

BRITISH HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING ASSOCIATION

AGM

FEBRUARY 2015

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In writing this I am aware that we are reporting for the period April 2014 to March 2015. Movements of the AGM over a number of years have led to this slightly odd position.

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

As a reminder, this period of my Chairmanship is the second time that I have been Chairman. I have now been Chairman for 4 years this time round and I am pleased to report that this year has broadly been uneventful.

Insurance has continued to develop as our slow and steady expansion into the world of powered flying, our cover now extends to all Microlights. We have an excellent working relationship with our brokers and underwriter and the insurance position appears to be very stable at the moment.

Skywings continues to be a high quality monthly production which costs each member around £ 1.25 per issue or £ 15.00 per year. Significantly better value than any of its competitors, the nearest of which I notice offers a year's subscription at £ 48.35, increased from last year's figure of £ 44.95.

The administration function remains my own area of responsibility and the Admin Report is available. However, our plan is generally to try to do more and more of our work using technology. As I suggested last year, we have investigated the possibilities of running our elections online. Sadly this proved to be enormously expensive to do securely. What we have been able to do is put the voting papers online, both on the BHPA Website and on the Facebook Page and we have accepted voting papers by email. Whilst only a very small number have been sent in by e-mail, it does seem that putting the voting papers online appears to have enabled more members to vote, at the time of writing we have received in the region of 170 proxy votes compared to approximately 70 last year.

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

The other activities of Exec continue apace. John Nash has represented our interests at Royal Aero Club, John Welch has worked tirelessly as Clubs and School Liaison Officer, Ed Cunliffe has been effective as the Paramotor Liaison Officer and Martin Baxter has made very significant progress with

the mammoth task of moving the sites database from a personal PC and an out of date database, to the office system where our staff will keep it up to date and secure.

This year we recruited two new members of the Technical Staff, Mark Shaw and Ian Curren, both former school proprietors with a vast knowledge of our sports. We welcome them to the fold.

I should like to thank all our staff for their hard work over the year and similarly I would like to thank all the members of Exec. for their hard work. This year we have a contested election and so there will definitely be two disappointed candidates. If this happens to be a serving member of Exec. we thank you for your efforts on our behalf and wish you well for the future. John Nash has not stood for re-election and so his term of office comes to an end, we thank him for all his hard work over the last 6 years.

MARC ASQUITH

CHAIRMAN

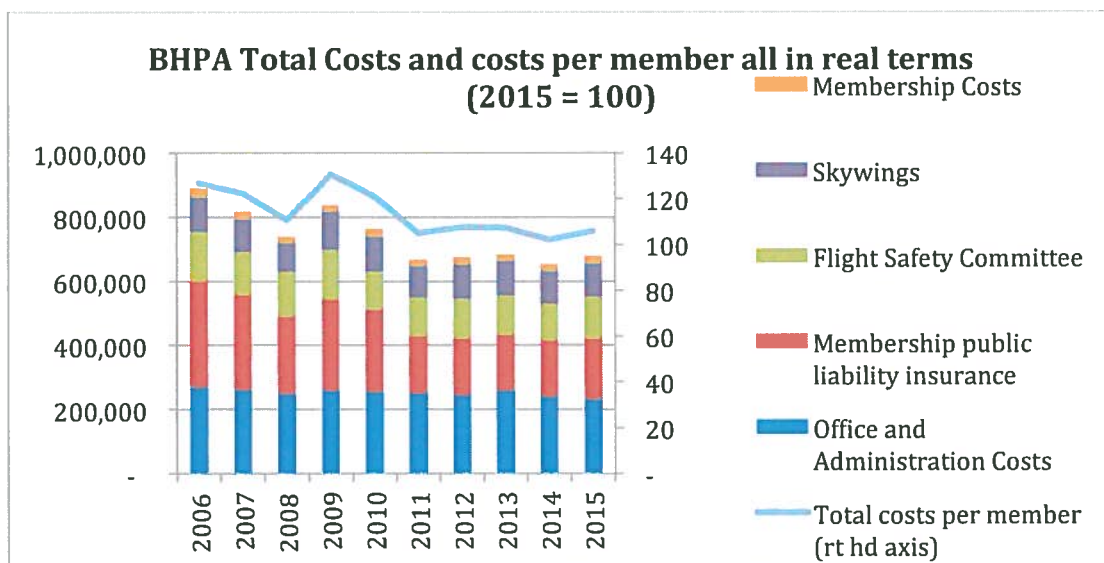
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BHPA Financial Report

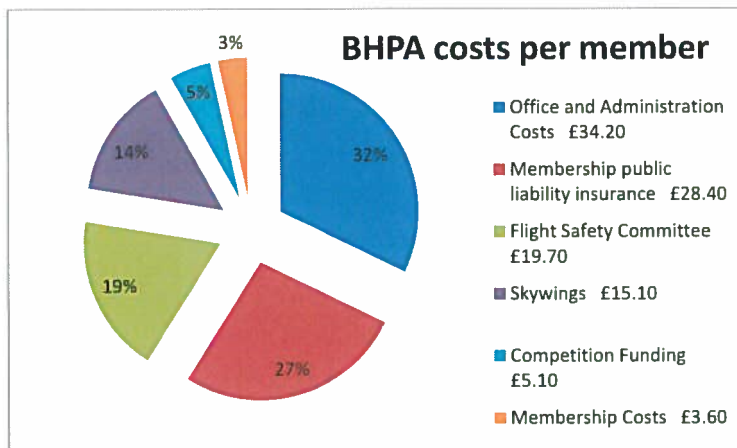
Once again I am pleased to be able to report that the BHPA's finances remain in good shape. The number of flying members of the association has continued to grow and the consequent growth in the association's income means that despite the increased costs of insurance and the Flight Safety Committee (FSC) we report a surplus of £25k on turnover of £740k. Overall reserves now stand at £559k 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 so 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.

