

# BRITISH HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING ASSOCIATION

AGM

FEBRUARY 2017

## 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 2015 - March 2016.

### Administration

The BHPA continues with incremental improvements year on year. The Administration team are seeking to move some of our routine items, such as membership renewals online, but nothing in this world is easy and so progress is slow.

### Sites

One piece of work that has been completed is the move of the Sites database onto the office system from an outdated, privately held database. When he volunteered to lead this project, Martin Baxter was a new member of Exec. and had no idea of the level of work that it would involve. We must express our thanks to Martin, Tom Hardie and Andrew Wakelin for their work on this project.

### Litigation

As many of you will know, save for a year or so in the late 1990s, I have served on BHPA Exec continuously since the formation of the BHPA. When we first formed the BHPA, the Exec met 5 or 6 times each year and when major events struck us, we would attempt to hold ( dreadful ) telephone conferences with 12 of us on the line, where no one was really able to have their say and little progress could be made. Written documents were exchanged by fax !

Since then modern communications technology has arrived and now most of our business takes place by email. We also maintain an active social media presence. Many members of the Board also maintain their own social media accounts and are members of many of the forums.

I am no different.

We also get frequently trolled and indeed, in the last few days, a leading UK Microlight manufacturer, who has a reputation for being the most placid of people, has become angry at the consistent trolling, lost his rag, and signed out of the particular social media forum.

I have to report that in 2015 I found myself in a similar situation and lost my temper with a particular BHPA member.

We have always had members who ploughed their own furrow, there is nothing new in this, but the threat of litigation brings new problems. If this is the way forwards, it will inevitably lead to an increase in premiums and an increase in subscriptions.

One thing is for sure – my own social media involvement is now significantly tempered. As Joe Schofield once said to me, just before hitting the send button, consider the delete button.

### **Membership levels**

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.

### **EHPU**

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 and whilst it could not be said that this is the responsibility of EHPU – who else should fund a European Paragliding Airworthiness Standard ? I should comment that Brexit will have no effect on this, the UK will not be withdrawing from EASA (neither side of the Brexit argument bother to tell you that ! ) and so the BHPA will not be withdrawing from EHPU.

### **Exec. Members**

It is clear that we are all getting older. John Welch has been absent with the approval of Exec for a number of months due to the ill health of his parents. Paul Dancey is in a similar position. At this year's AGM, Ed Cunliffe will be absent due to teenage childcare issues. Being on Exec is no longer as onerous as it once was. We only meet physically, perhaps, 3 times a year, and much of the work is done on email. We rarely dump some major task on a new person, thus allowing them to gain experience in how the BHPA works with only a light workload. We would be pleased to see new people join us and develop their knowledge and experience so that they can make a major contribution in a few years. If you are even tempted, you are welcome to come along to a meeting to observe and participate to see if you really want to join in.

Five years ago, I agreed to take over the Chairmanship from Martin Heywood, who had served 7 continuous years, on the basis that I would act as Chairman for a year or two and then hand it over

to one of the new boys. Sadly our intake of new boys has not been as voluminous as we had hoped. At the AGM we have an uncontested election and so Richard Shaw, who has stood on two previous occasions will finally be elected. He has attended as a regular observer for perhaps 2 years and will bring more strength and depth to the Paramotor representation.

Unless I am in for a horrible surprise, I therefore expect to be in the same situation next year. We need new blood on Exec. !

### **Staff**

A couple of years ago Mark Dale retired and we recruited Mark Shaw and Ian Curren, with Dave Thompson leading the team as Senior Technical Officer. Mark and Ian have fitted in well, as we expected, there are, of course, some elements of upgrading their own familiarity with aspects of the BHPA with which they are not familiar. Mark Shaw's inspection of the Parascending Club of which I am a member was amusing, since he came on the day before the clocks moved and so they had the shortest morning of flying in the year – 8 launches in about 45 minutes ! Had Mark come the following morning we would have been flying for the best part of 2 hours. However, 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 staff and 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, Tom Hardie on Airspace, ( the other ) David Thomson working on the Pilot Development Panel, and if I continue this list it will go on for pages. The main point I want to make is that without you all we would be sunk and on behalf of the membership, I thank you all for your hard work.

