

# Ups and Downs

## DHPC March 2008

AGM next Wednesday, 19th at the Cricket Club, 7:45 pm

### Jocky Sanderson's South Africa. From John Cardiff

If you have doubts about whether South Africa is worth the trip, don't doubt any further! Jocky's trip is at the end of the year - well worth booking!



My flight out there was end of November 2007. Jocky's local South African expert is Bernie Kelly. He and his wife put so much into organizing the best flying; he got much praise and thanks from us all. I know Bernie from competition flying; he showed his skill and friendly character out in Portugal.

We had a briefing and a good look at the Diamond Head takeoff. If we had flown there, we would have had a magnificent view of Cape Town and flown onto the Table Top Mountain. The wind didn't cooperate though.



Hermanus, a few miles to the SE of Cape Town. Incredibly the thermals were quite strong for a place so close to the sea, and one day we all did a most pleasant cross country from there.

I arrived a few days ahead of the main group, and Bernie organized the most beautiful guest house near the coast and the local hill, at



I had the time to book a day of shark watching. You go out to sea on motor boat with a group of about 15, the crew start throwing smelly fish into the water while you put on a wet suit and get into a cage attached to the boat, which puts you below the surface, and you sh\*t your self when the sharks rub up against the cage.



One of the posh hotels on the coast which did the most pleasant high tea on the lawn, let whole gaggles of paragliders land there. I think the idea was that the tourist had something to talk about, sipping their tea and taking pictures.

After a few days of this bliss, we moved inland for the main part of the reason to go to South Africa. We stayed at a lovely guest house in Koringburg which was at the base of a hill. We used the takeoff on it most days.

The main ridge had a take off at Porterville. If you see any pictures of flying in SA, they would have been taken above Porterville. The average lazy cross country in this area is about 60 km. Even a tandem managed 80 km one day.



One day I made a small error of judgement...

I met up with strong wind caused by a sea breeze and was only doing 4km ground speed (forward?) at 1500 ft. I thought I needed to drive forward a little faster so I stuck on a load of speed bar. (??!!). A huge collapse, and a pretty cravat materialized, basically followed by spirals and other aerobatics until I threw my reserve. Landing was ok but being dragged along a rusty barbed wire fence until I could wrap the reserve around a bush, was not exactly fun.



The conditions were fabulous. Some of the skies would make your mouth water. The flight back to England was beautiful. The visibility was perfect all the way. From my window seat so much of Africa was fascinating.



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Hi all,

Here is the report that I have written for Nova for my 9 days in Nelson (paragliding Nationals) I did not tell them of the 3 days lost due to Vario/gps failure or the 6km walk out which was no fun. I was second lady, but 19th overall. I would have been placed at least 5 places higher if I had a second Gps that I could work and was not borrowed at the last minute with no turn points on!!!! Sorry, should not blame the instruments; it was down to pilot error of not wanting to carry extra weight.

See you all soon. Tanya x

## Nelson, New Zealand Paragliding Nationals. **From Tania Ephgrave**

Nelson is a twelve hour drive from where I was staying in Queenstown which is quite a busy town. The morning briefing was held at 8.30 each day at the local climbing wall. The competition was due to run for nine days of which we managed to fly most. We flew six tasks altogether. The sites are all about one hours drive away from Nelson itself and many of the valleys are tree lined with lots of power lines; having said that, there are also lots of places to land.

Task one saw us driving to a site about an hour and a half away called Blowhard (right), where we doubled up on cars. The drive up took another hour with a quick stop to move a rather large tree from the road, which required most of the pilots. The take off is at about 1400m.

A 37.1km race to goal with an air start was set with Turn Point 1 11.4km down the valley and TP 2 8.8km further down the same valley, which became tree lined with plenty of high tension power lines and very limited landings. The goal was then 11.7km away back down the valley and over the ridge on the opposite side.

Nine people made goal with lots of people landing near the second TP due to increasing winds in the valley.





Task two and off to Mount Murchinson (left), this was my favourite day of the competition. It was another long drive to the site and up to the top but the views were fantastic. The only down side was the radio masts spoiling the view. Mt. Murchinson is at 1460m. A task of 44.6km, race to goal with an air start was set and take off was fifteen minutes after briefing, there was not much room to set up but everyone seemed to take off quickly and climb out to wait for the start gate to open. The first TP was just over the back of the hill at the bomb out field (3.8km), TP2 was then over another small ridge and along the valley to the town of Murchinson itself (12.8km). From there we had to go back along a tree-lined ridge for 6.8km to TP3. It was quite strange seeing people thermalling both sides of the ridge and both sides of the

valley, but it did mean there was lots of air going up everywhere! Goal was then a further 21.2km away past Mt Murchinson again and along another ridge line.

