

# SKYWORDS

The Magazine Of The Dales Hang  
Gliding and Paragliding Club

DECEMBER 2005



Ally Johnston takes off.

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at the Riverside Hotel, Ilkley at 8.30pm on Thursday the 3rd of November 2005

### AGENDA

- 1) Apologies for absence.
- 2) Chairman's opening address.
- 3) Minutes from the previous meeting.
- 4) Matters arising from the minutes.
- 5) Reports from officials.
  - a) Newsletter editor
  - b) Membership secretary
  - c) Treasurer
  - d) Club coach
  - e) Safety officer
  - f) Librarian
  - g) Sites officer
  - h) Paragliding competition secretary
  - i) Hang gliding competition secretary
  - j) Club secretary
  - k) Social Secretary
  - l) Web site officer
- 6) Nominations are invited for **all** of the above posts - some existing post holders will be standing down but if you have an interest in being involved in the running of your club, then please put your name up for election; the precise post can be sorted out later.
- 7) Election of officers
- 8) Debate of proposals
- 9) Any other business
- 10) Date of next meeting

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## COMITTEE

### **Chairman –**

Trevor Birkbeck

### **Newsletter Editor –**

Craig Richardson

### **Membership secretary –**

John Edmonds

### **Treasurer –**

Tony Pickering

### **Club coach .....**

### **Safety officer – Mick Bolton**

### **Librarian – Liz Addy**

### **Sites officer Southern –**

Sean Ogi,

### **Sites officer Northern .....**

### **Paragliding competition secretary – Pete Balmforth**

### **Hang gliding competition secretary – Kevin Gay**

### **Club secretary – Peter Logan**

### **Social Secretary –**

John Ellison

### **Web site officer – Peter**

Logan



## AEROFIX

How long does it take you to do an inspection for a glider and how long for a reserve, what's involved in the inspections?

A full inspection and service takes one person 1 ½ hours to a half day depending on the condition of the glider.

The inspection involves firstly checking the porosity. This is usually taken from the centre and tips of the glider to give an average reading. The glider is then hung on the rig for a full visual inspection of the leading edge, cell openings and walls; the bottom and top surfaces, looking for any holes or tears and paying particular attention to stitching and line tabs!

As well as actual damage we are looking at the general condition of the fabric, 'wear n' tear' etc.

We then look at the risers for wear to connection points, Mallion fatigue and condition of brake poppers.

All the lines are individually inspected both visually and by touch. Dyneema lines are measured for shrinkage and all brake main lines are measured. Depending on the age and condition of the glider a line maybe tested to destruction, this is usually a centre main 'A' line. A centre mid 'A' and or upper may also be tested. If any of these lines should fail, ie. come below the recommended minimum- about 60kg for one main line on an average glider, then successive lines are tested i.e. 'B's then 'C' etc. Damaged or failed lines are then replaced as necessary. If a complete line set is required the cost of replacement can sometimes be uneconomical and the glider would be written off!

When a full inspection is complete the glider is then removed from the rig and any repair work carried out.

A Reserve and system inspection, repack and refit in to the harness takes approximately 45mins. We prefer to receive reserves 24 hours in advance this allows us to deploy and hang them to air overnight.

My first glider was an Apco as and it lasted for years, I bought it three years old and flew it for three and sold it on and as far as I know it's still going now. I've heard of pilots looking for new gliders that will only consider a glider made wholly or partly from Gelvenor eg. Apco, Ozone, Airwave as they are worried about the life of the wing.

As a service and test centre you must service many types of glider, does the Gelvenor fabric really last that much longer than the other fabrics eg. Porcher Marine or is the fabric not as impor-

How long does it take you to do an inspection for a glider and how long for a reserve, what's involved in the inspections?

tant to the life of the glider as good care?