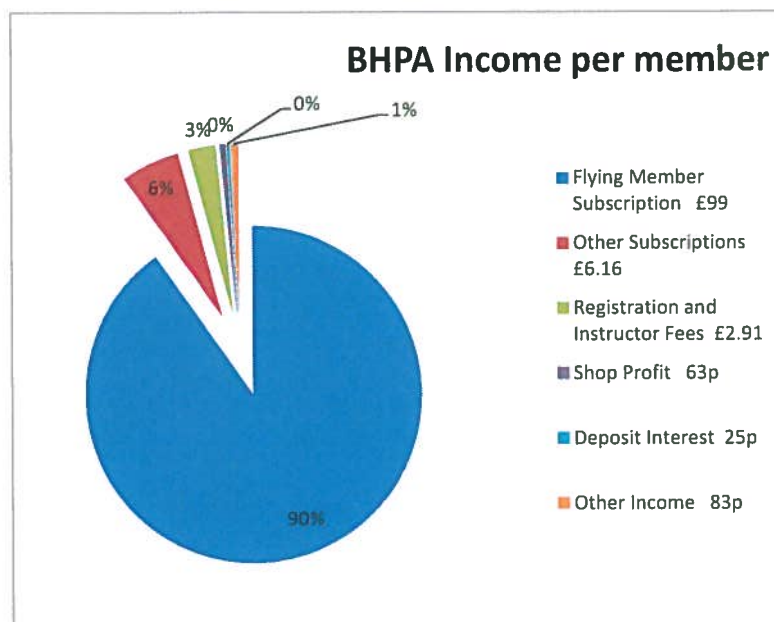
On Exec we all share members' desire to keep the costs of membership subscriptions down and to ensure that we get value for money. Comparing last year with the previous ten years illustrates how successful we have been in this aim. It also illustrates clearly where the cost pressures are coming from. Last year we saw a modest increase in insurance premiums after a number of years when they have remained fairly static. Exec decided to support the vital work of the FSC by increasing the number of professional staff enabling the team to be carry out more regular inspections and be generally more pro-active. Ultimately this keeps us all safer and will help keep our insurance premiums down.



Skywings advertising income grew by 4% last year but unfortunately print and distribution costs continue to rise by more than the rate of inflation so that the skywings subsidy increased – but only by 1%. The magazine still only costs us £1.25 per issue.



To deal with the anticipated increase in insurance and FSC costs Exec increased the subscription rates at the beginning of 2015. Flying member subscriptions still make up the bulk of our income and unfortunately any increase in costs ultimately falls to us to pay through increased subs. Despite the increase at the beginning of this year subscriptions remain low in real terms by historical standards.



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 Officer's Report

Changes

During the course of the last year we have seen significant changes to the master policy, principally of course with the raising of the indemnity cap to £5m across all disciplines. A year ago our indemnity levels were set at £2m generally with caps of £50,000 applicable to certain risks such as tandem and instructional elements, but these no longer apply. The caps were there to recover our insurance position after a bad run of high value cases from the 1990s and we have perhaps reached the point in time when we can say they have done their job. This is good news for the membership as a whole, and certainly we hope good news for schools that should have greater freedom to draw in instructors and trainee instructors to meet student demand. The Executive Council has for years been concerned that the low level of the caps may have been acting as a disincentive for some experienced pilots to go back into the school setting as trainers. Hopefully we will see a positive shift in number coming through in 2016, always of course depending on the weather!

Cautions

With the higher indemnity, I think comes a higher level of responsibility. Our premium annually remains on the good side of £200,000 but whilst the changing insurance market and our work with the insurer has led to this improvement in coverage (and it means that some of us can sleep better at night) there is the spectre that just one big accident using up a significant chunk of our new indemnity level would leave us at significant risk of struggling to obtain cover for the Association during the following year. On the instructional side we have the Technical Manual and training syllabus which we believe have contributed significantly to our insurability over the years but are now more important than ever and remain the core of safe instruction and litigation avoidance. We know that human error can always give rise to an accident and that's what the insurance is there for, but there has been a warning from the underwriter that where operators have conducted their business a very long way outside the TM, syllabus and Rules and Regs of the BHPA, cover has been declined. Similarly, tandem operators must maintain a high level of care to their passenger at all stages from deciding to make the flight to packing up the gear after landing. The law still sees the aircraft passenger as a vulnerable person to whom compensation will always be paid by the operator in the event of an injury, but as paraglider and hang glider pilots we don't benefit from any of the international conventions that limit financial liability for the large airline operators!

Collateral Cover

We're pleased to announce that there has been some uptake of cover being extended to BHPA members who want to fly microlights, effectively being an extension to our cover for SSDRs (itself an extension to powered HG and PG coverage); and also that Club-owned sites can include their landowner public liability on the policy.

Internationally

There have been moves within the European Hang Gliding and Paragliding Union to try to bring together a Europe-wide scheme of coverage for member nations. It looks as though this may gain some success as many thousands of HG and PG pilots can potentially be included on a policy which will spread the risk very widely. The BHPA will not be able to benefit from that as it stands because we are unique amongst the European Associations in that we cover so many different types of discipline, including training and powered elements that are not immediately transferrable to or exist within the proposed system. In addition the costs and benefits don't offer a competitive advantage over our current package, but we will monitor the situation and report back in due course.

Here's to safe flying in 2016!

Martin Heywood

Insurance Director

Vice Chairman

February 2016

BHPA Flying and Safety Committee

Report to the 2015 AGM (27th February 2016)



The current FSC membership is:

Angus Pinkerton (FSC Chairman & Airworthiness Panel)
John Lovell (Accident Investigation & Analysis Panel)
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 (introduced in January 2014) now has two years of on-line completed reports (plus another two years of manually loaded data) that can be searched on-line; and submitting a report has never been easier. I realise that many members 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.

