



2002 Annual General Meeting of the BHPA

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 30 November 2002 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
Marc Asquith
Paul Dancey
Martin Heywood
Brett Janaway
Dick Long
Harriet Pottinger
Angus Pinkerton
Andy Shaw

Peter Studzinski
Merv Turner

50 Voting members
of the Association

In attendance:

David Barber
Jennie Burdett
Mark Dale
Joe Schofield
Petra Slangen

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

The Chairman, Harriet Pottinger, welcomed everyone to the AGM and explained that the presentation of awards would take place at the competitions stand in hall 3 at 2pm.

Apologies had been received from Sites Officer Clive Robinson and our President Ann Welch. Harriet added that this would be the first AGM that Ann had missed since the BHPA was formed.

ITEM 2: RESOLUTIONS

2.1 That the Accounts and Report of the Executive Council for the year ended 31 March 2002 be approved.

The resolution to approve the accounts was passed.

2.2 That the following members be elected to the Executive council: J. Aldridge, P Dancey, M Heywood, A Pinkerton, P Slangen.

John Lawrence asked why it was a block vote and rather than voting for individual candidates. Dick Long explained that as there were five candidates for five places, it was not a contested vote and individual votes were unnecessary.

There was one abstention, no votes against and the resolution was therefore approved.

2.3 That Clear & Lane be reappointed as auditors and the Executive Council be authorised to fix their remuneration.

The resolution was approved.

This concluded the formal business of BHPA Limited as required by the Companies Act.

ITEM 3: PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Harriet said that unfortunately Ann Welch was unwell at the moment and unable to be at the meeting but she had sent her written address which Harriet read for her, as follows:

"I would like to start by saying something about Walter Neumark, who I first met some 50 years ago - and always remembered because he had one of those restless brains determined to change the unconventional into the practical and the workable. Had he been a couple of generations earlier he was the sort of person who would have sorted out the mystery of the spin and its recovery.

Walter knew about flying aeroplanes and gliders, and about the disadvantages of the uncontrollable round parachute, so he immediately appreciated the potential of Pierre Lemoigne's slitted canopy which could move through the air.

He saw it not only as a better safety parachute as it could be turned into wind for landing, but which could be towed up into the air for cheaper and safer parachute training - and to Walter almost more importantly, as a means of getting youngsters into the air. Then as a way to teach the principles of soaring in thermals. He started parascending clubs and the BAPC with its

own magazine. It was with this background and enthusiasm that Walter contributed so much to the BHPA.

Way back in the sixties Walter let me fly his precious Lemoigne, towing me up with a Landrover to several hundred feet - it felt like thousands, I had never had any desire to leap out of an aircraft, but I enjoyed this.

Ever since, I have appreciated the value of Walter's dogged and brilliantly pig-headed brain. The obits in Skywings by Marc Asquith and Bill Morris were absolutely right and I am sure would have been liked by Walter - even made him laugh.

We should not forget him or what he did for all of us.

In hang gliding and paragliding we are lucky in having a large number of competent people who are prepared to take responsibility for themselves and those for whom they are responsible - like instructors, repairers, winch drivers etc. etc. These people are rarely, if ever, negligent but if anything does go wrong there are always a few, who through their own stupidity, seem far too ready to blame the responsible and able people who have done their best. It is a culture which has come to us from across the pond, and in the long term can only damage the flying which gives so much pleasure.

People should not have to keep looking over their shoulder while giving of their skills. I taught people to fly gliders for 40 years and neither had nor needed any insurance. Instructors at the time could teach without any fear of reprisals. Unfortunately, I do not know how the present culture can be reversed.

Now, I would like to thank Harriet for her excellent chairmanship in guiding the BHPA through the maze of bureaucratic problems over the last years. I hope we all appreciate just how much work is has been."

ITEM 4: OFFICERS' REPORTS

Officers' full reports are available at www.bhpa.co.uk

Harriet informed members that the BHPA is now ten years old but we will save the anniversary celebration until next year as then it will be the thirtieth anniversary of the start of the original associations.

Thanks were expressed to the BHPA staff for all their work during the year and the hundred or so volunteers, without whom the BHPA could not operate. Brett Janaway was thanked for his contribution during his time spent on Exec.

4.1 Treasurer

Dick Long reported that there are no real problems with the BHPA's situation at the moment. We made a small surplus for the year which is exactly the way it should be, we do not want to make huge profits by increasing fees.

Once again Skywings has done very well; this is the most visible element of the membership package and is an excellent publication.

The Management Accounts have just been completed for the first six months of this year and we are on track for a small surplus again.

Steve Uzochukwu asked whether the interest on our reserves was included in the accounts and Dick replied that it

was. Steve was concerned that the BHPA was not actually covering its costs and was relying on the interest from the reserves. In response Dick said that the same thing applies to the Sports Council grant or the money we receive from the affinity card, if we did not get them it would make a big difference. We take members' subscriptions in advance and put the money on deposit to gain interest, if we did not use the interest then subscriptions would have to go up.

4.2 FSC

Angus Pinkerton said there had been five fatalities during the year; four paragliding and one powered hang gliding. Three of the paragliding accidents were the result of low level collapses and the other was a sea landing in which the pilot drowned. The phg fatality was due to the pilot not having enough distance on the take off field and he hit power lines.

