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Secretary's Foreword

Welcome to this - a revised edition of the AHPA Annual Newsletter. We hope that you find this an enjoyable round-up of AHPA related activity from the past year; and also an equally informative overview of issues that will shape the future of AHPA into 2022. As always, we really welcome your feedback on this publication, in the spirit of continuous improvement. Similarly, we are always on the lookout for the next generation of Committee members - so if you think you have something to offer, please get in touch.

Key Information - Changes to Kit Hire Charges

- We've listened to your feedback on the annual kit hire payment dates; and acted in a way that we hope is agreeable to all. So, to avoid the Christmas - New Year - January period (when funds might be tight...), the annual payment deadline for AHPA Hire Kit has been rescheduled - with payment now due no later than 31 March annually. Whilst we have done what we can to be accommodating, the slip into March means however that this date is a hard deadline, to allow us to finalise accounts by the end of the financial year. Please use bank transaction or direct debit:

"Army Hang Gliding & Paragliding", Sort Code: 16-19-26, Acc No: 10490227.

- As our only source of self-generated income we've also taken the decision to marginally increase kit hire charges. Reasoning: Whilst the Army Sports Council Board (ASCB) and Army HQ continue to fund the association, we have been tasked with demonstrating that the AHPA can also generate and sustain a certain level of internal funding. The kit hire rate rise is our response and is live from the start of 2022. It still represents exceptional value compared to having to purchase all your own kit, and is a facility not offered by any other club or is even matched by the other single Service associations.

	2021 & before	2022 onwards
Wing Only	£200	£250
Full Kit	£250	£350

AHPA Committee

Appt	Name	Name	Telegram POC
President	Maj Gen Karl Ford CBE		
Chairman	Col Peter Baines OBE		
Secretary	Nick Lloyd		@lloydnr
Treasurer	Chris Danby (Des)		
Accountant	Rob Shakya		@robshak
Membership	Jonny Williams	Hasta Tamang	@JonnyWilliams
Equipment	Andy Howells	Padam Gurung	@AndyHowells
Chief Coach	Andy MacDonald		@Andymac64
Safety	Peet Steinberg		
Comms / Social Media	Mike Luedicke	Cam Cannings (video)	@Mike_Luedicke

- A reminder of your AHPA Committee positions (contact the appropriate committee member with any ideas, queries or suggestions).

ASCB Governance & Funding

In 2020 the Army Sports Council Board (ASCB) reviewed their entire working

practices. The aim was to professionalise - with output being numerous changes that have had a downstream effect on the way that the individual sports associations are run. AHPA incorporated these changes over 2021, which featured a Deep Dive Review into the AHPA (conducted by the 2* Director of ASCB). Read-out was broadly positive, yet we have been tasked with implementing numerous changes/improvements, with a specific focus upon our management of people, finances, equipment and safety - all of which will allow ASCB to have more trust in the way we operate and be able to support what we want to do better. Most of these changes are about processes and will be managed by Committee members, yet all will experience the change/benefits. The key tenets/principles of this development plan are below. Note also the new and official AHPA branding insignia (top right).

PEOPLE

- Improved retention of newly qualified CPs, post-JSAT courses.
- Extension of membership to Veterans and Civil Servants (although equipment hire benefits and entry to Inter Services Champs are not included in Veteran/ CivServ membership).
- Enhanced tracking, engagement and development of AHPA pilots, including greater focus on capturing/analyzing annual flying hours.

FINANCES

- ASCB have agreed to increase their funding of the AHPA through the Operating Grant for FY22/23 by almost £4,000 (*a hugely positive endorsement of our response to the challenge to improve transparency and management*). This grant covers insurance, air experience instructors license fees, tandem kit servicing/maintenance, Army branded (new style) equipment and also clothing for the representative teams. New for 2022 is a 'pot' of £5,000 to cover registration fees for AHPA members taking part in formal competitions—which will (1) be a great help to subsidise costs and (2) an excellent incentive for others to progress into comps.
- Increase to kit hire charges (as covered on page 1).
- ASCB Sports Equipment Public Fund (SEPF) - details TBC in March 22. This is a pot of money for the association to purchase new equipment with, and is the only way of getting 100% funding for items (all other means require AHPA to contribute 25% - hence the need to self-generate our own funds). We have increased our request this year by approx. £7,000 in order to hopefully fund an Army branded tandem set. It will also fund 4-5 new harnesses/reserves, and 1 x new novice paraglider.
- Army HQ Welfare Funds are also bid for, twice a year. This grant covers a maximum of 75% outlay, with AHPA required to contribute 25%. We use this to buy new wings or replace old wings across the performance range, based upon specific demand.



