



British Parachute Association Limited

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Annual Report 2011

Martin Soulsby, Chairman

Presented to the BPA AGM 2012 at De Vere Whites Premier Suite, Reebok Stadium, Bolton, on Saturday 28 January 2012 at 1030

Good morning and welcome to Bolton, and thank you for all coming to support Bolton against Swansea this afternoon in the 4th round of the FA Cup.

When we started organising this AGM a year and a half ago, we obviously targeted a weekend when there wasn't going to be any football, however, due to events out of our control The Trotters are playing this afternoon from 3:00pm. The Club have shut the stand above us to reduce the noise and I hope we will only be slightly affected by the game. So let's kick off now...

Review of 2011

We start off with the fantastic news that there were no fatalities at British drop zones in 2011, the first fatality-free year since 1988. Which we will all agree is great news and may it continue in 2012.

However, I am sad to say we have to remember the following members and former members who died during 2011:

James Brownhill, David Fairbrother, Gary Harbird, Lloyd Newell, Gerry O'Hara, Dave Parchment, Andy Ring, Francis Sweeney and Harry Whitworth.

I ask you now to stand and join me in one minute's silence for absent friends.

50 Golden Years

During the last year, we have been celebrating the BPA 50th Anniversary. Early in 1961, the British Parachute Association was formed.

In 1966, it was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and the first Memorandum & Articles of Association were written. These have been tweaked over the past couple of decades, but are basically the same as written in 1966.

It has served us well, but is now rather old-fashioned and so a little later this morning, I shall be inviting you to replace them with an all new updated Articles of Association, which will have the same effect, but be more appropriate for the 21st century.

During the last twelve months, we have celebrated our 50th Anniversary in a number of ways. Council began the celebration by randomly issuing 50 Golden Tickets for a year's free membership in the April 2011 Mag. Eight of those tickets were not claimed so they are up for grabs today, four in a raffle for Jump 4 Heroes at lunchtime, with each ticket costing £2; and four in the tombola for dinner ticket holders at the 50th Anniversary Dinner tonight.

There has been a well-received series of articles in the Mag, reviewing each of the last five decades of our sport. Thank you Liz Ashley, Editor of the Mag, and all the contributors for bringing the past to life so vividly.

Over a weekend in September, Skydive Langar was host to the BPA 50th Boogie. This was a great event attended by over 400 members. Unfortunately due to the foul weather we were only able to jump on the Friday, though we did manage 600 jumps from lunchtime. But that just gave us more time in the bar, party tent and on the double-decker bus! It also highlighted one of the great assets of our sport - its people. Thank you to Dave and Ang Hickling, Milko, and all at Skydive Langar for a fantastic weekend.

Today, our celebration of 50 Golden Years continues, and will be rounded off this evening by the 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner. I'm delighted that a number of our former Chairmen are able to be with us for all or part of today.



Martin Soulsby speaking at the BPA AGM 2012

BPA Chairmen 1961-2011

We have prepared a board recording the names of BPA Chairmen during our first fifty years. Our longest-surviving former Chairman, Dare Wilson, is the second name on the list. We thought - who better to inaugurate the Chairmen's board? But sadly, Dare can't be with us today. However, thanks to his eldest son Alex, we are delighted to have received this video message from Dare...

Through the efforts of Dare and his successors, of our Councils and membership over the years, we have become what we are today. And it is a great place to be. May I, on behalf of all of us here in 2012, pay tribute to our predecessors in building our sport and our Association to become what we are.

So much has happened in the last 50 Years. I mean 50 years ago, even I wasn't even born! I know, hard to believe. Currently the average age of our membership is 36. However there are people who are around today, who have been involved in the Association for most of that time.

Our 50th Anniversary is a time to capture the past, before it is lost forever. That's why today I am delighted to announce the launch of the BPA Archive Project.

Launch of BPA Archive Project

An initiative of the Development Committee, chaired by Vice Chair Craig Poxon, is the appointment of two BPA Archivists - Andrew Hilton and Graham Spicer, who are with us today. Andrew and Graham are holding a meeting up on the Balcony at 2:00pm this afternoon. They are seeking your input into the BPA Archive, so if you have memories, papers or artefacts of the past, do please go along to Andrew and Graham's meeting this afternoon and help to shape this new project.

