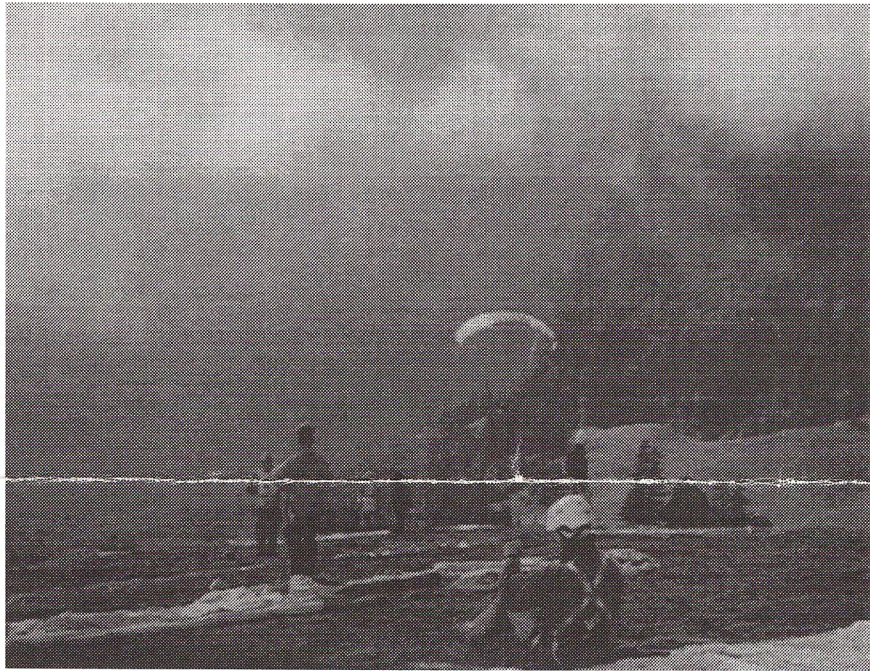


nova



December 1995

No January Meeting

Inside; Committee News,
Converting from HG to PG
and more...

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Sites

Mere Rifle Range 01747 860201 Lulsgate 01179 474441
Crooks Peak
Phone Mr Croft to check bottom landing BEFORE flying 01934 732730

Weather

Avon, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset 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

December 1995



Editors Bit

Well I think winter is finally here, if we didn't already know then the recent snow and ice has certainly told us. Indeed the weather was so inclement that only a handful of people turned up to the December meeting. As a result of this turnout and the closeness of Christmas and New Year celebrations we have decided not to hold a January meeting. However things will be back to normal in February, when we hope to have a speaker.

Well the last time I got to fly was three weekends ago or so, when I was lucky enough to get two flyable days out of two. On the Saturday Simon Kerr, Charlotte and myself went over to Hay Bluff in South Wales, and enjoyed a good days soaring with the odd small bubble of weak lift coming through. It was rather cold with all of us landing from time to time to thaw out our hands and feet. We eventually landed as darkness descended to head down to the Pub in Hay on Wye with Howard Travers and others. Unfortunately for the rest of the Avon crew it would seem that we were high enough to be above a very low inversion as there was a complete lack of wind on Westbury all day.

The next day saw hordes of hang gliders at Westbury wit fairly strong winds in the morning. During the afternoon the wind dropped allowing the paradanglers a go, and I managed an hour or so. All in all a good weekend at this time of the year.

After two weekends of bad weather I was desperate to get out. Rob Crane and I decided to brave the cold weather, being egged on by the promise of lovely NE winds. Pandy was our destination and we headed over there on a lovely sunny crisp winters morning. After skidding our way up the road towards the farm we met a hang glider pilot coming the other way who said the wind was coming over the back and that he thought it would be on at Hay Bluff. We decided to head round there and have a look. We lead the way up towards the Gospel Pass and the road conditions deteriorated, becoming increasingly icy. At one rise the hang glider pilot had to give up as his car couldn't slither it's way up. We headed on not relishing the thought of retracing our steps, and as we came over the top of Gospel Pass fear was showing in Rob's eyes. The road was totally iced up and there was quite a drop on one side. Anyway having calmed down and stopped at the car park we discovered there was a total lack of wind, and indeed any other flyers.