MARC ASQUITH

BHPA Chairman

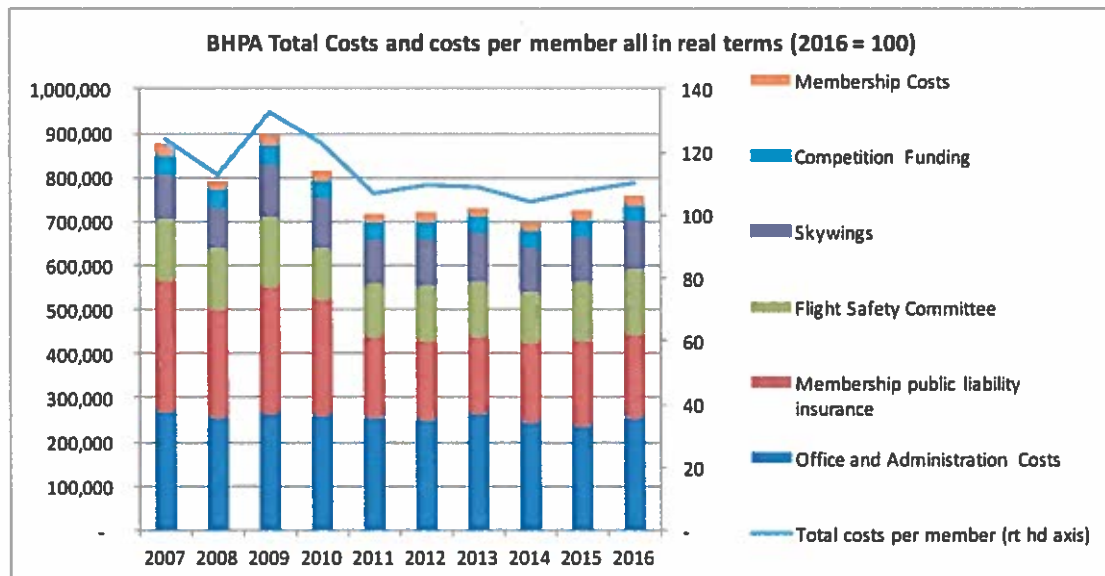
23 February 2017

## BHPA Financial Report

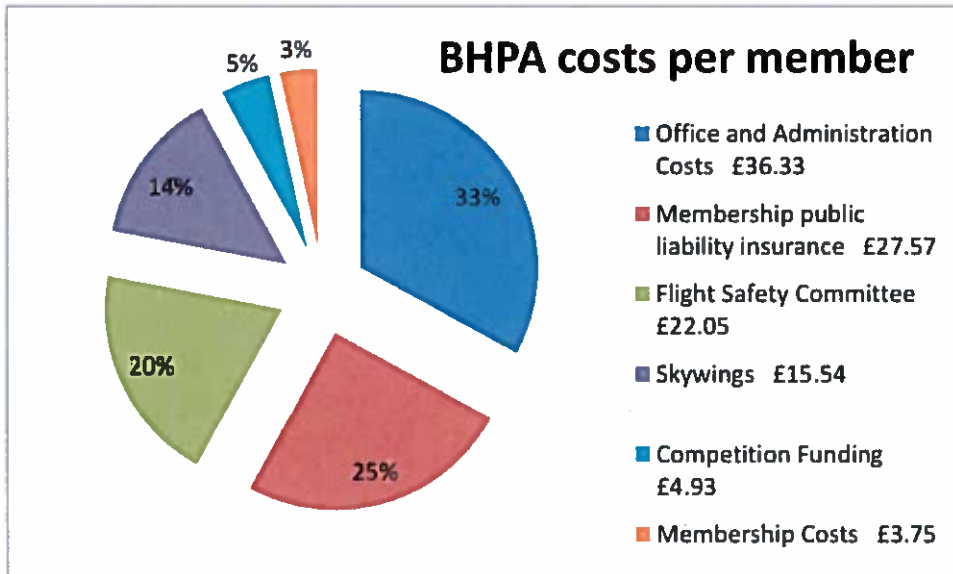
I am pleased to be able to report that the BHPA's finances remain in good shape. The number of flying members has continued to grow and the consequent growth in the Association's income means that, despite the increased costs of insurance and the Flight Safety Committee (FSC), we report a surplus of £2k on turnover of £757k. Overall reserves stand at half a million, of which £349k is invested in our freehold office. We pay our subscriptions annually in advance so the BHPA continues to hold reasonable levels of cash. Unfortunately interest rates are very low for businesses and associations like ours and our interest earnings remain 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.

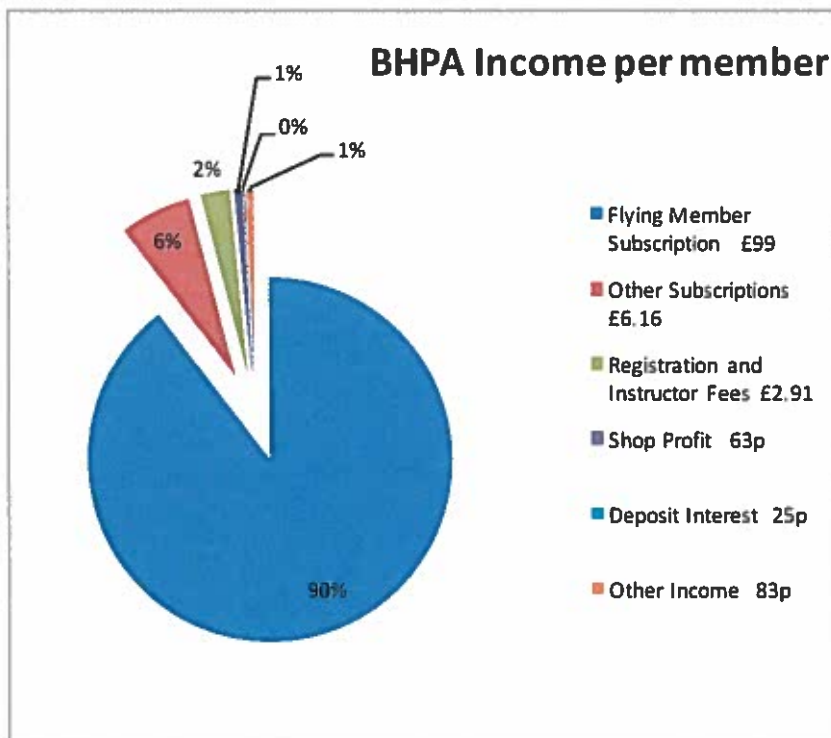
On Exec we all share members' desire to keep the costs of membership subscriptions down and to ensure that we get value for money. Comparing last year with the previous ten years illustrates how successful we have been in this aim. It also illustrates clearly where the cost pressures are coming from. In 2015 Exec decided to support the vital work of the FSC by increasing the number of professional staff, enabling the team to carry out more regular inspections and be generally more pro-active. This has fed through to higher FSC costs, but ultimately this keeps us all safer and will help keep our insurance premiums down.



Skywings advertising income was static last year but unfortunately print and distribution costs continue to rise by more than the rate of inflation so that the Skywings subsidy increased by £5k. This fed through to a 3% increase in the cost per issue - but to only £1.29 per issue.



