

Happy New Year from...



The Official Magazine of



February 2004

Happy New Year...



Editorial

Hello,

Great to be back and flying again – see the above picture for confirmation! Thanks to this month's cover-girl, Clive Belbin, seen this month flying his new Airborne C2 (that's me above, flying my new C2 too). Thanks to Johnny Carr for importing these wonderful competition Hang Gliders into the UK and if current sales are anything to go by, we'll be seeing the Airborne name up there in this year's HG comp results.

This is the first regular issue of 'the sock' for 2004. Last month's 'lite' edition managed to inspire a healthy turn-out for the SHGC repack day and the belated Christmas Party. Congratulations to the winners of the 2003 awards and for putting up with the usual boos, sneers and cries of fix-fix. A full list of the winners is lurking somewhere in this publication, so if you want to find out who won the bag 'o washing award.....

By the size of my in-tray here at Sock Towers, it looks like you're all still recovering from the silly season and haven't lost enough weight to fit back into your harnesses! Still, my piece on fitness to fly should help.

Also, thanks to everyone who has passed back their encouraging words about Windssock. I'm over the moon that my (lonely) evenings spent here at Sock Towers, sifting through your kindly submitted items have resulted in something that you enjoy and make our club the friendly, co-operative and supportive entity that we are all so very proud of.

So, please enjoy what bits and pieces I've managed to cobble together this time. All I need you to do is to read this, feel inspired, go flying, write about it and send it to:

nick.cresswell@ntlworld.com

or:

NICK CRESSWELL
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Ta' ta

NICK

Chairman's Letter

Last month, I wrote about Shoreham Airport's expansion plans. Members of the club attended both public meetings, during which a lot of opposition was expressed. The trouble with opposition is that often, it's ignored. Hopefully, this will not be the case with the airport. Certainly, in the meeting I attended, I got the impression that the planners were trying to get the plans passed under the noses of the locals, without too much consultation. Within the last few days, I have heard that a group has been formed opposed to the expansion plans. We will try to join and monitor the group, and hopefully, kill off the plan for an ILS-equipped runway. Most professional opinion seems to indicate that the plans will never happen; let's hope that they are right.

Thanks to all of you who attended the (somewhat late) Christmas do, now renamed the New Year do. Personally, I'm in favour of holding the event in January rather than December - what do you think? Please let the committee know. I know that there were some concerns about the food; hopefully next time we can sort that problem out.

Our esteemed treasurer, Martin Brady, has decided to step down this year after five years in the job. So the club is looking for a replacement treasurer. If you think that you can help the club out, please let a committee member know.

Here's looking forward to a great season in 2004.

Regards
Dave

Officials Corner

SHGC Committee meeting 7th January 2004

Summary

- The SHGC will be running the BHPA Festival of Free Flight on/behind the Dyke, Fri-Sun 2-4th July.
- Christmas Do 24th January Royal Oak 3 Station st Lewis
- Parachute repack day, 18th January. (Help, where?)
- British Club Challenge is starting again - Neil is organising 2 PG teams, HG organiser wanted!
- Carlo Borsattino is taking over as chief coach - welcome.
- Shoreham airport expansion scheme feedback must be in by the 16th! Their scheme B would pretty much rule out all flying at the Dyke, so get your responses in!

Windsock Items

- Announce FFL
- Christmas Do announcement.
- Repack Day
- Coaching something from Carlo?
- Shoreham airport
- BCC thing from Neil

Members Present

Dave Massie, Michel Carnet, Johnny Carr, Martin Brady, Brian Brunswick, Neil Brennan-Wright, Will Greenwood, Simon Goodwin, Carlo Borsattino, Damon Robinson, Don D'Ambro.

