

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
SAFETY AND TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 5TH JUNE 2003

Present:

John Hitchen	-	Chairman STC
Pat Walters	-	Tilstock
Jeff Illidge (no vote)	-	Black Knights
Ronnie O' Brien	-	PPC
Brian McGill	-	RAFSPA
Dennis Buchanan	-	NWPC
Tony Goodman	-	JSPC (N)
Steve Jelf	-	Silver Stars
Dave Emerson	-	Hinton
Andy Montriou	-	Skydive Redlands
Mike Rust	-	NLPC
Dave Hickling	-	BPS, Langar
Pete Szer	-	Headcorn
Alan Wilkinson (from 7.35pm)	-	St Andrews
Paul Hollow	-	Target Skysports
Paul Applegate	-	Riggers Committee

Apologies Tony Knight, Dave Wood, Ian Roseninge, Phil Cavanagh, Karen Farr, Ian Cashman (Tony Goodman represented Ian at the meeting).

In Attendance:

Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
Dr John Carter	-	BPA Medical Adviser
Trudy Kemp	-	Assistant to NCSO/TO

Observer: Mick Nealis.

ITEM

1. MINUTES OF THE STC MEETING OF THE 10TH APRIL 2003

It was proposed by Steve Jelf and seconded by Andy Montriou that the Minutes of the STC meeting of the 10th April 2003 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 10TH APRIL 2003

Page 1, (Item 2 – Matters Arising - CCI Rating Suspension) The Chairman advised those present that both the CCI and his son were written to after the last STC to inform them of the Committee' s decision. He stated that nothing has been heard from either of them, although assistance and advice has been offered to the CCI, but none appears to have been accepted at this time.

The Chairman stated that a letter had been handed to him from David Sawyer just prior to the meeting, a copy of which was tabled to those present advising that Cornwall Parachute Club was in need of an Advanced Instructor willing to work as CCI for the club in the near future. Anyone interested was asked to contact the Club c/o David Sawyer, telephone number 07729 173240, email: davidincyberspace@talk21.com

Page 2, (Item 2 – Matters Arising – Panels of Inquiry/Working Groups). None of the various Panels/Working Groups have yet completed reports for presentation to STC.

The Chairman reported that the Panel of Inquiry into the aircraft accident at RAFSPA last year is almost completed and the report should be ready for the next meeting.

The Panel looking at canopy handling and low turns are continuing to carry out a good deal of work. In the mean time, tabled to those present was a 'draft' safety poster which is intended will be sent to clubs. Also tabled was a copy of an e-mail from John Horne, who is the chairman of the Panel, giving some information on a 'smoke machine' which could possibly be used by clubs as a help for Students to assess wind direction.

The Panel dealing with equipment/body entanglements hopes to have a static line bag ready for approval in the not too distant future.

Page 5, (Item 5 – AFF Student to Instructor Ratio). A letter from Pete Sizer regarding a point of order on this item was circulated with the agenda. Pete believed that a Counter Proposal "not to change anything" should not have been accepted, but the original proposal should have been voted on, and the likely case in this instance, is that the proposal would have been defeated. The Chairman stated that he accepted Pete's interpretation and will consider this in the future.

Page 9. (Item 9 – A.O.B. ii). Chris Francis' s proposal that Kemble Airfield be cleared as a Temporary DZ/PLA subject to inspection and clearance by the NCSO or TO, was accepted by STC. The TO inspected the DZ/PLA on the 8th May and agreed to its use as per the proposal at the last STC meeting. The jumps took place on the 31st May and unfortunately, one of the Tandem Students hurt her ankle.

Page 10. (Item 9 – A.O.B. v). Andy Ford' s guidelines for jumping wing-suits was a main agenda item.

3. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS SUB COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 10TH APRIL 2003**

Paul Applegate gave the meeting details of the previous Minutes, which included an Amendment to the BPA Operations Manual:

Paragraph 8 (Packing), Sub-para 8.3.2. – Delete.
Previous sub-paras 8.3.3. & 8.3.4. now become sub-paras 8.3.2. & 8.3.3.

Another, minor amendment has been included:

Paragraph 8 (Packing), New N.B. following Sub-para 8.9 (Sealing Thread).

N.B. The acceptable BPA reserve sealing method can be found on BPA form 215.

There being no further matters arising from the previous meeting, it was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Pete Sizer Sizer that the Minutes of the Riggers Sub-Committee Meeting of the 10th April 2003 including the above Operations Manual Amendments be approved.

