

British Gliding Association Annual Report 2014



Chairman's Report

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How will 2014 measure up for the BGA? Was it a vintage season? What state of health are we in?

Overall, we meet the 2015 season with solid finances, an experienced, professional full-time team in the Leicester HQ, increasing junior membership, improved performance records, number one in the world team rankings and an excellent relationship with our regulator, the CAA. BGA volunteers are as active as ever, many clubs are reporting increasing activity, there's a new website to improve our online reach and gliding people are as passionate as ever to engage with anyone who's yet to experience the wonder of unpowered flight.

Of course, the regulatory changes we face continue to provide a challenging environment to operate and thrive in. We're fortunate that previous, far-sighted people put together the corporate structures - the committees, the Articles of Association, the club structure as BGA members to provide a voice, drive stability, yet organise us to face the challenges that seemingly roll on, wave after wave.

The last few years under EASA's onslaught of (largely unnecessary) European regulation have been particularly challenging, arguably underpinned by the initial omission of recognising not-for-profit sporting bodies, or even sporting activity itself, as differing from commercial activity. We've been on the back foot ever since: airworthiness, training, medicals, licensing, operations, airspace - wave after wave of consultation, expert groups and striving to minimise the invariably negative impact that these could have on our sport.

Our BGA cycle of budget approval is circa 6 months before our financial year commencement. It has meant trying to 'second guess' not only the outcome of regulatory consultation, but the likely costing schedule from our own CAA when, they too, are under significant pressure of change as their raison d'être has evolved from regulation to enforcement on behalf of Europe.

Our finances remain stable and, whilst costs have risen, we will continue to minimise any increases for our members. I remain deeply thankful for the many volunteers who have worked so

tirelessly to bring common sense to bear within EASA, particularly David Roberts who has been walking the corridors of EASA on our behalf as an unpaid volunteer for 10 years plus.

The CAA too has been very helpful in this time of significant change. Their leadership engage with us, listen and consult fairly. Indeed, it was the CAA who pushed so strongly in mitigating the impact of the proposed EASA aeromedical regulations. They have interpreted the regulations to allow adoption of the BGA inspector system to satisfy the Part M requirements. They have recently, like much of Europe, delayed implementation of the Part FCL training and licensing regime. There is much common sense there and I don't mean that to patronise, but am thankful the CAA leadership sees value in the BGA's measured approach. It's so different in other regions. Our Nordic cousins have airworthiness costs so high they need oxygen to settle the glider annual. Some resort to employing overseas airworthiness organisations to 'sign-off' their gliders.

I have just heard that, against much advice, the Germans have actually opted 'in' to the FCL regulation for April this year, meaning all German training organisations must be approved, with the corresponding approved personnel, approved facilities and approved procedures, together with all the corresponding oversight, paperwork, cost and inconvenience. Surely no-one thinks it safer, but there is real fear amongst our German gliding colleagues that much German gliding training will stop shortly after April this year. Not much common sense there. There is hope, with the new head of EASA, Patrick Ky suggesting a lighter touch for GA is the way ahead, but we've yet to witness tangible outputs from this well-intentioned rhetoric.

Amongst this EASA driven change, we've enhanced our Op Regs, our Laws & Rules and there is ongoing development around our Safety Management System, Quality System and Airworthiness Inspection team. Whilst much of it is driven by EASA, one might reflect that the 'no win, no fee' culture may well have enforced much tightening of our processes anyway. We strive to retain a common sense approach, minimising cost and change for change's sake.

It's not all roses with our UK regulator, though. Airspace issues are now our number one bone of contention. We don't expect, or want, to fly amongst dense commercial traffic and we understand that other users need fair access too. However, the commercially driven airspace grabs of the last few years around Norwich, Doncaster, Southend, and Farnborough have resulted in huge swathes of airspace classed unusable for much of GA, with negligible use actually made of the space itself. Check out the daily schedules for the airports. One might conclude the repeated pattern demonstrates a systemic failure in the airspace determination process. After all, what justification can there be for allocating significant areas that remain blatantly under-used? It is clear the regional airports are grabbing all they can during this airspace, real estate 'gold rush', whilst GA is increasingly squashed into the gaps between.

The BGA, along with our other General Aviation Alliance colleagues, are actively engaged with the DfT, CAA and the commercially-driven team within NATS to facilitate adoption of a balanced, risk-based approach to airspace determination. Airspace remains our single most important issue for the foreseeable future. We remain indebted to the small team of expert airspace volunteers led by John Williams, working ever-increasing hours on our behalf.

