

# NOVA



**The Magazine of the Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club.**



**Cover Photo:** The photos comes from Jim Mallinson and shows Greg Walsh above the Dhauladhar at about 4200m. More on Jim's adventures later in this edition.

## Editor's Bit:

Thanks to everyone who has contributed words and pictures to this edition on Nova. They'll be a new editor taking this magazine to greater heights next year, so thanks to everyone who has provided contributions through 2008, and keep those articles and photos coming – I'm sure there's an article or something to share in all pilots! Also thanks to Par Avion for their sponsorship of our quizzes.

**Cheers, Jon Rose.**

## Chairman's Chunter - December 2008

It's been quite a busy time since the August issue of our august journal. We've had the Mere Bash, hosted a club coach course, held the AGM and elected a new committee, and we've just had the Christmas Party and prize giving. Well you have to do something when it's not flyable!

The Mere Bash was quite an adventure. I went down to Mere on Friday evening, and as I drove with the rain lashing down, I thought to myself "never mind, I'll pitch my tent in the marquee". A call from Tony Moore put me straight on that one. He was already there, and was walking about in the marquee ankle deep in water! We retired to Tony and Cathy's for some consoling beer.

The next morning we went back with spades and started digging drainage ditches. Cathy's son Tom was single-handedly responsible for draining most of the marquee, and then as more and more people arrived everyone mucked in (literally!) laying pallets as duck boards and spreading straw and old carpet. It was a magnificent effort, and it made the party possible. As evening approached, the barbeque was lit and the music started, and the event was another great success. Sunday saw everyone helping again with the clear-up, and by early afternoon you would hardly have known we'd been there. Many thanks to everyone who helped.

The club coach course in November was very well attended, with 13 Avon members present, and about the same number from other clubs. The course was run by Mark Dale, and Dave Thompson of the BHPA, and provided us with some useful insights into effective techniques for coaching. The club's coaches will be meeting in the New Year to discuss the organisation of the year's coaching, so if you have any comments or suggestions please let our Chief Coach, Chris Jones, know.

The AGM was well attended, and not many people fell asleep during my Chairman's report. Far more interesting was the buffet that we laid on, and the talk by John Cheale about hang gliding in Slovenia. The actual election of the committee took no time at all, as none of the posts were contested! The new list of committee members appears elsewhere in this issue. There have been a few changes from last year, and it gives me great pleasure to welcome to the committee Nick Somerville as Sites Officer, and Ben Friedland as Librarian.

Tim Pentreath and Mike Humphries stood down from those two posts respectively, and Jon Rose has stood down as Nova editor. I would like to thank all three for their hard work. Tim has been on the committee for more years than anyone can remember, and during that time he occupied most committee posts, including that of Chairman. Many thanks Tim!

And let's not forget all of the committee members who are staying on; they also deserve our thanks for all their hard work last year.

Stop press! At the election we did not have a candidate for the post of Nova editor, but as I write this, Rob Kingston has confirmed that he would like to take on that role. Many thanks to Rob – it's great to know that our club magazine will continue without a break.

And then last week we held the Christmas Party. We returned to an old favourite, the Green Park Brasserie in Bath, and the evening was hugely enjoyable. A highlight was the photo competition; we had about 40 photos hung around the dining room, and the voting was hotly contested. The standard was very high (and there was only a little muttering about the 'no photoshopping' rule – the committee is going to discuss that at its next meeting!) In the end Graham Richards won by a short margin – you can see his photo in this issue. Then, as the disco started up, we did the prize giving, yelling the names of the prize winners over the strains of Abba blasting from the room next door. It was great to see that even a poor flying year can yield such good competition results. The full list of prize winners is also in this Nova.

Ken also showed us the trophy that the club has won for its performance in the PG national league. I say "the club", but the award is judged on the total distance flown by each club's top four pilots. For Avon those pilots were Jim Mallinson, Alex Coltman, Garry Sandell and Ken Wilkinson, so well done to them. And it's not just a trophy that they won for the club, there are also vouchers to go towards new Niviuk gliders, and some goodies too. We will be discussing how we distribute this cornucopia in a fair way.

