

British Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association

AGM March 2015



Chairman's Report

In writing this I am aware that we are reporting for the period April 2013 to March 2014. Movements of the AGM over a number of years have led to this slightly odd position.

One reason for these movements has been to align our AGM with that of the BGA. As I have done for the last few years, I would encourage members who attend the AGM to spend some time exploring the small trade show and attending the various talks provided by the BGA. They are excellent, entertaining and relevant to our flying.

I have now been Chairman for 3 years (this time round) and it has been an eventful time with paragliding competition wings having been the main issue. I am pleased to report that from the anecdotal evidence, it appears that the recent Category 1 paragliding competitions have not experienced the same level of reserve deployments and there have not been any reported fatalities. It could appear that the CIVL Competition Class of paraglider is a step forwards in safety over the previous Open Class.

It seems that particularly in hang gliding there is a world championships every year. Early in 2013 Australia hosted the flexwing championships where our team won a Bronze Medal. I was delighted to join them at the Royal Aero Club medals and Awards Ceremony in 2014 where they were presented with the Prince of Wales Cup by HRH Prince Andrew, the Duke of York. Annecy hosted a rigid and women's World Championships in 2014. Our Atos flying rigid team came 6th and Kath Rigg posted a 10th place. As I write, the World Championships for flexwings is again running, this time in Mexico.

Insurance has continued to develop as our slow and steady expansion into the world of powered flying. We are keeping pace with the developments at the CAA where deregulation appears to be the watchword. We have an excellent working relationship with our brokers and underwriter and the insurance position appears to be very stable at the moment.

Skywings continues to be a high quality monthly production which costs each member around £ 1.20 per issue or £ 14.40 per year. Significantly better value than any of its competitors, the nearest of which I notice offers a year's subscription at £ 44.95.

Our emphasis on safety continues with the Flying and Safety Committee continuing to develop student and pilot training schemes. I am particularly pleased to see that the FSC is beginning to look at some of its rules and procedures and remove whole sections that are not working well. The wing registration scheme has now been completely abolished. It was not working well for speed wings and paramotor wings and it had never been used for its intended use, to notify pilots of problems with a particular uncertified wing. Well done to Mark Dale and the rest of FSC. Let's hope this is the start of a general direction of travel for FSC.

The administration function remains my own area of responsibility and the Admin Report is available. However, our plan is generally to try to do more and more of our work using technology. We are keen to steal ideas from other bodies and if anyone is aware of anything that we might investigate, I would be delighted to hear from them. By way of example, the British Parachute Association has been conducting online elections for a few years and that is something we would like to investigate.

The Finance team work quietly away in the back ground but without them we simply could not function. Our aim is to make a modest profit every year in order to maintain the real value of our reserves. Planning the BHPA finances has always been like steering an ocean going tanker, a small turn of the tiller in the Channel and you end up in the South Atlantic rather than New York! In any event, membership numbers are now climbing very slowly and we remain financially stable with good reserves.

The other activities of Exec continue apace. John Nash has represented our interests at Royal Aero Club, John Welch has worked tirelessly as Clubs and School Liaison Officer, Ed Cunliffe has been effective as the Paramotor Liaison Officer and new boy, Martin Baxter, is proving to be an effective Sites Officer. Martin has started the mammoth task of moving the sites database from a personal PC and an out of date database, to the office system where our staff will keep it up to date and secure.

Finally, although this report is aimed at a previous year, this AGM will be the last when two of our long serving members of staff will attend in the current roles. Jennie stood down as office manager in August 2014 having progressively reduced her hours over the last few years. Having served the Association from the very early days of the BAPC, she will continue to work 2 days a week so that we can retain access to her vast knowledge and experience. Mark Dale has been quietly developing his own business interests over the last few years and has decided that now is the time to stand down from our employment. He has been reducing his hours with us and will finally depart in the next few months.

We all thank both Jennie and Mark for their long service and hard work. We wish them success for the future.

Similarly I would like to thank all the members of Exec. for their hard work. This year we have a contested election and so there will definitely be one disappointed candidate. If this happens to be a serving member of Exec., we thank you for your efforts on our behalf and wish you well for the future.

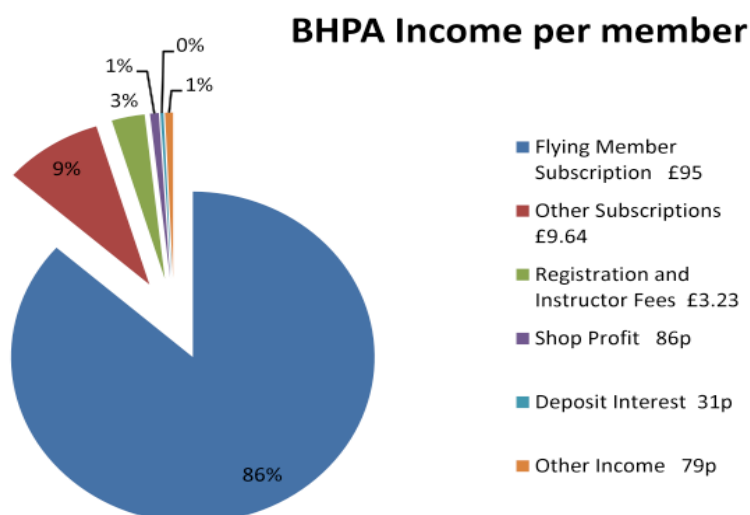
Marc Asquith
Chairman
4 March 2015

BHPA Financial Report

As Treasurer I am pleased to be able to report that the BHPA's finances remain in good shape. The number of flying members of the Association has continued to grow and the consequent growth in income, coupled with a fall in costs, means that for the year ended 31st March 2014 we made a surplus of £57k on turnover of £739k. Overall reserves now stand at £534k of which £349k is invested in our freehold office. We pay our subscriptions annually in advance so the BHPA is cash rich and the value of cash held at bank increased to £404k. Unfortunately interest rates (from low-risk institutions) are very low for businesses and associations like ours so our interest earnings are disappointing low.