Carried Unanimously

Paul Applegate advised those present that there was nothing to report from the meeting held that evening.

4. FATALITY – HINTON SKYDIVING CENTRE

The Chairman reported that unfortunately there had been a fatal accident at Hinton in April. A Board of Inquiry report had been completed and a resume of the report had been circulated to CCIs with the STC agenda.

At approximately 10.20 hours on Wednesday 16th April 2003, Francis Charles Simmons boarded a Cessna 206 aircraft at the Hinton Skydiving Centre, in order to make what is believed to have been his tenth jump, following a number of jumps spread over a period of just under three years. His first jump being a Tandem jump had taken place on the 6th July 2000. He had completed several training courses and revision-training sessions during that period, the last having taken place that morning.

The aircraft climbed to 2,200 ft AGL above the PLA, where the Jumpmaster released a WDI.

The aircraft then climbed to 3,500 ft, during which time the Jumpmaster gave Francis Simmons a pre-jump check. The aircraft then 'ran in' over the top of the PLA, at which time Francis Simmons was instructed to move to the door to prepare for exit.

On the command of the Jumpmaster, Francis Simmons made a good release from the aircraft, maintaining a good body position. As the parachute started to deploy, he was seen to catch his arm in the parachute rigging lines.

The parachute was seen to fully deploy, but was then observed to be turning to the left, and continued to do so until he impacted with the ground.

A BPA Board of Inquiry was formed, consisting of John Hitchen, Tony Butler and Ian Cashman. During the investigation it was discovered that Francis Simmons had deceived the Clubs he had jumped at into believing that he was 63 years of age. It was subsequently discovered that he was 75 years of age.

Following the investigation, the Board came to the following Conclusions:

'Francis Simmons' initial exit from the aircraft was good, but as the main parachute started to deploy he may have caught his left arm in the rigging lines, causing the main parachute to distort on full deployment. It is also possible that the static line initially went under his arm during exit, thereby enabling the parachute deployment bag and risers to pass under his arm and his arm then catching in the parachute rigging lines, which could have had the same effect, of distorting the parachute, causing it to rotate.

The Board believe that he made no attempt to extract his arm from the parachute rigging lines, either because he was unconscious, or because he was unable to for either physical or psychological reasons.

The Board believe that the parachute continued to rotate until impact.

It is unlikely that he would have been permitted to take part in initial parachute training had any of the clubs known his correct age' .

The Recommendations of the Board, are as follows:

That the subsequent Panel of Inquiry, which follows this Board of Inquiry, considers the following:

- a) As to whether the current BPA regulations (below) regarding the age of ab-initio Students accepted for training are adequate.

BPA Operations Manual, Section 11 (Medical), Paragraph 2 (General), sub-para 2.1:

Persons above the age of 50 years will not normally be accepted for parachute training, other than Student Tandem Parachutists, where higher ages may be acceptable. Exceptions to this may be permitted if the person has previous parachuting experience and/or is of a high standard of fitness for their age and can convince the instructor of that fitness.

- b) If a parachutist is 'grounded' from jumping at one club for safety reasons, should there be a system in place for other clubs to be notified of that 'grounding' ?
- c) The desirability for a standardised static line dispatching technique/procedure.

The Board Report including their Conclusions and Recommendation need to be formally accepted:

It was proposed by David Hickling and seconded by Brian McGill that the Board of Inquiry Report into the death of Francis Simmons be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Chairman advised those present that the Panel of Inquiry that follows the Board of Inquiry has now been instigated. The chairman of the Panel is Mick Nealis and the other members are Steve Jelf and Andy Montriou. The Panel held their first meeting this afternoon.

5. FATALITY – RAFSPA

The Chairman reported that a second fatality occurred in April, two days after the previous one. This fatality happened a Weston on the Green on Good Friday. A resume of the Board of Inquiry Report was circulated to CCIs with the STC agenda.

At approximately 12.15 hrs on Friday 18th April 2003, Alex Moore, an FAI 'B' Certificate parachutist, with 63 jumps, boarded a Dornier G92 aircraft at RAFSPA along with thirteen other parachutists. He was part of a four-way group intending to make an FS descent.

The aircraft climbed to approximately 12,000ft AGL. A 'jump run' was made over the PLA. When the aircraft was over the 'exit point' , a group of four parachutists exited the aircraft, followed by a group of two parachutists. Alex Moore, along with three fellow parachutists,

then exited as a group of four. They were followed shortly after by the remaining four parachutists on board.