“With Porcher sponsorship of the IS PG Champs now concluded, we are on the hunt for new sponsors for 2022 and beyond”

- The sponsors of the Inter Services Championships for the past few years (Porcher Industries - makers of wing cloth), have been hit hard over the pandemic. As a result, they have opted to cease sponsorship to UKAFHPA. Whilst understandable from Porcher’s perspective, this a real shame and will challenge UKAFHPAs ability to make ends meet for future events. We’re scouting for new sponsors and need your help to establish links to companies or individuals who might be interested in sponsoring us. The championships requires approx. £3000-4000 annually—which is not a huge deal, but really helps us deliver better events. **Please have a think and come back to me if you**

have any links/ideas. We have charity status and can promote a brand name at events. (Note: We cannot engage with paragliding flight instrument manufacturers, due to conflict of interest).

EQUIPMENT

- Significant work has been undertaken by Andy Howells to manage the equipment pool. We have managed to reduce the amount of kit sitting on the shelf to about 8% which is fantastic efficiency (as it provides our income).
- **Wing Progression** has become a hot topic and we really need members to fly, progress, and upgrade wings when they are ready to do so, in order that we can offer the novice kit to newly qualified CPs. Pilots remaining on Low EN-Bs blocks the successive hand-down chain, forcing us to buy too many low class wings (when we really need to be providing higher performing wings to achieve best results in competitions). So—if you feel ready to move up a grade of wing please speak to Andy Howells (and then Andy Mac) to check availability of kit and explore your options based upon experience.



Winter Flying, Scotland. @KieranCampbell

“Winter brings fresh and smooth flying conditions, or the opportunity to travel south to search for big XC. Maintaining currency, if only with short but regular sessions are essential to be ready for spring’s thermic energy.”

- **Servicing scheduling** has changed from every year, to every other year in line with manufacturers’ recommendations. This also saves us 50% expenditure of servicing. As a reminder, your annual hire fees will cover the cost of servicing and P&P back to you. You need to pay for P&P for initial shipping to the servicing company and also the cost of any repairs—and by hiring kit you agree to arrange this. Contact Andy Howells for advice on servicing companies that we use. We will conduct periodic checks to make sure this is happening every 2 years, and winter is the time to do it, so don’t be caught out and lose summer flying opportunities!

Warning: *If you are not making an effort to get out flying then you cannot justify holding on to a wing that others could make use of...!*

Hiring AHPA kit is on the understanding that you are going to use it, and if you don’t we will expect it to be returned. **So get out there when the weather is good!**

Inter Services Championships - Format Change

The UKAF Sports board have now approved a change in the format of the Inter Services Championships - brought about largely due to our experience of the unreliable and unpredictable weather in Wales (*i.e. it has prevented results being achieved in 5 of the last 10 years*). In response, the champs will be split into two events: an Open Champs, and a Development Champs.

“Grey skies above Merthyr Tydfil, IS Champs August 21.

Crickhowell will continue to host the IS Dev Champs, with a new IS Open Champs to be run within the existing Naviter Open in Tolmin, Slovenia”



- **IS Development Championships.** Similar format as previous years, held over 1 week at Crickhowell, Wales. An all-inclusive event for all levels of qualified pilot, and tailored to allow collective coaching and competitive tasks to take place.
- The IS Developmental Championships will offer us the opportunity to develop our pilots and feed our best into the new IS Open Championships.
- **IS Open Championships.** A new concept designed to hold a reliable and effective IS competition to be able to challenge advanced pilots and declare Services and an Inter Services Champion.
 - In order to comply with International / NGB competition regulations, and take advantage of efficiencies (of a competent Meet Director, event coordination, logistical support, scoring and medical support), it was decided by the UKAF committee to piggy back on to an existing [CIVL FAI Cat 2 Competition](#).
 - After reviewing the formats of the accessible Cat 2 competitions that take place nearby (Europe), the [Naviter Open Competition](#) has been decided upon. The Naviter Open takes place in Tolmin, Slovenia and is a developed site for paragliding competitions, having hosted World Cups previously.
 - The (British) organiser has authorised priority registration for 15 UKAF pilots (5 per service). The event uniquely allows for teams to take part, scoring the top 3 pilots from each team of 5.

