

Report of the 26th AGM of the British Aerobatic Association

Amongst those members present at Sywell on Saturday 27th January 2001 were -

Ben Ellis, Tom Cassells, Alan Cassidy, Eric Marsh, Gareth Roberts, Martin Sandford, Patrick Margetson-Rushmore, Nick Buckenham, Steve Green, Ray Stoward, Nick Wakefield, Jen Buckenham, Gary Ferriman, Robert Tinkler, Charles Kirk, John Vize, Iain Dall, Rob Millinship, Peter and Diane Pengilly, Mike Caskey, Julie Wood, Steve Carver, John and Christele Askew, Graham Hill, Tony Edmunds, Andy McLean, Polly Whitehead, Donna Brady, Gerald Cooper, Pete Shaw, Ciara McGurk, Julia Konlag, Kester Scrope, Judi Jones, Dick Happs, Jurgen Schafer, Diana Britten and Jim Duthie.

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Jefferies, Mark Walden, Paul Ambrose, David Copse, John Gilbert and Steven Lewis.

1 Chairman's Address

Ben Ellis - Chairman, after welcoming members to the meeting, asked that they should agree the report of the 25th AGM published in ANR 136 in April 2000. This was proposed by Mike Caskey and seconded by John Vize. The members passed the motion.

Ben then gave a quick round up of the domestic competition scene, the Association's 'bread and butter'. Last year it seemed that we were starting to suffer not so much from global warming as global wetting! The abiding recollection is of dismal days spent staring at low cloud and heavy rain. The reality is that some competitions actually fared rather well, with one complete failure. The first competition of the year set the tone of things to come. At the Dan Smith, held at Dunstable Down, only one sequence was completed - in 2 days - due to poor weather. However, the first power gathering at Leicester for the Icicle was a much more optimistic affair, with 22 pilots completing 2 flights each.

Welshpool, 3 weeks later, hosted a wonderful Beginners field of 15 which competed in ideal conditions on the Friday, but we managed a field of just 8 for the McLean Trophy on the following day, mostly because aircraft were grounded elsewhere in the country. May saw us taking the trip to South Wales to a new and extremely satisfactory venue, Pembrey. In June we trekked north to Sleaf where 13 competitors flew 3 sequences each. The joint Irish Nationals and BAeA meeting at Waterford was very successful with 15 pilots contesting the Roy Legg Trophy and the Celtic Shield. Unfortunately the end of June was a complete washout at Sywell, without a single competition sequence being flown in 4 days. This was to have been our National Championship for Advanced and Unlimited levels when we were to choose our National team for the World Air Games in 2001. More on team selection from Steve Green later.

Fenland has been very good to us over the years, but the weather really let us down this time, with only the Beginners being flown on the Friday. The weather at Compton Abbas was good enough to not only fly the Kernow, Don Henry and Air Squadron Trophies, but to also run the postponed advanced Nationals, Mark Jefferies being crowned for the third year in succession. The season rushed towards its conclusion with a fine Standard and Intermediate Championship at Conington, a superb Glider Nationals at Saltby where we managed to complete 4 flights per pilot for the first time in its' history. Then up to Sherburn for a highly enjoyable Late Bash.

In addition to all of this, we sent two teams to World Championships last year. Our Unlimited pilots went to Muret, in France, and the Advanced contingent went to Germany where they secured a team 4th place overall. Congratulations to all those people who took part especially those of you who were in the medals during the course of the year. Full details of every competition along with

reports are contained in the Aerobatics News Review; a full results service is available from the website. Later today we will be presenting those Trophies not already awarded.

Ben took the opportunity to thank all those people who worked so hard to make all of our activities possible, the Committee, Contest Directors, Judges and their assistants, scorer and runners. Jen Buckenham, Membership Secretary, was thanked for all her work, which includes acting as scorer at many of the competitions and co-ordinating the Aerobatic News Review, which continues to be so ably edited by Tony Lloyd. Together, she and Tony put together a publication commemorating the first 25 years of the BAeA, which he hoped that members had enjoyed reading as much as he had!

2 Financial Report

PJGMR presented the accounts as shown. There were no questions arising from the accounts. Patrick reported that the auditors, JPAudit Ltd., no longer wished to act for the Association, due to the size of our company. As it is not a statutory requirement to have the accounts audited, due to the small income and financial turnover, he proposed that he should prepare the accounts for the Association, which would be overseen by an ordinary member of the BAeA.

There followed a discussion of the requirements for audit. John Vize proposed that an ordinary member should oversee the accounts, Gary Ferriman seconded this move.

