

# NOVA

Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club News Letter



January 1995

February Meeting - Dave Draper will give a talk on XC flying.

# NOVA

## The Committee

### Chairman

Pete Corcoran  
9 Wallace Road  
Bath BA1 6QQ  
(01225) 335301

### Secretary & Treasurer

Paul Ellis  
Blindmans Cottage  
Brickyard Lane, Wanstrow  
Shepton Mallet BA4 4TH  
(01749) 850674

### Membership

Fiona Macaskill  
Churchill House  
Vicarage Lane, Olveston,  
Bristol BS 12 3DP  
(01454) 613788

### Novice Contact

Paul Guilfoyle  
(0272) 551346

### Competitions

Tim Pentreath  
Garden Flat, 10 Kensington Place  
Bath BA1 6AW  
(01225) 424953

### Sites and Club Coach

Chris Jones  
20 Blenheim Gardens  
Fairfield Park  
Bath, BA1 6NL  
(01225) 319052

### Editor

Marcus King  
First Floor Flat  
21 St James Square  
Bath BA1 2TS  
(01225) 428356

### Novice Contact

Dave Garbe  
(0272) 246504

## Information

### Senior Coaches

Chris Jones	(01225) 319052
Simon Buckley	(01452) 814114
Jason Board	(01934) 510404

### Club Coaches

Mike Bowring	hg	(0272) 444129
Dyan Ahado	hg	(01249) 660611
Nigel Fovargue	hg	(01793) 643748
Nick Romanko	hg	(0272) 248722
Jon Buckingham	hg	(0272) 698708
Marcus King	pg	(01225) 782516
Fiona Macaskill	pg	(01454) 613788

### Sites

Mere Rifle Range	(01747) 860201
Lulsgate	(0275) 474441
Crooks Peak: Phone	(01934) 732730
Mr Croft to check bottom landing field	

### Weather

Avn, Gls, Wilt, Som	0891 500405
Glamorgan	0891 500409
Dyfed and Powys	0891 500414
Airmet South	0891 500693

**Mid-Week Flying Phone (0800)515544**

# N O V A

## Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club Newsletter

January 1995

### Chairman's Bit



Eleven days off work and finally January 2nd was actually flyable. I turned up late (as ever) at Westbury to be amazed by the number of hang gliders, paragliders, and sailplanes which were enjoying good lift. Maybe this is a good omen for '95.

Now the bad news...

#### Problems On D&S Condors' Sites

The Condors' sites are for members only, just like ours. The leases they have with their landlords state that only members can fly there. I've heard from the Condors' committee that a number of Avon hang glider pilots are regularly flying their sites and refusing to take out associate membership. Condors pilots are naturally asking why they should pay to be associate members of Avon when we refuse to follow their rules. Although I asked for the names of the pilots causing the problems I was not given them, the Condors' committee hope that the problem can be sorted out quietly. I have however agreed that we will approach and maybe publish the names of pilots who continue to cause these problems. It only costs £5 to join the Condors as an associate member, a small amount to pay to follow the rules and keep the peace.

*Pete*

### Editors Bit



Well issue two with me at the helm. It wouldn't be an editors bit without a plea for more articles, send em in. Having said that a big thank you to all the contributors in this issue, Helen Barnes, David Garbe, Fiona Macaskill, Tim Pentreath and Tim Swann. Nothing from the NET this month but I'm sure we will be dipping in there again in the near future. If you have any ideas for N O V A just drop me a line or collar me at the meeting or on a hill. Well that's all from me so see you next

time.

*Marcus*



## February Meeting

Should be a good meeting on February 1st. Dave Draper will be giving a talk on Cross Country flying. Dave is a wealth of information on this subject and is widely regarded as the brains behind Jerry Peck's Tactics series of articles in Skywings. If you have heard him talk before I'm sure you will be there, if you haven't then make sure you take this chance. As well as Dave's talk, what I hear you say what else can there be, we will be giving out the club awards for last year. We hope to see lots of faces new and old.

## Site News

### The Deverills is CLOSED!!!

Until further notice this site is closed, don't jeopardise further negotiations by ignoring this closure.

### Mere

In early December Marcus, Ron, Bertie and Simon enjoyed a pleasant days flying with some bubbles of lift coming through presumably from the central heating systems of Mere. More recently Tim Swann had an interesting time here on Jan 3rd, see his article.

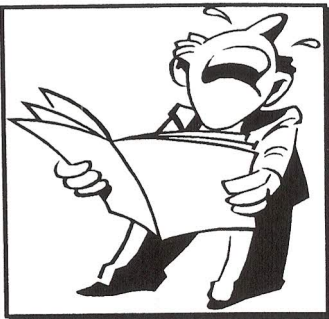
### Westbury

Has as usual been providing us with the odd bit of winter flying, with some reasonable height gains on offer. January the 2nd was the day of days when anybody who was anybody turned up and Westbury looked like a major flying competition had descended on it. Except, of course, there was more flying done than ever happens at a competition. Anyway everybody seemed to be having a good time.

