

Seasons Greetings from...



and.....

WINDSOCK

The Official Magazine
of the
Southern Hang Gliding Club

December 2003

Merry Christmas...



Obligatory Editor's bit

Season's Greetings,

Yes, it's cold, the thermals are scarce and it's time to put on a few pounds, only to realise that you can't fit into your flying suit when the really good stuff comes round again in the new year.

This month's issue features some of your best bits of 2003. It's been an excellent year for many of us, myself included. I've had a fantastic time learning to Aerotow and have enjoying the freedom to fly in virtually any wind-direction!

Thanks again to all of this month's contributors who's names are littered across the excellent articles and features. Keep them coming. Plus, a special seasonal 'thank you' to Gary Cook of Sky Systems for the festive club logo on this month's cover.

And as always, remember that this is YOUR MAGAZINE. We want YOUR contributions, in particular articles about:

- Local Site Knowledge
- Experiences here at home
- Your trips abroad (plus how you got there or got back – helicopter or otherwise!!)
- Issues you want to raise
- New products you're particularly impressed with
- Pictures of you enjoying yourselves (you know what I mean)

We couldn't care less if you have one or one-thousand hours. You're a paid up member so you're a part of this and I'm sure you've got something in you're head that we'd all like to read.

As always, send it all to: nick.cresswell@ntlworld.com

or:

NICK CRESSWELL
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Chairman's Letter

So yet again global warming does its thing, and another year of indifferent weather has finished. Despite this, some remarkable distances have been flown by Southern Club pilots. Congratulations especially to Mark Watts, for coming at the top of the national XC league. Weekend pilots didn't get much of a look-in this year, so let's hope 2004 will be better. Now, where have I heard that before?

Last week I attended a public meeting in Shoreham, the subject of which was the expansion of Shoreham Airport. The owners, Brighton and Worthing Councils, have engaged consultants, who have done their usual thing, and produced grand plans for its expansion, so that the owners may make more profit. They have come up with two options, namely A and B.

Option A is to expand the number of allowed flights to 100,000 per year, from the currently-allowed 75,000; the excess to consist of general aviation traffic. Apart from having even more GA pilots not looking where they are going, this should not affect our flying.

Option B, however, is for a new 1200 metre runway to be built, in order that larger passenger aircraft can use the airport. Shoreham would have the same size runway as London City Airport, and use the same sort of aircraft, e.g. aircraft of the size of Bae146 passenger jets. The new runway is to be aligned at 50/230 degrees, and have instrument landing systems (ILS). Because of the presence of Mill Hill, the ILS beam will be aimed so that aircraft follow a 4 degree glide slope. At 50 degrees, this will put passenger jets at about 1000--1100 feet directly above Devils Dyke. I cannot imagine the aviation authorities allowing us to fly at the Dyke if this happens.

Judging by the spin being output by the consultants, option B is the one they want to happen. The local meeting produced near 100% opinion against it, so the planners may have a hard time getting their proposals through. Let's hope so. In the meantime, www.shorehamairport.co.uk has the details. If you live in the area affected, please make some effort to kill the second option if you can. I'm sure that local groups will form to stop the plans. In the meantime, the club has registered its interest. The time for comment has been extended to 16th Jan 2004. These are not official plans yet, so get your objections in 'pronto'.

Regards, DAVE

Officials Corner

SHGC Committee meeting 3rd November 2003

Summary

- Windsock has now gone electronic for those who opted for that on their membership forms.
- Start of season for scrub clearance - 1st one West Firle 23rd November.
- Get your nominations in for the club trophies!
- The committee would like to make it clear that we expect everyone to wear a helmet. The BHPA advice is that you are uninsured even for 3rd party damage without it – i.e. you could get personally sued and lose everything as a result of an accident.
- ??Christmas party??
- ??Neil's comp??

Windsock Items

- Scrub Clearances.... dates?
- Windsock distribution changes.
- Christmas party.
- Appeal for replacement for Trevor as coach.
- Neils Jan/Feb comp details??

Members Present

Dave Massie, Michel Carnet, Brian Brunswick, Simon Goodwin, Neil Brennan-Wright.

Apologies

Nigel Barret (coming from Heathrow). Will Greenwood.

Matters Arising

- Communication - Brian forgot to post the summary again - apologies.
- Simon - now reinstating himself on committee - thanks!
- Paper Windsock has only gone to about 2/3 of the membership who on renewal asked for it. Nick will be emailing the others soon.

Sites - Nigel in absentia

Nigel sent the message that everything was now in order.
 Beachy head: he intends to talk to them about the peregrins, re getting restrictions removed. Michel heard a report that there were cattle on Caburn, meaning its SSI status would be less of a problem. Dave has been around Chris Williams' house, he says we still owe him £250, because the cheque as only £1000. He has spoken to Nigel about it, will get it sorted (thinks we do owe it). Dave showed his design for the boards on top of the hill to the committee. For the A0 size, the enlargement+lamination would cost just under £10. There was general support, some question about what size to do it as though.

A0 seemed bold. Good for the most public sites. We'll get Dave to send them as attachments to the committee to approve the text. West Firle scrub clearance we have booked to do it for the 23rd of November. It needs Nigel to say ok. Plan to do one a month - publicise on the forum and round about. Dyke - currently continuing to ignore NT request for licence, if they press it then we will reply with a stronger letter. Aeromodellers on the Dyke currently have no licence or obvious organisation.

Aerotow

Martin sent around an email showing the group in the black

Membership - Simon

Emailed the list around - but we want it sent around as a CSV file for flexibility formatting. Total number up to around 518 around 3/4 a month joining.

Christmas Party - Neil

Getting a phone call tonight about the honey club prices etc. (On the sea front in Brighton) Also backstop case of the Dyke pub, would be buffet with a band etc. Dyke would cost £12-£15 a head. Some thought that the band is a waste, as people are coming to talk etc. Maybe just an acoustic band/Jazz, light background. Lots of spaces at Dyke for various dates. Planning to try to do a really big summer party for next year.

Safety/airspace - Michel

A few more people losing control, but nothing specific.

