

North Wales Hang-Gliding & Paragliding Club

Newsletter ~ May 2008



From the Chairman & Editor

The new flying season is well under way with the first XCs being made. Carl Wallbank has made some interesting flights in April – a white knuckle ride into wave over Snowdonia and a 100km XC to the Airways Airpark in Derbyshire a few days later - see his reports on the Members Form. Perhaps there will be even more before the month-end? Carl, let's hope you stay on this form for the competitions you will be taking part in later this year.

Ian Home has made the first PG XC, from Moel Famau to his neighbour's back garden, his own garden being too small to land in! Elsewhere, Thurstaston has probably been our busiest site this year, to the point that we need to ask you to avoid taking up too much space – see the article elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The Club AGM was held at the end of March, and is fully reported later. The Club is in a healthy financial position with a useful sum held in a savings account as a potential 'sites purchase' fund.

News

Membership Renewals

For many members who have renewed their subscription at this time of year, your subscription for the coming year is now due. Membership subscriptions will remain at £15.00 per annum. We suggest you use the Club Website 'online' facility to renew but if you prefer to pay by cash or cheque, please send it (cheques payable to NWHGPC, please) should be sent to the Secretary, Stu Harrison, 12 Wendover Close, Noctorum, Wirral CH43 9HU.

Club Flying Sites: Our Sites Officers report that all is very well with the owners. As I write this, I am not aware of any 'lambing' closures: I reckon most of the lambs will be half grown by the time you read this!

PG Comps: At the AGM, Stuart Lloyd agreed to become PG Comps Organiser. A big 'thank you' to Matt Cook for all you have done in the past in this capacity. Stu has already published his 2008 plans on the Members Forum.

BHPA Club Coach Course: For at least the past two years, the Club has paid the Course fee for two members per annum to attend a BHPA Coach Course. We are now removing this limit of two persons and will in future pay the course fee (but not other expenses) for **all** who wish to attend this course, either for the first time or for refresher training at five year intervals, as recommended by BHPA. If you wish to take up this offer, you should first obtain the recommendation of the Club Chief Coach for your flying discipline - either Jamie McRae for PGs or Steve Hogan for HGs. (If every member decides to take up this offer, we may be forced to reconsider!).

Triple X Free Flying Festival: A reminder that Mark Leavesley is organising this festival, which he hopes will become an annual event. It is to be held over the long weekend of June 20 – 22, at Walcott Hall, near the Long Mynd. For more information, visit info:leavesleyaviation.com

FEATURES

Report on 2008 Annual General Meeting

The 2008 AGM was held on Monday 31st March at BSWC Broughton. Some 25 members attended. Apologies were received from both the Secretary and the Treasurer, who were unable to attend because of business commitments. The Chairman had received a financial report from the Treasurer and presented it at the appropriate time. In reviewing our activities in 2007, the Chairman expressed the view that poor weather had upset the hopes of many, but Carl Wallbanks' success in leading the UK Team to victory in the World Hang Gliding Championship in Texas was a highlight we all enjoyed – and hope will be repeated.

Site Officers reported that we are enjoying good relationships with our flying site owners; no negative reports have been received. Occasional overcrowding at some sites needs to be monitored and regular visitors should be encouraged to join the Club. Would members please note these particular points, which will also be the subject of amendments in the Sites Guide:

1. The land owner at the Gyrn has asked that *only* 4x4 vehicles ascend the track up to take-off.
2. Rangers at Thurstaston Country Park on the Wirral have expressed concerns over the space occupied by ground handling and the laying out of wings before take off. On busy days, this interferes with and could pose a danger to the activities of other Park users. To allay these concerns quickly, Club Coaches and those who use the site regularly recommended that ground handling practice should not be carried out at this site, and that only a maximum of four wings at a time should be laid out. It was also suggested that, because of the risk of the less experienced pilot being blown back into members of public, we should impose a 'Club Pilot + 10 hours' rule. However, it would be better if such pilots were to seek help / advice from others on site, especially from Club Coaches and other regular users of the site; and that the Club Site Guide should contain this recommendation. *(See also the following feature)*
3. Great Orme: Absolutely no landing in the gully immediately south of the car park, or in the walled area to the west of the car park.

In the last minute absence of Stu Harrison, **Club Secretary**, the Chairmen stated that at a Committee Meeting in late February, Stu had reported that Membership was in the order of 120, and that his workload was now simplified: both facts due largely to the online joining and renewal processes set up by Tim Salter (Thank you, Tim!) Stu's role is now largely one of 'first point of contact' for prospective members and other enquiries to the Club.

The Chairman tabled copies of the **Treasurer's Report** for the year March 2007 – March 2008. This Report is available on the Club Website, but these are the essentials:

Current Account Opening Balance	£1,269
Income	£1,809
Expenditure (includes £300 transferred to savings account)	£1,650
Current Account Closing Balance	£1,428
Savings Account Balance (Includes Interest earned in year)	£6,583

Membership subscriptions will remain at £15.00 per annum, and for those who normally renew at this time, we suggest you do so through online renewal; otherwise, cheques payable to NWHGPC should be sent to the Secretary, Stu Harrison, 12 Wendover Close, Noctorum, Wirral CH43 9HU. If you have previously paid by 'Paypal' and you card details have not changed, your card will be debited again at the anniversary of joining/renewing. If your card details have changed during the past year, please go through the renewal process again with current card information.

