

NOVA



The Magazine of the Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club.



Cover Photo: The cover photo was taken by Martin Harris. It features Tom Arnold late in the day at Westbury. The light is as it was caught in the sunset without any photo-shop trickery!

Editorial:

Hello and welcome to the August Nova. In this edition you'll find the details of the forthcoming Mere Bash which is hopefully already in your diaries, you'll see the contact details for getting your ticket and all the attractions of the Bash. Thanks to the people who sent in entries for the T-Shirt design competition for the Mere Bash, there is now a team of Elves (seconded from Ubley) putting the design onto enough shirts to adorn the masses in September!

Congratulations to Richard Stiling who emailed all the correct answers to the May song lyrics competition. Your voucher for Par Avion will be with you soon. If you want a £25 voucher to spend with the Par Avion school and shop then the third and final song lyrics competition will be of interest.

A big thanks to the people that have submitted photos, articles and captions for this edition of Nova. As always I'm reliant on your contributions to put this magazine together, so if you can contribute something for the December Nova we'd all like to see or read what you've been up to this summer.

The titles I hoped would prompt some follow-up articles "10 things I know about flying" and "Reader's Sites" where you tell all about sites within a days travel of the Avon club area. If you have any ideas on what would make a good competition for the December Nova I'd like to hear your ideas as I've run out of song lyrics related to flying – apologies for the cheesy-pop I've had to resort to.

Happy Reading, Top Flying, Jon Rose, Editor.

Chairman's Chunter:

Now stop moaning about the recent bad weather; it means you'll have time to read Nova properly! And anyway, I want to look forward to a couple of club events that are coming up, neither of which depend on the weather (well, not much anyway).

You may remember that Chris Jones, our Chief Coach, wrote in the February issue of Nova about the club's plans to re-energise its coaching activities. To that end, Chris has organized a Club Coach course to take place on the weekend of 1-2 November. This is a BHPA course that is run a few times a year around the country. By doing the course you get the BHPA Club Coach qualification, which ensures that you are aware of the ins and outs of advising other pilots on their flying. It's very important that clubs can offer effective coaching, as it's part of the training system – just think back to how you felt when you left your flying school with your CP qualification. You had never flown in a thermal, never flown a crowded site, and you might not have even done a 360° turn! I expect you were grateful when someone offered some advice.

So if you would like to do the course please give your name to Chris (coaching@avonhgpg.co.uk). Normally the course would cost you something in the region of £35, but the committee has agreed to subsidise it, so it will cost you just £10. There's no such thing as a free lunch of course, so if you take advantage of the subsidy you will be expected to take an active part in the club's coaching. But you'll be out flying anyway, so why not take a little time when you're on the hill to help out some of the pilots who are going to be the strength of the Avon Club in the coming years?

Please don't think that you need to have years of experience and hundreds of hours of airtime to be a coach. When I went on the course a few years ago, the trainers were very keen to point out that even relatively inexperienced pilots can make good coaches. If you yourself qualified fairly recently, you are likely to be in touch with the issues that a low-airtime pilot faces. You don't need to know everything in order to offer good coaching, you just need to know the limits of your knowledge.

And if you're already a coach, and you want to continue with active coaching, maybe you could also consider doing the course. The BHPA has said that it now expects coaches to re-validate their qualification every five years, so maybe now is the time for you to do so. That's what I'm going to do (and I know I won't get it cheaper than £10 elsewhere!).

So that's one of the events that are coming up, and the other is of course the Mere Bash. I hope you've already seen the announcements (and Richard Zaltzman's article in the August Skywings). If you've been before you'll know that it's a party to end all parties, with bands, bonfire, barbeque, bouncy castle, and best of all – cheap beer! It takes place in the bottom landing of the historic Rifle Range at Mere, just off the A303 in Wiltshire. Mere has been used for free flight ever since the early days of hang gliding, so it's a fitting place to celebrate our sport.