Although we saw overall membership costs rise by a touch more than the rate of inflation in the year to March 2016, this summer we have experienced continued strong growth in the number of flying members and our costs have fallen. I expect to report a larger surplus at the end of the current financial year, and as a consequence Exec will not be increasing membership fees in January 2017.



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**

## **BHPA AGM 2017 – Insurance Report**

Once again I am pleased to report that it has been a relatively steady year on the insurance front with no nasty surprises in terms of incidents or coverage issues and we have been well served by our insurer over the year, Liberty UK, and of course our brokers, Romero. However, as often seems to be the case, the insurance companies themselves never stand still and a change is heralded for 2017 and we now have a new underwriter, XL Catlin. The move is not as a result of any untoward event in the relationship, but as before when Liberty took over from Hiscox, it was a direction change within the company itself which prompted the move. We have therefore benefitted from a similar change in our direction by XL Catlin and they have confirmed that coverage will be on the same terms as provided by their predecessor. I'm also pleased to say that the price is essentially the same apart from a little more contribution to the Government via Insurance Premium Tax. The indemnity levels remain at £5m across the board and there are no sub-discipline caps. Landowner benefits also remain in place for the benefit of site access.

I think a special mention must also go to our Broker, Martin Mansley from Romero who has worked very hard on our behalf, not just in being able to deliver our needs to the various underwriters we have had over the past decade, but he's built up a strong portfolio of outdoor sport clients and so we directly benefit from being part of a significant and much larger package to be able to take to new insurers arriving on the scene. It has given us a very much business-as-usual feel to deliver to members rather than the anxiety-laden end of year worries about coverage, caps and prices of years gone by.

I'm therefore pleased to report that the coverage aspects of the sport remain in good health and continue to offer unrivalled value to the membership.

Martin Heywood

Insurance Director

Vice Chairman

February 2017

# **BHPA Flying and Safety Committee**

## **Report to the 2016 AGM (25<sup>th</sup> February 2017)**



FSC members and responsibilities:

**Angus Pinkerton** (FSC Chairman & Airworthiness Panel)  
**John Lovell** (Accident Investigation & Analysis Panel) *retired during 2016*  
**Jocky Sanderson** (Advanced Training)  
**Tom Hardie** (Airspace Panel)  
**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 Curren** (BHPA Assistant Technical Officer)  
**Mark Shaw** (BHPA Assistant 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 five years of reports that can be searched on-line; and 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.

There were a total of 147 incidents reported in 2016 (compared to 156 in 2015, 151 in 2014, and 144 in 2013). The accidents this year included 4 fatalities; 1 PG in Spain, 1 PG in India, and 1 PPG in the UK; the fourth involved an unqualified non-member in the UK (there were four fatalities in 2015, one in 2014 and three in 2013).

56% of the reported incidents involved a degree of injury (compared to 62% in 2015, but this figure has not varied very much over recent years). The number of incidents on each type of glider continues to be close to the ratio of membership qualifications for each type. A full analysis of the 2016 data will appear later this spring. We have been approached by experts in data analysis, who are currently delving into the five years of UK data. We will also publish their results in Spring.

Our incident statistics are now incorporated into the pan-European database that was developed under the supervision of the European Hang Gliding and Paragliding Union (EHPU). There are still some difficulties with data quality, but in 2016 there were a total of 41 fatalities recorded in Europe. 4 in the UK, 11 in Germany, 14 in France and 13 in Switzerland. These larger numbers are hoped to enable more dependable statistical analysis in future.

In my role as Convenor of the CEN European Standardisation Committee, WG6, I am pleased to report that during 2016 we completed a revision to the Paragliding Harness standard EN 1651. As well as a general refresh, the standard now contains three new tests: and Anti "falling-out" system strength test; an "Impact pad" (back protector) test; and the requirement for manufacturers to test emergency parachute deployment from the harness container under G load. During 2017 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).

The Tow Panel have supported the Technical staff who have worked hard with Flylight, the CAA and the Malvern Aerotow Club to arrange a legal trial of the new FoxTug SDR aircraft. So far this has proved to be an outstandingly capable hang glider aerotow tug, and provides a new opportunity for slower, high climb rate, hang glider aerotowing.

In the area of power assisted flight, we've also been working with the CAA on a scheme to enable the use of wheels on de-regulated "Foot Launched Powered Aircraft" (though we'll clearly need a new name for these wheeled mini-trikes!)

We are at last close to having a definitive version of the UK Airlaw changes needed to implement SERA (the Standardised European Rules of the Air), and as a result we hope to publish the long-delayed new and updated revision of the Pilot Handbook.

The post-CP coaching scheme or 'Pilot Development Structure' has now been launched, although not yet in the on-line interactive format that is envisaged. Our two newest Technical Officers have developed the first set of documentation for the scheme which initially is aimed at our 'Red Ribbon' paraglider pilots in their first 10 hours since gaining their CP (Novice) rating. Material is under development for hang gliding and our other flight disciplines.

Our new Technical Officers also enabled us to keep up the pace and progress in inspecting our schools during 2016. We also ran our first 10-day, full-time residential, Instructors' Course. This was based in Portugal to ensure that at least some of the week would be flyable and enable practical instructional training as well as classroom theory.

We continued our trial of the Speed Flying Training programme in some additional schools, and will be reviewing the outcome this year.

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 John Lovell, former Merchant Navy officer, school proprietor and a founder-member member of the BHPA's Flying and Safety Committee, who retired from his FSC post as head of the Accident Investigation and Analysis Panel, to better enjoy his retirement on the sunny Greek island of Paros. Also many thanks to Stuart Bond, who has provided invaluable expertise on Aerotowing, and who has emigrated to Australia.

*Angus Pinkerton, Chairman, BHPA Flying and Safety Committee, February 2017*



## **BHPA AGM 2017 - Sites Report**

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.

