



BKFA Update

No 6 October 2007

Annual General Meeting

This years Annual General Meeting will be held again in the function room at

**The Lamb Tavern
94 Lamb's Conduit Street
London WC1N 3LZ**

on **Sunday 25 November 2007** beginning at **2.00 pm**.

All are welcome although voting is restricted to members of the Council, in line with the constitution.

If your club would like anything specific considered at the AGM, even if you are not members, please do get in touch: we are keen to hear views from right across the kite flying world although it is our members that will finally decide.

Future membership

As noted elsewhere in this update, a number of officers are standing down and we are concerned about their replacements. This seemed an opportune time to consider our membership structure.

When BKFA was formed it was agreed it would be an association of clubs; a number of clubs expressed concern that if BKFA were to attract individual membership it could take away their own members, particularly if insurance were on offer.

Last year, with a number of people expressing concern that their own club had either opted out of membership or were reluctant to join, the constitution was changed to allow for the existence of 'sections' within BKFA. These sections would appear as any other club, with similar voting rights (i.e. votes in proportion to membership up to a maximum of three) to ensure they did not come to dominate BKFA. At the time, it seemed like a good idea.

Nothing can change this year: insufficient notice has been given for any change to be made, but it is important that we discuss this again.

On the plus side:

- No one club can dominate BKFA. BKFA is unlikely to come to dominate its member clubs (how many sections could realistically be set up with enough members to justify three votes each?)
- There is provision for people to set up various sections within BKFA: trade representation and individuals whose clubs are not BKFA members are two obvious ones

On the minus side:

- Clubs are not generally taking an active part in BKFA
- We believe attracting new officers is going to prove difficult
- There are a growing number of individuals who would welcome the sort of insurance that BKFA MAY be able to offer, an offer it can only make if there are enough individuals signed up. And with a couple of key clubs rejecting the insurance offer (because they can at present achieve a much better price), the rest are excluded.

So is it time to reconsider the membership structure of BKFA? We would welcome your views.

Officers

Our secretary, John Dobson, stands down by rotation in accordance with the constitution. A new secretary is needed urgently in order that BKFA can continue.

Jon Caton, Chairman may have to stand down, depending on the outcome of circumstances when he takes up a new job within the next few weeks.

Where have we been all year?

Maybe this should have been the first question on this news update – silence was certainly anything but the plan. We also started out with a list of events that one or other of us intended to cover as BKFA reps – and for the most part it did not happen entirely as intended.

We were able to provide a limited presence at Southampton, Rougham, Wirral, and Brighton. Strangely enough, most of the interest shown was by the general public, rather than established kite flyers!

Jerry has found that work is simply not allowing him the time to put into BKFA and indeed (along with the weather) has curtailed the number of events he has been to this year. He has decided to carry on for one more year.

We achieved the banner and designed a leaflet to promote BKFA but somehow those failed to be at the right place at the right time for several events this year. Part of the problem is that the BKFA representatives also have other “duties” at some of these events, so it is difficult to give over the time required to man a stand.

What we need is help: help with publicity and promotion, help with projects, help with simply being at events to promote kite flying and the BKFA. We would like to be at non-kite flying events to promote our sport, but at present that is simply not an option.

Website

At least we have finally made progress in one area, our website. We all agreed that the interim site that Andrew Beattie kindly hosted simply was not good enough. Andrew needed some skilled input from us that we did not have. Now, thanks to Peter Bindon, problem solved as we hope you agree when you go to www.bkfa.org.uk

The website still needs a little tidying up and we certainly intend that it should grow. We will be adding sections on records, air law and developing those on child protection. Please do go and have a look, let us know what links we should include and any other content you would like to see. We've even provided a feedback form for your input!

Insurance

As noted above, we have hit an impasse with insurance. We have a fabulous offer from Perkins Slade, a leading broker specialising in sports insurance, but it requires 1,000 members to be effective. And a couple of our larger members can undercut the rate for their members for historic reasons. It makes no sense for them to change their present arrangements at the moment but it does mean we cannot offer this facility to our smaller member clubs.

We have not given up and will continue to look at options in this area for all kite fliers including single line, large kite and power kite fliers.

Child protection

Through our associate membership of the Royal Aero Club, we attended a recent seminar on the changes due for implementation next year to the present child protection laws. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 is being phased in progressively, with many of the key requirements taking effect in 2008.

It brings into scope considerations for not only children but also for vulnerable adults and has at its key purpose the aim of stopping unsuitable people working with these groups. Work in this context can include volunteers, even though they are unpaid.

It does not remove the need for Criminal Record Bureau checks (CRB) but does reform current vetting and barring processes.

A full report will appear on our website.

CRB checks

We have the opportunity to get CRB checks done for member clubs for a flat of £12.50 each inclusive of VAT. This applies to volunteers – paid staff would attract an additional £36 fee for an enhanced disclosure.

CRB checks are increasingly required by schools and other organisations where people are working with children and vulnerable adults. Some organisations may require these checks even if teaching staff or other supervisors are present.

We would be interested to know whether this service would be of use to members.

Record attempt

We could not let this newsletter pass without noting Dennis England's valiant attempt on the UK height 'record' for multiple kites in train. We say 'record' because the 14,000' we have seen quoted for the Cody flight frankly seems a bit too round to be true. But we do suspect it was there or thereabouts.

We have posted a full report on the website (please feel free to use it), but suffice to say there can be few people who have flown on 20,000' of line, which must have been getting somewhere close to the magic number. But we shall never know as a rather more terrestrial error meant the recoding instrument failed to show the height reached.

Maybe next year.....