## December Meeting

Well what can you say about a meeting to which only about ten people turned up? Yes you've guessed it not a lot. The turn out was not surprising really, as there was no speaker, the weather was lousy and people were probably getting ready for Christmas. To try and encourage more of you along next time the committee are busily working hard to find speakers for the next few meetings, see the next newsletter for more details. If you have any suggestions or connections then please give the committee a call.

**Come on guys!**  
**Read the sites guide!**  
**There is no excuse for -**  
**"Oh, I didn't know the rules!"**  
*You know who you are!!!*



## Hot Gossip

- ☺ Fiona has been mixing it with the elite recently having been invited to Judy Leden's recent party where there was an appearance by none other than Saddam Hussain, oh no got it wrong again King Hussain of Jordan.
- ☹ Chris Jones was also invited but couldn't be bothered to drive halfway across England for it.
- ☺ Some people have been flying recently (see site notes), and no this isn't a wind up.
- ✈ Helen Barnes has just returned from Brazil where she had about 5 hours flying which works out at about oh um err a lot of money per hour (See the article elsewhere in this issue).
- ✈ Tom Richards of former Laragne fame is well on his way to achieving his PPL. I look forward to the flight he's promised me.
- ☺ Mark Baines has sold his trusty Contrail due to an impending arrival, we wish him and his new family all the best for the future.
- ✈ Kat Thirkston has broken the women's world distance record in Chile. This was without the aid of her mascot Tiny.
- ☺ More and more Avon members have been turning up at the Bristol Climbing Centre. Is this large scale move to climbing due to the lack of suitable flying weather.
- ✈ Avon club members have appeared in the Skywings Pilot Profile 2 months running who will be next?
- ? Dave Garbe has been attempting to beat the world record for the longest sentence.

## NOVA

- ? Are the rumours that Angus Macaskill has been seen ground handling a GENESIS true?
- ☹ Very hot news on the fate of Harley Paragliders, we are more up to date than Skywings. Harley and their parent company Thunder and Colt were indeed bought by Cameron Balloons who then closed them. Andy Booth the sales manager has bought some equipment and materials and will be offering a spares and repairs service to UK pilots, I have a contact number if you need it. As for the name and designs, I have been told that they have been bought by an overseas country who will restart production as soon as possible. So the Harley name and the Cyclone and Sirocco gliders will live on. Sadly though we have lost a British paraglider manufacturer and their support for the UK flying scene.
- ✂ Forthcoming articles have been promised from Paul Davies and Dave 'Watch my Wake' Pilkington on flying in the States and from Dave McCarthy on flying in Venezuela. Get them to me as soon as possible, and anybody else who feels like writing, yes as usual we need your articles.
- ➔ And finally Helen Barnes if off again to sunnier climes, this time South Africa.

## SPAIN .... NATIONALS & PWC

*A slightly delayed view of the Spanish round of the PWC in Piedrahita from Fiona Macaskill.*

From my point of view, it was a very good idea to arrange the final leg of the British Nationals the week before the PWC in Piedrahita, Spain ... it proved to be a good practice before the foreign 'big boys' came. In fact, although I managed to waste my best day's flying by wrecking my camera before take off, (no film = no points) I had the most wonderful two weeks flying I have ever had.

Piedrahita offers a unique combination of hill and flat land flying. 1/2 an hour drive up from the town and you can almost guarantee thermals will be working from 1.00 to 7.00 and are just waiting for you to fly up into them. We did have too much/little wind and from the wrong direction of 4 out of the 6 days of the PWC - this is a most unusual phenomenon and very upsetting since many of the 130 people there (I being one of them) had experienced problems of weather at 2 previous legs of the PWC.

Good memories:

- flying to cloud base (11,700ft) - things look awfully small from that height and it really is very easy to stay up - turn points are a little problematical as it is quite hard to see them from that height! ... but it does not matter too much if you loose 1 - 2,000 ft trying to get into sector when there is so much between you and the ground!