Early last summer a paid contractor was tasked to maintain and develop the BHPA databases. After an initial shaky start, we have recently made some progress. We can use Ordnance Survey mapping (down to 1:50K) to display a filtered selection of sites within Great Britain. Unfortunately mapping of Northern Ireland is less freely available and we may have to resort to Google Maps for the Ulster club and the 4 schools based on the Emerald Isle.

You may recall that, in Nov 15, we sent validation reports out to 69 clubs that we know claim residency of a site, with an article in the club bulletin sweeping up others who might wish to make a claim. After several reminders we now have responses from 39 clubs.

Once 50% of clubs had responded I published a list of some 250 'unowned' sites asking if anyone wanted to claim them. Only a few did, so I deleted the remainder. That leaves us with 915 sites throughout the UK.

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; and 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.

Future work will involve chasing the contractor to link associated documentation to the specific site in the database, continuing to update the data, and working with the Airspace Liaison Officer to provide the military with what they need to allow CANP (and any successor) to work effectively. Since no-one else suck their head above the parapet, I look forward to taking the project forward on your behalf.

Martin Baxter  
BHPA Sites Officer

February 2017



Skywings magazine continues to be delivered within budget and on time. The final Skywings management figures for 2015/16 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, 2016/2017. But I should emphasise that at this stage this is just an estimate of the likely outcome and can not be relied upon.

	Final			Anticipated	
	2014/15	2015/16	Variation from 2014/15	2016/17	Variation from 2015/16
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£168,342</b>	<b>£174,062</b>	<b>+£5,720</b>	<b>£179,296</b>	<b>+£5,234</b>
<b>Advertising income</b>	<b>£65,946</b>	<b>£65,579</b>	<b>-£367</b>	<b>£68,639</b>	<b>+£3,060</b>
<b>Magazine subscription sales income</b>	<b>£1,157</b>	<b>£801</b>	<b>-£356</b>	<b>£911</b>	<b>+£110</b>
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>£101,239</b>	<b>£107,683</b>	<b>+£6,444</b>	<b>£109,746</b>	<b>+£2,063</b>
<b>Average net cost per magazine printed</b>	<b>£1.22</b>	<b>£1.29</b>	<b>+£0.07</b>	<b>£1.28</b>	<b>-£0.01</b>
<b>Copies ordered</b>	<b>81,759</b>	<b>81,983</b>	<b>+224</b>	<b>84,476</b>	<b>+2,493</b>
<b>Copies printed</b>	<b>83,019</b>	<b>83,243</b>	<b>+224</b>	<b>85,986</b>	<b>+2,743*</b>
<b>Carriers</b>	<b>80,835</b>	<b>81,161</b>	<b>+326</b>	<b>83,171</b>	<b>+2,010</b>
<b>Pages printed</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>+32</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>+8</b>

\* includes 250 extra copies printed for free distribution at Popham

As reported at last year's AGM, whilst there was an overall increase in the amount of advertising placed in 2015/16, the income achieved in 2015 fell due to changing advertising patterns. As a result advertising rates were increased by 3% in January 2016 to try to improve the situation.

I was reluctant to increase rates any earlier as maintaining advertising bookings over the winter months can be challenging, and delaying the increase until the new year, when traders attention was turning to the new season ahead seemed to be the better option. As a result, the rate increase didn't make any real difference to the revenue for 2015/16, and the impact of the rate increase couldn't really be fully assessed until well into 2016/17.

I am pleased to report that advertising revenue for 2016/17 is likely to be around £3,000 above that achieved in 2015/16, with no noticeable decline in the amount of advertising space booked.

The number of copies ordered in 2015/16 rose by 224, compared to the previous year. A reflection of membership growth over that period. Membership growth is obviously desirable for the BHPA as a whole, but it's a double edged sword for Skywings. Increased print runs help keep the cost per issue down, but the total cost of printing and distributing the magazine goes up. An increased budget for 2015/16 allowed us to print an additional 32 pages compared to the previous year, but the cost per issue only rose by 7p, because more copies were ordered than in the previous year.

The copies ordered to date during 2016/17 has risen more sharply than in previous years, and is likely to be around 2,500 at year end. The predicted £2,063 increase in net cost this year is pretty much a direct result of the additional printing, bagging and distributing costs of those extra copies. As further evidence of this the average cost per issue is likely to remain static or even fall slightly.

Skywings is of course a team effort, and in closing I would like to thank all our contributors for their continued support over the past year, and of course thank our talented Skywings team, designer and advertising agent Colin Fargher, and editor Joe Schofield, for their hard work and support.

**Paul Dancey,**  
**Publications & Website Director**  
**February 2017**



## **Website Report 2017**

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

A new Pilot Development page has been added. This initial page is aimed at pilots who have just obtained their CP rating. But this area of the website will obviously grow as the pilot development panel continue their work.

Much of the work on the website over the past 12 months has however been “behind the scenes”. Early last year I started converting Skywings news and competition and events calendars to a database driven solution. The work on the public facing pages was completed last year and these are now database driven. I had then hoped to turn my attention to creating a suitable back end for maintaining these pages, but unfortunately that was over taken by subsequent events demanding urgent attention.

During the past 12 months the PHP software on the server hosting our website has been upgraded twice. First to version 5.5, and then to version 5.6. Whilst the first upgrade only resulted in a small number of issues requiring attention, the second upgrade proved rather more problematic as a number of the older scripts used on the website were found to be using routines or methods that were no longer supported by PHP 5.6.

Temporary “quick and dirty fixes” have been put in place to suppress the unsightly warning messages that were being generated by the latest PHP upgrade, whilst I rewrite the relevant scripts to make them fully compatible with PHP 5.6.