The free fall part of the descent went without incident, during which a number of FS manoeuvres were completed. At approximately 4,000ft AGL the parachutists separated and deployed their parachutes between 2 - 3,000ft AGL.

All parachutes deployed normally and Alex Moore's parachute appeared to be flying correctly. At some stage his parachute was seen to fly past the intended landing area and at approximately 100ft AGL was observed to be facing the parachute into wind, approximately 100 metres short (down wind) of the intended landing area. His parachute was then seen to make a sharp left hand turn, completing approximately 90° before impacting with a concrete area of the ground.

A BPA Board of Inquiry was formed, consisting of Tony Butler and Tony Goodman. During the investigation, it was noted that three of the plastic connector link protection 'tubes' on the main parachute had been ripped and damaged, probably over a period of many jumps and the fourth 'tube', on the right front riser, was intact, but was positioned approximately half way down the riser.

Following the investigation, the Board came to the following Conclusions:

'Alex Moore made an uneventful free fall descent. He deployed his main parachute at the correct altitude. He remained upwind for the majority of the descent. He over-flew the intended landing area and because of the wind strength and/or possibly due to a lack of judgement, ended up too far down-wind to enable him to get back to the intended landing area.

Being over an area which contained a number of minor hazards, the Board believe that he then decided to pull down on both his front risers, in an effort to gain extra 'drive' in the hope of landing closer to his original intended landing area.

The Board believe that when he pulled his front risers down, he may have also pulled on the right connector link protection 'tube' and pulled it loose from the connector link. The riser may then have slipped up, through the 'tube', having the same effect as releasing that riser, which could have caused a very sharp turn to the left.

It is also possible that he could have made a sharp intentional turn to the left, though the Board believe this is unlikely. It is also possible that as he was nearing the ground, he may have been distracted, acknowledging a friend who was below him, though, it is unlikely that this would have affected the outcome of this tragic accident' .

The Recommendations of the Board, are as follows:

- a) Even though experienced parachutists and holders of IC1 Grades are responsible for ensuring that parachutes are fully airworthy before packing them. Clubs should instigate a system (if they do not already have one in place) for ensuring that any equipment loaned to IC1 Grade parachutists or above has been inspected prior to the parachutists using it.
- b) Many Clubs have landing areas designated specifically for experienced parachutists. Clubs should re-asses these areas, taking into account the proximity of hazards and their possible effects, should a parachutist make a simple error of judgement.

The Board Report including their Conclusions and Recommendation need to be formally accepted:

It was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Mike Rust that the Board of Inquiry Report into the death of Alex Moore be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Panel of Inquiry that follows the Board of Inquiry has now been instigated. The chairman of the Panel is Nigel Allen and the other members are Ronnie O' Brien and Mike Rust. The Panel held their first meeting on Monday of this week

The Chairman advised those present that the Panel have issued a Safety Information Bulletin, which would be circulated to all Clubs, a copy of which was tabled for information.

6. INCIDENT/INJURY REPORTS RESUME

- i) There had been 31 Student injury reports received since the last meeting, 22 male and 9 female. 30 were landing injuries, 1 was a Student who caught his arm between the risers on deployment, which he freed after about 3 seconds, straining a muscle in his shoulder. All the landing injuries were on ram-air canopies.
- ii) There had been 14 injury reports received for Intermediate/Experienced Parachutists. 13 male and 1 female. The reports included a serious incident where two parachutists collided in freefall. A group of six parachutists left a LET 410 aircraft at 12,000ft in a five way 'tube' with one following as an observer. After about 7-8 seconds the 'tube' broke up and they began to form a 'star' . As the fourth person docked (27 seconds after exit at approximately 8,000ft), the observer collided with them, from the left side at some speed. The fourth parachutist to dock was able to deploy his main parachute and managed with some difficulty to gain control of his toggles. He appeared to land without flaring. The jumper who collided with the formation appeared to become unconscious on impact. His Cypres fired and he landed still unconscious under his reserve, off the PLA. Both parachutists regained consciousness before going to hospital. One parachutist suffered facial injuries and a broken elbow joint and the others' injuries included a punctured lung and ruptured spleen. A formal investigation has been instigated. The CCI was present at the meeting and was able to provide further information to STC concerning this incident.
- iii) Since the last meetings there had been 8 Student Parachutist Malfunctions/Deployment Problems reported. 1 male and 3 female. 1 was under an Aeroconical. The Student thought he had a malfunction, so he deployed his reserve. The rest were on ram-air canopies.
- iv) There had been 35 reports of Malfunction/Deployment Problems to Intermediate or Experienced Parachutists since the last meeting. 31 male and 4 female. Two of the reports involved pilot chutes going through the winglets of camera wing suits. The first involved a jumper who deployed his pilot chute through the winglet. The second was where a jumper was videoing on his back and the pilot chute came out the pocket and went through the winglet. Both resulted in a pilot chutes in tow.

