

Monday health and beauty with Kate Lahive

kate.lahive@sheffieldnewspapers.co.uk



Living Sylvie takes the plunge to aid her fellow MS sufferers

DAREDEVIL Sylvie Brown likes to experience life 'on the edge'.

After taking part in skydiving, abseiling and a treadmill marathon, her latest challenge was no less ambitious - she returned to the skies for a spot of hang-gliding.

Adrenaline-junkie Sylvie signed up for the experience to raise money for Multiple Sclerosis, a condition she's lived with for the last decade.

And the 31-year-old from Upperthorpe had no regrets about taking to the skies, which she described as 'dreamlike'.

Sylvie was attached to Stewart Bond, an instructor at the Icarus School of Hang Gliding in Huddersfield and they were towed into the air by a microlight plane.

"Within seconds we lifted off the ground. The strange thing was that it felt so natural. I wasn't nervous. I just enjoyed the thrill of it as we rose higher and higher," said Sylvie.

"The views of Huddersfield and the countryside surrounding it, the tiny airfield, the tiny fields, the spots that were cows, sheep and trees, were spectacular."

"I could not stop grinning and chatting to Stewart over the loud humming of the microlight."

"I was also surprised by how smooth the flight was. We were very lucky with the low winds that evening."

After a signal from the microlight pilot, indicating they had reached their target of 2,620ft, the chord attaching to the plane was released and they were on their own.

Sylvie was struck by the silence.

"It was so peaceful. We were just flying through the air like a bird."

"The experience was like a dream," said Sylvie. "The street lights were now just coming on in Huddersfield as it was getting to dusk and it was most picturesque."

She was given the chance to steer the hang-glider using hand controls.

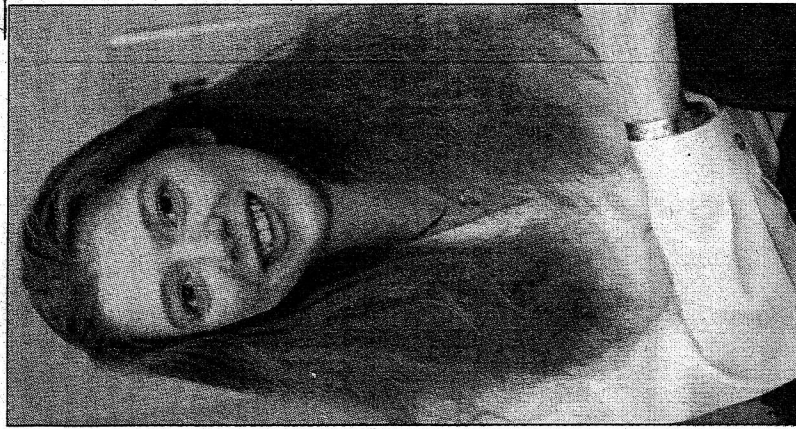
Later they carried out some hair-raising aerobatics, including a steep dive.

"We were plunged into a freefall dive and we swirled about at angles of up to 90 degrees. Though very disorienting, I was convinced we had gone upside-down several times."

"I enjoyed this totally mad experience. Some people would hate it, but I loved it. It was very surreal," said Sylvie.

Twenty minutes after take-off the unforgettable experience was over.

"Everyone could see just how much I'd enjoyed the experience of hang-gliding and aviation."



New challenge: Daredevil Sylvie Brown is about to try hang-gliding

"I was on a total high and could not stop smiling. The hang-gliding experience had lasted around 20 minutes in flying time and had exceeded all my expectations and I would recommend it to anyone," she added.

Her determination also meant she has raised £1,500 for the Multiple Sclerosis Resource Centre after family and friends agreed to sponsor her.

Sylvie's condition has remained stable since she altered her diet.

Life can be a struggle as she can experience difficulty walking but she is determined to get the best out of life and is passionate about helping the Multiple Sclerosis Resource Centre.

"There is no other charity which helps and encourages people with MS to help themselves like this one does so it is vital they keep going."

"They offer a lifeline to so many and we want to reach out and help even more people live well with MS," she added.