Festivals - Michel

BHPA hasn't scheduled a festival of free flight next year. People had wanted more hill than tow event. Michel has been investigating for tow field over the back here, farmer wondering about doing an event to justify it (charge public admission) - talking to the BHPA (Damon and Mervin) about it and they think that it would be a good thing to have. Pencilled in 6th/7th July at the moment. If its on the hill it would be hill, otherwise tow. Good thing to promote us locally. It would be on Williams land, rather than NT. Something like 100s of people. Won't be same scale as the BHPA FFF airfield based thing, but will be something. Investigating logistics funding etc. Committee will welcome it. In return we may be able to get the use of the field during the year. Maybe tie in with a big summer party.

Towing - Dave Perrot via Michel

Been chasing a few winches, wanting to look at the field. There's a winch and a 4x4 car to move it. The field is registered for towing, so its all ready to be used really, just needs to start it.

Sites Guide - Simon

Simon passed around a print out of the guide, showing the formatting that would be used in the final version. He asked a bit about how things should be done, he will need help getting all the information. Old one was written too much for HG pilots, need more info for PGs. Simon will need to some extent to chase information from people about things. At this point he needs the extra information and viewpoints to polish it up. Maybe discuss a couple of sites at each meeting, or one at a time on the forum. There was talk about the Grid references, and discussion of the format. Everyone was prepared to back Simon's decisions. Also discussion of the club handbook, what should go in. Agreed that we will be paying for OS map licence which will be roughly £45 a year. (For a non-profit organisation)

Renaming of Firle Bo peep. Site records. Brian should look through papers.

AOB

Flying without helmets - issue in respect to insurance, BHPA Martin Hayward has now made it clear that the person would almost certainly not be covered for the third party insurance. SHGC hasn't given any dispensation. We disapprove of it, should make it clear that the club committee expects everyone to wear a helmet. The reason the BHPA exist is for the insurance.

It has also turned out that almost all the people who didn't give BHPA membership numbers were actually members, so that's not such an issue.

A letter to Dave himself explaining our concerns etc, then we can have been seen to do it. Michel will send the letter.

Neil - arising from Seaford meeting - would like to organise a competition over Jan/Feb a walk/fly across.

The 11am briefing worked well at the Dyke the other day. Maybe the comp could be organised from that. Replacements for Trevor who has moved to Wiltshire - now looking! Chris Jowl is organising the Seaford meetings. Dave Roberts London wing meetings maybe. Talk about moving meetings from Seaford now too. Ideas: Trevor Arms@Glynde, or Hickstead. John Shepherd mentioned. Also need more events, not coaching maybe, topics announced more in advance.

Club coach sweat-shirts. Will use the new (current) logo, just say "SHGC Coach". Not too loud colours, grey base with logo.

Next meeting.

This is to be Wed 3rd December **7:30pm** at the Dyke pub.

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Back by popular demand! Clive's Hang Gliding Garage Sale

Change your Hang Glider NOW! Get used to your new wing in benign ridge-lift so that you know its ways inside-out when those snotty spring bullet thermals start kicking you around.

Was your New Year's Resolution "To do more flying", "To improve my flying skills", "To upgrade my Hang Glider" or was it just "To spend more money"? If so, you need me and I need you! My New Year's Resolution was "To sell those Hang Gliders that are cluttering up my garage and house and buy myself a better hang glider with the proceeds."

Here's the deal: You see a glider that interests you in the list below. You contact me. I answer your questions. We arrange a mutually convenient time for you to see the glider. You see the glider. You see me fly the glider. You see your nominated test-pilot fly the glider. You fly the glider. You give me cash. You own the glider. All the above steps are optional except the 'You give me cash' one.

All gliders will have new side-wires fitted as part of the deal. Small print:- if the glider is damaged by you or your test-pilot during a test flight then you buy the glider 'as is'. i.e. 'Cash for crash and no haggling'. If you arrange a test flight, you will be deemed to have accepted this condition. End of small print.

The 'as is' price below is for the glider without a full strip-down (you may want to do that yourself to save the money). The 'stripped' price is for the glider with a full strip-down report from a reputable source of my choosing.

HERE THEY ARE:

- Solar Wings Ace 160 RX BHPA CofA with owner's manual and batten profile - £125 as is/£250 stripped
- Airwave Magic Kiss (tatty) BHPA CofA £175 as is/£300 stripped
- Airwave Magic Kiss (quite nice) BHPA CofA with owner's manual £225 as is/£350 stripped
- Moyes SX4 (<100 hours) with owner's manual and batten profile USHGA CofA £1275 as is/£1400 stripped

ALSO AVAILABLE: Stealth race harness c/w side-mounted Apco Mayday 18HG chute. Would suit pilot around 6 feet tall. Chute has owner's manual and re-pack history. - £400 ono.

Contact **Clive Belbin** on 020-8681-8693 (H), 0780-126-1468 (M) or email clivebelbin@beeb.net

Clunck-Click

Toast

By Will Greenwood

Hang check, helmet on and fastened, leg-loops.....whoops!

Will Greenwood reminds us of the importance of pre-flight checks.

The British Nationals 2003 in Laragne, France were very memorable for me for lots of reasons; the fantastic weather, the superb flying, my highest position in the league so far and yes, I nearly killed myself. Yes you read correctly, I am a very lucky man and someone upstairs did not want me on that *particular* day !!

I will start from the beginning and hopefully we all may learn a little. The previous day had given us good flying, as had the week of practice before the start of the comp. I may have been tired on the day and didn't want to go the top launch at Chabre, so I rigged with Dave Matthews and Miles Davison at the lower launch. Having rigged the glider, I sat and had lunch and a drink in the shade until I decided it was time to go.

Then the wind started occasionally blowing across the mountain and a few dust devils went off, making launch timing critical. I remember Dave saying he wished we had gone to the top launch - I'm now glad that we didn't!! I decided to launch and started to put my harness on, ready for the wind to blow up the hill (a thermal cycle). While I was doing up my harness I was distracted for a minute (!) and then continued to get the rest off my gear on. Clipped in, I moved over to the launch area, watching the windssock began to blow gently up the slope. I balanced the glider and ran like hell - the glider lifted.

Clear of the ground I felt my harness suddenly jolt and in only a second I felt myself sliding *out* of my harness and heard my zip 'rasp' undone; not a very nice feeling, as I'm sure you can imagine! I held the base bar tight, wondering what the hell had happened; I could feel that the top strap usually round my lower chest was now jammed under my arm pits!!

Yes folks I had not done up my leg loops and was

swaying like a rag doll under the base bar, making the glider increase speed and then begin to "Dutch Roll". Sue Brooks saw me weaving wildly out of control and shouted a warning to Dave and Miles who could only watch, neither of them knowing it was me.