The total number of incidents reported in 2015 was 156 (compared to 151 in 2014, and 144 in 2013). Unfortunately the accidents this year included 4 fatalities; 2 PG in the UK, 1 PG in Spain and 1 PPG in the UK (there was only a single fatality in 2014 and three in 2013).

62% of the incident reports submitted involved a degree of injury - a figure that is fairly consistent over recent years, and the number of incidents on each type of glider continues to be close to the ratio of membership qualifications for each type. The proportion of incidents involving serious injuries (anything involving a fractured limb or worse) was 34% and is very similar to 2014. However, this was lower than the previous three years, which averaged nearly 50%, so there may be a trend towards less serious injuries.

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). Each country using the database now has access to the entire field of data and our BHPA technical staff will soon be making a summary report available summarising the European data (including that from Germany, Austria, France and Switzerland) from 2015.

In my role as Convenor of the CEN European Standardisation Committee, WG6, I am pleased to report that during 2015 we published the finalised Paraglider Load Test Standard, EN926-1, and the Emergency Parachute Standard, EN12491. We also began work on an update to the PG Harness Standard (EN 1651) which is expected to include a back protector test.

The Tow Panel reports that several new permits for winch towing were issued in 2014. All tow permits and permissions are up to date with the CAA until the end of December 2016, and the Panel has continued to work with the CAA to tidy up air charts by removing old sites and expired permissions.

The Airspace Panel comments that last year saw the CAA consulting on another crop of problematic airspace proposals from a variety of air traffic control units. Also that there have been further delays in implementing a comprehensible UK implementation of the UK Airlaw changes

required to implement SERA (the Standardised European Rules of the Air), and as a result the Publications Panel have been unable to launch the new and updated revision of the Pilot Handbook. However, they have published a new edition of the glossy Elementary Pilot Training Guide that we give to all of our students (and is available free for download on the Web).

The post-CP coaching scheme or 'Pilot Development Structure' has progressed, although not quite as quickly as we hoped. Our two new Technical Officers have begun assisting with documenting the scheme, and will continue to be involved to assist in its implementation which will concentrate initially on material aimed at 'Red Ribbon' pilots in their first 10 hours after gaining CP (Novice).

Also (thanks to these new and very keen resources) during 2015 we completed inspections of over half of our schools, and during the past week we held a very successful (judging from the Feedback forms) two-day Trainers' Conference. This was primarily aimed at our Instructors and Schools and was attended by over 50 of our Trainers. Responding to demand, we are planning to run a 10 day residential Instructors' course, incorporating both practical and theory sessions, later this year.

Last year I reported that following extensive consultation with schools and clubs, the CP (Novice) syllabus for training paragliding hill pilots had been revised and that students would not be required to demonstrate top landings before leaving a school. Schools are required to teach the theory, and most have continued to supervise students' first top landings. The changes also placed more emphasis on ground handling and we have revised our approach to landing training following a review of the relative ineffectiveness of Parachute Landing Falls.

We promised to review the situation following the Top Landing changes, and the incident statistics for 2015 show that although there was a similar number of Top Landing related incidents in 2015 as there had been for the previous few years, there were fewer incidents involving CP rated pilots. The numbers are quite small, and not really statistically significant, but there has certainly not been the significant increase that some critics were concerned about. We will continue to monitor the situation.

The extension of the Speed Flying Training programme to more schools did not result in as many students being trained as we hoped, and we will be continuing the trial for a further year before making final decisions. I would note that European (and USA) incidents statistics, and anecdotal evidence from non-BHPA members, suggests that speed flying (or flying mini-wings) is the source of a significant number of accidents and fatalities.

As always I would like to express my sincere thanks to the people who volunteer to work on and with FSC. We are all passionate about our sport and I feel privileged that such a skilled and experienced group of people are willing to give up their valuable time to contribute to its safe development. This year we lost involvement of Stuart Bond, who has emigrated to Australia for at least the next few years, and so I would like to particularly recognise his contribution.

Angus Pinkerton, *Chairman, BHPA Flying and Safety Committee, February 2016*

BHPA AGM - Sites Report

2015 - 2016

Sites Trust Fund

As at 31 Jan 16 the sites trust fund stood at £14,065; up £710 on last year (£60 per month).

Database

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

Our efforts to bring the database up to date continue. I waded through the backlog of 337 forms (going back to 1992!) and in Nov last year we send out validation reports to all 69 of the clubs and schools that claim Residency. Thus far 21 have been returned and processed. When 50% of the reports have been returned I will attempt to find owners (or delete) the 244 sites that are currently shown as unclaimed, and then we will ask the RAF to provide site codes for CANP purposes.

Site Insurance

We have persuaded our insurers to include 3rd party liability insurance for club owned sites (Bell Hill, Bloreng, Long Mynd, Tinto) into the BHPA policy at no extra charge, thus saving some clubs about £500pa.

National Trust (England & Wales)

In December 1998 John Clarke, the BHPA Sites Officer, negotiated a joint agreement with the National Trust (NT). It encouraged flying at NT properties and provided guidelines on how best to manage flying activities. In the year 2000 these guiding principles and good practices were lifted by the NT into its very own document 'Recreational Activities and National Trust Properties'.

Following a question at the last AGM and various flying issues at NT sites, for the best part of a year I have been trying to validate these principles with the NT. Eventually I managed to get a response from a 'grown up'. He explained that NT has gone through a process of de-centralisation and that they no longer consider either of the documents to be valid. Any decision to allow (or deny) flying at a NT property now rests entirely with their local team. This means that we cannot expect similar decisions, rules or costs at different NT properties.

I argued that local NT teams, who have little experience of flying, might be tempted, through ignorance and fear of the unknown, to refuse flying activity on 'safety grounds' rather than trust the views of the club. He assured me that the safety case presented by a BHPA Club or School would be respected, and that anyone who is refused permission to fly is entitled to know the reasons for that refusal.