The new IT Contractors, engaged to look after the office IT systems, have also been able to make some progress towards fixing the routines our office staff use to upload documents and flat field databases from the office server to the website server. There is still much more work to be done on this, but at least a start has finally been made on resolving this long standing IT issue.

We have now published sixteen “page turning” issues of Skywings magazine on the website. The most recent six issues are password protected, whilst no password is required for the remaining ten issues. The latter includes the November and December 2015 issues that formed part of a “closed” trial prior to the public launch.

The take-up however remains comparatively low; ranging from 11 – 88 hits on the password protected issues, and 102 – 265 hits on the freely available issues at the time of writing this report.

There has been very little feedback to date, so given current statistics it would appear that for the present the general appetite for a printed copy of Skywings dropping through the letterbox remains unabated, and that publishing the on-line electronic version is seen as a useful add on for those who prefer electronic delivery.

As part of our efforts to ensure we remain PCI compliant with regards accepting credit card and Paypal payments, our office staff have now all successfully completed a Security Awareness training Programme, and we are in the process of writing and implementing a more comprehensive Security Policy ahead of our annual assessment later this year.

**Paul Dancey,  
Publications & Website Director  
February 2017**

## Competitions Report 2016-17

*Sport for sports sake, and a tribute to the legion of volunteers.*

Another Comps year in which quite a lot happened – a successful world PPG championship in the UK and UK pilots competing in Albania, Australia, Brazil, the Czech Republic, France, Holland, Italy, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Thailand, and the USA, not to mention a blizzard of comps in the UK. None of this happens without considerable commitment from the pilots who all have to make significant sacrifices in both time and money to compete.

Not that the efforts end there by any means - there is an army of volunteer organisers, scorers, drivers, medics and others putting in the many many hours of work necessary to make it all happen, Thanks and Respect to all of them for the time, energy and enthusiasm they put in on other peoples behalf.

We may look jealously at the support, financial resources and rewards that other sports enjoy but we can claim a clean sport with our sportsmen and women truly competing just for the honour and the sports sake.

Most of the volunteers selflessly put themselves forward for the love of the sport or to put something back for the enjoyment they have had, but just occasionally some find themselves thrust into a situation where their skills and mettle are unexpectedly tested. Unfortunately such an occasion arose in this years HG Nationals following a harrowing mid-air between Rob Greg and Ben Philpott, which left Rob seriously injured and inaccessible to all but Ben who crashed nearby. The outcome could have been even worse were it not for the actions of Ben tending to Rob for the considerable time it took the rescue services to be able to reach them and for Jenny Buck's actions as Meet Director and Army Medic co-ordinating the rescue.

They both have received awards in recognition of their actions and the full story will no doubt appear in Skywings shortly. Meanwhile hats off to them, and let's hope we never have need for such actions again.

Looking forward to a safe, successful and enjoyable season in 2017.

*Bill Bell*

### **Stop Press!**

**UK Accuracy Team takes Gold!**

**Congratulations to UK PPG team members Andy Shaw, Andrew Webster, Matthew Bignell, William Lawrence who flew to a convincing win last week in Latvia.**

Further to this success, UP Paragliders have sponsored the UK Team this year and if all members are Flying UP at this years World Championships, there will be over 5000 € up for grabs for any individuals and teams winning FAI Bronze Silver or Gold Positions.

## Hang Gliding Competitions 2016-17

### **British Open Series**

#### **Round 1 SE Wales**

This was held in Crickhowell, South Wales 29th April to 3rd May and also decides British Open Champion. Meet Director Jenny Buck took us to Hundred house Builth Wells where a big task was set to Hampshire but the task had to be stopped early due to storm cells building on course. Even so a lot of pilots had already crossed the Severn with some pilots reaching 150km but all landed safely. The following day was canned due to weather and spent discussing the future of British hang gliding, schools and training, litigation and tandems all led by our favourite lawyer (Marc Asquith).

Despite continuing bad weather a 2nd task was set on the final day from Merthyr. Gordon Rigg was the round winner with Luke Nicol 2nd and Rob Gregg 3rd. Neil Atkinson was the Class 5 winner and Oliver Moffat the club class winner

#### **Round 2 Yorkshire**

Again the weather threatened to stop any tasks being set but the pilots were not to be deterred and despite a 2 mile hike across Dodd fell to a site the Yorkshire club didn't think they had. On 3 days, tasks were set with some good flights to the west coast on days 1 and 2. Pilots also experienced wave on task 2 which went above the clouds and some memorable flights were had but the down phase also shortened some pilots distance achieved. Task 3 saw determined flying by Luke Nicol, Tony Fillingham and Justin Needham but activation distance was not reached (quite). Very strong winds curtailed the flying on the last 2 days. Winners; all the pilots who turned up. Also Class 1 Dave Mathews, Class 5 Nev Almond, club class Tim Swait

#### **Round 3 Mid Wales**

Did I mention the weather? The previous weeks weather had been pretty good but again the first 4 days of the comp frustrated task setting and flying. The final day with southerly winds gave no options apart from Camlo, (with the loss of Bache Hill, flying at any site in Wales in a southerly wind is difficult). With a difficult bottom landing option and top cover forecast sadly some pilots went home but enough stayed to complete the competition. Neil Atkinson (48km) and Justin Needham (36km) led the field of 5 rigids and 10 flex wings to conclude the series.

Overall Dave Mathews won the BOS title just ahead of Justin Needham in class 1  
Neil Atkinson did enough to beat Paul Harvey and win the class 5 series

The BOS this year had 55 participants' 30 flexwing 9 rigids and 16 club class compared to 56 (37, 7 and 12) in 2015. I believe a big consideration was the poor /dismal weather which caused only 5 tasks on 15 days. Even some of those days were very difficult days with small windows of opportunity. The format for the competition is due for discussion at the up coming planning meeting.