On a more positive note, 2014 was a fine summer, with most clubs reporting increased activity, more soaring, training and fun. There

were a number of successful domestic competitions and the British Team completed two world championships as overall champions. Amongst the many superb individual performances included world gold medals to the 20m team of Howard and Steve Jones, whilst Jez Hood and Andy Davis won silver in their respective classes of Standard and Open.

On the subject of congratulations, our CEO Pete Stratten was awarded a Royal Aero Club Silver medal in this year's awards. He is hard working, patient, hugely modest and one of the BGA's greatest assets. We've been most fortunate to have such a capable CEO during these last few years of change and challenge.

So, what will 2015 hold for us all? It's already started with a bang, as John Williams used the Scottish wave systems to break the UK 500km triangle record - in February - a record in itself.

Safe landings.

Peter Harvey
Chairman, British Gliding Association

Chief Executive's Report

What a difference it makes when the sun shines! Club airfields have certainly been busy during 2014 and many of our pilots have enjoyed some of the best of UK gliding conditions, made personal achievements, or simply had a fantastic time just taking part in the sport and activity that they love. Most of the UK's expedition sites have been well-used by visitors, some of who have for the first time discovered the great flying available on our doorstep and are hopefully encouraging others to visit next year. The British Gliding Team once again found itself on the World Gliding Championships podium, including Gold for Steve and Howard Jones in the 20m Multi-Seat class and Silver for Jez Hood in the Standard class, - lots to celebrate. It was great to see some change emerging from the large number of successful competitions held across the UK, including organisers of the Club Class Nationals combining a particularly epic week of racing with providing the action online as each race unfolded.

The BGA continues to have an effective voice both domestically and internationally. During 2014 we worked with government agencies, regulators and sporting organisations on diverse issues such as HMRC requirements affecting sport; cabinet minister Grant Shapps' GA Red Tape Challenge; emerging change at EASA; and the UK's future airspace strategy. That work continues. Consultations, many of which are handled by our small team of volunteer experts and are subject to collaborative action with GA Alliance colleagues, continue to flow through. We are very aware of the difficulties that can accompany change, particularly when the regulatory goalposts move. We have tried to keep as much load as possible off the shoulders of busy club committees and look to club chairmen to let us know if we've got the balance right.

As you would expect, we are proactively involved in national airspace safety initiatives. Somewhat worryingly during 2014, air sport has experienced particular difficulty engaging with the CAA on some airspace matters. At the time of writing, there are some eighteen airspace change developments that the BGA, along with the GA Alliance, is involved with, including a number of long overdue post-implementation reviews. It is hoped that going forward into 2015 the CAA will find the resource to address a growing list of issues. We will continue to protect our needs as a stakeholder in the face of influential commercial interests.

Of course, continued freedom to fly would be pointless without pilots. Focussed, expert-led effort on our marketing plans last winter provided anticipated clarity of purpose and key messages. The new, outward facing, marketing part of the website that signposts to our clubs has been well received. The next significant marketing task is to establish a sustainable way of encouraging lots of people to discover gliding. There are 64+ million people out there in the UK! Periodic digital marketing initiatives coupled with media exposure pulling people towards the website and onto clubs is a part of the solution and will be progressed with professional support in 2015. Work is underway to consider options and strategies around future participation.

New members are one half of the growth equation; hanging onto existing members is the other. The Information for Members section of the new website should be close to completion by the time this report is published. The completely-new member section of the website will support clubs' efforts to better meet their members' needs by describing training and development opportunities and providing resources and easily accessible, expert information. Of course, only a club can make sure it provides a place that people want to visit regularly, feel comfortable at, and where people can achieve their aspirations.

The Development Committee continues to provide outstanding support to clubs, both at a one-to-one, single-subject level and on more general themes including, for example, during the annual club management conference and through external engagement. By co-ordinating the already active and effective strands of support including Junior Gliding and Aim Higher, the newly formed Participation Group aims to make the most of related funding opportunities and available resources - including through the new website. Pilots flying solo at 14 and 15 have become the norm in 2014 with lots of clubs reporting increased activity at that end of the spectrum. It's been good to be able to provide some support to our Air Cadet gliding colleagues this year, with cadets and instructors otherwise unable to fly taking part in jointly organised and externally funded flying at a number of BGA clubs. This partnership, as with other participant-related activity, is founded partly on our ability to address risk through our safety management approach as well as flexibility and a positive outlook at clubs.

Cautious forecasting and ongoing cost control resulted in a healthier than budgeted surplus in 2014. Fees continue to be held down, bearing in mind the need to resource our member services and retain an appropriate contingency fund. Keeping our governance relevant remains a priority. Following on from the 2012 redrafting of the Articles, late in 2014 clubs were consulted on and supplied helpful input to proposals to modernise the BGA's Operational Regulations ahead of the next AGM.

