

BRITISH HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING ASSOCIATION

AGM

FEBRUARY 2018

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Once again, I find myself sitting at a laptop with one week to go until our AGM trying to gather my thoughts and review the year that has passed.

As I always say, this task is complicated by the fact that we are reporting almost exactly a year in arrears. This AGM covers the financial year April 2016 - March 2017.

Administration

The Admin team has seen something of a change this year. Clair returned, part time, from maternity leave, Carla, who had been her maternity cover initially moved to part time, then Ruth left us due to ill health and Carla moved back up to full time to cover the work. All this change has re-emphasised to us that we need to ensure that all our Admin staff can cover all the areas, and so we are doing some additional training.

Airspace

Very recently, Tom Hardie stood down as our Airspace Officer. We thank Tom for his many years hard work. Fortunately, this has coincided with our agreeing to co-fund a programme of work on airspace lead by the BGA, with other co-funders being our fellow airsport members of the Royal Aero Club. We will still need some volunteer work, but I suspect to avoid burn out, it will have to come from a team rather than just one person.

Membership levels

Last year I reported that back in 1996 we achieved our largest ever level of membership at just over 8000. That fell for a few years and then foot and mouth struck in 2001. During the course of that year our membership fell below 7000 and then steadily fell further to 6500 in 2012. Since then it has steadily, but slowly risen, such that in the middle of 2016 we hit 7000 once again, and the graph indicates a steady climb. I am happy to report that the climb continues, and we are close to 7500 just now.

EHPU

Again, last year I reported that our attendance at the European Hang Gliding and Paragliding Union in early 2016 saw us drop the ball. The usual delegates are Angus Pinkerton and myself, however, due to unexpected ill health at the last minute, I was unable to attend, we were able to obtain a refund for the room but not for my flight. At the meeting the issue of the funding of WG6 arose. Almost no BHPA members will have any idea what this is, but to suffice to say that it is the body that

produces the EN A, B, C and D standards for paragliders as well as standards for helmets, harnesses, reserve parachutes etc. It runs through the French version of the British Standards Institute, the BSI which is known by the acronym AFNOR. At the 2016 EHPU meeting the funding of the bill from AFNOR was debated and Angus Pinkerton, as the Chairman of WG6, felt compromised in setting out the position, since I was absent, the UK position was not advanced. The bottom line was that EHPU decided not to fund AFNOR/WG6. It was only when the French FFVL said they would fund it in any event, and the BHPA together with a number of other countries agreed to contribute, that the work of WG6 continued. EHPU continues to struggle with the funding of WG6. Well I am pleased to report that WG6 was eventually funded with only one contribution from the PMA members, €500 from Ozone. This year we have agreed to request assistance, but failing any emerging, EHPU will simply budget for it.

Exec. Members

This year we have an uncontested election for Exec. and so barring something very odd happening, I can welcome Mark Meadows to Exec. Maybe my plea from last year for new blood has been heard on high !

Accidents

This year has been one for some bad and strange accidents. In particular, for the first time that I can recall, one of our clubs faced a Police Investigation which commenced on the basis that the tow operator was possibly guilty of criminal assault. The independent legal advice that we obtained on behalf of the club, and funded by our insurers, was that members who witness an accident should provide statements to the BHPA investigation team and not to the Police Officers investigating.

Staff

I just want to say that we all recognise that both the Tech and Admin Staff all work hours above and beyond the call of duty and each one gives of their best, for which we all should be grateful.

Conclusion

Finally, without the commitment of all our volunteers we could not function. Each club has its group of volunteers who work as Chairman, Secretary, Sites Officer, Chief Coach etc etc. The structure of the BHPA has sub-committees all populated by volunteers beavering away at their own area of interest. The main point I want to make is that without you all we would be sunk and on behalf of the rest of the membership, I thank you all for your hard work.

MARC ASQUITH

BHPA Chairman

12 February 2017

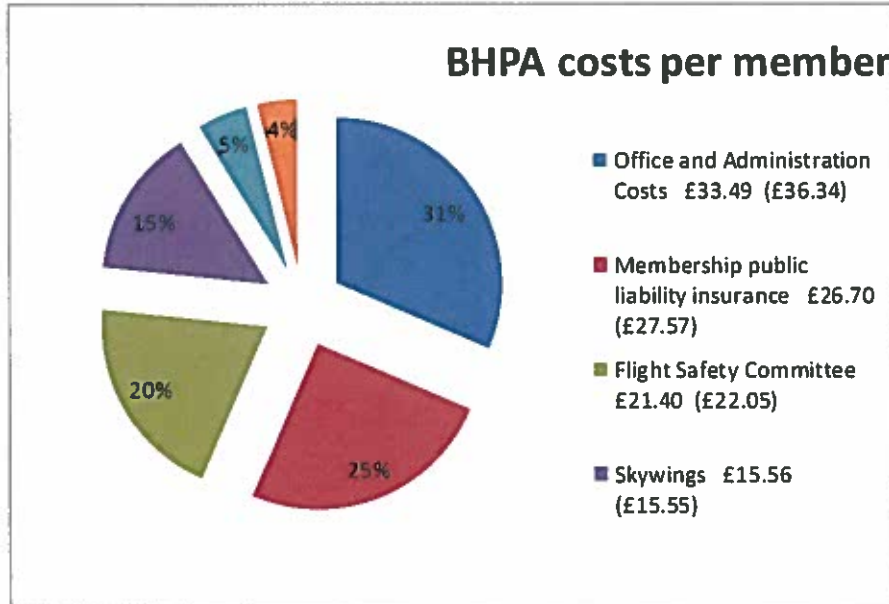
BHPA Financial Report for the Year Ended 31st March 2017

I am pleased to be able to report that the BHPA's finances are in excellent shape. The number of flying members grew over the year by a little over 3% and this fed through to a 4% growth in association income which rose from £761k in 2016 to £792k in 2017. Happily our total costs remained almost unchanged from the previous year (£758k compared to £759k in 2016) so that we ended the year with a surplus of £34k compared to the £2k surplus in 2016.