Thanks to Jenny Buck, Phil Chettleburgh and Martin Colclough for their efforts running the series in a very frustrating season.

### **British Nationals**

#### **Laragne France**

Meet Director Jenny Buck, Scorer Phil Chettleburgh, Weather Lorenzo Labrador  
The town of Laragne was the location for the 2016 Nationals. A regular site for UK pilots and a reasonable forecast for the week. This was also a chance for the British pilots to warm up ahead of the upcoming European championships

Day 1 Canned due to weather

Day 2 80km task with 6 pilots in goal led by Grant Crossingham

Day 3 66km task with 28 pilots in goal including James Chancellor on a king posted glider at his first nationals and progressing well from his recent start in the club class

Day 4 A serious incident involving 2 pilots just after launch stopped the day.

Day 5 A windy day meant that pilots struggled and only 6 in goal with Carl Walbank leading

Day 6 23 pilots in goal and with the weather (for a change) improving into the evening, some pilots extended their day by several hours.

Carl Walbank 2nd for the day was enough to claim the national title for the second year running with Grant Crossingham 2nd and Gordon Rigg 3rd.

Paul Harvey claimed the class 5 crown with goal every day.

The nationals saw reduced numbers of European pilots but again was well supported with 30 British pilots amongst the internationals competing. The incident on day 4 when a mid-air collision resulted in serious injury to Rob Gregg marred an otherwise successful competition. JB and her team including Sam Butler (our medic) worked hard to get immediate medical help and direct rescue services quickly to the downed pilots and sort out the administration problems, which followed.

Best wishes go to Rob and his family

#### **European Championships (Class 1) and World Championships (class 5) Krushevo, Macedonia**

6 flex wing and 3 rigid pilots made the trip to the European and world championships being held in Krushevo. This site is new to just about all HG pilots possibly due to the distance away from the usual European alpine sites. With a chain of 2000ft mountains providing a reliable take-off breeze and a thermic valley with so many easy landings available, a competent organising team and excellent weather with accurate forecasts this was an excellent site for the competitions.

Phil Chettleburgh as team manager, transport, motivator and mediator had got a full time job.

The flex wing pilots flew well as team to ensure everyone finished well, particularly gung ho Dave Mathews who as reserve was not able to score for the team but his experience and motivation ensured the new team members Ollie Chitty and Luke Nicol performed to the best of their ability.

A final result of 4th place for the team with 3rd so close and always a possibility to the very last score

4 Grant Crossingham Awarded diploma for 4th individual place

16 Dave Mathews

21 Carl Walbank

30 Ollie Chitty

32 Gordon Rigg

36 Luke Nicol

The rigid team did not perform so well as a team but all made individual contributions to the team score and finished 4th overall

9 Paul Harvey Awarded diploma for 9th individual place

12 Neville Almond

22 Tim King

The class 1 team demonstrated that working as a team is so important in these competitions while the class 5 team showed that individuals working alone are unable to beat the gaggle. The bonding of the team was shown to be both the British teams strong and weak point.

## **UKNXCL**

Carl Walbank with another record, declared goal flight of 274 km and an open distance of 289 km wins the cross country league with 1196 points and also outperforms Neville Almond (class 5) who scores 1107 points.

Interestingly most flights were not from competition days and were mainly from the early part of the season. The flexibility of individuals to make the best of a weather window certainly influenced the scores this year.

## **International competitions**

British pilots continue to compete successfully individually in international competitions including

Forbes (Australia)  
Open de Canaries Lanzarote (Spain)  
Quest Air 1 and 2 (USA)  
Flytec Race and Rally (USA)  
Italian Nationals  
Aeros Winter Race (Slovenia)  
French Nationals  
Brazilian Nationals  
Brazilian Pre-worlds

## **Conclusions**

The home competitions suffered badly this year due to weather. The loss of Bache Hill means we have no decent south-facing site in Wales.

We continue to bring in new and returning pilots through the club class

Safety continues to be an issue and we need to continue pressure to minimise accidents, using a strong safety committee, pre flight checks and safety awareness talks.

We have had some minor problems with the scoring programs, but this year was kind to us and no major issues were found. We are delighted that CIVL have acknowledged that there are problems with the scoring system and are making financial investments into correcting these issues

Nationally we continue to rank amongst the top nations. Critical to improving our performance is individuals winning tasks although the team is getting pilots nearly there. More pilots flying top foreign comps will help. Luke and Ollie continue to show promising talent but the older pilots (Grant 4th in Euros and Carl Nationals winner) are still beating them. The British team still have a depth of talent with 12+ pilots vying for team places

The planning meeting in November 2016 was used to make the panels decisions for the competitions and teams for 2017

After a difficult year in 2016 with weather that refused to cooperate, the format of the British Open Series was discussed at length. It was considered that while some pilots would like a more flexible competition with sites and dates chosen last minute, several factors preclude this;

The FAI require 30 days notice for a CAT 2 comp

Land owners (and clubs) appreciate the prior warning of 60 pilots on site

Meet Director and scorer need prior notice

Notams

Accommodation and work/holiday booking

Worlds in Brazil will involve a number of the panel as pilots and organisers so excludes August

So again we have three 5 day competitions

BOS 1 and British Open SE Wales based in Crickhowell 28th April - 2nd May

BOS 2 Yorkshire based in Leyburn 26th -30th May

BOS 3 Mid Wales based around the Long Mynd 2nd -6th September

These events are all FAI Cat 2 competitions for class 1 and 5 gliders and include a club class for improving pilots. Non flyable days will be used for improving pilot skills levels with suitable lectures on GPS, airspace avoidance, flight planning and racing tactics. Safety awareness and parachute repacks are also planned. We are also arranging a talk by Tom Weissenberger for inspiration and coupled with a lecture by a sports psychologist on 4th March to start the flying season

After discussions with the Italian pilots and organisers and reductions of the airspace at launch at Monte Cucco we have decided to hold the nationals at Sigillo in Italy.