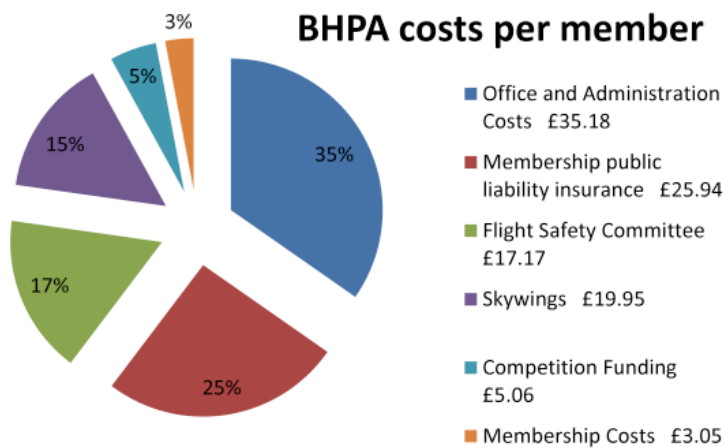
The BHPA holds reserves for three important reasons. Firstly they allow us more flexibility in budgeting; making a loss in a single year is possible provided we make up for it in the next so subscriptions can be lower than they would otherwise need to be. Secondly they provide us with a fighting fund should we have to face an existential threat to our sports, and thirdly they provide funds available to support site purchases. We have adopted a policy of maintaining the value of reserves in real (inflation-adjusted) terms over the medium term so that surpluses in one year make up for losses in others. The surplus this year puts our reserves back at the same level, after adjusting for inflation, as they were five and seven years ago.

Overall subscription income grew 7.7% on the previous year, partly due to the price increase in subscriptions but also due to the welcome increase in the number of flying members. Other sources of income, which are relatively minor by comparison to subs, showed little change on 2013.

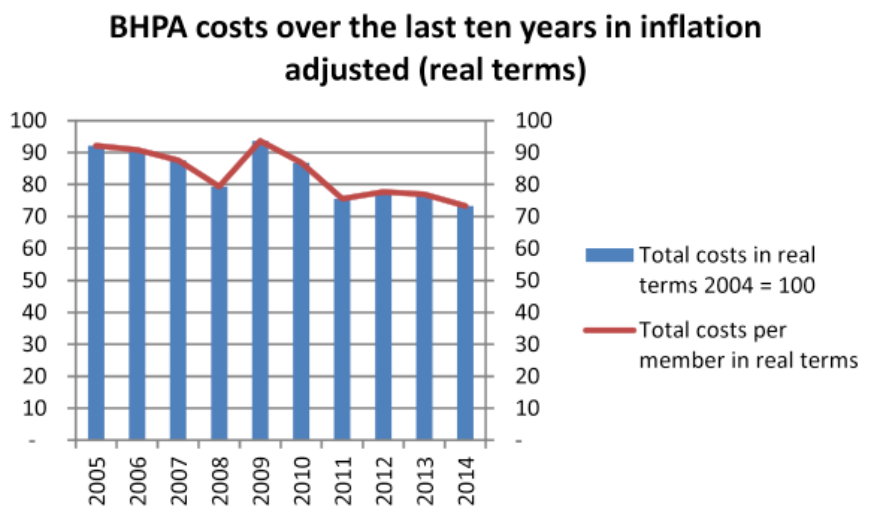


The Skywings team managed a 4% increase in advertising income and managed to keep total costs to the same level as the previous year. Consequently the cost per member per issue of Skywings, paid through the annual subscription, has fallen to £1.25.

Overall membership costs fell in the last year, but within this there were some variations. Insurance costs went up by £7k but FSC (Flying and Safety Committee) costs were down £5k and our legal costs were down £14k.



On Exec we all share members' desire to keep the cost of membership subscriptions down and to ensure that we get value for money. Looking back over the past ten years and adjusting for inflation it is clear that this objective has been achieved. In no small part this is thanks to the work done by our Insurance Officer in negotiating down our insurance premiums.



Although a great deal of the work of the Association is carried out by unpaid volunteers we are dependent on our highly-experienced professional staff both in technical matters and in the office. I am grateful to Michelle and the rest of the team in Leicester for making the Association (and its accounts) run so smoothly.

Angus Langford
BHPA Treasurer

Insurance Director Report

Yet another reasonably quiet year on the insurance front. We now have £5m cover for pilots, up from the £2m of yesteryear and site owners seem to be happy with this as I've noted there are fewer problems expressed by Clubs gaining access over the past year. Given that the personal injury market on the legal front seems to be stabilising, I'm optimistic that we can maintain it at this level for a good while into the future. I'm sometimes asked about our indemnity level a question like, "what if a case goes for £10m" – well yes, I suppose a successful claimant could go after you for the balance over £5m, but the chances of all that happening remain very low and even if cover was higher, a case could always go for £15m! My own view is that statistically, £5m is as close to the ceiling as we need to be at the present time.

So much for expansion of cover vertically, but what about horizontally? It looks very much as though later this year we will be able to expand our already successful SDR cover into the microlight arena. We have members who cross over a lot of disciplines and as long as they are fully licenced and compliant with all air law as it applies to microlighting, their BHPA membership will cover their flights for third party losses and also losses sustained by a single passenger. We are still working on the wording for the latter with our Insurer but for this a cap will apply which will be close to the EU prescribed minimum. The deal will not include Hull Cover and is an extension of current BHPA cover in effect.

Premiums for our cover remain at a fairly static level despite these changes and the odd small and medium sized claim.