Task three and we were off to Mt Murchinson again, this time the wind was coming from a different direction so we were taking off from a different face. A race to goal of 77.9km, with an air start was set. The forecast was for the wind to drop as the day went on, a few people took off and then the window was shut and opened a few times due to increasing wind speed. After about half an hour the wind dropped and settled into a much more manageable speed and the rest of the field took off. The first TP was about 10km away, some of the first gaggle dived off into a tree-lined bowl with no exit, it seemed to work and all managed to climb out and make the first turn point. I managed to make it to the first TP and was at over 7000ft when my GPS/vario locked out. I took the batteries out in the air in the hope that it would work again. No luck, so I glided to the nearest village (10km away). My lesson for the day was that I must carry two GPS's and two varios. The next TP was about 20km away and goal was 44.6km away. Nine people made goal and a few people carried on to Hamner Springs, which is just under 100km away from Mt Murchinson. The only problem with this is that it took them until 02.30 in the morning to get back to Nelson.

Task four and we went to Barnicote (below). This is the site that is the closest to Nelson.



It is a thermic/ sea-breeze site. This was the chosen site of the day because it was due to be too windy everywhere else. The local airport is within 3km of the site and the tower has to be called to let them know we are flying and then the airspace is opened. Normally the club is only allowed to fly 500ft AGL, but we were allowed up to 1000m during the competition. As we arrived at

the top of the hill the cloud was just lifting and a race to goal was set with the window opening at 11.50, the goal was closed at 3pm. We were set a cat's cradle task of 44.6km, the first TP was 6km away down the ridge to Fringed Hill;

TP2 was at the other end of the ridge to a fire lookout after a further 11.4km. We then had to go back to Fringed Hill, then back along the ridge again to a tree lined spur 9.7km, before heading out to a water tank another 9.7km and then out to goal at Saxon Fields 6.2km away. We had 12 in goal today.

Task five and we were off to Innwoods which is an 1100m hill, the take off was very small and you could only set up two people at a time and only one person launching at a time. So there were two-minute slots during which two people had to launch. The slots were allocated based on your position in task three. As I was 18<sup>th</sup> in task three, this meant I was 18<sup>th</sup> to launch. This is the first time I have had to launch like this and it did not help that the person before me ended up in the trees! No problems though I managed to launch first time. The task was a race to goal 53.7km away with an air start, one hour after the window opened. The whole field was in the air 20 minutes after the window opened. The First TP was 18.8km away and the 2<sup>nd</sup> TP was a further 25.4km away then goal was yet a further 9.5km away. There were only 6 in goal today.

Task six and we were back at Barnicote again (below).



We had another race to goal, but this time only 34.5km away, but a different cat's cradle this time. The first TP was to a water tank 6km out from the ridge, then 5.5km to the fire lookout, all the way along to Fringed Hill 11.3km. We then went back to the water tank 6.3km and then on to the fire lookout and out to the goal at Saxon Fields 10km. The wind was picking up out in the valley so there were a lot of people not quite making it into the goal cylinder; 17 people made it though.

The Competition was a great success and I had some fantastic flights. Everyone I met was very friendly and helpful and I would love to go back again next year.

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## Flying at Panchgani again. From John Cardiff

I made a last minute decision to have another go at flying at Panchgani in India; quite greedy really, as it was only a few weeks after returning from the fabulous South African outing.

Although conditions were pleasant they were no way as good as last year. This time, in 2 weeks, only 3 cross countries were attempted, but we flew nearly every day.

I made a critical error towards the end of the last week. All of us were enjoying the flying but the wind was increasing and we were having trouble landing. I should have just steered out to the bottom of the valley and landed down there. Clever me thought I could land at the launch point. I had a couple of attempts



involving flying way down, aiming for the takeoff without getting too high back in the lift. I didn't get low enough and ended up hovering too far back, where the wing gave up flying.

I don't remember how I hit the ground because I was knocked unconscious. Apparently I hit a pipe in a garden with my right arm. I smashed up my elbow and shoulder. A front rib is broken and bruises hurt on my heels. I was really lucky nothing worse happened.

The hospital have glued things together for now. We shall see how it all turns out.



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## Pictures from Gary

Great fun was had by all present at the prize giving dinner.



## How to pick 'em... From James Dell

I learnt to fly with Paraventure in Algodonales in Spain. In my 2 years of flying I have spent most time on a Nova XAct free flying in Spain and the UK. I also have PPG experience on a Bailey SNAP100 and a Paramania Action. With 25 hours, a growing confidence and a frustration in my free flying wings performance (or was it my ability) I felt ready for my first upgrade.

I was at the point in my flying where, thanks to some training and patience from our club coaches, I finally felt one with my wing; my trusty Nova X-Act size 27. I know exactly what it's going to do and when. I know how well it turns, glides, responds and I can recognise lift fairly easily and confidently use it. However, I was being left frustrated by its limitations and was noticing the better performance of other gliders, particularly in the glide. I found that, with some hard work, I could sometimes reach top of the stack yet, when it switched of, and we all needed to glide back to the hill, I would sink quicker than everybody else.