Organisation is already progressing well.

Dates for the British Nationals and Monte Cucco Open are June 25th to July 1st

The Meet Directors for the competitions will be Jenny Buck (Nationals) and Martin Colclough (BOS)

The World Championships for class 1 (and women) are being held in Brazil August 6th - 19th

The team is

Grant Crossingham

Carl Walbank

Gordon Rigg

Dave Mathews

Oliver Chitty

Andy Hollidge reserve but we expect team size to be 6

Kathleen Rigg representing Britain in the women's worlds

The team manager for this event will be Jenny Buck. Her experience and position in the armed services we consider will help with the logistical problems facing the team, now that transport of gliders on commercial airlines is becoming more difficult, and experience in organising and competing will assist the team performance



## **The Panel**

The panel is elected by the competing pilots from the BOS and the nationals with 2 members standing down each year

Currently the panel is composed of the following with a brief outline of their functions

**Tim King** -chairmen, coordination and dispute resolution. I lead the team and try to ensure the competitions are run enjoyably and competitively. Also involved in team selection, rules, international comps and writing reports

**Darren Brown** - vice chair. Darren is the national's organiser, an important role that can involve a lot of negotiation

**Richard Hunt** – secretary. Richard keeps accurate minutes of all meetings and Skype calls. Reminds us relentlessly of the actions we agreed. Also has updated the waypoints used for the competitions and local organiser for mid Wales last year.

**Graham Phipps** (hair and beauty) Graham with his wealth of experience of flying training and competing makes sure we avoid mistakes we have made before. He also inspires the club class

**Greg Emms** – Mid Wales and SE Wales BOS coordinator and organiser. Meals, venues campsites hills and permissions to fly across Wales

**Kev Gay** – Yorkshire BOS coordinator and organisation. The Yorkshire version of the meals hills and flying.

**Steve Penfold** – Treasurer. A firm hold on the purse strings armed with spreadsheets and forecasts of future spending.

**Gordon Rigg**. Expert on everything hang glider related. This years FAI rep and is active in ensuring comp rules are applied correctly. Waypoints, tasks and scoring

**Jenny Buck** – Meet Director for the nationals, team manager, motivator and competitor

**Martin Colclough** – Full time Meet Director for the BOS this year

**Phil Chettleburgh** – Scorer, NOTAMs, website, point of contact who will save the day. Still dreaming of flying. Also brings along Ross (for support) and Robbie (scoring and UKNXCL)

*Report by Tim King*

In Summary, the past 6 months has been the best in a long time for the UK Accuracy Team, with some of the best results in nearly 10 years being achieved and new pilots coming into the sport.

### **Classic Accuracy**

The 46th Classic Accuracy National Championships were successfully held at South Cerney airfield during a re-run at the beginning of October, thanks goes to Meet Director Arthur Bentley for organising the competition and GLSW & Surrey SPC for providing the Tow Operation. Parachutist convert Dave Crowhurst was crowned national champion for the 2nd year running. The winning team was Scout Rebels (GLSW & Surrey SPC) consisting of John Lawrence, Katie Lawrence and Simon Sykes. With William Lawrence collecting the Most Improved Trophy and Simon Sykes taking the Best Place Paraglider.

The 2016 European Grand Prix was validated on two competitions in France and the Netherlands. French pilot Bruno Lautard won the overall European title and Simon Sykes was best Brit in seventh place. The UK Classic Accuracy League was won by Simon Sykes.

The Accuracy panel has also purchased a new tuffet, to replace the previous one lasting 20 years, this is available to hire to all clubs as to support Classic Accuracy Training.

### **BHPA Paragliding Accuracy Panel**

Andy Webster has stepped down as Chairman however has agreed to stay on the panel as Secretary, and we would like to thank Andy for his on-going commitment to Accuracy.

The Panel now has eleven members consisting of; Simon Sykes (Chairman), Andy Webster (Secretary), Arthur Bentley (EPAC), Chris Haynes (Equipment), Gary Ounsworth (Classic Accuracy), Matthew Bignell (Competitions), Mick Collins (Trophy), Andy Tillsley (Squad Co-ordinator), Taz Spence (Website) and Mark Bignell (Squad Manager). Non-voting roles - Jonathan Parki (Treasurer).

*Report by Simon Sykes*

## **Paramotor Competitions**

Planning and organisation for training, competitions, and the British Open is carried out by a very strong team and a mixture of competition and non-competing pilot volunteers. A lot of planning goes into having a successful year and with a decline in competitors prior to 2014 at the British Open we feel that we are back on track, the team are strong and look forward to a great year.

Going forward it is hard trying to find a balance on how much we can support new pilots to the team due to the pressure on funds for both the team and British Open costs. As a team we find it an honour to be a British Team and represent our country but with limited funds we find it discouraging for new pilots to come forward and having to subsidise their costs to the level they have to, we are also very grateful of the BHPA.

2016 saw The UK host the world microlight and world paramotor championships with a total of 13 countries registered for PPG alone at Popham airfield. This year we had a very strong British Team in PL1, PF1, PF1f and PF2 with new faces joining the team after competing in The British Open earlier in the year and getting the taste for competitive flying.

The PF1 team achieved a silver medal, PF1 Pilots Ric Womersley and Barney Townsend placed 9th and 10th Individually, and Tandem team (PF2) Danny Kettle and Dylan Marsh 5th and Julie Stapleton (PF1f) 4th – all being awarded FAI diploma certificates.