Then the glider turned right, towards the hill and I had to think fast and fight to survive. I pulled in and increased the turn so I missed the hill, then pushed out and tried to "high side" to fly away from the hill but the glider would not stop turning. All I could do was keep the glider spiralling away from the hill; each time I was pointing away from the hill I would heave with all my strength to level the turn a bit then spin it round. With this method I started to edge away from the mountain-side, but still I was out of control.

The next thought was terrain clearance; a quick look down saw that I now had enough height to throw my reserve, I reached for the handle but stopped - would I stay in the harness with one strap? I wasn't prepared to find out!! I also looked at the small paraglider landing 1/4 the way down but could not control the glider enough, so the only option was to crash!! My brain screamed 'trees you twit, go for the trees, ah logical captain'. It's very calming when everything is going tits-up to have a good life line!! I remembered the small bendy trees we had passed every day on the way and there they were 200ft below, come to daddy!

So, sweating like a pig from the adrenalin and effort of trying to control my glider, I was determined to live and let the glider spiral down in its tight right hand turn. Then, as the trees got closer I glanced at my ASI , 45mph – full! Slow it down Will, ease the bar, don't let go, fight you dick.

The glider whooshed round and I missed the tops

by inches - next time round this is it! I remember this bit so well; I've had some control over my life before but soon it was going to be in the lap of the gods. The glider came round as the trees rushed towards me so I high sided and pushed out as hard as possible, Bang! The wing tip caught first tree, I curled into a ball and all hell broke loose - and then I closed my eyes !!!

Seconds passed and I opened them again, only to be resting about 4ft from the ground with the glider perched between the trees and the ground at a 45 degree angle. I'd landed on the edge of a fire-break some 50 meters from the mountain track; one lucky man you might say!! Then the brain kicked in and I pressed the transmit button and made the "I'm down and ok" call. The relief of hearing hear Sue's voice was overcoming, then Dave buzzed-in over the radio. "Yup definitely ok, no broken bones", I relayed, "glider doesn't look to bad either, but who cares"! I unclipped myself and scrambled to the road, to be met buy a Swiss guy who had seen the whole flight; he was amazed I was alive. Then the cavalry arrived - Dave, Sue and Miles. I was very glad to see them.

Miles and Dave got the glider down and we packed it away and returned to the top of the hill, only to find that their gliders had been dust devilled; man, I felt awful!! However we all got our gliders repaired in time for the comp, thanks to some hasty phone calls to the UK and the generosity of a lot of people, who I cannot thank enough. "THANK YOU GUYS" - you know who you are!!

And the moral of the story is, do your pre-flight checks and if you do find yourself in a difficult situation, fight it and you may be lucky...even as lucky as me.



Will couldn't provide us with any photographic evidence his narrow escape, so readers will have to make do with this shot of him expertly avoiding a tree in a Dragonfly instead...Cheers Will!

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Club Member Dave Smith is pictured here just moments after his first powered flight: Congratulations Dave! Dave has chosen the Adventure R-e as his paramotor - lightweight, reliable and priced at £3299 as an upgrade to an existing wing. Adventure's own Speedoo and X-Presso wings are available from £1599 as dedicated paramotor canopies.



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The Great 'What Happened Next' Conundrum!



From Peter Impey:

This shot of Alison Webb was taken at Mount Caburn on the morning of Sunday 30 November – a light SSE breeze and Alison took off to fly to the bottom but forgot about the bush.

To see what happened next and to submit your captions, see page 15.

Club Nights

Seaford Meeting. Thursday, November 27th.

Around 70 pilots (a bumper crop) turned out on a wet night to hear Carlo continue the series of talks on local sites – High and Over this time round – and for some inspirational XC slide shows from both Carlo and Gandhi. The evening was also memorable for being Trevor's last stand so heart-felt thanks from all of us, both recent and veteran pilots, for all the work put in over the last few years.

Carlo's talk (with expert interventions from both Mark and Dave 'Mad Farmer' Watts) was of particular relevance and use to the low-airtime pilots present and a useful refresher course for the veterans. Of particular interest to many were the behaviour of the sea breeze which funnels up the Cuckmere valley and, of course, the exact location of the best thermal triggers.....remember, you only get to learn these things if you turn out for the Seaford gigs!

The second half of the evening was taken up with Carlo and Gandhi's fantastic XC slides compiled over many flights. As well as being an inspiration to all, many of us found the slides of considerable value for their graphic demonstration of the different cloud formations associated with sea breeze, convergence etc. The theory followed up by photos showing the actual cloud formation on different flights was particularly useful. Thanks to all concerned and we look forward for more of the same in 2004.

Thanks, Richard Madden

Doing the Knowledge

When is a Pilot 'not' a Pilot

By Carlo Borsattino

I have to agree completely with something said by one SHGC member in response to a typically heard comment from another pilot, saying that they thought it was too ambitious – borderline arrogant - to think about getting one's Pilot rating until one was a good pilot already, maybe a year or two down the line at the earliest. To this, they replied: "I don't think it's ambitious at all as I think all pilots really should be working towards getting their Pilot rating as soon as possible."

All Club (and 'Elementary') Pilots should be working to get their Pilot rating right from the very first time they hear the words: "Run Run Run!", not just stopping at the (very) basic 'legal' requirement to fly solo of "CP". The level of skill and knowledge which is required to pass "CP" is minimal, and in reality totally inadequate for flying safely.

This is true even for flying on one's own, but even more so when it comes to flying with others. Put bluntly, most Club Pilots - through no fault of their own (for the most part at least) - are a danger to themselves and others when they leave the school, and return to the hill.

As our Chief Club Coach, Trevor McLoughlin, rightly pointed out, the realistic fact is that on a BHPA 'Club Pilot' course people do not learn anywhere near enough to be able to fly well and safely - it's simply not realistically feasible.

Schools, and their instructors, can only really teach people the basic techniques and skills required to take off and land safely, and then try to arm their students with as many useful skills and as much appropriate knowledge as is realistically possible to fit in during a 10 day CP course, with other factors thrown in such as the individual's ability and of course, the wonderful UK weather!

To learn to be a good and safe pilot takes years, not days, weeks or months.

