and will be either a 'takeoff', a 'landing' or a 'turn point'. I loaded around 5 takeoffs, 5 landings, and 50 turn points onto my GPS at the start of the comp, all within the Laragne area. Waypoints taken from this set are then used to define a task for each day, depending on the conditions. So there is no need to load new waypoints onto the GPS each day, just select the appropriate ones from the list. Each task starts at a takeoff, passes via several turn points - between three and five in this comp - in a defined order, and finishes at a landing - which is called 'goal', because that is where you're trying to get to. Your GPS track log is used to verify that you have followed the task correctly. For those who reach goal, it is simply a case of 'the quicker you get there the more points you get', providing you have passed within the designated distance (normally 400 metres) of each turn point in the correct order. If you don't reach goal, but still complete some of the course, you will score according to the total length of the course you have completed - again, assuming you have logged the turn points correctly up to the point where you land. In this case, the time taken is not relevant, providing you land before the 'task deadline', which is usually way later than anyone is likely to land. The total distance of the tasks set in this comp varied between 38 and 54 kilometres.

So when does the clock start? Each day, the comp director will define times for 'Window Open', 'Task Start', 'Window Closed' and 'Task Deadline', depending on the conditions. Lets say, Window Open is 1pm, Task Start is 'Window Open + 1 hour', Window Closed is 2:15 pm, and Task Deadline is 6pm. Then you are allowed to take off any time between 1pm and 2:15pm, you can cross the invisible start line in the sky (which will be defined as a cylinder around takeoff or a turn point) any time after 2pm, the clock for the 'race to goal' time will also start at 2pm, and you need to land before 6pm to get any points. Simple then. This system helps to spread out the competitors, and reduce risk of collision. The more keen pilots will take off early, to get the best chance of good height gain before crossing the start line. The more reticent ones (e.g. me) will tend to wait 30-40 minutes after Window Open, when the rush has died down. This still gives 20 minutes to gain a bit of height and position for the Task Start. As the start line is a cylinder, the pilots in the air have plenty of options on where to wait



The task board

for Task Start time, both vertically and horizontally, without putting themselves at a disadvantage.

One thing to bear in mind is that it is very easy to have an excellent flight, but score badly, if you don't follow the task rules to the letter. Crossing the start line before the Task Start time, even if only by 30 seconds, will mean you won't score anything. If you only get within 450 metres of the first turn point, instead of 400 metres, then you will also score nothing, even if you fly the rest of the course perfectly. Also bear in mind that the GPS will only be logging track points periodically. So if you are logging every 30 seconds, and you enter the 400 metre cylinder around a turn point 2 seconds after one point is logged, and leave it 2 seconds before the next point is logged, then sorry, your track log says you haven't made that turn point, so null points. On this last point, modern GPSs can happily log every 10 seconds without filling up the memory during a flight of several hours, and when flying in a competition you should always configure them to do this.

So now on to the important bit – the flying. The next seven days were to be the best sustained period of flying I have ever had, by quite a long way. For simplicity, I'll call Friday day -2, Saturday day -1, and Sunday, the official practice day, day 0. Then the competition proper will start on Monday, day 1, and through to day 4, as no tasks were set on the final two days due to a deterioration in the weather.

On day 2, I took the shuttle minibus from the campsite to takeoff, and took off around 2pm into gentle lifting air. After gaining a bit of height on the ridge I headed north,

and ended up landing at 25km after 2 hours – equal to my previous PB. Day 1 saw a shorter 1 hour flight, and 15km. The conditions were excellent, and the forecast good for the next five days. On day 0, the official practice day, a task of 38km was set, around three turn points. I managed 26km, a new PB (by 1 kilometre). Day 1, the first day of the competition proper, another 38km task was set, I landed after 27km. Another PB. On day 2, a 54km task was set – I managed 52km, in just under 3 hours. So three PBs in three days. I like this place. Day 3 saw a bit of a tricky task, going south instead of north. I took the short way instead of the right way, and went down at 12km. Day 4, a 50km task was set up the valley towards Grenoble. I managed 26km.

