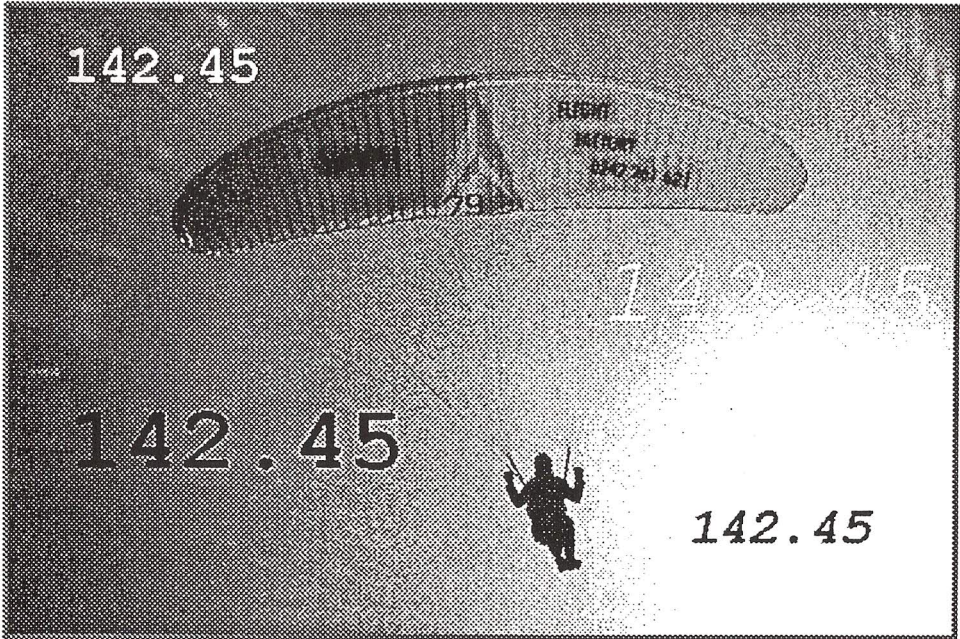


NOVA

Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club Newsletter



April 1995

GET YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL IN NOW!

Steve Wills will be talking at the May meeting on flying in Spain

*INSIDE THIS ISSUE AIRWAVE CHALLENGE, 2M RADIOS, FLYING IN THE US,
AND LOTS MORE.*

NOVA

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Weather

Avn, Gls, Wilt, Som 0891 500405
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Avon Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club Newsletter

April 1994

Chairmans Bit



I am beginning to think the club is making a takeover bid for Skywings. Recently the last three pilot profiles have been of Avon members, Fiona, Colin and Jason (where did you get those shorts?); the Avon club profile; and two articles by Chris. If this was an attempt to sabotage Skywings appearing in W H Smiths it appears to have worked.

I've already broken my flying resolution for the year. It was to avoid Coombe Gibbet during the weekends at all costs. The first of the Airwave Challenge competitions took me back there on a Sunday. It was the first time I tried to fly in a competition (got drilled behind the ridge!) and was sort of enjoyable if you like being the air with 30 to 40 other gliders, it was manic.

Pete

Editors Bit



First off an apology for the late arrival of the last issue of NOVA. Unfortunately the address labels went missing in the post and we were unable to get anymore in time because Fiona was away skiing and Flying in France. I hope nobody missed Tony Targett's talk as a result and thanks to Pete who distributed the mag when I went down with the Flu.

At last spring looks like it is finally on it's way and the first 'cross country's of the season have been achieved. Don't forget to take care in the rough spring thermals, it is likely that you haven't got much time in the air over the last few months.

If this is the case it's very easy to get desperate to get into the air, and far too easy to fly when conditions are suitable for your experience. If your fairly new to this sport seek advice from others in the club, that's what the club coaches are there for. Take it from me, if you do have an accident you'll have plenty of flyable days when you are forced to ponder upon your mistake.

Remember, when you do make that epic cross country please tell Tim Pentreath or Neil Atkinson about so it can be included in the club XC leagues and also think about writing about it for NOVA. Yes I'm at it again I'm begging for more articles, letters etc just send them to the address below.

Marcus

Send Your Articles to:-

Marcus King
 First Floor Flat
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 Bath BA1 2TS
 or Email to marcus@radair.win-uk.net

MEMBERSHIP -1995

Spring has come at last ... and I am very pleased to say that many of you are eager to pay your annual membership fees - maybe you, like me, think paying early will hasten the first good flying days ... yes, I've had an XC this year and am feeling better for it!

Every day the post is bulging with renewals and even new member's applications - its amazing to see how many hours people flew last year - its not uncommon for people to have doubled or even tripled their hours over the last year. I'm always slightly amused to note the pilot who, for example, had flown for 4 years in 1994 and mysteriously has now flown for 6 ... never mind ... all the data held on my database might as well be put to some use - A few facts:

- We now have 174 full members: 54 paraglider pilots, 84 hang glider pilots, 13 who fly both, the rest didn't say what they flew!
- 54 of our members fly mid-week regularly - that is 34% of the club
- We have a total of 907 years flying between us - this averages out at 6 years per pilot
- Between us we have flown far in excess of 35000 hours - this averages 227 hours per pilot
- 14 of our members have flown over 1000 hours
- Darren Arkwright, Dave Draper, Colin Lark and Judy Leden have all flown over 2000 hours each.
- Mark Haycraft and Jason Board have both flown over 1500 hours ... some of us have still got a little way to go!

As I'm off to Italy in a couple of weeks for the Bassano comp. and not coming back for 2 weeks I'd like **ALL renewals in by 7th April please** - I would appreciate not having to process renewals for months to come!

Happy flying

Fiona

April Meeting & May Meeting

You should already know that Ron Richardson is talking at the April meeting, Ron is part of DAVRON, so as someone who shall remain nameless said "We can ask him how to copy the chips in his 800 series varios."

In May Steve Wills will be giving a talk on flying in Spain, one not to miss as I'm sure many of you will be heading out there this summer, if not now you will be after listening to Steve.

Site News

Westbury

We've had some excellent weekends at Westbury recently. One pilot reached over 6000', but was unfortunately being sucked up the side of a Cu-Nim at the time! Said pilot lived to tell the tale, but all those who saw it happen thought he was a bit STUPID!

Also STUPID was the paraglider pilot who got blown back on landing and crashed onto a hang-glider braking it's keel. This was especially STUPID as Westbury has a huge top landing area. Would paraglider pilots please note: You do not have to land as close to the front on the hill as possible. It is not compulsory! Land well away from spectators and parked hang-gliders. South of the road where the hang-gliders land is a good place when it is windy. Its only a short walk back to take-off. If it had been my hang-glider that had been broken I may well be up for GBH now!