Let's look forward to an equally eventful year in 2009.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,  
**Richard**

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### **The 2009 Committee**

The election for the 2009 committee was held at the AGM on 13 November. None of the posts were contested, and at the time there was no candidate for Nova editor. Since then, Rob Kingston has offered to take on the editorship of Nova, so we have a full committee as follows:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>
Chairman	Richard Danbury
Treasurer	Graham Richards
Membership Secretary	Andre Odinius
Social Secretary	Ali Lees
Sites (Overall)	Nick Somerville
Sites (North)	Morgan Nicholas
PG Safety	Richard Hellen
PG Competitions	Ken Wilkinson
PG Low Airtime	Iain Mackenzie
HG Safety	Tony Moore
HG Competitions	Neil Atkinson
HG Low Airtime	Tony Moore
Nova Editor	Rob Kingston
Webmaster	Rich Harding
Librarian	Ben Friedland
Chief Coach	Chris Jones

# Awards for 2008

The annual prize giving took place at the Christmas Party on 9 December. The following table gives the names of the illustrious winners!

Discipline	Award	Prize	Winner
HG	HG XC league	Shield, glassware (and £100 cash donated by Tony Moore!)	Tony Moore, 59.98km
PG	PG XC league	1 <sup>st</sup>	Shield and glassware
		2 <sup>nd</sup>	Glassware
		3 <sup>rd</sup>	Glassware
PG	Longest PG XC flight	Glassware	Jim Mallinson, 119km
PG	Longest PG DHV1/2 flight	Glassware	Ken Wilkinson, 95km
HG	Most improved HG pilot	Glassware	Paul Whatley
PG	Most improved PG pilot	Glassware	Jo Eades
PG and HG	Best novice pilot HG and PG	The Osbaldstone Memorial Cup and glassware	Tim Carr
PG and HG	Longest flight during the Easter weekend	Dave Yeandle Shield	Ben Friedland, 16km
PG and HG	Mere Bash challenge	Tankard	No winner
N/A	Best Nova article	Glassware	Ben Friedland "My first UK XC" Nova, May 2008
N/A	Best photograph	Glassware	Graham Richards "Rod on the Rocks, Snowdon, 2008"

## The club awards down the ages

Some recent conversations with members have shown that it might be useful to write a little about the club's annuals awards. When I took over as chairman a year ago, I wanted to make sure that we had a clear list of club awards, and a written set of rules so that members could know what they have to do to win the prizes. I thought I would just look back at some back issues of Nova to check on the awards that had been made in the past, and to make sure that I understood what the "usual" awards were. Things were fairly clear until I decided to check what Nova says against what is engraved on the various trophies.

Most of it was clear, but it took a while to find my way through the various defunct prizes (e.g. the "Best Cross Country" shield, the "Novice Trophy" shield, the "Pilot Shield"). But the greatest confusion was with the terms "Best Newcomer", "Best Novice Pilot" and "Most Improved Pilot". All those three terms seem to have been used to describe two different awards, and there doesn't seem to have been consistency in applying them. Furthermore, we seem to have been awarding the Osbaldstone Memorial Cup to the "Best Newcomer", even though it is engraved with the words "Presented to the best novice pilot by Sue Osbaldstone July 1979". So, to cut a long story short, back in February I agreed with the committee that we would do away with the term "Best Newcomer", and use the other two terms as follows:

Discipline	Award	Prize
HG	Most improved HG pilot	Glassware
PG	Most improved PG pilot	Glassware
PG and HG	Best novice pilot HG and PG	The Osbaldstone Memorial Cup and glassware

I also agreed with the committee a complete list of awards, prizes and rules and posted it on the club website at [http://www.avonhgpg.co.uk/club\\_prizes.php?menu=3](http://www.avonhgpg.co.uk/club_prizes.php?menu=3). Those are the rules that were applied to this year's awards.