# NOVA

- getting all the photos, in sequence and sector and managing to hand the film in on time without loosing or damaging it ... easy? not for me! perhaps stress is a contributing factor ... but for me this MUST be one of the hardest parts of competition flying!
- finding the turnpoints and working out the correct sector ... again, you may think: easy - but not for me! Staying up is hard enough - going in the right direction (not just down wind) is harder still, finding the correct hut on the correct track on the correct hill is even harder, but this year I have finally managed it!
- getting back safely. I did several 1 and 2 hour walk outs. Like Helen, I encountered black bulls, gorse bushes in plenty, numerous high stone walls (I've now developed a technique for getting myself and my kit over without detaching the two). There is something indescribably satisfying about walking for over an hour in the scorching heat, bag on back and stumbling across a stream, drinking the ice-cold water and dousing oneself all over, washing off all the ingrained dust. It is unusual to see more than 2 cars pass without stopping when hitch hiking - perhaps being a woman does sometimes have the advantage!
- eating out is something I very rarely do in England ... somehow it always seems too expensive and I want to spend what little money I have on more pressing needs but in Spain all that becomes a dim and distant memory. I ate out every night for 2 weeks for under £5 per night ... food was plentiful and delicious, wine unlimited, company delightful ... well, there were only 20 women and 130 men! We tended to have a siesta after flying every day, go out to eat at 9.00pm and not return until 1.00am after more drinking, dancing talking etc in the village square - a wonderful life - highly recommended! ... No wonder Steve Ham moved out there.
- Spanish people are so friendly, I was often invited to a home for a drink, while returning from an XC, once I was taken to look round a 20 horse riding stables and given a demonstration of Spanish horses 'performing' - standing on 3 legs and raising the 4th high into the air on command - the old man and his grand daughter who showed me was so proud of his life's work - I did not speak a word of Spanish, he not a word of English, but we communicated very adequately! They then drove me several miles out of their way back to the youth hostel where I was staying.
- Flying with World Champions really intimidated me in Grindelwald and Zillertal - I kept well away from them and consequently missed out on the best opportunities. In Spain I was a little more relaxed and I tried to position myself behind the Jocky Sandersons and Hans Bolingers of this world and follow them. If they think its a good time to take off then it MUST be - all I had to do was follow! This worked well most of the time ... but I do remember the time Howard Travers (of Para Excellence) and I were both scratching the same sun-drenched boulders and I had to fly between them to avoid a close encounter. I had to lift my feet up to fly over the bush in the middle.
- The National Championships was open to all in Spain - there were about 65 pilots (ie 20 guests) and I really enjoyed spending time getting to know so many interesting people with so many different backgrounds. If you want a taste of competition flying, to meet some wonderful people (and pilots too) and have a GREAT time do consider coming out to Digne,



## NOVA

France at the end of August next year and joining in - you will not regret it! - N.B. the location/time is only provisional at present so don't book you holiday and ticket quite yet!

Although I only totalled 108 km in 2 weeks I do feel I learnt an enormous amount, did win 30 women's PWC points (5th place) and have made some good friends who I hope to meet up with next year in the 'circuit' ... see you there?

*Fiona*

*I can totally agree with Fiona's sentiments and would encourage anybody who is interested in XC and competition flying to seriously consider entering some competitions this year both in the UK and abroad. Tim Pentreath will be organising teams for the Airwave Challenge in the UK and I'm sure he'll be only too happy to help co-ordinate people going to other events. The annual Airwave European Challenge is a very special event, combining (usually) brilliant flying and the chance to meet many like minded people from around Europe. Finally the British Open which is to be held in France this year is an opportunity for you to go and show the competitions committee what you are made of, and I'm sure you'll learn a lot along the way.*

*Marcus*

## More Musings of an Aeronaut

Calling Low Airtimers. Next fly in second Sunday in February. Watch this space for talks aimed at priming you for the coming season. These will be at a pub in the Bristol/Bath area, details in the next N O V A.

If you make the effort and come to a fly in you could boost your airtime and you confidence, as well as making new friends. If it's not flyable, we've got stunt kites, frisbees, footballs, etc, etc, to make up for the fact that we may not get to fly. Please give it a try whether paraglider or Hang Glider pilot.

Can You Afford to Miss It?

Congratulations to Tim Swann. He has won the cup for the most progress made by a low airtime pilot in the last 12 months. He has been a stalwart of the Fly Ins, and has improved greatly mostly because he simply went for it at every opportunity he got. Well done.

December Fly In Report

Dream. day. Awoke to a 20 knot North Westerly and mooched over to Westbury. Six of us rigged and took off around midday. We simultaneously wandered into a hoover of a thermal and after 15 minutes in the air, we were all at 3500' above Westbury, with the decision about which direction we should head already taken care of at our Low Airtimer meetings held every so often, ( well you should have been there.) We all set off in the direction of Mere, climbing



At this point we stopped for tea, after which we all began a tiring but challenging into wind flight back in the direction of Westbury. Half an hour later, we were back above Westbury, and one by one we flew back to the common and executed perfect landings next to the ice cream van, which furnished us with coffee and doughnuts, followed by massage, as nubile eunuchs arrived to pack our gliders away for us and drive us all home, to a huge roast dinner etc, etc, etc.