The Bash takes place on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 September, with the entertainments reaching their peak on Saturday evening. Children are most welcome to run riot too, and most years the bouncy castle sees some pretty punishing use. This year we again have three bands: Bitter Ruin and Jam with Robina will again be starting off the evening's musical entertainment, and then the now legendary Rock Pirates will blast us into the small hours of Sunday morning.

Tickets will be £10 in advance and £15 on the door, with children under 16 free. That includes your camping on Saturday night, all the music and other entertainment, a huge barbeque for you to cook your food on, and you get the best atmosphere you'll have experienced all year. You even get salads laid on (kindly provided by volunteers – contact the committee if you're willing to do one.)

Tickets are selling fast, so please contact Ali Lees at socialsec@avonhgpg.co.uk if you want some, and they'll also be on sale at the 14 August club meeting. See you there!

Enjoy your flying, Richard

Committee Meeting, 12 June 2008.

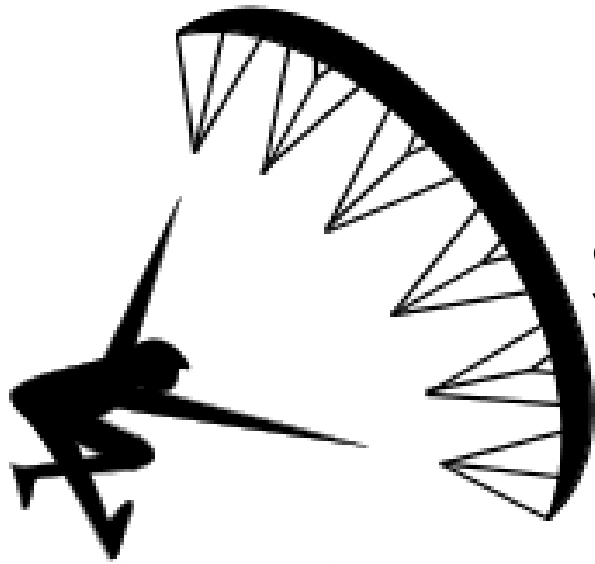
Summary of the minutes for publication in Nova

The club committee met on 12/6/08. The following is a summary of the meeting.

Mere Bash – Arrangements for the Mere Bash were discussed.

Membership – Membership numbers were reviewed. There has been a gradual decline in membership in recent years. Ways of maintaining and increasing numbers were discussed.

Club website – Improvements to the website were discussed.



Mere Bash

6th & 7th

September 2008

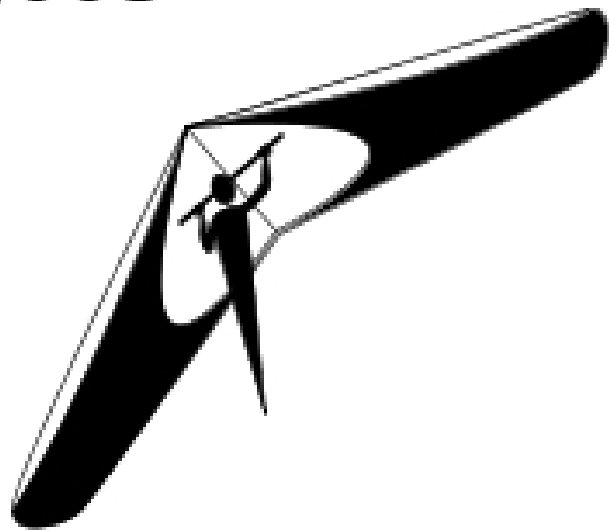
£10 in advance

£15 on the day

Mere Bash

—●— 2008 —●—

This year the Avon Club will again be marking the end of the summer with its legendary Mere Bash. It's a party to end all parties, with bands, bonfire, barbeque, bouncy castle, camping and best of all – cheap beer!



The Bash takes place on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th September, with the entertainments reaching their peak on Saturday evening. There's a fantastic line up of bands - Bitter Ruin, Jam with Robina and the legendary Rock Pirates.