(Apart from, that is, the last-minute introduction of a ban on digital editing of photos for the photo competition! Since the Christmas party that has been the subject of quite some debate on the committee forum. Personally, I say edit away, and let the voters decide if they like the result. But we'll keep you updated on the discussion. Please feel free to post your opinions on the club forum!)

Richard Danbury



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# Rod on the Rocks.

Congratulations to the winner of the photo competition, Graham Richards.

It was taken from the air just below the Snowdon summit (not sensible really, but it just looked too good) and shows Rod Taylor a small speck against the almost sheer rocks that run up from the lake (Llyn Llydaw) to Y Lliwedd.

The photo was taken with a Fuji Finepix S5700 (just £80 on ebay) Shutter speed 1/170, f3.5 and ISO 64. The photo was then cropped for better composure and the tonal range extended to give a full black to white image (aka Ansel Adams) using Paint Shop Pro 7.



## Gone for a Bir. Jim Mallinson reports from India.

I'm just back from India after another fantastic flying season in Bir, in fact the best autumn ever. Eddie Colfox and I had three groups of clients for our fly-guide trips. Unfortunately John Silvester had to drop out at the last minute after putting his back out, so for our first tour we roped in my old friend Debu Choudhury, a Manali-born polyglot Italian/Indian and a brilliant pilot. Having him on board proved very handy because during our first tour cloudbase was low around Bir so we went over to Manali where conditions were great, with cloudbase over 4000m, and Debu was able to show us the best sites.

For the next tour we had just two clients - Miha Razinger, an excellent Slovenian pilot who is a meteorologist and works in Reading, and Jim Chu from San Francisco, who was inexperienced (150 hours airtime) relative to Miha but proved himself well. The conditions in Bir were back to normal, i.e. fantastic, for their trip and after the assessment day we decided to fly to Dharamsala to spend the night. However, when we'd already got there by 1.30 we thought we might as well turn back and we knocked off the 90km out and return with ease. The next day we went over the back and played around in the high mountains before heading west along the high route to Dharamsala. We had our bivi kit with us and found a beautiful spot to land which looked just like somewhere out of the Lord of the Rings.



There were a couple of shepherds camping there on their way down to the plains after six months in the high mountains and they were very appreciative of our bag of sugar as they had almost run out. Hospitable as ever, they treated us to chai, dinner and breakfast and watched us take off the next morning with fascination. Another day we flew to Mandi, where Miha and Jim landed in the cricket ground and were accosted by the local media. On their penultimate day we flew to our luxury bivi camp, complete with raj-style tents and three course meals, and the next day we forged a new route out to the east, turning back at the temple of Parashar on the west flank of the Kullu valley and making it back to the main ridge running up to Bir.

Our last group enjoyed similarly great conditions. We promise to guide our clients for a maximum of seven days during their ten day tours and after five days on the trot these guys were demanding a rest day. Greg Walsh, (pictured below) above the Dhauladhar at about 4200m, clocked up 40 hours in his ten days. This group was less keen to do a vol-biv so we made it back to Bir every day except the last, when we took them to the luxury camp. I'd asked along a few friends to make up the numbers but with gatecrashers it turned into quite a party - there were twenty of us up there! The colonel's team did a great job catering for everyone and the festivities went on into the night.



Once the groups were over I had a few days to do some exploring of my own. I took the high route to Manali and for the first time managed to reach Danesar lake (picture on next page), an imposing looking pool of ice perched at 4200m under a wall of spiky shards of rock.

I had my bivi kit but was alone and figured it would be a pretty chilly night out so high above the treeline and without firewood, so carried on over the col into the Kullu valley, landing near my friends the Acharya family's beautiful ancient wooden temple above Naggar where I spent the night, looked after royally - the two daughters had stayed with me here in Wiltshire over the summer and returned my hospitality in spades.

The next day I decided to walk up above Kullu and try to fly back to Bir. The conditions looked great but by 2 I hadn't found a decent take off so I camped out for the night and carried on up in the morning. At 3000m I found a perfect smooth grassy knoll but the air was much more stable that day and even the vultures were having trouble staying up. I launched at one o'clock. 20 minutes later I landed in Kullu – a 1600m top-to-bottom after a two day walk up!