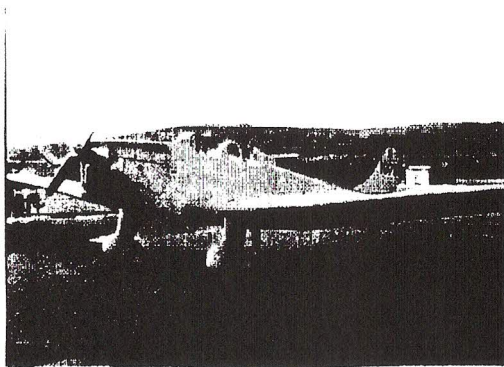
OK I own up. There wasn't actually a fly in at all, so I devised a fantasy Fly In (Soon available as a board game) for the hell of it. After all, we gotta fill the mag somehow!!!

More Flying Tales...

Last month I described an experience I had during my gliding days, and this month things are a little more recent.

4 years ago I completed a PPL and became quite involved with a group of PFA pilots in the London area, who, like me, were keen on building their own aircraft, and it was at the PFA rally that year that we spotted the candidate.

She, (sexist I know, but if you see this aircraft, you'll realise what I mean) was the most beautiful machine I had ever seen, and to prove it she had just won the 'Concours d'elgance'



at the rally that year, awarded to the antique aircraft judged to be the best at that years rally. The she in question was a Miles Magister, built circa 1946, powered by an inverted 12 cylinder Gypsy Major engine, finished in RAF yellow, with a full polished aluminium cowl and spats. There is a school of thought that states that an aircraft has to look right in order to be right, and the George Miles Aircraft Company, along with people such as Geoffrey de Havilland and Percival/Proctor certainly believed in this basic design criteria.

Anyway, enough of this twaddle, I'll get to the point.

# NOVA

Having decided to attempt to build ourselves the worlds No 3 Magister, our group managed to track down 75% of an existing airframe and wings at the Brooklands Aircraft museum, and in order to help us decide on whether the project was feasible or not, I decided that looking over the Magister seen at the PFA rally, would be a good way to proceed.

After much investigation, I tracked down the aforementioned 'Maggie' at Shoreham and arranged to go down there and look over, under and in the aircraft, while she was having an oil change.

Naturally, seeing an aircraft like this from the wrong side of a barrier was great, but to actually get my mitts on it was mind blowing. The smells from the cockpit, of leather, oil and warm metal was an odour that is hard to quantify other than being part of something from a bygone age with masses of character, and if anybody reading this has ever flown or sat in a Tiger Moth, they will catch my drift!

Back to the plot. The owner returned to me about the aircraft, and finally said the words that I had dreamed of hearing. He had to fly to Boscombe Down to drop of some parts for a Beagle Pup, and did I want to come.

Well spin my nipple nuts and post me to Alaska. Not Half!

20 minutes later saw us on a heading of 352 magnetic, at 3250' QNH, me in control while the owner wrote a letter to his Mum. I kid you not!

This is a tandem, open cockpit aircraft, capable of 160 knots, and he isn't even looking where we are going. The feelings involved in flying the 'Maggie' were a little tempered by the fact that during the war, when the Magister was the main trainer for Spitfire pilots, it took several lives due to a strange aerodynamic process whereby if you sideslip the aircraft, the elevator becomes blanked by the rudder, and you lose control of pitch, until a steep enough dive has been entered whereupon she pulls herself out. Naturally, not being content with simply flying this beautiful machine above the patchy stratus enveloping the Hampshire/Wiltshire countryside, I asked the owner about this problem and he decided the best thing was to demonstrate.

Seconds later, we went into a full sideslip at which point the lower wingtip just kept going downwards followed by the nose, and I am now looking straight down at Terror Firmer, until with a vicious vibration from the rear end, we went into a 60 degree dive, and she pulled out. In the words of Bill and Ted,.....EXCELLENT!

The day ended back at Shoreham, with a dusk landing, and the most satisfying days flying in my life. Partly because you really know when you have flown an aircraft like the Magister, because every muscle aches, but not as much as the one that causes your mouth to grin for 5½ whole hours.



## Competitions News by Tim Pentreath

(who's he anyway?)

Well, in case you missed the AGM or didn't read "The Chairman's Bit" last month, I'm the new Competitions organiser on the Committee. I'm a paraglider pilot myself, so I'll be concentrating on paragliding competitions - Neil Atkinson will be the person to speak to regarding hang gliding.



If you don't already know me, I'll give you a clue to help you recognise me on the hill - I fly a rather attractive pale pink ~~ribbed-elastic~~ wing, otherwise known as a Nova Sphinx! I was taught to fly in 1990 by Dave Ward-Smith and Rob Stimpson down in South Wales, and I must admit I still tend to do a lot of my flying down there. I've now clocked up about 150 hours airtime, but have yet to actually fly in a competition! (I entered a team in this year's Lakeland Team Challenge - we came 2nd without even unpacking our canopies, but that's another story). My wife Lisa also paraglides - she flies a somewhat brighter shade of pink Edel Space, and although I hate to admit it, she often comments on how dirty the top surface of my wing looks! Paragliding hasn't escaped our two cats either - they're called "Tuck" and "Spin"!