Gelvenor is a good wearing fabric and it does tend to go porous much slower than other fabrics. However, as with all good things, there are down sides to it. Because of its waxy coating it is sometimes difficult to apply a conventional adhesive patch, so a small, let's say, 5cm tear could result in a trip to your local repair centre. Gelvenor tends to be heavier than other fabrics, resulting in an overall heavier glider. Bad news if you've got a big mountain to climb.

I don't want to criticise any glider manufacturers but does the build quality of the different gliders vary a lot between the manufacturers, can you tell what kind of glider it is just by the finish of the wing and risers?

Yes it is possible to tell the difference between gliders just on build quality. But that is all we will comment on the matter! Ten years or so ago pilots tended to fly gliders from their local dealers which accounted for all the Apco gliders in the Dales, FreeX and Edel gliders in the Lakes and not much else as I recall.

Now it seems there are loads of manufacturers out there and pilots aren't tied to just a few manufacturers. If a pilot were thinking of buying a new glider they may be put off by some of the more obscure names. If someone were to come into your workshop with a glider in bits that needed repairing and it was made by one of the odd names out there eg. Sol from Brazil, or Air Systems from Slovenia would you be able to repair it? Where do you get your technical information from for the fabrics and line diagrams etc?

We can do repairs to any gliders and replace any lines. However, as you say, on some more obscure wings we may have problems sourcing the exact original cloth in the correct colour and it is sometimes difficult to stock every type, diameter and colour of line that is used today.

We hold or have access to line length plans for the majority of gliders. If we don't have the information for a particular glider it is also possible to replace a damaged line by removing and measuring its equivalent on the other side.

When you service a glider you test the porosity of the material, the simple way to do this it to try and suck air through the fabric of the glider with your mouth and if it's a bit too easy to breathe then start to worry, can you explain how you carry out this test?

The industry standard 'JDC' machine we use draws a given amount of air through a fixed area of fabric and measures the time it takes to do this. The quicker the time the more porous the cloth.

Years and years ago ITV suffered porosity problems with their Saphir and if I can remember rightly I think Falhawk Athletes went porous, this affected their flying characteristics and they became prone to deep stall problems. With advances in gliders fabrics do you have many gliders that fail your porosity test when they come in for servicing?

Glider still go porous and suffer problems that we have to write them off for. However, gliders are inherently much more stable today than they were 10 years ago, consequently a porous modern glider may just suffer from launching problems or a inferior glide and not be prone to falling out of the sky as perhaps some of its' predecessors might.

I've heard that putting a glider away when wet can affect it's porosity, do you know if this is true and if so why? Any tips on glider storage that we should know about?

Storing a glider wet is a bad idea. It can cause the fabric to deteriorate; go mouldy; porous; weaken not to mention smell. You would never think to fold up and put away wet clothes but yet we've seen people treat their £2000 paragliders with less regard. Don't do it. If you do get your glider wet, get it out at the first available moment and let it dry properly before storing it in a cool dry place away from chemicals!!!

Another common problem from a few years ago was line shrinkage. Is this still a problem on today's modern gliders, does it only

affect certain types of line? How much wrong in length do the lines have to be before the glider starts to fly pissed? How do you get the correct line length, do you have to replace the lines?

Line shrinkage is still a character of some gliders which is why we still check line lengths against manufacturer specifications. Generally we are only concerned with dyneema lines which have a tendency to shrink sufficiently to effect glider performance. Having said that, it does not mean that all dyneema lined gliders will need their lines restretching.

If you have a dyneema lined glider, DON'T PANIC, if you're experiencing no problems it's almost certainly fine. Problems tend to manifest themselves at first when ground handling, as shrinkage is usually most prevalent at the trailing edge, and the glider may 'hang back' when

launching. If this does occur we wouldn't recommend tying your risers to your bumper while you and your mate have a tug-of-war on the other end. Our methods are rather more subtle and until you've checked the line lengths you don't know for sure if that is the problem.

If your glider is inspected annually it should be fine!