My last adventure was unplanned - I managed to drop my money belt, complete with passport, visa card, loads of cash and satphone, from about 3500m, 300m above a precipitous bear-infested forest. Eddie saw it fall, marked the area and the next day we flew up there, eight of us, to search. The rest, however, is a long story and my next installment will have to wait...



We will be back in Bir in autumn 2009 and we are also planning to do one tour this spring. For more information on our tours, check out [www.himalayanskysafaris.com](http://www.himalayanskysafaris.com) (soon to be updated) or email me on [jim@khecari.com](mailto:jim@khecari.com). Jim Mallinson.



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## **WHITE HORSE MARQUEES** (Sponsors of the Mere Bash)

Why not try flying something different in 2009 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](http://whitehorsemarquees.co.uk)  
[foilflyer.co.uk](http://foilflyer.co.uk)



# Answers to the August Song Lyrics Competition.

With just 2 correct entries received, both of whom were previous winners, a coin was flipped and Richard Stiling became the two-time song lyrics champion. Many thanks again to Par Avion for the sponsorship, their contact details are at the foot of the page.

## Music to Fly to, Vol. 3:

1. I got my head checked, By a jumbo jet, It wasn't easy, But nothing is.

**Song2. Blur.**

2. Every time I try to fly, I fall without my wings.

**Every Time. Britney Spears. -**

3. All this time, spinning round and round, made the same mistakes that we've always found.

**Sweet Harmony. Beloved.**

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.

**Light My Fire. The Doors.**

5. Fantastic Expectations, Amazing Revelations.

**Fear. Ian Brown.**

6. (Together) We will make our plan, (Together) We will fly so high.

**Go West . Pet Shop Boys.**

7. But look around, The leaves are brown, And the sky is a hazy shade of winter.

**Hazy Shade Of Winter. Simon And Garfunkel.**

8. Because I'm easy come, easy go, Little high, little low, Anyway the wind blows doesn't really matter to me, to me.

**Bohemian Rhapsody. Queen.**

9. See how they run like pigs from a gun, see how they fly, I'm crying.

**I Am The Walrus. The Beatles.**

10. Faster than the speeding light - She's flying.

**Ray Of Light. Madonna.**

11. Wanna fly to a place where it's just you and me, Nobody else so we can be free.

**All The Things She Said. Tatu.**

12. Did you ever know that you're my hero, and everything I would like to be? I can fly higher than an eagle...

**Wind Beneath My Wings. Bette Midler.**

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## ParAvion Paragliding Centre

ParAvion is a school and shop run by Trevor McLoughlin and is based in Marlborough.

**Contacts:** Elm Tree Park, Marlborough, Wiltshire. SN8 1PS

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

email: [office@par-avion.co.uk](mailto:office@par-avion.co.uk)     [www.par-avion.co.uk](http://www.par-avion.co.uk)

# How to not crack 100km! Words by Ken Wilkinson, photos by Ben Friedland.

The recent weather in August had been DIRE. Rain and wind. I had been doing up my kitchen in my summer holiday, but lo and behold, the 15<sup>th</sup> seemed to have great promise.

Graham, Ben Friedland and self made up the team for the trip to Rybury, the tiny hill in front of Milk Hill. It had been getting a good press, as the source of many long XC's, and its lack of airspace downwind meant big distances were possible. On the way, looking at a glorious sky, we dropped in at a garage. I bought a Lucozade bottle, and a flapjack. I will eat the flapjack at 60k and drink the Lucozade at 70k, I pompously announced. This in fact turned out to be what I did!



Rybury hardly works at all but has miles of large fields out front. It is a great trigger point, and is better than the bigger Milk Hill behind. The first hour or so was spent trying to avoid a midair, as several pilots floated a hundred or so feet above the hill. In truth I thought we had missed the day as the upper atmosphere seemed to get milky, cutting off the sun's heat. This proved not to be the case as I felt my first proper bit of convection. This manifested itself in the form of a 100% collapse, the only one I have ever had on my wing. Great! I thought, as this clearly had energy, so I turned right back into it and got a solid 2m/s climb straight to base at over 4000 feet. Gliders were circling half a mile away in the same lift. It was a massive thermal, from ground, all the way up.