BHPA Festival of Free Flight - Michel

BHPA rep Damon visited us before the committee meeting to discuss this. It will happen on the Fri, Sat, Sun 2-4th July on Williams Land. Michel showed the map showing the paddock. It will mean the FFFL going back to its roots as perhaps more of a hill event - as it once was in previous locations. More people in the Southern Club are moving to towing. Why here? Only way to justify having a big towing field is to bring some big event in to pay for it. The BHPA had decided to not engage this year, so its good timing to move it here. They are now saying that they don't want to put up any real money, but they will give backup in kind for the event. Previous years have been losing money, but paying for the venue by giving them the entrance money. So for this the farmer will be taking the gate money profit, if any. The big hangup is that we will need to get our club involved in towing to support this. This will presumably mean the nascent towing syndicate anyway. There will also be marquee, band etc, maybe get local radio stations interested to provide this? Question about undercover storage. So from SHGC Damon needs money to get the first marquee, but then won't be running it. Will need to find flight directors etc. Good way to charge will be just for parking, in the field. Maybe charge car parking with camping. Chris Williams is offering the field for free for a year, but getting any profit up to the yearly fee (would be £10000 for entire field, previously had offered less for runways. Wondering about other events that could use grass field too.) to him. If everything goes down because of bad weather, we still advertise the evening bashes to a wider market - non-flyers. There will be food vendors, exhibitors, and we it would be good to work out a way of keeping bar profits Budget was presented out.

So SHGC needs to cover the funding that the BHPA will not in order to make it done. The Budget gives about £5000 in advance needed, but its a very very rough outline, likely to be much more. So the question is what about the insurance. Last year BHPA got it covered in the deal for their normal insurance. Some discussion about the total amounts. Looking as though it would need about 300 flyers turning up. We didn't know the figures from last year.

Last year SHGC summer do got 130 people alone. This is the 30th year do, so its not actually that bad a do, even for a party.

We will put a request f or marquees on the forum, Damon will wait 2 weeks with the company that he's found for £2000. Planning permission not needed for

The concern is getting helpers, how much support the committee can personally offer to this. Talk about air cadets etc,

Looks like the core group will be Michel+Neil+Don+Damon+Dave Perrin(tow)

Brian to circulate Damon's email address.

Committee approved £4000 initial expenditure.

Coaching

Carlo offering to oversee it. The various schools have been doing pilot lectures anyway.

Andy K please add Carlo added to comm email!

Seaford lectures didn't always have topics planned enough in advance to pull people in.

Lewis might be central location. Trevor Arms would be up for the idea, or the Christmas do place maybe? Want lectures away from the bar. Neil helping change venue, thurs 29th will be at Seaford.

Site Guide

Simon has been having trouble getting information and updates from people - needs more support. Dave did have a good look at changing directions for Firle. Johnny offered to front a sub-committee to push it to completion. Dave Michel Martin also to help. Tue 13th eve.

Shoreham Airport

At the second meeting it was made clear that the plan B runway would extend airspace right over the Dyke, stopping all flying there. There was a lot of anti feeling, so its not just us. The deadline for writing is the 16th, Michel will put on forum for that. We do need to not be anti-aviation - the glider glider club letter worked well for that. Michel also offered to write an SHGC letter.

Wondering w hy they are doing this, maybe related to planning or re-use of site.

Aerotow

Tug running fine, still looking for ways to do dual flights, stuck even if people not charged directly. BHPA insurance only covers coaching. Michel has been looking at getting French insurance. Will and John O'Neal are only people dual qualified.

Will has been hangering the tug in his building, wondering whether he should be charging for the space. Now the group is up and financially stable. Will suggested £500 a year, everyone on committee was happy with that. Passed.

Windsock

Nick to remember to put it into the forum and email-people list.

Membership

Now up to 531 members. Still some of the usual offenders not members. Dave Smith has been doing a good job on the PG site fees side.

BCC (ex Airwave challenge)

Neil aiming for couple of teams again this year (PG). Will also ask for an organiser for a HG team.

AOB

Newtimber - nothing happened yet, part of NT thing.

Nigel writing to council about Easterly near Eastbourne.

Coudry park???? the big complex, they asked Will whether there were sites. Its south Downs, perhaps joint site.

Next meeting.

This is to be Wed 4th February **7:30pm** at the Dyke pub.

Attention bargain-hunters?**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

Stamina

Fitness to Fly

By Nick Cresswell

Maybe we're just a bunch of beer drinking, hell raising, thermalisers! But what if you want to be *really* good?

We all love a good flying trip. My glider must've spent most of 2003 sat in the hold of an EasyJet 737, either to or from Spain. During these trips I have met some incredible people, flown some stunning country and enjoyed all of the eating, drinking and laughter that goes with it.