3 Election of Officers

Three committee members were due to retire: Nick Buckenham, Alan Cassidy and Eric Marsh. Only two nominations had been received, both for Alan Cassidy. All three members had indicated their willingness to serve on the Committee for a further term and were re-elected by the membership.

Other Committee members were elected to their posts,
Steve Green - nominated by Tom Cassells, seconded by Alan Cassidy
Tony Lloyd - nominated by Ben Ellis, seconded by Tom Cassells
Steven Lewis - nominated by Ray Stoward, seconded by Tom Cassells
Nick Wakefield - nominated by Eric Marsh, seconded by Gareth Roberts
Jen Buckenham - nominated by Patrick Margetson-Rushmore, seconded by Martin Sandford
Ben Ellis - nominated by Eric Marsh, seconded by Martin Sandford
Tom Cassells - nominated by Eric Marsh, seconded by Martin Sandford.

4 BAeA, the way forward

Tom Cassells spoke about his wish for the Articles of the Association to include the wording 'Excellence in Aerobatics', as he felt that this is the standard to which all aerobatic pilots should aspire. He spoke of his inspiration, which came from watching pilots like Nigel Lamb, Nick Onn and Tim Barnby. He felt that if pilots excelled in the upper levels the benefit would cascade down with eventual benefit to all levels.

Eric Marsh asked if this aim was for the benefit of the BAeA, or a team representing the country Internationally: Tom stated that the aim was to improve overall excellence. Kester Scrope reminded the meeting that there were only two competitions a year at which the Unlimited pilots could be seen competing. Iain Dall expressed the view that all pilots have goals and aspirations within limitations, but a revision to the Articles and Memoranda would not bring about change. Several members expressed the view that seeing Diana Britten flying during the lunch break had been inspirational and that other Unlimited pilots should be encouraged to do the same. Alan Cassidy supported Tom in his aim to seek the promotion of contact and involvement between the 'grass-roots' and Unlimited levels. John Vize expressed the wish for the Association not to go back to what

it had been before its restoration, as it now supports the whole membership and is not perceived as being elitist.

Alan Cassidy would like to see pilots cultivated to rise through the levels; there followed a lively discussion about the cost involved of flying at higher levels. Mike Caskey suggested that there should be an incentive to people coming in the first three places in competition. Views were expressed about allowing people to choose their own level, and the additional benefits to judges and assistants. It was felt that there were very limited facilities for training and critique; Ben Ellis suggested that perhaps the Association should organise a more structured approach to training. It was suggested that Unlimited pilots are invited to attend competitions and make themselves available to answer questions and advise; and there was a suggestion that the training camps should be restored, with a broader skill-mix.

5 Team Selection

Steve Green told the meeting that normally selection of Unlimited pilots for Team placings would be made following the Nationals at Sywell. This year the whole event had been 'rained off', an alternative manner for selecting the team had to be found, and therefore a selection panel had been formed. This consisted of Steve Green, Ben Ellis and Diana Britten, with advisory input from Tom Cassells.

The way the rules for team selection have been set up in the past made the task somewhat difficult for the panel to achieve, as there was little guidance. This needs to be clarified for the future. It is not clear if the objective of selection is to simply arbitrate if there are more plots than places (i.e. pilots who achieve the minimum 60% score in Unlimited sequences) or if the panel should be charged with selecting the strongest team to represent Great Britain at international competitions, which could allow for selection of fewer plots than available places in some years. The basis for team selection needs to be reviewed and the role of the selection panel clarified.

Steve asked that members should send him their ideas and suggestions so that he might put together an article to be published in the ANR, so that the team selection process can be reviewed.

The team selected to represent the UK at WAG 2001 has been named as Tom Cassells, Alan Cassidy, Nick Onn, Richard Pickin and Patrick Williams. Val Rahmani will be the female team member.

Letters of invitation have been sent to the following as prospective Advanced team members, Dave Kaberry, Steve Griffiths, Martin Sandford, Gary Ferriman, Graham Archer, Iain Dall, Mark Jefferies, Eddie Goggins, Cas Smith, Simon Cattlin, Nick Wakefield, Mark Walden, Ron Allan and Mark Waite.

6 Team Financial Support

Ben Ellis led a discussion leading from an article in ANR 139 by Mark Walden, which has promoted voluntary contributions from members, to go towards the support of the team competing in International Competition. Donations totalling £166 have been received.