I went into cloud a bit, at 4200ft and used the bigears/speedbar to get out of it. There was too much traffic for that, and I headed off towards Marlborough, following Graham and a couple of other gliders. I was very conscious of not 'blowing it' but the circling gliders a mile ahead drew me on. I found strong lift there and soon was at base again. Jim Mallinson was climbing out very slowly, but once he finds lift, he just sticks with it, however light. Ben F left this and went down soon after. Lessons to be learned!

I was alone, but there was a clear line of strong lift downwind, so I cruised happily along it, with the base rising now to around 5000ft. I could see Jim and a few others about 3 miles to the north. I could see the M4 and Didcott coming up quickly and also several gliders very low, some landing. One of these turned out to be Graham, who had been looking down on me 20 minutes before.

I cut cross wind and joined in behind the lead gaggle, Jim M, Carlo Borsattino, and a couple of others. I got low at Adlington, then got a corker, passing south of Oxford, then another low, and yet another. The sky still had a milky appearance, but clearly the lapse rate was spot on. Apparently many other big flights have been done under a milky sky so don't lose faith.



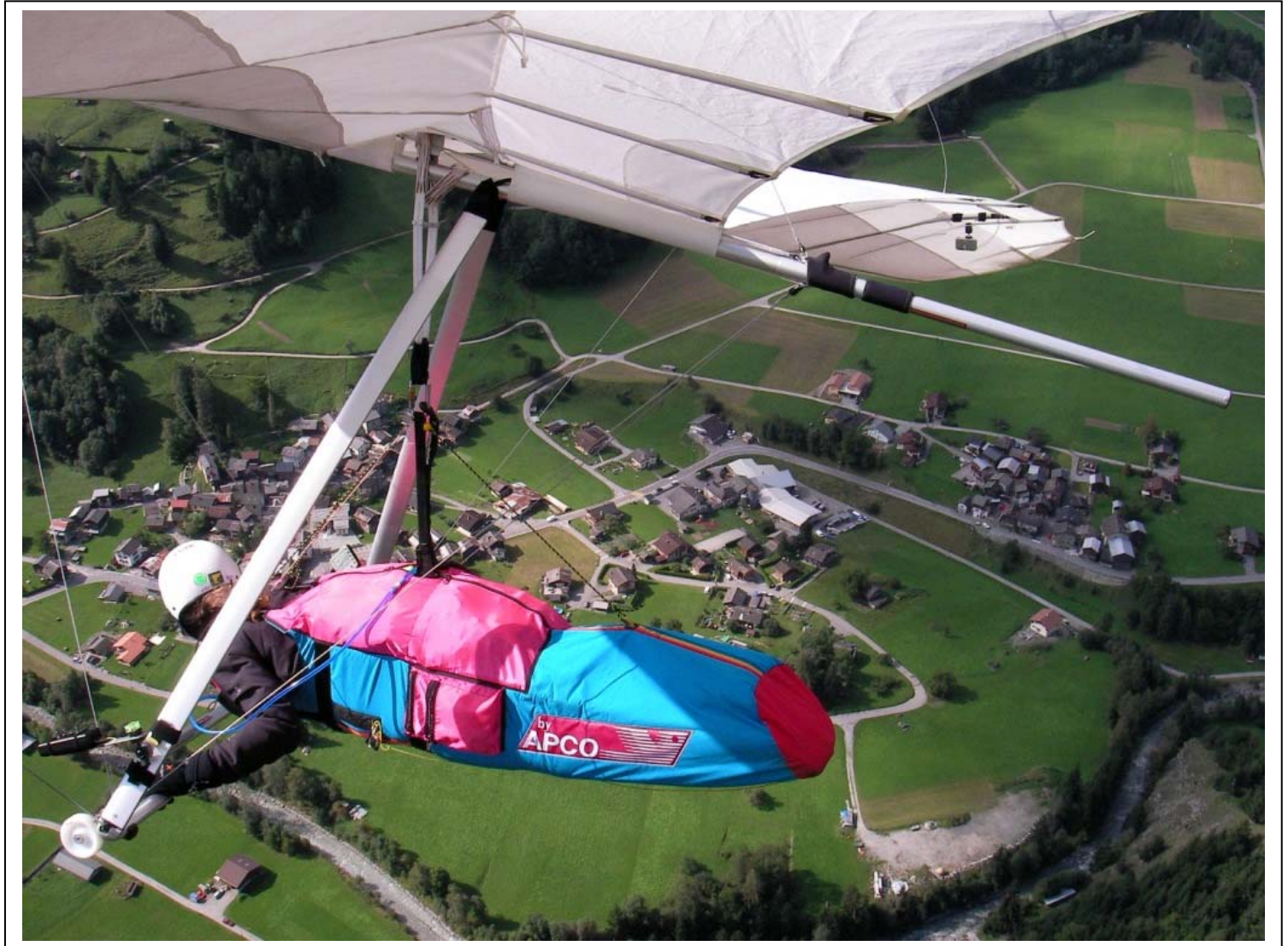
I could see this was going to be a big un, as the drift was fast. I hadn't marked the takeoff however, and had Bens gloves on, that were too small for my hands. I seemed to lose the alti from my display and Luton airspace was coming up. Stupidly, I hadn't set my vario alti either. I was sure I would land before the airspace, but headed to a weak patch of sun, and was rewarded by a slow steady climb. After 3 hours, I was getting a bit tired, and did not want to 'blow' the flight with an airspace infringement. I was sure the airspace restriction was from 3500 upwards, but didn't have my glasses on. With no alti, and an inability to press the buttons on the GPS with the gloves, I decided to go off at 90 degrees to completely avoid the airspace.