Martin Heywood
Insurance Director
Vice Chairman

March 2015

BHPA Flying and Safety Committee

Report to the 2014 AGM (7th March 2015)



The current FSC membership is:

Angus Pinkerton (FSC Chairman)
John Lovell (Accident Investigation Panel)
Jocky Sanderson (Advanced Training)
Tom Hardie (Airspace Panel)
Ken Raines (Chief Examiner and Examination & Inspections Panel)
Stewart Bond (Development Panel)
David Thomson (Pilot Development Panel)
Joe Schofield (Publications Panel)
Paul Mahony (SPHG Panel)
Simon Payne (Tow Panel)
Mark Dale (BHPA Technical Manager)
Dave Thompson (BHPA Senior Technical Officer)
Ian Currer (BHPA Assistant Technical Officer)
Mark Shaw (BHPA Assistant Technical Officer)

I would like to begin by highlighting the value to all of our flying community of submitting Incident Reports. The BHPA's on-line Incident Reporting system (introduced in January 2014) now has three complete years of reports that can be searched on-line (David Thompson has had a busy time entering the previously submitted paper reports) and submitting a report has never been easier. I realise that many members feel that they don't see any direct effect from the submission of their reports, but remember that few reports represent brand new types of incident, and the main value of most reports is in collating similar types of incidents and tracking them over time. This allows us to develop our training systems, advise pilots of higher risk activities and informs the development of equipment standards.

Our incident statistics are now incorporated into the pan-European database that was developed under guidance from the European Hang Gliding and Paragliding Union (EHPU). Each country using the database now has access to the entire field of statistics and our BHPA technical staff will make regular statistical analyses of incidents, compare European statistics with British ones, and raise the profile of accidents and safety for the benefit of all pilots.

The total number of reports in 2014 was 150 (compared to 157 in 2013, 106 in 2012 and 91 in 2011). Although some might assume this indicates a greater number of accidents occurring in the last two years, it is more likely to display how the online system of reporting makes the submission of Incident Reports easier and more convenient than the previous paper system.

Of the total reported incidents, 87% occurred in a paragliding wing discipline (including speed flying and paramotoring), one of these being fatal. This paragliding fatality was, however, the only fatality that occurred throughout the year. Approximately 60% of the 150 incident reports submitted involved a degree of injury - a figure that is fairly consistent over recent years. Equally, the ratio of discipline-specific incidents to the membership-number qualification split remains broadly the same.

In our less populous disciplines, there were two mini wing incidents and three powered paragliding incidents.

In paragliding (including speed flying and paramotoring), 52% of reported incidents involved a degree of injury, and over a quarter of these injuries had a spinal element. Even though this is a slight reduction in the proportion of spinal injuries when compared with the previous year, it does not indicate there is any less of a need for incorporating back pad (back protection) testing into the EN harness standard currently under review within the Working Group 6 (WG6) committee.

In my role as Convenor of the CEN European Standardisation Committee, WG6, I am pleased to announce that during 2014 we finalised, and issued for formal vote, updates to the Paraglider Load Test Standard, EN926-1, and the Emergency Parachute Standard, EN12491. These are expected to be approved and published during 2015. WG6 has agreed that a revision to the Harness Standard is needed, and this has begun.

The Publications Panel reports that a short-run reprint of the Pilot Handbook was required to tide us over until the UK Airlaw changes resulting from SERA (Standardised European Rules of the Air) were finalised. As the details regarding UK GA flying are still unclear (including the impact on our flying), another short-run reprint is imminent despite a complete revision of the Pilot Handbook being ready to go.

The Tow Panel reports that several new permits for winch towing were issued in 2014. All tow permits and permissions are up to date with the CAA until the end of December 2015, and the Panel has worked with the CAA to tidy up air charts by removing old sites and expired permissions.

The Airspace Panel comments that last year saw another crop of problematic airspace proposals from a variety of air traffic control units, with the most disappointing part being the failure of the CAA to follow their own processes. Thanks to all those BHPA members who have assisted in crafting our responses and also to our colleagues within the GA Alliance, without whom the BHPA could not be as effective when dealing with what is an arduous task at the best of times.

On the other hand, the GA Unit within the CAA has been wonderfully proactive and receptive, this is a complete turnaround from around 5-10 years ago when they seemed to be causing us problems and the Airspace side was the part of the CAA to hold up as the exemplar. Again we are working with our GA Alliance colleagues to address our concerns.

Two new members of technical staff have been appointed – Mark Shaw took up his position at the start of the year, and Ian Currer the week before this AGM. As well as taking on duties carried out by the departing Technical Manager Mark Dale, they will be assisting with school inspections so that the desired inspection cycle can be adhered to. The Chief examiner reports that there are a number of trainee instructors awaiting examination, which will be undertaken when the weather picks up.

The post-CP coaching scheme or 'Pilot Development Structure' has progressed, with the first Writer's Workshop taking place in February this year, in Derbyshire. David Thomson reports that the workshop was a productive method which brought coaches (the primary users of the Structure) together to draft sections and exercises. From the success of this event, future workshops may be held at clubs around the country. The two new Technical Officers have begun assisting with the Structure, and will continue to be involved to assist in its implementation.

Following extensive consultation with schools and clubs, the CP (Novice) syllabus for training paragliding hill pilots has been revised so that students are not required to demonstrate top landings before qualifying. Schools are still required to teach the theory, and most are expected to continue to supervise student's first top landings. More emphasis has been given to ground handling and updated (Paragliding Hill) Student Record Books have been revised and are available to schools. The technical staff are revising BHPA training material with updated sections on landing training following a review of the relative ineffectiveness of Parachute Landing Falls.

The training programme for speed flying has now moved on to a further trial phase and has been extended to additional specified schools in the UK. The speed flying flight requirements have been amended to take into account limitations on hill height that may have precluded schools operating in some areas from being able to deliver the course.

As always I would like to express my sincere thanks to the people who volunteer to work on and with FSC. We are all passionate about our sport and I feel privileged that such a skilled and experienced group of people are willing to give up their valuable time to contribute to its safe development.

However, as he is retiring, this year we have a particular need to recognise and thank Mark Dale for his many years of service to the BHPA FSC (and indeed the BHGA Training Committee before it). Mark's contribution to the BHPA has been of fundamental and crucial importance to the development of our training systems and the documentation that supports them. At the very beginning of the BHPA (in conjunction with Tom Beardsley and Bob Harrison) he set the foundations and continued the development of the Technical Manual, while also authoring the Pilot Handbook. He has represented the BHPA to the CAA and the AAIB, and acted as General Secretary of the EHPU. He has investigated accidents, and reported to Insurers and Coroners Courts. The Hang Gliding Test Rig has been his responsibility, keeping it running and carrying out both development and Certification testing for UK and foreign manufacturers. In the hang gliding arena he was essential to the development and legalisation of Hang Gliding Aerotowing in the UK. These are only small samples of the immense amount of work he has done over the years, and I can honestly say that without his efforts my job as Chairman of FSC would have been very different (and indeed very difficult). I wish him all the best in his business ventures, and hope that we will continue to see him flying our kinds of aircraft (as well as his drones) in the future.