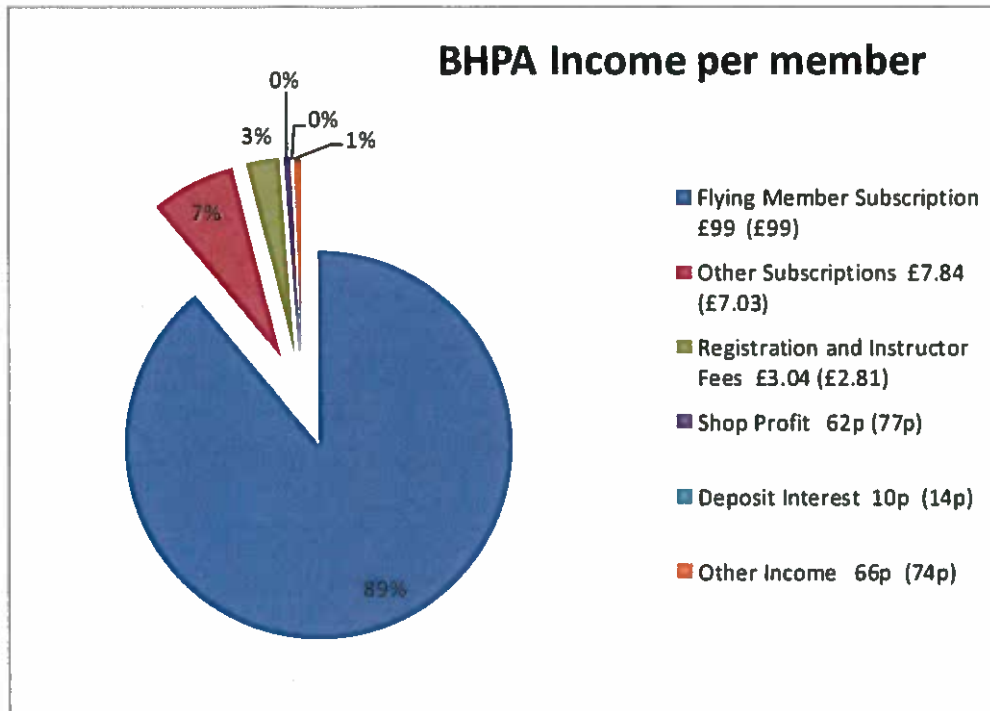
Overall reserves stand at £519k half a million of which £335k is invested in our freehold office. During the year Exec decided to set up a separate trust to hold the site purchase donations to ensure that they are ringfenced and can only be used for the purpose for which they were given. To this end £15k of donations was transferred out of reserves into the trust fund. We pay our subscriptions annually in advance so the BHPA continues to hold reasonable levels of cash but unfortunately interest rates are very low for businesses and associations like ours so our interest earnings remain disappointing small.

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.

On Exec we all share members' desire to keep the costs of membership subscriptions down and to ensure that we get value for money. Overall costs remained static over the year and with an increase in the number of members the cost per member of providing insurance, the services of the FSC technical team, Skywings and our back office showed a small decrease.



BHPA Costs per member for 2017 with 2016 figures in brackets



BHPA Income per member for 2017 with 2016 figures in brackets

In the current financial year which will end in March 2018 membership has continued to grow however inflation is beginning to impact on us such that I expect a much reduced surplus at the end of the current year. Looking forward into 2018 I expect the increase in costs will oblige us to review subscription rates but Exec will endeavor, as always, to keep any increases to a minimum.

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 FSC 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 Report – AGM 2018

We've just completed our first year of cover with our new underwriter XL Catlin and business is running as usual. The insurer has once again shown that they are responsive to our gradually evolving needs as members of the Association continue to push the boundaries of what can be done with free flight and the powered alternatives that are spreading out gradually from the peripheries of our core business.

For 2018, there has been a 10% rise in our insurance premium over 2017 but given the current claims history a small rise was distinct possibility. However, there is nothing in our history at present that would put at risk our ability to secure cover at the £5m level for all disciplines, and premiums still remain below levels seen 12 years ago. Some members from that era will recall days of coverage caps for tandem and instructional activities and indemnity levels of £2m along with the rising barrage of requests for £5m cover. I can advise that, now that we have £5m across the board, we are beginning to see some landowners insisting on £10m indemnity levels for some of the sporting activities taking place on their open areas; and our first request for coverage at that level has just been received by a club in the south of England.

It is difficult to predict where we will be in 5 years' time, but the insurance team will continue to work hard to ensure access to the hills and dales for all. You can do your bit to help us by sticking to the rules - they are there for the protection of you and your fellow pilots, and to secure coverage in the event of an incident.

Martin Heywood
Insurance Director
Vice Chair

12.02.18

BHPA Flying and Safety Committee
Report to the 2017 AGM (17th February 2018)



FSC members and responsibilities:

Angus Pinkerton (FSC Chairman & Airworthiness Panel)
Jocky Sanderson (Advanced Training)
Tom Hardie (Airspace Panel) *retired during 2017*
Ken Raines (Chief Examiner and Examination & Inspections Panel)
David Thomson (Pilot Development Panel)
Joe Schofield (Publications Panel)
Paul Mahony (SPHG & Power Panel)
Simon Payne (Tow Panel)
Dave Thompson (BHPA Senior Technical Officer)
Ian Currer (BHPA Technical Officer)
Mark Shaw (BHPA Technical Officer)

I would like to begin by repeating my annual message about the value to all of our flying community of submitting Incident Reports. The BHPA's on-line Incident Reporting system (which went live on the Internet in January 2014) now has over 10 years' of reports that can be searched on-line. Submitting a report has never been easier. I realise that many members still feel that they don't see any direct outputs 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.

Incidents

There were 203 reported incidents in 2017. This is a significant increase on last year's incidents (147), but may be due to increased familiarity with the on-line form and a slight increase in both overall membership numbers and flying activity during the year. 65% of the incidents (132 incidents) involved injury which is in a similar proportion to previous years.

There were 48 minor incidents, 77 serious incidents and 7 fatalities. Five of these fatalities were paragliding (three in the UK, one in Italy and one in Nepal). There were two powered paragliding non-member fatalities (both occurring in the UK). There were no unusual patterns in the data and the full analysis will appear in April or May '18 Skywings.

Looking at the overall position across Europe, through the EHPU's database, there were 55 fatalities recorded.

Numbers are as follows (PG unless otherwise stated);

France	26 (18PG – 3 Speed Riding – 1 HG – 4 unlicensed PG)
Germany	11 (6PG – 5HG)
UK	7 (5PG – 2PPG)
Switzerland	6
Norway	2
Sweden	2
Italy	1

The figures are difficult to compare, as the membership numbers and reporting ratios vary dramatically, but clearly 2017 was a bad year for accidents in France.