An increasing number of our accidents are happening abroad and FSC are becoming concerned that the holiday atmosphere is encouraging pilots to do things that they would not do at home. The claims through Airsports Insurance have increased substantially.

Angus then gave brief details of the information from all the FSC panels contained in his report. He thanked all the members who sit on FSC and all the panel members as well as all the volunteers such as Coaches and Safety Officers in the clubs.

4.3 Insurance

Martin Heywood reported that we had been very fortunate to renew our insurance for the coming year at the same premium. Since insurance premiums had increased throughout the industry our renewal at the same premium actually represented a fall in real terms. Our premium will of course increase at some point but it is difficult to predict when. There are two large claims on the books at the moment and these will inevitably make a difference. We are not in a buyers' market and cannot expect to continue to do as well as we have been until now.

To date, a requirement for £5m cover has been made by only one landowner.

Joe Schofield referred to the increased number of claims from abroad mentioned by Angus. Martin said that the claims through Airsports for repatriation, medical expenses, equipment etc. had gone up enormously and premiums would have to be increased. Unfortunately everyone wants to claim for everything these days.

4.4 Skywings

Paul Dancey reported that Skywings had been affected by the F&M outbreak but everything is now back to normal and Skywings is well within budget. Following negotiations with our printers, our print bill has been reduced and there is more colour in the magazine. From 2003, it will be in full colour at no extra cost to us. Also, we have had PageFast handling our advertising for ten years and have decided that we now need a fresh approach. Therefore Colin Fargher has taken over and we hope that advertising sales will increase. Skywings also has a stand at the exhibition this year to sell magazine subscriptions.

Paul then thanked Joe Schofield and Colin Fargher for their work during the year.

Harriet asked whether mono advertisements would still be available for advertisers who did not want colour and Paul replied that the option to use mono would still be available.

4.5 Sites

Clive Robinson was unable to be at the meeting but Harriet said he would still be available on email if anyone needed to contact him.

Harriet asked members to remember to add anything of interest to Clive's rare birds register and reminded them of the Stanage Edge success with regard to the Ring Ouzel. Clive has now been asked by the EHPU to compile a European register of site 'issues'.

Dave Daniels addressed the meeting on behalf of Wessex HG & PG Club who are hoping to raise £60k to purchase Bell Hill. John Aldridge asked whether the site would be 'Members Only'. Dave replied that the members only rule is due purely to overcrowding at the site. Ideally Wessex would like Bell Hill to be an open site but they would have to see how things work out. Marc Asquith suggested that an alternative would be to have site marshals which Wessex could do if they owned the site.

However, Dave said he wanted freedom to fly and did not want 'policemen' at the top of the hill telling people when they could and couldn't fly.

4.6 Competitions

John Aldridge presented his written report and there were no questions from the floor.

4.7 Events

Merv Turner was not available at the meeting but Petra Slangen presented the report on marketing. Petra said the Panel had attended three major shows during the year and would be attending the Outdoor Show early next year. Stands are available to BHPA schools at discounted rates. There had been a problem with people being unable to get into the Outdoor Show this year but next year the capacity is being increased to overcome this.

Petra also mentioned other marketing panel initiatives such as telephoning lapsed members.

4.8 Club Liaison

Andy Shaw said he would first like to thank the Marketing Panel for all their hard work at the exhibitions during the year. These had been of real benefit to our schools and he advised any schools that had not attended one of the exhibitions to get in touch with the Marketing Panel.

Andy then went on to say that we should be working to get youth into our Association. We must get youngsters interested in the sport early on, otherwise there is a danger that we will run out of instructors in years to come.

4.9 Website

Peter Studzinski said that unfortunately he had not had time to complete the tasks he had set himself last year but now that winter is here and he cannot fly so much he would be catching up.

Mark Woodhams mentioned that there was a spelling error on the BHPA home page and asked Peter to correct it.

In regard to Smartgroups, Mike Bennett asked whether they had undertaken to report to Peter if there was a problem but Peter said they had not. Mike offered to investigate what was available as an alternative and agreed to liaise with Peter on this issue.

4.10 Public Relations

Harriet reported that David Wootton was standing down from the Marketing Panel but would still be dealing with the media. Harriet also informed the meeting that Donal MacIntyre was at the exhibition and would be signing copies of his book at the Flyability stand.

4.11 Admin

Harriet asked all members to try to remember to use the 0870 numbers when calling the office, technical staff or Skywings.

Members were then advised that school registration fees and instructor supplements would be back to the full amount in 2003. These have been subsidised for two years to support the schools following Foot & Mouth at a cost of over £90k.

4.12 External Representation

Marc Asquith reported that he and two others had set up a Royal Aero Club Technical Committee which would deal with matters related to active aviation rather than medals and awards etc.

A huge amount of work has been done in response to the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and both Marc and Harriet said thanks were due to David Roberts who led the project.

Before closing the meeting Harriet said that the BHPA trophy presentations would be in the exhibition hall and thanks must go to Lee Harris who has set up the stand free of charge.