However, it was on one of these trips that I started thinking about the physical demands of free flight and how our bodies aren't always prepared for them.

Whilst aerotowing in Avila, Spain last year, I became conscious of just how much beer and wine forty-one free-flyers can consume in two weeks. By the end of this fortnight, I was ready for a good long spell of 'drying out' – as were most of us. During my spell of abstinence, I located my log-book and began to write. I also started thinking about my performance in the conditions I'd encountered and wondered if I might've achieved more without all that night-time indulgence. There had certainly been moments in flight when I'd made bad decisions or just given up and gone down. Some these had been due to impatience, lack of determination and a short-attention span. That these traits are all symptomatic of a hang-over is more than a coincidence. It was time to think on.

Now I don't want to make anyone feel bad, guilty, unhealthy or worried, but I'd like to throw in some of my ideas about fitness for flying. Hopefully this might open up a few threads of debate on the subject.

My first thought was that any free-flight over a notable distance requires many decisions to be made along the way. This might be a decision about which terrain, weather pattern or fellow flyer to follow, but each decision requires many pieces of information and is made very quickly. Amongst this information is how one feels at the time (the 'can I be bothered' factor). Feeling energetic might

result in one staying with a weak and broken climb because one has remembered the mantra of never leaving lift. Feeling less energetic, one might be inclined to risk finding a more reliable climb a couple of Ks along the way. That fact that a better climb is beyond a large patch of sink is another risk to face.

Like most decisions in life, risk has a big part to play. Each flying decision is based on perceived risk, which is based on the result of previous decisions. My next thought was that my decisions can only get better if I stay in the air for longer and take the opportunity to make more decisions. So how does one address that?

During my next trip to Spain I noted that I had bombed out on a couple of occasions when I could've carried on. Why did I decide to bomb? Was I tired? Had I misjudged the conditions? Both maybe? I also recounted a few low saves I'd had and the thought processes that had seen me take a small bubble from two hundred feet back up to cloud-base. I concluded that my low saves were a result of determination and my bomb-outs were a result of seeking an easy (and safe) way out.

Each time I bombed, I could attribute this to a bad decision I had made during the flight. Mostly, this had been because I had followed the wrong area of terrain and ended up in sink, which I'd run from like a scared rabbit into a safe area where I could land if I needed to. With more determination I might've assessed things better and headed to a more lucrative area of lift – but I hadn't give myself the chance to experience getting it right that time.

If I make a bad decision and fly off to land, I lose a chance that day to make more good decisions and learn from them - surely this isn't a good thing!

So what was sapping my determination? Well, as an eleven-stone weakling, my arms get tired after a long time in the air, especially if I have to fight to

stay up. On numerous trips I have flown for two days on, followed by one day off, knowing I will feel better for the physical rest. Drinking heavily the night before also affects my determination in flight and makes me more tired.

So, missed days due to tiredness means less time learning to make good making good decisions, resulting in inferior decisions later on. This looked like a vicious circle to me.

I could only conclude that I had to be fitter for flying if I was to progress and develop as a pilot. The more consecutive days spent flying when my body could take it, the more I'd learn (the difference between attending school once a week and once a day); you capitalise on the experience much better.

So, does this mean that I've quit drinking, taken up yoga and switched to a macrobiotic diet? Not quite, but I am in the process of building a 'home 'A' frame' in which to develop my weight-shifting muscles when it isn't flyable. My objective being to increase my physical resilience to flying so I can spend more time flying for longer, thus learning to make more resolved and determined decisions.

Watch this space.....

SPRING FLYING & SKIING in Le Grand Bornand, French Alps

In the fabulous Aravis Mountain range only 50 mins from Geneva airport. Fly from Mount Lachat and land in the Le Grand Bornand landing field only 2 mins from the chalet. We can accommodate up to 7 persons at our Savoyard farmhouse chalet.

Fly at Annecy which is only 30 mins away.

We provide fly and ski guiding for pilots and skiers of all abilities. Find out more at www.aravis-snowandsun.co.uk and contact Jez on 00 33 (0)4 50 633395 or jez@aravis-snowandsun.co.uk for availability and confirmation of prices.