The BHPA "Club Pilot" rating is really meant to be a very basic level 'novice' pilot's licence that

should be treated in a way like a kind of "provisional" licence. I hope that all reading this will recognise and agree that the standard required to pass "CP" is extremely low, and by a long way sub-standard to what is in reality the 'basic' level required to fly at all "safely and competently".

Have you ever heard of the expression: "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing."? Well, this certainly applies to free flying and this is why I think that it is so important for all Club pilots, both new and more experienced, to be working towards improving their skills and knowledge as quickly as possible, right from the early stages. One of the best ways to do this is to set yourself clear goals and objectives, and completing the tasks and learning the theory required to achieve Pilot rating is an ideal 'goal' to aim for, with a clear reward once you have achieved it. As well as just the 'badge', there is the knowledge and the skills that you would have gained, the sense of achievement, and other 'rewards' on offer.

The BHPA have tried to encourage all CP's to get their Pilot ratings as soon as possible by various means, from either 'renaming and shaming' the CP to "Novice Pilot", to (always the most effective) a financial reward, offering a discount off the annual membership once you get your Pilot rating (£6 off). Added to this you are only officially 'legally' allowed to go cross country without supervision once you have achieved your Pilot rating, and the BHPA warn that Club Pilots may not be covered by the 3rd party insurance included in the BHPA membership if they have an incident whilst flying cross country.

As an instructor, I always tell my students from day one that they are working towards getting the Pilot rating, and that the "Elementary" & "Club" Pilot ratings are simply two steps along the way to this. I notice however, from speaking to pilots on the hill, that many Club Pilot's come out of school with the idea that Pilot rating is some sort of "Ace Pilot" badge of honour, and that they

shouldn't even be contemplating getting this until they are 'arrogant' enough to consider themselves some sort of Sky God. This is not right, and I wish whoever is giving CP's this very wrong idea out there would stop doing it. The Pilot rating should be seen as the BASIC level that ALL new and low airtime pilots should be trying to achieve it as soon as possible, right from the beginning.

Of course, having a "Pilot" rating does not necessarily mean that you are automatically a "Good" pilot - far from it - but simply that you have reached this basic level of knowledge and awareness, and completed a number of hours and certain tasks. There cannot be a good (constructive) argument made against the fact that in trying to attain one's Pilot rating, the Club Pilot is by definition trying to improve and 'move forward' with their pilot skills and knowledge, which must be a good thing, rather than stagnating at CP level - something that is so easily done, and sometimes with serious and unfortunate consequences.

The tasks and skills required to attain Pilot rating (really not that hard, with a little effort, a few good theory sessions, and/or some home study) give the Club Pilot something to aim for, a way to progress and improve skills and knowledge - something which I think is always essential for all free flight pilots out there, no matter what level they are at. If you have your Pilot rating already, why not aim for Advanced Pilot - in actual fact it's easier than the Pilot rating!

For the Pilot tasks, look at the BHPA "Pilot Task book", available from The BHPA Office or your local school.

For the Pilot exam, speak to your local school(s) and/or club coaches, and find out about Pilot theory sessions and/or which books to buy.

There are also some very useful resources available from the BHPA web site, from which you can, amongst many other things, download a list of "Pilot and Advanced Pilot tasks" on. Have a look at:

www.bhpa.co.uk/members_area

To find the "Pilot and Advanced Pilot tasks" from this page, choose "Documents", which will take you to a list of files including: 'pilot_tasks.pdf', which is a list of "Tasks for Pilot & Advanced Pilot Rating - for information only."

You can also join the BHPA 'Official Group' online, which has a lot of useful information on it (although some warn that you might receive some SPAM as a result of joining a 'Smartgroups' group). Have a look at:

BHPA Official Group (Smartgroups)
www.smartgroups.com/groups/bhpa.official

To find the list of Pilot tasks, choose "Files" from the Nav Bar and then "pilot_tasks.pdf" from the list.

Best wishes,

Carlo Borsattino,
 BHPA Senior Instructor.

*For PDF files you'll need the ADOBE "Reader" program, available from www.adobe.com

So then, what did Happen Next?



Captions please.....

Suggestions so far:

- "Alison Webb – snapped by our anonymous roving photographer – demonstrating how important it is to check airspace in all directions before taking off."
- Or more simply....."Alison's bush"

.....email to nick.cresswell@ntlworld.com

Away

Parklife

By Nick Cresswell



Part 2

So where was I.... I remember now...on a cold wet airfield in Spain.

Having travelled to Avila in Spain to join Aerotow.com's five-day conversion experiment back in May, I had just enjoyed two of the best flying days of the year. The spring conditions had got us all excited about a cracker of a week and all of the Southern Club flyers had managed to get to grips with the equipment, conditions, facilities and the mountain-of-booze on offer. Unfortunately, as the rest of the guests arrived on day three, so did the clouds and rain.

It was around this time that we began to appreciate the significance of this whole event. As we all gathered around in the evening to face the bad news that was the latest weather report, Mark Taggart (complete with leg-in-plaster), introduced us all to some of our more notable guests.

From the UK, were Mark Dale, Judy Leaden and her husband Chris Dawes. World Record holder, MBE and regular Blue Peter consultant Judy would be giving first class instruction to our PG to HG conversion students, expertly assisted by Chris and Mark. As many of you know, Mark is the Author of the BHPA pilot handbook and it was a real thrill to put a face to the man who had given so many of us such an excellent grounding in the sport. Chris brought his invaluable tug handling skills to the mix, along with many years of experience running the Airways aerotowing operation with Judy in Derbyshire.

Representing the Paragliding camp was Bob Drury. Bob is something of a 'big noise' in European Paragliding circles and a regular contributor to Cross Country magazine in which he has documented his numerous global trails. We were to be treated to an excellent talk by Bob on

his Himalayan expedition a few years ago, along with some frankly breathtaking slides.

A big part of the week's initiative was to promote the growing popularity of class 5 hang-gliders, in particular, the Atos machines. Felix Rhule, creator of the Atos, had brought with him a number of machines for us all to try, along with a single wing section that was hung from the ceiling of the clubhouse (for us all to wonder at as we ate and drank the rains away).