I've heard that acro king Mike Kung who tests for the DHV changes his glider every fifty hours. I wouldn't buy a second hand glider from him as I would expect it to be pretty worn out, do you know what sort of effect that flying acro can have on a wing, constantly pulling lots of high loads? Do the lines stretch or anything like that, can you tell

if the wing has been thrown about a lot?

Wings can and do stretch when put under lots of stress but this isn't something that we are really able to test for at the moment. When we can we'll let you know.

It's recommended that pilots change their reserves every ten years even if they haven't been thrown as the material degrades chemically. How do you go about testing an older reserve to see if it's still fit for it's purpose?

Yes, as you say, materials degrade over time and manufactures recommend replacement after 10 years regardless of use. We stick to this policy as best we can and refuse to repack reserves that are too old or tired. Harness designs are much better now than they were five or ten years ago, I remember seeing a few reserves that would never have come out of the bag due to poorly designed harnesses and deployment handles. Do you still come across the odd older harness with a reserve that would never work?

Do you see many reserve packing mistakes that may cause deployment to fail and if so what are the common mistakes?

Fortunately, mistakes are rare, but almost all mistakes we do see are the incorrect fitting of the reserves into the harnesses.

Kite surfing and traction kites seem to be taking off in a big way now, several manufacturers have expanded into the kite market. Do you service and repair kites, if so is it just like servicing a glider or are there different things to look out for?

We don't tend to be asked to service kites but we often do repairs.

Do you do other repairs as well as gliders and reserves? Can you patch flying suits and repair harnesses, eg. replace worn leg straps?

If we can fix it we will, just don't ask us to replace zips



# Annual General Meeting

## PROPOSALS

1) That the DHPC would, if required, offer the use of Dales Club sites to the PG Nationals, HG League or to the British Club Challenge, as the Committee sees fit, as a venue for a competition in 2006  
Proposed T.J.Birkbeck, seconded P.Logan

2) 'That membership fees are increased by £10 per year (£15 for joint membership) with this extra amount being put into a fighting fund to be used for possible future purchase of sites or leasing of sites.'  
Proposed James Goldsbrough, seconded P.Logan

3) That the DHPC give a vote of thanks to Kristine for being an excellent host at the Riverside Hotel. Proposed T.J.Birkbeck, seconded P.Logan

## Reports.....

### Social Sec.

This year's Dinner dance was a resounding success in its new venue at the Tempest Arms. Much fun was had by all with the food being edible (change from the Black Horse school dinners!). We will be returning there for the Feb 2006 event.

A talk by Kaz Stewart on sports psychology went down well leaving the audience with a lot to think about! Judy Ledden's talk was inspiring cataloguing her trip with a film company to 'fly with condors'.

2006 Dinner Dance to be 25th February.

### Chief Club Coach

A quiet year with my largest involvement being the successfully coaching evening along with Pete and Les, who both lectured on different sections of the syllabus. All candidates passed the Pilot Rating. Also I successfully converted two pilots trained by Tony Delaney's school Airborne into the BHPA. This involved me speaking to both pilots, observing one flying and obtaining CP papers from the BHPA. I invigilated the exam and both passed with flying colours and are now both BHPA members and therefore insured!

The problem of having club coaches judge non BHPA trained pilot's abilities was discussed. It was felt by the majority that in these circumstances we should refer potential BHPA/Dales pilots onto Active Edge or Northern Paragliding instructors for approval.

### Southern Sites

No problems on the southern sites and no feedback regards the little contretemps at Sutton and Cowling earlier in the year. Looking to pass over the sites to someone else due to pressure of work. Mick said he would write to the pilot who was involved in the dispute at Sutton & Cowling this year to get their side of the story. This flare up has now been resolved. The farmer's whisky is late in being distributed so volunteers were requested for distribution and the committee was left to organise this.

