

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
SAFETY AND TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING
COUNTY ARMS, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2001

Present:

Jhn Hitchen	-	Acting Chairman
David Hickling	-	BPS, Langar
Karen Farr	-	Skydive Strathallan
Dennis Buchanan	-	NWPC
Ian Cashman	-	JSPC (N)
Phil Cavanagh	-	BKPC
Andy Paddock	-	Silver Stars
Pete Sizer	-	Headcorn
Pat Walters	-	Tilstock
Dave Emerson	-	Hinton Skydiving
Ronnie O' Brien	-	PPC
Dave Johnston	-	British Skysports
Alan Wilkinson	-	Skydive St Andrews
Paul Applegate	-	Riggers Committee

Apologies Nick Johnston (Dave Johnston represented Nick at the meeting), Maggie Penny, Chris Allen, Ian Roseninge, Carl Williams, Tim Andrewes, Dane Kenny. Mike Bolton, Chris Lyall, Brian Dyas (Alan Wilkinson represented Brian at the meeting), Trevor Dobson, Dave Wood.

In Attendance:

Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
Jhn Carter	-	BPA Medical Advisor
Trudy Kemp	-	Assistant to NCSO/TO

Observers: Dave Lewis, Tony Goodman, Richard Wheatley, Martine Howland, Jhn Curtis, Jhn Harding, Bernadette Whitaker, Colin Fitzmaurice, Sean Bell, Bill Rule, Dave Vowles, Andrew Pollitt, Robert Sharp.

ITEM

1. MINUTES OF THE STC MEETING OF THE 9TH AUGUST 2001

It was proposed by David Hickling and seconded by Ronnie O' Brien that the Minutes of the STC Meeting of the 9th August 2001 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 9TH AUGUST 2001

Page 2, Item 2 – CYPRESAADs. At the last STC meeting the subject of the Student CYPRES was dealt with following much debate over the previous months. At that meeting, it was proposed by Phil Cavanagh that ' the Student CYPRESAAD be used on Student parachute equipment as per the manufacturers recommendations' . This proposal was voted on; 3 votes in favour of the proposal, 0 against, with 8 abstentions.

When concern was expressed at the number of abstentions, a number of CCl's stated that they had abstained because they felt they did not have enough information. The Chairman had stated that he believed that because of the number of abstentions, Council would ask STC to consider this item again. At the Council meeting of the 21st August, Council did ask that STC should discuss this item again. Because of this the Chairman had asked that CCl's who had any further input or questions relating to this issue, to forward them to the BPA offices, to enable them to be passed on to Airtec.

The Chairman reported that no CCl's had sent anything in to the office, and therefore, he felt that CCl's may now be content with the decision made at the last STC.

The Chairman also advised those present that Chris Allen had put some questions to the BPA and Airtec, but these questions referred to AFF only. After consideration Chris had stated that he was content with Phil Cavanagh's previous proposal, as he felt it would permit the use of the Expert CYPRES when AFF Students get to the stage where they are converted to throwaway pilot chutes. Chris had written a letter, which had been circulated to those present.

Pete Szer advised the meeting that he had obtained a student unit from Airtec and had conducted some trials without any problems.

Following some discussion, where it was felt that because of the previous vote another vote should be taken at this meeting, it was proposed by Phil Cavanagh and seconded by Dave Emerson that the decision made at the last STC that 'the Student CYPRES AAD be used on Student parachute equipment as per the manufacturers recommendations' remain in place.

For: 10

Against: 1

Abstentions: 0

Carried

The Chairman confirmed that the time limit set for those clubs to make the necessary changes to their equipment a year from the date of the last STC meeting (9th August 2001).

David Hickling asked for clarification on 'what we call a student'. Was it as per the BPA, ie below FAI A Certificate. Because the Airtec definition of what a Student is and the BPA definition was different?

Much discussion ensued, but the meeting felt that the only interpretation of 'Student' could be the Operations Manual definition.

Following comments made by Ronnie O'Brien, it was accepted that as an 'Intermediate' parachutist must have equipment fitted with an AAD when converting to a throwaway pilot chute, which may be an Expert CYPRES, the same criteria could apply to an AFF graduate converting to a throwaway during his/her consolidation jumps. In all other instances equipment fitted with a CYPRES AAD, used by Student Parachutists, that AAD must be a Student CYPRES.