In order that we should have some excellent video footage of the event, Charlie Jost from the DHV in Germany had joined us. Charlie has spent many years heading up the work to certify many gliders of different classes and specifications. He would also provide us with some of his fascinating insights of exactly what a glider has to go through in order to gain its certification. During one of our rainy evenings together, Charlie took us through the principles of Glider Certification testing. He took us right back to the basics of Hang-glider design, describing the dangers of luffing dives, tucks and spins. For Charlie, this wouldn't be complete without a good measure of video evidence, so we relaxed (and drank on) as he showed us footage of some remarkable hang-glider tests involving dead weights and a German road-bridge! Some of the DHV's tests involve launching tethered gliders carrying dead-weights (as opposed to a pilot!), launched over the edge off a very high road-bridge. The idea is to see how a glider of a particular type recovers from an induced tuck or spin. The moral of these tales (as I understood them) is that when a hang-glider enters a tuck, it is better to pull the bar towards you, rather than push away, as would seem more instinctive. This would be a valuable lesson for one of our first-time Atos pilots during that week; but you've probably already read about that in

Skywings, so enough about that for now!!

With all that ground-based excitement, you'd think we'd forgotten about the flying. Well, thankfully no – the next day the sky seemed a little bluer and it was time to warm up the tugs and make up for lost time – and get those PG converts soloing onn Hang-gliders.

The next three or four days just seemed to get better and better. The long rains had left quite a stable and moist air-mass in the area, which proved excellent for our PG to HG converts and for the general HG Aerotow trainees like myself. Darren Blackman and Ron Richardson both managed to make good work of what weak lift was developing, providing some overdue inspiration for the rest of us.

Now that I was competent on the tow, I could begin to explore the Avila area and suss out what worked and when. There seemed to be a genuine pattern to the day, with a line of convergence to the north around lunch-time and a fairly mixed bag of lift in the surrounding valley later on.

The next couple of days were a fairly hit-or-miss affair, involving a tow to about 2,500ft and a scratch around in climbs of around 1½ up, until one inevitably came into land about an hour later. Still, there's nothing better than marginal conditions in which to practice one's thermalling technique. Hard work indeed!

While the team of PG converts made leaps and bounds towards their first solos, the HG trainees looked to Ron for some XC guidance. Having set ourselves some tasks during the wet days, Ron gathered us up on the field with our GPSs, our map of way-points and half a hope that we might actually reach some of them. Now, I'm going to have to confess here that being a total rookie at working a GPS, I decided to focus on getting up, staying up and setting myself a few micro tasks of my own, so sorry, no tales of making it to goal and popping corks, though I had plenty to celebrate on the last day – read on.

Anyway, a few of us attempted to keep up with Ron and managed to bag a few way-points, but I had to suffer the indignity of falling behind and landing out, as well as giving a bogus location to our retrieve driver – sorry Simone (yes I will learn how to use my GPS soon I promise). This penultimate day was something of a boomer for Paul Cryer (HG) who managed to sneak his way to nearly five grand through a blue hole. Paul's

grin seemed irremovable as he described the site of the clouds disappearing beneath him. Charged with instant envy, I was determined to do something comparable myself the next day.

So, with only one more flying day to go before our return, I go up early, checked everything over, barged my way to the front of the launch queue and got away at around noon. This proved to be a really good move. My tow to 2,500ft saw me releasing to the north of the field where some convergence clouds seemed to be loitering. Although fairly early in the day by Spanish standards, I was able to maintain a fairly respectable 2-3000ft ATO for an hour or so, but something told me it was starting to work back over the airfield and beyond. Heading south I sniffed around for something big but it just wasn't happening. It was lunch-time, I was hungry and I thought about landing at the strip for a bite before having another go. Ha ha, wrong! The farm buildings and sheds around the strip were beginning to throw of some quite stunning column of lift. Quickly finding my second wind (as it were), I tucked the glider into a tight 360 right over the field at about 500ft and worked a very tricky little thermal for about ten minutes. I was beginning to think I wouldn't have the energy to see it through, but as theory dictates, the thermal got wider and wider as I went up. The next few minutes were frankly a haze of adrenalin and sweat, but my next conscious memory was the site of my altimeter clocking 4½ grand and, shortly followed by the realisation that I had a buzzard on each wing.

I'd heard the stories about being close to wildlife in the air and this really was the moment I'd been waiting for. At five grand I was very conscious of the kindly cloud that had been pulling my in for the last twenty minutes and decided to head east to Avila. Another realisation hit me at that point; it really was a doddle staying up, once you'd actually got up. The clouds seemed to street their way towards the town of Avila and it was now more a conscious effort to stay down and out of 'cloudly' danger than it was to stay up.

A definite smugness came over me when I realised that most of the others were still on the ground. Only Steve Elkins and myself had bothered to launch this early and he'd already gone down to land. I called Ron on the radio and described my journey up and where I thought it was working. The boys quickly scrambled to join me, but I was beginning to feel a distinct chill and bowed out of a four-up climb over Avila to head back to base.

Needless to say, I dreamt of wild-life that night (in a healthy way, of course). I also recounted the lessons I'd learned about determination when looking for lift and staying with it, even when it seemed to be over.

I was lucky enough to return to the same valley a couple of months later, to fly the Piedahitra area. I wasted no time in investing that Aerotow experience to greater gains – but that's another story.



Baptism of Fire: Dual Aerotowing proved an effective means of converting the PG-HG students to solo HG flying



Enjoying the social side of Aerotowing L-R: Anthony lafrate, Darren Blackman, Ron Richardson and Sarah lafrate



L-R: Aerotow Proprietor Mark Taggart, Site Manager Chris Jones and Tug Pilots Nigel and James



Paul Cryer heads for the Blue Hole of dreams



Yours Truly prepares to hang-out with a couple of birds!

Head

Just because it's cold outside, doesn't mean your gear should sit and gather dust.....

'Blue Van' Dave explains:

Glad to hear that some did the Brighton run today, I (a few other Dave's), Alison, Prunie and one or two that I recognise seeing on the hill (but can not remember their names) were at Beachy Head. The start to the day was very light, this changing when Dave Massie arrived to become a perfect 8-10 bang onto the small south facing bowl.

I went off first and due to a chat I had with Dave Massie earlier I was going to see if I could make Seaford, the big goal being making the gap at Cuckmere Haven and then on past Seaford Head. The day however had started badly, with me leaving my flask of coffee and vario at home. I suppose given that I live in Eastbourne, my favourite site would be the closest, but I do enjoy Beachy; I certainly learn something new every time I fly there.

