



2000 Annual General Meeting of the BHPA

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 2 December 2000 at the Telford Exhibition Centre, Telford, commencing at 11.00am.

These minutes are not to be taken as a true record without referring to the minutes of the Executive Council meeting at which they were approved.

Present:

John Aldridge
Martin Heywood
Brett Janaway
Dick Long
Walter Neumark
Harriet Pottinger
Angus Pinkerton
Peter Studzinski
Merv Turner
Steve Varden

88 Voting members
of the Association

In attendance:

David Barber
Jennie Burdett
Mark Dale
Joe Schofield
Andy Shaw
Dave Thompson
Ann Welch

Apologies:
Paul Dancey

ITEM 1: CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS: REPORT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Chairman, Harriet Pottinger, welcomed everyone to the meeting and read out a list of names of winners of the 500 Club who had cheques waiting to be collected.

Harriet then went on to say that during her first year as Chairman she had discovered that BHPA actually had a mission statement which she read out.

"To promote all aspects of the sport of hang gliding and paragliding to the community in its widest forms and to endeavour, through sensible controls, to achieve sustainable growth and development whilst maintaining a high standard of safety and training."

Harriet said she hoped that the reports in the AGM folders demonstrated that we are fulfilling all the points in the "Mission Statement".

Harriet then thanked all those who had helped and supported her over the past year. She said there is one person who deserves special thanks for all the money he has saved the Association over many years. Andrew Wakelin continues to do a great deal of work for the Association which, if we had to pay for it, would cost thousands of pounds. Therefore as a token of our gratitude Andrew is being given Honorary Membership of the BHPA.

John Lovell was also thanked for all his hard work as Leader of the Accident Prevention and Medical Panel. Accident investigation is not a pleasant task and unfortunately there have been a number of serious accidents this year.

Two members of the Executive Council were not standing for re-election, John Clarke and Henry Blackshaw and both were thanked for the work they have done.

John has been on the Exec for many years and has been instrumental in getting agreements with the National Trust sorted out. He has also obtained National Trust agreement that schools should not have to pay more than clubs for use of sites. John has helped many individuals and clubs with site matters over the years and although he will no longer be on Exec he has agreed to continue in an advisory capacity.

Henry has been instrumental in encouraging new members to the Association to contact clubs early in their flying careers rather than waiting until they leave the schools.

Congratulations are due to the Accuracy Team who won the First World Accuracy Championship and to Gordon Rigg who won the National Hang Gliding Championship.

On the subject of membership fees, Harriet reported that they will stay as they are for the coming year, with two exceptions.

From 1st January all members with Pilot Rating or above will

get a discount of £6 on their membership fee. This discount will hopefully be increased to £10 next year. This is an added encouragement for members to get their Pilot rating.

Also from 1st January there will be a new Under 16 Annual Membership available at £39.

It was then explained that the wrong set of accounts had been included in the AGM pack and the correct ones would be available shortly. In order to give members time to look at the correct accounts, the AGM would be reconvened at 2pm for their approval.

ITEM 2: RESOLUTIONS

2.1 To approve the minutes of the Eighth Annual General Meeting held on 4 December, 1999.

The minutes were approved without amendment.

2.3 To elect the following members to the Executive Council: M. Heywood, W. Neumark, H. Pottinger, A. Shaw, P. Studzinski.

All the above named were duly elected.

ITEM 3: PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Ann Welch gave the President's Address and was pleased to note that the BHPA would be introducing a reduced fee to encourage members Under 16, she believes it is very important to get young people into the sport. Ann said that hang gliding/paragliding and microlighting are the only way to get young people into airports; none of the other airports have managed it. When hang gliding first arrived it was disapproved of by the general aviation world, however, it was great fun and people wanted to do it. As a result hang gliding and paragliding have grown faster than any other branch of aviation. Hang gliding/paragliding, along with FLPAs and microlights are the only branches of aviation that are bringing in young people.

Hang gliding/paragliding is responsible for regulating itself and does it very well and Ann suggested that it is because of this good record that the CAA feel that they can loosen their grip on other forms of aviation.

Ann went on to say that airports can and should work together to their mutual benefit. For too long they have been barriers between the sports and we need to work together; if we do not, the people who do not like any kind of aviation will win.

Ann then thanked Harriet for all the hard work she had put in during her first year as Chairman.

ITEM 4: OFFICERS' REPORTS

4.1 Insurance

Martin Heywood said he was in a much better position than his predecessor because last year the insurance had had a massive

hike. Things were settled at the moment but this could change as increasingly solicitors are willing to take on 'no win, no fee' personal injury claims. These claims are set to knock on the door of £10m for one claim some time soon. Basically, this year's news is that things are staying the same for another year.

Martin then asked members to contact him with any queries they may have, either by phone or email. No matter how trivial the query may sound, he was happy to hear from members any time.