A retrograde step from my perspective, but a dead end all the same.

BHPA PowerPoint Presentation

The PowerPoint presentation about the organisation and structure of the BHPA has been delivered during at least 3 club nights (another next week), and is available for delivery by a member of Exec on request.



Skywings magazine continues to be delivered on time and within budget. The final Skywings management figures for 2014/15 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, 2015/2016. But this will undoubtedly change over the next couple of months as invoices are received, so should not be relied upon.

	Final		Anticipated
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Expenditure	£164,062	£168,342	£175,062
Advertising income	£63,012	£65,946	£64,613
Magazine subscription sales income	£1,291	£1,157	£762
Net cost	£99,758	£101,239	£109,687
Average net cost per magazine printed	£1.21	£1.22	£1.32
Copies ordered	81,464	81,759	81,904
Copies printed	82,724	83,019	83,164
Carriers	80,340	77,823	77,884
Pages printed	556	548	580

Whilst the figures show a welcome small increase of £2,934 in advertising revenue in 2014/15, this was again outstripped by increased costs, which were up by around £4,280 on the previous year.

The number of magazines printed also rose by 295 in 2014/15. But whilst this helps to keep the cost per magazine down, it also pushes up the overall printing and postage costs for the year.

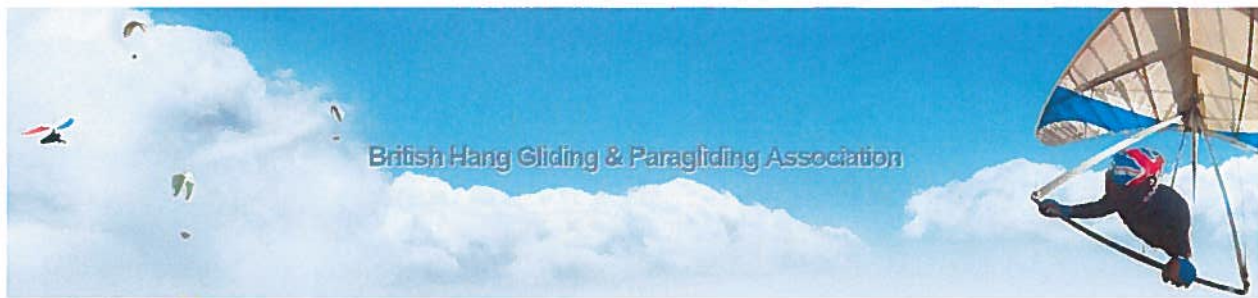
Taking into account Skywings subscription and back issue sales, the net cost of publishing Skywings in 2014/15 rose by some £1,481, or around 1.5%; an improvement on the previous year. But keeping within budget came at a cost, a small reduction in the number of pages printed.

Looking at the current year, whilst the amount of advertising placed has again risen, the advertising income achieved so far for 2015/16 has sadly fallen. As a result we have been forced to increase non lineage advertising rates by 3% this year to try to compensate for this. The situation has however been eased by Exec agreeing a modest increase in the Skywings budget for 2015/16, and as the above figures show this has enabled us to more than reinstate the pages lost during 2014/15.

We are also currently trialling an on-line version of Skywings magazine to try to better gauge the demand for this option, and to gain a better understanding of the technical issues involved in on-line publication. The publication of the printed magazine continues unchanged. For more information about this trial please refer to my website report in your AGM pack.

In closing I would as usual like to thank our hard working and talented Skywings team, designer and advertising agent Colin Fargher, and editor Joe Schofield, and of course thank all those who have contributed to Skywings over the past 12 months and helped to make it the great read it is.

Paul Dancey,
Publications & Website Director
February 2016



Website Report 2016

The website continues to be updated and maintained on a regular basis. A Paypal payment option has now been added to our online shop, and our SSL certificate has been renewed and reconfigured to allow the full website to be accessed using the https protocol.

This change was made to ensure that our Google rankings did not suffer as a result of Google recent decision to weigh search results in favour of those who fully implement the https protocol. We also now comply with the new PCI DSS Version 3.00 required by our bank to allow us to take on-line payments.

Over the past 12 months I've received a number of emails suggesting that the schools map was broken. But when I investigated these reports I actually found that the issue was that they were not using the fully qualified domain name to access the schools map.

I'm afraid the Google mapping API used on the website is linked to our fully qualified domain name, if this isn't used then a Google error message will always be displayed when viewing pages that display maps. To avoid possible error messages visitors to the BHPA website must use one of the following fully qualified domains:

<http://www.bhpa.co.uk>
<https://www.bhpa.co.uk>
www.bhpa.co.uk

Whilst most website content is also viewable if you shorten these to bhpa.co.uk, pages using Google mapping functions will always throw an error message.

The website file structure has also been revised to facilitate file uploads from the office, but I am currently waiting for this to be implemented on the office systems.

We are also currently trialling an on-line "page turning" version of Skywings magazine, in addition to the printed version. The login required to access the on-line version is published each month in the printed magazine of the same cover date.

This is an add-on service, and the printed magazine will continue to be delivered each month to all BHPA members and Skywings subscribers.

Publishing an online version simply represents a modest experiment to evaluate the demand for an electronic version, and to help us to get a better idea of the difficulties in delivering a magazine in electronic form.

Whilst the "page turning" style is a nice effect, on some devices you may find that the best option is to either select single page spread when viewing online, or download the pdf file for viewing offline. This will enable you to make best use of your device's available screen width, and should help reduce the need to zoom in to increase text to a more easily readable size.

Paul Dancey
Publications & Website Director
February 2016

BHPA Competitions AGM Report 2016

Competitions report,

2015 has produced some fantastic flying and some excellent results to report set against a number of accidents and organisational challenges.