To book your ticket contact Ali Lees @ socialsec@avonhgpg.co.uk

As usual it's held in the bottom landing field at Mere.
<http://www.avonhgpg.co.uk/sites/rifle.php?site=7>

Airwave British Clubs Challenge - Sunday 15 June 2008.

By Ian Mackenzie.

8.45 on a Sunday morning at a dodgy meeting point at Junction 17 on the M4. Gliders quickly piled into the back of an estate car and off.

Next stop, the much more engaging surroundings of the Honey Café in Bronllys, whilst sitting on the outside terrace facing the glorious escarpment of the Black Mountains. Only trouble is, the sky doesn't look too good. Much grumbling from the assembling pilots, who console themselves by enjoying some seriously good cooked breakfasts.

Time moves on. Now the motley crew are sitting on top of the site known variously as Aberedw, Tremaen, Builth Wells or Hundred House. It's too windy to fly. We sit down and wait...and wait. At one point a minor revolt breaks out. Someone can't take any more and wants to go a beach. But its miles to a beach! The rebellion subsides, and so does the wind. Waiting has paid off.

We have four teams competing in a round of the British Club Challenge sponsored by Airwave. There are two teams from Avon, an A and a B team, the South East Wales Dragons and Dunstable.

The day is beginning to look better. We creep into the air in dribs and drabs. It's still quite windy and we push out front looking for lift. At first nothing much develops but then a weak climb draws us in and a group begins to slide over the wide, flat top of the hill behind the escarpment. The lift stays weak and the group spreads out. There is a lot of watching; checking for anyone who might be going up, then chasing them. Most are just holding height. Some push for the West side of the hill hoping for more luck there. I hold my position and grab onto a blip which isn't taking me up, but isn't letting me down either. I'm drifting in zeros and the strong drift is taking me off the hill and leading towards the next ridge. Now I'm beginning to climb, but slowly.

Someone has seen me. Ken Wilkinson and Jo Eades head over and connect with my thermal below and behind me. We work hard keeping our gliders in the lift. Down below, there are gliders landing on the second ridge. At least we are doing better than some people.

Things are getting better. My lift seems to top out at 3,000 ft so I push on and find more lift, take a climb, then push on again. There is now a nice cloud ahead and I can feel it drawing me up. I take the climb all the way to base at 5,000 ft and sit on the sunny edge looking at the fantastic views over the Wye Valley towards Hay Bluff. I've lost sight of Ken and Jo, but now I see Ken in race mode hurtling past me about 500 ft below and heading towards the Bluff. As he crosses the valley, he sinks like a stone. I stay where I am.

Another Avon pilot, Alan Davies joins me under the cloud. That makes four Avon in the air. Has everyone else landed? We pick our moment and then cross the valley keeping our height much better than Ken. Even so, I'd like to use my speedbar. I can't. It seems to be caught up on one side. I spend a couple of minutes disconnecting it and reconnecting it. OK, now it works but I'm sure I lose some height as a result.

I'm now approaching Hay Bluff, and there are paragliders on it. I've dreamed of this, to fly up to the Bluff from distance leaving the mortals down below gazing up enviously. It's a good feeling.

As I pull over the top of the Bluff with a good 2,000 ft clearance my plan is to fly straight down the Pandy ridge as the sky looks great. Unfortunately it is not to be. Immediately I begin to sink and keep on sinking. I don't want to bomb out on top of the hill, so make the quick decision to dive over the East side. Now I'm really sinking. Just as well I'd got the speed bar sorted. I speed up and push

away from the ridge sinking below ridge height but also out from behind the corner of the Bluff. I'm preparing to land when the vario suddenly gives up its moaning and begins to bleep. I bang the glider round and grab hold of a rough, strong little core that is my only chance of getting up. It works and I soon find myself scooting skywards. Again, I've been spotted. Alan cruises in on his Avax XC2 to join the thermal above me.

Having got a bit of height back, I can take stock. Jo and Ken are still around. In fact they are both down where I was a couple of minutes before. Jo is circling and seems to be climbing out. I lose sight of Ken and assume he has landed. Still can't see anyone else. If it really is just us, then Avon is doing well.