**Note for Minutes:- Alan Wilkinson arrived at 7.20 pm.*

Page 3, Item 4 – Fatality –Tilstock. Following the Board of Inquiry, the Panel of Inquiry was asked by STC to consider a number of other areas, as well as the recommendations made by the Board, relating to RAPS in general. CCl's were asked if they were prepared to sit on this Panel, (which was likely to be a time

consuming one), to contact the office. Some response had been received and a Panel had now been formed. David Hickling had agreed to be Chairman of the Panel and the other members that had so far offered to sit on the Panel were; Brian Dyas, John Horne, Trevor Dobson, Doug Peacock and Andy Paddock. The Panel would report back to STC in due course.

Page 8, Item 6 – Incidents (vi). The AAD firing which involved a 70-year-old member with 972 jumps, was investigated by the CCI, who has stopped the jumper from jumping at his centre at this time.

Page 10, Item 8 – Tandem Course. The instructor who had not completed all his jumps on the course, Neil Finnighan, had now done so and had been awarded his Tandem Instructor rating.

Page 11, Item 9 – Permissions (c). Jason Grime has now been re-evaluated by a nominated Examiner and has been re-instated as an AFF instructor.

Page 12, Item 10 – AOB (a). At the last meeting STC agreed that the PLA/DZ at Killykergan could be used as a temporary PLA/DZ by Wild Geese whilst their regular Student PLA/DZ at Ballyrogan was unavailable due to the foot and mouth problems. Wild Geese now wished to use Killykergan on a permanent basis. The PLA/DZ was inspected by the NCSO on the 8th September 2001. A copy Maggie Penny's request was circulated to those present, which was supported by the NCSO.

The Chairman advised those present that the PLA/DZ had been cleared in the past and there had been no changes to the site since that time.

It was therefore proposed by Maggie Penny (proxy) and seconded by David Hickling that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

Page 13, Item 10 – AOB (c). Although David Vowles was present at the evenings' meeting, he had not indicated that he was going to attend and therefore it was agreed that this matter should be held over until the next meeting. Mr Vowles had indicated that he would be in attendance at that meeting.

It was therefore proposed by David Johnston and seconded by Karen Farr that David Vowles' Approved Packing Certificate remain suspended until he presents himself to STC.

Carried Unanimously

Page 13, Item 10 – AOB (d). The Committee was advised that David Hickling had put off his proposal regarding throwaway pilot chutes for AFF Students until a future date.

3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS SUB COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 9TH AUGUST 2001

There being no matters arising from the previous meeting, it was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Pat Walters that the Minutes of the Riggers Sub-Committee Meeting of the 9th August 2001 be approved.

Carried Unanimously

4. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PILOTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 9TH AUGUST 2001**

There being no matters arising from the previous meeting it was proposed by David Hickling and seconded by Ian Cashman that the Minutes of the Pilots Sub-Committee Meeting of the 9th August 2001, be approved.

Carried Unanimously

5. **FATALITY 1ST SEPTEMBER 2001 - TOPCLIFFE**

The Committee was advised of a 'first freefaller' Steven Cooper who was killed on the 1st September 2001 at the Merlin Parachute Centre, Topcliffe.

A resume of the Boards' report, together with the Conclusions and Recommendations had been sent to CCIs with the Agenda. The members of the Board were; Tony Butler, Ian Rosenvinge and Dave Johnston.

At approximately 17.10 hours on Saturday 1st September 2001, following a 'flight line' equipment inspection, Steven Cooper boarded a Cessna 182 aircraft operated by the Merlin Parachute Centre, in order to make his eighth jump, which was his third of the day. This jump was to be his first free fall jump. Also on board were three other parachutists; a Tandem Instructor with his Tandem Student and the Jumpmaster.

The aircraft took off and climbed to approximately 3,500ft AGL, during which time the Jumpmaster gave Steven a pre-jump equipment check. The aircraft then 'ran in' over the top of the PLA, at which time Steven was instructed to 'climb out' and hang from the wing strut.

On the command of the Jumpmaster, Steven released from the wing strut. He was seen to immediately go onto his back. He remained on his back and his right hand was observed to move to the area at the base of the parachute container, where the main parachute ripcord was located. He was seen to do this on a number of occasions.

Steven was observed to remain in a back to earth position until approximately 200ft AGL, when parachute material was seen above him. Shortly after he was lost from view, just prior to impact.

The Conclusions of the Board were as follows:

' That once Steven had released from the aircraft ' wing strut' he immediately went into a ' de-arched' position causing him to become ' back to earth' . He remained in this position throughout the majority of the descent.

The Board believes he made numerous attempts to locate and operate the main parachute ripcord. At some stage, probably just below 1,000ft AGL the AAD activated, but the reserve parachute pilot chute did not clear his body and probably remained under his back, because of his inverted position.