On a happier note Neil Atkinson and Colin Hale managed to fly around the end of the range in late Feb to fly XC. Tim Pentreath also managed a short hop down to Warminster on his paraglider. So it is possible to go XC from Westbury, just don't forget the range boundary. Don't fly behind the fence at the back of the grass area and fly out to the railway line west of the Westbury-Warminster road to go around the western edge of it.

Ubley

After a massive lay-off Ubley has been flown again. Lets hope it produces so XC's this year.

Chris

March Meeting

A special award was made to Jason Board. Jason was given life membership of the club in recognition of his wondrous feat of winning the national cross country league in the 1992/93 season.

Jason was then followed by the even more wacky Tony Target our local BBC weather man. Tony gave a wide ranging talk on what he gets up to as a weather forecaster. He covered everything from tephigrams (ask anyone who was there to explain) through to how he helps M&S decide whether they should stock their shelves with loaves of bread or rolls for the weekend.

While Tony made a gallant effort in answering many questions on different aspects of weather, he also learnt something from our more knowledgeable members on the local weather conditions.

British Open

Please Contact Marcus King on 01225 428356 if you want to fly in the British Open which is being held in France (probably Mieuussy) from August 6th to the 12th. Marcus will be taking his van to France for 2 weeks including the week of the British Open so if you want a lift give him a call.



Competition News



I don't know what the first three months of 1995 have been like for you in terms of flying, but for me, despite all the rain, this year has been my best so far. As I write this after the first Airwave Challenge event (see below), I've had four days flying, totalling 6 hours 10 mins, which have included three (albeit small) XC flights including one 6.5km from Westbury. My max height gain has been 1800' - not bad for February!

Airwave Challenge - Sunday 12th March

Last Sunday saw our first Airwave Challenge day, flying at Coombe Gibbett against pilots from the Thames Valley, Dunstable, Dover & Folkestone and Southern clubs. It all started on the evening of the previous Thursday with a phone call from Martin Brown (TVHGC) saying that the forecast was looking good - could we make it on Sunday? After much frantic phoning around on Friday evening I had established we had enough people to make a team (apologies if I didn't call you - let me know if you're interested so I can call you next time), and so on Saturday night I confirmed with Martin that it should go ahead.

Sure enough Sunday dawned clear and bright, and by the time Lisa and I reached Coombe Gibbett shortly after 10am there were already a dozen gliders in the air. An open XC task was set, and by about 11.30am the first gliders left the hill. By this time there were at least 30 gliders in the air, and at one stage in the afternoon someone counted 42 - definitely not for the faint-hearted!

I managed to leave the hill at about 12.30pm in a gaggle of five gliders in a thermal that took us up to 2050' ASL (1150' ATO). I ended up flying 9.1 km, after a couple of very low saves - one from less than 100' just as I was about to admit defeat! I got just enough lift to take me over the wooded side of the valley I was in, and into the field beyond - it probably added 1 km to the flight. I saw one glider land in the valley which I'd just left (boy did I feel pleased with myself - he was higher than me when I almost got grounded there!) Four of us landed within 1 km of each other I guess, but the fifth went on to do another 4 km.

I hitched back to the hill in time to see Fiona and Angus head off in a gaggle of four or five - they went on to do 15.7 km and 20.4 km respectively. Well done the Macaskills, especially Angus with a personal best.

After a quick sandwich I was back in the air, and after about half an hour managed to leave the hill again, this time with two others. Only 4.0 km this time, but it made a pleasant change from the hurly-burly of the ridge! We all landed fairly close together, and it turned out that one of the pilots had been in the same gaggle as me on the previous flight - he was the one who landed in the valley which almost caught me! I met up with Carl Ford on the retrieve - well done for your 10.8 km.

The furthest flight on the day was 25.4 km, which meant that our scores are as follows:

Position	Name	Distance	Points
	Angus Macaskill	20.4 km	803
	Carl Ford	10.8 km	425
	Tim Pentreath	9.1 km	358
	Tim Pentreath	4.0 km	157
	Total	44.3 km	1,744

Unfortunately Fiona's flight doesn't count since she's a league pilot, but in any case it wouldn't have affected our overall position:

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Position	Club	Distance	Points
1	Thames Valley	63.7 km	2,508
2	Dunstable	63.3 km	2,495
3	Avon	44.3 km	1,744
4	Dover & Folkestone		
5	Southern		
	Total	171.3 km	

Well done and thank you to everyone who turned up (Pete, Paul, Marcus, Fiona, Angus, Dave, Simon Jon, Carl and Lisa). Special thanks to Martin Brown (TVHGC) for hosting the day, and to Stuart Wilson (DHGC) for getting the whole thing going!

We still need to compete against at least one other club in order to qualify for the next stage of the competition - it'll probably be down in Wales and hopefully less crowded! If you weren't there on Sunday and are keen to do it next time, then please call me to let me know.

Go For It '95 - Avon PG XC League - 17/3/95

Flights are coming in thick and fast now - well done Angus on your personal best.

<i>All sites league</i>						
Name	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Angus Macaskill	20.4					20.4
Tim Pentreath	9.1	6.5	4.0			19.7
Fiona Macaskill	15.7					15.7
Carl Ford	10.8					10.8
Total						66.6

<i>Avon sites league</i>						
Name	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Tim Pentreath	6.5					6.5
Total						6.5

Please continue to give me details of your flights (Date, Canopy, Site, TO grid ref, LZ grid ref): home 01225 424953 / work 01225 447003 / fax 01225 461166.

Easter XC Competition

Easter is nearly with us, so I thought I'd remind you of the Easter XC comp. The rules are simple: the XC (min distance 1 km) must be flown from within 50 miles of Bristol over the Easter Bank Holiday long weekend. Inform me of your flights as you would with any other XC.

I'm actually going to be in the Lake District for that weekend and the following week - if anyone else is going up there give me a call and we can arrange to meet up.

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California Dreaming

By Paul Davies

Next time you're flying out of San Francisco International Airport, on the way back from the World Championships in the Owens Valley perhaps, try and get a window seat on the right-hand side of the aircraft. Wait until the plane has taken off and is heading west to fly round San Francisco before heading north, and has just crossed the coast. Then, have a quick look out of the window, downwards, and if you're lucky you'll see about ten paragliders, and ten pilots who are hoping you're a lot higher and further away than you seem.

These pilots are flying at The Dumps, and if you had flown out of SFO in May last year, you might have seen me below you.

Sunday, Sunday

I swerved the car across three lanes and onto the off-ramp. Bob, my guide for my first day's flying in California, made a small gulping noise. "We could have taken the next interchange, Paul". I'm not really listening; my attention is occupied by the woman in the car behind, the one I nearly hit; she's flashing and honking. Today is Sunday, the place is San Francisco, the objective is paragliding. Chris Jones put me in touch with Bob by electronic mail. Bob is a fireman, and a member of the local paragliding club. Under his direction, we are driving towards the San Francisco suburb of Pacifica, and a coastal soaring site called The Dumps. It looks windy, Bob says, but we're going anyway.