THE PERFECT WAY TO GET A HEAD START FOR THE SUMMER

Terminology

A new Dictionary of Paragilding

From Mark Reeves

This dictionary has its roots in a recent Sky Systems trip to Greece with Olympic Wings. Unfortunately it rained a lot and despite the noble efforts of Stelios and his colleagues and organisers Michel Carnet and Barry Philpot, occasionally we got a bored. The rubbish that follows was inspired by a bunch of blokes who (rather than have real conversations) preferred to fart a lot and tell crap jokes whilst spending many hours in a cramped minibus waiting for the rain to stop!

parabolic	symptom of badly adjusted leg straps (mainly affects male pilots). Can be treated effectively by paracetamol but left untreated can lead to paralysis .
paradise	you spend a small fortune going all the way to Greece and it doesn't rain all bloody week
paraffin	design feature allegedly reducing wing tip vortices (such as found on Advance gliders)
paragon	stolen equipment
paragraph	polar curve
parallax	symptom of pre-flight nerves
parallelogram	bugged if I know
paramedic	flying doctor
parameter	don't you mean <i>paramotor</i> ?
par amount	1. launch site 2. result of badly judged landing in a crowded area
paranoia	1. irrational fear that the Cu over your head is going to turn black any minute 2. see parasol
paranormal	too windy to fly
parapet	flying pig
paraphrase	flying jargon unintelligible to the normal human being e.g. <i>a-symm, big ears, cross-port venting</i>
parasite	one who flies at sites without paying club fees
parasol	dickhead who ignores rules of flying safety and courtesy
paratha	unwelcome chapati-shaped decorative effect left by cows in landing fields
paradox	fat bastards like me can fly

Thanks to Al, Roger, Adrian, Brian, Dave, John & Martin – you know who you are!

(ed: and thanks to you Mark for bothering to write all that old bo***cks down!!)

Psst...a word in your ear

To give advice or not to give advice... ?

By Carlo Borsattino

Most new pilots seem to realise quite quickly when they leave the school that they lack certain knowledge (especially regarding the weather) and general flying ability, but are able to be fairly honest with themselves (and others) about it. Occasionally, some do not display this attribute and seem to have over-inflated and ill-formed ideas about themselves as pilots. Know-it-all pilots can often be seen as putting on acts of bravado and pseudo-expertise; Chinese-whispering something they heard once, that they thought sounded clever at the time. You may have spotted some of them flying in marginal conditions, seemingly unaware of the very real dangers of flight and supposedly believing that their superior skills and abilities will save them if something happened. Some seem to act as if flying was only a game or even a 'simulation'; flying in conditions far beyond their abilities, often putting themselves, and others, in serious danger.

The reality is that these dangers are real, and ALL pilots, no matter how experienced or inexperienced, are adults and therefore fully accountable for their actions.

An unfortunate few pilots seem to learn their lesson only by getting away with a 'near miss' (or perhaps several), sometimes putting others in danger and usually putting the incident itself down to some 'freak event' that was somehow totally beyond their control. Often, the know-it-all pilot puts their narrow escape from injury down to their great 'pilot skill', and often claims that they were in control, and knew exactly what they were doing, the whole time. Frequently, they seem to even come up with some grandiose story of great bravado to 'impress' everyone with, sometimes even managing to delude themselves into believing it too. Sadly though, others seem to learn the hard way.

It is for this reason that I feel that a receptive, proactive and open attitude towards one's progression as a pilot is vitally important, especially in the early stages.

This is aimed at reducing the chance of learning the 'hard way' (and putting an abrupt ending to one's learning). By receptive, I mean that you should always be prepared to listen to others and not just take their comments as a personal insult or attack or shut out their comments defensively.

Even if a comment is made in the 'heat of the moment', I find it's still worth thinking about afterwards and to try to see if something could be learnt from it. You should be proactive in that you actively seek out knowledge and ways to improve your skills, in all areas, no matter how basic or complex they might seem at first. One should not sit back and expect ability to arrive by some magical process of osmosis. You should also be open, in that you are prepared to share your thoughts and ideas with others, and be prepared for discussion and to impart advice, where appropriate.