In closing, it is important to reflect on the huge amount of work carried out throughout the year by volunteers, staff and contractors. They all do what they do because they care, and without them our sport could not function. I would like to thank everyone that contributes. Whether it's teaching pilots to fly, driving a winch, maintaining gliders, mentoring new soaring pilots, processing important admin, getting stuck into the detail of draft regulations, running a club, or being a member of the BGA's Executive Committee and everything else in between, all of these contributions allow the majority of us to just enjoy the fascinating, personally challenging and hugely rewarding sport of gliding.

Pete Stratten
Chief Executive

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Treasurer's Report

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From a financial point of view, 2013/4 was a better than expected year. The historic decline in gliding participation with an acceleration of pilots lost through tightening medical requirements has so far been less severe than forecast. The welcome extension of the EASA licensing transition to 2018 provides an opportunity for disproportionate regulation and the associated current and future costs to be addressed.

I am pleased report a surplus of income after tax for the year of £70,999 (2013 £78,539). The surplus includes a one-off distribution of £26,500 received on the winding up of NPLG Limited. NPLG had been set up as a joint project between the BGA, LAA and AOPA to manage the NPPL on behalf of the CAA. That relatively small administration task is now carried out by the LAA and the NPLG is no longer required.

Following a review of the tax treatment of BGA trading income, we have made a full provision against a potential tax liability which is currently under discussion with our tax advisers.

The long promised web-site modernisation is in progress with £14,000 having been committed to the re-write in the year. Other central office costs have generally been contained to less than inflation.

We continue to spread cash deposits between a number of banks to minimise the continuing risk from the financial crisis and have achieved a further increase in interest receivable.

The 2015/16 Budget assumes the continuance of the current low inflation and interest rates. Participation is assumed to remain broadly similar although there is a notable drop in the number of temporary members following the increased numbers in 2013.

The need to halt and reverse the historic decline in participation is a top priority for all. The Executive Committee has allocated a budget of £20,000 in each of the current financial year and the Budget period to encourage participation and infrastructure, including instructor and inspector development.

It is proposed that all fees and prices will be held at current levels for the 2015/16 Budget period and we will continue to bear down on costs to achieve balanced levels of income and expenditure.

Leslie Kaye
BGA Treasurer

In last year's report I wondered whether 2014 would see a turning point in the inexorable pressure for more and more controlled airspace (CAS). There were indeed some grounds for optimism: the CAA's introduction of Radio Mandatory Zones (RMZs) as an alternative to Class D; the Post Implementation Reviews (PIRs) being carried out on the patently disproportionate introduction of Class D airspace at Norwich and Doncaster; and the hoped-for climate of co-operation with our regulator in developing a strategic approach to the needs of VFR flights in parallel with a similar option for IFR.

Sadly it appears that those opportunities for common sense have been squandered or ignored.

We have instead seen a continuing headlong rush for Class D at Southend, Farnborough and Inverness and expect to see yet more attempts for airspace at Oxford, Hawarden, Brize-Norton and Leeds Bradford. The PIRs yet again remain uncompleted. The response to Farnborough by the GA community as a whole was nothing short of magnificent – but it took a toll on everyone's resources that could have been so much better used in developing improved options for VFR. It is hard to understand why such efforts had to be made just because TAG were hell-bent on acquiring Class D (and class A!) when the recently introduced RMZ policy seemed tailor-made for such a situation.

Even more galling in 2014 was the decision issued by the CAA to introduce CAS in place of Class F in areas where no commercial

traffic operates, in areas where there had been no consultation and in areas critical to some of the best soaring opportunities in Europe. And this was done despite our repeatedly pointing out the futility of this action to the highest levels of management in the CAA. We have, after the event, been promised a prompt review of the decision but this brings small solace to an issue which should never have arisen in the first place. Sadly, at a time when other parts of the CAA appear to be adopting an enlightened approach to regulation, this single decision has left the credibility of the airspace section at an all-time low.

We can only hope that 2015 bring a more responsible and listening approach from the regulator; without this, it will be difficult to sustain our preferred approach of making logical and proportionate arguments in the expectation of reasonable results.

I am again indebted to the main stalwarts of the airspace committee, Sarah Kelman, Andy Roch, Gordon MacDonald and Bruce Cooper and many others, as well as magnificent efforts from John Brady and Tom Hardie of the LAA and BHPA respectively.

John Williams
Chairman, Airspace Committee

Competitions and Awards Committee

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The Competition and Awards Committee has seen a change over the past year with a new chairman now in place. I would like to thank the outgoing chairman Russell Cheetham for the hard work and time he gave to the committee over many years. The committee has also taken on a number of new members to help with some specific tasks going forward – more on that later.