Examinations, Inspections & Instructor Training

The Examination and Inspections Panel worked hard to to keep up the pace in examining candidates for Instructor, Senior Instructor, Dual Pilot and Senior Coach Licences, carrying out 42 exams in 2017. 24 school inspections were undertaken. Overall standards in the schools were high, with all schools displaying a professional attitude to training. This professionalism is reflected in the low student incident numbers, amongst the lowest of the European Federations. There were 28 reported incidents involving injury in our Schools, which is approximately one for every two schools.

Since the last AGM the technical staff have run two bespoke Senior Instructor courses and two combined Coach, Instructor and Senior Instructor courses. This has resulted in us registering our first "Development School" abroad, based in Spain; the potential for two new Paramotoring schools (who have previously been operating independently); and a new BHPA school based in Annecy in the French Alps.

Following the successful bespoke Instructor course for two Paramotoring schools in October 2017, another PPG instructor course is in the planning stages and we anticipate running a PPG specific course in 2018 if there is sufficient demand.

Unfortunately we were forced to cancel our planned residential Hang Gliding Instructor course, as only three candidates confirmed attendance. However, since the recent Trainers' Conference we have received ten further enquiries, and we have provisionally re-scheduled the course for October 2018.

The technical team is also working on an SIV syllabus and the appropriate Instructor Licences.

We are continuing our trial of the Speed Flying training programme in some additional schools, and will be reviewing the outcome later this year.

Airworthiness

In my role as Convenor of the CEN European Standardisation Committee, WG6, I am pleased to report that during 2017 we completed a significant revision to the Paragliding Harness standard EN 1651, which is to be published in 2018. As well as a general refresh, the standard now contains three new tests: an "anti falling-out" system strength test; an "impact pad" (back protector) test; and the requirement for manufacturers to test emergency parachute system deployment from the harness container under G load. WG6 meetings are being scheduled for 2018, where we will be discussing formally proposed amendments to the Flight Test Standard; to allow "folding lines" to be used during asymmetric collapse tests when testing C Class gliders as well as Class D (France); enhanced requirements for additional video recordings (Germany); and additional spiral dive test requirements (Switzerland). Furthermore, we will address formal questions on the emergency parachute standard EN 12491.

Towing

The Tow Panel has renewed nine tow permits, has successfully applied for and been granted one new permit, and there is one application pending. The CAA application process now takes significantly longer as all local air users who may be affected are consulted, and this can take a year or more!

Power

The Power Panel has had an eventful year. The CAA published exemption 4455, allowing the use of wheels on powered aircraft that weigh less than 70kgs and have a stall speed below 20kts. This has effectively legalised solo patrikes and has allowed the development of some very light powered hang glider trikes (commonly known as nano trikes). The power training syllabus for paragliders has been updated to reflect these changes, and a new ab-intio syllabus for wheeled powered hang-glidings is currently being developed.

Pilot Training & Development

The Post-CP coaching scheme or 'Pilot Development Structure', released on paper in an interim form for low airtime paragliding hill pilots has been in regular use by pilots, clubs and schools. Work has stepped up on the on-line interactive format, and we employed Judith Mole on a part-time basis to manage the population and testing of the new on-line resource. The current evolution was very well received at the Trainers' Conference that took place in February 2018. Material for the on-line resource is under development for Hang Gliding, Paramotoring and other disciplines; but we still require the input of skilled Coaches and Instructors to develop the content.

Other activities

The year has seen the addition of CAA display authorisations being administered by the BHPA and we hope that this will enable our display pilots to perform at air shows and other events and help promote the sport in the UK.

As always I would like to express my sincere thanks to the people who volunteer to work on and with FSC. In particular this year we must recognise and thank Tom Hardie, former BHPA Chairman and member of the Flying and Safety Committee who recently retired as FSC Airspace Panel head. His invaluable contribution and support on Airspace issues will be greatly missed, and not just by the BHPA!

Angus Pinkerton, Chairman, BHPA Flying and Safety Committee, February 2018.

BHPA AGM - Sites Report

2018

The database is central to my role. Whilst sites are rightly managed at club level, we maintain the database to record who takes the lead for each site, to de-conflict between clubs and schools, and to answer queries from both members and the wider community. It's a vital tool in alerting clubs to airspace and other proposed threats like windfarms. The data is confidential because some clubs and schools don't want it published.

For the last 4 years I have been trying to bring the database up to date. Despite a slow response from some clubs and schools this process is nearing completion and we have validated the data from 63 of our 69 clubs/schools (91%). This has rationalised the number of sites from 1104 down to 872. A further 70 are marked as closed (safety or landowner issues) so we have 802 active sites.

When it comes to site conflict most clubs and schools have had a very grown up approach, and have been able to come to a mutually agreeable solution. There are a couple of sites where old scores have not yet been settled, and I have bypassed these with a view to revisit them when time allows. Early on in my tenure I decided that I would provide remote assistance to any disputes and negotiations; but that I wouldn't travel to meetings in person. I do not consider that travelling all over the country represents a reasonable use of my time or your money.

When Tom Hardie stepped down as Airspace Liaison Officer he left me to resolve 2 outstanding issues: marking our sites on military charts, and addressing the shortcomings of the current Civil Aircraft Notification Procedure (CANP).

Tom and I had previously adopted the view that marking our sites on charts was unhelpful. By way of example, think about your local hill site. How many times a month is it used, particularly over the winter months? Military pilots (I used to be one) are likely to become complacent if they fly past a site 9 times and see no activity; and then be very surprised when they fly, perhaps a little closer on the tenth occasion, and encounter a gaggle of 20 paragliders. A few years ago when we put this argument to the military they decided to mark only the busiest of our sites, but didn't specify what qualified as busy: days per year, or the number of gliders on a good day; nor how many sites they intended to mark. I need to clarify their position.

Whilst we await a technical solution to the requirement for a light weight transponder (and it's more complicated than you might at first think) our defence, at least around flying sites, is CANP. But it has a number of shortfalls which need addressing if we are to make it effective and attractive to members.

I have put our suggestions to the military but they have been slow to respond, although recent correspondence (and a couple of AIRPROX!) has indicated some movement.