Alan and I now circle together with Jo working likewise but maybe a thousand feet lower. We know what the next obstacle will be; the danger area around the SAS base in Golden Valley. I keep squinting at my GPS. I should be able to see the danger area on the screen, but can't. I begin to get anxious about carrying on. I'm not on radio so can't talk to Alan. No matter, he bellows something incomprehensible, "blah, blah, blah, Skirrid" and sets off on a glide towards the lone hill to the South. I get the message and set off after him. We are steering a dog leg to take us round the danger area. Mission accomplished and we now heading South-eastwards again. The drift is less than it was and the lift is also fading. The best of the day is over.

Jo has less height, so is first of the remaining trio to land, putting down near the road between Hereford and Abergavenny. A couple of kilometres later, I land, choosing a golden stubble field which turns out to have great views of the Pandy ridge. Alan cruises above checking his options, before deciding he likes the look of my field (and of the village with a pub down the road). Big grins all round. We imagine the cloud behind us being generated by Ken fuming on the ground.

When the Angel Inn in Grosmont opens, the locals are friendly and interested and buy us cider till the retrieve arrives.

43K flown, a winning team performance in the BCC and a lift to take us home. Its been an excellent day.

WHITE HORSE MARQUEES (Sponsors of the Mere Bash)

Why not try flying something different in 2008 like Bertie's new open-cockpit microlight (below left)?

Full training up to NPPL given in this fantastic fun flying machine!
Or how about flying on water with a Sky Ski Hydrofoil (below right)?
Trial flights by appointment.



White Horse Marquees
Tel. 01985 840705
whitehorsemarquees.co.uk
foilflyer.co.uk



Song Lyrics Competition. (Music to Fly to, Vol. 3)

A third and final volume of flying related tunes. All you need to do is email the song title or group / artist to each of the ten songs below. Again, there is a £25 voucher for Par Avion up for grabs. (email to editor@avonhpgg.co.uk) deadline is 30th November.

1. I got my head checked, By a jumbo jet, It wasn't easy, But nothing is.
2. Everytime I try to fly, I fall without my wings.
3. All this time, spinning round and round, made the same mistakes that we've always found.
4. You know that it would be untrue, You know that I would be a liar, If I was to say to you Girl, we couldn't get much higher.
5. Fantastic Expectations, Amazing Revelations.
6. (Together) We will make our plan, (Together) We will fly so high.
7. But look around, The leaves are brown, And the sky is a hazy shade of winter.
8. Because I'm easy come, easy go, Little high, little low, Anyway the wind blows doesn't really matter to me, to me.
9. See how they run like pigs from a gun, see how they fly, I'm crying.
10. Faster than the speeding light - She's flying.
11. Wanna fly to a place where it's just you and me, Nobody else so we can be free.
12. Did you ever know that you're my hero, and everything I would like to be? I can fly higher than an eagle...



For the latest Windtech news, reviews, images, and info, see...

www.windtech.co.uk

UK Tel **01273 812 442** info@windtech.co.uk

The advertisement features a large background image of a yellow paraglider over a rocky coastline. At the top, there is a white line-art logo of a person with arms outstretched. Below the logo is a row of eight small square images showing various paragliding scenes: a purple canopy, a person's back with a harness, a person on a cliff, a red canopy, a person in a harness, a red canopy, a blue canopy, and a yellow canopy. The text 'Windtech UK' is written in a large, stylized white font across the middle of the banner.

Safety in France by Richard Danbury

I was flying in the Annecy area of France a couple of weeks ago with a group of Avon pilots. If you haven't been before, it's a great place with many flying sites and good infrastructure for paragliding (two of the sites overlooking Lake Annecy have shuttles that take you to the carpeted launches!)

Because so many pilots go there, now and again there's some sort of incident like a pilot coming down in the trees. But the rescue services are very good at getting people out, because they get a fair bit of practice! But they need pilots to be prepared for a rescue and to have a few items of equipment with them. So this year they have produced this safety leaflet that explains (in English!) all the information and equipment you will need for an efficient rescue.