I've flown quite a bit around the country - the Isle of Wight, Dorset, South Wales, North Wales, the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales - the gliders tend to get chucked in the back of the car wherever we go! I've flown abroad a couple of times, most recently in Chamonix last April. (Yes Editor, I'll write an article about that too!). I enjoy flying at new sites so hopefully this year's Airwave Challenge will give all those who participate ample opportunity to fly over some new countryside.

The idea of the Airwave Challenge is to allow friendly competitions between clubs so encouraging us mere mortals to enter competitions. The competitions are friendly and relaxed and although League or Nationals pilots can participate, their scores don't count (?). Team numbers haven't been specified - I guess it depends on how many people turn up on the day. As you may have read in Skywings, the format of this year's competition is slightly different to last year - we can fly against any five clubs rather than specified clubs. The initial rounds have to be completed before the end of June, with semi-finals between July 1st and August 14th, and the final on the August Bank Holiday weekend (26th-28th). May and June are often the best months for cross country flights so I'll try to arrange dates then - watch this space! The likely teams we'll be competing against will be Wessex, Thames Valley, SE

## NOVA

likely teams we'll be competing against will be Wessex, Thames Valley, SE Wales, SW Wales and either Mid Wales or Malverns. So let me know if you're interested in participating. It doesn't matter if you've never flown an XC before - you're very likely to do your first one with help and encouragement from a dozen other pilots all trying to do the same thing!

Whilst on the subject of competitions, the rules for the "Go For It '95" XC leagues have changed slightly from those published in December's Nova, both for paragliding and hang gliding. Flights for both hang gliding and paragliding can now be made from any UK sites although flights from Avon sites will be recorded in a separate Avon-only league as well. In the recent committee meeting it was decided to increase the minimum distance for paragliding flights from 1km to 5km, but on reflection I think it should be 3km. This shouldn't be too difficult to achieve - if you get to 1000' ato, you should be able to do 3km even if you find no more lift, assuming a 10mph wind and a 6.5:1 L/D ratio!

Anyway, that's enough from me for now, lets hope 1995 is a most triumphant year! Good flying!

## A DODGY DAY AT THE RIFLE RANGE by Tim Swann

Tuesday Jan 3rd: an extra day of Christmas hols. The wind is very light but Airmet say it will pick up. So off to Mere. Luckily its freezing or I'd never attempt the last bit of that track. Great: there's someone else there - a rare visit by Rob Crane. He's left his Clubman on the car and is practising ground handling on a paraglider.

I rig up, slow as ever, and also spend a while playing about on the ground practising balancing & take-off runs. (This is in memory of the day before, at Westbury. Some kind chap held the nose wires. I said "Release!" and he calmly said "I think not ... your left wing is down". Thank you whoever it was).

Eventually two more chaps arrive with paragliders, but by now the wind is indeed getting up and it's too strong for such frail craft. Seems OK to me though. A bit gusty. A bit off to the left (A walk round the top and down the spur confirmed that). Clouding over too, could be something brewing. I've flown in worse, but it had better be a short flight.

Rob and the chaps kindly help me over the wire: why is the gate locked? And one kind soul holds the nose again as I inch forward. Rob scares me with the tale of a similar Easterly occasion here when people were turned involuntarily to land downwind, or worse. Memo: keep the speed up.

Move up to the front. Check: the model aircraft down by the spur have all landed, good. Straps tight, balance, Release! Drive forward, pull on speed, get well out from the hill: so far so good. First turn is to the right: a bit downwind. Why? because I was too lazy to walk round the bowl.

Gosh I've turned (been turned) too far. It really is downwind. Instead of heading out for the spur I find myself skimming fast & low along the contour with too little airspeed to turn away. OK pull on speed. Getting lower now and that barbed wire fence on the slope is coming up



# NOVA

fast. Pull on more speed, up, over the wire and out into the clear air. Hmmm: no panic but a bit close for comfort.

It's also a bit rough. One minute it's smooth enough to hang in the wind and get 300ft or so, the next it's all over the place. There's alternate gust & lull and a lot of turning force. And it's easy to lose 200ft in one pass. I have to work hard to keep on line: more exhilaration than good clean fun.

Meanwhile, down below, they've all packed up and are heading for the carpark. This is no time to be flying alone. Let's get down.

I've still got decent height for a top landing, so turn cautiously downwind, drift back to near the road, then a final leg across wind, no worries.

Need to lose a little more height so carry on a bit, crossing over the fence beside the field. Now turn into wind, Oops!: I need to get back over the fence. No problem with my trusty Clubman and harness: just pull in the bar and off she shoots: downwards (and maybe forwards a little).

Now I really don't want to land this side of the wire. So stay in prone, nose down to streamline ... made it! That's cleared the fence, but now it's a scramble to get onto the uprights in time. Upright OK, landing gear in position, but I've lost some speed. Pull on a bit, level out and touch down. Yippee, too slow but a soft landing. Safe and sound again. Well yes & no.