The mountains were looking absolutely superb in their coat of snow, especially as the air seemed very clear towards the Beacons in the West. I just wanted to fly so I suggested we walk up and do a top to bottom. So of we went through the snow and ice up the mountain with me taking rather more stops than Rob. At the top we found there was some wind, and yes you've guessed it was over the back, but it was from the south so we couldn't walk over to the NE take off and fly down. It was very light so we talked ourselves into trying to alpine launch with a tail wind, this was a complete disaster so eventually we conceded and packed up and started our long trudge down. On the way down we discover just how good glass fibre backplates are as sledges and had a rather fast descent down the final slopes. Well when we got to the car the day just got better, I left my mobile phone on the car roof and only noticed about 4 miles down the road. We eventually fought our way back through the ice to

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the car park but couldn't find it. I reported it to a policeman who was waiting for the council to come and close the road up over Gospel Pass and we drove home to Bath. By the time I had arrived home BT had already phoned to say that mobile had be found in the middle of a road, but that they couldn't say where to protect my privacy, causing a fair bit of worry to my flatmate.

The next day with another good forecast and my mobile to collect Charlotte and I headed back over to South Wales. After leaving the fog at the Severn Bridge we spent the day in Wales in bright sunshine. Alas there was no wind. We headed back to the Severn where we entered England and the thick Fog, What a weekend of non flying, still at least we got out, beats pushing you way around Bath doing the Christmas shopping.

Finally a big thanks to Fiona and especially to Bertie for their articles. Yes you've got it I'm going to ask for some more. Get any articles to me as soon as possible, as the next issue will be a bit of a rush job for me as I am off to Chamonix for a week in January.

Anyway, safe flying and remember fly high, stay high, fly far. See you on the hill. ☺

Marcus

News From Your Committee

- - - Trees at Ubley - - -

It is understood the Farmer at Ubley has suggested that we plant some trees. Dave Garbe's wife has offered to discuss a management plan with the Farmer, and the committee has agreed to putting some money towards the trees. We will probably be looking for volunteers to help with the planting.

- - - Mere Track - - -

Yes, a few people have been getting stuck in the mud and falling down the holes. We are talking to the owners to discuss how best to solve the problem.

- - - New Sites - - -

Yes news of two sites found by Avon members which are both currently under negotiation. Both sites take winds in the southerly direction, one is near Weston Super Mare the other is near Frocester. Full details of these sites will appear in NOVA as soon as the details are completely sorted out.

- - - New Paragliding School - - -

Robin Brown has a new paragliding school in the Frocester area. We believe he has an office at Kemble Airfield, where he is hoping to set up a tow school.

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End of Year Accounts 94/95

Income

Membership	£2946.68
Interest	£50.68
Total	£2997.36

Out Goings

Sites and Farmers Treats	£593.96
NOVA/Stamps/Stationary	£611.20
Trophies	£135.80
Hall Hire	£160.00
Sundries	£481.27
Expenses	£60.00
Total	£2042.23

Currant Account Balance	£1695.25
Deposit Account Balance	£2714.15
Cash in Hand	£33.00
Total Funds	£4442.35

Lost & Found

Found 1 Blue Woolly Hat and a Green Army Overall, phone Chris Jones.

Found 1 Blue Hang Glider XC Bag, phone Marcus King

Lost 1 tip batten which Dave Garbe says mysteriously found it's way into the bottom landing at Westbury all on it's own. If you find it please phone Dave Garbe.

Novice News

There will be Fly In on the second Sunday in January, everybody is welcome. Call Dave or Rob for details nearer the time.

There will also be a novice competition with the Wessex early in March.

British Paragliding Cup News

Simon Kerr is currently trying to organise a round of the British Paragliding Cup on local sites, in conjunction with neighbouring clubs. Simon is currently talking to other clubs committees. It is hoped we can provide a round in the South of the country and that it will become a regular competition. We will be looking for volunteers to help so give Simon a call with offers or any suggestions you may have.

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Le Hot Gossip

Graham Steel has joined the ranks of our club coaches after recently attending a Club Coach Course.

Rob Crane has finally got rid of his Clubman and is now the owner of a Kiss complete with Elf logos, mind you he hasn't actually seen yet let alone flown it.

I'm off to Chamonix in January, so get any articles to me as soon as possible.

The Flight Factory recently held a greta skittles evening. There were a lot of very wrecked people afterwards. It's good to see Mark Jones up and about again after his serious accident earlier this year.

And finally...