BPA Strategy

In 2011, we didn't just look back. We also looked forward. Council developed and set out a strategy for our Association. The keystone of the strategy is the pursuit of excellence in all that the BPA does. Already a mantra for BPA competitions, where our national teams give world-class performances, the philosophy will be rolled out to cover all BPA activities. In the BPA, safety is at the heart of everything we do, and we shall continue to pursue and build on our excellence in safety.

We shall also pursue excellence in communication with members, through our highly praised Mag and newer channels such as email and social media; and continued excellence in membership administration - where the quality of service from the BPA Office has long been appreciated by the membership.

The retention of members is a second strategic aim. Each year, we issue about 750 new A certificates but lose about the same number of existing members. Working in partnership with Affiliated Centres, we shall be highlighting the reasons why members leave the sport and, for those reasons we can influence, make changes to retain more members and grow the membership.

The two other items of the strategy will be: Succession planning for key staff, and what we need to do to ensure we have a BPA office fit for the 21st century.

Membership numbers

On your seat you will find a sheet (see back page) of facts and figures to support this part of the presentation.

As you can see Full Membership is 5,062 for 2011 up by just 35 year-on-year. Not a huge increase, but some compensation for the previous year's drop of one per cent.

For the third year in a row, Student Provisional Membership hit a record high of 47,832 showing a clear upward trend, a five per cent increase on the previous year.

Temporary Memberships, including Joint Services Adventurous Training, are up by 104, a four per cent increase to 2,776.

The trial of allowing an individual up to two temporaries in a membership year has now become a permanent feature.

Jump numbers

Jump numbers were up again by 4,189 to 243,220, with the ratio of malfunctions and injuries to jump numbers dropping.

Our challenge remains retention: to retain members once in the sport.

The BPA is first and foremost a membership organisation and is run for and by its members. I would like to thank all those who freely volunteer their time.

Thanks

I should like to thank Dr John Carter our Medical Adviser and Debbie Carter, our Treasurer, who both give us the valuable benefit of their respective professional expertise. I'd also like to thank our many other volunteers - including judges and media co-ordinators. And last but not least, may I thank the BPA staff, whose names and roles are in your handout.

Stay safe

Safety and training come first. Thank you to our Safety & Training Committee (STC), and to John Hitchen for chairing it. And thanks our STC Subcommittee Chairs: Paul Applegate - Riggers, and Kieran Brady - Pilots.

And thank you too to our insurers who have sponsored and supported a number of BPA safety initiatives including development of the BPA Drop Zone Safety Management System.

Our insurers are Mark Seels of Jelf Manson Insurance Brokers and Mike Henderson of Liberty Mutual, our underwriters. We are delighted to be working with such supportive and proactive insurance partners in making our sport safer. I also thank all Affiliated DZs, their staff, instructors and helpers, for enabling us safely to enjoy our sport and as I said earlier, helping us to a fatality-free year.

We congratulate the new instructors, packers, riggers, pilots, coaches and judges who qualified during the year. And we thank the centres and rigging lofts that have hosted courses, and the examiners for their expert support.

Royal Aero Club Awards

Winners of the Royal Aero Club Awards for 2011 were announced earlier this week. I'm delighted to say that Andy Pook and Chris Thomas have each been awarded the Royal Aero Club Bronze Medal for services to sport parachuting. Congratulations to them both.

Royal Aero Club Trust

As I am sure a lot of you know, the Royal Aero Club Charitable Trust provide bursaries available to our younger members. Its Flying for Youth Bursary Scheme is open to young people aged between 16 and 21. The Trust awarded 24 bursaries across all airports last year. Seven of these grants were awarded to BPA members, helping them to gain stickers such as FF1 and FF2.

Applications for the Trust's 2012 Bursaries are open until the end of March. So I would highly recommend eligible members to apply, and there is a link on the news page of the BPA website.

Europe and new regulations

Moving on... to Europe and new regulations.

It would be a pleasure to do a David Cameron and veto the whole lot, but it would just be like scoring an own goal. So we as your Council are highly committed to being involved in Europe and the formation of regulations, so as to ensure we are not adversely affected.

Paul Moore has continued as President of the European Parachute Union. We are driving the growth of the EPU because European legislators want only to listen to one unified voice for our sport. Tony Knight is our Liaison Officer on Europe. He has spent yet another year ploughing through official consultation documents on proposed new European Air Safety legislation. Kieran Brady is the third member of our European team. Kieran keeps an eagle eye on possible developments in aviation legislation both in the UK and in Europe. Thank you all for doing a pretty thankless task.