I landed just fine but the glider didn't want to come down. Its a bit crosswind, that wing's a bit high, here we go! Slowly but surely the wing lifts, pivots and turns over: pulling me gently down on top of it.

After that it's all anticlimax. Unhooking's a bit tricky without treading on the sail, but not hard. Rob comes over to help. Glad he was still there, it could have been worse. Together we turn the glider upright again. (Just like Dennis Pagen recommends: turn it on the kingpost until the downwind leading edge is across the wind, then let the wind flip it, rotating round that leading edge. No worries). An hour or so later I'm all packed up, fairly happy that there was no damage done. Memo: do an extra long check next time.

But now it's time to chat to the aeromodellers who turned out to be quite friendly chaps. They said they knew it was a hanggliding site so they'd landed when they saw me preparing to take off. Very decent of them. They also reckoned Cowards Bowl to be the model aircraft site. Do we have an agreement with the local club? I don't see anything in the sites guide.

I digress. It was an instructive day, but I'm not sure I learnt all the right lessons. Maybe I was just pushing my limits and improving my skills. Or maybe I shouldn't have flown at all. Thinking about it, if the wind is, in effect, blowing outwards all round the bowl (the "bowl effect") then any straight line across the wind rapidly becomes downwind. But even though I'd been warned, the rapidity of the turn - and the need to pull on more speed to counter it - both took me by surprise. Rob had sensibly decided not to fly when he saw my problems. Good idea. Next time I'll wait for someone else to go first.

## BRAZIL by Helen Barnes

If you read or hear anything about Brazil, it's that you WILL get mugged and the babes are gorgeous. Well, I guess I'm not best qualified to speak about the latter, although a hint is that two English paraglider pilots resident on Governador Valadares have married Brazilians. As for being robbed, only the occasional taxi-driver over-charged me, with far more people returning me too much change or generally demonstrating a generous nature.

I went to Brazil in November 1994 and enjoyed it. I'll try to make this article as factual as possible, so you can gauge whether you would enjoy it too. My aim was to fly in Rio and in Governador Valadares, site of the 1991 hang-gliding world championships and 1994 paragliding World Cup.

The flight to Rio is 11 hours, and pretty dull at that, especially if you're smack in front of the smoking section and the guy behind you talks and chain smokes all night. Only the bargain air-fare (£299) made it passable. As they say in the song, 'things can only get better'.

So, first - flying in Rio. I flew at Pepino Beach - a very popular place for tandem hang-glider flights. A huge area of the beach is marked as an LZ only, so the public have to tan their Brazilian bodies outside it! There is also a grass landing area, if you don't want to get sand all over your precious investment.

The cost is \$6 to fly (site fee). There is a VW kombi (standard form of transport) to take you up to take off for another \$3. The take off is GREAT for hang-gliders - a huge ramp, which looks very solid. For paragliders, there's a pathetic area of grass cleared in front of (and just below) the ramp. It's TINY. You have to lay out for an alpine launch. The audience, who are seated under the stilts on which the ramp is built, hold up the middle of your canopy. You cannot believe how nervous you have suddenly become. All those launches in a howling gale on Merthyr count for nothing.

There's space for 2 steps forward and then either i) you are airborne or ii) you are in the bushes over the cliff. Luckily I managed state i), despite a chronic dislike of alpine launches. There followed a 5 minute top to bottom - with a great view of the beach with tall apartment blocks behind it and Rio as a backdrop. Definitely worth it, though you'd have to tempt me hard to try that take-off again!!

The site doesn't generally work very well. Although it's a high mountain, the proximity to the sea kills thermals, there's little prevailing wind for soaring and the sea-breeze doesn't work that high up.

So, posing in Rio over, it's off to Governador Valadares (or GV for the rest of this article, the rest is too much to type.) Unfortunately, the journey is a 12 hour bus-ride from hell. It really isn't much fun, even though it's overnight and the bus is air-conditioned. I arrived in GV the

# NOVA

next morning feeling pretty jaded. A two-hour delay to fix a puncture and an exploding chemical toilet causing an unbelievable stench made me wonder- isn't staying in England and flying at Westbury a lot more pleasant?

## Governador Valadares

GV is a bit like Slough, one of my companions observed. The likeness is in the 'utility' of the place - it has a purpose (gem mining town) but absolutely nothing inspiring to look at and NO tourism what so ever. That said, you get treated quite kindly as a visitor (you obviously didn't mean to be here!)

We stayed with Alcides, a local hangglider pilot who recently quit working for the bank after 8 years to 'free his mind' (yeah, know what you mean, man). This means he's now running a business catering for visiting pilots. The deal is \$20 a day for bed, great breakfast, journey to take off (1 hour in a 4WD) *AND RETRIEVE*. *This is* great news for anyone who has been put off XC by the problems of retrieve in a foreign country. Alcides speaks English, and didn't leave me stranded once.