The Dumps is the popular local name for an area of scrubland adjacent to Mussell Rock Transfer Station, which is all that remains of the public dump that used to be here. It overlooks Thornton State Beach, which runs along the Pacific Coast to San Francisco proper. The beach is overlooked by cliffs, soared by both hang gliders and paragliders: paragliders start at The Dumps, hang gliders at Fort Funston, 2 miles towards the city. The cliffs are about 600 feet above sea level at their highest, and are topped by the suburb of Westlake. In the far distance, you can see Marin County, peaks wreathed in cloud. It's a popular place, with people fishing, walking dogs, running, and watching the flyers hanging out.

It is windy. When we arrive, there's no-one flying. This is a cast-iron sign that it's too strong: there is always somebody flying, if it's flyable. Bob suggests we take a tour of the local area, so he can point out places to eat and drink while you're hanging around. He selects Taco Bell, probably the cheapest fast food in the US. Bean burritos and Coke later, we drive back, and see paragliders above us in the sky. Bob briefs me. It is often strong here, and you must be careful not to get sucked up to the top of the cliffs and then blown back over the 40 Kv power lines, the houses in Westlake, or Highway 1, any of which can be fatal. You know how to big ears? You have a speed



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bar ? Stay well out, and you'll be fine.

I launched, assisted by two local pilots who held me down in the strong winds. Being nervous, I stayed much too far out, and ending up soaring the lower ridge, about 70 feet above the sea. I could hardly hear my vario for the roar of the surf. After half an hour, I lost it and landed. After walking back to take-off, I decided to stop messing about. Choosing my moment, I launched into lift and scooted across to the cliffs, about half a mile away. The lift over there was really mellow, as the locals said. I rose gently to the top of the cliffs, looking down towards Marin County in the distance, and, just visible, The Golden Gate Bridge. Fly out from the cliffs, gentle 2 down sink. Fly back into the cliffs, gentle two up lift. Up, down, up, down. I looked out to sea, at the waves approaching from the ocean, and listened to the surf. They have more religions in California than anywhere but Hawaii.

I decided to land, and flew back behind take-off. I 360'd for a bit, ess'd a bit, 360'd some more, and eventually the mellow lift let me go, and I landed. I was stoked, as Hawaiian surfers say. Bob hitched a lift home with a mate, so I climbed into the car to drive home, clicked on the radio, and tuned it to KRQR ("Kay Are Kew Are Classic Rock"), a specialist FM station. It was playing Stairway to Heaven as I drove up the hill to Highway 280, watching the gliders still floating over the Dumps. I was happy.

The Windtalker

Bob had clued me in: the Windtalker is a talking wind sensor that lives at Fort Funston. When you phone it (415 333 0100), it tells you the average wind speed and direction, and the averages over the last hour, in an odd female south-east asian accent. Over the next six weeks, I was to phone it many, many times, mainly to try and puzzle out its connection with reality; what was it measuring ? It was usually right about direction, but its speed measurements often contrasted massively with what was really happening.

I established several broad guidelines which I found useful when correlating the Windtalker with a westerly site like The Dumps:

1. Don't go if it says the wind direction is Easterly
2. Don't go if it says the wind speed is thirty miles per hour or more
3. Oh bugger it, go anyway. You can always have a cup of coffee and a blueberry muffin at Mazetti's

Summer Breeze

The following Saturday I'm out there again. No worries about meeting someone to fly with: there is always someone at The Dumps.

It was marginally flyable for me; the breeze is too strong. The local Edel dealer was there, flying his Edel Rainbow in his Edel Harness, wearing his Edel Flying Suit of Ludicrous Colours, described by Bob as beach faggot pink. He took off, big ears'd away from the ridge, and just managed to stay aloft without being sucked up to the 40 Kv power lines, whilst not flying so far over the sea as to enter international waters. He had, he said, about 700 hours at this one site. I flew for about fifteen minutes when it grew calmer; this was a different site, much edgier and stronger. It really blew up then, so I went home. Stairway to Heaven was on the radio again. I was soon to find that it was always on the radio again.

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Play Misty For Me

I started to go along after work, slacking off at about four o'clock and haring up to The Dumps. Trouble was, you couldn't really tell what the weather was actually doing from where I was, in Silicon Valley. It could be hotter than the surface of the sun in the car park outside work, with me slapping on the factor 15 in preparation for a couple of hours flying. By the time I got to the Dumps, it was often foggy: the world famous San Francisco fog that is so wonderfully picturesque on postcards.

Not to be discouraged, the locals often flew in it, or rather, tried to fly under it. I gave this a whirl once, but it was usually quite light, and scratching was the order of the day. This often became a bit much when visibility reduced to zero. I watched a local pilot, Al, launch from the alternate take-off, next to the cliffs, turn smartly left, and vanish into a wall of fog. I packed up and walked back to the main take-off and the car park. By the time I got there, it was deserted; everybody had gone. I hoped that they'd all landed first.

The English Guy and The Local Guys

America is a culturally rich and diverse country; race, colour and creed mean nothing here. (Ha, and indeed, ha). After a couple of weeks hanging around, I was tolerably well known to the regulars, and known by sight to others less regular. I was often known as The English Guy, and Californians would delight in saying things like "Allo Might" in a weak Cockney accent. Often, after a day of this, I began to wonder if I really sounded that way.

The locals often use the word "coo-ul", usually when they are happy about something. I tried to mimic the way they said it, but to me it only has one syllable; to them it has two. You can also use it when you're unhappy about something, say when a large slobbering Labrador has just run across your canopy again: this is un-coo-ul.

A number of the local pilots lived within five minutes of the site, and were always there in the evening. Often, there would be just one guy flying, and a couple of people looking up at him as he was bounced about, jumping up and down, gale dangling near Westlake. I asked who he was, and why no-one else was up there. Oh, they said, that's Rick: "he doesn't always show real good judgement".

It Beats Working

I spent most weekends hanging around at The Dumps if it looked remotely flyable. On Sunday I would drive up there for about ten, picking up a San Francisco Chronicle, a cup of coffee and a blueberry muffin or two at Mazetti's Bakery in Pacifica, a top-notch establishment if you're ever there. I would then sit in the car park, reading, drinking and eating, waiting for the wind to either drop or pick up, nipping up the road to McDonalds for a slash.

I had some incredible flights on days such as these: when the conditions are right, you can just cruise up and down the ridge, about two miles each way, in wonderful smooth lift. I had plenty of time to practice taking photographs whilst airborne, and to learn one of the Great Truths of Photography: you are never as close as you think you are, it will look really small on the print. I have a number of pictures of jumbo jets, taken when I was sure that I could see the pilot's fixed, manic grin. But no, they are reduced to small dots in the middle of the print.