The next day, the weather started to cloud over, with the possibility of storms, so no task was set. When this was announced, there was actually a

cheer from the pilots. Everyone was so washed out from the flying, a day off seemed a very attractive option. Some people had flown 10 days in a row, as there were several flyable days before I arrived. I had seven days of successive flying, a total of 13 hours airtime, and 183 XC kilometres flown, more than doubling my total XC distance prior to this. When I entered the comp, I had in mind that I didn't want to end up in the last 10%. My final position was 66th out of 108 pilots (there was a separately scored group of 12 self-declared 'expert' pilots for fairness) so I was more than happy with this. Jo and Mike had similar experiences. On paper, they ended up a bit lower in the ranking than me, but I think this was more down to their GPS issues than their flying – they both managed to make goal on at least one occasion, whereas this eluded me (but by 2km – so close!). We did have an Avon team, consisting of Mike and myself (Jo deserted us to join a girlie team). However, as there were only two of us, and the normal team size was at least four, with the total of the best three scores going forward for the team, we were at a bit of a disadvantage. This was reflected in our final position, shall we say.

In addition to the flying, there were debriefs and talks every evening from various well known figures in the free flight community, and two social evenings with food, drink and music. These events took place on the campsite or, in the case of one of the social evenings, in the square of a charming village 10 kilometres away, with transport laid on from the campsite. There was also an opportunity to demo ozone gliders. I tried a Geo, Buzz and Rush. It was a great chance to compare the characteristics of the low

and high-end 1-2s (not sure about those bootlaces they used for the main risers on the Geo, though).

The organisation of the whole event, flying and non-flying related, was superb, with the comp director, minibus drivers, retrieve co-ordinators, GPS downloaders, debriefers, cooks, DJs, and many more all putting in a huge amount of effort to ensure everything ran smoothly. The entry cost was 120 Euros. To

say that was a bargain would be something of an understatement. The lifts to takeoff alone were worth that. This sport can be very frustrating as we all know, and a lot of us have been in the position of spending a lot of money on a foreign trip to a 'guaranteed' flying destination, only to pass a week in the bar waiting for the rain to stop or the wind to die down. But sometimes,



everything comes together – the place, the weather, the people – and makes up for all the frustration. This was one of those times.

In case you hadn't guessed by now, I would heartily recommend Laragne to all levels of pilot as a flying destination, and would recommend anyone who has a little bit of XC experience and wants to get some inspiration and progress a bit further to enter the Chabre Open next year. Unfortunately it is likely to be over

subscribed, so if you are interested keep an eye on their web site - registration is likely to open within a few weeks - or better still, lets get together and organise an Avon team entry. One point to bear in mind for general visits is that conditions can be a bit full on in July and August. Probably June and September are more suitable unless you're looking for mega-scary stuff.

Some related web sites

The Chabre Open website: www.fylaragne.com. Gives information on past and future 'Chabre Open' competitions, including results and individual track logs. Sign up via this site once registration opens.

David and Rachael's B&B: www.allez-up.com. A beautiful, comfortable flying-oriented B&B with private swimming pool. Good for individuals and groups. Give them a call for information on booking, best time to go, flying and non-flying activities in the region etc.

Remko and Sheila's B&B: www.les-glycines.com. This is where Mike and I stayed during the comp. A lovely old B&B run by a very friendly Dutch couple. Remko flies hang-gliders.

Pilot exam notes: www.pilotnotes.co.uk. Very useful revision notes if you're going to take the Pilot exam.