The Safety Officer, Dave Edwards expressed the hope that no further ankles would be broken this year; otherwise, last year passed safely. It was suggested that we should investigate the possibility of running a 'First Response First Aid' course for members.

BHPA Coaching Courses, and qualifications need for the rating of Chief Club Coach were discussed. The meeting agreed that the Club would pay the full course fee (but not expenses) for attendance at BHPA Club Coach and Senior Coach Courses, including repeating the course as refresher training,

which BHPA recommends every 5 years. There is now effectively no limit on the numbers who may be helped in this way: we will think again if *all* members wish to attend a Coach Course!

Webmaster Tim Salter reported that all was well with the Club Website and online membership procedures. Jerry Hazzard wished for more copy for our quarterly **Newsletter**, and ideas for Speaker Meetings (what's new!?).

There were no matters or resolutions for discussion from either the Club Committee or members.

Election of Officers: All existing members of the Committee are willing to continue in office and were duly elected, with the exception of Matt Cook, PG Competitions, who wishes to stand down (thanks, Matt!) and is replaced by Stuart Lloyd. Both Stu Harrison, Club Secretary, and Doug Jones, Treasurer, have advised the Chairman that they would be willing to hand over their duties to others, if there are any willing volunteers – any offers?

There were no matters of other business not already covered elsewhere in the meeting, which then closed at 9.45pm..

Flying at Thurstaston

At the AGM, it was reported that Park Wardens at Thurstaston Country Park had expressed some concerns about the space occupied by fliers on a busy day, and the risks and inconvenience they might impose on other visitors to the park. The AGM discussed the matter and aired various ideas which were quickly taken up on the 'Members' Forum'. Some very wise opinions and advice were expressed, but I deliberately did not contribute to the discussion because I felt I should work with those who are more familiar with the site than I, to come up with a solution. I think we have found it, but it is up to members to make it work.

In our discussions, a number of things that came across from the website discussion were very pertinent:

- The matter should be resolved through better site discipline (to which I as Chairman add that this must include a measure of self discipline).
- There is no point in introducing 'rules' when they cannot be enforced: we must rely on members to assess current flying conditions at the site and to act accordingly – and with help from those with more experience of the site.
- Though it has the smallest top to bottom height of any of our sites, launching, flying and landing here are by no means as simple as they might at first appear.

Thurstaston is also unique in another way and it is the nub of the problem: it is the *only* NWHGPC flying site we actually *share* with the public. At all other sites (OK, we are close to the public at Moel Famau) we are on our own and only get in each others way – and I hope we can forgive each other! At Thurstaston, the public can be all around us as we prepare to take off and land, and that means there *has* to be a greater chance of upsetting someone in some way. We *must* take even more care not to do anything that might lead to complaints about our activities.

Since this is a site that I have not used a great deal, I have relied upon the advice of those who know it well to come up with ideas which I hope will resolve the situation. Rather than adopt rules which are almost impossible to enforce, we propose the following guidelines and appeal to all members to follow them:

1. Do not fly if you are the only flier on site.
2. If new to the site or if an inexperienced pilot, seek advice (in advance of your visit if necessary) from the Site Officer, Mike Rimmer, or other Club members who do know it well.
3. Consider the general public who are visiting the site. If it is busy:
 - Do not use the main grassed area for prolonged spells of ground handling.
 - Avoid spreading out. Keep unused wings stacked close together.
 - Do not leave wings laid out. Lay out only when preparing to take off.
4. If necessary, limit the number of wings flying at any one time.
5. Give horses on the beach plenty of space. Don't take off over them.

By following this guidance, I am sure we can continue to enjoy this site and keep sweet with the Wardens. Thanks to Mike Rimmer and Brian Dillon for help and guidance! I hope we haven't overlooked anything - do tell me if we have!

WHAT'S ON?

Monthly Club Meetings assemble from 7.30 onwards at Broughton Wings Social Club at Airbus UK, Broughton, Chester. Talks or whatever start at 8.15pm

Monday 26th May and 12th August

Bank Holidays – no meeting.

Monday 30th June and 29th July

Club Night at BWSC – Nothing arranged, because many are likely to be on holiday - and the evening might be good for flying!

Speakers have been approached to talk to us at our Club Nights in the autumn and winter. I have talks almost finalised for September and November; others will be announced in the August Newsletter and Members Forum.

PG Competition Weekends will be held (weather permitting) on the weekend preceding the Club night. Keep an eye on the Forum for final details from Stu Lloyd.

Club News and Information; contact details for all Club Officers, and a Membership application form, can be accessed on the Club Website at <http://www.nwhgpc.org.uk>.

All paid up members of the club who provided a valid e-mail address at renewal time should also have received an e-mail invite to join the "members only" area. If you have not received an invite and you feel you are eligible, please e-mail webmaster@nwhgpc.org.uk.

Contributions to this Newsletter are welcomed from any member. Ideally, please submit copy as a Text File or MS Word File on CD to Jerry Hazzard, Mill Cottage, Mill Road, Bronington, Whitchurch SY13 3HJ or by Email / Email attachment to jerry.hazzard@btinternet.com If you are unable to provide text in these formats, the editor is willing to type up your scripts from longhand! The editor reserves the right to correct grammar, syntax and spelling, and to trim articles to fit page layouts.

This Newsletter is published quarterly, on/about the 1st of February, May, August and November. Articles / copy for inclusion in a Newsletter should reach the Editor two weeks before publication date.

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