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Mother's Day

One of my Sundays happened to be Mothering Sunday. A pretty unconvincing morning, with a strongish wind that was on the edge of my ability, so that I stayed on the ground. About one in the afternoon, people started arriving, having had lunch with Mom. Rapidly, there were about 25 paragliders and their pilots scattered about the take-off area, together with a number of over-excited dogs. A local instructor had brought his dual Rainbow along, the size of a tennis court (about 32 square metres, or 1.35 Pilkingtons if you fly at Westbury a lot). He was proposing to take Mom up for a flight.

I was co-opted to assist with the launch. Mom, who was about 70 and looked kind of frail, was clipped in, and then myself and another helper held the pilot and passenger down while we walked forward and the monster canopy came up. Things got pretty exciting for a few seconds, as we all fought to hold things together and upright without falling all over Mom, who looked as if she probably wouldn't survive this sort of treatment. With a final push through the compression they were off.

They soared about for about an hour, looking down on Westlake, flying up to Fort Funston and back. The landing, the pilot had told us, is the most important part. Got to keep the old canopy upright until everybody is fully on the ground, to avoid dragging Mom all over the local vicinity. Myself and the other helper prepared to grab the harness, running backwards and forwards across the landing area as the canopy tracked across, waiting for a drop in the wind. When it finally came, we grabbed and hung on, trying not to damage Mom. The pilot collapsed the canopy, and we were all dragged back about six feet, but at least Mom was on top. Somewhat exhilarated, she was undamaged; she'd enjoyed it immensely. We were all fairly bruised, and I had a large cut on one finger which had got caught in a harness buckle at some point during the proceedings, and was now leaving blood stains everywhere.

I had my final weekend flight at The Dumps on the Saturday morning that my Significant Other (as they would say around take-off when not complaining about how much alimony they were paying to their ex-wives) was arriving. It was breezy, but I knew I could cope now, so I took off at the alternate take-off and spent a happy hour ridge-dancing, throwing the canopy about to lose height in the freshening wind. I had, over the weeks, developed a spiffy landing technique which involved gripping the C-lines as I approached the ground, ready to collapse the canopy to avoid being dragged all over the interesting spiky bushes, whilst weight-shifting to keep the canopy pointed the way I wanted. On this occasion, I failed completely, almost landing in the largest interesting spiky bush, almost a tree really. Oh well. I had enjoyed myself well enough.

Some Actual Facts

Less of the anecdotes, here's some facts which may be useful if you find yourself in San Francisco clutching a paraglider.

The Dumps is controlled by the Bay Area Paragliding Association; most of the pilots you will meet there regularly belong to this club. They are very friendly, and will always welcome visiting pilots. Make sure you find a member who knows the site and receive a briefing before flying there for the first time. If you want some names, give me a call.

Don't land on the beach at Fort Funston; the Park Rangers, who run the place, might fine you. It's OK to land on the sand near The Dumps, although it is un-coo-ul, and your fellow

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pilots might call you a Beach Geek. It's a long walk back to take-off, in any case. For heaven's sake, do not land in the sea; this has proved fatal at this site.

Mussel Rock is the small rocky outcrop about 100 yards out to sea in front and to the left of take-off. Do not underestimate it; the rotor it causes can give you lots of problems, especially when the wind is off to the south. It looks very innocuous: it's a long way away, and it's way below you. But, as the locals say, "That rock whacks people". The best bet is to take off and turn smartly right, heading away from it.

If you do **turn smartly right**, you have to fly over about 300 yards of fairly flat ground to reach the cliffs and the real lift. This is a challenge in really light winds; it is easy to end up below take-off height and heading for the beach or the sea. Beware if you start to sink out: landing is the best option.

You must be a member of **USHGA**, The United States Hang-Gliding Association, to fly The Dumps (if not everywhere in the US). I joined at Airtime of San Francisco, based at 3620 Wawona St, San Francisco, about ten minutes drive from Fort Funston (phone SKY-1177). On production of the appropriate BHPA log-book, they will sign you up on the spot. As they make no money from the deal, they may ask you to buy one of their sweat shirts, which are pretty gruesome.

There seems to be some friction between **hang-gliders** and **paragliders** in this area. Hang-gliders fly from Fort Funston, and paragliders don't. I don't know why. There are reputed to be some monster hang-gliding egos at Fort Funston who sneak up on paraglider pilots in the air, but I never encountered any problems.

If you ever eat in **Taco Bell**, take my tip: keep ordering until you reach about \$5. This buys you about the right amount of food. \$4 or less just won't cut it.

Mazzetti's Bakery in Pacifica is, as mentioned, a fine establishment for all your hanging-about catering needs. You can usually park right outside, good for security, and they follow the delightful American custom of giving free top-ups of coffee. Their muffins and scones are outstanding.

While you're in the area, go on the **Alcatraz** tour, it's really good. Make sure you get one of the headsets.

Chris found the following story of a tragic accident at the Dumps on the NET.

A sad and frustrating accident occurred at Pacifica, California, today, resulting in the death of Roger Gershon (sp?). Roger Gershon was a Class 1 pilot and was flying at the entrance to the parking lot at the south end of the Dumps. The winds were SSW around 10-12 MPH, according to my last check of the Funston windtalker.

As we arrived, at about 1:45, we witnessed Roger fly in an area that was behind a jutting part of the cliff, which was more turbulent, and he lost some altitude. He could not fly back up to the top of the cliffs, and turned downwind and tried to make a beach landing. He landed in a few inches of water, next to a huge rock. He positioned himself on the other side of the rock from the water. Although his glider was partially in the water, he looked safe and many of us

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witnessing the situation were relieved and thought the worse was over. (I missed the landing so I am not sure if Roger landed softly or whether he had injured himself in any way) Someone had already called for emergency help and the sound of sirens could be heard.

From our vantage point 500 or so feet up, Roger seemed to be trying to pull the glider out of the water. Four fisherman had run up and were trying to help. A couple of fire trucks arrived at the scene and the firemen joined us at on the cliff and watched the whole thing from above. I heard someone yelling to call off the emergency crew as the worse was over.

Five minutes or so later, it became evident that Roger was still not out of his harness, and the water currents were pulling on his canopy. Jeff Greenbaum who was airborne pulled big ears and began a descent to the beach. A wave brought Roger's glider onto the beach and we saw Roger take a few steps and get a bit farther from the water. At that point, sensing that Roger would be OK, we yelled at Jeff Greenbaum to stop descending and to come back up and land. We were worried about Jeff having trouble in the turbulence. Jeff continued on down and made a beach landing away from the water.