What I thought I was looking for, in a nutshell, was 1 thing: a better glide ratio. A bonus would be to find a wing that is also good at paramotor as I was having to sell both my motor wing and free flying wing to fund my upgrade.

I used forums, other pilots knowledge, articles and test reports to research for wings that I felt would give me what I was looking for. Having tried out several DHV 1 wings in the past I was also sure that I wanted a wing in the 1-2 range or higher (like my current X-Act) with the additional active-flying requirements and manoeuvrability that the DHV 1's seem to lack.

The three wings on my short list were. The Nova Rookie, the Niviuk Hook and the Gradient Golden II.

There was a lot of hype on the internet about the Hook and the GII and I very nearly made my choice based on that alone. But some wise pilots said to me that I must try them out first so I set about finding some demo wings to loan.

### **The Dealers**

The Nova dealer, Dean Crosby of Active Edge, was excellent and within just a few days a demo Rookie was in my hands. Getting hold of a Niviuk took slightly longer and the wing supplied was unfortunately an older (and not current) model but still the same wing design as the 2007 model. With Gradient I was passed from manufacturer to importer to dealer and back again and eventually gave up.

The Nova dealer was very responsive and agreed to pay for the delivery if I pay the return cost which, I thought was fair enough. The Nivuk dealer, wanted me to pay for delivery and return costs but would refund it if I bought one. Again fair enough, but it was a bit of a nightmare getting it returned due to them wanting it insured and their courier would not. These problems were, however, resolved by Niviuk UK who 'went the extra mile' in talking to the courier for me and sorting out the issue. It's when things go wrong that a dealer has a chance to prove himself and he did.

Having spent several weeks flying the Rookie, and the Hook I had all but decided on the wing for me but, after some bullying (erm I mean encouragement) from Gradient fans on the hill, I thought I should make one last attempt to get hold of a Gradient Golden II. Having failed with the dealers I thought I'd try other pilots and I posted a message on [www.paraglidingforum.com](http://www.paraglidingforum.com) asking any local pilots if I could blag a go. However, two dealers got back to me the same day. One could not get the price I wanted and therefore decided that he would not send me a demo but the other dealer could and would. We negotiated a deal and he had a brand new demo Golden II (in my preferred colour scheme; Garish Orange!) within a day and no delivery charge! He said, as it was a new wing, if I like it I keep it. This made it the best deal as well as the best service. If I were reviewing dealers they would all score well (well, the ones that sent demo wings would) with the Gradient dealer, Airplay, ultimately winning. It's a shame that I wasn't put onto this dealer straight away by the manufacturer.

### **My review of the wings**

My all up weight is about 113Kg. All demo wings were large with the weight range being 100 to 130Kg apart from the Hook which was 95 to 130. I tested all wings at Dunstable Downs in both light and strong conditions, several times and, in addition tested the Rookie under power. I also spent a decent amount of time ground handling them.

### ***Nova Rookie.***

Like all Nova wings the quality of all equipment is excellent. Nothing to pick on at all. And no silly gimmicks either. My only complaint is that the rucksack is the same size for a large wing as it is for all other wings and it was a very tight squeeze to get all my large kit into. But a very comfortable rucksack.



I noticed that the wing was the same shape and size as my Nova X-Act. The only difference I could see was the number of, and arrangement of, the lines. There were fewer. Would this make much of a difference?

Upon flying the Rookie it immediately felt familiar. Rather like my Nova XAct. It seemed to fly very similarly but with two very noticeable differences. The brakes are very low and I had to fly with a wrap on at all time. And the glide ratio (albeit a small improvement on paper) is so much better than my old X-Act. My first go on a modern wing and I had gained what I was looking for; better glide and a wing that would get me back to the ridge when the lift dies off.

The feel was very similar to my XAct and I was very soon feeling right at home and using every morsel of lift that I could find to try and just stay up. To my astonishment I was actually getting some air. I had my best Dunstable Downs flight ever. A flight of over 3 hours and height gains up to 750 feet ato. I

also managed to venture out and use more of the ridge than I had ever done before. This was all down to being able to get from lift to lift without losing too much height and having confidence in the wings ability to glide back when I needed too.

It was also a very reassuring wing with no tendency to deflate and extremely easy to fly hands off (very useful for motoring, photography or when you're in nice smooth air). It is a very solid and safe wing and, I thought, good response and performance too. My only complaint: the brake lines were very long and I had to fly with a wrap on.

I also tested the Rookie under power. Surprisingly (for a gliding wing) it sat very nicely almost above me (like a motor wing). It did hang back a bit but nothing like my X-Act does. I went thermal hunting with Curley Jon and we had a ball. Cruising around Chichley Hill and taking thermal elevators up into the sky. At this stage I thought no need to try another wing. I'm going to have this one. But I hadn't tried the other two yet!