A few tips if you go to Laragne

- For a general trip to Laragne, I would highly recommend staying at the B&B of David and Rachael or Remko and Sheila. But for the Chabre Open, it's best to stay at the campsite, because this is where you need to gather in the morning, and where stuff happens in the evening.
- If you aren't already, get comfortable with the spiral dive. This applies to any trip to hot, storm-prone regions. During the comp I used a spiral dive for the first time 'in anger', i.e. because I needed to rather than because I chose to. I had to travel about 1km under a very large, lofty cumulus, to get to a turn point. As I was already at base (9000 feet) it wanted to take me in. Now this wasn't a dangerous 'frozen like a chicken and spat out like an orange pip' type of cloud, but going in cloud during a comp is a big no-no, for obvious reasons. So I used a few spirals to lose 1000 feet. In that situation, use of the spiral allowed me to continue to the turn point. In a real 'frozen chicken' cloud situation, it could be a life-saver.
- And finally - The minibuses which ferry people from campsite to take-off during the comp make two trips. The first trip leaves from the campsite. Meanwhile a large coach takes the people who wouldn't fit to the bottom of the track that goes to the top, where they wait for the minibuses to come back down and make the second trip. Don't rush to be on the first trip up, take the coach, because at the bottom of the track is a beautiful river and bathing pool where you can have a cooling dip whilst waiting for the minibuses. Much better than hanging around on the hot dusty top, and there's still always plenty of time to get your kit together before the window opens.

The Treasury Report

Stafford Evans has completed his first term of office in charge of the Avon Treasury. Against all media expectations he did not mount a leadership challenge at the recent committee elections, but it is suspected that his big clunking fist deterred several members from putting themselves forward.

Well at the end of my first year as treasurer Tim P thought it would be a good idea to write a report on the clubs financial year for NOVA. Thanks Tim.

The club's financial year runs from October to September, thus keeping it in line with the AGM. So with luck and some jiggery pokery the new incumbent gets a fresh start when elected. (For elected read press-ganged.)

Financially the club has had a reasonable year, starting with £1253.43 in the club's bank account with HSBC and finishing with £3212.22. Although there are still a couple of outstanding items still to clear, these include toilets for the Mere Bash, room rental at the Compass Inn and a donation to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance. We also have a building society account with the Halifax, the balance here is currently £5244.45. This has recently been boosted from the club's ISA in which we had just over £3000 invested, this has returned £110.28 after tax. The committee decided to close this and seek an alternative investment for the monies. Currently we expect to invest

in a fund though Scottish Widows that is specifically set up for clubs. But as always if you know of a better place (no not your current account) please let the committee know.

On the face of it this all looks rather healthy, which it is. However we never know what the future holds, for instance should a site become available for purchase or the farmers put more of a squeeze on us, the reserve of cash will be essential. But there are of course annual expenses, £875 on site fees, £550 on venue hire, £390 on DVDs for the library and around £375 to print and post NOVA to highlight a few. Another notable expense was a loss on the Mere Bash amounting to over £400; poor weather and a surfeit of parties over three weekends probably contributed to this. I think next year we'll need to assess the timing of the Bash as we can't hope to compete with the likes of the "Homegrown Festival". In the coming year I'd expect to again improve the library if new titles become available, and if we can get a couple of free-flying celebrities in for the monthly meetings we'll cover that as well.

I've only noted where the larger chunks of money have gone, if anyone would like a full copy of the accounts sheet in Excel format please get in touch.