As Jeff ran over to Roger, Roger was still attached to his canopy and was still battling the currents. It seemed as though the fishermen had stepped back to let Jeff help out. A wave wrapped the canopy around Roger's legs and Roger was washed into the water. Jeff was holding on and asked a fisherman to get his knife out of his canopy.

Meanwhile two other pilots had run/slid down the side of the cliff and were trying to pull the canopy out. Up at the top the number of fire trucks grew, yet there were no rescue personnel on the beach. As time went by Roger got more and more entangled and got further out into the water. Jeff and the others stripped and were trying to swim out to help. A police officer told me that a Coast Guard helicopter was dispatched from San Mateo. That was around 2pm.

It looked like Jeff and the two other pilots were still without a knife. At that point someone (Ken Davis?) threw out a hook knife from the top of the cliff that was picked up by one of the pilots helping out. The waves were about 10 ft high or so and the guys had trouble getting to Roger. In fact, Roger's head was no longer above water and he was hard to spot were it not for some blue on his harness. His canopy was submerged and was only be visible during waves.

The paramedics began their trek down the other side of the cliff. Meanwhile Jeff and the others were trying their best to pull on the glider, but could not get directly to Roger. Apparently his feet were wrapped up in the lines. This frustrating scene went on for another 10 minutes. At one point those below were asking for a rope and the few ropes that were tossed down got caught halfway down the cliff.

Once the firemen got to the bottom they had rope with them and tried to attach it directly to Roger, but to no avail. Eventually the rope got entangled with the canopy and they pulled to whole mess of lines and sail in with Roger somewhere inside. They started stripping Roger and draining his lungs. It was estimated that Roger spent 20 minutes submerged.

I then went down to the beach hoping to help out Jeff and others with their equipment. Roger was being given CPR and one fireman told me that he was not in good shape. I heard that he

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had no pulse and they needed a defibrillator. I looked up and three other emergency crewmen were rappelling down our side of the cliff.

Meanwhile, I tried to pull the glider away from the occasional wave. The wet canopy with the sand inside weighed too much for me to budge. In addition, I noticed that Roger's reserve had also deployed and was entangled with the rest of his canopy. I got some help and moved the canopy up as far as we could. Then I tried to unhook his harness from the glider. The carabiners were still screwed in the locked position. I guess that means that Roger never tried to undo them. The speed system lines had been severed cleanly and there were many other severed lines and many tears in the canopy; I assume this was evidence of the attempts at cutting Roger free. I also saw some risers caught in the cross brace clips of the harness.

At 2:30 I looked at my watch, frustrated, that the Coast Guard helicopter was not there. The medics were still performing CPR. Jeff and the other guys were putting their now wet clothes back on.

The Coast Guard helicopter finally arrived and winched up Roger and took him to the hospital. A call an hour later to the hospital revealed that Roger had passed away.

I carried Roger's clothes, that the medics had torn off of him, to his car. The clothes weighed a lot and we found much sand in the pockets. His wet flight suit was VERY heavy.

What makes this episode so hard to accept, understand and deal with is the fact that Roger made it down to solid ground with no apparent injury. He was alive and well, yet, he was pulled to his death slowly as we all watched. There was no sense of urgency for quite a while after he landed. We all watched him struggle and thought out loud "Get out of your harness" or "Cut your canopy loose", but did not realize the urgency of the situation.

I could have much more easily understood a sudden accident, for example a long fall resulting from a wing collapse. I would have just chalked it up to the risks of the sport, etc. But watching a guy go from standing on the beach to drowning while we watch is just... I can't explain it.

I have to say that Jeff Greenbaum and the two other pilots who were down on the scene were incredibly brave and should receive kudos for their actions. They were stripped to their underwear, wading in very cold waters, trying to save Roger. I apologize profusely to the other two whose names I do not recall (Scott Sebastian?), but I was not thinking to ask their names.

If I could go back and do one thing differently, I wish I had not written off the situation as "in control" when Roger was still wrapped around the rock, and had gotten my butt down that cliff and cut him from his canopy. I am ashamed that I took part in conversations about how "He was told not to fly..." while Roger was still in a position that he could be helped.

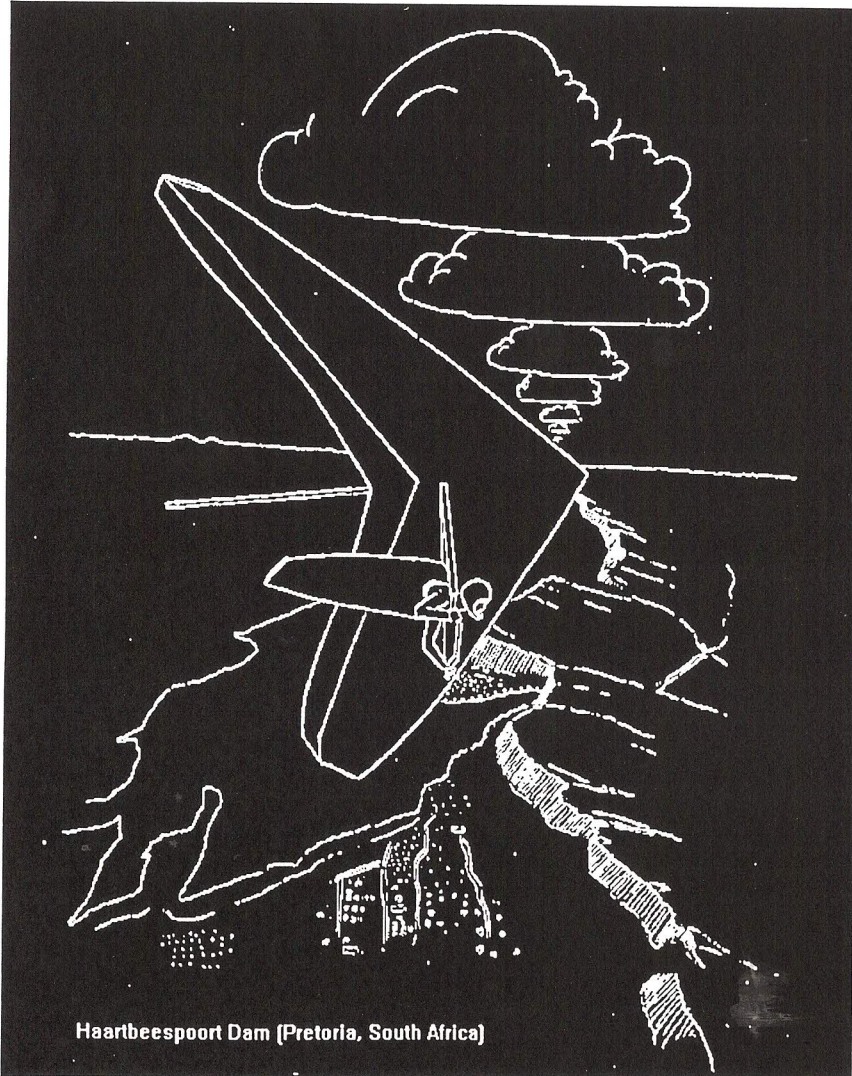
My lessons from this event? Have a hook knife with me when I fly. Have another knife within reach. UNHOOK MYSELF FROM THE GLIDER IF NEAR WATER OR SURF!!! If I can't unhook using carabiners, I am in serious trouble and should cut through my risers and/or get of my harness (Quick release ACPUL clips on the harness might help - in Roger's case getting out of the harness would have been necessary since his reserve was deployed too,

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which has its own attachment points). NEVER, NEVER think about the cost of the glider. I can worry about that after I am alive and safe on dry land. AND, anywhere near water, treat landing near the surf as an emergency situation!