### ***Niviuk Hook***



I was rather disappointed upon unpacking the Hook as last years model (2006) was provided. It was rather dirty and well tested. I noticed that the brake lines were 'fuzzy' and the dealer explained that this issue is fixed in the 2007 model. They have changed factories due to quality issue so if you buy a used one make sure it's the new model. I made a point of having a look at Dave Neal's 2007 Niviuk Artik and the quality issue has certainly been sorted. All being said though, the 2006 demo wing is of a very high quality anyway.

The Ruck Sack is the best I tried. It has so many adjustments (all the way up each side) so that the huge rucksack can shrink to fit anything with a nice

snug fit. The quality of the rucksack was also definitely the best of the bunch too with ample padding, excellent stitching and very very comfortable (once adjusted right which is well worth spending the time doing).

In the reviews the Hook has been nicknamed the Spitfire of the 1-2 class. Whilst ground handling it I could immediately feel it's easy and responsive control. I actually enjoy it! I found I could 'fly' it above my head with no eye contact and I was running up and down the Downs making Spitfire noises like a school boy thoroughly enjoying himself. But this school boy was actually gonna get to fly! Upon flying it I could instantly see why it had the Spitfire nickname.

As large wings go, it looks a fairly small and fat wing (due to its aspect ratio) and consequently it turns very easily. What amazed me most was its weight-shift ability. Just wriggling into the harness had me turning left and right. It felt sporty immediately. Yet, at the same time, I did not feel out of my depth as, with such a positive response, it is so easy to correct any deviations. It's like having your car back from the garage when you've had the wheel alignment set correctly and you suddenly realise what it can and should feel like. No slack, no delay, no under steer just positive and secure.

The Hook felt like I'd stepped into a Ferrari after my XAct and the Rookie. It launched and climbed out so easily. It was very very easy to feel the small pockets of lift that Dunstable Downs has. I tried this wing over several days and had my longest ever flight (free flying). 4.5 hours and had to land due to cramp in my leg. All through this flight I was getting height and deliberately losing it by having fun knowing that I could work what little lift there was to get back up again. I noticed some gliders try and follow me to the elephant and beyond but they turned back as they were unsure if they'd make it. But I had got used to this glider very quickly and could fly it much further out than any wing I have tried and always made it back. The feel of this glider I would describe as sharp and precise yet hands-off stability is excellent. Feedback is brilliant. I very very easily found lift and it was by far the easiest wing to stay in the lift and work it. It's a wing that likes to be flown actively but doesn't demand it. It is a wing that you will have fun on and feel confident. I found with the agility it had that my confidence and ability was making huge leaps. This is what I wanted. A wing that I could grow into but still feel safe. I was racing around and trying stuff out. Gaining height, lots of height, and trying various descent techniques. I was playing with the best big-boys toy I had ever laid my hands on. I now understood that one wing is not like another at all.

My only complaint: I had to take wrap on the brakes which again seemed very long to me. More on this later.

### ***Golden II***

The stuff bag that the Golden is supplied in is of very poor quality. It seems to be made of cheap material that frays very easily. Indeed, it has loose threads hanging out of every seam. Why they chose to use this strange material and not the same material as the glider (like most other manufacturers) is baffling. The rucksack however is very well made in terms of stitching but it could do with more padding on the shoulders.



The wing itself just oozes quality; the triple stitching on the leading edge, the difficulty in getting air out of it after landing is testament to the exceptional quality of the material. The risers are a nice size (thin like most of the modern gliders) and the speedbar, speedbar attachments, brake swivels and all parts are made from very high quality components.

The Golden II flew very nicely indeed, as good as the Hook but rather different. It felt very light or, what I would describe as, fluttery; which was fun. You can certainly feel what's happening and on top of this you can also hear what's happening as it does flutter. I could find lift with it quite easily. Having flown the Hook I noticed its size. It was BIG (wing span). This is due to the different aspect ratio I think.

It flies well but I could not get it to turn as sharp or as positive as the hook. I guess this is because of the lower aspect ratio (it is quite a bit wider wing span but thinner than the hook) so to turn it tight I found I had to use quite a bit of brake and weight shift didn't seem to have much more

effect. [I actually upgraded my harness whilst I had this wing on loan and it worked noticeably better with my new harness; a Supair AltiX. Weight shift was far easier and I no longer needed a wrap!] I also found it a more difficult wing to keep flat in the turns. I often find that the outside bake can flatten the turn but on the GII the sacrifice made was a vastly reduced turning circle, maybe because of its wing span and aspect ratio.

Its plus points though is that it is very comfortable to fly, it flies straight with little input and no meandering, you can feel everything (good feedback) and it has a very good best glide. It also penetrates very well even when you're not heavy on the wing. It is also a very (I would say) graceful to manoeuvre and light to the feel yet also sensitive to feedback (sounds very romantic!).