## The flying

1st to 10th December. Supposed to be still in rainy season. Flyable every day, except the last, when it **POURED** - the streets flooded. The site is a peak, Pico de Ibituruna, which sticks out by itself. Take-off is at 1000m. The rest of the surrounding land is low, with loads of small bumps, most flat enough to land on top of. There is no forest, so as long as you can find a flat enough bit, you can land.

Many of my flights were top to bottoms, in sink all the way with the vario blaring distressingly. I began to question the value of an hour's trip to take off for a top to bottom, even if it was nearly 3000' and normally took 15 - 20 minutes.

The sky always looked daunting - huge cumulo-mungus busting everywhere, often with rain coming out of individual cells. It really wasn't as bad as it looked though, even for us British scaredy-cats.

I had 3 good flights, the first of which was to cloudbase - all of 1500' above take off! All of the conditions described in this article improve during Jan/Feb/Mar, I understand.

The next 2 flights were very similar to each other. I didn't get anything on take-off, and flew around looking at the ground for a likely thermal source. I was always saved by the turkey vultures, who thermal slowly and determinedly in the 3 to 4 up thermals. They marked the first thermal and climbing 2000' to cloudbase, I took my courage in both brake-lines and glided off, still flying the ground for thermal sources rather than the sky. I don't really know the performance of my canopy for gliding in light winds, so this was a bit of an unknown.

Once I was really proud as I looked for a cloud forming and flew towards it, to find it growing with a thermal beneath it. I spent far too long going round and round in circles, ending up feeling sick with the hot sun on the back of my neck and dizzy from all the circling. However I did preserve my height, before gliding off again to look for the turkey chaps. This enabled me to fly about 15k one day and about 20k along the same route (different thermals!) the next day. I burned off 2000' to land both times, as I could see the retrieve truck and

# NOVA

wanted to stop as I felt sick! Faster pilots who didn't need such a safety margin of height at each thermal could have flown further (40k) on both days.

If you've got a lot of money (for the airfare to Brazil), or want a Brazilian babe, or just want to see what it's all about, then go. You'll enjoy it.

If you haven't yet flown at Piedrahita, then maybe consider going there first. It's just as good in my opinion, and cheaper to get to!

For accommodation in Governador Valadares, contact:

Alcides Vieira Costa,  
Av. Piracicaba, 62  
Ilha dos Araujos  
Gov. Valadares-MG, BRASIL  
Phone and fax: 00 55 33 221-0712



## Bits for Sale

**Sky Systems Supp Harness** including Apco parachute. Good condition, parachute as new. Sensible offer considered. Mark Joyce 0380 830195 (3)

**Thunderbird Mk 3**, still the best vario on the market, £120. Neil Atkinson (0225) 754152. (3)

**Two hand-held CBs**, 40 channel. Battery powered or mains. Good air to air range. Chargers, aerials, and still under guarantee. As new, used once. £150 the pair. (0278) 452813. (3)

**Lindsay Rudduck vario with Diplex Altimeter**, £60. Trevor Dixon (0272) 240963. (3)



## Gliders

**Miura** Extra Large White/Turquoise 95-125 Kg ACPUL 11A 1C Good Condition 1Yr Guarantee left £1600 Nick 0628 784158 (1)

**Kiss 154**, Very tidy glider, always stored indoors. Would suit progressing pilot who wants a lot of performance for very little money. Why pay £3000+ for latest hot ship when £700 will buy you all the performance you could wish for. For test flight ring Geoff Rogers on 01761 232096 (2)

**Magic 4 Full Race**. Sweet handling, lovely to land. Ex Steve Wills mile muncher. Rainbow underside. VGC £400 ono. for a quick sale. Dave Garbe (0272)246504. (2)

**Flight Design B2 24**, (75-97 kg all up). Green/Red, 10 hours. Paradise 3 harness, kevlar back plate & Parasail reserve. Good condition, on elady owner. Complete kit £1500. Bristol (0272) 721839. (3)

**Flight Design B2 26.4**, ( 95-123 kg all up) Red/Yellow, 20 hours. SAS 2harness, kevlar back plate & Parasail reserve. Good condition. Complete kit £1500. Bristol (0272) 721839. (3)

**Magic III hang-glider**. Excellent condition, stored indoors, easy handling, speedbar, red l/e, rainbow underside, keel mod, c of a. For test flights call 0691 772635. £425 ono. (3)

**Hot Dream B2 25.2**, Red/Purple, 45 hours dry air time, good condition, speed system and trimmers, owner going to Africa for the winter. £1250. Tim Brunskill, (0749) 679908, or contact the Editor of Nova, Paul Davies (3)

**Rumour 2, 13 m**, nice colours, stored indoors, moving to bigger wing, £1400. Ian Dibble, (0305) 783110 (3)

**Super Scorpion Mk 2**, ideal dune soaring glider, pretty rainbow sail, BHPA registered. Good condition, £150. Steve, (0278) 452813 (3)