Angus Pinkerton
Chairman
BHPA Flying and Safety Committee
March 2015

BHPA AGM - Sites Report 2014 - 2015

Post

My first year in post after a 4 year vacancy with no handover. It's been a steep learning curve!

Database

This remains my priority. It is NOT intended as some sort of National Site Guide. The majority of our sites are very well negotiated and managed at local level by clubs and schools. Some sites are very sensitive and it would not be appropriate to publish details for the world to see, and possibly abuse. No, we need a Sites Database to de-conflict and avoid duplication. The aim is to have one nominated representative for each site so that in the event of an enquiry we can refer them to this single point of contact.

The good news is that the data is now held on the BHPA server. The hard copy paperwork is also held in the BHPA office so if a Sites Officer disappears into thin air (as has happened in the past) the data is safe. I have remote access to the database.

But it's way out of date and we are missing 4 years of paperwork. My plan is to update the database with the backlog of amendments and then send out validation reports to all clubs for comment. This is bound to stir up a hornet's nest of enquiries and negotiations, but it has to be done. I had hoped to achieve this over the winter months but unfortunately the database requires some modification first and our software engineer has been suffering from heart problems, so no progress has been made.

In spite of our outdated database I have been able to help a small number of clubs, schools and landowners to resolve their differences over the year.

Civil Air Notification Procedure (CANP)

As you may remember we conducted a survey of members as to why they didn't use CANP and how it could be improved. The results were published in Skywords. Although we only had 91 responses from our 6,500 members (which tells a story in itself) it did give us some useful data to present to the military. Against our advice, they have decided to continue to show our sites on their charts, although it remains unclear which sites they intend to depict. They have also asked us to continue to use CANP whilst we all investigate the use of alternative methods of deconfliction.

Historical Agreements

We have an operating code between ourselves and the British Model Flying Association. It's a useful starting point for clubs with shared usage and is now available via the safety section of the BHPA website.

I also discovered that we have an agreement with the National Trust, produced by John Clarke back in 1998. About 7 years ago some difficulties with local National Trust estate managers in the south of England were largely ironed out when our insurance policy increased landowner indemnity to £5M. After some discussion amongst the BHPA Executive it was decided NOT to attempt to review a 16 year old agreement at present: let sleeping dogs lie.

Sites Fund

As at 31 Jan 15 the sites fund stood at £13,355; up £932 on last year.

Thanks to some sterling work by Martin Heywood we have obtained trust status for the sites fund, giving it preferential tax status. The trustees are Martin Baxter, Angus Pinkerton, Adrian Thomas and Marc Asquith. BHPA Exec retains the authority to replace trustees as appropriate.

BHPA PowerPoint Presentation

I promised to produce a PowerPoint presentation on the organisation and structure of the BHPA for delivery a club nights. It's not quite finished yet...

Martin Baxter
BHPA Sites Officer
February 2015



The official magazine of the British Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association

Skywings

Report 2015

Skywings magazine continues to be delivered on time and within budget. The final Skywings management figures for 2013/14 are shown below, along with the final figures for the previous year for comparison.

I've also included an estimate of the anticipated year end result for 2014/2015. But this will undoubtedly change to some extent over the next couple of months as invoices are received, so should just be regarded as my best guess at the present time.

	Final		Anticipated
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Expenditure	£157,832	£164,062	£168,397
Advertising income	£60,733	£63,012	£65,345
Magazine subscription sales income	£1,372	£1,291	£1,032
Net cost	£95,727	£99,758	£102,020
Average net cost per magazine printed	£1.17	£1.21	£1.23
Copies ordered	80,397	81,464	81,697
Copies printed	81,657	82,724	82,957
Carriers	79,125	80,340	77,742
Pages printed	576	556	548

Whilst the figures show a welcome increase in advertising revenue of £2,279 for 2013/14 compared to the previous year, expenditure for 2013/14 unfortunately well outstripped that increase, and rose by around £6,230 compared to the previous year. If you take into account the income from Skywings subscriptions, the net cost of publishing Skywings in 2013/14 rose by some £4,031, or around 4.3%.

Whilst this was largely a result of costs rising ahead of inflation, it's worth noting that an additional 1,067 magazines were printed last year, up by around 1.3%, as a result of rising membership numbers. This is a double edged sword. An increase in the number of magazines printed helps to keep the cost per magazine down, but the overall annual cost of printing the magazine of course goes up.

2014/15 is so far following a similar pattern with the welcome increase in advertising revenue unfortunately being outstripped by rising costs. But since the privatization of Royal Mail, postal charges seem to have at last stabilised, and we have not had to contend with annual inflation busting rises. As a result the margin between increased advertising revenue and increased costs has narrowed considerably, and is likely to be around £2,002 at year end (£3,951 in 2013/14). Similarly the net cost of publishing Skywings this year is only likely to go up by around £2,262, as compared to £4,031 last year. The number of magazines printed has also gone up this year.

In closing I would as always like to thank the hard working and talented members of the Skywings team, designer and advertising agent Colin Fargher, and editor Joe Schofield, and also thank everyone who has contributed to Skywings over the past 12 months. Without your support Skywings would not be the great read it is.

Paul Dancey
Corporate Communications Director
February 2015



Website Report 2015

A few minor tweaks have been made to the BHPA website following comments received, but generally the new design and structure seems to be working well. The website can now be accessed via the recently registered shorter domain **bhpa.uk** or the more traditional **bhpa.co.uk** domain.

Following an approach by Terry Aspinall, who originally created the Hang Gliding History website, the BHPA has now taken over ownership of this website to ensure the long term availability of this brilliant resource. During the ownership changeover it became necessary to register a new domain, and as a result the hang gliding history website can now be accessed via the original **british-hang-gliding-history.com** domain, or the recently registered **bhpahistory.com** domain.