International Parachuting Commission

Moving beyond Europe to world level, at the International Parachuting Commission of FAI - the International Governing Body of our Sport - John Smyth is the UK Delegate and also the Vice President of IPC, and during the year, Tony Butler succeeded John Hitchen as Alternate Delegate, again giving us the BPA a very powerful voice in how our sport develops.

John Hitchen, our National Coach & Safety Officer, stood down from IPC in 2011 after nearly three decades of representing us internationally. During this time he earned huge respect from the leaders of our sport in other nations across the world. I know he will be greatly missed from IPC, where he chaired the Style & Accuracy Committee. John, on behalf of the BPA, thank you for such great service representing us so well on the international stage.

The skydiving year 2011

This is an AGM of two halves, so at half-time we have a video! Now let's have a look at a video compilation, Highlights of the Skydiving Year 2011, put together by Mike Carpenter.

2011 was another great year for our teams internationally. They demonstrated the kind of sporting spirit and humour for which the UK has become so well-known.

World Cup 2011

The World Cup in FS & Artistics was held in Germany. We sent eight teams who, between them, took part in FS 4-way Open and Female 4-way, 8-way, plus Freeflying and Freestyle. The World Cup in Canopy Piloting was held in the Czech Republic. We sent a team of four. The UK also contributed judges to both events. Congratulations to team Airkix Freestyle - Pixie and Al Hodgson - for their World Cup Bronze in Freestyle.

Once again I have to thank our insurance brokers, Jelf Manson, for kindly providing free travel and medical insurance, for our international competitors.

Domestic competitions

Domestically, we held a programme of Nationals and Grand Prix across all disciplines in 2011. There was a great turnout at the FS Nationals - 54 teams in the 4-way event. We continue to pride ourselves on our FS Nationals being the second biggest in the world after the USA. But whatever their size, all of our Nationals are important to us. Staying with domestic competitions, the winners of the Overall UKSL & Grand Prix Championships will be presented with medals once I have finally stopped speaking. Thank you to all the competitors who took part, and to the Drop Zones who hosted these meets. And a special mention to all our officials and judges at both our domestic and international competitions who do a fantastic job and I know are held in such high regard both here in the UK and also internationally by IPC.

A special mention to the 4-way Female FS team who took Gold at the Dubai International Parachuting Championships in December 2011. Some of them came out of retirement to show quality will always show through. Liz Matthews, Sarah Cannon, Julia Foxwell, Claire Scott and Dave Head, or should that be Nutty, Smithy, Foxy, Sparky and... Heady?

Competitions Committee

I should like to thank the Competitions Committee, including the Discipline Reps, under the Chairmanship of Steve Saunders, for their hard work throughout the year. I would also like to thank our judges and their co-ordinator, Kate Charters, for all the work they have done

The Competitions Committee also put together another great season of BPA Coaching Roadshows and coaching at UKSL meets. These offer world-class coaching free of charge to BPA members.

Freeflying - Largest British women's head-down formation

This was another year of great leaps in the skill levels of our Freeflyers resulting in the largest British women's head-down Record formation of 8, set at Hibaldstow on 21 May 2011.

Congratulations to the record holders Anna Howerski, Cat Adam, Kirsten McAndrew, Jane Henderson, Tiziana Rossetti, Yolande Lee, Karen Strzycek, and Karen Bain. Camera: Olly Burgin.

British 28-way head-down Freeflying Record

There was a new British Freefly head-down Record of 28 set at Hibaldstow on 28 August 2011, smashing the previous record of 22 set in the year before. Congratulations to Matt O'Riordan, Jim Harris, Sean Freeman, Rob Silver, Dave Pacey, Matt Elliott, Alberto Mazzucato, Ady Wild, Tiziana Rossetti, Duncan Aspinall, Darren Glover, Carl Baines, Charlotte Kemp, Gary Crisp, Steve Howes, Paul Cooper, Andy Newell, Ally Milne, Ted Foster, David Geffin, Ben Cornick, James Davies, Dan Parker, Mike Carpenter, Frazer Smith, Glenn Phillips, Jay Southall and Will Blackie. Camera: Olly Burgin and Andrew Lovemore.