### Northern Sites

This year as been uneventful regarding any disputes over flying even though the biggest one could have been from DEFRA.. whilst that was going on I did speak to farmers without trying to push the subject too much (thought it the best way) and there was no problem, those that I did speak to were on our side. The only one that I could have foreseen as a problem was Semer Water, surprise surprise.. I did speak to Sandra and she was honest in saying that she was fed up with Semer and all the problems it does cause with family etc. and that she considered selling the land, I told her if that was the case then please inform me and the DHPC. I have not heard anything since and will approach the subject the next time I see her nearer Christmas. Tailbridge and the rumpus Northern had seems to have died a death, Ian Currer putting the ball back in his court and nothing coming back to him. I have also tried contacting the farmers for Ingleborough but they haven't returned the calls so a knock on the door is my next approach.

Other than that there are no problems....

## Membership

We have 200+ members (exact number on the database). The new, revised database is working well, no need to change format or programme. There are loads more para's than hang's. The email newsletter has been well accepted and I would ask none emailers to reconsider.

Renewals will be out in January and I would ask people to check the details and get them back to me ASAP so they can continue to enjoy the benefits of membership.

John Edmonds opened debate on whether the club should stick with tags to show membership or have tags, key rings, nothing or cards showing emergency contact details.

A vote on having a tangible means of ID was passed almost unanimously. A vote on continuing with helmet stickers was passed by a majority.

## Paragliding Competitions

As expected we failed to qualify for the BCC this year due to rule changes from the new organisers. The difference is that there are no reserved places for 3 northern and 3 southern clubs and the southern clubs can score many more points because there are more of them and they have shorter distances to travel. One round was held at Easter at Parlick which we won I think.

The first Dales BPC round for a long time was a successfully held but did not give any tasks due to weather. There was flying of some type on three days out of four however. There was interest from the BBC on filming this which will carry forward to 2006. BPC pilots were keen to return and said they liked the area and its possibilities.

No War of the Roses held, its still the Pennine Lads turn to sort it out – I should have nagged them more.

Dales had six pilots competing in the Championships this year with some respectable results.

I will be standing down from paragliding comp sec this year so volunteers please.

## Website

Chas Ward wasn't able to take over as much of the website as was originally thought due to family commitments.

Traffic has remained steady along with email and phone enquiries. The ISP had an outage last year that disappointed me with their quality of service so we're keeping them under review at the moment and may switch to other more reliable ISPs. Quality of service has been fine lately though.

## Club Secretary

Dealt with the possibly disastrous Single Payment Scheme and coordinated the club's response, supporting the Cumbrian Club in its drive against this. Walter Slingsby and Neil Cruikshank should be thanked for taking the time to meet with their MPs and getting them to table Parliamentary questions which opposed the legislation.

The number of enquiries dealt with averages one a week, mainly by phone.

Nothing major to report from the BHPA.

## Treasurer

Steve summed up that we broke even this year after taking into account the Yorkshire Air Ambulance donation and some accruals. We would have to be prudent in future with increased donations and a more expensive dinner dance.

Steve noted that membership fees hadn't increased since 1996. The Dinner Dance's increased cost was discussed and those in attendance were broadly supportive of it as it was an opportunity to thank the farmers.

## Safety

Tony had not received any accident reports this year despite there being one high profile incident televised this year (tree suffered some minor bruising but the pilot's sense of direction needs a transplant). No reports of any major incidents had gone round the grapevine.