One report concerned a parachutist who had a work colleague collect his rig from his estranged wife. On checking the reserve pin prior to kitting up, the pin was found to be bent at nearly 90 degrees. The police have been informed.

The BPA is still receiving a lot of reports of brakes firing and twists on high performance canopies. Most of these could be avoided with careful packing.

- v) There had been 17 Tandem Injury or Incident reports received since the last meeting. 7 were minor injuries and 10 were malfunction/deployment problems. Two of these reports included two potentially serious incidents;

The first concerned a jump where only one harness upper snap hook was attached. As the instructor and Student moved towards the door, it is believed that a large knife that was attached near the top of the Student harness caught under the right hand snap hook, releasing it. The instructor did not notice it and the pair exited. Upon opening the remaining snap hook held and they landed without further incident. The knife has now been removed from that position. CCIs should make their Tandem Instructors aware of the potential problem with locating large knives on the rear of the Student harness. This would not have occurred if the snap hook had been fitted with locking pins. The CCI was present at the meeting and was able to provide further information to STC concerning this incident.

The second involved malfunction of the main canopy and when the instructor cutaway he discovered that his reserve had twisted risers, possibly indicating that it had been packed like that! A formal investigation has been instigated.

- vi) Four reports had been received of AAD firings. All involved relatively inexperienced Category 7 & 8 jumpers. The first involved a jumper whose altimeter may have stuck. He stated that he checked it twice and both times it registered 6,000ft, he then tapped it and it went down to 1,500ft. As he went in for the pull the FXC fired.

The second involved a loss of altitude awareness, where the FXC fired shortly after deployment of the main. The reserve canopy fully deployed as the parachutist was making a turn under the main. She then cutaway the main.

The third concerned a jumper who deployed low whilst on his back. The FXC fired as he deployed.

The fourth involved a jumper whose toggle (hacky-sack) slipped inside the BOC pocket. As he deployed his reserve, his Cypres fired.

- vii) One report was received where a Student on a D.P. appeared to have a good canopy but cut it away. She has made about 33 static line jumps and two free fall jumps, on which she cutaway once. The CCI has decided she should not jump again.
- viii) Two reports had been received of CF canopy entanglements.
- ix) A couple of reports had been received of display misfires. One was an out landing and the other involved a jumper making a bad landing, resulting in a broken femur.
- x) A report had been received of skysurfing board having to be cutaway. It involved a 'first time' board jumper unable to get upright.
- xi) There have been a number of 'off landing' reports received. All at clubs.

- xii) A report had been received where, following a parachuting sortie, the pilot heard a loud noise at the rear of the aircraft and felt a slight vibration from the control stick. It was seen from the ground that the rudder fabric skin had become detached. The aircraft landed without further problems.

7. PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR JUMPING A WING-SUIT

* Alan Wilkinson arrived at 7.35pm.

At the last STC meeting a paper from Andy Ford on the guidelines for jumping a wing-suit were circulated to those present.

The Chairman advised those present that these guidelines have now been adapted into the format of a BPA Form and the proposed form was sent out with the agenda. He stated that no input has been received regarding the content of the form.

Some discussion took place with regard to item 3 (Equipment) with regard to the type of deployment device to be used for jumping a wing-suit. Andy Ford had categorically stated in the Guidelines that Bottom of Container throw-out pilot chute is the only deployment system that should be used and that under no circumstances should a pull-out system be used.

It was noted during discussion that an experienced jumper has jumped wing suits (safety) with a pull out system and that wing suit manufacturers may be coming up with other recommendations. As this document was being used as a 'Guideline' only, it was felt by those present that the section stating the type of deployment device needed re-wording. The Technical Officer stated that he would liaise with Andy Ford on this matter.