One of the best ways that a pilot can avoid learning the hard way is by watching, flying with and learning from other pilots and from the feedback and constructive input that other pilots, instructors and coaches have to offer. This is why the Club environment is so important, as it provides an environment for pilots of all levels and disciplines to learn from each other, with the added "Bruce Bonus" of voluntary club coaches who are willing to give up their time to share their experience with new pilots. Being a Club member means that you should always 'look out' for one another and advice should always be sought and/or given.

But when and where is it appropriate to give advice? That's a tricky one (as I very well know!), but my belief is that it's always better to give advice, even when it's ill received at the time, if there is a chance that it may save someone's life or limbs in future. The worst thing, in my opinion, is to not give advice to someone who you think might need it, for the sake of 'social etiquette' (fear of perhaps making yourself unpopular, looking stupid or 'un-cool', or even simply trying not to

bruise their ego), and then later finding out that that pilot has hurt themselves and your advice may/could have helped prevent this from happening.

In 10 years of flying and instructing, I feel I can say with sad certainty that I have known this to be the case on a number of occasions. The proof of it is that too many times I have heard pilots stand by when someone has had an accident and say (sometimes seemingly with a strange and sick sense of satisfaction), 'I knew that would happen to them, didn't I say that would happen!?' Of course, it just about always turns out that these pilots never said anything to the pilot in question before, or at best, just shouted some abuse at them when they got in their way in the air.

Of course, it doesn't have to be this way and with a few moments of reflection, we can all learn to be more objective of our own and each others' flying.

Best wishes

Carlo Borsattino
BHPA Senior Instructor

New Paragliding World Record - Pierre BOUILLOUX 237 km Triangle.

It's official, Pierre Bouilloux regains the record he held for many years before with an awe inspiring 237 km triangle - truly an incredible achievement in paragliding, that the rest of us can only dream about! You can be sure that there are PLENTY of other pilots trying out there these days. In my books, Pierre stands as one of the very few (only?) paraglider pilots that has been able to 'achieve the unachievable' in paragliding -CONSISTENCY! Every dog has his day in paragliding, especially in the early days, but only the really great pilots can do it again and again!

Regards, Carlo

Tea & Medals

And the winners of the 2003 Southern Hang Gliding Awards are.....

Hang Gliding

Sussex Weekend League:

- 1) Dave Matthews
- 2) Johnny Carr

Aerotow Cup:

Johnny Carr

Broken Uprights:

Neil Ewins

Sussex League:

- 1) Dave Matthews
- 2) Johnny Carr
- 3) Will Greenwood

Best Newcomer:

Kris Holland

Martini League:

Dave Matthews

Most Improved Pilot:

Nick Cresswell

Paragliding

Novice League:

- 1) Adam Northcote-Green
- 2) Grita Rose-Innes
- 3) Mike Parfitt

Serial Cup:

Dave Newns

Bag of Washing:

Russel Ogden, for his barbed wire fence (im)balancing act at the Dyke!

Sussex League:

- 1) Mark Watts
- 2) Dave Newns
- 3) Carlo Borsattino

Best Newcomer:

Peter Gibby

Outstanding Achievement:

Russell Ogden, for his PG championship

Martini League:

Mark Watts

Most Improved Pilot:

Malcolm Lammings

Well done to all.

Away

Annecy Sky Systems Trip, 15-22 September 2003

Written & Compiled by Malcolm Lamming

Pics by Dave Hairs, and from <http://www.coupe-icare.org/indexuk.php> (click "Concours photos", "Voir", "VOIR LES SELECTIONS").

Part 1

On Saturday 20th September, we (a group of eleven) drove from Irwyn and Joan Jehu's Maison du Moulin (www.maison-du-moulin.co.uk) south of lake Annecy, to the Coupe Icare festival of free flight at the village of Saint Hilaire just north of Grenoble:



Perspective makes its take-off look like a flat astro-turf tennis court in the webcam (<http://www.prevol.com/webcam/webcam.php3>), but it is just as steep as it looks in the photo.

Anyway, the Coupe Icare has a rotating presidency and this year the Moroccans are fairly stylishly in charge, chanting the mantra "no stress":



.....and the Italians are doing the flying:



...after their pre-flight checks:



.....the British are providing the policing:



.....the French pilots have all been locked up:



...but that didn't stop one getting away:



The thermals are good for late September:



The result is a success, with rigid observance of ridge-on-the-right rule.