### Nominations for Posts

**Chairman** – Trevor Birkbeck willing to stand, no change.

**Newsletter Editor** – Craig Richardson willing to stand, no change.

**Membership secretary** – John Edmonds willing to stand, no change.

**Treasurer** – Tony Pickering stood, TJB proposed, PL 2nd.

**Club coach** – Left in obedience, experienced volunteer sought. John Ellison will stand in until replacement found.

**Safety officer** – Mick Bolton stood, TJB proposed, PL 2nd.

**Librarian** – Liz Addy willing to stand, no change.

**Sites officer Southern** – Sean Ogi, MB Proposed, PL 2nd.

**Sites officer Northern** – Left in obedience, committee to decide between Marton Baxter and Graham Laycock.

**Paragliding competition secretary** – Pete Balmforth, PL Proposed, MB 2nd.

**Hang gliding competition secretary** – Kevin Gay willing to stand, no change.

**Club secretary** – Peter Logan willing to stand, no change.

**Social Secretary** – John Ellison TJB Proposed, PL 2nd.

**Web site officer** – Peter Logan to continue and build a team of contributors.

### Proposals

1) The Dales club should be available for various competitions such as the BPC, HG Nationals and Bleriot. Passed.

2) Summary of discussion:

James Goldsbrough proposed a membership increase of £10 / £15 for single / joint members to be ring fenced into a fighting fund for future sites purchase.

Peter Logan supported this but was concerned as to how the DHPC would handle becoming a land owner. Maybe we should sell on the land with a permanent agreement to fly there in the deeds. It was felt we would discuss this when the time came. Steve Clarkson also queried land ownership issues.

Kate Maddison and John Ellison were generally in favour of an increase in fees for sites purchase but weren't sure of the amount. They were keen on letting the membership know exactly what the increase was for. John sug-

gested the allocation of £2000 of club funds to start off a sites fund and a £5 increase with further raises to be discussed.

Noel Whittall was concerned about our realistic chances of being able to obtain a site. Trevor Birkbeck mentioned that land prices were in the region of £3000 per acre at the moment. Noel didn't like the ring fencing idea but was supportive of building club reserves.

Martin Beetham was asked to comment on the Shining Tor failed site purchase since he's on the Derbyshire club committee. He said that the Westsex club had managed to buy Bell Hill with outside help and a similar reserve to ours but they did have first refusal on it. The DSC has a ring fenced fund with any surplus going into it. Shining Tor went for between £70k to £100k but was a done deal apparently. Bell Hill was £62k plus £5k legal fees, Bloreng 53k, Tinto 55k. Extra money was raised by selling life memberships, raffles and applications to the Foundation for Sports and Arts.

Ian Sadler was concerned that a steep rise would mean people just sign up to other clubs that have reciprocal flying rights with the Dales club.

Steve Clarkson proposed a moderate fee increase with an intent to buy sites. Noel was supportive of this.

Trevor was generally against increases in membership fees where possible but considered a £10 increase once in ten years to be more than fair. James was open to having the fund ring fenced or not and Kate proposed that the strict definition of sites purchase be opened up.

Vote on amendment for membership fee increase for ring fenced sites purchase fund to be changed to a fund for ensuring the future of flying in the Dales. Kate Maddison proposed, John Ellison 2nd. Passed – unanimously.

Noel suggested the Treasurer propose the membership fee increase at this point.

Vote on a membership fee increase of £10 for single members and £15 for joint membership to setup a fund for ensuring the future of flying in the Dales. James Goldsbrough proposed, Pete Logan 2nd. Passed – unanimously.

3) Flowers and Thanks for the use of the Riverside Hotel. Passed.

Next AGM meeting, first Thursday in November 2006.



Catch up with the latest club news.

Log on to

[www.dhpc.org.uk](http://www.dhpc.org.uk)

**Club Night**  
First Thursday  
of the month,  
held at the  
Riverside Hotel  
Ilkley

## BALANCE SHEET - AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2005

<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>
Cash at Bank:		
Current Account	1031.36	65.33
Deposit Account	11750.87	11069.49
Cash in Hand	60.34	86.70
Magazine Float	<u>200.00</u>	<u>200.00</u>
	<u>13042.57</u>	<u>11421.52</u>
<b><u>NET ASSETS</u></b>	<b><u>13042.57</u></b>	<b><u>11421.52</u></b>
Balance at 30 September 2004	11421.52	11011.94
Add Excess of Income/Expenditure	<u>1621.05</u>	<u>409.58</u>
	<b><u>13042.57</u></b>	<b><u>11421.52</u></b>