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A GOOD YEARS FLYING IN 1996

NOVA needs your articles now. I have had many comments on how good it is to read about other members exploits so get sending your articles to:-

Marcus King
First Floor Flat
21 St James Square
Bath BA1 2TS

or Email to marcus@avon-rubber.co.uk

Please get articles for the next issue to me by Jan 10th 1996

Mobile Phones

There has been **no** response to my idea of including a list of people willing to publish their mobile phone numbers so that people can contact them on the hill so here it is again. I want to print mobile phone numbers for all those members who have them and are willing for other members to try phoning them on those flyable days. If you want or should I say are willing to have your number published then let me know. Hopefully this will be a further aid to new pilots who want to know where the experienced pilots, and it will help me when I lose the scrap of paper I wrote somebody's mobile number on. To get the ball rolling here's the list of one as it stands.

Marcus King (pg) 0585 813736

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Maps and Map Cases and What I Want for Christmas - Bertie Gotrian

Back in November 1987 I was attempting my first solo cross country as part of the qualification towards a Microlight PPL. The task was to fly my Pegasus XL from Clench near Marlborough via Milk Hill to Sarum and to return by the same route. All went well on the first leg and I booked in at Sarum, paid my landing fee and went for the obligatory cup of tea.

Half an hour later I was waiting my turn to take off in a queue of light aircraft. It was the first time I had flown in mixed company and I was determined to prove my competence. My turn arrived, I completed a power check, taxied onto the runway and waited nervously for the wake of the previous aircraft to dissipate. It seemed at that moment that every eye on the airfield was looking at me. Clear in front and clear behind; I applied full power and after a short run took off and started to climb steeply away from the runway.

Then it all went wrong: At about 70ft the map case strapped to my knees blew open; the map shot past me at 50 mph and with a loud thrrrruppp disappeared through the propeller showering the runway with a million pieces of confetti!! At the same time I took my foot off the throttle, swung through 90 degrees and dived erratically at the ground. With 20 ft left I pushed out and re-applied the power climbing steeply away once again. The prop felt none the worse for the shredding and it seemed prudent to beat a hasty retreat to Clench rather than face the wrath and/or derision of the light aircraft mob.

As I climbed away from the field I imagined the startled pilot of the plane waiting behind being hit by the unexpected blizzard and the phone message to my instructor awaiting my return at Clench. I flew back feeling a real plonker. Luckily there was no phone call and I kept quiet vowing to take more care of maps in future.....

Six and a half years later. A cold front had passed over the South of England and unusually it was moving north. The sky during the morning looked fantastic with cloud streets running north-south as far as the eye can see. A quick midday visit to the range at Mere found the wind gusting from 10-25 mph, but there was no one about and conditions were a bit strong to be flying on my own so I went back to work returning to the hill at 3.45. Ron was in the air on his K4 and Chris was rigging his. Conditions were much calmer and quickly joined Ron on my Espace in some good lift over the western spur. We reached the back of the bowl with 300ft. Ron stayed in the bowl and I decided to keep going.....

So there I was at 4500ft above the quarries at Whatley in the Mendips drifting towards Radstock when my cloud stopped working. I set off on a glide due north and found some rough broken lift at 2000ft AGL just NE of Radstock.

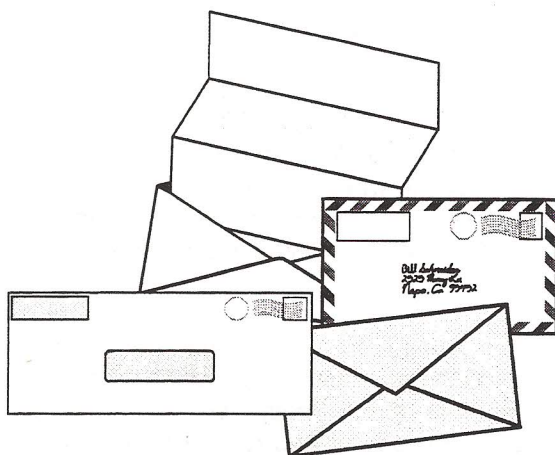
Then it all went wrong: I was desperately trying to stay in the broken thermal when I saw the first of two passenger jets on approach to Bristol. They were about the same height and it was obvious that my track was taking me into controlled airspace!! It was time to check the map cunningly concealed in my pocket. The map slipped out without a hitch, unfortunately it was folded with Bristol on the inside. I unfolded the map forgetting that I was flying at 18mph; it promptly flew into my face and proceeded to wrap me up. At about the same time the thermal decided to join in and liven things up further. I was being thrashed around, fighting and out of control map heading fro controlled airspace.