This was a terribly tragic day. One that we will remember for ever. Roger, we will miss you. My condolences to his friends and family.

-mahboud



Haartbeespoort Dam (Pretoria, South Africa)

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Frequency Allocation for 2m Radios

Having very recently bought a 2m radio, I was slightly bewildered by the range of frequencies that it is theoretically possible to operate at. My radio has an operating range of 130-170 MHz, corresponding to 3,200 channels at a 12.5 KHz inter-channel step, so which frequencies should I use?

Re-reading Rod Buck's excellent and informative articles on the use of 2m radios (Skywings - April and May 1994), indicated that the frequency band 143.5-144.0 MHz was largely unused. This, he points out, allows 40 inter-channel step (12.5 KHz accepted standard). In fact the MHz band is largely unused in allows 160 channels.

However, whether there are really doesn't help you when favourite site and want to other pilots are using.

Now maybe there already is after all, pilots do use radios, but my guess is that it is pretty informal and certainly not published anywhere!

I have come up with a system which I think would be workable, that simply allocates frequencies to each club listed in the back of Skywings. Twelve adjacent frequencies (at 12.5 KHz gap) have been allocated to each club, the intention being that these twelve frequencies are split into six pairs with the first frequency in each pair allocated to air-air and air-ground communication, and the second one allocated to ground-ground use.

The first two pairs are the primary and backup channels for each club (backup needed in case of traffic already using the primary), with the other four pairs available for general use or for schools operating within the club region. The idea behind having a separate ground-ground channel is so that pilots in the air are not distracted by largely irrelevant messages, although clearly the ground-ground frequency need not be used unless there is a lot of traffic (which is unlikely I guess).

Table 1 lists the primary pair of frequencies allocated to each group of clubs, whilst Table 2 lists all twelve frequencies for each group of clubs. (In order to work out the allocation, I divided the country into a number of regions and made sure that there was only one club from each region in any group of twelve adjacent frequencies).

Hopefully this system will encourage pilots to use standard frequencies rather than just picking them at random, and will allow easier communication between us all. Who knows, it may even help us gain our own legitimate frequencies (or am I just being naive?)

Now maybe you're thinking that this is all very complicated, and that you've got a much simpler system that would work. If so, then great, let everyone know and we'll all benefit. But

142.45

40 or 160 channels, it you turn up at your know what frequency

such a system in use,

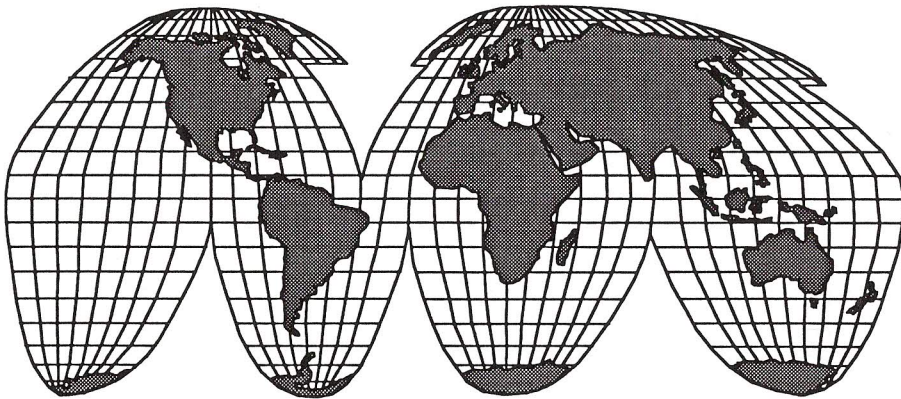
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in the meantime, given that there doesn't appear to be anything else around, why don't we try this and see how we get on - I'll be listening on 142.45. Out.

(The author would like to point out that in this country it is illegal to use 2m radios from the air).

The Committee of the Avon HG & PG Club and NOVA do not wish to condone the illegal use of radios.

Send your thoughts on this subject to me here at NOVA, so we can get an idea what club members think of the radio situation here in Britain. If you are for or against the use of 2m radios let me know.



From The NET...

Date: 02 Nov 94 16:32:15 EST

Subject: "Free" Flying, here and Europe

This article was written by John Halle and just published in the newsletter of the Cascade Paragliding Club, Oregon.

I asked John for permission to forward this because I thought it is an interesting subject for all of us, HG or PG pilots. It will take hard work and good spirit from all of us to accept individual responsibility and discipline rather than banking on general enforcement and regulations. These neither help the growth of the sport, nor its safety, nor the opening of more sites to all.

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To keep free flight as uncomplicated as possible will take the strength of the whole flying community in disciplined cooperation with the general public and all involved agencies etc. And I hope that the spirit of free flight will help us to maintain, hopefully enhance, our freedom of flight the way it was meant to be.

Christian Mulack, Ailes de K-USA, 11/2/94

SWITZERLAND, SUMMER 1994

Hottest Summer since the Roman Empire or something. Geneva feels like Washington, D.C. Fortunately the temperature gradient is pretty steep and above a thousand meters (where we will spend most of our time) life goes on. I have family here, including a new nephew, and we have brought our daughter's best friend along to see Europe for the first time so this isn't exactly going to be a paragliding holiday. Still, motoring back from the Valais toward the Lac Lemman to visit a real by god castle (where Byron carved his name, romantically, in a pillar in the dungeon) I look up to see a gaggle of pilots soaring out over the lake and down into the Rhone valley. We find their LZ and watch, one of us enviously, as they land. No lift in evidence but still, not a bad flight looking out over the lake, complete with terraced vineyards and the storybook Chateau de Chillon, to the high alps behind the far shore. There may be better views somewhere but I don't know where. Later, visiting the castle, I look out from the gaps in the battlements through which earlier generations poured boiling oil on invaders climbing up from below to see one wing after another glide past and circle down into the valley just beyond the end of the lake. If paragliding had existed in the 13th century, defensive tactics would have had to be changed to repel attacks from above.