Martin was asked whether our insurers actually fought any claims or simply paid up and Harriet informed the meeting that a claim against Kent Kestrels had recently gone to court and had successfully been defended. Russ Hicks (Kent Kestrels CFI) then gave details of the accident and said that they had had an excellent result in court and no blame had been attached to either Kent Kestrels' instructors or the BHPA.

Derek Godfrey (Icarus Wings) referred to the huge claim which the membership had been told about last year. Martin said that this is still on going and is being dealt with by our previous insurers. There is also another potentially large claim pending but it is too early to say how this is going to go.

4.2 Skywings

Paul Dancey was unfortunately unable to be at the meeting but Joe Schofield said he would be happy to answer any questions.

The typeface used in Skywings was mentioned and Joe said that this was being researched at the moment and may change. Ann Welch said she always had difficulty finding the month of issue on the Skywings cover and Joe said he would pass this comment on.

Joe was then asked if the details of the front cover photographs could be included in Skywings. He replied that they always are if they are available, however, a lot of the time he does not have any information at all.

In response to a question on photographs for the magazine, Joe said that for the cover they must be really clear and slides are always better than prints. It is really a sliding scale depending on what the photographs are being used for in the magazine.

4.3 Admin

Merv Turner said that admin was a big area and if anyone had any problems they should contact him. Every member of staff had a different role so please try to ensure that you are speaking to the right person when you call the office. Over the next few months we will be publishing each member of staff's area of responsibility. We are also trying to improve communications and hopefully you will soon be able to contact the staff via the internet.

Finally, all the staff are available on the BHPA stand over the weekend so if anyone has problems or queries please speak to them.

4.4 Flyability

Steve Varden asked whether anyone had any questions on the Flyability report. Joe Schofield asked Steve whether he was happy with the way things were going. Steve said that he thought things were improving and Flyability now had a very full website. There had been three hundred people taking part over the last four years and twenty-two scholarships had been awarded so far.

4.5 Competition

John Aldridge referred to his written report in the AGM folder and asked whether anyone had questions for him. He was asked why the decision had been taken to reduce the number of competitions and John said that quite simply, it was the weather. Both the hang gliding and paragliding panels have decided to place a little more emphasis on the European competitions to get better results.

Dan Gooch asked what there is to help a low airtime pilot to get into competitions. John said he should start in club competitions and the Club Challenge (formerly the Airwave Challenge) but the main thing is to get his Pilot rating. He should encourage his club to enter the Club Challenge and he should be part of that team. After that it is the Open and then the Nationals.

Alan Phipps (Kernow) asked about competition reports and the Club Challenge. John suggested that this should be

discussed at the afternoon forum. In regard to paramotoring, John said that no competitions had been run by the BHPA this year, they had all been run under the auspices of the BMAA. He explained that as far as international competitions were concerned, they had to be done through the BMAA. There is a general lack of support for paramotor competitions, people seem to prefer just to have a fly in.

Walter Neumark pointed out that any powered hang glider or paraglider can take any hang gliding or paragliding national or world record, so long as they switch the engine off. So long as the aircraft behaves like a free flying hang glider or paraglider and they can prove that the engine was switched off, they can enter a record. Harriet said this should be mentioned to Bill Morris so that he could put a note in his publication.

4.6 Website

Peter Studzinski reported that he had made lots of changes since taking over as Webmaster. When Peter took over there were actually two websites so he got the new site to the point where the old one could be removed completely. However, when he started to do this he received complaints that some people could not use the front end menus. He had therefore had to change this from the old Java script and it is now progressing well. He hopes that the BHPA Shop will have online ordering in due course.

Peter explained that one of the biggest problems is the schools and clubs listing, which is very time consuming. We really want this to tie in with the database at the office so that we can update information automatically. Brett Janaway, Benet Allen and Andrew Wakelin have all been working on this and it will be given the highest priority.

Steve Varden pointed out that the home page title said 'Skywings On The Web' rather than BHPA and Peter said that this would be changed.

Kathleen Rigg asked how many hits the BHPA had and Brett replied that it was an average of 6,000 per month. 25% of these were UK and 75% from elsewhere, mainly USA.

Phil Mackereth asked whether there were any plans to put in links to major competition sponsors. He had been trying to get sponsorship this year and potential sponsors always asked how they would get publicity.

Paul Loasby said we could not expect Peter to get this all done overnight, it was a very big area. Harriet added that Peter was doing a grand job in getting it sorted out.

4.7 Events

Brett asked if anyone had any questions, either in regard to the All Out or the Telford Exhibition. There were no questions from the floor.