The idea behind this is to provide an element of future proofing, to allow us at a future date to create a history page on the BHPA website, with a links to the hang gliding history website and a similar history websites for paragliding, paramotoring, etc, should they one day be created.

A few months ago the php software on our web server was upgraded to version 5.4. This inevitably resulted in a couple of minor issues with scripts that were in use. These have now been resolved and scripts updated as necessary.

Instructor and Coach Newsletters are now available in the appropriate documentation areas of the website, and a script written to allow these to be uploaded from the office, once a few outstanding issues have been resolved. These are related to measures put in place to safeguard the security and integrity of the server when files are uploaded via FTP.

The script used to display incident report summaries has also been refined to improve the search options available based on wing type.

I should also perhaps mention that at the request of our Dutch colleagues at **KNVvL**, I have created a "white box" version of the software developed to display Euro Incident Report data on our website. This has been provided to them free of charge, and following customization to suit their needs is now in use on their website

During March we will also be upgrading our hosting account to ensure we have sufficient space for future growth. This is likely to result in a short period of downtime, and the work will therefore be scheduled to take place over a weekend to minimize impact.

Paul Dancey

Corporate Communications Director

February 2015

BHPA Competitions AGM report

On Target!

The headline is that participation in all disciplines continues to be buoyant, records continue to be broken and we have World-class pilots in all disciplines – this year already we have Gordon Rigg, taking bronze in the Forbes flatland HG comp and Kirsty Cameron 4th in the Womens Paragliding Worlds in Colombia.

There are challenges of course, and our teams face increasingly strong competition, all the disciplines are pushing to introduce and develop new pilots and new safety initiatives.

In short, perhaps no breakthroughs this year but nobody is resting on their laurels and the level of professionalism in the planning and organisation increases to make the sport safer and better for participants at all levels of competition.

British Paragliding Open Competitions

In 2014 we had two separate CAT 2 Open competitions; the first of these was based in Gemona, Italy and the organisation and management of the event was delegated to the Vol Libro club, a very experienced team. With an excellent group of supporters and volunteers, the event was a great success and pilots were impressed by both the flying and task setting. The event was attended by 125 pilots. There was one accident in the event, but no injuries. There were five valid tasks of a possible six.

This Open competition was won by Emile Van-Wyk (GBR), a current member of the British Team. First female was Kirsty Cameron (GBR), also a British Team member. Top Sports Class was Alex Coltman (GBR). All in all, an excellent result for the British pilots, with Calvo, the MD, stating it was the most successful British Competition he could recall. The event will return here in 2016.

The second British Open was held in Ager, Spain (Catalunia), a former venue for the British. The conditions were typically strong and 'interesting', and three challenging tasks were completed. Others tasks were started but stopped in the air due to storm development on the course. The event was attended by 121 pilots. There was one accident in the event, with minimal injuries. There were three valid tasks of a possible seven.

This Open competition was won by Xevi Bonet (ESP), a local pilot, with Adrian Thomas (GBR) coming 2nd. First female was again Kirsty Cameron (GBR), who also managed to take 3rd overall in the competition. Top Sports Class was Tim Pentreath (GBR). Again, an excellent result for the British pilots with Brett Janaway as MD.

The British Champion in 2014 is Adrian Thomas (for the 4th time), having beaten off strong challenges from Emile van Wyk, Kirsty Cameron and Toby Colombé. Kirsty Cameron is the women's champion, also for the 4th time. Full competition reports were published in Skywings.

European Championships (CAT 1)

Britain fielded a team for the European PG Championships, held this year in Serbia during August. Kitt Rudd ably performed his role as team manager, and supported the Brits to a good result, despite very few tasks being achieved in the 2-week event. The event was dogged by bad weather throughout, much

as Europe was throughout 2014, but they still managed 6 valid tasks. Team GB finished 10th of 22 nations. Guy Anderson finished top Brit in 30th place of 114 pilots.

World Championships (CAT 1)

Britain fielded a strong team for the World PG Championships, held this year in Columbia during January 2015.

Our team: (position out of 148 pilots)

Guy Anderson (36th)

Jamie Messenger (45th)

Emile Van Wyk (49th)

Kirsty Cameron (79th)

Juan Sebastian Ospina Restrepo (80th)

Kitt Rudd was again team manager. The event is possibly the most competitive World Championship event for many years seeing lead gaggles of pilots numbering 50, even after 60 or 70kms of the task being flown, with just seconds separating the lead pilots.

Kisty went on to secure 4th place in the womens overall results and our National team ranking was 10th -with the winners, Germany, only posting 5% more points showing how closely fought the competition is at this level.

The event was much more expensive to attend than in previous years due to both the geographical location of the event and the team size of 6 (plus team manager) which we were awarded. The panel had to use approx. £3,000 of reserves, over and above the BHPA grant, however reserves are healthy so this did not cause a problem.

Panel Meetings

The Panel met in Gemona to discuss a number of topics. There was a further meeting of the panel in December. The main topics for discussion were 2015 & 2016 venues, agreed as Macedonia & St Andre for 2015 and (probably) Portugal and Gemona for 2016. In addition it was confirmed CCC class wings would be accepted into the championships forthwith.

In addition the panel agreed to set aside approx. £1,000 to update computers and radios for use in championships. A discussion is also under way for the purchase of trackers for future events.

Finally, the selection procedure for future CAT 1 events was altered. Previously it only allowed for the top ranked pilots in WPRS to be selected. It has now been amended to also allow the opportunity for pilots to be selected if they have done exceptionally well in a single event. This allows for some of our top pilots to take a break from competing exhaustively in a season, but to still qualify from one good result.

The season finished with good reserves available to the panel of approximately £10,000 in the British Team account and £10,000 in the competition account. The competitions of 2014, approximately, broke even. The British Team account is showing a large loss from 2013, but does not take into account the BHPA grant due in April 2015, already paid out for the World Championships, which was early in

January. Therefore the real terms loss of reserves in the team account is closer to £3,000, as explained above. The Competitions account is also down due to the presentation of an old invoice from prior years that had not been taken into account in those years. In real terms, the balance is static.