The 2014 season has been one of the most successful ever for the British Team, winning the team Gold medal at both World Championship events, with the most notable performances from Steve and Howard Jones winning the Gold Medal in the inaugural 20m Multi-Seat Class World Championships.

Back home, the national championships all had good weather and an average of 5 competition days. The big story this year was seeing the Junior Nationals back at full strength with 47 entries and 5 two-seaters that gave 10 P2s the chance to experience the competition environment before completing their silver badge. The Junior Nationals are key to feeding the success of national competitions and future British Teams so it is absolutely vital that we maintain the level and quality of the Junior Nationals movement.

The Club Class Nationals also deserves a mention for their successful use of Flarm tracking throughout the competition. This not only makes it more interesting for people on the ground, but also provides publicity and a way for the general public to interact with and understand competition flying. The Competitions Committee hopes that Flarm tracking is developed further through the IGC and manufacturers so that it can be used to its full potential in the future.

Overseeing and monitoring the conduct of all UK competitions with respect to competitors and organisers is the mainstay of the Competitions Committee function. This includes amending the competition rules and associated guidance material as required, improving the overall quality and safety of events whilst principally influencing and adopting IGC strategy where appropriate.

During the year, we have worked in a number of areas and will build on this as the year progresses. Increasing the dialogue that the Competitions Committee has with the competition movement is something that needed to be improved. You may have seen this start to happen in the form of increased competition forums and the recent online survey. The survey went out to current competition pilots as well as people who no longer fly competitions. We had a

very good response with over 400 people taking the time to answer the survey. The information gathered in this way is key to helping your committee understand what needs to be improved and what needs to be changed. This gives direction for the future as well as providing host clubs with useful feedback to help them improve the service they offer to pilots and crew who attend their competitions.

Competition safety is always on the radar of the Completions Committee and the BGA as a whole. This year we will be holding seminars for Competition Directors and their organisation so that we can discuss potential safety initiatives and also provide direct feedback taken from the competition survey. During the seminars we will cover competition best practice, trends and recent issues in competitions and the importance of the role of director. This will hopefully serve to improve the already excellent service the clubs' competition organisation provides.

As mentioned previously, your committee has taken on some new members specifically to look at some key areas going forward. The committee now has a standing action to create and present a 5 year plan to the BGA Executive every year. In summary, this will include initiatives to increase competition participation, competition flying development coaches, and reinvigorate the interclub league. If people want to fly competitions we need to make it as easy as possible and give them all the tools they need to make their first competition safe and enjoyable.

The management of the British Team also falls under the committee. With the continued success of the British Team we would like to build on that and increase the interaction the team has with the gliding movement. We want to create an aspirational competitions structure where people can enter at the grass roots level and see how they can progress from their first competition to, one day, maybe representing Great Britain. Supporting the British Team and the training and development of future pilots obviously takes money. Developing a sustainable financial plan will also form a major part of the five year plan.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the Competitions Committee for their continued hard work and welcome new members Matt Cook, Richard Hood and Andy Cockerell.

Mark Holden

Chairman, Competitions & Awards Committee

The consultation on the new regulations being proposed for Community Amateur Sport Clubs (CASC) continued to dominate the Development Committee's workload in 2014. These regulations provide clubs with 80% rate relief and other benefits. With 33 gliding clubs registered and 8 applying to be registered, CASC brings around £350,000 per annum into our sport.

Many clubs would have found the initial proposals from the HMRC very difficult to comply with. We managed to secure a seat as part a forum set up between HMRC and sports affected by CASC. Through this forum we have influenced the new regulations and, whilst they are not ideal, we now believe gliding clubs should be able to meet the CASC requirements. The regulations are not simple and the Development Committee has organised workshops for concerned clubs, to help them understand and comply with the new regulations.

Developing the response to CASC has required a great deal of data from clubs and work from volunteers, coordinated by Alison Randle. I would like to record my thanks to all these for their valuable efforts.

A key activity for the Development Committee is to help clubs share good practices and ideas. Some clubs are managing to grow their membership numbers and are becoming more financially more secure. By sharing some of these ideas we hope to help others grow too. This has become a strong theme of the annual BGA Club Management Conference, an event that we will continue to refine and develop. We also provide a regular update to the broader gliding population through articles in Sailplane and Gliding.

An update of the Funding Guide was issued in 2014, a valuable resource not just to identify sources of funding but also to help clubs with the process of applying for funding. Here I would remind clubs that the Planning and Environment Fund is still available to help clubs who need financial support with professional fees to help deal with threats to a clubs' future. Applications for this should be made to Diana King. In 2014 the Development Committee provided support to 11 clubs seeking various types of funding.