European 80-way head-down record

A new 80-way European Freeflying head-down record at Empuriabrava, on 23 September. This included an 18-strong British contingent. We were one of 18 nations represented, and our team was: Cat Adam, Will Blackie, Mike Carpenter, Gary Crisp, James Davies, Richard Frame, Jim Harris, Anna Howerski, Kurmit Jaadla, Claudio Lettieri, Adam Mattacola, Ally Milne, Matt O'Riordan, Fabian Raidel, Martin Reynolds, Frazer Smith and Ady Wild. Camera: Tim Porter.

So congratulations to all those new record holders and a round of applause please.

Development Committee

I have already referred to some of the work of the Development Committee, under the Chairmanship of Craig Poxon. During the year, the Committee also oversaw arrangements for the annual meeting for Drop Zone Operators, which was held on 1 November. The Committee is planning canopy handling roadshows for those between A and B Certificates. This is part of our wider strategy to improve retention in the sport and safety.

BPA credit card

The BPA credit card continues to make a small but valued contribution to supporting our sport. If you'd like to apply for one and benefit the sport, there's a link on the BPA website.

Online renewals

We are still working on online renewals. A new database with an online renewals facility has been developed, but as yet it can replicate only about 85 per cent of the functions used by the BPA Office. The programmers are working on the remaining 15 per cent. We shall get there, so please bear with us.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee under the Chairmanship of Adrian Bond has been very busy. They continued to oversee the Mag, which has been ably edited by Liz Ashley working with our publishing partners at Archant Dialogue.

You can visit the Mag stand to enter a raffle to win one of five free annual subscriptions to an Archant Life or Specialist title of your choice. We'd also like to thank Archant Dialogue for sponsoring the seminars and meetings up on the balcony this afternoon.

Also part of our communications strategy, the BPA e-letter has been emailed every other month, between Mags. Thanks to all friends, contributors and followers of the BPA and the Mag on Facebook and Twitter. Please friend and follow us if you haven't done so already, it's a great way to keep in touch. What is so important is that the communication is both ways.

Staying online, this review is being streamed live over the internet and is available to watch now and on demand as are a number of the events this afternoon.

The Communications Committee also co-ordinated the online membership survey for 2011, the results of which gave Council a structured source of insight into members' views. They are also responsible for the Starter Mag, given out at Drop Zones in the afterglow of a first jump, which is now being updated and re-published every year.

This remains a terrific marketing tool to encourage more students to continue

in the sport. It is also available online at skydivethemag.com. So you can give it out and help us promote our sport.

And of course we have our annual Skydiving Calendar, given to members free with the December magazine.

Insurance

We're delighted to announce another reduction in insurance costs, this time a five per cent reduction after last year's seven per cent.

With the usual inflation-linked increase of three per cent in the BPA element - even though inflation has been running at around five per cent - it will result in slightly lower subscriptions for all categories of membership from April this year. The reductions are: 55p for student membership; 50p for temporary membership, and £1.25 for full membership renewal.

I know it is not a huge amount but it is good to be able to announce any reduction in the current economic climate. I would like to thank our Insurance sub-committee, our staff and our insurers for all their hard work.

Council 2011

I'd like to thank all the Members of Council for 2011 for their hard work and commitment, and for all standing again for election to Council 2012.

Patron

I am also delighted to announce that His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales has graciously agreed to continue as Patron of our Association for a further period of five years.

AGM 2012

And looking forward to next year's AGM, it will be held at the Leicester Marriott Hotel on Saturday 26 January. I'm assured Leicester City won't be playing there. Thank you to Adrian Bond for arranging this as Chair of the Communications Committee's AGM Working Party.

Concluding remarks

Looking back at 2011, the Association is fifty years young and in good shape, with full-time membership of over five thousand.

At the end of this review, I should like to say a few words about the future. In 2011, Council set out a strategic goals for the Association, one of which was retention. For me, the stat that we issue 750+ A Certificates each year, yet are losing a similar number of members, is dreadful! There are loads of different reasons for this and we will be spending 2012 highlighting them.

But I am asking you as members to help here: you are all role models to less experienced people and how you treat others reflects on the sport as a whole. So please spend time sharing your knowledge, and taking an interest in newer and less experienced members.

The other area I want to talk about is canopy accidents - there are far too many of them! Again we all have to take some responsibility for them.

If you see something that is not right, say something to that person, to an instructor, to the CCI. If you are approached and someone questions your canopy handling, they are doing it because they want you to be safe - they are not inferring anything about your manhood! Yes, because it is we men we are talking about here! Thank the person for their concern, and have an honest look at how you are flying your canopy, so we all can enjoy a safer 2012.