Paramotor Competitions

Home

The British Open was a resounding success. The weather as usual played a big part in this. Once again it was held at Beverley airfield. Lots of competitors attended including the whole Qatar national team. This year in addition to live tracking we demonstrated live video from selected competitors which was streamed live to the internet during the competition.

Next year we envisage holding the comp further south and we will be making a big push to attract more newbie's into the comp.

International

Team members attended the European slalom in France and the World classic in Hungary. In the Worlds Michel Carnet won Silver and the team came fourth. We have plenty of team building to do and the recent extra support from the BHPA will help us with this.

Changes, developments, initiatives and safety

Michel Carnet has joined the organising committee this year and there is a push to encourage more to get involved. Michel is a big driving force in competition and he has many good ideas to bring to the table.

We are actively trying to raise the profile of competition and paramotoring in general. We have held a stand at the Aero Expo at Sywell for 2 years. Next month we will have a stand at the annual flying show, this is to be our third time there. The show has now moved back to Telford, and Richard Shaw has worked with the organisers in an effort to attract more paramotor/paraglider traders. The newly formed RAF paramotor team also attended. They have recently successfully been attempting World records with FAI claims pending for timed climbs to 3000m in the solo and dual categories from Mark Morgan Mick Roche and Gordon Blackley. We hope they will also be attracted into competition soon. The RAF team are all BHPA members and uphold the same safety ethos as ourselves.

The organising committee are currently working on the 2016 9th Paramotor World Championships to be held at Damyns Hall near London in 2016 which has now been approved along with the 15th world Microlight championships by the 2014 FAI Plenary. It is a combined event, and affords us an excellent showcase as it should attract more press coverage than we usually receive for this sort of event.

Hang Gliding Competitions

The Year in Review

British Open Series

The BOS got off to a slow start in South -east Wales on the Blorenge with Nick Pain calling a perfect 104 km out and return task. The very light winds meant a difficult launch but once away the conditions were perfect, with 6 pilots racing to goal at Castle Meadows and several very close. This set the scene of hard

competition on every task. Justin Needham held back an ever competitive Gordon Rigg to win the round and British Open title, while Luke Nicol won the Class 5 section and Greg Emms with a PB won the club class.

The second round in Mid-Wales started with rain and high winds cancelling the first 2 days. Day 3 on Camlo, a rarely used site saw bottom landing skills tested in small and up slope fields, but determined circling in tight thermals lifted 10 pilots in stages away towards goal. Day 5 at the Long Mynd saw some easier ridge soaring and most pilots getting away from the hill but extensive shade put most quickly back on the ground. Andy Hollidge won the Class 5 closely followed by Luke Nicol. Flex wing Winner Dave Mathews was pushed hard by new comer to the main class Ollie Chitty.

Round 3 in Yorkshire was mainly defeated by exceedingly bad forecasts which kept everyone grounded for 4 of the 5 days. A final 113km task was completed by Gordon Rigg (class1) and Takatoshi Kosaka and Mike Armstrong (class5).

Series Winners were Gordon Rigg (class 1)
 Luke Nicol (class 5)
 James Gaunt (club class)

Although the inclement weather had restricted the competition, talks on GPS, trackers, dealing with tasks for newcomers and parachute repacking meant lost days were used practically and targets of previous years mentoring (Ollie Chitty 5th overall in the main class and Luke Nicol 1st class 5) proved successful and the whole series was free of serious incidents.

British Nationals

Again we returned to the popular venue of Laragne in south east France but due to conflicts in the very busy international diary (Europeans which were cancelled and Class5 and women's worlds) Nationals were held jointly with the French. This resulted in a large keenly fought competition but also brought conflicts of interest and difficulties with management contrasting with the French hospitality. The French weather also proved challenging with very windy conditions preventing tasks on 4 days. However Nick Pain and Rebekah Sherbourne (weather guru) valiantly found windows of opportunity to maintain the competition with an exodus to St Andres for the final day. British team members battled to the end to finish 3rd 4th and 5th overall but were closely beaten by the French in the 2 lead positions.

Grant Crossingham is the National champion for the second year running and with Gordon Rigg 2nd and Carl Walbank 3rd snapping at his heels. Luke Nichol won the class 5 championship at his first attempt in a depleted field after the worlds.

This was a well organised, fun and sociable competition but co-operation with the French to do the organisation had proved a long and difficult process. Thanks to Lorenzo Labrador for many hours of negotiation and Nick Pains efforts as Meethead to remain calm at the helm when so many others would have walked away.

Pre-Worlds Mexico

The Pre-worlds in Valle de Bravo in Mexico last winter allowed us to field a team with a mix of experienced hands and less experienced future champions (we hope!) A lot of the European teams sent

their very best pilots in preparation for this year's world championships, however a high quite a few pilots decided to stop flying due to the extreme turbulence encountered with the event staged so early in the year. Injuries (including Rob Greg and Kathy Rigg) and glider damage prematurely halted flying for more pilots, sustained landing in small landing fields at high altitude.

Steve Blacker and Wayne Thompson made goal several times in 7 full days comp flying, having had several practice days and learned a lot towards this year's full competition with Gordon Rigg leading the Brits home with 16th place.

Security issues in the area did cause concern, however we have received assurances from the organisers and the Foreign Office currently give the area a clean bill of health and armed police and promises of increased army presence are at present keeping Valle de Bravo a pleasant place for the privileged Mexicans and tourists there.

Class 5 and Women's Worlds in Annecy

Jenny Buck as Team leader managed a very difficult task in a competition which unfortunately had too many incidents. Tim King failed to land smoothly in a very windy field resulting in injury and lengthy hospital stay.

Tim's situation may have been much more serious had it not been for the intervention of team manager and military nurse Jenny Buck who was able to use her management skills, contacts, and specialist knowledge to ensure Tim had the care he needed at the right moment.

Thanks to Jenny's interventions Tim has made good progress and is back flying again.