Much of the Development Committee's workload is helping clubs to respond to a diverse range of problems and issues. In 2014 this included nine different planning issues, two clubs with internal management issues, two lease renewals, two site purchases and one claim for damages to a site. Responding to such requests often requires quite specialist knowledge and we must be careful to provide professional, robust advice. We are therefore developing a panel of experts that we can draw on in areas such as land management, legal advice, management advice and, in particular, we are seeking someone with experience in dealing with vulnerable adults. I would urge anyone who can help expand this team to contact me via the BGA Office.

The final significant change for the Development Committee was the transfer of the Chair from Diana King to myself. Diana has been in the chair since 2004 when she was also a member of the BGA Executive. She has made an enormous contribution to our sport and has quietly helped many clubs deal with difficult issues from site purchase through to their very survival. I was delighted to note her pleasure when she was presented with a well-deserved BGA Gold Medal at the Club Management Conference in November. Diana remains a member of the Development Committee so we can still benefit from her experience and wisdom.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the Development Committee for donating their time and energy to our sport.

Dave Latimer

Chairman, Development Committee

Work on flying operations continued apace in 2014, including much work with outside agencies. Hugh Woodsend, our representative on the Airprox Board, retires after many years of sterling work and we wish him well in his retirement. He is being replaced by Chris Fox and Ed Downham who will share the role. The BGA Airspace Incursions representative has attended meetings with various organisations and has continued to represent the BGA in a number of matters including VFR Charts and NOTAMs. It is a fact that, in aviation, little changes - just the people - and that point is reinforced when looking through the detail of our team's work.

As is usual, the BGA Winching advisor has been busy answering myriad questions from clubs concerning such matters as Dyneema, Skylaunch throttle settings, and winch strop lengths. He has even gone as far this year as translating his winching presentations into French for the benefit of our cross-channel neighbours. It is interesting to note how many overseas gliding organisations contact the BGA for operational advice and information: 5 countries in 2014.

We have been able to help with input into the "Red Tape Challenge" as well as other regulatory initiatives. Most of you will be aware that the EASA Part-FCL changes have been put into abeyance until 2018 as EASA moves towards a more proportionate and evidence-based form of regulation. Finally, the CAA General Aviation Unit has come into being and initial indications are that, as predicted last year, the new structure will prove beneficial to our sport.

Ted Norman

Chairman, Flight Operations Committee

1. Examining

Senior Examiners

At the end of 2013, Patrick Naegeli, Andy Miller and John Garrett successfully negotiated the path to become EASA Part-FCL Senior Examiners (Sailplanes) under the watchful eye of Mark Young, our CAA examining overseer.

During the year, these three lead SE(S)s have worked on behalf of the CAA to assess a number of volunteers and to recommend their appointment as SE(S). They have also gone on to develop a training course and a seminar for FIE and FE candidates. Initial sessions have taken place. During 2015 a further small number of sessions will be run followed by the required Assessments of Competence. The aim is to build up the number of EASA-compliant Examiners on an as-required basis.

Regional Teams

Setting aside what could easily be a major distraction - the conversion to life under EASA - the regional examining teams continue to support CFIs and their clubs.

2. Instructing

Course Development

Mike Fox and his team of BGA instructor coaches have continued to provide instructor courses on a regional basis. This year, 50% of candidates undertook the new modular courses. To benefit from the improved teaching philosophies included in this revised course, principally Threat & Error Management (TEM) and Teaching & Learning, it is planned to only use this format for future courses.

FIC Training

Mike Fox and Colin Sword have developed a training day for our club Flight Instructor Coaches (FICs). The first of these training day

was run at Sutton Bank at the end of November. Feedback from the attendees was generally positive. Mike and Colin are fine-tuning the course content before it is made available regionally during 2015.

FI Revalidation Seminar

Instructors who have converted to holding an EASA Part-FCL licence can, as part of their three year re-validation requirement, attend a seminar. To meet this need, Mike Fox is busy developing a seminar which is scheduled for roll-out during 2015.

Training Manual & Revised Pilot Training Syllabus Roll-Out

Under the leadership of Mike Fox, the BGA's Training Standards Manager:

Andy Miller has, during the year, completed the development of an ATO training manual. The revised syllabus within the manual covers pilot training from first lesson through to Bronze Badge and XC endorsement (i.e. licence) standard, as a continuous process.

As the transition to EASA has been slowed, Andy has edited this manual to remove any unnecessary regulatory bits and pieces. He is currently trialling the revised syllabus at his home club before offering it to a small number of clubs for further evaluation. When the feedback from the trials has been incorporated into the manual it will be available for everyone to use, initially on a voluntary basis until EASA Part-FCL finally kicks in.