If you're going to Annecy soon, you can pick one up at the Plan Fait landing field. But wherever you're going to be flying, I think there's some useful information here, and some good tips for what you should have with you if you have a mishap.

Recommended personal security kit

Haemostatic bandage
Whistle
Signalling mirror
Pen distress rocket
Attachment sling to secure position
Line cutter
Long duration glow stick
20 to 25 metres of cord

Conventional distress signals

I need your help.

I don't need your help.

ATTENTION, AWAY FROM A TAKE OFF, A WING LEFT UNFOLDED FOR A WHILE MAY BE CONSIDERED A DISTRESS SIGNAL.

This document has been created by:
 • Les Groupements des Hélicoptères de la Sécurité Civile (HSC) - Mayjet.
 • La Préfecture de Condamine de Haute Savoie (Préfecture de Condamine Départementale de la Haute Savoie (CCD-74) à Annecy).
 • Le Centre Montagne - Savoie - Piémont (CMSP) du Service Départemental d'Incendie et de Secours de la Haute Savoie (SDIS 74).
 • Le Comité Départemental de Savoie en Montagne (CSM).
 • Le régulateur de site de décollage de Montmin (DVL).
 • Les Clubs de Vol Libre de Savoie (CFLS) - Le Club Aéro Sportif d'Annecy, Les Éclaireurs Savoie, Volap, Annecy, le Delta Club d'Annecy, la Ligue Savoie Alpes du Sud Libre et la Fédération Française de Vol Libre.
 • Le Syndicat Intercommunal à Vocation Unique des Hautes de Lac (SIVUL) associations de : Doménard, Montmin, Talloires.
 • La Direction Départementale de la Jeunesse et des Sports de la Haute Savoie.

Before flying

- > Find out the day's weather and its evolution.
- > Check the local weather stations.
- > Ask the locals, the Free Flight regulator* or check www.ffvl.fr
- > Tell someone of your flying plans, launching area and proposed flight path.

ADVICE TO PILOTS

Raising the alarm

- > Call **112**.
- > Tune to the FFVL frequency **143.9875 MHz**.
- > Try to establish contact.

Be ready to answer the rescue service's questions

- > Who are you ?
- > Where are you (location, altitude, GPS coordinates) ?
- > What has happened, when ?
- > What is the wing's colour ?
- > What is the nature of any injuries ?
- > What are the weather conditions ?

Stay contactable by telephone

Listen on the FFVL frequency

143.9875 MHz

RESCUE SERVICES HAVE PRIORITY

When the helicopter is approaching

Help the rescue teams complete their mission safely.

- > Listen on the FFVL frequency, where the rescue services can contact you.
- > Stay contactable by telephone.
- > If flying, clear the helicopter's activity area.

Secure the zone, stop take offs

- > Pack and remove the gear.
- > Put it out of the helicopter's downdraft.
- > Evacuate the operation zone.
- > Organise a large security perimeter.
- > Clear the public from the zone.

you are treed or on a cliff

- > Secure yourself, attach yourself solidly (see the personal security kit).
- > If you have a reserve chute, tell the rescue team.
- > If you are not completely sure of yourself, don't climb down alone.

You are on a power line

Indicate the fact, the rescue team will proceed once the current has been cut.

- > Avoid all manoeuvres that could cause an electric arc.
- > Do what the rescue team tells you.
- > Keep away from the power lines.

Hitting a pylon doesn't only happen to other people.

Even when there are no injuries, inform the rescue services of anything relevant (eg. a wing left behind...)

Avoid having the rescue services called out for a wing in the trees when you have already left the scene by your own means.

DON'T TAKE OFF DURING THE WHOLE PERIOD THE HELICOPTER IS OPERATING IN THE ZONE.

A rescue can take an hour to an hour and a half, several trips may be necessary.