I highlight the successes of Kathleen Riggs three new World records and four European records, and Carl Wallbanks smashing of the British HG distance and goal records.

At the same time we have had unfortunate accidents involving HG, PG and Paramotor pilots - without it seems a common cause.

We have had some close shaves organisationally with unrest threatening the Krushevo PG event and the loss of the site for the PPG Worlds. Earlier problems with the PG panels financial reporting have now been resolved.

The panels continue to up their games with a variety of safety initiatives, pilot and team developments and are, it seems to me, increasingly professional in their stewardship. We are taking steps to improve sharing of best practice and ideas between the panels and more time and attention is being given to training, developing and selecting teams and individual pilots

The planning and organisation of this is undertaken by a significant number of people who are all volunteers and almost all are competitive pilots themselves. The demands an increasing level of formality and professionalism places on volunteer's time is significant and we are lucky to have so many people willing to give up significant chunks of their own time to enable others to compete.

Partly as a result panels have increasingly found it necessary to subcontract some key roles, supported by a large team of volunteers, something the PG panel has been doing for some time.

Inevitably this, and the need to provide a more support during competitions, adds to the pressure on Panel funds. Organising competitions continues to make net contributions to panel funds but costs escalate with increased demands and the funding of our teams necessarily lags well behind the costs of competing. The result is that the costs involved to attend competitions at all levels, and to represent their country in particular, makes it a discouragement to new competition pilots and difficult to some experienced pilots to afford to put themselves forward for selection.

I'm pleased to be able to say we continue to have a top 10 place in every team free-flight discipline and many world-class pilots. But, we fall well short in the level of support we are able to give our top competitors compared with their rivals and could undoubtedly do better in some of the individual rankings.

Nonetheless the UK continues to produce World-class aviators in so many disciplines, not just our own PG/HG/Accuracy & PPG pilots but look across to the Sailplane and Microlight results and consider how many of those pilots come from a HG or PG background.

Looking forward to the coming season I'm struck by the enthusiasm of all the panels fizzing with new initiatives and positive outlooks- It's gonna be good!

Bill Bell
Competitions

Paragliding Competitions Panel

BRITISH NATIONALS

We had two rounds of the British Nationals this year. Round 1 was in Krushevo, Macedonia and round 2 in France, St Andre.

Krushevo

There was an entry of 84 pilots, of which 39 British pilots attended. With five valid tasks, the venue proved to be both reliable and delivered a very good standard of flying. The local community delivered a first class competition at a venue that is becoming very popular for competition flying in recent years.

The competition was 'outsourced' for a fixed fee to the local organisers. This is increasingly the method the panel is using for our competitions as it helps to keep the price low, removes some financial risk from the BHPA and generally seems to deliver a better quality competition as local clubs try to impress.

There was one notable accident at the competition. An Israel pilot, entered into the competition, was killed on the practice day just prior to the competition start. The conditions on the day were generally good and no blame was attached to the competition organisers.

St Andre

As always, a popular venue with 141 pilots competing, 56 of them being British. Again we had five valid tasks and again St Andre delivered some stunning flying for all.

This competition was run as a 'panel' event, with the panel underwriting all the costs individually. This has usually proved to be the best format to use at St Andre as it always has a high turnout, so is rarely a financial risk to the panel.

There were not serious accidents at the competition, although there were the usual flurry of reserves being thrown by pilots throughout the week in the strong Alpine air. There was no specific cause attached to the reserve throws and they were not associated with any single glider type.

Nationals overall

In total 68 pilots competed in the 2015 Nationals. Guy Anderson is the new British Champion. Jake Herbert is both the Serial class and ports class champion with Jessica Cox, by way of default being the only woman to compete this year, is the Women's champion.

2016 Nationals

For 2016 we will be attending the venues Gemona, Italy and Serra da Estrela in Portugal. These are both venues the British have attending in recent years with good results so we expect a good turnout and quality competitions at both venues. Both competitions will be outsourced for a fixed fee.

New for 2016 is the Team Training initiative which is funded by a mixture of seed corn panel funds and sponsorship.

Webpage: http://pgcomps.org.uk/?page_id=2064 - where you can download the application form.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/britishparaglidingracingacademy/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-mnfoxfLJTxfeihoCMYUWg>

Present Panel Makeup

Presently we have 11 members plus two associated members. Brett Janaway (Chairman), Emile Van Wyk (Vice), Toby Colombe (Treasurer), Guy Anderson, Adrian Thomas, Tony Blacker, Richard Bungay, Kitt Rudd, John Stevenson, Laurie Gavagham, Matthew Tandy. In addition we receive reports from Kirsty Cameron (Team accounts and webmaster) and Tim Pentreath (Skywings admin).

Hang Gliding Competitions Panel

British Open Series

Nick Pain had decided to stand down as meethead at the close of 2014 so we needed to enlist the army. Jenny Buck was persuaded to try out the post with the assistance of Martin Colclough. Both have flown HG in competitions and like ordering people about, fortunately we weren't route marched up any hills.

Round 1 was based around Crickhowell in south Wales but Bache Hill in Mid Wales was the only option in a southerly, so with a little persuasion the mid Wales club allowed us to use the only flyable day and provided with a good task to the north Wales coast. Days 4 and 5 canned due to extremely bad weather. Luke Nichol now back flying a flex wing out flew Grant Crossingham on a marginal glide to goal to take the title of British Open champion. Paul Harvey won class 5 and Angus Pinkerton claimed a record for flying the most years before winning the club class.

Round 2 returned to Hawes in Yorkshire and a route march up a big hill.....but we did get a good task Ma'am. The next 2 days were forecast with very strong winds giving safety concerns and trial flights on Dodd fell in wave persuaded most people that it was flyable but not taskable. Day 3 again windy but saw Luke Nichol and Kev Gay giving demonstration dual flights through till dusk. Day 4 and we had a proper task that sorted the competition although many of the top pilots landed early while some flew for 5 hours without leaving the hill. Day 5 with wind and rain on the way allowed a quick task for those that took the opportunity. Tony Stephens narrowly won the round from Luke Nichol and Gordon Rigg in class 1 with Stewart Reid taking class 5 and Tim Swait, the club class by the narrowest margin. Yorkshire and 5 days flying out of 5, excellent.