Don Irving

Chairman, Instructors' Committee

2014 represented a positive year for 'Junior' gliding – a significant number of first solos and a [nearly] full entry list at the Junior Championships are among the highlights. The Junior Gliding team has been busy maintaining a growing social media scene, organising the Winter Series and increasing opportunities for participation at all levels. Whilst the past year has shown an upward trend in Junior gliding, there is considerable progress yet to make.

The youngest members of our sport face the challenges of increased living costs, university fees, geographical location and extortionate car insurance premiums which often relegate gliding to a luxury item. The Junior Gliding team is well aware of these issues and is working on a number of initiatives to ease these burdens.

The reduced solo age has proved particularly successful in opening doors to a new breed of pilot. We have witnessed great enthusiasm from this contingent, and fully encourage clubs to provide as much support for this as possible. We have recognised that some attention must be given to the widening age gap between new and "old" juniors. New initiatives are being discussed to bridge the gap, and ensure a seamless development throughout the 'Junior' period.

We are delighted that so many clubs have become Junior Gliding Centres; this shows a genuine support for youth aviation. During 2015, our focus will turn to developing the JGC offerings and providing standardised promotional material for clubs to use.

The Junior Championships were hosted by Lasham Gliding Society and saw 47 pilots competing across 8 challenging days. It was great to see so many new faces, with several more taking part in the two-seater coaching program. Whatever a young pilot's ambition within gliding, we see this competition as a training ground for all. The combination of racing, tuition, socialising, coaching, cross-country and the inevitable field landings produces well rounded pilots. We would ask that all clubs encourage their Juniors to participate in this competition. The 2015 Juniors will be held at Aston Down, commencing the 22nd August.

The Winter Series, renowned for its social scene and the ability to extract soaring from any weather, has cemented itself in the calendar. Successful events at Dunstable and Denbigh preceded a well

attended jaunt to Scotland in October. Portmoak delivered excellent ridge soaring and provided some with their first taste of wave.

We welcome Saz Reed to the Junior Gliding team joining Steve Pozerskis, Matt Davis and myself. She is a popular member of the Juniors and a regular Winter Series day "winner" who will be taking on a number of roles, including encouraging more females into the sport.

The BGA conference saw three rowdy tables of young pilots getting involved; a very visible sign of the revitalised junior scene. The 2014 conference also saw the creation of the Alex Ward Trophy, in memory of a promising young pilot, and which will be awarded to those who make an outstanding contribution to junior gliding. The votes for the past year have been cast, and we are pleased to say there were numerous worthy candidates. It has been whittled down to one, and will be announced at the 2015 BGA dinner.

Social media continues to play an important role in 'creating a buzz' and organising events. Given the wide geographical spread, it helps maintain a family atmosphere and we encourage all young pilots to join in the banter. The events are open to anyone, of all ages, who are simply willing to bring fun back to grass roots gliding.

2014 has delivered a step change in the junior scene, with increasing enthusiasm and participation. However a considerable amount of work remains to attract new pilots and secure the long term future of gliding. We are always accepting of suggestions and volunteers to help, so please feel free to contact us at ukjuniorgliding@gmail.com.

Juniors Financial Support

Once again, a fair proportion of UK Junior pilots have been supported in their flying progression this year by a number of generous bursaries and scholarships, both from third-party organisations and, of course, the inaugural awards from the Philip Wills Memorial Fund. Pilots have received financial assistance from - amongst others - The Caroline Trust, The Air League, The Royal Aero Club Trust, The Honourable Company of Air Pilots and the Royal Aeronautical Society Centennial Fund. We are glad to see that the Philip

Wills scholarships will return for 2015, as these have offered valuable help to a number of pilots for who are no longer considered of 'Junior' age by some of the other organisations.

It's also great to see that individual club 'cadet' schemes are having a very real impact on the number of young pilots becoming involved with the UK Juniors scene; we've noticed that the age demographic at events such as the Winter Series is becoming somewhat more youthful, which is good news. Some of these younger guys and girls have been able to gain extensive and valuable experience for very little of their own money, and it's encouraging that a number of them are beginning to get involved with cross-country and racing.

We feel it's also important to thank the private owners and clubs who made their gliders available for young pilots to use during the Junior National Championships and for other events throughout the season. We all know that the costs of owing a glider or even hiring one for a competition can be prohibitive to those still in education or without 'proper' jobs yet, and it was fantastic to see so many borrowed gliders on the grid at the largest Junior Nationals we've had for a long while.

Charlie Jordan
Junior Gliding Development Team

Again, in 2014 no accident to a glider or powered aircraft operating under BGA control was attributed to a medical cause.