To summarize, I left light steady lift at 95k, which would have whisked me over the 100k mark, if only I could have read my GPS!! What a wally! It still won the 'best DHV 1/2 prize' in the XC league however, which was worth 250 smackers. Ben had done 80 earlier in the year on a DHV 1/2 and was a bit annoyed that I had taken that from him!

Train to London, and then express to Bristol was the easiest way back, and Ben picked me up at the station at about 9.00, returning my car. A really great day out. Jim did 119k, but Carlo, in spite of several flights over 80k, still has the hundred to beat, as he did 95.5k.

# Call for hangies to join a trip to Slovenia in March 2009.

I am a lucky hang glider pilot. My partner Ginny started learning 18 month ago and we can fly together at weekends and on holiday. Over the last twelve months, our search for good weather in interesting places has taken us to Andalucia, Slovenia and Switzerland (and occasionally Wiltshire, Dorset and Sussex).



The Sierra Nevadas and Swiss Alps each offer unique and spectacular flying opportunities, but it was to Slovenia we swore to return as soon as we could. The modern independent Slovenia is a beautiful and easy going place, which had very little involvement in the Balkan conflict of the '90s. The north west of the country is in the Julian Alps, with long XC routes into Italy.

The south west borders the Adriatic and has a Mediterranean climate. Less than an hours drive separates these two very different regions. The local flying scene is strong, providing well organised and maintained take-offs and landing fields. However unless there is a comp on, sites are un-crowded year long, especially mid week.



On our trip in August, we spent most of our time in the south, at the sites of Lijak and Kovk. Lijak is flyable 300 days per year, thermic throughout, with conditions typically improving from a dry February into March and eventual rains nearer April. The take off is on tree covered ridge that can be be soared well into Italy, and is sheltered from the Bora wind the can stop flying further east. Here, in the abundant lift, Ginny finally got to complete her CP soaring tasks that had seemed so difficult on UK sites crowded with airtime starved pilots. I got to push my boundaries and go XC, with the encouragement of our guide Brett.