REMEMBER : A WING IN THE TREES CAN CAUSE MANY 112 EMERGENCY CALLS.

If you are OK, tell 112. Say if your wing has been left in the area and indicate its colour.

Recover your wing as soon as possible, and again inform 112.

May Song Lyrics Competition Answers:

Congrats to Richard Stiling for the winning entry, for those who don't use the SmartGroup...

1. Picture yourself in a boat on a river, With tangerine trees and marmalade skies.

Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds. THE BEATLES.

2. Sail away with me, To another world, And we rely on each other, ah ha.

Islands In The Stream. THE BEE GEES.

3. Julius Caesar and the Roman Empire couldn't conquer the blue sky.

Weather With You. CROWDED HOUSE.

4. On a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair, Warm smell of colitas, rising up through the air.

Hotel California. THE EAGLES.

5. Maybe I'm gonna have to get high, Just to get by.

Space Cowboy. JAMIROQUAI.

6. I feel so extraordinary, Something's got a hold on me, I get this feeling I'm in motion, A sudden sense of liberty.

True Faith. NEW ORDER.

7. And now she's waiting for the right kind of pilot to come, and she'll say to him.., I would fly you to the moon and back.

To The Moon and Back. SAVAGE GARDEN.

8. In a sky full of people, only some want to fly, Isn't that crazy?

Crazy. SEAL.

9. I'm learning to fly, around the clouds, But what goes up must come down.

Learning To Fly. TOM PETTY.

10. I wish I had the wings to fly away from here, But my, my I feel so low, my, my, where do I go?

Little Bird. ANNIE LENNOX.



Tow Conversion course with Par Avion.

By Tom Arnold with photos from Par Avion.

Frustrated with all of those Summer days (I'm sure I remember something called 'Summer' a few years ago) when you sit on the hill in absolutely still air looking longingly at amazing cloud streets only to take a lob into a promising thermal and enjoy a 2 minute sled ride, I decided to get my tow rating.

Inspired by an excellent talk given by the Par Avion instructors at an Avon club meeting earlier this year, Pete and Stevie and I went along to Par Avion headquarters on the 8th of April and handed over our money. We were given a briefing about what to expect from the day and then we bundled into the minibus with a couple of first-day EP students.



Preparing to launch...radio contact is with the winch.

We arrived at one of Par Avion's fields and looked up to see a beautiful sky beginning to fill with fluffy cumulus cloud streets... and we were swiftly advised that for today we would have to ignore those as we were officially students for the day. Top-to-bottoms only. Bigger! Still, if we got our 10 tows done then we would be qualified, and days like this with only a light and variable wind could become amazing XC opportunities.

So we got on with the training, starting with towing each other 2ft into the air with a rope to introduce ourselves to the sensation and to the tow-release. Within half an hour or so I was hooked onto a tow line (there are two attached to the winch) and ready to go.

I watched one of the EP students go first and it all looked very easy. When it was my turn I simply leant back slightly, and then when the line went taught and my instructor told me to launch all I had to do was walk forward while holding my A risers near my ears. Not really a forward-launch as such; it is much much easier as the line does all the work and you just wait for your wing to come up against the tension. Then when my instructor could see that the wing was ready to fly he called 'All out all out' over the radio and suddenly my feet were off the ground and I was going up at 1200ft/min!

My only job was to sit still and use tiny dabs of brake and weight-shift to keep perpendicular to the winch. At around 600ft the line went slack, I put both brakes in one hand, and pulled the release handle. The line dropped away beneath me and I then flew back to takeoff to do my next tow. All very simple really – the most difficult bit was trying to restrain myself from climbing out, as there were thermals everywhere. It only took a few hours to do our 10 tows and suddenly we were all qualified!



The winch controller on the other end of the radio.

The staff offered me one free tow to finish the day, and said that they'd drop me off at around 800ft. Of course I took the tow, but I was a little disappointed when the line went slack at 600ft. However, as I pulled the release I noticed that my vario was still singing away and I realised that they had dropped me off into a lovely big smooth thermal. A voice over the radio advised me to *"Have a little play and land by the van when you want to go back to HQ"*. Brilliant.