Round 3 was held at the Inn on the green, Much Wenlock with flying at the Long Mynd. The first day with an excellent forecast provided a cracking competition with a 99 mile task to goal near Aylesbury. Fantastic day for everybody with lots of personal bests for distances, 14 in goal and a great day all round.

Unfortunately the weather took a turn for the worse which prevented flying and some pilots disappeared but on the last day when despite the low cloud Jenny set a 50km task to anywhere. Some pilots reappeared while in the absence of Gordon Rigg, Luke thought he had won the series. A thrilling climax to the day as a few determined pilots left the hill at cloudbase, just above the hill, and eked out 25km to clinch a few vital points.

In a crowded scoring room the British Open Series was won by Graham Phipps, just ahead of Dave Mathews and Justin Needham. After being trounced by the youngsters (under 35) in the early rounds the seniors (over 50) had shown the tortoise could beat the hare. Tim King had also done just enough to beat Mike Armstrong and Paul Harvey. Julian Todd won the club class ahead of Tim Swait.

Overall, 2 of the rounds were badly affected by the weather, losing 8 of the available days. However these days were used for Parachute repacking (thank you Greg Emms), flying lectures and talks, and training days for the club class with GPS etc., work continues with mentoring the Club class. Thank you to Jenny Buck, Martin Colclough and Trevor Birbeck for working together and being meetheads, Phil Chettleburg for scores and Rebeccah Sherwin for being so accurate with her weather forecasting.

British Nationals

Preceding the nationals in Ager, Spain, Gordon Rigg presented a 5 day training camp for the elite pilots vying for places in the British team with 14 pilots attending. Gordon had prepared several tasks and lectures to help pilots go faster over the possible routes and also to "learn" some of the

terrain behind the Ager ridge. Paul Harvey suffered a heavy landing on day 3 but this demonstrated that safety was greatly improved by carrying a functioning radio when Carl Walbank and Malcolm Brown "found" Paul and coordinated rescue with Steve Blackler at the helipad with rescue services. Paul was helicoptered out but home in time for tea with a dislocated shoulder. Thank you to Gordon for organising a focussed effort, which has shown the potential, we have in some of the younger pilots and room for improvement in others.

The nationals saw a reduced entry probably due to the pre Euros scheduling in Macedonia which precluded pilots doing both events, however we had 37 British entries (the highest entry for many years) and 53 total. Claudia Mehia was contracted to organise the competition (as we had not been able to source a British meethead) and because she had local contact with the Spanish flyers, officials and knew the location. With 5 tasks flown over the 7 days (but 1 stopped) Ager proved a reliable and exciting venue.

Carl Walbank, having seen the youngsters flying the preceding week, flew with a vengeance to win the first 2 days and then maintain his position and the front and comfortably win the title. Malcolm Brown in second flew consistently well to keep Grant Crossingham at bay who had landed short on day 2. Ollie Chitty and Luke Nicol showed great potential with 4th and 5th. Dave Mathews also had a bad day 2 which other wise would have seen him in top 3. A very competitive event.

Andy Hollidge pushed hard every day in the Class 5 to get a convincing victory. Walentin Teraud (Russia) won the sport class.

Claudia ran a well-organised comp with her safety team of marshals and nurse on launch, windsock beers and scoring in the goal field and good-humoured morning briefings. Rebecah Sherwin again provided excellent weather briefings and forecasts. Thanks to Phil for his work on the scores.

However, Dave Shields having had a water landing when approaching goal on task 1 suffered a heavy landing at goal on task 2. Despite immediate aid and a helicopter to hospital Dave is still seriously damaged. We await the accident report so we can apply attention to the safety aspects that need to be considered. This is on the agenda for the planning meeting.

World Championships Valle de Bravo Mexico

Partly due to instability in the region and the difficult and limited landing options available at high altitude this world championship was not the best attended championships. Many pilots had also ended the pre worlds early the year before. We entered a team with experience (Carl, Gordon and Grant) with solid and keen pilots (Steve Blackler, Wayne Thompson and Graham Phipps).

Carl, Gordon and Grant often headed the field with Steve, Wayne and Graham pushing hard and taking the early bird launch. As a team, they worked really well together and were proud that despite working and flying hard they were one of the few teams to come home in one piece. Seldom do pilots get awarded medals in hospital, but it happened this year. Due to the scorer's inexperience and the organisers ineptitude Grant was penalised a days score when the scorer moved a turnpoint by a couple of meters. Despite protest the scores have not been corrected but we have been promised a software investigation by Stephan Melbos...we await the outcome.

With hindsight the team would have benefited from a team manager on the ground to assist with scoring issues and protests, retrieve from difficult and dangerous locations and support during a long competition. This was something other European teams benefited from with, for example the Italian team having a large back up team including medics and drivers.

UKNXCL

The UK league (and the paragliders) have spurred pilots on to set some new records this year:

Carl Wallbank set new British record of 338km (200+ miles)

Gordon Rigg and Ollie Chitty set new distance to goal record only for it to be beaten by.....Gordon Rigg 217km to goal

Andy Hollidge distance to goal record class 5 of 178km

Meanwhile in class 5 Neville Almond tops the table with 1638 points scored and all flights scoring over 200pts

Kathleen Rigg has set several (!) World records;

Out and return 229km, 200km triangle and speed over a 200km triangle. And a European distance to goal record of 156Km.