During the year 157 file items were logged, a further and large reduction on previous years. Of these the majority (14) were from pilots and concerned specific medical problems. Three were from clubs and concerned individuals. The second major source (11) was the BGA and other associations. An increasing correspondence questioning policy came from other nations (9). GPs were the third group with 4 queries, all concerned with individual pilots.

Unusually, metabolic (diabetes) was the leading diagnostic group (6) with cardiovascular disease, neurological and psychiatric equal second (3 each). Malignancies, ophthalmic and respiratory issues were also recorded (1 each). The introduction of the LAPL with decisions taken by AMEs will account for much of the change and reduction in the number of queries. The disadvantage of this is that the prevalence of adverse pathologies is no longer known to us. In Where the BGA Adviser was concerned, the recommended disposal was full flying (4 cases), restricted (OPL) (6 cases) and safety pilot (2 cases). No pilot was recommended for grounding.

International representation is of great importance, if only to spread BGA experience to our European fellow pilots. Steve Gibson has taken the lead with EASA. Peter Saundby represents the UK with the FAI Medical Commission (CIMP) and we retain close contacts with Europe Air Sports.

At the start of the year we were expecting that almost all pilots would be operating under Part-FCL by April 2015. During the year there was a reversal of the political tide in Brussels which led to participation in a CAA working group, postponement of the implementation of Part-FCL and a review by the BGA of future medical policy consequent on continued delegated power.

The BGA first introduced medical fitness assurance in the 1960s following a serious accident, the cause of which was an instructor who had concealed evidence of serious disease. In the original form this was a simple declaration to private driver standard for flying solo or with another pilot and, for instructors, a declaration to the then PPL standard which had to be endorsed by a doctor with access to past clinical records. Later the BGA joined with other Associations to draft the NPPL which followed previous BGA practice but required a GP endorsement for all pilots and replaced

the old PPL standard by the DVLA Group 2 (professional) driver standard. The UK NPPL was designed to comply with anticipated EU legislation but in the event it was not accepted as a means of compliance (AMC) by EASA. This recent reversal of the political tide gives an opportunity for the BGA to return to the earlier and simpler procedure by which solo pilots can self-declare fitness.

Intervening changes such as the improvement of administration of driving licences and decreased prevalence of cardio-vascular disease permit further relaxations. The CAA has established a Working Group of which the BGA is a contributing member and which is now considering this same issue of recreational pilot medical fitness, but everything proposed by the BGA is consistent with the ideas of that Working Group. Indeed any changes introduced by the BGA could act as a useful pilot study for the CAA and therefore should be subject to monitoring.

The principal change proposed is that the possession of a driving licence should be sufficient evidence of fitness to fly gliders solo or with another pilot. Because we also wish to encourage youngsters who may not yet hold a driving licence, it is proposed that for those under the age of 25, a self-declaration (signed by parent or guardian if under 18 years) to the DVLA private driver standard should be acceptable. This can be administered at club level as previously. The reason for the upper age limit is to provide some check on older drivers who may have lost their licence for reasons such as alcohol or traffic offences. They would have to seek an NPPL under existing rules and the GP is then likely to bring their concerns to the notice of the BGA medical adviser.

The age restriction for instructors over 70 years was agreed some twenty years ago because the incapacity risk for the healthy national population exceeded the critical 2% level at this age. Since then the national death rate from cardio-vascular disease has fallen by a third and while maintaining the same risk exposure level, the age can be raised to 75.

These proposals make no change to previously accepted medical risks; they are a simplification of the means by which fitness can be demonstrated and recognition of epidemiological change.

Drs Peter Saundby, Steve Gibson & Frank Voeten
BGA Medical Advisers

Safety Committee

Following the BGA's adoption of a formal Safety Management System in 2013, the BGA Safety Committee continues to give priority to supporting clubs' and pilots' efforts to reduce the fatal accident rate, to not harming any third parties, and to avoiding any airspace infringements.

The fatal accident aggregate remains markedly lower than at any other time in the past 40 years during which records have been maintained. That's great news. The ongoing safe winch launching campaign as well as instructing-related developments are making a significant contribution. Sadly, an experienced pilot was killed in a loss of control accident in 2014 and our thoughts are with his family and friends. There were also a number of accidents during 2014 that given slightly different circumstances could have resulted in tragedy. Please read on - the next three paragraphs are relevant to you.

Incorrect rigging of gliders remains a significant risk and every year results in pilots attempting to fly with a control disconnected. In most cases, the person rigging the glider allowed themselves to be distracted. It sounds a bit dramatic, but interrupting someone who is rigging their glider could result in that person being injured or much worse. Distraction can result from any exchange that breaks concentration or routine. Meticulous rigging, DI and pre-flight checks are essential. Developing a culture that frowns upon interruption could literally save a life.