I climbed a few hundred feet and messed about a bit in the lovely smooth lift, and I am sure I could have effortlessly climbed out, but I had no map and no reserve (they wanted me to use one of their bumpair harnesses for the training, rather than my airbag) so after 20 minutes I spiralled down and landed next to the van to pack up and go back for a celebratory coffee with the others.

A great day – a lot was learnt in a very fun and relaxed atmosphere. What surprised me most was how safe the whole thing was. I had felt rather apprehensive about putting myself at the mercy of somebody else (not something we usually do in our solitary sport), but my anxiety was unfounded.

The instructors at Par Avion anticipated every potential problem and on the occasions when one of us wandered off course when on tow, the line went slack to allow us to correct our course even before we realised we had strayed.

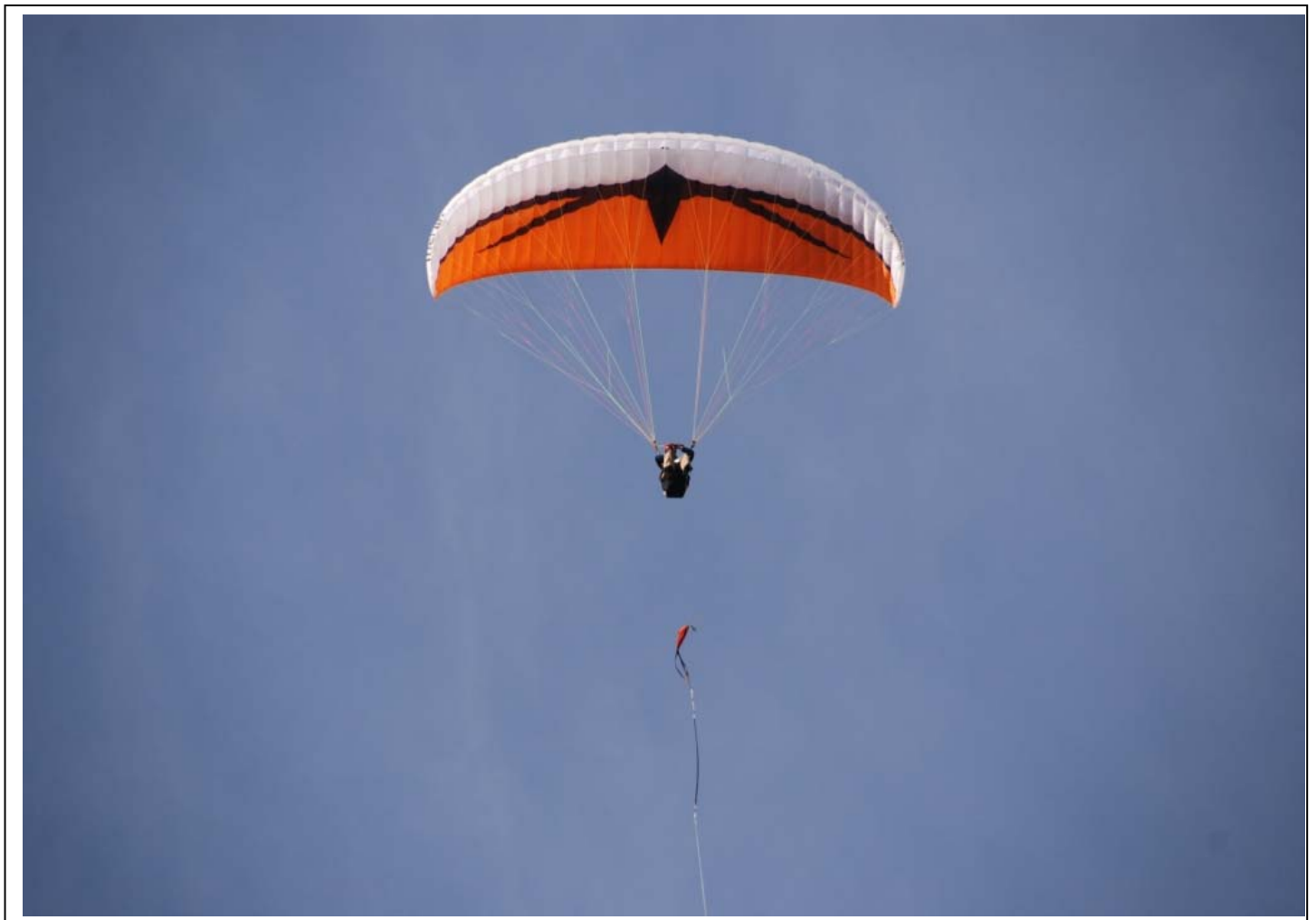
I am now looking forward to some great XCs from a tow field, if we ever get a day with less than 25mph of wind! Here's hoping...