.....continued next month

Feedback

SHGC Repack Day. Sunday, January 13th.

I got there about 11:00 and was No. 22, so left my reserve to be Repacked later, after having a go deploying it from my brand-new harness - which proved a LOT easier than when I tried (using my old harness) at the Thames Valley equivalent a couple of years ago.

A suggestion for next time - have some blacked-out goggles, or some of those eye-covers they give out on planes. If you can deploy WITHOUT looking for the handle, then you are likely to do so if the s**t hits the fan.

In the meantime, practise finding the deployment handle (without looking for it) while out flying.

If you can hang in your harness somewhere, try the first part of a deployment (repeatedly if necessary) to see how much effort it actually takes to rip the velcro apart and the right direction to do it to minimise the effort required.

I found (on my old harness) that the deployment handle had way too much velcro holding it onto the harness, so used some elastoplast on one surface to reduce the active area.

Regards & Thanks

Mike Parfitt



Dear Friends of Southern Hang Gliding Club
 Very many thanks for awarding me the "Best Newcomer" (paragliding)! I must say I was highly delighted but flabbergasted! I'm sorry I wasn't at the Party but apart from it probably starting about my bedtime I'm rather nervous about the drinking and driving situation having recently lost 3 points and £60 to a speed trap at 4-15 am. Also I'm afraid to say I haven't got to know anyone from your Club, as far as I know.

I seem to be the only person without a computer so probably miss quite a lot although I've heard talk of The Forum

As Richard Madden (Windsock Dec: 05) said, the time after becoming a club pilot is a difficult time and I feel there should be a scheme where for five or ten pounds a day we could be shown how to survive those first few weeks. I was very fortunate in meeting Steve Purdie who saw this terrified old boy on Mt. Caburn about to meet his doom on his first flight on his own. Since then he has helped me along culminating in the trip to the Himalayas last Oct/Nov. When I reached 11,135 ft. one day I felt I was really "out of this world". I'm really sorry I didn't take this up when I was younger but I used to think that racing a catamaran at Eastbourne was the most exciting sport. Wrong!

I look forward to christening the tanker soon

Best wishes to you all
 Peter.

A few Himalayan tales...



An Old Proverb

A trip of a lifetime was the excuse to get three straight weeks off work to go on this adventure, and indeed it was a trip of a lifetime. If not just for the most amazing scenery and flying you are ever likely to see or do then at least for the human element on this trip. Watching fellow flyers wrangle with their fears, thoughts and emotions, just as I did, would have made a great study for a psychologist.

Practically everyday was flyable...where does that ever happen?

For me there were many highlights and a couple of lowlights. Among the Highlights were finding thermals (hard to miss anyway) and actually staying in them... being hoisted to over 12000ft and doing it again the next day and the next day...

Lowlights included: learning the hard way to get my legs down early when landing...falling asleep (snoring included) during Bob Drury's recital of his epic 21000ft flight a few days before... finding out that an 80 year old had more flying stamina than me! "Hello Pete".

The fact that I am now scheming to get on next years "once in a lifetime" trip only goes to show that as an old Bhuddist proverb I found/made-up says:

"You can have as many trips of a lifetime in as many lifetimes as you want."

... It works for me.

Just to say a big thank you to Steve Purdie and the Airworks team who were totally professional and dedicated to the safety of the 'Goony' birds they had let loose on these mountains and to the detriment of their own personal flying.

See you on the mountain!!
Graham Parker



The Birdies and Me

I'm no sky god. Not even close. More like a newbie scaredycat. By day four I was getting more confident; I'd survived a couple of big collapses, thermalled up to over 10,000' and so things were looking good.

After launching I headed down the spine to the house thermal and climbed up. The thermal was working well but full of other paragliders. I reckoned there must be less crowded lift to be found somewhere in the Himalayas, so I headed off in a random direction to see what I could find. After a

few minutes I saw three vultures circling off to the west. These were big birds. Very, very big birds. As the local eagles and vultures are very good at finding lift I flew towards them.

I approached through sink (a good sign) then my glider rocked back, came overhead, and went up like an industrial firework. It felt like my boots would be ripped off my feet. My vario recorded an 11.5 metres per second climb (peak?). Steve came over the radio to say "Anyone looking for lift, go where Jay is; he's found a rocket ship!"