I left the thermal for some calmer sink and found Bristol on the map, but it was an old 1:250,000 and didn't have any airspace marked on it for Lulsgate. I remembered there was a stub that sticks out at Keynsham so did my best to try and fold the unruly useless map, gave up, stuffed it under me and glided down to land on the edge of the town.

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On the journey home I had time to contemplate the error of my ways. Things weren't all bad though; it was my first real XC and I was picked up hitching by my mother-in-law who gave me a lift back to the range.

Now that I have converted to the hang dangle thingaMagic I am eagerly awaiting my first cross country, but what I want for Christmas is a map and map case!



Letters To NOVA

Alan Gibson's letter struck a chord with me.

I am a new member to the club having relocated with my Job in August. Unfortunately, my relocation meant that I was unable to fly anywhere all summer due to only being home weekends or after we moved having lots to do at weekends. I play Rugby in the Winter rather than waste weekends looking at the Sky! Obviously this means I do miss some flyable opportunities but again thats partly to do with not knowing anyone that I can team up with. My previous club was Derbyshire Soaring and I last flew in Tenerife last October. I am fairly low airtime and would still appreciate at least someone else being around when I fly.

DSC published a booklet with everyones Name, address, telephone and short flying experience. This at least made it possible to attempt to contact someone else. Does Avon have something like this?

I am interested in possibly going to the Alps in the spring. I did a course with Dennis Trott two years ago and would like to return to Chamonix. Alan expressed interest in a foreign trip but without a list of club members I don't know how to contact him. Is anyone else interested? I have an estate car that I can take so three passengers with luggage could spread the cost nicely.

I travel a lot during the week but will try and make the next club meet and the LAT in January. I live in Keynsham so a meet this way would be helpful but Bath isn't that far that I see it as a problem.

I have a mobile, 0585 417423, which I'll tote around in the summer.

Perhaps you could put alan in touch with me. My number is 0117 9869914.

Yours

Steve Wells

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Getting Converted - Bertie Grotrian

About this time last year I felt that my flying had reached a cross-roads: did I want to buy a high performance canopy and have a serious shot at the cross country league or try something different like hang gliding? I chose to convert and for simplicity I'll list some factors:

A new challenge; this speaks for itself.

Cost; a second hand glider, pod, chute and instruction worked out a good deal less than upgrading the paraglider. The depreciation will be negligible compared to a paraglider.

More flyable days; how many days have you spent sitting in the car park at Westbury waiting for the wind to drop watching hang glider pilots having fun?

Safety; better to fly the right wing in optimum conditions rather than gale hanging on a twitchy wing.

Once the decision was made I asked the BHPA to send me a list of schools. The bad news last year was the nearest place was in Wales. Three months followed waiting for the right combination of weather, work and finding a school that was operating. I had all but given up and was contemplating a towing course in Norfolk when the new Wiltshire Hang Gliding School came to the rescue.

The forecast for one Sunday in March was a clear morning with light NW winds followed by sunshine, showers and increasing wind. I was flying at Westbury by 8:45 on a demo Apco Extra (not having completely given up on the idea of trading up). By 10:30 I was starting to find it difficult to penetrate and by 11:00 I had packed up and left the hill to the hang gliders.

Driving towards Pewsey, on the north side of Salisbury Plain, at Cleave Hill I saw a Hang Gliding School out. Not having any firm plans for the day I potted over and asked who they were and if I could join in. Within five minutes I was strapped in to what looked like a prehistoric glider being shouted at by an equally prehistoric instructor; Mike Atkinson - one of the greatest living Englishmen. By chance I had stumbled on two of the most important rules of converting: First, always try to get out and fly before training and second, find an instructor who understands the skills you have already mastered and will work at the pace you want to go.

Flying before the lessons reduced my frustration and allowed me to concentrate. Because I'd had my 'fix' I was happy to spend the day doing top to bottoms. In Mike Atkinson and Dave Bullard I found two instructors who were prepared to push me as far as they thought was safe so much so that by the end of the first day I was happily flying from the top of Cleave (200ft ttb) in a 20mph wind. Progress was remarkably swift and I went home thinking I'd cracked hang gliding but then ignorance is blissful.