I really noticed its exceptional glide when I was coming in to land. I was only at 2 or 3 metres above take off. I could feel the glide and shouted to the guys on the ground "I don't think it wants to come down". I had to over fly the takeoff area and try again with a more crabbing back approach.

However, where it fell down for me was in the ground handling. It just would not sit on its back on the ridge for even a few seconds, which would not give me long enough to get set up properly. Even whilst getting it out of the bag and trying to lay it out it seems to want to flip over and always tended to end up with a line over. Not a big deal you'd think, but the unsheathed lines are a right cow to see and untangle (especially on the ridge). It was also the hardest of the wings to launch as it accelerates very quickly. On my first launch it came up and yanked me off the ground. This can however be sorted, I found, by having some brake on at just the right time to dampen the acceleration before it gets above you. I have also, since then, read about some special techniques that others have employed to launch this wing.

I felt that this wing is not very suitable for Dunstable Downs, and with that being my main flying site, not suitable for me. Whenever I landed, the unsheathed lines always tended to find something to snag on (and there's plenty of it on Dunstable Downs), more than any wing I've flown. Even on a simple lay out in what I thought was clear ground it would find the only snaggy thing available and latch on to it, screwing up the launch. Some fanatics have tried to tell me that this is poor technique, which may be true, but the truth is, it is the hardest wing to launch of all those I tested.

Once it's over your head, it ground-handles and flies well, but try and lay it out in anything above a puff of wind is very hard. If you see a line over or a knot (which I saw loads of even in my short experience of it) you cannot walk towards the wing to sort it out. As soon as you walk toward it (and the tension on the risers is slackened, the trailing edge tries to fly away and turn the wing over. It seems to want to lie upside down. Maybe my ground handling is not good enough but I found it very frustrating. Where the lines split off to several more lines near the wing, the lines are unsheathed. This may be where the wing gets its good glide. It has a lot of lines near the wing but they are all unsheathed and with so many lines at the top it has allowed the design to have fewer (sheathed) lines lower down which must reduce drag fairly considerably I would imagine. But the lines snag on anything that they can find, and find something to snag on that will often result in a line over, and as previously mentioned it's not easy to untangle without getting out of the harness, as walking towards the wing will see it try and turn over or blow away. This is the main reason that I grew to eventually actually dislike this wing; the line tangling problem is a real problem.

As you know at Dunstable Downs, it needs a fairly stiff wind to make it easily flyable. In these conditions to lay out the GII and build a wall without one side (tip) of the wing going for a walk and folding over first was very hard indeed, and I (too often) ended up with a line over. (This also happened a lot after I landed and was trying to pull the wing in for packing). I even tried having it bunched up and gradually teasing it out to meet the wind and build a gradually expanding wall (a technique I am pretty good at) but it seems that the wing tips really want to fly/fold up without the rest of the wing and too frequently for me they ended up folding over and causing a line over. Maybe my skill level was to blame and I'm sure it could certainly be corrected by trying out different techniques.

I did try it on several days and had the same problem every time. So much so that I ended up hating this wing! If your most regular site is anything like Dunstable Downs then these unsheathed lines will really get on your nerves.

### **The Dark Horse!**

In every competition there is a dark horse and my test flights were no exception. Whilst in Alicante I was offered a test flight on a Niviuk Artik. I will mention it briefly as I had only one flight on it in very smooth coastal soaring conditions.



This is a DHV 2 wing and I felt slightly nervous. WHAT - A – BLAST! It was fantastic, turns so tight, so responsive. Even wriggling into the harness made it turn, tight. I found I hardly had to use the brakes. I really felt at one with the wing very very quickly, and getting some speed up, was pure joy. Hands down, this wing was in another league to all the rest. But it is a DHV 2 and I was using it in smooth coastal soaring conditions. If you get a chance to try one then DO!

If it had been a 1-2, I would have plugged for this wing without hesitation.

### Conclusions

I later learnt that my original requirement spec (a good glide) was based on my lack of experience and appreciation of all the other elements and characteristics; ease of launch, speed (min max and range), agility, responsiveness (there's a wide range in the 1-2 category), etc. Once I had tried out more than one wing I started to develop an appreciation, and a desire for quality, in these other elements.

I noticed a wide variation in the 1-2 range. I guess that's why we talk about high end and low end 1-2's. Both the Hook and the GII fall into the high end category with regard to sportiness. They are speedy wings with good glides, agile and responsive but are subtly different; both are mid range in terms of safety (they both have about half of the tests scoring a 1-2 and the rest score a 1). I have heard many people describe both as a high end 1-2. Don't let this put you off. They are not verging on the boundary of a DHV 2 and are both safe wings. The Rookie is certainly a low end 1-2 in every sense of the word (both agility and safety). It has by far the least 1-2 ratings in all its DHV tests and is consequently a very safe wing.