### NOTES

1. In addition to the current assets listed above, the club holds the following stock as at 30 September 2004
  - Club Clothing at cost   £ 308.74
  - Club Videos               £ 160.00
2. The club also owns a number of items (televideo, PA system, books etc.) which, as the individual values are relatively low, have not been listed as assets, any such purchases being included as expenditure.
3. The rise in the cost of the Dinner Dance is due to a decision by the committee to change to a better venue and generally move 'up market' in terms of the quality of the event.
4. The figure for fundraising income consists of £72.00 raised by Kate Maddison (already donated), and £536.80 from the sale of a donated hang glider (money yet to be donated and still included in the club's assets).

The Donations expenditure of £572.00 consists of the £224.58 raised last year, plus last year's auction proceeds of £115.85, and an extra £159.57 agreed by the committee to make the total up to £500.00 (together with the £72.00 mentioned above).

Please note that as the fundraising and donation amounts have been included as income/expenditure for simplification purposes, the overall surplus figure is significantly

**INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2005**

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b><u>2005</u></b>	<b><u>2004</u></b>
Subscriptions	3445.75	3431.75
Dinner Dance	1204.42	1036.00
Magazine Advertising	30.00	-
Auctions	90.45	115.85
Sites Guide Sales	36.00	35.50
Club Clothing	40.00	15.00
Raffles	25.80	32.45
Bank Interest	181.79	102.02
Video Sales	10.00	40.00
Fundraising (see note 4 )	608.80	224.58
Unpresented cheque	-	15.00
<b><u>TOTAL INCOME</u></b>	<b><u>5673.01</u></b>	<b><u>5048.15</u></b>

**EXPENDITURE**

Membership Expenses	91.85	135.63
Dinner Dance	1753.95	1224.72
Magazine	324.52	1507.08
Library	93.43	122.35
Farmer's Whisky	365.95	-
Site Fees	205.63	176.25
Club Night Expenses	180.45	168.67
Committee Expenses	331.86	401.39
Competition Expenses	35.00	60.00
Trophies	31.99	-
Donations (see note 4)	572.00	100.00
Sites Guide Reprint	-	542.50

# XC LEAGUE

## 2005 Dales Paragliding League

Pos	Pilot	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1	John Ellison	78.5	40.6	13.5	6.5			139.1
2	Jake Herbert	30.0	27.0	19.1	18.6	18.0	17.5	130.2
3	Chris Fountain	24.4	18.4	15.0				57.8
4	Pete Spillet	45.2	10.6					55.8
5	Sara Spillet	13.3	12.2	9.9	6.8	6.5		48.7
6	Neil Cruickshank	20.6	16.3					36.9
7	James Goldsborough	15.1	10.2					25.3
8	Neil Plant	15.1	7.5					22.6
9	Tony Pickering	10.1	10.0					20.1
10	Harry Harrison	17.2						17.2
11	Richard Cardwell	17.1						17.1
12	Zena Stevens	8.3	6.8					15.1
13	Pete Swanborough	9.0						9.0
14	Ian Newiss	5.7						5.7

## 2005 Dales Hang Gliding League

Pos	Pilot	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1	Trev Birkbeck	40.6	38.1	23.3	13.3			115.3
2	Kevin Gay	46.7	8.4	5.4				60.5
3	Steve Mann	34.5						34.5
4	Digby Rolf	33.3						33.3
5	Ally Johnston	18.1	11.1					29.2

## WINGS & THINGS

Apco Tetra DHV1 90-115kg. Safe, good handling glider. 20 hours total flying. Bought new November 2004 for £1800. Sell for £995!!  
Free X Moon Top End DHV1-2 65-85kg. Dynamic, reactive glider.  
Around 70 hours flying time. Only £650 or why not buy as a second glider for playing at the coast or ridge soaring  
Contact Chris Little , 07966 153668.