The Board believes that Steven continued the attempt to operate the main parachute ripcord, finally managing to do so at approximately 2-300ft AGL.

The Board also believes that as the main parachute ripcord was being activated, the reserve pilot chute was then placed in a position where it was able to start the deployment sequence. As the reserve parachute was starting to deploy it is believed by the Board that the main parachute then began its deployment sequence. Because of the low altitude, neither of the parachutes were able to fully develop before Steven struck the ground.

The Board believes that had Steven carried out the Reserve Procedures as he had been taught, following his initial unsuccessful attempt to locate the main parachute ripcord, this unfortunate tragedy could have been avoided' .

The Recommendations of the Board were as follows:

' That the subsequent Panel of Inquiry, which follows a Board of Inquiry and is set up to investigate any peripheral aspects to the fatality, also considers the following:

- a) Is there a need to produce specific requirements for a First Free Fall Lesson?
- b) Does the parachute opening height for Student Parachutists (jumping ram-air parachutes) on their first free fall descent need to be increased?
- c) Does the current Category System encourage Student Parachutists to be progressed to free fall too quickly?

It was proposed by Dennis Buchanan and seconded by Dave Emerson that the Board Report including their Conclusions and Recommendations be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Technical Officer advised those present that following a fatality a Panel of Inquiry is automatically convened to look at peripheral aspects of the fatality and if agreed by STC to consider any recommendations made by the Board and also any areas STC wish to be considered. The Panel had been formed and the members were; Tony Goodman, Pat Walters and Dennis Buchanan. The Panel had held their first meeting that afternoon.

The next part of the meeting was held ' in camera' and all observers with the exception of Panel members and persons involved were asked to leave the meeting.

** Note for Minutes: Robert Sharp – BPA member entered meeting at 7.40pm and advised those present that he was there as a representative of the CCI concerned.*

The Committee was advised that during the Board investigation a number of irregularities were discovered not directly related to the fatality. The Technical Officer gave the meeting details of the irregularities and the action taken so far, including the suspension of the CCI' s ratings.

The Committee was advised that the CCI concerned had written a letter to the Association handing in his Instructor ratings.

Following further discussion on this matter, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by David Hickling that the Instructor ratings of the CCI concerned remain suspended until the Panel of Inquiry had completed their findings.

Carried Unanimously

6. INCIDENT/INJURY REPORTS – RESUME (Previously Item 5)

- i) There had been 24 Student injuries reports received since the last meeting, 15 male and 9 female. 1 Student got a bruised face when a riser struck her on deployment, another Student was sick and disorientated after her first jump. It was later discovered that she was dehydrated. The other 22 were on landing. 19 of the injuries were on ram-air canopies and 3 were on round canopies, including one Student who twisted an ankle landing a round reserve.
- ii) There had been 18 injuries reported to Intermediate or Experienced Parachutists since the last STC. 14 male and 4 female.
- iii) Since the last meeting there had been 14 Student Parachutist Malfunctions/Deployment Problems reported. All male and all were on ram-air canopies.
- iv) There had been 39 reports of Malfunction/Deployment Problems to Intermediate or Experienced Parachutists since the last meeting. 36 male and 3 female.
- v) There had been 17 Tandem Incident/Injury reports received since the last meeting, 4 were Student injuries. 13 were malfunction/Deployment problems, quite a few of them were knotted lines, this was also the cause of a number of the experienced jumpers malfunctions – jumpers should make sure there are no ‘twists’ in the steering lines every time they pack.
- vi) There had been 3 reports of an AAD firings. A Student lost altitude awareness and as the main deployed his FXC fired! A Student was carrying out a ‘turns’ exercise and lost altitude awareness, eventually pulled at about 800-900ft, and as her main canopy was opening the CYPRES fired her reserve. The instructor, who was following her in freefall, saw she was going low and continued to follow her, trying to give her a ‘pull’ signal. He eventually gave up at about 1000-1200ft and when he deployed he was about 100ft above the Student. Both the instructor and the Student were ‘grounded’ for a period by the CCI. The third report concerned a Level 6 AFF Student who was unable to deploy his main canopy at 5000ft as he was pulling on the harness adjustment strap. The instructor re-gripped and saw the Student go for his reserve ripcord. At which point the Student went head down and unstable. He then re-gained stability and was seen with both hands on the reserve ripcord. The instructor pulled his own ripcord at 2500ft. The Student only got the reserve ripcord out of the pocket, but did not deploy the reserve. The CYPRES fired the reserve successfully. The loop was cut, indicating the Student pulled the ripcord after the CYPRES fired.
- vii) A couple of reports of canopy formation entanglements and one of a canopy collision had been received and one where a Student lost her helmet on deployment.
- viii) A few reports had been received of display misfires, including one where the jumper landed in the water and a jet skier reached him just ahead of the safety boat and brought him back.
- ix) Also received had been a number ‘off landing’ reports. Including one where the Student Stuck power lines (no injury). Another were a Canopy

Formation jump landed 3.5 miles from the PLA, in a river, the jumper was picked up by a local craft.