Other too close encounters in a very crowded sky resulted in further parachute deployments and injuries, and mid-air where both pilots came down safely under parachutes. The sad loss of a member of the Japanese team, Masakazu Kobayashi resulted when his wing tip clipped the mountain on what turned out to be the final day.

The French had gone to a great deal of work to ensure the smooth running of this competition and the British team flew their socks off with Andy Hollidge finishing 10th and Luke Nicol 16th and the team ending 5th overall. This demonstrated how the knowledge both pilots gained the previous year had given them the experience and confidence to perform well. Kathy Rigg finished 10th overall in the Womens category.

UKNXCL

Neville Almond has showed the superior performance of the Class 5 gliders in experienced hands by again winning the league by a massive amount over both his nearest competitor and the class1 gliders by scoring 1804 points and including 3 new British records of Free distance, Free distance via 3 turn points (307km) and declared out and return (141km)

Dave Mathews was the leading flex wing pilot with 716 points and leading lady with 409 points was Kathy Rigg.

2015 Panel

Chairman Gary Wirdnam has stood down after a great 6 years of a steady hand at the helm leaving a big seat to fill, as has Dave Matthews whose mature judgement will be missed and Sue Brooks who as the first non-competitor on the panel nonetheless made a respected contribution.

During the year Ben Philpott also stepped down for personal reasons and his talent for publicity and communication is much missed.

Tim King has stepped forward as new Chairman and proving a very effective Chairman too. Graham Phipps has (re)joined the panel along with Richard Hunt leaving the new lineup thus:

Tim King (Chair)

Richard Hunt (Secretary)

Stephen Penfold (Treasurer)

Phil Chett (Scorer)

Lorenzo Labrador (CIVL Rep)

Bill Bell

Graham Phipps

Wayne Thompson

One big challenge this year has been the need to recruit new Meet Directors for both the BOS and Nationals as Nick Pain stood down with the avowed intent to return to competition himself this year. Claudia Mejia is confirmed as Director for the Nationals and we hope to be announcing the new BOS Director(s) very soon.

The year ahead

Off to a good start with our very own Gordon Rigg taking Bronze against a world-class field in the Forbes Flatlands at the beginning of January.

Next up is the Worlds in Valle de Baravo (Mexico), as I write our excellent team is about to depart and we wish them all the best:

Steven Blackler

Grant Crossingham

Gordon Rigg

Graham Phipps

Wayne Thompson

Carl Wallbank

Aside from the Worlds, the 2015 season offers three rounds of the British open series:

BOS1 SE Wales Sat 2/5/15 - Wed 6/5/15

BOS2 Dales Sat 23/5/15 - Wed 27/5/15

BOS3 Mid Wales Sat 25/7/15 - Wed 29/7/15

and

British Nationals in Ager, Spain, 9-15 August

This is organised by Claudia Mejia and Lorenzo Labrador with experienced Meet Director Claudia Mejia taking on the role for the British Nationals for as for the first time.

We had planned some new locations for both the BOS and the Nationals but it proved impossible to secure them in time so we will be looking again next year.

One welcome addition to the competition calendar is the return of the Cambridge Aerotow meet over the August Bank holiday.

We have established a number of safety and training initiatives for the existing calendar including offering discounts to encourage more pilots to hold First Aid certificates, changes to focus on pilot development in international competition, a possible 'boot camp' associated with the Nationals. Further work is planned with mentoring and accessibility initiatives to encourage new pilots to come to the British Open Series events which, although they continue to be well subscribed, always need a regular supply of new blood.

Accuracy Competitions

Paragliding Accuracy

The FAI Cat2 Paragliding Accuracy National Championships were successfully held at Llangollen in June, with thanks to Beyond Extreme and Chris Haynes for organising the event. The event was won by Simon Sykes for a second time, and he also became the first pilot to claim the Platinum Accuracy Award (four consecutive flights totalling 10cm or less). Green Dragons (Simon Sykes, Billy Elliston, Andy Shaw) won the team event, Ed Cunliffe was best newcomer and Marshall Hall was the most improved pilot.

There was British attendance at both European legs of the FAI Cat2 World Cup series. Seven Brits attended the German World Cup where Billy Elliston was top Brit in 24th position, and two Brits attended the Turkish World Cup where Andy Webster was top Brit in 8th position.

Billy Elliston, Andy Shaw, Andy Webster, Marshall Hall and Matthew Bignall represented the UK Paragliding Accuracy Team at the European Championships in Serbia in September and claimed a creditable 5th place. The weather was not good, but the standard of flying was exceptionally high and Billy Elliston was top Brit in 14th position. The individual event was won by Serbian pilot Dejan Valek and Slovenia won the team event. Andy Cowley also attended in his FAI capacity as Chairman of the Jury. Thanks go to Squad Manager Nikki Bodill for organising the squad training camps and selection process leading up to the championships, and to Andy Webster for taking on the Team Leader role at the event.

Billy Elliston won the 2014 Airways Accuracy League. At the end of the 2014 season there were four UK pilots in the top 100 of the WPRS (Andy Webster, Billy Elliston, Andy Shaw, Simon Sykes), and the UK as a nation were in 11th position.

Preparations are now under way for the 2015 World Championships in Indonesia, and Simon Sykes jnr is coordinating training camps in the run up to the end of May 2015 selection date. The 2015 Paragliding Accuracy Nationals will be held in June in Shropshire / Wales. 2015 will also see a pre-European Championship in Lithuania, and a six legged World Cup series.

Paragliding Accuracy is still very popular in Eastern Europe and is expanding in Asia, where the spectator potential of the sport is exploited. Efforts are ongoing to encourage more UK pilots into the sport, and especially female pilots so that we can hopefully field a full strength UK Team in the future.

Classic Accuracy

The 44th Classic Accuracy National Championships were successfully held at South Cerney airfield in Gloucestershire on August bank holiday with thanks to Arthur Bentley for organising the competition. Martin Robe was crowned national champion for a third time and Simon Sykes achieved a further Platinum Accuracy Award at the event. Birdwings (Arthur Bentley, Martin Robe, Gary Ounsworth) won the team event, Matthew Bignell was the best newcomer and Marshall Hall was the most improved pilot.