Not conflicting with other aircraft is a fundamental skill that all pilots need to learn and consistently work hard at. FLARM is helping pilots to identify possible airborne conflict. But of course the only way to avoid a collision is to maintain an effective lookout, stay on top of situational awareness and, if a collision looks possible, take the right action. Although the mid-air collision trend remains unchanged, a number of mid-air collisions in 2014 are salutary reminders that as pilots we should never relax our lookout or make assumptions. We should also have an abandonment action plan in mind well before it might be needed.

Airspace safety is both a BGA and UK national priority. Careful pre-flight planning and in-flight awareness all contribute to our good record on infringements. But we cannot relax. Yes, qualified glider pilots do accept a level of risk in our sport and Class G is available to all at our own risk. But we should all keep in the front of our minds that if an aircraft full of paying passengers meets another aircraft, flying in the UK as we know it will change forever. Our general awareness of IFR traffic in class G is probably not as good as it ought to be. That's partially to do with a lack of information that the CAA and others are thinking about. But pilots flying close to airfields and ILS feathers can significantly reduce risk as well as inconvenience to others by announcing their presence, regardless of whether or not an RMZ exists. Awareness of and empathy with other airspace users can help us to be proactive in avoiding or mitigating hazards.

The Safety Committee is currently developing its priorities for 2015. The detail will be shared with clubs in the early part of the year.

In closing, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank current and former Regional Safety Officers, members of the Safety Committee and all those club committees, pilots and instructors at clubs who do such a fantastic job of helping to facilitate a sport gliding environment where the levels of risk are as low as reasonably practicable and where third parties are protected from our activities.

Pete Stratten
Chairman, Safety Committee

EASA - European Regulation

The demand for more proportional and risk related regulation has mounted during this year, particularly since the General Aviation Workshop held in Rome in October. EASA is now making significant political decisions in recognition of the special issues facing sport aviation. The BGA continues to play a strong role, working through European Air Sport groups and the UK CAA to seek appropriate measures.

A light touch to maintenance regulation: Following the Rome conference the new EASA Director offered an opportunity to redraft a Part M 'Light' for a range of recreational and GA aircraft, to be defined but certainly including gliding. This task will be implemented through the 'General Aviation Task Force on Part M' programme for 2015. Further to this, the 'General Aviation Task Force on Part M' (Phase 1) work, to simplify the processes of annual airworthiness justification, is complete. These simplified rules will become available next year.

The EASA Certification department has also responded to continuing pressure to lighten burdens on design and modification. A new Certification Specification, known as CS-STAN, is proposed to simplify installation procedures for minor airframe changes including 'special to type' sporting and navigation equipment.

The Part 66 'L' personal engineer licence may be re-emerging. Progress is slow because we are still awaiting the final documentary 'Opinion' from EASA on the details of the licence. The start of the implementation process could still be during 2015 with full implementation probably by 2018. Discussions with the CAA regarding the transition of the BGA inspectors remains ongoing.

The CAA has recently de-regulated self-launching microlights below 300kg AUW. With the assistance of the EGU, the BGA is mounting a campaign to include future sailplane types below 300kg in a deregulated category. This decision remains in the gift of EASA under basic Annex II regulation criteria..

UK Developments

The BGA has been centrally involved in the UK government 'Red Tape Challenge' to reform regulation in General and Sport aviation.

Our relationship with the CAA continues to enable a mutual understanding. The BGA feels it holds a position of respect with the national regulator whereby those roles which remain in national hands are managed in an appropriate and cooperative manner. We continue to meet regularly with the CAA at both policy and operational levels.

On behalf of T-61 Venture motor glider owners the BGA has engaged a design organisation to seek a way forward on fatigue life-ing of these airframes. This is a new initiative on our part, precipitated by the relinquishing of 'Type Certificate Holder' status by the company holding right to this design. We are seeking means whereby our stewardship of these airframes is placed on the same level as UK designed pure gliders.

BGA Support Activity

Education, refresher training and communication will become an increasing role for the technical community, driven by the requirements of personal licensing. We are particularly concerned to develop and run a practical course on woodworking skills as these risk being lost with the preponderance of GRP sailplanes.

Chief Technical Officer

Gordon MacDonald was selected from a strong field of candidates to be the new BGA CTO. Gordon has been in post since October. We thank Jim Hammerton, now retired, for his efforts and advice during his long service with us. Beyond his stewardship of our maintenance practices, of which most inspectors will be aware, Jim proved an exceptionally organised negotiator with CAA at a vital time during regulatory change. He will continue to assist Keith Morgan in meeting our quality targets for the time being. Regional Technical Officers continue to provide valued technical advice at the membership level over wide aspects of the technical side of gliding.

Howard A Torode

Chairman, Technical Committee

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