We enjoy a terrific skydiving scene here in the UK, and have a huge impact on the European and World stages. Your achievements as British skydivers in 2011, only some of which I have had time to cover this morning, fill us all with pride. As do the achievements of those who came before us and have forged our path over our 50 Golden Years.

Thank you all very much, have a great time today, and have a fun and safe 2012

Martin Soulsby
BPA Chairman
28 January 2012

Facts and figures

BPA Rating - an individual member may hold more than one rating	Qualified in 2011	Qualified in 2010	Total ratings
Category System Basic Instructors (CSBI)	23	29	Varies during the year
Tandem Basic Instructors (TBI)	9	16	
Accelerated Free Fall Instructors (AFFBI)	8	8	
Category System Instructors (CSI)	16	23	270
Tandem Instructors (TI)	20	40	292
Accelerated Free Fall Instructors (AFFI)	2	11	175
Advanced Instructors (AI)	5	2	85
Instructor Examiners (IE)	1	2	39
Basic Riggers	4	2	Varies
Parachute Riggers	6	4	
Advanced Riggers	0	0	
Examiner Riggers	0	0	5
Advanced Packers (New)	13	14	209
Advanced Packers (Upgrades)	6	4	
Formation Skydiving Coaches	80	60	391
Freely Coaches	13	23	73
Canopy Formation Coaches	6	13	66
Canopy Handling Coaches	49	74	299
Canopy Piloting Coaches	3	6	55
Wing Suit Coaches	8	2	28
Judges	5	8	42

Membership and jump numbers

Category	2011	2010	Year-on-year variance %
Full	5,062	5,027	+1
Student Provisional	47,832	45,612	+5
Temporary	2,776	2,672	+4
Jump numbers	243,220	239,011	+2
Students trained	50,345	48,791	+3

Vice Presidents, Council & Staff, etc

Vice Presidents: Christopher Allen, Jim Crocker, John Lines, John Smyth MVO

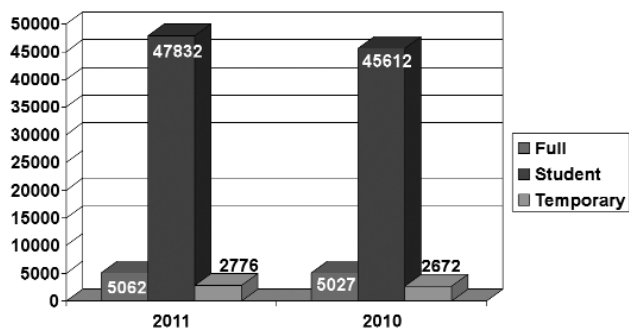
Council 2011: Martin Soulsby (Chair), Craig Poxon (Vice Chair & Development Chair), Debbie Carter (Treasurer - co-opted); Adrian Bond (Communications Chair), Steve Saunders (Competitions Chair), Paul Applegate (Riggers Chair), Kieran Brady (Pilots Chair), Alex Busby, Richard Head, Ian Marshall, Paul Moore, John Page, Weed Stoodley.

Editor, Skydive the Mag: Liz Ashley

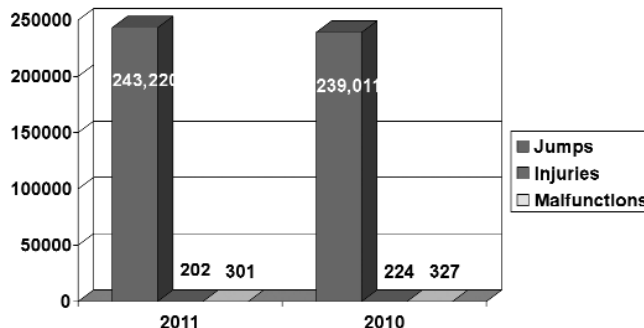
Medical Adviser: Dr John Carter

Staff: Tony Butler, Technical Officer; John Hitchen, National Coach & Safety Officer & STC Chairman; Martin Shuttleworth, Secretary-General; Jon Gretton, Company Secretary & Financial Administrator; Trudy Kemp, PA to TO/NCSSO; Helen Lucas, Administration Secretary; Karey Goodwin & Sue Allen, Membership Services; Dave Lucas, Storekeeper

Membership by calendar year



Jump numbers



www.bpa.org.uk

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