A good take off from the south bowl and out towards the cliff was followed by the appearance of the Police helicopter coming round the cliff below me (actually it was way off, but at the time looked.....). As I was below the top of the cliff I would normally have done another beat to gain more height before venturing around the cliff, but with low tide giving me a landing option on the sand bar if things did not work out, I decided to go for it. The moment I rounded the corner it was up up-up (no vario needed here) and I boated about the cliff top waiting for the others to follow. They didn't appear, so I went off alone towards Belle Tout lighthouse).

The wind was by now - I guess - 15 or so and a very dark line of low cloud was approaching us from the south. Less than 10 minutes later, the wind had increased a touch and I decided that the best place to be was on the ground. However by now it was far easier to find lift than sink and I had to make big 360 turns followed lower down by S's well behind take off to get down. It is always pleasing to make the right decision at the right time and this was reinforced by the appearance of a line of paragliders coming in to land.

All but one made a top landing in what were now quite strong conditions. One person flying past the arm into the SE bowl was rotored badly, having a 40-50% asymmetric collapse and on flying out towards the south bowl, found progress impossible and was gale hanging, turning and deciding to land in the bottom SE landing area, but again was rotored as they flew too far into the bowl and the lee of the arm, landing very heavily in strong sink. Thankfully nothing but pride was hurt. Less than 10 minutes later the wind was hoofing through at over 30, with rain to follow.

So what did I learn today:

- 1, The coffee shop at Birling Gap is closed for the winter!!
- 2, Pee before you take off (ed: don't we always?!)
- 3, Rotor is a serious consideration and should never be underestimated.
- 4, Beachy is still my favourite site.

And from Malcolm Lamming:

Today I had the pleasure/nerve-wracking experience of flying (pg) from Newhaven (pressure 1003mBar, wind S/SSW, wind-speed only just enough to stay up at first) to the east breakwater of Brighton marina, and back to a bowl between Telscombe Cliffs and Peacehaven. This out-landing decision was due to vast dark clouds and rain approaching from south over the sea. My landing point was 6.4km of the way back, leaving 4.3km to walk in rain. When I got back, pg-ers clustered at TO and politely asked if I knew that my face was cut and bleeding. This must have been due to a small but inconvenient gorse bush in the otherwise perfect turf bowl I landed in (with big-ears all the way until re-assuring contact). It felt like a feather pillow at the time, I can assure you, endorphins had kicked in; the gusts and raindrops started 5 minutes later (1335hrs GMT to be precise).

The cuts are superficial. Maybe I just shaved badly this-morning (or whenever it last was) and this was misinterpreted. I am also a keen cyclist and I always wear clear or tinted glasses to protect my eyeballs (of which I only have two) against the road chippings and insects and cigarette ends. In summer at Caburn, I and others were one-day forced to close both eyes against swarms of insects. Now I intend to go shopping for a full face helmet, preferably with a visor (sunglasses did not help others who flew during same insect infestation). A motorcycle helmet might meet this specification, but I suspect it would be more expensive and heavier. Any thoughts?

Chris Joel (who wrote the excellent article on Newhaven-Brighton run for November Windsock) overtook me on way out (well actually I wimped out and decided to hover and see what approach he took to Saltdean gap) and was the only one to get back before the above weather, I suspect he used full bar all the way back (did you?).

The seagulls were consistently in all the best lift areas, it was worth taking a leap of faith to get to where they were.

(After-thought: The only people to comment on the "shaving cuts" were the pg-ers at TO. Before this - during walk back - the nice locals, walking their dogs in the rain, all said "Good afternoon, your rucksack looks heavy", etc. Maybe they are used to bruised people walking around there!)

ENJOYED READING THAT?

...then great! Enjoyed a memorable day's flying recently? Then why not share it with us and make sure the rest of us don't forget it either!

DID YOU KNOW...that all of these stories have been submitted by subscribers to the SHGC Email forum? But you don't need a computer to write an article for Windsock - although it helps!! Visit www.shgc.org.uk to find out how to join our forum.

In the meantime, you can send your stories, news, pictures, comments and experiences to Windsock at:

**Nick Cresswell
3B East Dulwich Grove
London
SE22 8PW**

Email: nick.cresswell@ntlworld.com



Join us on safari to experience the beauty of South Africa and Namibia. Both countries are fantastic for flying and offer a wealth of other possibilities.

A 30-day flying safari in Namibia and South Africa divided into three unique 10-day adventures. Each leg is designed for you to enjoy the contrasting diversity of Africa offering a holiday tailored to your experience, flying style, love of nature and interest in other activities.

It is a flying holiday where your non-flying partner is also welcome and catered for. Locations have been selected to offer diverse non-flying activities for off-days and for partners who prefer terra firma. Activities range from game drives and adventure activities to pool lounging and nature walks to "super-mall" shopping and craft-market browsing. It is all there.

So, What can you expect from the land of milk and honey that awaits you...

Based on the African coastline bordered by the Atlantic to the west and the oldest desert in the world, the Namib, to the east you will be in the perfect location to explore all that is Namibia.

As a free-flyer the twenty minute drive to take-off will give you time to familiarise yourself with

What you do and how you do it depends entirely on you and your frame of mind:

- Spend the afternoon lying or walking on the sandy white beaches.
- Relax in one of the many coffee shops watching the ebb and flow of Namibian life.
- Browse the numerous high quality art and curio shops.
- A scenic powered flight across the desert or coastline is a fantastic way to experience the beauty of Namibia.
- A harbour cruise venturing out into the Atlantic to visit a seal colony or to watch the dolphins play.

Feeling slightly more adventurous?

- A game of golf watching the springboks graze their way across the putting greens?
- Perhaps a tandem-skydive is what you need
- An XC through the dunes by quad-bike
- Camel rides, hiking trails, archery, abseiling, rock climbing, parasailing ...

Night-time offers restaurants and pubs as well as an entertainment centre and casino.

After a few days of dune exploration and then it's time to head inland... 4x4 country. Guided self-drives. Explore the desert on route to pioneer inland flying.

Tented accommodation surrounded by ancient sand with an evening of star gazing, laughter and stories of old around a camp fire and a few bottles of wine...

Return from isolation to gaze at the largest dunes in the world ... 325m from top to bottom. Spend the evening near the majestic multi-coloured dunes in a beautiful fully staffed lodge.

Back to base for a day or two to say goodbye to the desert dunes before we head off.

You will be sad to leave...