Day two, one week later. I didn't get to fly before turning up at the school. Mike took us to East Farm giving me and another student a Clubman to fly. On the first day I had been heaving a stubby around the sky which, with the wheels, was very similar to my old Pegasus XL. The Clubman was far more sensitive and didn't respond kindly to my ham fisted efforts to control it. After two hours of rapidly receding confidence and frustration a student landed on the Clubman breaking the leading edge during lunch I took out the paraglider and had my 'fix' and after the break returned to a stubby. By the end of the day confidence was restored. The obvious lessons were get your fix first and beware of trying too much too soon.

On the third day I got to grips with the Clubman. Which was just as well as I had bought a second hand one. By the end of the day I was happily taking off on my own, making gentle turns and landing in less than smooth conditions. I hadn't flown beforehand but did manage a quickie on the way home.

Now the great thing about getting converted is that once you have progressed this far you can continue your training with a club coach and Westbury is an excellent site for those first soaring flights.

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Chris Jones can sign off the tasks and you can potter back to the school on a rainy day to sit the club pilot exam.

Six months and 24 hours later the question all you parapenters will want to ask is "what's it like?" The answer is: "Brilliant!!":- No more blown out days at Westbury; At least 10 extra flyable days this summer and many more to look forward to in the winter; Very exhilarating flying compared to wafting around under a flying mattress and little danger of it folding up in turbulence. I'm hooked!! The Clubman was traded in for a Magic 4 in beautiful condition though slightly girlie colours (CJ) at almost no cost.

The down side:- You may have noticed that hang gliders spend a lot of time standing around: "Is it worth rigging?" "Will I go down if I take off?" "Is the air full of paraperverts?" This is because rigging takes a bit of effort, going down takes a lot of time and effort and scratching with paragliders is absolutely terrifying. Even so because most paraglider pilots are blissfully ignorant of the peril they are in. Walking up doesn't warrant consideration. Taking off is marginally easier but landing (for me) is more difficult. Finally the consequences of cocking it up are likely to be much more painful which is why I fly with bloody great wheels.

The bottom line is that hang gliding is good fun and it is cheap and simple to convert. Mike Atkinson is one of life's experiences that should not be missed and the imminent arrival of the Discovery Sky Floater may make converting easier.

With the Discovery it might be possible to convert in one day. A brief flight at the All Out confirmed the very light handling and landing speeds similar to paragliding. It was almost possible to soar on a line of trees by one of the hangers! I think the Discovery is potentially so good that we should think about buying one for the club, or forming a syndicate. I have booked in with Colin Lark for a soaring test flight.

If you are a paraglider looking for a new angle to your flying then give hang gliding a go. You won't regret it and you just might have more fun than you thought.

Membership News

This year has seen another substantial growth in our membership. The figures below show that we have an overall increase of 20 pilots - but don't forget, some long-standing members have given up the sport and we actually have an extra 61 NEW members this year - A very special welcome to you if you are one of our new members.

As you can see, the average air time of pilots has decreased significantly - we must conclude from this that we are sharing the air with more pilots with less experience than in the past. May I encourage those of you who have flown for some time to be attentive and willing to help and talk to others who would appreciate a little encouragement from time to time.

So, what rating do our members have?

Well, I could talk the language we all understand, but, not wishing to be a stick in the mud, I'll use the new names but for those who have not yet read November's issue of Skywings:

EPC	=		=	Elementary Pilot (EP)
P1	=	CPC	=	Club Pilot (CP)
P2	=	XCPC	=	Pilot (P)
P3	=	APC	=	Advanced Pilot (AP)

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	Hang glider pilots	Paraglider pilots
Elementary Pilots	7	4
Club Pilots	53 (inclu. 7 tow)	51 (inclu. 2 tow)
Pilots	26 (inclu. 5 tow)	9
Advanced Pilots	13 (inclu. 3 tow)	5 (inclu. 2 tow)
Coaches (inclu. senior)	12	5
Tow coaches	1	
Trainee Instructors	2 (both disciplines)	
Instructors	1	1

Of course some of these figures are taken from when people renewed their membership in March 1995 and a lot has probably happened since then - hopefully more people have taken their next level of exams so infact people are more qualified than the records show.