**Magic 4, 133 Full Race**. Built by Airwave in 1993. Excellent condition, good performance and handling, nice colours. Suitable for low airtime or advanced pilots. £950. Pod Harness, £100. Davron Vario/Alti, £125. Parachute £150. Small flying suit £10. Contact Steve Wills, (0278) 452813 (3)

## For Sale Cont'd

**Airwave Race 2 harness**, suit 5'10" pilot, as new, £250. Ray Bass (0934) 84684 (3)

**Magic IV Half Race 166**, excellent condition, low air time, blue leading edge, rainbow under-surface, £650 ono. Rob Cook (0275) 879126 (3)

**Magic IV 166** including Pitchy. Good condition, flies well, £325 ono. Mark Joyce 0380 830195 (3)

**Ace 160**, excellent condition, low air time, v.b., white with lime green double surface, batten profile £500 or offers. Romer open face £15, phone Shaun O'Neill on (0453) 822187 (3)

**Airwave Calypso**, Good condition, Blue leading edge, blue and white underside, speed bar suit low airtime pilot £700 ono. Sup-Air pod harness suit 5'8"-5'10" very nice condition £100. Phone Neil Andrew (0272)676992 (2)

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



**February 2nd**

**Phone Dave Garbe or Paul Guilfoyle for details.**

Over and out!!!

# Diary of Events 95

<b>February</b>		
Wednesday 1st	Avon Club Meeting	
<b>March</b>		
8 - 26	Paragliding World Championship	Kitakyushu, Japan
<b>April</b>		
13 - 17	Monte Grappe Meeting	Bassano, Italy
24 - 30	PWC 1	Feltre, Italy
<b>May</b>		
24 - 28	PWC 2	Zillertal, Austria
27 - 11 June	Women's Eupropeans HG	Vägä, Norway
<b>June</b>		
9 - 12	Airwave Manx TT	Isle of Man
15 - 25	1st European Union Masters in HG & PG	Kossen, Tyrol, Austria
<b>July</b>		
15 - 21	PWC 3	Piedrahita, Spain
25 - 30	PWC 4	Gstaad, Switzerland
<b>August</b>		
14 - 20	PWC 5	Avoriaz, France
26 - 28	Airwave Challenge UK Final	TBA
<b>September</b>		
4 - 10	PWC Final	St André, France

*Many of these date are as yet unconfirmed, please check with the organisers and or memebers of the committee. If you have any dates for this diary please let me have them as soon as possible.*



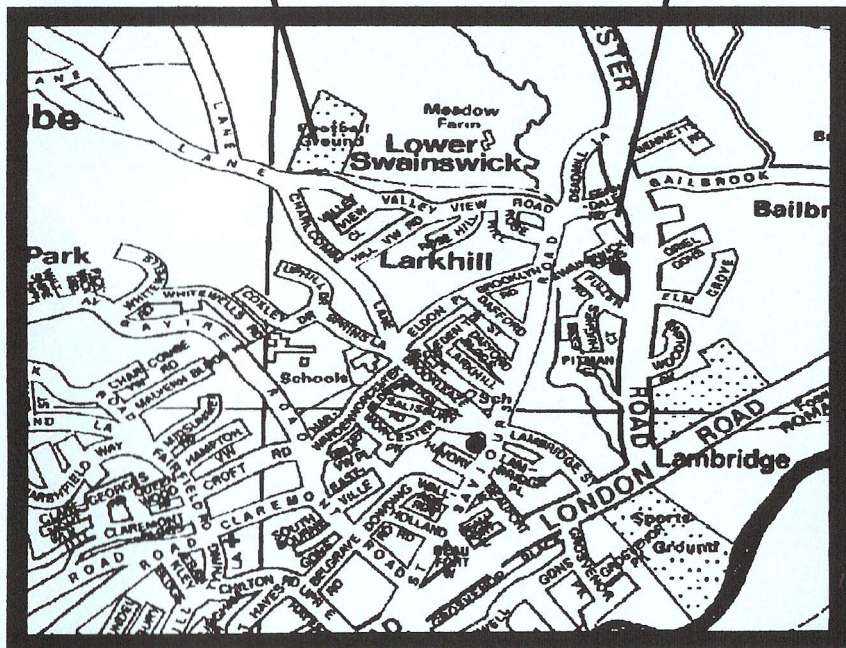
How to find the venue for the monthly meeting, held on the first Wednesday of every month at 8.00pm.

- From the A46, turn into Ferndale Road by the Bladud Arms pub.
- Go straight across the junction into Valley View Road.
- Go up the hill for about 300 yards until the road narrows by the derestricted speed limit signs.
- The football club is another 100 yards on the right past the signs.

Larkhall Football Club

Bladud Arms

A46



A4

NOVA