Stafford

Club contact list

| Role | Name | Home | Work | Mobile | E-Mail |
|------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|---------------|--|
| Chairman | Richard Zaltzman | 0117 949 0490 | 0117 925 3456 | 07776 131090 | chairman@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| Treasurer | Stafford Evans | 01225 404063 | 01373 823737 | 07748 145712 | |
| Membership Sec | Andy Bailey | 0117 979 3326 | | | membership@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| Social Secretary | Vacant | | | | socialsec@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| Sites (Overall) | Tim Pentreath | 01225 832922 | | 07905 271114 | sites@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| Sites (North) | Robin Brown | 01453 827202 | 01453 827202 | 07973 844449 | sitesnorth@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| PG Safety | Richard Hellen | 01453 548724 | | 07969 819505 | safety@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| PG Competitions | Ken Wilkinson | 0117 962 0455 | | 07792 833991 | pgcomps@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| PG Low Airtime | Iain MacKenzie | 01225 314655 | | 07702 020886 | pgla@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| HG Safety | Tony Moore (Also Neil Atkinson) | 01985 214579 | | 07775 692309 | hgsafety@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| HG Competitions | Neil Atkinson | 01264 323813 | | 0773 331 2852 | hgcomps@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| HG Low Airtime | Neil Atkinson | 01264 323813 | | 0773 331 2852 | hgla@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| Nova Editor | Richard Danbury | 01761 221731 | | 0787 668 1397 | editor@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| Webmaster | Rich Harding | 0117 983 1782 or 00 31 346 354454 | 0117 983 1782 or 00 31 346 354454 | 07966 491138 | webmaster@avonhgpg.co.uk / news@avonhgpg.co.uk / gallery@avonhgpg.co.uk |
| Librarian | Mike Humphries | | | | library@avonhgpg.co.uk |

PG Tips

This time PG Tips goes all technological! Here Ken Wilkinson tells us in a clear and concise manner (well, concise anyway) how to upload files onto a Garmin 76C GPS. Of course, you should always consult a club coach or your instructor if you're in any doubt that you can apply the advice safely – Nova recommends Howard for all questions of a technical nature.

Before you do any messing with importing files or registry edits make a restore point!! (Control panel- then 'help and support' on the left).



Download

Sendmap and img2gps software. (Google search) The img2GPS is a loader for files.

Contour maps and essentials, from SMC website: http://www.smc.org.uk/books/books_contour_maps.htm. (Open source). You will need to go to the mirror site: http://www.lukedesigns.co.uk/maps/contour_maps.htm to get the files that work!!

Download airspace maps. You can install these straight into Garmin Mapsource by following the instructions. The **reg** update works a treat. Copy the files, into 'airspace' folder in Garmin. (File-New-airspace). Chose the transparent version. They look better than the previous ones, much smoother though I haven't checked the accuracy. <http://www.surepower.co.uk/Airmaps.htm>. For the new Bristol airspace changes, try <http://ukgarminairmap.wikispaces.com>.

Suggested Data fields. I've got two data fields on the map. (*Speed and distance to destination* so you can see how far you've gone). On the trip computer you can select:

Destination (to find how far you've gone)

Moving time (flight time)

Speed

Glide Ratio, then whatever you want!

Basic ideas!! The units come with a **basemap** which is hard wired!! This is adequate on a 76C and better on a 76S. You add on **extra maps** which can overlay and all be seen if they are transparent. (like the **contour maps** and the **transparent airspace files**)

The Mapsouce maps (Garmin) give detailed roads.

The airspace will block some of the Mapsource detail so you need to upload these first on the list so you can switch on and off as you need. (Also there's everyday/weekday airspace to toggle in and out.)

USB update problems

Use 'test connection' to see if the computer and GPS are talking to each other. If not, you may need to download the USB driver update from Garmin.com, going to support/updates and downloads/additional software and selecting your unit from a long list. Amazingly Garmin have supplied a product that does not always work. If in spite of going through the self-extracting driver upgrade which proudly says it is working you may still find no contact!@!. (Make sure the file is in the Garmin folder under 'usb driver' so you can find it.)

Go to control panel/click help and support, on the left, click add new hardware, and you will find an exclamation mark by the Garmin USB. Scroll to bottom to 'add new hardware' and when it asks to look for the driver, go to the Garmin folder and click on the upgrade. It should then work!!

To make an upload

Fire up IMG2GPS.

Click 'load folder'.

Go to C:/Garmin/Airspace and open the img files. Select weekday and everyday, or whatever you want. You don't see the name of the file till you import it into IMG2GPS.