4.8 FSC

Angus Pinkerton informed the members of changes that had taken place in FSC membership during the year. Ian Runnalls had joined the Committee as Airspace Panel Co-ordinator. We are very lucky to have the benefit of Ian's considerable experience and knowledge. Indeed when Ian's flying experience was outlined to the FSC, it made the rest of us feel very poorly qualified indeed.

Tony Webb has been the Towing Panel Co-ordinator for many years but has now decided that the British weather has finally got the better of him and he is moving to Spain to be able to do some training. FSC are all very sorry to be losing Tony and thank him very much for all his work.

Ian Curren has also announced that he will be retiring from the FSC in 2001. Ian has been a valued member of the FSC for a long time, and was previously on both the BHGA Training Committee and the BAPC STC. Ian and his Panel have been working very hard over recent months on the Pilot Training Syllabus, and now that this effort is largely complete, Ian has decided this is a good time to take a well deserved rest.

During the year Steve Uzochukwu also resigned as Co-ordinator of the Airworthiness Panel, which means there are currently three vacancies on FSC. Anyone who is interested, or knows of anyone else who would be a suitable candidate, are asked to get in touch with Angus or any of the Technical staff.

The Trainers' Conference was held over two days this year, as in the past it has been a bit rushed in one day. This arrangement worked much better. We also had two guest speakers and a very illuminating First Aid and Accident

Management session.

In regard to accidents, we can show that the number of accidents is directly related to how many pilots there are flying. The difference between the number of accidents in hang gliding and paragliding are almost entirely the result of the greater number of paraglider pilots. The European statistics show that this is true throughout Europe.

Angus then said that the root cause of many accidents is pilots making easily avoidable mistakes, and the most common is flying (or continuing a flight) in unsuitable weather. There were at least two serious accidents in 2000 where the pilots originally were not going to fly, but they had changed their minds when they saw other pilots flying. It is up to you, the members, to take a cautious decision. If you are not sure that the weather is within your capabilities, then do not fly. To remind you of an old saying: It is better to be on the ground wishing you were in the air, than up in the air wishing you were on the ground.

In response to a question about instructor supplements, Angus said we cannot reduce these because it is something that the insurers have insisted upon. However, the TI registration fee is being reduced from £35 to £5 making it a total of £85 to register a TI rather than £115. Also the first examination fee of £50 will be waived and will only have to be paid if a re-examination is necessary.

Andy Wallis said that in the last issue of Skywings, Simon Murphy had called into question some of the data from FSC and he asked whether this matter had been resolved. Angus said that most of the problems in regard to parachute sizing were resolved once the issues had been explained more fully.

Johnny Carr said he had the impression that there were still some problems with parachute size. He added that he wanted to sell parachutes according to BHPA recommendations but some of these monster parachutes would not fit into the harnesses. Angus replied that it was not the size of the parachute that was important, but the descent rate that it would achieve under the load of the pilot, equipment and glider. Pilots should aim for something that was not going to drop them down on the ground at more than about 5.5 metres per second. One problem is that some manufacturers do not publish descent rates, they only give sizes. The choice of a descent rate of 5.5 m/s was not an arbitrary one by the BHPA, but was based on evidence from military experience, and in conjunction with the other European HG and PG associations working in the CEN committee. If manufacturer has provided information that 5.5 m/s is the sink rate you would expect at your total weight in flight (you plus glider, harness etc.) then that is fine, it does not matter what size the parachute is. Pilots should remember that the 5.5 m/s rate is measured under ideal conditions, at sea level, moderate temperatures, and with no wind. The actual descent rate could be significantly higher following a real deployment. If you have a parachute but without manufacturer's data, we recommend that you measure it (using the method described in the Pilot Handbook). Then use the BHPA's tables to roughly estimate the expected descent rate. If this works out at around 7.5 m/s (or more) then you should seriously consider changing your parachute. The closer you are to 5.5 m/s the better. Check the information from the manufacturer but if there is nothing else to go on use the BHPA tables. Our tables are only intended to be the back stop if you have no descent rate information from the manufacturer.

Dave Jessup (CYSPC) said he had been unable to attend the Trainers' Conference because he had to work, and felt that other people would have been in the same position. He said a two day conference midweek does not suit volunteers who are in the sport, although it may suit the professionals. Angus said he understood the problem (and he had to work too) but that our experience was that many more people attended a weekday conference than a weekend one. Perhaps we may be able to come up with a compromise such as Friday/Saturday or Sunday/Monday. The FSC is very sensitive to these issues and for the same reasons, holds some of its committee meetings midweek and some at weekends.

Harriet thanked Angus who she said had just about the busiest job on the Exec and had to work very hard.

ITEM 5: GAAC PRESENTATION

John Stainer from the General Aviation Awareness Council then gave a presentation explaining the work of GAAC and how it provides support and assistance in all aspects of general

aviation.

Following the break for lunch, during which trophies were presented, the meeting was reconvened to conclude the official business of BHPA Ltd.