Planning for a return trip in March 2009 is under way. Encouraged that there is a market for hang gliding holidays, xTc paragliding will again be providing accommodation, guiding, coaching (if needed), and all transport to take off and from the landing fields, or wherever you end up. Don't be fooled by the name, xTc Paragliding is run by Brett Janaway who is also a hang glider and microlight pilot, and understands our ways and needs.

We will be based in Nova Gorica, minutes from Lijak and with easy access to other Slovenian, Italian and even Austrian sites. As it's a two day drive from southern England, we hope to pool gliders onto one or two vehicles, so most people can use the various cheap air carriers to get themselves there and back. (As I write, there are still 4 spaces for hang gliders on my car).

The provisional dates are:

Arrive Wednesday 04 March 09

If staying for 7days flying - depart Thursday 12 March 09

If staying for 10 days flying - depart Sunday 15 March 09

There is potential here for all abilities, new CP to sky god.

PGs are welcome, but the pace will be set by HG needs rather than PGs. (Ever waited for a lift from a de-rigging hangie)? If there are four or more PGs interested, xTc will lay on a trip just for you.

What we need now is more pilots! If you would like to know more, please call or drop me an email asap.

John Cheale. Slovenia2009@servogenics.co.uk 01380 729955

# Muddy Marvelous...

## The Mere Bash in Photos



Everyone digs the Mere Bash, man!



Big Dave, in cunning disguise, models the T-Shirt!



Some kids got their faces painted so Big Dave didn't stand out!





'Meating up' with old and new friends!



The Rock Pirates rocking the crowd.



Bitter Ruin



Worro's Wagon Wescued by a Twactor!

# Money Matters. A Treasurers Report by Graham Richards.

At the AGM Graham Richards summarised the Accounts for Financial Year Ending 31 September 2008. The good news was the club funds increased by £1,798.74 to £12,073.42

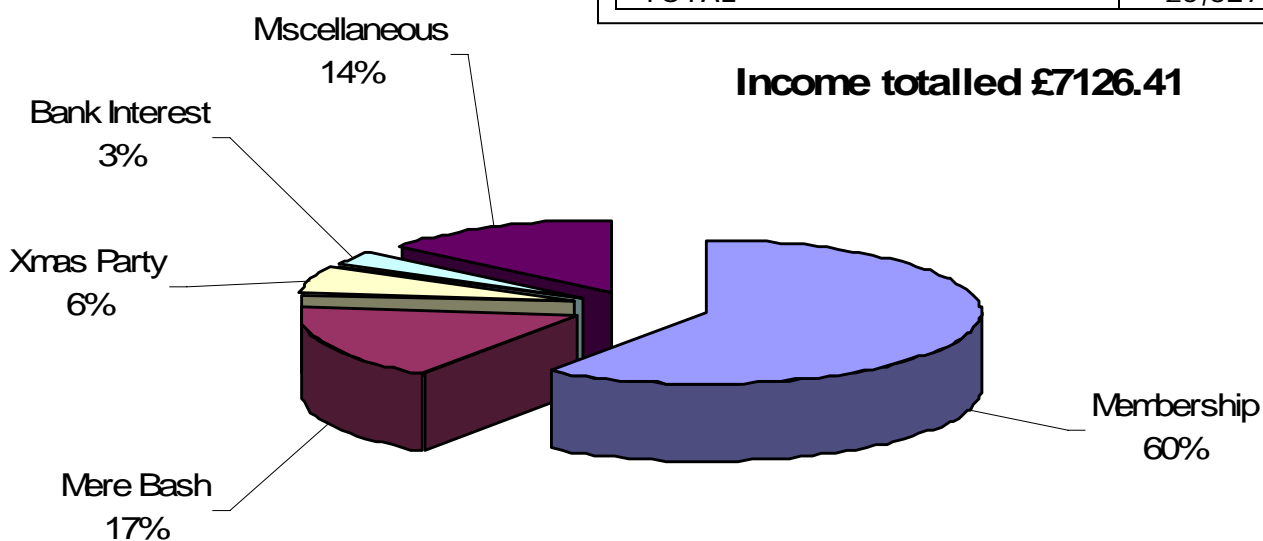
Below are some summary details of the Income, Expenses, and bank account balances for the club.