Pete Pengilly said that funding a trainer for the team(s) could benefit and improve all levels. It was promoted that the Unlimited Team members should commit to come to competitions, and suggested that Unlimited pilots also need inspiration and excellence. Alan Cassidy said that when he first joined the Association the membership fee had been £30, this fee had been utilised to pay the entry fee for the Unlimited Team in International events; the practice has ceased following a policy decision. Until now there had been no ideas as to how to spend some surplus capital which might benefit all levels of pilot. The opportunity for acquiring sponsorship and how the American Team was funded was discussed. It was suggested that the BAeA should have a stand at the PFA Rally to

promote aerobatic flight, this had mixed success in the past. As it is the 100th Anniversary of the RAeC this year they have been invited to attend the PFA Rally, the suggestion was made that the BAeA approach them with a view to having some representation on the stand, with a display from an Unlimited pilot.

Ray Stoward said that Glider members have to pay a membership fee to the BGA, which funds the cross-country events. The BGA are being approached for support of the 3-4 members who are eligible to compete at Unlimited International Aerobatic events. Ben Ellis suggested that any training funded should take place within the UK, so those non-participants may attend as observers.

Alan Cassidy felt that it would cost in the region of £3,000 to £5,000 for trainer's services for a week, for all levels.

Pete Shaw proposed that the Committee should raise the membership fees and that members should have the choice of opting out. The motion was seconded by Gary Ferriman and agreed by the members present.

7 The Diana Britten Award scheme

Diana Britten talked about the 'Diana Britten Aerobatic Scholarship' which, since the year 2000, is being awarded at two levels - Beginners and Cadet.

From 2001 the Graduate Trophy would be presented to a British female pilot who has competed in three or more competitions. The award will be made to the pilot with the highest average of three competition scores from Beginners (of which one score will count) up to Intermediate level. The winner will also receive 10 hours of aerobatic training tailored to their individual needs and will receive a replica Trophy.

Diana presented certificates to:

Donna Brady - Beginners level Scholarship winner

Polly Whitehead - runner up

Ciara McGurk - Cadet Scholarship winner

Sue Hawkridge - runner up

8 The Beginners Competition

Nick Buckenham spoke about the Beginners Competition, which would be undergoing some changes in the coming year.

This level has always been perceived as a stepping stone into competitive aerobatics, usually being held on a Friday afternoon, when the sequences can be flown in a quiet and unhurried manner, separate from the pressure of the main competition. It has been classed not so much as a 'competition' but as an 'event', with a token award being given to the pilot with the highest percentage. The idea was to encourage membership and the continuance of competing. In 1997 there were 18 competitors at the Beginners level, 31 in 1998, 29 in 1999 and 55 in 2000.

From 2001 the first Beginners event entered would as usual not require membership and there would be no entry fee, but pilots entering should complete an entry form and provide the necessary documentation at registration. Any subsequent Beginner's event entered would require full membership of the Association and payment of a £15 entry fee. Once a pilot has competed at Standard level they will not be able to compete as a Beginner unless Hors de concours and with agreement with the Contest Director.

9 BAeA Articles and Memoranda

Nick Wakefield spoke about the necessity to make some changes to the Articles and Memoranda of the Association; there has been no alteration to them since the restoration of the Association several years ago. He felt that it was not necessary to change the Memoranda, but proposed that there should be some revision of the Articles due to changes in the structure of the Committee.

Nick and Nigel Arthur would work together to draft the necessary changes to the Articles, and would circulate the proposed changes to all the membership later in the year. An Extraordinary General Meeting would be held so that the proposals could be formally made to the membership and be approved by them. It is likely that this would take place at a competition.

10 Award of Trophies

Dana Britten presented the following Trophies

The Cessna Aerobat Trophy -	Sue Hawkrige
The Golden Frog -	Dave Kaberry
The Manx Kelly Trophy -	Nick Buckenham
The Marcus Norman Trophy -	Gerald Cooper
The Pitts Special Trophy -	Steve Carver
The Shaggy Cow Trophy -	Nick Buckenham
The Swinstead Trophy -	John Vize
The Tiger Club Trophy -	Gerald Cooper
The Extra Trophy -	Graham Archer
The Len Perry Memorial Salver -	Tom Cassells
The Chipmunk Trophy -	Nigel Arthur
The Judge of the Year -	Dick Happs
CD of the Year -	Eric Marsh

In recognition of their work for the Association both Jen and Nick Buckenham were made Honorary members.

11 Any Other Business

Alan Cassidy requested that members should download copies of the BAeA rules from the web-site, www.aerobatics.org.uk as only a few copies would be available from the Membership Secretary, for those without PC access.

John Vize asked if any more thought had been given to 'flat sequences' for days at competition when cloud or rain prevented normal flight. Ben Ellis felt that it was not practical, whilst Pete Pengilly thought that it would not be a good idea. This had been a topic for discussion by the Committee, who felt that it was not fitting from a safety point of view.

The meeting closed at 13.05 hours.
Jen Buckenham