I am by no means an expert and I think it impossible to say which wing is the best. I think this is true of any pilot no matter how experienced. It is a very subjective question. However, I can say which one I enjoyed most and why and also which one I feel suits me best; and they are different wings.

Having flown all three (well four) wings the difference in performance between the Rookie and the rest was very noticeable. The Rookie went from amazing to docile as my experience has grown.

I would say that the Hook turns better/tighter than the others and definitely more positively.

I thought the GII was more like a sailplane, gentle and graceful, but with excellent feedback, so I'm sure it would excel for XC hounds.

I posted my findings on a forum and some GII fans (upset by my statement about the GII's turning ability) said that I should have been on a smaller wing. This maybe so; I was on the large wings (on all wings but with different aspect ratios) and had I have been a few Kg lighter I may have been better off and had more success on the smaller GII. I'm sure it would have been more manoeuvrable, but the GII had a better glide and I wonder if it would have done if I'd been on the next size down? Horses for courses I think.

The lesson here, I think, is that your weight (and where you sit in the range) does matter, and that will affect your choice of wing, especially with differing aspect ratios. Do I prefer being light, mid or heavy on the wing? I can't say. I think I prefer being in the middle myself but that is a general statement and will certainly not be true on all wings.

I must enforce that they are all excellent wings and excellent quality. Nothing to choose between them on quality, and I would have been happy owning any of them - which made the choice more difficult.

I originally thought I should get a GII simply because of the hype and its performance stats but I was wrong. To be honest, although this line over and snagging problem was my major (and only) gripe with the GII, this would not have made a difference for me in my choice. The only reason the GII was not my selected wing was nothing to do with the wing itself or it not being as good. Put simply, I preferred the Hook - for me. It just felt right for me. It flies just as well as the GII, hooks into lift very easily, great feedback and feels more

suiting to ridge soaring & fun flying (trying stuff out) which is the majority of my flying. In short, the Hook suits my flying preference.

It might not suit you:

If you're looking for a 1-2, you enjoy XC, and even a very small increase in glide is important to you, then the GII could be your wing.

If you're looking for a beginners wing and want something a bit more sporty than the DHV 1's then the Rookie could be your wing.

If, like me, you spend most of your time recreational flying at a site like Dunstable then the Hook is the best big-boys toy I have come across. Let me know if you want to try it!

So, yes, you guessed it I went for the Hook. But surprisingly it is not the wing that I enjoyed the most.

That accolade goes to the dark horse; the Niviuk Artik. It turns so easily. I had a ball. It was great fun to fly and with the amazing performance I was able to lose a lot of height and regain it easily, and many times ended up the highest pilot. Maybe this enjoyment was down to the beautiful sunset or maybe it was the nudist beach over which we flew (but at other times this was nasty). I did not feel quite ready or regular enough for a 2 but if you're Ok with a DHV2 then try the Artik, I absolutely loved it.

The main thing I have learnt in this exercise is that you need to get the wing that is right for YOU and your circumstances. Create yourself a short list and try them out. Spend the money on getting it delivered (the dealers are good guys and have demo wings available but you may have to pay return, or both out and return carriage costs), but you must try them.

If I were offered another go on any of these wings I would certainly take them up on it (especially the Artik!!). They were all lovely wings in their own way. No winners or losers just different. Pick the best one for you, your most frequent site and conditions and your aspirations. Don't get caught up in hype, try them out and find the one that 'suits you sir'.

Since testing these wings I have more than doubled my air time and am quickly gaining more. My upgrade has opened up a whole new window of available conditions to me and my skills are improving quickly again. Upgrading was defiantly the right thing to do and the accelerated learning that I am getting from my new wing is so much more fun than trying to squeeze performance and struggle with my old wing. My confidence is growing far more quickly and my enjoyment of flying has taken another quantum leap (something that I didn't think were possible). If you're at the stage where you are feeling frustrated with your DHV1's performance then go for it, try out some demo's. It is a great adventure.

### **A word of caution!**

One important lesson I have learnt is; don't change wings on a strong day. Especially if going down the performance level! After sending the demo hook back I went back to my Nova X-Act. It was a strong day at Dunstable but one I knew I could handle within my ability. And with the new confidence that I had gained on the Hook I raised my wing to feel the air. It felt lifty but not scary. I launched and pushed out, and to cut a long story short had the scariest flight of my life. Rising at a horrifying rate no matter what I did, collapses left right and front and eventually kissing the ground when I landed by pushing out HALF WAY across the landing field. I know that these conditions would have felt so much more fun if I'd been on the Hook. When assessing conditions I will now make sure that I am also realistic about the wings capability too.