2021 Round Up

- **UK XC Flying.** In contrast to the summer of 2020, most of 2021 was open for flying with restrictions only limiting numbers in cars going to and from the flying sites. Despite this, it seemed that there was less flying going on in comparison to other years, although there was still a strong showing from the more dedicated pilots. Some good XC flights were had which can be seen here: [XC League Results](#). Simon Green won the UKAF league with 6 scoring flights over 100 kms. Please sign up (free) for the 2022 league and register your flights.

“Congratulations to Simon Green - UKAF XC League winner 2021!”



- **Pilot Development Cse.** A UKAF organized PDC took place hosted by the JSHPG at Crickhowell, where 3 of our LAT pilots (Dani Ashton, James Cooke and Mark Davies) managed to get lots of hours in and practice wing handling, top landings and thermalling. This was a proof of concept and will be repeated several times a year with luck, to assist those making the jump from CP short flights to XC flying. Many thanks to Andy Howells who gave up time to assist as a Club Coach - an important contribution to support our less experienced pilots.



“Andy Howells volunteering as a Club Coach on the PDC to assist the next generation of AHPA pilots”.

- **Inter Services Champs 2021.** Despite the best-efforts of a fine organizational team, we were faced with top - end winds throughout this years event. Sadly, this prevented us from concluding any credible comp taskings, yet on most days our pilots were able to get up and soar at a wide variety of sites (largely during quieter moments and evenings). That aside, it was still a great chance for the 14 AHPA Pilots (among 48 IS competitors) to catch up with old flying colleagues, chat gear, engage in long debates about personal flying plans and explore how we can make improvements to the AHPA model.

“AHPA Team Members at Merthyr Common on the last day of the IS Champs 2021.

The windsock tells the story of most of the week....”



- **UK Hike & Fly Events.** (not yet officially recognized by ASCB).
 - **Dragon H&F.** The Dragon H&F event started the season off, now in its 3rd year and organized by Ali Andrews (ex-RN). It was an excellent and bakingly hot day where 40 odd competitors were quickly spread out, sweating across the Brecon Beacons. An expertly set course by Ali according to the conditions, it included mountains, flat lands and ridge racing, and for some: camping, tabbing, blisters, and frustration. 4 AHPA pilots took part (Nick Lloyd, Padam Gurung, Nev Shepherd and Andy Mac) with Nev and Padam putting in very determined efforts. All agree that it was an amazing experience and is highly recommended as the most accessible of the H&F UK events. *(Read Nev’s event report later on in this review.)* We also now have 5 Pilots signed up for the 2022 event - scheduled for 21-22 May 2022 [Dragon Hike and Fly Race 2021 – Crickhowell Paragliding](#)



“Nev Shepherd crushing waypoints during the Dragon H&F 2021.

Not yet a supported sport, yet still an increasingly popular challenge for AHPA pilots, H&F is growing a dedicated following”

- **Other H&F UK events.** No AHPA pilots took part in the other 3 H&F events this year yet they remain a great pandemic-proof way of testing your mettle in the best/most challenging flying areas of the UK. The inaugural event in Snowdonia (X-Eryri) was a huge success, after having to postpone due to weather conditions several times (search for X-Eryri on YT/Facebook). The X-Lakes faced a day of perfect flying conditions and a day of perfect zero-vis ground navigation, the X-Scotia and [X-Lakes](#) managed to luck out with excellent conditions. It is well worth getting some weekend reces done with your paraglider before these events if you can.
- **Competitions.** Pandemic restrictions to international travel pretty much ruined everyone’s plans to take part in competitions this year. Fortunately the X-Alps was on which provided riveting viewing for 12 days. Well done if you got any work done. Of note, the [British Paragliding Competitions](#) board planned (but had to cancel) a new event for 2022, for EN-B and EN-C pilots: the **British Sports Trophy**. This is the event that most of our pilots should be aspiring to take part in, so get on to www.airtribune.com and be ready to apply on the minute that registration opens (it is first come first served and will be extremely popular). Expect it to be full within hours. Those that did manage to get away were rewarded with the epic conditions that we love, so well done if you managed to.