In the meantime I now need to update what we call the 'liaison' for each site in the database. Most clubs list the grid reference of take-off for each site, but for deconfliction purposes we need to specify the centre of the flying area. Once that has been done then I'll be in a good position to review all our site codes with the military before confirming the revised list with clubs and schools. Unfortunately I haven't been able to work on this over the winter months: I 'temporarily' lost remote access to the BHPA server when it was upgraded to make it more secure so that we can accept credit card payments.



Skywings magazine continues to be delivered within budget and on time. The final Skywings management figures for 2016/17 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 the current financial year, 2017/2018. But I should emphasise that this is just a projection of the likely year end outcome, and as such should not be relied upon.

	Final		Variation from 2015/16	Anticipated	
	2015/16	2016/17		2017/18	Variation from 2016/17
Expenditure	£174,062	£179,703	+£5,641	£181,916	+£2,213
Advertising income	£65,579	£68,347	+£2,768	£65,774	-£2,573
Magazine subscription sales income	£801	£929	+£128	£906	-£23
Net cost	£107,683	£110,426	+£2,743	£115,236	+£4,810
Average net cost per magazine printed	£1.29	£1.28	-£0.01	£1.28	<i>unchanged</i>
Copies ordered	81,983	84,529	+2,546	88,659	+4,130
Copies printed	83,243	86,039*	+2,796	90,084	+4,045
Carriers	81,161	83,171	+2,010	85,463	+2,292
Pages printed	580	588	+8	556	-32
Advertising space booked (pages)	188	197	+9	185	-12

* includes 250 extra copies printed for free distribution at the 2016 World Paramotor Championships at Popham

The figures above show advertising space booked in 2016/17 rose by around 9 pages, and the associated income increased by around £2,768. This allowed us to print an additional 8 pages, compared to the previous year. Magazine subscriptions and back issue sales also rose slightly during 2016/17.

The number of copies ordered in 2016/17 also rose by 2,546 compared to the previous year, reflecting the continuing trend in membership growth. As a result the average cost per issue in 2016/17 fell by 1p to £1.28.

The final figures for 2016/17 and projected figures for 2017/18 demonstrate how membership growth impacts on Skywings costs in two very different ways. More magazines are printed and distributed, so overall expenditure rises, but the cost per issue either remains the same, or falls slightly. Whilst membership growth is financially beneficial for the Association as a whole, it does increase the strain on the Skywings budget. When coupled with the substantial fall in advertising income experienced in the current financial year, we have had little choice but to cut magazine sizes to try to keep close to the available budget. Sadly even after cutting around 32 pages, I am currently predicting that we will come in around £800 (0.7%) over budget this year.

Fortunately Exec have recognized the strain that membership growth has put on Skywings finances, and have agreed an increased budget for next year. This should enable us to reinstate some of the pages lost this year.

In closing I would just like to thank all those who have contributed articles, reviews, news items, photos and letters over the past year, and acknowledge the hard work and support from our dedicated and talented Skywings team, designer and advertising agent Colin Fargher, and editor Joe Schofield. Without their support Skywings would not be the magazine we all know and love.

Paul Dancey,
Publications & Website Director
February 2018



Website Report 2018

The BHPA website continues to be maintained and updated on a regular basis.

Shortly after our last AGM, the web server was migrated to improved hardware. This caused a few problems with the software used to run our mailing lists, but updating to a more recent version resolved that particular issue. The storage capacity of the mail server was also increased to better cope with staff changes, and provide an element of future proofing.

All outstanding PHP 5.6 issues mentioned in my last AGM report have now been resolved, and a start made on upgrading the website to html5 standard.

Following feedback from members, the cookie compliance script has been modified to make it more user friendly, and the school and clubs post code search tweaked to improve the accuracy of results.

As part of the Pilot Development Structure (PDS) project, a library of articles from past issues of Skywings is currently being created. These will eventually be linked to from within the PDS, and made available on the BHPA website listed by issue date and article title. To accommodate this development, and the growing number of on-line Skywings magazines hosted, the website has now been migrated to a new server with increased capacity. This should ensure we have adequate room to grow for the foreseeable future; it looked likely that we would otherwise run out of space during 2018.

In the long term, I hope to be able to host the British Hang Gliding History website in a dedicated area on the new server. This would bring everything "under one roof", and reduce overall hosting costs. The British Hang Gliding History would remain an independent "stand alone" website, but would be hosted in the UK rather than the USA, and be easier to maintain as a result of a common control panel and server software specification. This will be a fairly complex task due to the existing format of the British Hang Gliding History and is likely to take at least 12 months. A duplicate website will therefore be slowly created to allow access to be maintained to the existing site.

Each year the banks tighten their requirements for organisations wishing to take online credit/debit card payments (PCI compliance). Last year was no exception. Unfortunately our original IT support company were unable to resolve the issues thrown up in a timely manner, and Michelle had to appoint a new IT support company with a better understanding of MAC based networks. As a result a number of changes have been made to improve the security of the office network. Whilst some further tweaking is required, the office network should shortly be fully PCI compliant. The final task will then be to update operational and security policy documentation.

**Paul Dancey,
Publications & Website Director
February 2018**

Competitions report

The level of organisation required to run any comp increases year on year and thanks are deserved, as ever, to the many many panel members and individuals who put in a huge amount of work to make each year better than the one before and to make the dozens of comps staged through the season as popular and successful as they are.

As ever competitions held in the UK are bedeviled by the weather and this year was no exception -but when it is good, it is fantastic!

Nonetheless excellent, safe and enjoyable comps in all disciplines have been held both here and overseas, and in particular the HG worlds in Brasilia was a spectacular venue for the growing number of online spectators.

Spectating through live tracking, Vlogs and even live streaming during competition has come of age having been pioneered some years ago by the likes of Curly Jon & the PPG comps team experimenting with live in flight video and PG comps showing the way in live tracking, and now we have our own online stars like Ollie Chitty to bring a wider audience to comps.

Deregulated PPG trikes are now featuring for the first time in competition and a new discipline appearing for the first time is Acro,

Acro has been difficult to stage in this country, due to lack of proper mountains, but we already have pilots with UK display authorisations - and lack of facilities has not held back the popularity of skiing in the the UK.

As detailed below, acro already has some energetic organisers and is to start under the wing of the PG panel; we'll see where we go from there!

Bill Bell

Hang Gliding Panel

Report by Tim King

Competitions

BOS 1,2 and 3

After much deliberation at the 2016 planning meeting we continued with the same format of 3 5 day FAI cat2 competitions based at Crickhowell south Wales, Leyburn in Yorkshire and Long Mynd in Shropshire. These bases provide us with the best options for sites that are large enough to deal with about 60 pilots and give opportunity for varying flight routes. Martin Colclough was the full-time Meet Director for the series with Phil Chett providing scoring and many other duties. Local organisers Greg Emms, Kev Gay and Geoff Minshull did a lot of groundwork to ensure the comps went ahead.

Avian has supported us this year with day prizes. Thank you Tim Swait!

BOS 1 started with very stable conditions limiting flights to 20km but by day 3, so unstable, the thunderstorms stopped the day. However a classic day 5 had a task set from the Blorenge to Carmarthen for a real flying and racing task with 8 pilots in goal.

Dave Mathews was British Open Champion.

BOS 2 was marred by weather that prevented tasks being set until, on day 3, wave set up on Wether Fell giving wonderful flights above the cloud but lack of thermals away from the hill meant short in distance but memorable flights for many. The wind and rain returned for the rest of the competition.

BOS 3 had us trying for flights at Clatter in no wind stable conditions and then plenty of wind and rain and flying but no task set at the Long Mynd for the next 3 days. The last day then gave improving conditions with a task to Tewkesbury Ham with 3 pilots in goal and happy pilots spread across the country.

Series winners were Darren Brown Flexwing, Mike Armstrong Rigid and Angus Pinkerton Club class.

We have good participation in safe competition this year with a mix of new and returning pilots. Best newcomer Tim Swait.

Nationals

The British nationals were held in Monte Cucco, in Italy, in late June. A lot of work had been put in early by Darren Brown and Tonio Tarsi and with a change to the NOTAM organised, the airspace was lifted and helped the smooth running of the comp. Many pilots also arrived early and had a weeks flying before the event. Officials giving up their free time were Meet Director Jenny Buck and scorer Phil Chettleburgh. Mix of pilots from Johnny Carr to Charlie King and Ned Knowles (sports class), and pilots from Italy, Austria, Netherlands, Ireland and Belgium. The 3 classes competed in 4 tasks varying from ridge runs to a very nearly completed monster 198km. Open winner was Davide Guidicci with national champions Grant Crossingham class 1 (37 pilots), Tim King class 5 (5 pilots) and, Sports class Josef Bardoczy (10 pilots).

A very safe enjoyable yet competitive competition that was well run and supported by our local hosts with trophies presented by the mayor. The superb scenery, welcoming local hostels and sponsorship by Woody Valley and day prizes from Avian combined for a winning event.

Brazilia Worlds

We knew from the planning meeting last year that this event would be expensive, time consuming and difficult. Problems including no flights available from the UK, the sheer size of Brazil, 90min drive to launch on unmade roads, nightmare retrieve from bomb out field..... Team manager tasked with this job was Jenny Buck so it was run with military expertise and enabled 8 pilots to attend the event. Nick Chitty also assisted with the logistics. Ollie Chitty is to be congratulated on his Vlogs, which had much of the HG community following them avidly and helping to spread the enthusiasm to a wider audience too. Not bad work when you are flying in top-level competition at the same time!

British team was Grant Crossingham (20th), Gordon Rigg (35th), Oliver Chitty (39th), Dave Mathews (37th), Andrew Hollidge (41st) and Malcolm Brown (47th) with Steven Blackler (49th) and Richard Lovelace (92nd) competing for individual honours. JB reports that ALL persons committed 100% to the competition and worked together to achieve success. Although the team finish was not our best we congratulate their efforts.

Several of the team pilots have also attended other competitions in Australia, Europe and America to train for this and forthcoming Cat 1 events. This is again an expensive and time consuming effort that is needed to compete at this level.

UKNXCL

The UKNXCL continues to highlight some of the big flights occurring in the UK through the season. Takatoshi Kosaka wins the league Class 5 and Steve Blackler flexwing. Several pilots have just missed out on very large declared triangles, by falling short of turnpoints. Better planning required for next year!

In conclusion 2017 has been a successful year with well-attended safe competitions run by a dedicated group of volunteers. We continue to attract a small number of new pilots and also returning (older?) pilots while maintaining a hard core of experienced pilots, who are enjoying competitions at home and abroad. A place on the British team is a valued prize and they compete well against international competition.

For 2018

For the year ahead we plan to encourage more pilots to attend rounds of the BOS. We have noted that we lost a number of pilots after a run of bad weather in 2015 and 2016. The intention is to introduce a "bring a buddy" discount scheme and promote the benefits that come from flying in a controlled competition environment. We also have some talks planned for any bad weather days and will continue to support the club class with mentoring and retrieve

support.

Martin Colclough will be Meet Director with Phil Chettleburgh scoring and extras. Rounds to be based at Southeast Wales (April/May), Yorkshire (May) and Long Mynd (August) (all subject to final confirmation)

This year we are due to go to Laragne in France and are making plans to do so with Jenny Buck, Meet Director for the 3rd time. Darren Brown is organising this and we await permissions from the French authorities.

In 2018 we have two CAT 1 events, the class 1 Europeans and the class 5 Worlds both to be held simultaneously in July in Kreshevo, Macedonia. It's a very long drive but this time we have experience of the logistics from 2016 to make the trip a bit easier. Knowing the sites, goal fields flying conditions, convergence areas and even roads and accommodation etc. will all help.

Class 1 team.

Grant Crossingham

Gordon Rigg

Dave Mathews

Carl Walbank

Ollie Chitty

Darren Brown (currently reserve but team size expected to rise to 6)

This is a very experienced team of pilots who will be eager to improve on 2016's 4th place.

Class 5 team

Paul Harvey

Tim King

Mike Armstrong

This team size may also increase and we have some very good pilots in reserve for when we receive the local regulations.

Phil Chettleburgh will be team manager for this comp and his experience gained from 2016 will be invaluable.

The pre worlds will be held in Fruli, NE Italy end of July and we have a team of pilots keen to attend in advance of the main comp in 2019. This competition will be held at 3 venues to make the most of the sites available in the 3 host regions (Tolmin, Germona and Fruli). Could be interesting on launch if they pick the wrong site.

2018 has already got off to a good start with Ollie Chitty winning the longest task ever set at 388Km Vlogging as he crossed the goal line and finishing 7th overall. Ollie would probably have won overall if he hadn't landed following a misunderstanding over a (not) cancelled task. Gordon Rigg showing his longstanding Forbes experience finished 11th overall.

BHPA Accuracy Panel

Report by Simon Sykes

Paragliding Accuracy

Simon Sykes, Andy Shaw, Andy Webster, William Lawrence, Mathew Bignell and Katie Lawrence were selected to represent the UK at the 9th World Paragliding Accuracy Championships held in Albania in May, lead by team manager Mark Bignell. Also in attendance was Andy Cowley in his role as a FAI Steward, and Toni Preston as a Target Judge. There was a record number of competitor's present, with the organisers increasing the number to 150 from the original 120 from 28 Countries. This shows the extent that the sport of Accuracy is growing; along with this the level of competition has improved dramatically over the past year. The British team achieved a respectable 9th place, and will be looking on improving on this next year.

The 2017 Paragliding Accuracy National Championship was held at Green Dragons. Special thanks go to Matt Bignell for organising the event alongside the team at Green Dragons. A 5 round comp was completed with William Lawrence winning the UK Nationals for the first time; with many more times to come I am sure. Scout Rebels (GLSW & Surrey Scouts) won the Team Category consisting of William Lawrence, Simon Sykes and Katie Lawrence.

UK pilots have become more active in overseas CAT 2 competition this season, where a mix of 11 UK pilots attended 8 separate competitions. There were 2 notable competitions, firstly was PGAWC event in Serbia that had 9 UK Pilots, and was held at the location of the next World Championships to be held in 2019, for many it was the first visit to the area and valuable experience for 2019. Andy Shaw came top Brit with an overall placing of 24th from 111 competitors. The second was the PGAWC event in Slovenia that had 6 UK pilots in attendance; again this was held in the location of the next years European Championships and doubled up as the Pre-Europeans. This was a very well run event, managing 6 rounds in 2 days with 91 competitors. Katie Lawrence achieved 2nd place female with some excellent flying and also claimed top Brit with an overall placing of 24th.

This year the UK actively entered the World Cup series, with the team UP UK, finishing 9th out of 38 teams. The team was made up of Andy Webster, Simon Sykes, Katie Lawrence, Matthew Bignell and William Lawrence. Also in attendance in this series were Dave Mercer, Andy Tillsley, Don Bodill, Charles Grantham and Andy Shaw. The top UK pilot in this series was Simon Sykes coming in 37th from 213 pilots. We are looking at entering the series again next season and await the calendar.

Preparation for the 6th FAI European Paragliding Accuracy Championships to be held in Slovenia at the start of May is well under way. Mark Bignell is leading the way with this in his role as Squad Manager, organising regular training camps each month. The selection is a long way off, with all to play for, with the competition being held towards the end of the main season.

In Summary, the past season has been a really positive step on last year's achievements and we are looking forward to building on this next year.

Classic Accuracy

The 47th Classic Accuracy National Championships were successfully held at South Cerney airfield on its normal August Bank Holiday weekend, as the meet director I would like to thank all involved in the organisation and running of the competition, without we would not have achieved 11 rounds, the most in the history of this comp. Andy Webster was crowned national champion, after a close battle with Simon Sykes and Dave Crowhurst, who finished 2nd and 3rd respectively. The winning team was Scout Rebels 'The Lawrence' (GLSW & Surrey SPC) consisting of John Lawrence, Katie Lawrence and William Lawrence. With John Lawrence collecting the Best Veteran and Simon Sykes taking the Best Place Paraglider.

The 2016 European Grand Prix was validated on all 3 competitions held in France, UK and the Netherlands. French pilot Pierre Astrix won the overall European title and Dave Crowhurst was top Brit. The UK Classic Accuracy League was also won by Dave Crowhurst.

BHPA Paragliding Accuracy Panel

The Panel now has twelve members consisting of; Simon Sykes (Chairman), Andy Webster (Secretary), Arthur Bentley (EPAC), Chris Haynes (Equipment), Gary Ounsworth (Classic Accuracy), Andy Tillsley (Squad Co-ordinator), Taz Spence (Website) and Mark Bignell (Squad Manager), Andy Shaw (Development Officer). Non-voting roles - Johnathon Parki (Treasurer). Liz Lawrence (Judge Co-ordinator) and Merv Turner.

Paramotor competitions Panel

Report by Paul Martin

The paramotor competition scene is strongly represented by a team of very dedicated pilots and non-flying volunteers.

Following a great 2016 season, which saw the team gain a silver medal in the world championships, 2017 has also been a successful season.

After a lot of organisation the 2017 British Open was held in July at the Green dragons site, just inside the M25. Barney Townsend was the comp director and his aim was to try to encourage new faces by designing tasks that didn't solely focus on speed and requiring a small wing and large motor. With a focus on accuracy in navigation and flying skills instead of speed, with the aim of increasing safety. The new format was well advertised on social media, clubs, forums as well as Skywings and although the number of entries wasn't as high as we have seen in past years, (possibly due the inclement weather forecast) there were a number of new faces as well as the core comp pilots. This year we also joined forces with the accuracy academy for the 5 day event, sharing facilities and costs proved successful, and was great at bringing the 2 disciplines much closer together, with joint discussion and coaching sessions when flying wasn't possible. The discovery category did see a number of new pilots competing for the first time and will continue going forward.

Prior to the British Open a number of training weekends were arranged, which were open to pilots wishing to become involved in comps. Due to the weather these were limited, but proved successful, and were of benefit to the pilots that attended.

The main focus for the team this year after the British Open was the European championships in the Czech Republic at the end of August. 4 pilots made up the British team, 3 PF1 and 1 PL1, which competed in the week long event. Results Team leader – Paul Smith PF1 - Paul Martin – 6th PF1 - Mark Morgan – 25th PF1 - Paul Martin (Yorky) – 35th PL1 – Danny Kettle – 7th Overall team result – 4th

World Paramotor slalom challenge 2018 3 pilots received invitations, but due to timing and other commitments they were unfortunately not able to attend.

Now the rules on trikes have changed, it's hoped that this will encourage further pilots to compete on trikes going forward. Francis Rich & Danny Kettle have been key to encouraging new trike pilots.

Moving forward into 2018 the main focus for next year is the Paramotor world championships in Thailand at the end of April.

Team selection is currently under way and will be published in the next few weeks. It's hoped that British team can attend with a full team, with a strong chance of a team medal as well as individual medals. Getting the team and equipment to Thailand will be costly, and will not be fully covered by team funds, which means team pilots will be required to provide some funding themselves.

Work to organise the 2018 British open has already started, and a site near Crew has been identified and discussions are underway with the landowner. Barney Townsend has agreed to be comp director again and is working on a new format that will hopefully encourage more new faces and swell the number of entries, while still challenging the seasoned pilots. Provisional dates are the end of August, with a backup date the following weekend if the weather is not suitable.

Team pilots are planning to run a series of local training events leading up to the British Open to

encourage new pilots and provide them with the knowledge and skills to feel comfortable in competing.

Discussions have also been had with other national (non UK) teams to ensure national championship dates don't clash, and share ideas on encouraging new pilots, as this is seen as a common challenge.

The team has actively been chasing sponsorship opportunities, but given the financial climate this has proved difficult, but is continually ongoing.

There are plans to revamp the team and comps website to bring it more up to date and make it more of a focal point for information.

This years Committee members consist of Paul Smith – Chairman, Paul Martin – Treasurer, Barney Townsend, Michel Carnet, Danny Kettle, Andy Shaw and Mark Morgan.

Paragliding Panel

2017 has been an exceptionally good year for the Paraglider Competitions scene. We have had great success in several areas, most notable Guy Anderson coming second in the World Championships in Italy in the summer. This in turn elevated the overall UK standing when it comes to allocation of team places at future events.

15th FAI World Championships, Feltre, Italy 2017

Individual standing

2. Guy Anderson 14. Seb Ospina Restrepo 20. Julian Robinson 75. Idris Birch

(150 competitors)

* We did not have a female member attending this year.

Country Ranking

4. United Kingdom

(47 Nations)

The competition enjoyed the maximum of 10 tasks during the two-week event.

WPRS Rankings

At the time of writing WPRS shows the UK in 5th place overall. Interestingly, the top 4 pilots achieving this for us are the same 4 selected for the UK team earlier this year, demonstrating the consistency and dedication of these pilots.

Here set out is the last 10 years history of the number of pilots participating each season in Paragliding XC competitions. It shows that the decline that existed in the Open class days has been reversed and we have more pilots competing in FAI competitions year on year. Much of this can probably be attributed to the success of more friendly and fun competitions that now exist, making an easier road for pilots to compete.

Nov 2017 = 262 Nov 2016 = 253 Nov 2015 = 247 Nov 2014 = 247 Nov 2013 = 186 Nov 2012 = 189 Nov 2011 = 206 Nov 2010 = 221 Nov 2009 = 225 Nov 2008 = 202

British Paragliding Open Championship

The first leg of the British Paragliding Open Championship was held in the UK for the first time in

some years and based near Tewksbury to take advantage of being able to set base as a goal for a variety of wind directions. Sadly the weather was not cooperative and only one task was completed, more success in the second round at St Andre saw Guy Anderson take the title and the prize of Panel chairman for next year....

Panel Members

This year we have a few role changes. Most notably Brett Janaway has stood down as Chairman.

Brett's role of chairman over the last many years hardly covers the amount he contributes to PG competition in many ways and he deserves a break- unfortunately for him and fortunately for everyone else, this will not be happening as Brett is retaining his place on the Panel to ensure good continuity with current projects and taking on the job of Treasurer.

Vice-Chairman Guy Anderson, who has shown excellent leadership and motivation for the role in recent years, has taken over the Chairman's role. Apart from being a very fine pilot Guy is very involved in the heart of the Comps scene, and commands respect from all those in the sport

Charles Norwood is the new Vice Chairman, with a view to progressing in the future.

Jack Pimblett joined the panel to represent the Acro section of the sport (BAPA).

British Paragliding Racing Academy

Now entering its 3rd year, the academy is producing some fantastic results. Last year I said we probably had some future champions in amongst them. Now we know we have. This is the most vibrant and active pilot group I have seen in the BHPA in my 20+ years of involvement. The results of these pilots in competitions is fantastic and we know that we will continue to present strong teams on the World stage for years to come as a result of the work being done now.

Acro

A positive new development is the forming of the British Acrobatic Paragliding Academy (BAPA), an informal group of experienced paraglider pilots who actively train and display in aerobatic paragliding.

The group formed in order to start to formalise a safe, inclusive approach to mentoring and supporting British pilots who wish to focus on the discipline of acro flying. Nothing like this was known to exist in the UK when the group was formed, but it was recognised that more pilots were wishing to start or progress further in acro flying.

The group's aims are to:

1. Promote the sport of paragliding to the general public
2. Promote the discipline of acrobatic paragliding to the UK paragliding community
3. Nurture and support new/inexperienced British acrobatic paraglider pilots
4. Represent the UK within the world acrobatic paragliding community
5. Support experienced British acrobatic paraglider pilots to represent the UK in competitions worldwide.

Competitions

The BAPA aspire to organise the inaugural British Acrobatic Paragliding Championships now that the UK has a number of experienced acro pilots. Having recently taken part in the Oludeniz Air Games in Turkey, the founding members spoke to the Turkish organisers who seemed to be open to holding the championships during 2 days before or after the 2018 Air Games. This would allow the championships to use the existing infrastructure and take advantage of the reliable weather and established flying environment.

The plan is to ratify the championships as FAI (Cat 2).

Displays

A number of the founding members recently gained or renewed their CAA Display Authorisations (with the help of Ian Currer and Matthew Hill), which will allow them to perform acro displays at airshows and other events across the UK.

The Acro members are currently contacting specific events and working with the CAA on display insertion methods (helicopters, balloons, trikes etc.).

Admin Director's Report

Staffing

The last twelve months has seen some major changes to the office staff, which has resulted in a re-allocation of duties. Clair Tewley returned from maternity leave in April 2017 on a part time basis, and as Ruth Holyoak left us due to ill health around the same time we were able to take on Carla Burdett permanently, on a full time basis. The licensing duties, which in the past were part of Ruth's remit, have now passed on to Steph, and in turn processing ratings has moved from Steph to Carla.

There are further changes anticipated this year as Carla leaves us in April to have her fourth child. She is planning on returning to us in January 2019, after her maternity leave. We will have maternity cover in place during that time.

Technology

In May 2017 as planned we implemented a new telephone system. The process was relatively smooth and has given us greater flexibility as we can manage the system in house. It's useful for us to be able to change answerphone messages as and when necessary.

Towards the end of 2017 we had to take the decision to make some changes to our IT infrastructure. Each year the banks tighten their PCI Compliance requirements for companies taking credit/debit card payments. Unfortunately our current IT support company were unable to provide a solution to keep us compliant, so we had to appoint a new support company (Employee Zero) who specialise in MAC systems. This has resulted in a major overhaul of our IT systems to ensure our network security is at the required level. The process is still on going, but should be completed in the next couple of weeks. Fortunately it also has had the added benefit of putting some of the GDPR requirements (which come into force in May 2018) in place.

Membership

I am pleased to report that membership numbers continue on an upward trend, with us ending January at 7240. We are still attracting Microlight pilots, although at a slower pace, and now have 347 who are members.

We also have seven new schools, which includes one air experience school and one development school register during 2017/18.

As publicised, from 1st April 2018 we will be increasing membership fees slightly to reflect the increase in insurance costs. We will also be increasing the age for concessionary rates from 60 to 67.

I would like to end by thanking all the staff, Michelle, Steph, Jennie, Carla and Clair for their hard work during the year.

Marc Asquith
Admin Director
February 2018

Annual Report for Emergency Parachute Systems (EPS) Advisor to AGM 2018.

It has been twenty years ago, in January 1998, since the first BHPA EPS training course was run to formalise the qualification of BHPA EPS packers and things have moved on. Previously, conical and pulled down apex (PDA) designs dominated the market but now conicals have disappeared and PDAs are being superseded by square designs. The Rogallo types continue while the new cutaway ram air designs though expensive and complex continue to grow. A BHPA packer needs wider knowledge and the ability to adapt to this changing world. This is now being reflected in the redesign of the EPS courses.

There are currently around 28 qualified BHPA packers and for the last decade Club Repacks, have had their supportive attendance. This is a good opportunity to study how much progress is being made in packing accuracy and it is a positive picture. Where previously 30% of reserves had gross errors, this has reduced to 5%, roughly divided into failure to come out of the harness and failure to deploy from the inner bag.

This improvement is not down solely to the BHPA scheme but due to the contribution of designers, manufacturers, dealers, schools and pilots. There is more information available with poorly photographed, type written manuals now gone, with online manuals and videos replacing them, with more attention to helping repacks, by numbering and colour coding on reserves. "The Mismatch Problem", (where the main components, harness, handle, inner bag, reserves and bridle can come from a different source), continues but current designs recognise this and have gone some way to reducing this problem.

The following single issue still remains to be reconciled and is the root cause of repetition of many problems. The question of warranty by manufacturers, averaging 10 years with some extension to 12 or 14 years with controlled inspection, should mean that over time, in our mature sport, that there is a gradual reduction of old kit and a modernisation with new kit. But reserves outside their warranty continue to be used. Pilot notification and education has contributed to making pilots aware that the manufacturers limit the "life" of their reserves and indeed harnesses. However reserves of considerable age still appear. BHPA executive have declared that are prepared to "cover" pilots with expired reserves, and indeed BHPA packers. A notice on this issue has appeared in Skywings. Whether this is sufficient to eliminate this practice is debatable. A current reserve over the warranted lifetime represents a small annual investment as a life saver. This warranty issue continues and needs further thought.

Reporting, through the BHPA Incident Report (IR) of reserve deployments continues to be spasmodic, such information is vital for learning and statistics. However worldwide forums, other associations and You Tube provide continuous examples of deployments. Once more, pilots are encouraged to use the BHPA online IR system.

Though each and every BHPA packer makes a major contribution, it is a pleasure to praise in particular the work done by John Warden in both his articles in Skywings and his work with the Paragliding Association of India.

In 2018, the completion of the new Record Of Inspection and accompanying documents needs to be completed and improved along with the EPS Course Syllabus. The high demand on Packers, many of whom contribute without a commercial gain, is commendable and their numbers need to be constantly topped up. This is a difficult demand for organisers and members.

In summary, the BHPA has in place a system that can be shown to have improved the functional efficiency of reserves and from this to identify further work. However, though there is much to commend in the significant contributions and progress in the subject of BHPA EPS, the most constant need is to remind membership that the reserve parachute is not a "get out of jail free card". Though reserve deployments worldwide continue to demonstrate their life saving actions, they should in no way replace the preventative cautions of safe flying.

Paramotor Liaison

Incidents: The usual trickle of incidents have been reported to the BHPA in the year, these are all searchable on the BHPA website, you can filter by wing type 'paramotor' and are a useful learning resource. There is still a culture of under reporting of incidents however, and unfortunately Facebook and the forums seem to get far more reporting of incidents than the European Hang Gliding and Paragliding Union (EHPU) reporting system which is accessible via the BHPA website. Please let's remedy this; it doesn't have to be your incident you report.

It is a legal requirement and your duty as a BHPA member to report air incidents; fatal or potentially fatal incidents must be reported to the BHPA, Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) and Police immediately.

Serious incidents should be reported to the BHPA as soon as possible and in all cases an incident report should be submitted to the BHPA and EHPU within 48 hours.

Safety: I'm pleased to say that the message about not starting your paramotor unless it is on your back and you are securely strapped in seems to be gaining a more secure foothold not only in the UK but worldwide. This will certainly help to reduce the incidents where body parts get damaged by poorly secured machines, but everyone needs to remain vigilant as incidents will still happen.

Trikes: General Exemption No E4455 dated 26 April 2017 now allows paramotors and powered hang gliders to use wheels for take off and landing! This is mostly down to some excellent work from the BHPA technical team though note that to use wheels one **must** have insurance (the BHPA insurance covers the requirements). Also note that this is a temporary one year exemption from the Air Navigation Order and is being reviewed by CAA, so anyone flying with wheels under the exemption needs to stick to the rules please!

Schools: More excellent work from the BHPA technical team who continue to work on bringing some of the independent paramotor schools under the auspices of the BHPA, Mike Chilvers who operates in Lincolnshire and Norfolk is the first to come on board, I'm sure there will be more in 2018.

Events: Parafest is the main event of the year for paramotorists, now in it's fourth year Parafest is moving to a new location at Llanbedr Airfield on the Welsh coast. Everyone with an interest in the dark art of the paramotor should attend!

Edward Cunliffe
BHPA Paramotor Liaison