### **To wrap up!**

I read recently that long lines is common now-a-days (on 1's and 1-2's) due to the DHV tests requiring long brakes lines so that beginners do not stall as easily! I certainly felt that all the 1-2's that I tested had control lines that are too long (especially compared to my old X-Act from the days of less stringent testing). I needed to fly with a wrap on with all of them. However since using my new Niviuk Hook with my new harness the wrap issue is no longer a problem. Maybe it was the harness all the time? Some will no doubt say 'why not shorten them'. I tried this and it made launching harder as the brakes would go very taught whilst the wing was rising and made it very hard to pull up.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeJTUDJs49A>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/13772937@N05/sets/72157603829908363/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwSZV16Oaj4>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/13772937@N05/1452888726/in/set-72157602064222526/>



### **Triple X Free-Flying Festival**

**Website:**

<http://www.leavesleyaviation.com/>

**Info on the venue:**

<http://www.walcothall.com/>

**When:** 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> of June

**Where:** Walcott Hall, Lydbury North, close to the Long Mynd

The Triple X Free Flying festival will be held at the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2008 at Walcott Hall, Lydbury North, Shropshire. This is the inaugural event in what is hoped will become an annual event. Held near the legendary Long Mynd flying site, there will be plenty of opportunity for flying, whatever level of experience pilots have.

The festival will to be an event for the whole free-flying community, with flying and non-flying activities planned for each day of the festival. Activities confirmed to date are:

- Free-flying trade fair with major exhibitors and manufacturers
- Aviation car boot sale
- Acro display from multiple world acro champion Raul Rodriguez
- Model aircraft displays
- Ground handling seminars
- Free flying films
- Beer tent sponsored by the famous Three Tuns Brewery
- DJs, bands and lots more.

Whatever the weather, the festival promises to be fun for all attendees!

Organiser Mark Leavesley says: "We hope the event will be MASSIVE! It should be the best free flying event this year."

**Costs:**

- (before 1st April 2008) Full festival pass 3 days £40  
(after 1st April 2008) Full festival pass 3 days £50  
Day pass £15
- Aviation car boot sale stand £20 for 3 days
- Children under 12 years old – free
- Trade stand (bringing your own tent) £200
- Trade stand (in provided marquee) £250

All profits are going to the local children's hospice

**Contact Details:** Mark Leavesley, 01588 630253 or [info@leavesleyaviation.com](mailto:info@leavesleyaviation.com)

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## Events Calendar

**20<sup>th</sup> April** – **Chinnor scrub clearance**, rather than the second Sunday of the month. [Greg](#).

**2nd - 6th May** - Hang gliding Open Series competition at the Long Mynd.  
Contact [Paul@Seminara.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:Paul@Seminara.freeserve.co.uk) if interested.

**1st - 7th June** - Club trip to the Long Mynd with a focus on XC flying.  
Contact [Paul@Seminara.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:Paul@Seminara.freeserve.co.uk) if interested.

**22nd - 26th August** - Hang gliding Open Series competition at Crickhowell,  
**27th - 31st August** - Staying on at Crickhowell for some free flying.  
Contact [Paul@Seminara.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:Paul@Seminara.freeserve.co.uk) if interested.

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The first rounds of the BCC are happening soon – Easter.  
Contact Gary to find out more. [garycooper48@hotmail.com](mailto:garycooper48@hotmail.com) 07968 871484

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## DHPC Coaching Scheme

The Dunstable Hang gliding & Paragliding Club has an active coaching scheme which aims to help new low-airtime pilots in the club to gain enough experience to safely fly unsupervised on any site throughout the UK. We organize various coaching events throughout the year to assist new pilots in our club:

- Weekends away to other suitable sites, e.g. Rhossili, Blorenges, Long Mynd.
- Flying holidays in UK and abroad
- Lectures and exams for Pilot, Advanced Pilot, and powered flying
- Parachute packing, where everyone needs coaching!

*The club does not teach beginners to fly, for that you must contact a school, see [BHPA.co.uk](http://BHPA.co.uk) for details.*

The main coaching done within the club is simply to come out flying with either the club coaches themselves or talking and flying with more experienced pilots. Once you have achieved your Club Pilot Certificate with a school, just get in touch with the coaches on a Thursday or preferably Friday night, after the evening weather forecast, to find out where everyone is going at the weekend. We leave it entirely up to you to get in touch with us.

Paraglider pilots use the club message board to plan for the weekend and then make last-minute phone calls to coaches and other members. Hang glider pilots rely more on e-mails to plan a couple of days ahead, with last-minute phone calls or text messages. **Make sure the coaches have your address and mobile number and that they know you are keen to get out.**

Flying regularly is the only way to progress in the sport: developing your technical skills, becoming familiar with your kit, and understanding the sky. The first year is a tough time for low-airtime pilots and Dunstable is not an easy place to fly but with perseverance and a bit of help you will soon be soaring high above the Downs.

- **Lesson 1:** Contact the club coaches on a Friday night.
- **Lesson 2:** Meet at Dunstable the following morning.
- **Lesson 3:** Travel with a more experienced pilot/coach who can take you to other sites that he/she knows well.