Go to C:/Garmin/Contours, and again select what you want. The whole lot is 67Mb.

Go to the folder in Garmin that has your Mapsource products.

Select what you want up to 110Mb.

Click 'Upload to GPS' which will take about 5 minutes.

To switch maps on and off

From Map, -Menu,- setup map,- and go to the 'i' . Toggle down to highlight the map that can be toggled on or off. Quit to save setting and exit.

You can also try experimenting with the various options e.g. 'switch euro maps on/off' to get what you want.

The New(ish) Club Committee

The club AGM was held at the November meeting, and the election was held for the committee posts. Most of the committee were enthusiastically volunteered to stand for re-election (including those who weren't there), and in a remarkable triumph for democracy, they were duly voted in.

Amy Stanton stood down from the post as Librarian, and Cathy Lawrence relinquished the post of Social Secretary. Many thanks are due to them for their hard work over the past year. We welcome just one new face to the Committee - Mike Humphries has taken over as Librarian.

But that leaves the very important post of Social Secretary vacant. So if you would like to help the members of the club continue to live the debauched social life to which they have become accustomed, please step forward!

Tim Pentreath
Sites (overall)



Richard Zaltzman
Chairman

Richard Hellen
PG Safety



Tony Moore
HG Safety

Neil Atkinson
HG Competitions
and
HG Low Airtime
Contact



Mike Humphries
Librarian



Robin Brown
Sites (north)

Richard Danbury
Nova Editor



**Social
Secretary**

Andy Bailey
Membership
Secretary



Stafford Evans
Treasurer



Rich Harding
Webmaster



Iain Mackenzie
PG Low Airtime
Contact



Ken Wilkinson
PG Competitions





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| Up Trango 1 M | 85-105kg | £350:00 |
| Gradient Bliss L | 95-120kg | £400:00 |
| Ozone Vulcan S | 65-85kg | £700:00 immaculate, like new |

Call Robin tel 01453 827202

Mobile 07973 844449

www.airtopia.com robin@airtopia.com

Caption Competition

Last issue's photo was of Graham Richards enjoying that great Spanish delicacy "flan". The winning entry, getting twice as many votes as the next most popular, was by Stafford Evans:

Graham nearly choked when he realised he just offered to pay the bill in Spanish.

Well done Stafford!



Photo: Richard Zaltzman

Here is this issue's photo, which Stafford took when Mike Humphries thought he was all alone on the hill.

Send your entries to editor@avonhpgp.co.uk, if you know what's good for you. And what's good for you is a brand new 1:500,000 airmap, complete with all the new Lulsgate airspace, including the Bath Gap. You've got to be in it to win it!

Classifieds

For sale

ASPEN-1 DHV2 canopy 24sq m. 70-85kg, 75 hours, serviced 2006. Does have a patch but still a great wing for a lighter XC pilot. £750

Metamorfosi Conar reserve P16, as new, and as used by the champions £350.

Contact Mike Andrews on 0117 9682140 or email andrewsmj@onetel.net.

The other entries were:

Graham prepares to demonstrate that scene from The Green Mile when he realises he should have simulated it with 'flan!' - **Graham Richards**

Just because he'd been handcuffed by the police, Graham saw no reason to miss out on his desert. - **Richard Zaltzman**

"How are you feeling, Graham?" "Better. Better get a bucket." - **Richard Danbury**

Graham demonstrates the Hamster technique of preparing for that record breaking XC flight. - **Graham Richards**

"I just hope it's not too rough tomorrow..." - **Richard Zaltzman**

"One way or another, it's coming out." - **Graham Richards**

"I don't care how far he's flown, I'll beat Ken at something if it's the last thing I do." - **Richard Zaltzman**

"I don't mind the flan-eating part of this record-breaking attempt, but sitting on these drawing pins is just too much!" - **Richard Danbury**



Photo: Stafford Evans