## Income in 2008:

<b>Membership</b>	4,240.00
<b>Mere Bash</b>	1,215.58
<b>Xmas Party</b>	450.00
<b>Bank Interest</b>	235.08
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	985.75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£7,126.41</b>

## Expenditure for 2008:

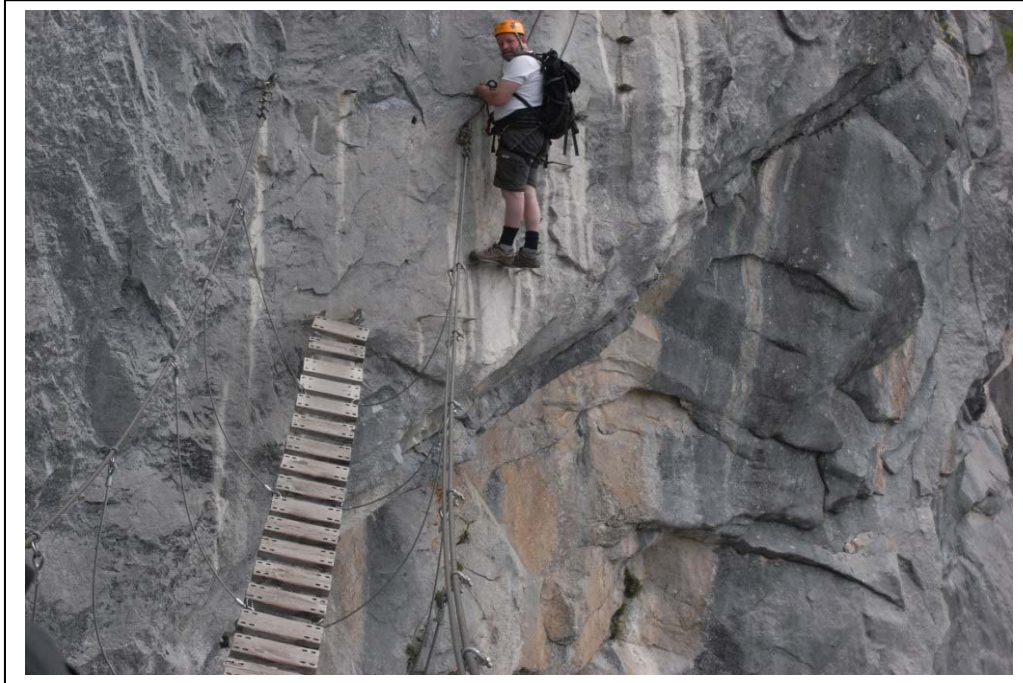
Venue Hire	866.25
Speakers	107.45
Mere Bash	1,495.93
Site Fees	899.84
Nova	264.00
Postage	98.51
Charity Donations	100.00
Trophies	150.50
Sundries	133.00
Comp Fees	105.00
Committee Expenses	98.19
Intro Pack	49.00
Miscellaneous	960.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5,327.67</b>



<b>BALANCES:</b>	<b>Savings Halifax</b>	<b>Savings Scottish Widows</b>	<b>Current Account</b>	<b>Cash</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Opening Balance	£5,290.50	£0.00	£4,984.18	£0.00	£10,274.68
Deposits	£97.74	£6,137.17	£11,694.63	£1,069.58	£18,999.12
Withdrawals	£5,388.24	£0.00	£10,762.56	£1,049.58	£17,200.38
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£6,137.17</b>	<b>£5,916.25</b>	<b>£20.00</b>	<b>£12,073.42</b>
Note – Withdrawals and deposits					

# December Caption Competition.

The grand total of funny captions from the August Nova was nil! Therefore I enter "*Ken demonstrates the fly-on-the-wall landing!*" & "*Worro or Spiderman – who can tell?*"  
I declare myself the winner by default, Yeah!!



See if you can find anything amusing to caption the photo below, send your witty captions for the picture below to [editor@avonhpgg.co.uk](mailto:editor@avonhpgg.co.uk)