More emphasis has to be made in 2017 for team training in readiness for a busy 16 months.

The British Open 2017 will be later than usual this year in July, to fall in-line with the landowner and crops, but we are proud to announce that The British Open 2017 will be held at Green Dragons Paragliding site a well-established BHPA training school. The task director will be British Team member Barney Townsend, we are very excited as organisers that Barney has taken this opportunity and to promote classic competitions and a move away from small wings and big machines where the emphasis is about speed.

2013 started to see a decline in numbers attending the competition and the committee looked to address this by sending out emails to old and new competitors for feedback on previous comps, to follow this up we posted on social media to let people know things have changed and to come and enjoy a fun safe competition.

From the feedback received we now have running along side the British Open The Discovery group for new pilots at an entry level to paramotor competing, all pilots within the Discovery group are given guidance and offered help from The British Team before any tasks are flown.

The British Open 2014 did see numbers rise with new faces and has continued to rise since then, we have a new registration system online which is easy to use but easily compiles all the pilots details prior to the event to assist in registration and scoring. We hope in 2017 we continue to be a strong team, have some successful competitions and our team pilots to be rated along side some of the top pilots in the world.

Andy Shaw at Green Dragons site is excited to be hosting the British Open this year along side other smaller events and hopefully we have his continued support for years to come.

With regulation changing and evolving around flying trikes within the UK and the help of the BHPA talking with the CAA to rewrite or remove the term foot launch from the classification, we have the opportunity to build a PL1 team. This will enable us then to build a bigger team and to be even more competitive against other countries in more team classes than just PF1.

I have emailed the CAA and also spoken to Marc Asquith to see if we can as The British Team be granted an exemption until a resolution has been found.

The British Team have a number of events in which they compete over the next 16 months; the list shows current events, which have been approved.

British Open 2017 21st July

French Open 2017 7th July

World Air Games Poland 20th July - Ric Womersley has received an invitation to the event to represent the UK due to his world paramotor ranking.

European Paramotor Championships Czech Republic 26th August 2017

World Paramotor Championships Thailand May 2018

This year's competitions committee consists of:

Paul Smith Chairman

Colin Baker Treasurer

Michel Carnet

Barney Townsend

Paul Martin

*Report by Paul Smith.*

## **Paragliding Competitions**

We had championship rounds in Italy, and Portugal during 2016. National champions were found as follows: Alex Coltman is British Champion 2016. Julian Robinson was 2nd and Guy Anderson 3rd. Dave Smart was 1st in Sports Class, with Jake Herbert 2nd and Chris Blanchard 3rd. Jake Herbert was 1st in Reynolds Class, with Theo Warden 2nd and Joe Dart 3rd. Catherine Castle was 1st Woman. 50 BHPA members took part in the Championships, significantly reduced this year due to extremely bad weather on the Italian round. In the Cat 1 Europeans, the UK finished 7th of 30 nations. We had 8 team members in attendance. The event was held in Macedonia.

*Report by Brett Janaway*

# Admin Director's Report

## Staffing

As I anticipated last year, our Admin Assistant, Clair Tewley, has been away for most of the year on maternity leave. Her son, Arlo Daniel Thorpe arrived safe and sound on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2016 weighing in at a healthy 8lbs 3.5oz.

During her absence Carla Burdett has very ably provided maternity cover. Carla is, of course, is yet another member of the Burdett family ( I think number 6 ) to assist the Association.

Clair has indicated that she wishes to return on a Part Time basis and Carla has indicated that she is happy to work Part Time, I am therefore pleased to report that both ladies will be remaining with us operating a job share. From April 2017 Carla will work Monday to Wednesday and Clair Thursday and Friday. This will lead to a modest increase in staff costs, but it is hoped this will give us greater flexibility to cope with cover for holidays and events as both ladies are willing to flex their hours when necessary.

## Technology

The office runs on a bespoke data base running on Filemaker Pro which was designed many years ago by Andrew Wakelin. Since then Andrew has maintained and updated the system as necessary. During 2016 we have continued with changes to our system updates. Unfortunately, Andrew's increasing ill health has meant that he has had to reduce his workload. A local company, Kantala, have been sourced, and has taken over support. A suitable handover took place and then, after a slow start they begun to make considerable progress with the improvement of our sites database. Our thanks go to Andrew for the many years of dedicated service that he has provided us and for continuing to act in an advisory capacity. Andrew has been awarded a BHPA Award of Merit in recognition for his hard work, however, again due to ill health and general modesty, Andrew is not able to attend the AGM to accept his award.

Andrew, it's in the post, honest !

## Membership

I am pleased to report that membership numbers have been slowly rising over the last few years and finally, in June 2016, we reached over seven thousand. This is a level we have not seen since 2007 and the trend continues upward. The increased insurance coverage means that we are attracting members from parts of aviation that have seen no benefit from joining the BHPA before. We now have around 300

permit Microlight pilots who are members, we continue to chase paramotors and are trying to simplify the legal flying of paramotor trikes, which we could easily insure.. We also have two new schools, one air experience school and two new clubs registered during 2016.

### **The Future**

Plans for 2017 include changing our telephone system, currently we cannot easily change the messages on the answerphone system and we want to make the management of the system something that we can directly fix. We also want to improve our direct debit system so that new members can join directly, perhaps online, as DD members. Both these issues should improve our efficiency and hopefully reduce our costs. Our IT improvements are the opposite of the death by a thousand nibbles – we keep trying to implement small changes and improvements so that everything seamlessly improves.

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

As a relatively new first time Dad, I am only too aware how hard it is to juggle the balance between child care ( and parent care ) and work. I congratulate all of our Admin team who work tirelessly for the BHPA and still manage to provide care for their dependants.

**Marc Asquith**  
**Admin Director**  
February 2017