	1994	1995
Full members	147	166 (increase of 19 pilots in 1995)
Paraglider pilots	49	67 (increase of 18 in 1995)
Average years of flying	6	2.6
Average no. of hours	230	44
Most popular paraglider	Apco Supra/Airwave Jive/Edel Space (3 each)	
Hang glider pilots	98	99 (increase of 1 in 1995)
Average years of flying	8	8
Average no. of hours	317	319
Most popular hang glider	Rumour	(17)
Pilots who fly both HGs & PGs		
Average years of flying	6	20
Average no. of hours	470	450
Associate members	95	56 (decrease of 39 pilots in 1995)

NOVA

Low Air Timers

Fly In 2nd Sunday in Jan

Meeting Last Weds in Jan

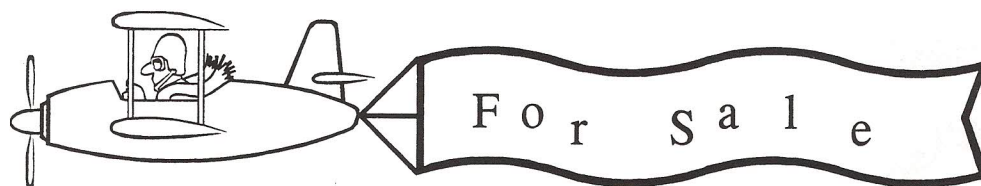
Novice Comp in March Against the Wessex Club

There will be lots of LAT events going on in 1996. The first of which will be a **New Years Fly In on 2nd Sunday in January**, with the new team of Dave Garbe and Rob Crane. Also in January there will be a LAT meeting on the last Wednesday evening of the month, details of the venue will appear in next months NOVA. Finally there will be an LAT comp with Wessex in February, so watch this space for further details, Mr Garbe promises plenty of interesting articles.

New Members Since October 1995

John	Bond	Farley Corner	Elmore	Glos	GL2 6SU
Michael	Milton	17 Chalfield Close	Warminster	Wilts	
Stephen	Neville	311 Devizes Rd	Salisbury	Wilts	SP2 9LU
Andy	Barlow	33 Belle Vue Rd	Salisbury	Wilts	SP1 3YD
Richard	Harding	4 Durnford St	Ashton Gate	BRISTOL	BS3 2AW
Christopher	Evans	7 Clunbury Avenue	Norwood Green	Southhall	Middx, UB2 SSU
Robin	Saddington	Tanglewood	Kienton Manderville	Somerton	Somerset TA11 602
Ian	Smith	13 Freisland Close	Shaw	SWINDON	Wilts, SN5 9YG
Robert	Craine	3 Bannerdown Close		Batheaston	Bath
Graham	Steel	97 Devon Avenue	Rowanfield	Cheltenham	Glos
Alexander	Colman	38 Stanley Rd	Warmley	BRISTOL	BS15 4NX
Katharine	Rhodes	Whitespring	Oakridge Lynch	Stroud, Glos	GL6 7NY

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Gliders & Bits For Sale

Wills Wing Ram Air 146 - less than 5 hours airtime, immaculate, fast with excellent handling, All white with Sega logo. Any sensible offer considered. Tel Judy 01298 871498 (2)

Apco Supra 28, Purple/White, 11A - 1B, 75 - 95Kg pilot weight, good condition but high horizontal milage hence low,low price! New lines, optional competition risers. The best combination of bomb-proof stability and competition performance. Reduced price for a quick sale - it could be yours for only £950 ono

Ails de K Flyair 950, purple/red, small, suitable for light pilot weight (total all-up weight 65-85kg) very good condition, very stable (one tuck in two years flying), ideal first canopy. Speed bar and harness £600 ono

Call Richard Westgate for a test flight on (01747) 811 302 (Dorset) (2)

Edel Energy (Small) Latest Competition Canopy 4 Months Old Offers circa £1600 (Cost £2600 New) Tel Fiona Macaskill on 01454 613744 (3)

Bennet Back Up System Hang Gliding Reserve Parachute. Immaculate Condition. £130.

Maikiki Pith Ball Vario, offers.

Stirrup Hang Gliding Harness, Airstream, free to a good home

Ball Electronic Vario £50

Phone Tony Williams on Bristol 9248230(3)

Xtralight 147, Blue Leading Edge, Moyes Logo, Purple delta Grey undersurface, Only 15hrs, returning to Australia. £2500, call Ken Weekly 0181 675 4038. (3)

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!