The vultures seemed quite happy to share their thermal with me, so I circled with them for a few minutes. When I left the thermal at the inversion and one of the birds followed me. I saw him in my peripheral vision behind and then beside me as I moseyed around. He then gently manoeuvred himself over the top of my wing and disappeared from view. I flew straight, head back, looking up to see where he was. A minute or so later, a head appeared over the front of the wing, looking down at me.

"Hello birdie" I said.

Apparently satisfied with this greeting, he looked ahead again and slid slowly forwards so I could see his body and wings. Now I could appreciate how big he was – over two metres across, with a body like a bull terrier. He was surfing the leading edge of my wing, inches above it.

We flew around together in close formation for five minutes or so before he moved off on a straight glide at a speed I could not match.

Since I was a very small boy I've been watching birds soaring and dreamed of flying with them. I got to do it this year with a big friendly one. It ranks as one of the greatest moments of my life.

Jay Power



Starting Again

For me the best day was my third day of flying from Billing. The day before I had spent an inordinate amount of time bashing around trying to get on the back ridge. On this occasion I decided I was going for it. The weather wasn't perfect but I managed to gain just enough height to fly back at the ridge and scrape my way along to the East for about 15k.

After about an hour and a half I realised that the mountain lift was becoming even less reliable so decided to turn back and try to make the return trip. I got about half way back along the mountain when it became apparent that the lift was fast abandoning me.

I took a gamble and flew out over the valley to see that I had nothing resembling a glide to the landing field. I scabbled around in 0's and 1's for ages watching two other gliders fall short and land out.

I eventually took the bull by the horns and full barred it hoping for another decent climb. I got this about 5k short of my goal and eventually ended up over the landing field with more height than I'd left the ridge with! I used this to explore the valley and ended up putting another 5k on the flight before landing a meter from the spot on the landing field.



I'd flown for three hours in sometimes-difficult conditions and achieved my first out and return cross-country of about 35k. What a way to admire the awesome scenery afforded by the Himalayas!

To put this in perspective, I started flying again last spring after an eight-year break and been able to do relatively little during the summer in England apart from remember what does what on a paraglider!

The best bit was hearing that a very experienced pilot, thinking he'd done enough for the day, remarked that he was toying with turning back when he saw an antique glider on it's way back, suffice it to say, he felt he had to go on!

My thanks go to everyone on the trip who got on so well together but particularly to Steve Purdy and his lovely assistants, Paul Penning, Owen Latham and Dave Lewis. I may not have appeared to be listening all the time but, trust me, I was and what a difference it made!

Rob Bunch

The Tibetan Children's Village

I thought my flight was over. I'd been going up, down and round about for an hour, bouncing my head on the inversions, and decorating a few Himalayan foothills as a result of a bout of airsickness.

Then I found myself back over the landing field, circling in the barest hint of lift, and planning my approach. This time, I thought, I'll make sure I don't drape my wing over a couple of Tibetan Buddhist monks -- blue doesn't seem to be one of their colours. And sometimes their cricket match distracts them from approaching gliders.

Then Hairy Dave approached on his newly -restored Apco Simba, and pointed out over the radio that we still had plenty of height. "What about heading down the valley on a little excursion?" he suggested.



So off we glided, with Dave on his high-performance wing perceptibly pulling ahead of and above my Firebird Grid (could pilot skill also have had something do with it? Just possibly!) I joined him in another weak and gentle thermal, enjoying the still novel sensation of cross-country flying -- my previous efforts, in Mexico, had been basically one huge climb followed by one long glide. The climb soon petered out; but, since the valley was itself getting lower, we still had enough height to plough on.

Dave's next climb, when I arrived in it, seemed to be only a zero for me, and I began to look at landing options. I saw a large and friendly-looking field, so big that it must have some decent power-line-free spaces, and made up my mind that would be it -- especially as the valley beyond got a bit narrow and built-up further down. The field lay between two big building sites; circling over one, as I checked ground speed on my new GPS, gave me a bit more lift, but I was reluctant now to abandon my chosen landing spot. Getting lower, I saw that there was only one line of big pylons; as I approached over a few small rocks and bushes, I noticed a crowd already assembling. I came down on nice soft grass, and my wing floated on to the most fragrant (and non-spiky) bush I've ever smelled in my life.