7. PROPOSED CHANGES TO OPERATIONS MANUAL

There were two proposed changes to the Operations Manual, which were circulated with the Agenda. Both proposals were from the Riggers committee. The first was agreed at the Riggers Meeting of the 9th August 2001 and the second was presented and accepted at this evening's Riggers meeting.

- a) This first proposal had been put forward because riggers had often found it difficult to discover how many descents some Tandem equipment had made, when they receive the equipment for inspection and packing:

SECTION 6 (EQUIPMENT), Paragraph 2.3 (Tandem), proposed new sub-para 2.3.3. to read:

2.2.3 The owner of all Tandem equipment must keep a Log Card/record of all descents, which must be available for the six monthly inspections and repack.

It was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above proposed change to the BPA Operations Manual be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

- b) Andrew Hilton had submitted the second proposal to Riggers, which had been circulated with the Riggers Agenda and concerned the currency check on reserve packers.

The Committee was advised that the reason for Mr Hilton's proposal was that currently the wording in the Operations Manual leaves a loophole whereby someone with reserves endorsed on an original Packing Certificate, predating the Advanced Packing Certificate system, can argue they do not need an annual currency check. The currency check was intended to apply to all reserve packers. Mr Hilton had known of several cases where individuals attempting to pack reserves under the old packing certificates without having their currency signed up.

He had therefore proposed the following change to the BPA Operations Manual:-

SECTION 6 (EQUIPMENT), Paragraph 8.3.1. N.B.(2), proposed change to read:

N.B.(2) Advanced Parachute Packers and holders of packing certificates endorsed for 'piggyback' reserve parachutes are subject to an annual currency certification at the time of membership renewal. This certification will be displayed on the BPA membership card.

It was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above proposed change to the BPA Operations Manual be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

8. INSTRUCTOR COURSES

- a) The BPA wished to thank British Skysports for hosting the Instructor Course that ran from the 13th – 23rd August 2001. The report was circulated with the Agenda.

The recommendation from the course was as follows:-

‘ That the following have their CSBI ratings extended by six months from the end of the course: Jm Hynds, Jhn Bagwell, Chris Beattie, Mick Glover and Graham Harris’ .

It was proposed by Dave Jhnston and seconded by Ian Cashman that the above recommendation be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

- b) A Tandem and AFF course was conducted at the Joint Services Parachute Centre – Netheravon, sponsored by the Red Devils. Both organisations were thanked for their assistance during the Course. There were 3 candidates on the AFF course and 10 on the Tandem Course. 2 AFF candidates and all 10 Tandem candidates were successful. The Course Report was circulated to those present for information only.

9. PERMISSIONS

- a) Dave Jhnston gave the meeting details of his request, which was circulated to those present requesting that Andy Pollitt be re-instated as a CSBI. Mr Pollitt’s CSBI rating had expired in August 2000 and due to work commitments he had been unable to attend a CSI Course, but he hoped to attend the first available Course in the future.

It was proposed by Dave Jhnston and seconded by Dennis Buchanan that the above permission be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

- b) Circulated to those present was a letter from George McGuinness requesting a six month extension to CSBI rating of William Gollan, which was his second request. The meeting was advised that Mr Gollan had injured himself on the CSI course in May 2001.

It was proposed Karen Farr and seconded by Ronnie O’ Brien that the above permission be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

- c) Also circulated to those present was a letter from Maggie Penny requesting permission for Stephen McGuigan to attend the CSBI course in November 2001. At this time he was short of the required jumps by 19. Although he would try to obtain enough jumps before the course, but the request was in case he was unable to do so.

It was proposed by Pat Walters and seconded by Phil Cavanagh that the above permission be accepted.

For: 10

Against: 1

Abstentions: 1

Carried

10. A.O.B.

- a) Circulated to those present was a letter from Ian Cashman requesting that Mark Tether's CSI rating be re-instated. His rating had expired on the 31st March this year and was not renewed due to military commitments abroad.

It was proposed by Ian Cashman and seconded by Dave Johnston that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

Date of next Meeting:- Thursday 6th December 2001
At 7 p.m.
County Arms, Leicester

15th October 2001

Distribution

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