Byron, I feel sure, would have been an active paraglider, which might have cured his unfortunate penchant for graffiti writing.

Paragliding in Switzerland is a different phenomenon from its counterpart in the western United States, if only because it is so much in evidence. You can hardly go anywhere on a nice day without seeing swarms of multi-colored wings circling down from the heights. From my parents' living room window in the middle of downtown Geneva on a good afternoon, one can observe dozens of para and hang gliders soaring along the ridgeline of the Saleve, a mountain overlooking the city from nearby France, less than five miles away. This will not do at all; I must get in the air. I call my brother, Mark, and we agree to try the Saleve after he gets off work. The Saleve was clearly created to support paragliding. Three to four thousand feet of cliff face extends north to south for about six or seven miles. After that there is a cleft (just to provide a bit of challenge) and the ridge continues along more gentle lines for another ten or fifteen miles. The site is flyable in no wind or in any wind with a westerly component. This covers about 90% of the conditions. The top is grassy fields right to the cliff top. My mother could soar here.

We get there in the late afternoon. Walking from the road to launch (about a three minute stroll) we observe one pilot in the air and some students practicing inflations. Unfortunately, the pilot is sharing the airspace with a thunderstorm that has positioned itself just off the cliff face and appears to have no immediate travel plans. Chris Smith (who gave me my first tandem ride four years ago) is giving advice to the students and eying the pilot from time to time. Finally he whistles to the pilot to land and packs up for the day. We wait for a while but the thunderstorm is still not going anywhere. It begins to sprinkle and we go in

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scratch you would probably have in mind something like Verbier. From Le Chble, in the Bagnes valley where the cable car starts, to the Atelas, the highest launch site, is about six thousand vertical feet. Even from Ruinettes, where we have to launch because the lift to Atelas is being rebuilt, the flight is over 4,500 vertical feet. Just off the Ruinettes launch is a thermal of such reliability that it is known locally as the "pompe coullions", an earthy phrase the general sense of which is that, if you cannot soar here, perhaps you should consider golf. (Verbier has golf, too, for those who cannot fly.)

Verbier itself is in a huge bowl about halfway up. It looks like the whole thing is flyable depending on wind direction and thermal activity. A couple years ago, a hang pilot won a cow for being the first to fly from Verbier around the Mont Blanc and back to a top landing at Verbier. Now the paraglider pilots are thinking about it. Not knowing what I would do with a cow if I won one, I leave the task to others.

The lift sells special "paraglider" tickets (it's even printed on the ticket.) So much a ride, a bit more for a half day and a bit more than that for the full day. Even with no up air at all, you could easily spend a couple hours or more in the air in a day in twenty minute chunks. This makes it easy for a somewhat timid, low-time pilot to limit his/her flying to relatively benign conditions.

No such luck at home and things are getting worse. A year or so ago, a Class II rating was, essentially, a trophy to brag about. Now, increasingly, it is a necessary credential to fly anywhere anyone would want to fly. As a result, for more and more low time pilots, a Class II rating is a necessary precondition for reasonable and rewarding participation in the sport and the pressure to build up hours (to say nothing of observed thermal flights) as quickly as possible is intense. Given that the facilities to build up time on long sled rides are not generally available in the United States, conditions that are marginal for inexperienced pilots are often the only conditions in which the requirements can be met within a reasonable period of time. All of this is being justified by a pious interest in pilot safety but it is hard to imagine how safety is enhanced by a system that rewards premature encounters with unsafe flying conditions. If safety were the paramount concern, Torrey Pines would be restricted to Class I on the theory that Class II pilots can better handle the more difficult conditions encountered elsewhere.

The predisposition to impose extensive "safety" restrictions on individual paraglider pilots is based on the premise that individual pilots are incapable of exercising rational judgment with respect to their personal safety. Nothing I have observed either in Switzerland or in the United States supports this premise which, in any event, is counterintuitive.

Most pilots (at least if one excludes the few who don't follow the rules in any case) have a healthy urge to remain alive that comes actively into play when launch decisions are being made. This is particularly true of low-time pilots. On the few occasions when I have observed something I thought was a demonstrably a poor exercise of judgment, it has been a relatively experienced pilot doing it. The example that comes to mind is the pilot I watched launch in strong and gusty conditions with several A-lines on one side broken (from a stall recovery the previous day.) No one has yet written a rule prohibiting launching with broken lines. My personal view is that most "safety" rules are written not to ensure safety but to protect turf, to ensure that the writer will not be responsible for any accident that does occur and because it is so much fun to tell other people what to do.

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On my second flight, Mark and I exchange wings. He has never flown a Spydair and I have never flown a Compact. The performance is about the same but the feel is quite different. More importantly, Mark's brake lines are about eight inches shorter than mine. I know this but, out of habit, follow my usual post-launch routine of reaching down to adjust my seat, still holding the brakes. About half way through this manoeuver, it occurs to me that this may not be the best idea I have had all day. While making the necessary correction, I ignore, for a while, directional control. When I recover my senses, I am headed straight for some ski lift cables. Mark yells just as I yank hard on the right brake, forgetting again that his lines are a lot shorter than mine. The wing takes off to the right and I follow along after a second or two, becoming a physics experiment demonstrating Galileo's theories on pendulums to the small crowd of tourists gathered at the top of the ski lift, hoping for something fatal. All in all, it was an interesting launch; I had been thinking about trying some steep turns but had in mind a bit more ground clearance.

A useful safety regulation would be one prohibiting stupidity while airborne. Hard to enforce, though.

Paragliding in Europe has a number of similarities with the local sport. The air there is a lot like the air here. Gravity still works the same way. There, as here, if you make stupid mistakes, luck is the only thing standing between you and disaster. On the other hand, there are some real differences.

The sheer scale of the topography, combined with a comprehensive network of roads and ski lifts and a generally welcoming and supportive attitude toward the sport make a flight in relatively stable conditions a lot more alluring than it is here. Most recreational pilots I know in Switzerland have never tried a reverse launch, considering it a trick for competition pilots. Generally speaking, conditions likely to produce even a slight risk of a collapse are avoided by low-time pilots, who can get plenty of air time on gentler days. About half the pilots I saw had no reserve.

In Europe, generally, safety is an individual concern; here it is a societal issue. We just love to be in charge of other people's behavior. We try to justify the pervasive interference that results from our fascination with running other people's lives with the claim that we are promoting safety but it is not true. Paragliding seems to me to be practiced more safely in Europe in part, I believe, because individuals (by themselves or with the help of others they select) are expected to make their own safety judgments based on their knowledge of the specific conditions and their particular skill levels and because, in Europe, the absence of a prohibition is not taken to mean that it is safe for any particular person to fly at any particular time or place. In the end, both here and there, the kind of safety that counts is up to the pilot. It is a shame that the local poobahs both in and out of paragliding cannot adopt the attitude of their counterparts in Europe. Not only would paragliding become more fun and more accessible; I am convinced it would be come a lot safer as well.