2021 Safety Report

From the BHPA incident reports for 2021 the following were the main causes for paragliding accidents:

Controlled flight into terrain (CFIT), mid-air collisions, Departure from normal flight.

The majority of incidents reported were from club pilots, but we can all learn from these incidents. The top three causes of incidents:

CFIT. Most of the controlled flights into terrain were due to pilot error and aggravated by misjudgement of the wind speed and direction. Another contribution to CFIT was the lack of flying currency and appreciation of ground speed vs airspeed. Certain landing sites were selected that were too advanced for the skills and experience levels of the pilots.

Mid-Air Collision (MAC). Collisions were reported between paragliders with drones, model aircraft, sail planes and other paragliders. The majority of MACs were in close proximity of the ground and left the pilots with limited options to avoid the collision or to land safely after the collision.

Departure from normal flight. This was mainly because of inexperience and due to the lack of flying currency. A small percentage of flight departures were due to unserviceable equipment and the AHPA can mitigate this by our servicing policy. The cause for the most of the wing stalls were poor setup for selected landing sites or loss of awareness of airspeed vs ground speed at close proximity to the ground.

Some tips for safe flying (we all want to **LIVE** life to the full!):

L - Limits, know your limits and your equipment's limits. We can expand this with safe ground handling after the winter lull. **Lookout**, keep a good lookout for other air users, especially other types.

I - Inspect, a thorough daily inspection could save you embarrassment (or worse) on the hill.

V - Velocity, a good appreciation of wind velocity vs ground velocity could prevent a departure from normal flight.

E - Environment, this includes the weather conditions as well as the physical environment. Identify your escape options on launching and for landings. Make sure they are clear of obstacles and hazards. Select the environment suitable for your skill level and experience.

Winter Tips to Prepare for Next Season

- Get your wing serviced (if required - every 2 years) and reserves repacked.
- Stay current - get out for short (but exhilarating) winter sessions as frequently as you can. Your confidence (and safety) will appreciate it come the strong spring conditions. It's also a great time of year to nail your ground handling!
- Plan and set goals (If you need ideas - get in touch).
- Get fit for Hike and Fly events.
- Learn how to use your apps / instruments to their full capability (If you need ideas - get in touch).
- Brush up on your met analysis (really understanding Skew-Ts is a powerful skill). I've lost count of the amount of times it looked good but wasn't, or looked average but was epic.
- Sort your admin: If you want to fly in comps, make sure you have your Sporting license from the BHPA. Check your travel insurance is appropriate.

2022 Events

Details are still being developed by UKAFHPA and external event organisers (mainly due to the unpredictability of the pandemic). There is a calendar further on which details what we know is happening at this point of time - watch the Telegram group for updates. In 2022 you can expect there to be:

- **1 x Ex SHROPSHIRE WINGS.** Aimed at pilots wishing to fly XC. To be held in the 2nd half of May, and probably spanning a fortnight allowing you to attend when you can be released from work - exact dates TBC in Jan. Location will be Nesscliffe Training Camp, and it will be free of charge (like AT). The OIC will be Peet Steinberg, supported by Roy Dade (ex AHPA Chairman) as a local area SME / guide. There will be up to 20 places so try and make use of this early season opportunity to brush off the cobwebs and hone the XC skills.
- **2-3 Pilot Development Weeks.** Aimed at Low Airtime Pilots (LAT) who have just completed Club Pilot courses in the JSAT scheme - and require coaching to improve slope landings, top landings, soaring and thermalling. Also a great option those pilots who have not been able to fly for some time (typically 6 months - 3 years) and want to get back to it in a safe and developmental environment.
- The enduring **British Club Challenge (BCC)** consists of single day events in the UK between Apr and Sep - aimed at LAT and inexperienced or developing XC pilots. UKAF usually apply for 2 teams of 6 pax and this should be the first event that you attend in your progression away from the hill. It's a very friendly day with lots of assistance / advice on hand.