The European Grand Prix was validated on the full complement of three competitions in France, UK and the Netherlands. Martin Robe and John Lawrence achieved podium places at the UK and Dutch legs respectively. French pilot Francois Barriot won the overall European title and John Lawrence took a creditable third place.

John Lawrence also won the 2014 UK Classic Accuracy league and was awarded the Nigel Legg trophy for services to accuracy.

The Classic Accuracy National Championships will again be held at South Cerney, and there will be European Grand Prix competitions in France and the Netherlands.

BHPA Paragliding Accuracy Panel

There were some personnel changes to the BHPA Paragliding Accuracy Panel in 2014 with Chairman Liz Lawrence and Treasurer Jonathan Parkinson leaving the Panel and Matthew Bignall, Mick Collins, Andy Tillsley and Simon Sykes joining the panel.

The Panel now has eleven members consisting of; Andy Webster (Chairman), Arthur Bentley, Don Bodill, Nikki Bodill, Chris Haynes, Taz Spence, Gary Ounsworth and the above four new members.

In addition to running the national team, priorities for the Accuracy Panel in 2015 include arranging next year's Classic and Paragliding Accuracy National Championships, and encouraging more pilots into accuracy flying.

Compiled by Bill Bell from contributions by:

Andy Webster

Tim King

Brett Janaway

Richard Shaw

Admin Director's Report

As anticipated we have seen some changes in the office over the last few months. From 1st August 2014 Michelle took over the role of Office Manager with Jennie reducing her hours to two days a week. Jennie is enjoying the opportunity to step back from work and spend more time with her grandchildren. Recruitment is under way to recruit an Office Junior, possibly an apprentice who will hopefully be in place by the summer to assist with the heavier workload at that time of the year.

There has been considerable work undertaken to re-invent the look of the Student Training Record Books and the Pilot Task Book. They now all have colour covers and are printed digitally so we can have smaller print runs and respond more quickly to any changes.

The continued transfer to online activities continues and recently the office has switched from franking mail to using an online business service, which will give us some considerable savings with our postage costs.

Last year we renewed the contract with our ISP with promises of guaranteed internet speeds for both upload and download. In addition our telephone system now runs on a VOIP system and this has proved somewhat unsatisfactory. There appears to be a long delay between dialing and the office number ringing and also, it sounds as if you are making an international call. This gives us cause for concern and we are making plans now to review this contract at the first break point in three years.

We plan to continue with online developments, amongst the possible options are online renewals, online voting and membership cards which carry a Q code allowing members to present their cards and have all their qualifications appear on a webpage. We will see which of these come to fruition.

With the reduction in days worked by Jennie we are now down to 3 full time staff and 2 days a week from Jennie. There has therefore been an increase in workload for the full time staff and so, as usual my thanks go to all the office staff for their hard work during the year.

Marc Asquith
Admin Director
March 2015

Schools Report

We've had a couple of good summers with weather and this to a large extent reflected in the fact that we have more schools than ever before. Back in 2013 we had 54 registered schools and are now up to 59. I've contacted a number of schools and most report that they haven't put their prices up in the last 3 years and 5 out of the 6 that I spoke to reported that they were concerned about their financial position. Schools are the life-blood of the association and it's vital that we do everything possible to help them.

John Welch
School Liaison

Paramotor Report – March 2015

Membership - I'm very pleased to report that the numbers of BHPA Paramotor (PG Power) ratings continues to climb, standing at 473 as of the 5th of January 2015. Very well done to all those newly rated pilots.

Low Flying - Low flying continues to be a priority for CAA, I'm very pleased to say I don't have any new prosecutions to report since my 2014 AGM report but please remember to fly courteously to those on the ground and always within the rules as published in the Air Navigation Order. If anyone has any doubts as to the rules they should always get in touch with a club coach, an instructor or myself for clarification before they fly.

Competitions - The paramotor competition season is due to kick off very soon, run by the BHPA Paramotor Competitions Panel. There is a single five day event this year starting on the 30th May at West Mersea in Essex. In a departure from previous years' competitions there will be two distinct pilot groups this year: the Open group and the Discovery group. The Open group is of the usual format with UK pilots and foreign guests trying to win the Open trophy, and with the British National title being awarded to the highest placed UK pilot. The new Discovery group is for people who may want to have a go at competing without feeling pressured or intimidated in any way and will be run in a more relaxed manner.

As ever the competitions require plenty of volunteer marshals. Marshalling is an excellent way to get close to the action and is a great learning experience for new and upcoming pilots. It will be a great event and I would encourage everyone to come along.

Incident Reporting - Incident reporting continues at a very low rate for paramotor pilots, members are reminded of their responsibility to their fellow pilots and indeed the requirements of the law in the event of fatal or potentially fatal incidents which must be reported to the BHPA, Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) and the Police immediately.

The BHPA incident reporting system now feeds directly into the European Hang Gliding and Paragliding Union (EHPU) database, the EHPU represents 97,000 pilots across Europe. An incident that may seem trivial at first could help to identify trends and may help to improve safety for all.

Please report an incident you have witnessed or have been involved in if it:

- Involves injury, whether to participants or others
- Involves damage to property, third party or not
- May give rise to an insurance or legal claim
- Involves non-standard equipment or techniques
- Involves failed or malfunctioned equipment
- Highlights safety points or was unusual
- Is something you feel the sport may learn from

Uncertified Wings - The popularity of small, fast, and often uncertified wings continues to grow, I fly one myself, as it has done for a couple of years now. Members' attention is drawn to the changes in the registration process for uncertified wings which can be found on the BHPA website. The changes came into effect on May 14th 2014.

Under the new system, both the 'Register of Owners of Uncertified Wings' and the 'Development Gliders Endorsement' are replaced by the 'Pilot's Declaration: Uncertified Wings'. This declaration allows the pilot to confirm that he or she understands the risks involved in flying uncertified wings

and absolves the BHPA and its officers from the consequences. The pilot's third party insurance cover remains in place, as it previously did under the old system. The new system requires the member to indicate at annual renewal that the declaration is to continue in place. There is no ongoing charge for a continuing registration.

Edward Cunliffe
Paramotor Liaison
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