After two weeks, it is time to come home. As usual, I feel that I have not done nearly enough flying and wonder where the time went. Thinking about definitions on the way home (preparing to reenter the practice of law) I consider whether I should explain to the rest of the passengers how fortunate they are that our "aircraft" (747) has a spare "aircraft" (Spydair) in

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the baggage compartment. As none of them look like lawyers, I conclude that they wouldn't understand.

John Halle

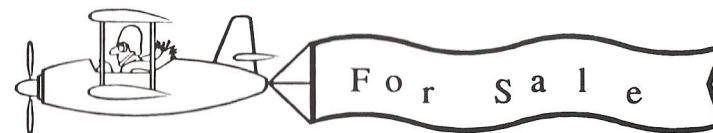
LOW AIRTIMERS

There plenty of things planned for the low airtime pilots. Give Dave Garbe or Paul Guilfoyle a ring for details. Their numbers are on the inside front cover.

Airwave Manx TT

Is there anyone interested in forming a team for the Airwave Manx TT on the Isle of Man in June. Give Tim Pentraeth or Marcus King a call if you are interested.

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Gliders & Bits For Sale

A'de'K FLYAIR 1000 Medium 26.7 m², 32 cells, 6.8 Glide Speed 17-48kmh speed system risers, take off weight 75-95 Kg (all up) Red and Yellow, 11A 1B, an excellent intermediate in first class condition. 30 hours approx, back pack as new Cost £1895 price required £950 PX + Cash possible tel John 01300 341074 evenings Dorset. (1)

APCO Supra 28 75 - 95Kg all up purple, low airtime beautiful handling top performance fast canopy, goes XC with minimal effort. Price includes guarantee SUPAIR harness plus APCO mayday reserve £1300. Contact Jonathon Milner on Bath 01225 333635 (1)

Paraglider: Large Flight Design Dream 91. 26Msq. Less than 100 hours airtime. Standard harness and bag in perfectly servicable but tatty looking state. Glider sound, serviced, minor repairs effected. Offers in the region of 400.00. tel: 01225 891314 to try it out on one of the frequent perfect flying days in the south west. Will seriously consider swop for IBM compatible or Apple Mac Laptop computer of equivalent value. And incidentally, anyone who requires Beginners Level Home Tuition in the use of Your Computer, please get in touch to arrange an appointment. (1)

Trekking Miura Small Excellent Condition, only one year old, still got one year guarantee £1,500 Tel Fiona 01454 613788 (1)

Magic Kiss 154 Steve Wills' much loved glider. You've seen it in Skywings. Safe. Serviced yearly. Good performance, handling mellowed with age. Good condition for age. No reason to sell, but I fancy a change. Absolute bargain at £695 Tel 0278 452813 (2)

Thermal Seeking Canopy Trekking Espace 44, 75-95 Kg, 18 months guarantee £1150 ono Bertie 0747 830380 (2)

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Miura Extra Large White/Turquoise 95-125 Kg ACPUL 11A 1C Good Condition 1Yr
Guarantee left £1600 Nick 0628 784158 (2)

Chest Tow Release & Back Strap £40 ono Phone Richard on 0272 290003
(2)

Fairhaven AV10 alti-vario. Its got QNE, QFE, and QNH in metres/feet. Simple instrument, nothing flashy, see the adverts in Skywings for a picture. After two years of trouble free use it can be yours for £85. Call Pete Corcoran on 01225 335301.(1)

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!
Over and out!!!



NOVA

Diary of Events 95

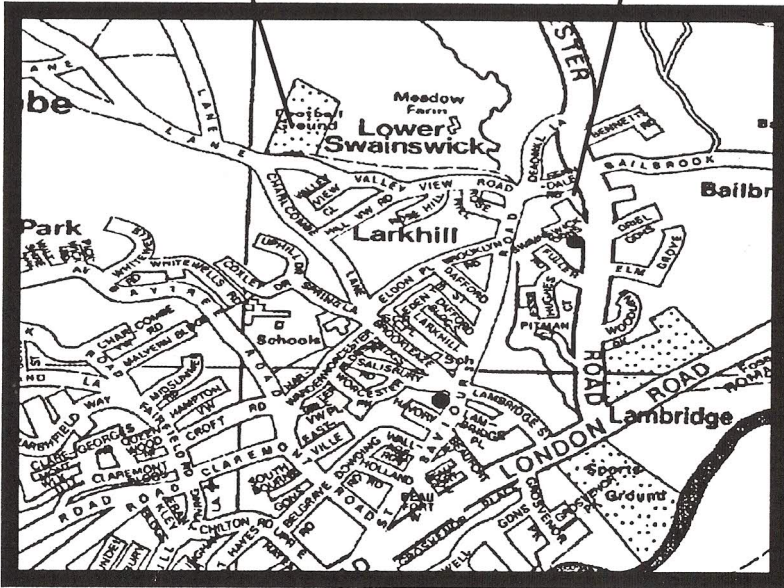
April		
13 - 17	Monte Grappe Meeting	Bassano, Italy
24 - 30	PWC 1	Feltre, Italy
May		
3	Avon HG&PG Meeting	Talk by Steve Wills
6 - 8	British Hang Gliding Open	Long Mynd Contact Jim Bowyer 01873 831667
18 - 21	Paragliding Nationals Round 1	Mid Wales ?
27 - 29	British HG League Round 1	Wales
27 - 11 June	Women's Eupropeans HG	Vägä, Norway
June		
7	Avon HG&PG Meeting	Talk by Rod Buck (tbc)
4 - 10	PWC 2	Zillertal, Austria
9 - 12	Airwave Manx TT	Isle of Man
15 - 25	1st European Union Masters in HG & PG	Kossen, Tyrol, Austria
18 - 24	British HG League Round 2	Ager, Spain
July		
2 - 15	World HG Championships	Ager, Spain
7 - 10	Paragliding Nationals Round 2	The Lakes
15 - 21	PWC 3	Piedrahita, Spain
25 - 30	PWC 4	Gstaad, Switzerland
August		
6 - 12	Paragliding Nationals Round 3 & British PG Open	Laragne, France Contact BHPA Office
14 - 20	PWC 5	Avoriaz, France
26 - 28	Airwave Challenge UK Final	TBA
September		
4 - 10	PWC Final	St André, France

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

Larkhall Football Club

Bladud Arms

A46



A4

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.

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First Floor Flat, 21 St James Square, BATH. BA1 2TS
Email marcus@radair.win-uk.net