2016

Following the competitions panel meeting in November, we have organised these events for the 2016 season;

British Open Series 3 rounds

BOS1 SE Wales Friday 29th April to Tuesday 3rd May

BOS2 Yorkshire Saturday 28th May to Wednesday 1st June

BOS3 Mid-Wales Friday 19th August to Tuesday 23rd August

Round 1 of the BOS is also designated the British Open Championship

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.

The British Nationals are scheduled for June in Laragne but at present we are awaiting final permissions from FFVL. This is also a Cat 2 level competition and decides the national HG champion

We have selected a team for the Class 1 European championships being held jointly with the Class 5 World championships in Macedonia July 2016.

Class 1 European championships

Grant Crossingham

Carl Walbank

Gordon Rigg

Luke Nicol

Oliver Chitty

With reserves David Mathews, Malcolm Brown and Graham Phipps.

The team selection has been exceedingly difficult this year with new pilots keen to displace proven world-class teammates. We hope to take the reserves to the competition when team sizes have been finalised, to assist in selecting a world beating team for Brazil 2017.

Class 5 World championships
Neville Almond
Tim King
Paul Harvey

We are also organising some British team training similar to 2015 to improve racing skills for pilots close to the level required in top level competition.

Panel Membership

Tim King (Chairman), Darren Brown, Richard Hunt, Lorenzo Labrador, Steve Penfold, Graham Phipps, Gordon Rigg, Wayne Thompson.

Conclusion

This year has been a highly competitive year with senior pilots being pushed hard by younger pilots who want their place on the British team. We have put on 4 well attended competitions that have been organised with enthusiasm by our experienced team. Sometimes the weather has not cooperated but that was countered by using alternative sites and the accurate forecasts resulted in good tasks run during limited time windows. Thanks to the panel.

Paragliding Accuracy Competitions Panel

Paragliding Accuracy

The re-run of the 2015 FAI Cat2 Paragliding Accuracy National Championship was successfully held at Green Dragons in late October. The original June event in Shropshire was called off due to a poor weather forecast and although the re-run was also planned for Shropshire a change of venue to the south of the country was called due a better weather forecast. Thanks go to Chris Haynes for doing all the preparation for the events in Shropshire and to Matthew Bignell for organising the October event at short notice. Andy Webster won the individual event and Beyond Extreme (Andy Webster, Nick Simmons, Don Bodill) won the team event. Ben Akhtar was best newcomer and Matthew Bignell was the most improved pilot.

There was British attendance at all the European legs of the 2015 FAI Cat2 World Cup series. Nick Simmons was top Brit in Serbia in 15th place, and Matthew Bignell was top Brit in both Germany (16th place) and Bulgaria (21st place). Matjaz Feraric won the overall series and Andy Webster was top Brit in 14th place.

Andy Shaw, Billy Elliston, Simon Sykes, Andy Webster, Katie Lawrence, and Matthew Bignall represented the UK at the 8th World Paragliding Accuracy Championships in Indonesia in August 2015, and took 11th place despite being short of one female pilot. Don Bodill and Ben Akhtar also flew as individuals under a new FAI ruling. The standard of scoring was exceptionally high considering the difficult thermic conditions, and demonstrated how competitive the sport is becoming especially in Asia. Indonesian Dede Supratman won the individual event and Thailand won the team event. Andy Shaw was top Brit in 17th position. Andy Cowley also attended in his FAI capacity as Chairman of the Jury. Thanks go to Squad Manager Nikki Bodill, and Training Camp Coordinator / Team Leader Simon Sykes for all their hard work. Simon's endeavours were recognised with the award of the Nigel Legg trophy for services to accuracy.

Paragliding Accuracy was represented at the World Air Games in Dubai where Romanian pilot George Cotet took top spot. Unfortunately there was no UK representation as both Billy Elliston and Andy Webster, who had been invited based on the WPRS, were unable to attend due to work commitments.

Matthew Bignell won the 2015 Airways Accuracy League and also claimed the top Brit place in the WPRS in 59th position. At the end of the 2015 season there were four UK pilots in the top 100 of the WPRS (Matthew Bignell, Billy Elliston, Andy Shaw, Andy Webster), and the UK as a nation moved up to 10th position.

Preparations are now under way for the 2016 European Championships in Lithuania, and Simon Sykes jnr is coordinating training camps in the run up to the July event. 2016 will also see a pre-World Championship in Albania, and a four-legged World Cup series.

Efforts are ongoing to encourage more UK pilots into the sport, especially female pilots, and there will be a Paragliding Accuracy representation at this years Parafest event in June.

Classic Accuracy

The 45th Classic Accuracy National Championships were successfully held at South Cerney airfield in Gloucestershire on August bank holiday with thanks to Meet Director Arthur Bentley for organising the competition. Parachutist convert Dave Crowhurst was crowned national champion and his Parachuting Upwards team (Dave Crowhurst, Ester Reynolds, Jimmy Frith) won the team

event. Ester Reynolds was best female, Martin Robe was best veteran, Dave Crowhurst was the best newcomer and Pierre Astiex was the most improved pilot and best youth.

The 2015 European Grand Prix was validated on the full compliment of three competitions in France, UK and the Netherlands. French pilot Bruno Lautard won the overall European title and Martin Robe was best Brit in sixth place. John Lawrence won the 2015 UK Classic Accuracy league.

The 2016 Classic Accuracy National Championship will be held at South Cerney in September, and there will be the usual European Grand Prix competitions in France and the Netherlands. Birdwings and Green Dragons have committed to holding Classic Accuracy training weekends in 2016, and ideas about an international Classic Accuracy team are also being discussed.

Nikki Bodill and Don Bodill left the Accuracy Panel in 2015 after many years of service, and we would like to thank them for the valuable contributions they made.

The Panel now has nine members consisting of; Andy Webster, Arthur Bentley, Chris Haynes, Gary Ounsworth, Matthew Bignell, Simon Sykes, Mick Collins, Andy Tillsley and Taz Spence.