As Dave made his own approach and touched down a few yards away, I took out my Hindi phrase book to make contact. The spectators-- almost all male, but of all ages -- seemed surprised but happy to be complimented on the beauty of their country, and asked what the bush was called. They were all careful not to step on the lines, while one man quickly realised what I was trying to do and helped me lift my wing off the foliage and fold it.

An English-speaker arrived, obviously Tibetan from his face, but speaking English with an Indian accent. He was Tsering Topgyal, manager of the building site, where a new Tibetan children's school was being put up.

Bir is a centre of the Tibetan exile community in India; more refugees arrive every year, walking over the Himalayan passes to escape Chinese rule. Tsering himself was born in India -- hence his fluent Hindi. He invited us into his office for tea; in return, he asked us a favour. He showed us an aerial photograph taken two years earlier of the project in its infancy. If we flew over again, he asked, would we take some aerial pictures, and send them to him? We promised to do our best; he then insisted on driving us the few miles back to where we were staying.



Two days later I managed to fly over the site again, with my camera clicking. I hope that's stored up some karma for my next reincarnation!

Andrew Craig

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 paradinking (and hang-drinking?) opportunities available! You are all invited to the London Wing meeting on Monday (the 23rd of February) 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:

- 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

2004 Competition Calendar

Discipline	Date	Event	Location	Contact
Accuracy	17 - 18 Apr	Sky Lincs (PC)	N Luffenham	Ann Underwood - 01964 543883
HG	1/2/3 May	British HG Open	Yorkshire Dales (t.b.c.)	Class 1 and 5 John Aldridge
HG	28 May - 1 Jun	Mid-Wales/Long Mynd Open (Open HG Series)	t.b.c.	John Aldridge
Accuracy	29 - 31 May	Green Dragons - Euro Cup (PP)	Woldingham	Andy Shaw - 01883 652666
HG	13 - 19 Jun	Class 1 National Championship	Milleau	John Aldridge
HG	27 Jun - 3 Jul	Inter Services Championship	Crickhowell, SE Wales	Dave Fenwick
PG	11 - 17 Jul	Inter Services Championship	Crickhowell, SE Wales	Dave Fenwick
Accuracy	24 - 25 Jun	Birdwings Summer Fun (PC)	South Cerney	Arthur Bentley
Accuracy	28 - 30 Aug	Accuracy Nationals (PC)	t.b.c	Derek Godfrey
HG	27 - 31 Aug	Black Mountains Open (Open Series)	Crickhowell, SE Wales (t.b.c.)	John Aldridge

Note: Only Confirmed events are shown above. For a full listing of planned events for 2004, please visit: <http://www.bhpa.co.uk> and select the Competitions item from the margin-menu.

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DUNE DU PYLA 2004 Hour Building + R&R.. June 6-13 and 13-20

Mellow coastal flying on the spectacular Dunes near Bordeaux. A great family holiday with beach and many other options in easy reach - plus you can hop on the dunes for mellow coastal ridge soaring above the beach... These courses can also accommodate beginners, why not try and get a friend an EP while you clock up some flying? more details on our website.

GREECE IN OCTOBER! Earmark a couple of autumn weeks for a return to the Mount Olympus area, great flying, great companionship, great fun...



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.



We stock kites by ozone :
the **LITTLE DEVIL** traction kite from £166, the **IMP Trainer/Kid's** kite for just £54



Our showroom is open from 9.00 to 5.30, Monday to Saturday. We are situated *en-route* from Devil's Dyke to Mount Caburn, drop down from the A27 on the Ditchling Road heading into Brighton, turn right into Woodbourne Avenue.

UPGRADING ?



We can offer **great deals** on **part-exchange** for your old **DHV-1 glider**. If you are looking to upgrade, give us a call to discuss your requirements. We are also able to offer part-exchange deals on **all kinds** of harnesses, from beginner to advanced. **Bring 'em in!**

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And Finally.....

To accompany Peter Gibby's Letter on Page 19, Peter has sent us this inspirational picture of himself, taken 'with friends' after landing in India. Thanks Peter and safe flying:



