

# **INSURANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE AGM - DECEMBER 2006**

It has been another quiet year in respect of legal claims made against BHPA members for personal injury. Claims are down in terms of both number and size, and that applies to both instructional activities and claims against club pilots. Again this means there is a trend of good news, now going back about four years which is improving the look of our claims history. That said, our global claims history for the last ten years, which is what prospective underwriters look at is still not good with payouts exceeding premiums paid. In addition, we have heard that a European underwriter who was able to provide alternative instructional cover is likely to be pulling out of the market at the end of the year and our interpretation of this is that the industry is still far from being sufficiently confident of all our activities for us to be able to obtain a range of quotes.

At the time of writing, we will shortly be renewing with our current underwriter, hopefully year on year being able to obtain improved terms where possible. A new adverse pressure is that relating to declining membership income, which reduces the amount we have available to pay the premium. However, there hasn't been a year go by since I took over the job of insurance officer where we haven't faced some external pressure operating and Exec's view is that long term stability must be the priority.

Safe flying.

Martin Heywood  
Insurance Officer  
BHPA

# FLYING & SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE AGM – DECEMBER 2006

There have been several new recruits to the FSC's membership this year; Mark Turner, Paul Mahoney and Michel Carnet. I am extremely pleased to have the benefit of their wide ranging in-depth aviation knowledge – and their enthusiasm.

The current FSC membership is:

- a. **Angus Pinkerton** (FSC Chairman)
- b. **John Lovell** (Accident Prevention, Investigation and Medical Panel)
- c. **Trevor McLaughlin** (Instructor and Coach Training Panel)
- d. **Chris Dawes** (Development Panel)
- e. **Mark Turner** (Airspace Panel)
- f. **Paul Mahoney** (SPHG Panel)
- g. **Michel Carnet** (Pilot Training Panel)
- h. **Andy Cowley** (Chief Examiner and Examination & Inspections Panel)
- i. **Joe Schofield** (Publications Panel)
- j. **Russ Hicks** (Towing Panel)
- k. **Mark Dale** (BHPA Technical Manager)
- l. **Dave Thompson** (BHPA Technical Officer)

Virtually all of our schools have completed their own individual Operations Manuals, based on the 'School's Operations Manual' pro-forma template that we provided. These documents will go a long way to ensuring that schools keep the right side of current HSE 'Risk Assessment' requirements, etc. BHPA Technical Manual Amendment 11 was issued and the TM is now on the BHPA web site in an easily searchable PDF format. In terms of CPs produced, 2006 has not been a good year for BHPA schools. By the end of October 2006 we had around 400 new PG CPs and 40 new HG CPs. The average over the last few years has been nearer 500 PG CPs and 80 HG CPs. It is hard to be sure why this has happened, but one school reported failing to find a single day of trainable weather in August.

During 2006 there have been only 2 fatalities involving BHPA members – one paragliding (drowning) and one hang gliding (in Spain). A full summary of the Accident and Incident reports received in 2006 will be published in Skywings in the New Year. The AAIB have a new Chief Inspector – and he has re-interpreted their Terms of Reference and has instituted new rules for the investigation of all airports accidents. This means that the AAIB are now directly conducting all investigations into fatal and life threatening accidents – and we are providing technical assistance. The precise details of this new way of working are still being discussed with the AAIB. For non fatal and less serious accidents the BHPA system remains unchanged, and in any case we ask all our members to continue to complete Incident Report forms.

The Airspace Panel had a very busy year, with the transponder issue gaining most prominence. The membership responded magnificently – now we have to wait and see what the outcome will be... but there is no doubt our voice was heard. The new SPHG PPG 'Flat from Scratch' training syllabus completed its development testing and is now in place. As part of this work a survey was conducted of existing PPG pilots which yielded very useful data. Thanks to all those who took part. The revised CEN PG standards are finally in place and operational. We are confident

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that pilots throughout Europe will quickly get used to the new system and will recognise it as a very welcome step forward. And hopefully next time it needs a lick of paint it won't take ten up years of our lives! Thanks to Steve Uzokuwu for writing up his summary of the new arrangements for Skywings.

"Acro" flying and now "Speed Riding" are both a cause for concern. One pilot nearly drowned on what seems to have been a poorly organised Acro course (the safety boat was reportedly an old man in a rowing boat). Speed Riding (small paraglider-like wings used in the Alps for high-speed terrain hugging descents) have already been seen in the UK – and are rumoured to be being used for soaring in gales. We don't know of any that have been through any recognised airworthiness testing – so there seems to be plenty of scope for some high speed disasters.

*Angus Pinkerton,*  
Chairman, BHPA Flying and Safety Committee.

# COMPETITIONS DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE AGM – DECEMBER 2006

Competitions continue to be popular in our association, partly as social gatherings of pilots but also as a way to improve and measure achievement, the popularity of the two cross country leagues are further evidence of the competitive nature of a significant portion of our membership. All disciplines continued to attract a solid following with an encouraging number of newcomers at all levels.

We have had several successes at international level this season with Robin Hamilton winning the individual Silver medal at the World Class 2 (Rigid Wing) Championship in Florida, where we also got team bronze. Robin has also set yet another World Record in Class 2 - subject to FAI homologation. In flexwing hang gliding the UK won the team bronze medal at the European Championships in Croatia while the UK Paramotoring team also gained team bronze at their European Championships in Spain with top Brit Dave Hairs also awaiting FAI homologation of a record he set in that competition.

All disciplines had successful national level competitions and the BHPA congratulates our champions: Gordon Rigg (for a record breaking 7th time) in hang gliding, Adrian Thomas in paragliding, Andy Shaw, the second time Paragliding Accuracy Champion and Derek Godfrey, third time Classic Accuracy Champion while Michel Carnet is the UK Paramotoring champion.

The National Hang Gliding Championships returned to St Andre after a 5 year absence and pilots were rewarded with excellent flying. Five tasks were completed - one cancelled en route for safety reasons - and a lot of personal bests were flown. It was tight at the top for most of the way through but Gordon Rigg performed consistently well throughout and came out the clear winner.

UK hang gliding skills were also thoroughly tested in the British Open Series. The first meet was in SE Wales and saw three successful tasks completed with last year's champion, Graham Phipps, winning the meet Unfortunately the second meet in the Yorkshire Dales was completely blown out. The final, based on the Long Mynd, was blessed with excellent flying weather and we got four very good tasks out of the five day comp; this produced some changes with Carl Wallbank flying extremely well throughout and finally taking both the comp and the series.

The discounts offered for pilots entering the entire Open Series at the beginning of the season worked well and will be repeated in 2007, as will the offer of free entry to pilots with AP entering the Nationals for the first time.

Class 5 pilots remain generally uninterested in national competition and once again only a couple competed regularly in the Open Series. For the fourth year running we did not manage to attract the minimum numbers needed to run a national championship in this class but we were represented respectably by three pilots in the Florida Class 5 Worlds.

The National XC League continues to be well supported and Dave Matthews of the Southern Club has become the new National Cross Country League Champion after a very close contest. Henry Blackshaw gets the President's Trophy for the longest flight of the year for his magnificent 202 km flight back in April.

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In paragliding the UK Nationals had a good season with a successful leg in SE Wales, followed by another in Montelegre (Portugal) and the final at Ager (Spain). Adrian Thomas won the Series with Steve Ham coming out as Serial Class winner.

The British Paragliding Cup was again very popular but suffered from the usual UK weather problems, albeit not quite as badly as 2005. The improvement on last season allowed a total of five good tasks, giving winner Dave Snowdon a chance to prove his mettle against the rest of the field.

UK Paramotoring competitions have also had a successful year with the BHPA supporting their best-ever UK Nationals at Woodbridge as well as the UK team competing in the European Championships in Spain. Michel Carnet took the national champion title at Woodbridge and the team had their best ever result in the FAI European Championships winning team Bronze; Dave Hairs, a comparative newcomer to the sport, came through strongly to be the highest placed Brit in the contest.

Changes are afoot in Accuracy with Andy Shaw standing down as chairman of the Accuracy Panel and the news that Judy Leden is to join the team for the World Accuracy Championships in Lithuania next February - an interesting and very welcome return to the competition scene for one of our best known competition pilots who has already been national ladies champion and represented her country at both hang gliding and paragliding.

John Aldridge  
Competition Director



During 2005/6, despite worrying BHPA membership trends, Skywings publication costs came in under budget, and are considered likely to do the same in 2006/7.

|                                      | 2005/2006       | 2004/5   | 2003/4   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Expenditure</b>                   | <b>£169,757</b> | £172,938 | £169,131 |
| <b>Revenue</b>                       | <b>£90,198</b>  | £88,071  | £87,958  |
| <b>Net Cost</b>                      | <b>£79,559</b>  | £84,866  | £81,173  |
| <b>Average Net cost per magazine</b> | <b>£0.93</b>    | £0.95    | £0.87    |
| <b>Copies ordered</b>                | <b>85,681</b>   | 89,260   | 93,594   |
| <b>Pages printed</b>                 | <b>688</b>      | 684      | 668      |

As the above figures show, in 2005/6 we printed a total of 688 pages across 12 issues, up slightly on the previous year. Advertising revenue for 2005/6 also rose by around £2,127, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our advertising agent, Colin Fargher.

That's the good news.

The bad news is that we only ordered 85,681 copies from the printer in 2005/6. That's around 3,579 down on 2004/5, and 7,913 down on 2003/4. This averages around 4,000 fewer copies ordered year on year, presumably as a direct result of current BHPA membership trends.

Careful management and maximum effort on the advertising front during 2005/6 enabled us to keep the unit cost at around 93p per copy, compared to 95p in 2004/5, and 87p in 2003/4.

Unfortunately the results for 2006/7 are unlikely to be as good.

The number of copies ordered is likely to be down on 2005/6, unless things improve over the next six months. After a promising start to the year, advertising revenue has fallen sharply and is likely to be well down on last year. In order to try to keep unit costs in check we have already started to pull back on the size of recent issues, and this trend is likely to continue over the winter months. The real worry of course is whether advertising revenue will bounce back next year or the present trend continue.

The health of Skywings is intrinsically linked to that of the trade. When the trade is in recession, Skywings advertising income suffers, as traders naturally try to cut their overheads. We will continue to try to keep costs under control and redouble our efforts to maximise our advertising income, but we face difficult and uncertain times.

The one thing that is however certain is that we remain committed to delivering a high quality full colour monthly magazine that educates, informs and entertains its readers, on time and within budget. But that is only possible because of the dedicated team behind Skywings, our editor Joe Schofield, our designer Colin Fargher, and all those who regularly contribute the articles and photographs that make Skywings the great read that it is. My sincere thanks to all of you for your support and your contributions over the past year.

Paul Dancey  
Publications Director

## **Webmaster's Report AGM 2006**

Primary development of the web site finished last year but a web site is not static and changes to meet requirement. This year the site has been used to capture and gather information about PPG as well being used as one of the tools the BHPA utilised in tackling the CAA's proposed changes of legislation in reference to transponders.

The schools and clubs data on the web site is now automatically linked to the database in the Office, this makes the web site reflect exactly the data held by the Office.

We also have an instructor's forum as well as two opt in newsletters.

### **Usage of the BHPA web site**

The BHPA web site is very popular having seen a more than 15 fold increase in the number of daily visits since the new site design was published in April 2004.

On average the site gets over 20,000 visitors each month, 10,000 of which are new visits from people who have never been to the site before.

- The front (home) page is the most popular [www.bhpa.co.uk/index.php](http://www.bhpa.co.uk/index.php)
- The second most popular are the schools pages <http://www.bhpa.co.uk/bhpa/schools/>
- Thirdly the links pages <http://www.bhpa.co.uk/phplinks/>
- After which the most viewed page is the paragliding introductory page <http://www.bhpa.co.uk/paraglide/>

| <b>Summary by Month</b>  |                  |              |              |               |                       |                 |               |                |                |                |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Month</b>             | <b>Daily Avg</b> |              |              |               | <b>Monthly Totals</b> |                 |               |                |                |                |
|                          | <b>Hits</b>      | <b>Files</b> | <b>Pages</b> | <b>Visits</b> | <b>Sites</b>          | <b>KBytes</b>   | <b>Visits</b> | <b>Pages</b>   | <b>Files</b>   | <b>Hits</b>    |
| <a href="#">Oct 2006</a> | 18601            | 14001        | 3282         | 719           | 14247                 | 4145307         | 22307         | 101763         | 434041         | 576635         |
| <a href="#">Sep 2006</a> | 20929            | 15542        | 3382         | 733           | 14188                 | 4276633         | 21991         | 101471         | 466268         | 627873         |
| <a href="#">Aug 2006</a> | 23273            | 16968        | 3407         | 803           | 16590                 | 4874893         | 24921         | 105637         | 526023         | 721487         |
| <a href="#">Jul 2006</a> | 20749            | 15469        | 3571         | 880           | 15325                 | 4465891         | 27301         | 110729         | 479562         | 643219         |
| <a href="#">Jun 2006</a> | 21118            | 15769        | 3492         | 926           | 15839                 | 4351417         | 27803         | 104765         | 473092         | 633565         |
| <a href="#">May 2006</a> | 21051            | 15776        | 3432         | 924           | 16487                 | 4208782         | 28652         | 106422         | 489076         | 652587         |
| <a href="#">Apr 2006</a> | 21717            | 16209        | 3414         | 908           | 16291                 | 4097566         | 27262         | 102425         | 486284         | 651516         |
| <a href="#">Mar 2006</a> | 19673            | 15018        | 3279         | 879           | 15636                 | 3973514         | 27253         | 101654         | 465582         | 609863         |
| <a href="#">Feb 2006</a> | 18273            | 14137        | 2957         | 766           | 13296                 | 3314930         | 21466         | 82810          | 395862         | 511671         |
| <a href="#">Jan 2006</a> | 18185            | 13978        | 2930         | 740           | 13412                 | 3579803         | 22943         | 90837          | 433323         | 563736         |
| <a href="#">Dec 2005</a> | 15505            | 12008        | 2525         | 650           | 11783                 | 3055310         | 20153         | 78297          | 372249         | 480679         |
| <b>Totals</b>            |                  |              |              |               |                       | <b>46866567</b> | <b>286151</b> | <b>1145776</b> | <b>5269392</b> | <b>7002500</b> |

## **BHPA Website Report November 2004**

### **Search engines**

The BHPA site is well ranked on all the major search engines, with Google providing 79% of all search engine referrals. Yahoo provides the majority of the rest. The BHPA is easy to find on the internet and is the biggest and most popular English language paragliding and hang gliding web site in the world.

### **Conclusion**

The BHPA web site has two main functions, firstly to serve the members of the association and secondly to help those non-members wishing to find relevant information about our sport. The site also represents a public face for the association and as such provides an easily accessible point of contact and also helps in attracting new members. Further enhancements and improvements to the site are planned for 2007, but as with all web sites there is no end goal – the BHPA web site will continue to grow and expand to meet the needs of the association and its' members.

Members wishing to suggest changes/improvements to the site are encouraged to contact either myself or Paul Dancey in his role as BHPA Publications Director.

**Sean Lovatt** – [webmaster@bhpa.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@bhpa.co.uk)



# **SITES DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE AGM – DECEMBER 2006**

## **Site Purchase**

Since the decision to make contributions to a site purchase fund voluntary I have drawn up a set of operating procedures for the fund and now a form is being sent out (since November) with each membership renewal giving members the details of the fund and providing an opportunity to contribute if they so wish. In the last 18 months no club has approached the BHPA for assistance with site purchase. Of course you can donate at any time if you feel strongly, I am sure that the BHPA Office can supply the forms if you ask them. I will present a summary of the support given to a site purchase fund at the next AGM (if I am re-elected) together with recommendations as to its viability.

## **Wind Farms**

I have been the recipient of 5 requests for comments from developers of new wind farms. I hope that I haven't wasted too many peoples' time by worrying them over new proposals in their area. In most/all cases the proposals are either well known about by the clubs or have little bearing on the local flying sites. It is worth keeping an eye on these so that we could be involved early on with and developments that threaten hill sites. Interestingly one Windfarm Company has requested a copy of our sites database to help in the search for new windfarm sites! Of course we did not give them a copy but there is likely to be a continual growth in wind power that will affect some of our sites in the future so clubs should be on the lookout for new proposals.

## **Flying Site Data Base.**

Apologies to those of you wanting information about clubs/schools site listings in the BHPA database. I am aware that there are several clubs and a schools wanting confirmation of their changes and or listings. Unfortunately I do not yet have the authority to update the database listing or have access to the latest version of the database but the BHPA is in the process of transferring the maintenance of this list to me. Once this is done I will be able to update clubs/schools with the current information.

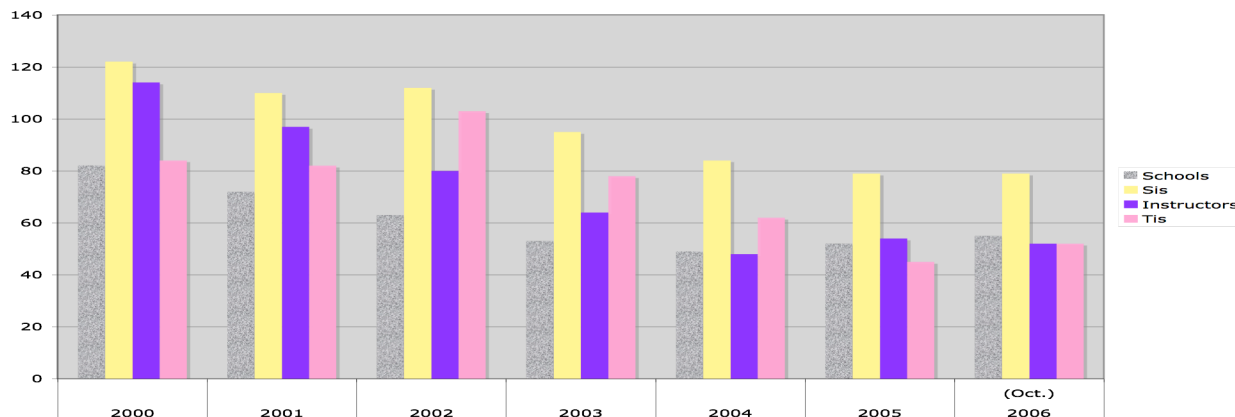
## **Skywings Articles on rights to flying sites**

In response to enquiries about access to flying sites I have written an article giving some general advice about our rights to access flying sites this should appear in the next two editions of Skywings. It is only general advice but I attempted to cover most of the questions I have been asked by members over the last two years.

Steve Walsh  
Sites Director

# SCHOOL LIAISON DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE AGM – DECEMBER 2006

## Number of schools / instructors



After six good productive years with the Exec team, I have decided to stand down purely due to my brain needing a rest! Sometimes you can get so involved you forget about your own Flying School and family:o)).

For future instructors wishing to stand I would like to share a couple of points: - I have sometimes found it difficult from a commercial point of view! Especially when it looks like some of my ideas will favour my own school, yet I still represent other BHPA schools. I have a huge amount of respect and gratitude for every individual on the Exec. having seen them help schools through F&M - Insurance - Promotions - Airspace - Transponders etc., etc. But they equally and very clearly represent the members as well. During the past twenty years I have often heard the odd slagging-off of certain individuals within the BHPA but I have learnt that it is better working from the inside rather than the outside. Since being on Exec., when I have asked for help for my own school, I have always received some great ideas and support.