PPG Competitions Panel

2015 has been rather a sad year. Our very own Dean Eldridge a past team member died while testing a wing slaloming and a pilot died when competing at the World slalom championships in Poland. As a result slalom safety has been pushed to the forefront in pilots minds and has been addressed with changes to the rules passed at the recent Cima plenary. Chairman Richard Shaw was accepted as a jury member for the slalom Worlds and, despite the tragic accident, came back impressed with the organisation and ready to cherry-pick the best ideas. Barney Townsend UK's alternate delegate is now confirmed in the role of Cima secretary. Barney also came back to the organising committee for UK comps and has a key role in helping organise a worlds in the UK in 2016.

Since loosing the original venue at Daymns Hall following a change of ownership securing a site has been somewhat problematic but this will now take place at Popham 20-27th August and is held in association with the BMAA. This year we look also forward to the European Slalom event in Bornos, Spain.

Two of our team members out of the three UK pilots (Karen Skinner, Mark Morgan and Philip Jennings) were chosen to compete in the World Air Games in Dubai with top Brit Phillip Jennings coming in 15th overall.

Reports by, Brett Janaway, Paragliding Panel Chairman
Andy Webster, Accuracy Panel Chairman
Tim King, Hang Gliding Panel Chairman
Richard Shaw, PPG Panel Chairman

Admin Director's Report

As planned early last year we recruited an Admin Assistant, Clair Tewley, who started work with us in April 2015. Clair has settled in to the team well and has been a great asset in dealing with the heavier workload during the summer months. She is leaving us at the end of March to have her first child, but is planning to return to us after her maternity leave. We will have maternity cover in place during that time.

The increase in staff levels has meant that the office no longer needs to resort to the telephone answering machine on Wednesday mornings to catch up on paperwork. The office is now open to deal with members' enquiries from around 8.30am to about 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

We spent some time during 2015 looking at implementing an online voting system using a third party provider. Unfortunately, the costs involved were quite significant and after informally consulting members via the BHPA Facebook Page, it was agreed that the money would be best spent elsewhere. We have however taken steps to improve the current system by placing the voting form on the website and Facebook page and by accepting scanned copies. This has seen the votes for the election in February 2016 more than double those we received last year.

At the end of 2014 we signed up to accept PayPal payments. Initially response was slow, but that has increased considerably during 2015 with more members choosing to pay their renewal fees this way. The PayPal facility was also added to the online shop during the end of last year, which has proven to be popular.

2015 also brought about some changes to our office support. Due to increased work commitments Kriss Burdett who has looked after our IT systems for many years has had to step down. We now have a small independent local company, Your IT, looking after us. Our thanks go to Kriss for the many years of help that he has provided to us.

During the summer, the Office Staff set up and manned a stand at Parafest in Llangollen. In November we attended Flyer Live 2015 at Telford International Conference Centre. On both occasions, we had a stand for two days and at Telford we incorporated the exec meeting on the second day. We had considerable interest in our PPG/PHG/SSDR/microlight cover and hope to see it generate new members over the next few months

I'd like to end by thanking all the staff for their hard work during the year.

Marc Asquith
Admin Director
February 2016

Paramotor Report – February 2016

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. The unfortunate loss of Dean Eldridge hit the community hard, as he was a very well known and popular pilot. Other notable events are a paramotor pilot flying into Glastonbury festival (for the second time) and being prosecuted by the CAA, and a very close AIRPROX between a paramotor and an RAF Tornado over Cambridgeshire.

Trikes: Calls for relaxation of the current regulations governing the use of wheeled paramotors have come up again this year, BHPA are working with the BMAA and the CAA to find a workable and acceptable solution but pilots are reminded that the current Air Navigation Order definition of SPHG (Self Propelled Hang Gliders – which includes paramotors) includes the condition "is foot launched".

Events: 2015 saw a new paramotoring festival ably organised by Executive Council hopeful Mark Meadows. Parafest was a fantastic event based near Llangollen with flyable conditions for both paramotors, paragliders and even the Flying Pig on all three days of the event. Parafest 2016 is well on in the planning stages; I'd recommend everyone with an interest in paramotoring to attend. The other not to be missed event this year will be World Paramotor Championships 2016, this is now being held at Nottingham City Airport from 20-27 August 2016.

Weather: A very poor start to 2016 for all pilots I'm sure all will agree, though the weather seems to have improved somewhat over the last few days, hopefully the poor start to the year will herald an amazing summer!

Edward Cunliffe
BHPA Paramotor Liaison

Schools Report

2015 hasn't been the easiest year for most UK based schools with relatively few days offering good teaching conditions but despite that, the general feeling I get from most schools is fairly positive.

The changes to the syllabus which mean that top landings are no longer compulsory at CP have been running for nearly a year now. Initially, most of us had concerns that this might result in a dramatic rise in accidents with pilots learning to top land by teaching themselves. Actually, the end result hasn't been the feared chaos. Most schools (the vast majority) are still teaching top landings as part of the CP course and the number of recorded accidents over the past year certainly don't show any increase (actually, the number of accidents on top landing for post CP has gone down).

The BHPA have taken on an extra technical officer and there are now 3 full time tech officers. This will mean that schools will be inspected more regularly. As most schools have little contact with others, there is relatively little sharing of information and hopefully the increased contact will improve things.

The BHPA recently hosted a trainers conference which was attended by 46 SI's, I's and TI's. Over two days, a huge range of topics was covered and without exception, those who attended felt it extremely worthwhile.

There are currently 8 schools involved in trialling a speed flying syllabus. Unfortunately, because of the challenges of the weather, no real conclusion has been reached but this trial will continue. Early feedback is positive and it will be something else that schools will be able to offer.

So, with a little luck from the weather, 2016 has the potential to be a good year and there are certainly BHPA initiatives that are being investigated which will have positive benefits for schools.