When : 31 January 2004 – 09 February 2004
 Where : Namibia, The Namib Desert
 Cost : £ 750-00

the 10 km dune ridge you are about to fly. A 20 km out and return is on the cards...

Shoes, varios and flight decks? There is no need. Easy flying. Just bumble along, a small thermal here and there maybe pausing for a wing over or two on the way. It's up to you. If you have to land... well it's only soft golden sand, no vegetation, no rocks.

So you don't free-fly... Does the thought of sitting at launch watching paragliders bob up and down from dawn till dusk sound so mind numbingly boring that suicide becomes an exciting alternative? It'll send me over the edge... long before sunset saves me. Don't worry; this is your holiday too.

For further information on Namibia and the two South African legs visit:

www.p3projects.net

Or contact:

Paul Penning
Tel: 0777 556 0967
E-mail: paul.penning@p3projects.net

Dave Lewis
Tel: 0788 407 2536
E-mail: daveh@xcengineering.force9.co.uk



Dream It...

Fly Southern Africa

...Do It

Stepping out...with my Paraglider

Virgin Pilot – My First Year as a Paraglider CP

By Richard Madden

As even the Southern club's many sky gods will dimly recall, that first year after gaining a CP qualification is not the easiest. Since the beginning of the year – I qualified with Tim and the team at Sussex HGPG in late 2002 - I've managed to clock up just over 25 hours. Not by any means as many as I would have liked, but still 25 better than zero.

As with any adventure sport, breaking new ground - which later may seem relatively trivial - was both thrilling and terrifying in equal measure. Some epic 'firsts for me' will live long in memory. Chief among them were a 45-minute top-to-bottom from 7,000ft up Tenerife's extinct volcano, Pico del Teide, and a life-enhancing 2 ½ hour sunset flight at 8,500ft over Lake Annecy in late August.

The Tenerife flight was during a week's flying with Sussex HGPG. For a newly qualified CP, Tenerife is definitely challenging flying. When your only other reference point is the South Downs, the take-offs are intimidating - steep with loose rock underfoot - and some of the sites are a bit urban for my liking. But adapting to unfamiliar terrain is an important part of free flying and while flying over motorway interchanges and towns for the first time certainly put the wind up me, it did wonders for my confidence – once I was safe back down on terra firma that is!

Tenerife also played host to my first tentative 360s and I broke the 'hour in the air' mark for the first time at a site called Ifanche. Take-off is into a mountainous gully that opens out into a ridge with three massive rocky outcrops like a mountain scene from Lord of the Rings. A really inspirational site. The flight from the volcano was icing on the cake. I like to think of it as my first XC flight but it wasn't really as it's actually a straight glide down to the water's edge seven miles away at Puerto de la Cruz. The air was incredibly smooth like being on a conveyor belt and with the snow-covered volcano on one side and the rising sun like a giant

tangerine on the other; I was in paradise!

My week's stay at the Last Resort in St Jean-de-Sixt (near Lake Annecy) defies superlatives. Flying in the Alps for the first time was such a buzz in itself and the set-up at the chalet is second to none. Allen and Ali who run it really know how to look after people. The cooking's superb and the craic round the table in the evening gets a really good team spirit going. The coaches are top notch: Kenton (who used to coach at Sussex with Tim) and Bob Drury for XC courses.

Conditions were very strong in the Alps all summer and we usually just flew in the early mornings and after about four in the afternoon. It was quite intimidating taking off at sites like Montmin (overlooking Annecy) with large crowds of onlookers but I only had to abort one take-off all week which was quite a relief. It was pretty punchy up there at times and I discovered what it's like to be in 8m/s lift! We flew all six days and my flying came on in leaps and bounds. It was also a great time to be out there as that same week, seven French pilots landed on Mt Blanc; the first time it's ever been done.

Back home again I feel I've still got a lot to learn about our Sussex sites. I've only flown the Dyke a handful of times and whenever I fly after a few weeks break, I feel like I'm back to my first day in school again and my ground handling tends to fall apart. One of my worst paragliding fears is of a 'mid-air', which makes me nervous of taking off when the sites are crowded and while I sometimes feel I'm being unfairly pushed out of the lift by some selfish (better?!) pilots, I'd still rather make a bottom-landing than spend the rest of my life in a wheel-chair. Rowena's fatal accident also really shook me. I'd only met her a few times on the hill but she was always so helpful and modest about her achievements.

My other major fear is of misjudging the weather;

a subject, especially on our Southern sites, which I still find one of the blackest of black arts. Having said that, I've been feeling a lot more confident since finding out about the Newhaven meetings and receiving a lot of very helpful advice from Trevor, Dave, Carlo and the boys. Thanks guys, I really appreciate it.

I still haven't left the hill (but then again I don't suppose I'm meant to as I'm not yet pilot rated) but that is one of my ambitions for 2004. I was up for Carlo's trip to Governador Valadares in Brazil in Jan/Feb but a work trip coincided which I couldn't afford to ignore - being freelance & all. I was gutted and still am, but I'll be first in the queue for 2005.

Finally, I'm gradually getting to know the names and some of the faces of a few of the wizened veterans of the club. It's good to have cult heroes in the truest sense of the phrase as Posh 'n Becks leave a little to be desired in my book. Ghandi 'n the Mad Farmer seem a better bet any day of the week!

Announcement from the London Wing

Hi,

The usual reminder to all London based pilots:

It is nearly the end of the month and despite the crap weather there are still paradrinking (and hang-drinking?) opportunities available! You are all invited to the London Wing meeting on Monday (the 24th of November) starting at 7.30pm, although some of us will be in the bar earlier :-).

We will have the usual beer and chat and a Q & A session - any volunteers to give a talk either this month or in the future?

The meeting is at Blue Posts in Newman Street, near Tottenham Court Road tube - it is an excellent venue (a large room over the pub with its own bar).

Future meetings will be on the last Monday of every month (except December, when there isn't one), so book the following dates in your diaries:

- 24th November 2003
 - 26th January 2004
 - 23rd February 2004
 - 31st March 2004
 - 26th April 2004
 - 31st May 2004
- etc.

The full address is:

The Blue Posts
81 Newman St,
W1
near Tottenham Court Road
Tel: 020 7637 8958

Coaching Column

By Trevor McLoughlin:

Well, it's nice to see Windsock back at last isn't it? Thanks to Paul for all his efforts in the past and good luck to Nick with his new (and heavy) workload – shame he forgot to put my bit in the last issue, but there you go; no great loss really!