*Do contact any of the club coaches listed below; they will be only too pleased to give any advice needed.*

<b>name</b>	<b>role</b>	<b>located</b>	<b>phone 1</b>	<b>Phone2</b>	<b>email</b>
Andy Scott	Hang Gliding Club Coach		020 8959 8117		<a href="mailto:10up@10up.homechoice.co.uk">10up@10up.homechoice.co.uk</a>
Gary Freedman	Hang Gliding Club Coach	Radlett Herts	01923 858287		<a href="mailto:gary@garyfreedman.com">gary@garyfreedman.com</a>
Bill Bell	Hang Gliding Club Coach	Ealing	07768 028899		<a href="mailto:billb@ukonline.co.uk">billb@ukonline.co.uk</a>
Matt Moore	HG Coaching Rep	Enfield Middlesex	0208 367 8068	07753 123618	<a href="mailto:mattmoore@btinternet.com">mattmoore@btinternet.com</a>
Paul Seminara	HG Lead Club Coach		01494 873888		<a href="mailto:Paul@Seminara.freereserve.co.uk">Paul@Seminara.freereserve.co.uk</a>
Richard Greaves	HG & Pg Senior Coach	Totternhoe Beds	01525 221283	07776 346086	<a href="mailto:richard.greaves@freestone.co.uk">richard.greaves@freestone.co.uk</a>
Keith (Kenny) Eaton	Paragliding Club Coach	Milton Keynes	01908 604621	0794 9709097	<a href="mailto:k.eaton@eu.hns.com">k.eaton@eu.hns.com</a>
Peter Large	Paragliding Club Coach	Long Marston Herts	01844 214854		<a href="mailto:peterjlarge@hotmail.com">peterjlarge@hotmail.com</a>
Gary Cooper	Paragliding Club Coach	Berkhamsted	01442 877750	07968 871484	<a href="mailto:coopstar@ntlworld.com">coopstar@ntlworld.com</a>
Tanya Ephgrave	Paragliding Club Coach	Milton Keynes	07971 522192		<a href="mailto:t_ephgrave@hotmail.com">t_ephgrave@hotmail.com</a>

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## For sale:

Ozone Mantra M1. Good condition. 18 months young. White Red/black.

**Your chance to upgrade at silly price! Do it now for next summer.**

Test fly anytime

£500 for everything. (ONO)  
John, 01582 476205

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## DHPC Committee members

<b>Post</b>	<b>name</b>	<b>phone 1</b>	<b>phone 2</b>	<b>Email</b>
Auditor	Bill Bell	01727 858 698	07768 028899	<a href="mailto:auditor@dhpc.info">auditor@dhpc.info</a>
Ups & Downs Editor	John Cardiff	07899 843799		<a href="mailto:newseditor@dhpc.info">newseditor@dhpc.info</a>
Chairman	Steve Meadowcroft	01234 720012		<a href="mailto:chairman@dhpc.info">chairman@dhpc.info</a>
Membership Secretary	Adam Collis	01582 629594	07790 590949	<a href="mailto:secretary@dhpc.info">secretary@dhpc.info</a>
PG Competitions	Gary Cooper	01442 877750	07968 871484	<a href="mailto:pcomps@dhpc.info">pcomps@dhpc.info</a>
Safety Officer	Keith (Kenny) Eaton	01908 604621	0794 9709097	<a href="mailto:safety@dhpc.info">safety@dhpc.info</a>
HG Competitions	Gary Freedman	01923 858287		<a href="mailto:hcomps@dhpc.info">hcomps@dhpc.info</a>
Lead PG Coach	Richard Greaves	01525 221283	07776 346086	<a href="mailto:leadpcoach@dhpc.info">leadpcoach@dhpc.info</a>
Webmaster	John Russell Lancaster	01462 615 063	0778 777 0398	<a href="mailto:webmaster@dhpc.info">webmaster@dhpc.info</a>
Treasurer	Peter Large	01844 214854		<a href="mailto:treasurer@dhpc.info">treasurer@dhpc.info</a>
Social Secretary	Ian Lemmis	01908 271075		<a href="mailto:social@dhpc.info">social@dhpc.info</a>
Liaison Sharpenhoe and Chinor	Greg Leveridge	01525 715 656		<a href="mailto:sc liaison@dhpc.info">sc liaison@dhpc.info</a>
Dunstable Site Liaison	Matt Moore	0208 367 8068	07753 123618	<a href="mailto:lqcliaison@dhpc.info">lqcliaison@dhpc.info</a>
Lead HG Coach	Paul Seminara	01494 873888		<a href="mailto:leadhcoach@dhpc.info">leadhcoach@dhpc.info</a>
Club Secretary	Martin Sims	01525 633 536		<a href="mailto:secretary@dhpc.info">secretary@dhpc.info</a>