Garmin 3 GPS, Hardly used and in perfect condition. £85.  
Contact Scott Armitage, 07970697253.

Will Wing U2 160 Very low hours as new, Spare U/Right, Tip wand, Wills Wing aerofoil base bar wheels.  
£2600.00 (going ridgid)  
Contact Ron Freeman, 01670 816924.

Airwave K5. Absolutely immaculate. Red L/E, red U/S.  
Crispy sail and beautiful handling. £550  
Contact Clive Bridges, 07768 001190.

Freex frantic plus Mint blue & white Kit bag original repair tape (never needed) manual. Freex ruck sack. £395.  
Contact Ron Freeman, 01670 816924.

Podlite HG harness. Red, suit 6ft1 to 6ft4. Average condition. £40  
Contact Clive Bridges, 07768001190.

Nova Radon DHV 2  
Medium 85-110kg, Red with black leading edge very good cond. Tested by Aerofix, Gelvenor material, DHV 2, 55KM top speed excellent glide. ask for Chris 07973 22713.

Gradient Bliss 28 95-120kg all up Blue/white in lovely condition. A truly superb XC wing. £750 ono  
Contact Kitt Rudd, 01539 727913.





**[ Log on to  
dhpc.org.uk ]**

***SKYWORDS is back, due to work commitments I have been unable to produce a regular mag.***

***I am now in a situation where I can spend more time on the mag, so a regular copy of Skywords will now once again be published.***

***So if you have any articles for publication, send them in to me***

***Craig Richardson***

***skywords@dhpc.org.uk***

## Lord of the skies

From the archive, first published Thursday 13th Oct 2005.

York hang glider Richard Lovelace has flown into the world top 40 after becoming national champion in a golden summer.

Successes this summer include: becoming the UK national champion and coming third in the incorporated FAI international, finishing 26th in the Pre-European competition in Croatia, leading the English team to a storming victory over the French in the Bleriot Cup, and rising up the world ranking table by more than 300 places to 33rd.

The net result is a national title and a guaranteed place at next summer's European Championships in Croatia.

He said: "This year's been a fantastic year. It's beyond all my dreams - even the wildest ones that I dreamt up while sat in the bath.

"I've been flying competitively for just three years and my world ranking last year was 362 or something so it was totally unplanned and unexpected and I'm

really pleased.

"It means I go into next year as the top British pilot and the third highest-ranked Brit in the world."

The UK championship took place in the Spanish Pyrenees and was made up of six tasks from 60 to 100 kilometers in length with times and routes measured by global positioning technology.

In winning the Alvin Russell Trophy, Lovelace clocked the competition's fastest time with an average speed of 65kph.

He then led the English team in the Bleriot Cup - the annual Anglo-French contest for novice fliers, in which Lovelace last year helped wrestle off the French for the first time this century.

After turning down the team captain's role, he took on the challenge of being the tactical manager and literally blazed the trail for his team-mates to follow, Pied Piper style.

"We didn't just beat the French," said the 39-year-old from Strensall. "We ab-

solutely thrashed them."

A missed day from the British Open series, part of which was filmed for the BBC Inside Out programme, combined with abysmal weather conditions meant he had to settle for a disappointing eighth place, or he may have had more silverware on his mantelpiece.

Up next for the Network Rail signalman is an appointment at the Istra Peninsular in Croatia in June.

He said: "The big one this year is the European Championships, which is second only to the World Championships. Because I'm now British champion, that automatically gets me a place in the Europeans.

"I'm also hoping to get picked for the Pre-Worlds in Texas in August. I'm 99 per cent sure that I can, so it's just a case of organising time off work."

Any sponsors interested in benefiting from Lovelace's international exposure can get in touch by calling on 07801 847 487.