So, what's been happening? Well, we've had a very successful series of meetings this year and lots of different topics have been covered. Obviously, without Windsock a lot of you will not have been aware of them; you have no excuse for this really – the SHGC Forum is where all the up to date information is. I know I've said it before, but unless you still live in the dark ages and don't have access to a computer, you really should be reading it. It's good for advice and some great debates. It's also very easy to hit the delete key or set a filter to ignore any given individual whose inane comments drive you nuts.

Changes

As a lot of you will have heard by now; on the first of October, I took over as Chief Flying Instructor at ParAvion in Wiltshire. This is one of the three schools that had asked me if I would come in and lead their operation when I left Airworks,

As a result, I've had to de-register Skygypsy as a school because I can only be CFI of one school at a time. However, I shall continue doing trips abroad using the name Skygypsy - it just won't be a BHPA registered school anymore. The UK coaching side of Skygypsy I'm afraid, will have to stop now as I'm no longer living in Sussex and will obviously be busy teaching in Wiltshire. I will also no longer do commercial tandem flights or tandem training for the time being.

Having lived and worked in Sussex for so long now and got myself nicely settled, I found deciding to move a very difficult decision to make – I really didn't want to leave. Alas, needs must and I've taken this course as a result.

So, It's Goodbye

Unfortunately, I am now forced to resign as your Chief Coach because of this move. Initially, I thought I could keep things as they are for a while and continue to do the Seaford meetings and lectures, but in reality it's simply too far to travel in my old bus – it takes about three and a half hours each way! So, with reluctance I must retire and let someone else look after things for you.

Just as a recap – in my role as Chief Coach over the last five years, I've got nearly one third of you through your Pilot rating (143 of you from a membership of 450), and have proved to you that club meetings do work and are necessary (despite some early criticism from those who had 'tried it all before' and said it would never work). I think I've set a standard that 'should' quite easily be followed – whoever takes over from me will just need some enthusiasm and the support of you all.

I know a lot of you think I've done the job well and deserve an award for it (thanks for your votes everyone [FX – blush!]), but I really don't consider this to be a great achievement; I was simply doing the job that you should expect of a Chief Coach. It took me a lot of hard work to start with to overcome the deep-set apathy and get the ball rolling, then once started keep it rolling, but it's those of you that have attended my meetings and lectures over the years and continued to support me in what I was trying to achieve that made it possible. Many, many thanks to all of you for that support – I really appreciate it. I hope you'll continue with that same support for whoever takes over from me, because without it things will go back to how they used to be and it will once again become a dull and 'unfriendly' club.

Meeting

At the Seaford meeting in November, we had nearly 70 people attend. This was our best attendance ever – the most we've had before was 58. Thanks to Carlo Borsattino for a great slideshow of some of his and Ghandi's Sussex XC pictures. Also, my thanks to the following (celebrities?) for putting in an appearance; Dave Newns (Ghandi), Dave Watts (Mad Farmer), Mark Watts, Irwin Jehu and the current UK Women's Paragliding Champion Dr Abigail Barr.

Quite a few of you came along just to say thanks and goodbye because you knew it was going to be my last meeting. To those of you that made the effort to attend for that reason, buy me drinks and give me bottles of wine I thank you. Also, to the many of you that came to me at the end of the evening to shake my hand and say good luck (or in the case of the girls give me a hug), I really appreciated it. At times I found it quite emotional, it was a nice send-off – thanks.

I shall miss you all a lot, as so many of you have become good friends over the years. I sincerely wish each and every one of you the very best for the future, fly safe and never stop learning or listening – the day you think you know it all is when it can all go badly wrong!

If you need to contact me, you can call me at ParAvion, the phone number is 01672 861380 (more details in any copy of Skywings). If you fancy a change of scenery or want to test fly one of the new UP glider range, you know where I am.

A parting thought:

In my opinion (echoed recently on the forum), the only 'good' pilot is the one who knows the weather. If you think you can become good at flying without learning about the weather, then I suggest you take up knitting!

Blue skies,

Trevor

Classifieds

Sellers Note: Any advertisements submitted will appear in the next available issue and will only be considered with valid SHGC and BHPA membership numbers (yes, we do check both lists). Repeat submission are available *only* if requested. Please submit any advertising material or repeat requests to the address(es) shown in the editor's section at the start of this magazine.

Buyers Note: The Southern Hang Gliding Cub accepts no responsibility or liability for the condition or price of any item shown or any incident arising from the purchase and/or use of any item featured in this section. (ed:- just so you know)

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Ozone Atom, Medium 80-100 Kg. DHV 1, Blue, one year old, excellent condition, £1000. Call Geoff, Tel:01634 313205, mobile:07747038959, e-mail: geoff.deady@blueyonder.co.uk

Flying Planet ASTAIR, Afnor Standard, 90-115 kg Large. Red/white/mauve, 20 hours only. Excellent first wing, "solid, simple and safe" Skywings review Apr 2000. Just serviced by The Loft. £995 John Templeton 01323 873 337 Seaford, Sussex jcmt@onetel.net.uk

Windtech Ambar, size 29 (85-105kg all-Up). Low-end DHV 1-2, also AFNOR Standard rated. Suitable for new pilot, or more experienced pilot looking for fun wing with high safety. Great for thermalling & XC flying! Purple, 30 hours by one careful lady owner, very much loved, sale due to upgrade to Windtech Pulsar! Very good condition. £975 ono. Tel: 01273 84 67 22. Mobile: 07775 895 495 email: nancy@nancylicious.force9.co.uk

Christmas special - anemometer only £19. Also, **Tenerife trip** 1st-7th and 7th-14th of feb 2004. info@sussexhgpg.co.uk

Dates for your Diary

SHGC Party: Late January 2004

Once again, apologies for the lack of Christmas Party this..er...Christmas. We will be throwing an annual club party in January when we will be presenting all those shiney cups that our club elves have been busy polishing.

information. Email: neil.brennan-wright@virgin.net or Tel: 01424 733720

Windsock becomes a Web-site: February 2004

Right now and over the next two months, the foundations are being laid for Windsock as a Web-site. Windsock will still available as a printed magazine, but the new Web-enabled version will allow contributors (that's all of you), to submit your items and pictures directly into the site and the magazine. If your interested in becoming a regular contributor, drop me an email at nick.cresswell@ntlworld.com