2.2 To receive the Accounts and the Report of the Executive Council for the year ended 31 March 2000.

Dick Long informed members that despite warnings from his predecessor that we were going to lose huge amounts of money, we had only lost a small amount which was expected and we are on target to make a small surplus this year.

There were no questions on the accounts from the floor and Walter Neumark said Dick should be congratulated for his work. The accounts were approved by the meeting.

2.4 To re-appoint Clear & Lane as auditors and to authorise the Executive Council to fix their remuneration.

The meeting approved the re-appointment of Clear & Lane as auditors.

This concluded the official business in accordance with the Companies Act.

ITEM 6: OPEN FORUM

6.1 Paul Loasby wished to discuss the situation of Club Pilots going Cross Country. Harriet said she had already emailed him referring him to the letter in Skywing from Dave Thomson of Lanarkshire, which gave an excellent explanation of the position. Harriet then read out the letter.

Paul said he was experienced but was not Pilot rated, so was he insured to fly XC? He was asked why he did not take the Pilot examination if he had the experience. Marc Asquith said that if Paul had his Pilot rating then his insurance position was quite clear, as he was only Club Pilot rated then his position when flying XC was unclear, so why do it?

Paul replied that it seems that anyone who is only CP rated may not be insured when flying XC. Dick Long and John Aldridge said that this was not a black and white situation and if anyone who was unhappy flying in this "grey" area, they should get their Pilot rating. John said we cannot change the BHPA rules to suit one person, all Paul has to do was to take the Pilot exam.

Alan Phipps, Kernow, said he is CP and there is no chance of him getting 20 minutes airtime out of ridge lift in Cornwall. Harriet replied that he would not have to as this is not in the syllabus.

Angus said there are three possible answers to this insurance problem - yes, no and not sure. It is perfectly OK for a CP to go XC when guided by a coach. Insurers would not accept an unqualified acceptance by us to allow people to go XC but would be perfectly happy if we just said that only P rated pilots could fly XC.

Paul asked what the minimum requirements were to allow a CP to go XC but Angus said that we cannot set down any rules or we would be introducing another rating, i.e. a CP who is allowed to go XC.

This discussion went on at great length and John Aldridge said he did not think that Paul was being very constructive.

Angus said that this was a really strange discussion anyway because FSC were always being accused of making more and more rules. In this particular case writing anything down would only make matters worse because all that we could write down would be that nobody of less than Pilot rating can fly XC.

6.2 Phillip Gregory expressed concern that someone with only a CP rating could be a Club Coach. Joe Schofield replied that we do not expect all our coaches to have the same experience and knowledge but we do try to drum into them that they should only coach up to their own level of experience. If site, conditions, etc. are beyond their experience they should find someone more experienced. Even CP rated coaches have a great deal of experience in landings and take offs.

Phillip made a further point that the coaching system was organised by the BHPA but it was up to the club whether the coaches identified themselves on the hill. Harriet said that in her own club, low airtime pilots were encouraged to make contact with the coaches and were given their telephone numbers.

6.3 Patrick Buxton (Kernow) said he would like to get as many

clubs entering the Club Challenge as possible. This had become much too much of a Southern England event and he hoped it would become more central. He wanted to get this club competition back on the calendar where it belonged.

There followed some discussion as to whether low airtime pilots should have a separate competition. John Aldridge explained how Joint Services ran their competitions as they had three classes to allow low airtime pilots to get their first XC.

Angus Pinkerton also explained the organisation of a competition in Scotland which had required pilots to follow a road and land within a mile of it. Obviously the chosen road would not have to be busy or within controlled airspace etc. For the pilots who wanted to fly in the "first time XC class" there was an instructor on hand all the time to brief them. Effectively they had a very long gliding task and were told where to land but there were alternative, safe, landing fields along the way for those who did not reach the end.

John Aldridge said he viewed the Club Challenge as being a competition for Club Pilots and suggested that there should be a different level of competitions for those pilots who had only just got rid of their red ribbons.

Harriet Pottinger gave details of her own competitions experience, as it was relatively recent compared to many other people at the meeting. She felt that the best way to do it was to start with club competitions and work up to the Club Challenge.

Andy Shaw (Green Dragons) asked how his club could become involved in the Club Challenge and was told to begin with local competitions which then became more organised on a regional level and then national level. The purpose of the competition was to improve the pilots but it was up to the clubs to encourage them.

Harriet wished Patrick the best of luck and thanked him for driving this on. She suggested that the Club Challenge should have information on the website.

Brian Pilcher suggested that this type of discussion should be scheduled for discussion at the AGM next year. He was a low airtime pilot and had found it very interesting; he was sure more people would have attended had they known that this discussion was taking place.

Harriet then thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 3pm.