"Decent conditions during the British Club Challenge (BCC) 2021.

The BCC offers a fantastic opportunity for novice pilots to develop their flying skills in an organized and safe environment"



- **2 x Inter Services Championships.** 'Developmental' and 'Open' Champs as described previously.
- **4 x Hike & Fly events in the UK.** Hike and Fly is not (yet) officially recognized by the ASCB so duty status and funding are not in-scope, yet you are free to register and take part as an individual. Locations are SE Wales (Dragon H&F), Snowdonia (X-Eryri H&F), Lake District (X-Lakes) and Scotland (X-Scotia H&F).
- Multiple Formal **FAI Cat 2 Competitions** in Europe and Worldwide. See www.airtribune.com or google the event names.

Conclusion

Whilst flying-wise it was not a great year, but we are now in a better place as an organization, have better funding to do what we want, and we are keen to support all pilots at all levels. Please get in touch for advice on how to achieve your next step or suggest what we can put more effort into. Do your best to get out when it is flyable and if you need support convincing your CoC to let you, let us know. Fingers crossed that the pandemic lets us get out to all the exotic flying locations again, and we can enjoy cool beers in a hot landing field again soon.

Blue skies and safe landings.



DRAGON HIKE & FLY 2021 - NEV SHEPHERD



The Dragon Hike and Fly race is an annual event based in the town of Crickhowell near the Brecon Beacons in South Wales.

The race format is particularly suited to us - with the skills required and physical demands endured very similar to those we experience and possess as soldiers.

The 2021 race route started at Libanus in the middle of the National Park, with 5 turn points to reach, while working our way back to the finish line in Crickhowell using only paraglider or feet for transport.

This was a two day race format allowing movement only between the hours of 9am - 7pm on the Saturday and finishing by 4pm on the Sunday. This kind of racing is very similar to orienteering - with the added skill benefit of flying by paraglider to cover as much distance in the air as your piloting skills and weather conditions will allow.

For the 2021 years race (as in my previous race) I decided to race unsupported, which means carrying all my flying and overnight kit including food, stove, tent and anything else required to make one nights wild camp possible.

This adds to the adventure of the race yet inevitably means you will be slower on foot due to the weight disadvantage (approx. 7kg extra kit to carry).

Day 1

A decision in the air during the first flight of the day had a knock on effect for the rest of the race. Whilst looking for a place to land (to give me best advantage hiking forward) I ended up the wrong side of a river - which I had hoped to cross while still flying. The consequence of this was that I could not get across the river safely with all my kit, resulting in a long 20km hike for the majority of the day to access a bridge - which saw me fall far behind the race leaders.

Though I had still reached the halfway point of the race before the cut off for the days racing, to my surprise I discovered that I was still within the top half of the racing pack! On the ground that evening I decided on a selecting a comfortable place to pitch my tent with a vista across the Beacons National Park and on a hill top that I had been circling over in flight during the day.



Day 2

The wind direction had changed from the previous days flying and this meant another day largely on foot, with very little chance to fly. I therefore chose to head back to Crickhowell with another competitor who had also spent the night under the stars (unknowingly close to myself).

DRAGON HIKE & FLY 2021—NEV SHEPHERD

Decisions like this are all affected by fitness, ability and circumstances. In my case, being unsupported, I had no information of what others were doing in the race (which had a knock on effect on my decision making). It was also a very hot day and I had to carry more water and more weight (not being topped up by a supporter). Arguably though, my adventure was the most rewarding kind of adventure you can have - being totally self sufficient on foot whilst also able to fly at 4000ft gliding silently over peoples heads. Landing bedside them I was repeatedly asked "where did you come from...?" !!



This kind of racing is so much fun and every decision you make will have an impact (either good or bad...) on your race standing and position.

Strategy is so important and unlike a standard format of paragliding race, it's not over when you first land - which further adds to the adventure and the beauty of racing the smallest and lightest aircraft available.

This sport is growing rapidly and so are the possibilities.

What decision will you make...?