Contacts for Par Avion:

Elm Tree Park, Marlborough, Wiltshire. SN8 1PS

Telephone: (01672) 861380. Fax: (01672) 861580

email: office@par-avion.co.uk



Release and relax!

Caption Competition.

May Caption Competition.

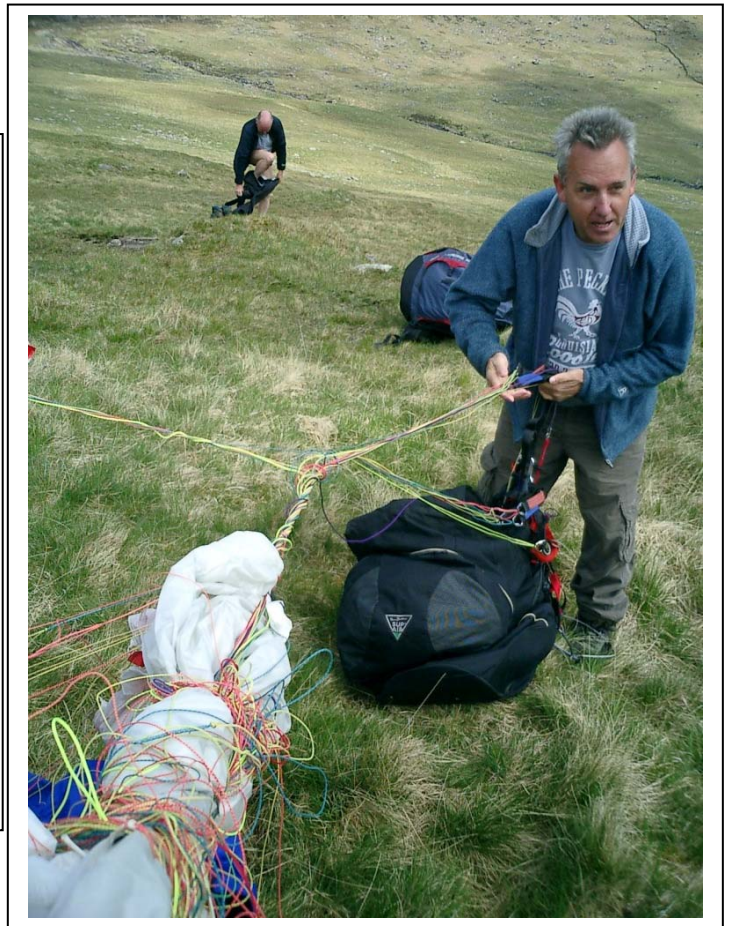
Winner:

" I am just sorting out his lines because after that spiral he has shat himself" **Colin Williamson.**

Rod: "Right Paul, let's see you play your Peruvian ukulele now that you're trussed up like that!"

Paul: "Ha ha! Little does he know, I've already escaped! Now, where's my sheet music for 'Streets of London'?"

Richard Danbury.



August Photo...

The picture was taken by Mike Humphries of Ken W. in St Jean de Sixt (near Annecy). Please send your witty captions for the picture below to editor@avonhgpg.co.uk