I have attended all but one of the BHPA Executive Meetings in the last six years. I have continually voiced my views and shared my experience gained over the years on all subjects from the perspective of BHPA Schools, small or large, Scouts, commercial and non-commercial! part-time or full-time schools! Yep anything to do with teaching.

Four years ago I organised the first ever Parascending get together of instructors and manufactures. This has now gone further and represents all BHPA schools. I have developed the BHPA Schools Workshop, attracting all schools, large or small, full or part-time, Trainee Instructors, Instructors, Chief Flying Instructors and School Proprietors. Manufactures and UK Importers also attend providing input to training, development and display their latest up and coming gliders and accessories, which is a great start to the year for all concerned. A number of BHPA Instructors and BHPA Committee Members also attend and I confirm that BHPA School Airways have agreed to host the 2007 BHPA Schools Workshop. It has been agreed by all that the best time of year for instructors and manufactures to come together is the last Tuesday and Wednesday in March. So next year's workshop will be 27th-28th March 2007.

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I have developed a BHPA Instructors' Email Forum. I was very excited about this form of communication because if it is used constructively, it can be a very effective tool with the sharing of views and experiences, hence saving the BHPA staff or instructors a lot of time and money ringing around. When I launched the Forum everyone sent me comments direct with good input and views, BUT the take up from Instructors and BHPA alike has not been as good as I might have expected. If anyone can think of a better solution / idea with regards to improving the communication between the schools please do give your ideas to the Exec, or if you would like to take this forum to a new level please let me know. I will not be running this forum after the end of this year so if nobody comes forward to run it I will close it.

I have continued to promote the BHPA to thousands of people at shows across London during these last six years. I have received some very positive feedback from potential customers from all over the UK and I am very confident many have taken up the sport at their local BHPA schools. At my school I have signed up hundreds. It is my view that the BHPA should have a high profile at these events, but as of the end of this year I will not be doing this job unless asked. I will be putting Green Dragons first. So, if anyone would like to take this role up the BHPA Exec would be delighted.

It is great to hear that John Welch, the CFI of Flight Culture, is coming forward to take on the Schools Liaison role, if you are a school or instructor please do pick up the phone or email and give him feed back. I would urge all BHPA Instructors to get involved with the Exec as part of their development and success of their teaching future. Good Luck to all.

Andy Shaw  
Schools Liaison Director

# PARAMOTOR LIAISON REPORT TO THE AGM – DECEMBER 2006

Paramotor liaison is a new post with the BHPA committee created in recognition of the growth evident in powered footlaunched aviation. I was co-opted to the post in May, so I've really only just started and there's plenty to do.

I've been involved in paramotors for five Years now and 2006 must have been the busiest year yet for paramotor flyins starting with the Paramania flyin held in France in April, four 'Pie and Peas' flyins at Model Ridge in Teesside, Cross Country magazine's HomeGrown festival and many more across the country. I've been getting round to as many of these as I can canvassing opinion on what the BHPA can do for the paramotor community, promoting the BHPA safety and training message and even doing a bit of flying.

Communication is what it's all about as there is a lot of misunderstanding in the paramotor world about the aims of the BHPA and the advantages of BHPA membership and the BHPA club culture. This needs to change, we need to bring paramotorists into the BHPA club environment and we need to break down the barriers between the powered and unpowered aspects of the sport.

The paramotor competition scene is flourishing too, 2006 saw the biggest and best UK Nationals Competition ever, generously supported by the BHPA, held in June in Suffolk, and an excellent performance by the British team at the European Championships in Spain where the team brought back the bronze medal. October 2007 gives the UK team an even bigger challenge with the world championships in China.

Very positive progress also from the Flight Safety Committee who are working on various new ideas which will certainly widen the appeal of the BHPA to the non-member and prospective paramotor pilot.

Anyone with ideas on how we can integrate paramotoring further into the BHPA club culture please let me know.

Edward Cunliffe  
Paramotor Liaison