David Hickling stated that he felt that caution should be used with regard to the stated minimum jump qualifications, as he believed that 250 freefall skydives wasn't a lot of jumps and that 250 jumps should be an exception rather than the rule at this stage.

The Committee wished it to be emphasised in the Minutes that this document is to be used purely as a guideline.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by David Hickling and seconded by Mike Rust that the Guidelines for jumping a wing suit by Andy Ford be accepted with the understanding that the wording in the 'Equipment' section with regard to deployment devices be revised following liaison with Andy Ford.

Carried Unanimously

The Chairman advised the Committee that Andy would also like wing-suit jumping to become a BPA 'Grade' as per FS, CF etc. and it is his intention to present a training jump programme to STC in the future.

The Chairman and members of STC thanked Andy for his hard work in producing the above guidelines.

8. INSTRUCTOR COURSES

There had been two instructor courses since the last meeting. Both course reports were circulated with the agenda:

1. The first course, an AFF and Tandem course was held at Target Skysports, Hibaldstow from the 28th April – 2nd May and the Association would like to thank Target for hosting the course. The course report went out with the agenda and there were no recommendations made.

The Chairman advised those present that the Examiners had commented that the instructional standard of the candidates attending the AFF course who were AFFBIs was very low.

2. The second course (2/2003) was held at Skydive Strathallan from the 12th – 21st May.

The Course Report went out with the agenda and the recommendations need to be voted on:

‘ That Ian Anderson, Chris Gilmore, Stuart Miller-Hall, Chris Southworth and James Swallow be given six month extensions to their Category System Basic Instructor ratings.’

It was proposed by Steve Jelf and seconded by Alan Wilkinson that the above permissions be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Chairman advised those present that the Examiners had commented on the poor dispatching by some candidates on the CSBI Course.

The Examiners on the CSI had also commented on the low standard of some of the candidates attending that course.

9. **PERMISSIONS**

- i) A letter from Pete Sizer was circulated with the agenda requesting that water jumps into Bewl Reservoir be permitted without referring to STC each year, under the following conditions:
 - a. The event is organised by either Pete Sizer or Jane Buckle
 - b. FAI ‘ A ’ Certificate (Red) or above with a minimum of 60 jumps may make the jump.
 - c. Exemption from the square reserve and ten pre-declared jump rule.
 - d. Currency rules will be adhered to.

It was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Pat Walters that the above permission be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

- ii) Also circulated with the agenda was another letter from Pete Sizer proposing extensions to the instructor ratings of: Mark Maynard (AFFBI) and Richard Moulton (CSBI). Also tabled to those present was a further letter from Pete requesting an extension to the CSBI rating of Tim Bell.

It was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Andy Montriou that the above mentioned instructors be given 6 month extensions to their BI ratings.

Carried Unanimously

- iii) Circulated to those present was a letter from Dave Lewis of the Icarus Parachute Display Team.

Dave Lewis had referred to John Ruck who had previously held a BPA Approved Pilot Certificate for Bell Jet Ranger helicopters, which had expired in March 2001. John had recently returned to flying and wished to renew his Approved Pilots rating. The problem Dave had was that he was unable to find a BPA Pilot Examiner for Jet Ranger helicopters to countersign John's application.

Dave Lewis had stated in his letter that Allan Ramsden, a commercial pilot and director of Tiger Helicopters regularly flies other Demo Teams, but does not have enough hours parachute flying to be nominated as a BPA Pilot Examiner. He does however hold a CAA Examiners rating on several helicopter types.

Dave had therefore requested that Allan Ramsden be permitted to countersign BPA Pilot Certificate applications for the types of helicopters on which he holds a CAA Examiners rating.

Some discussion took place with regard to this request. Some members of STC wished to clarify that this request was a 'one-off' permission for John Ruck. The Technical Officer stated that following a conversation with Dave Lewis, he understood this to be the case.

Some members of STC believed that Dave Lewis's original request could be misinterpreted and a counter proposal was therefore tabled by Pete Sizer, seconded by Steve Jelf that Allan Ramsden be permitted to countersign the BPA Pilot certificate for John Ruck for the types of helicopters on which he holds a CAA Examiners rating.

For: 12

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1

Carried

- iv) Circulated to those present was a letter from Dave Emerson requesting that Ian Marshall be reinstated as a Category System Instructor. The Committee was informed that Ian's CSI rating lapsed in March 2000.

During the past 3 years Ian had let his rating lapse due to commitments working on the new Canopy Formations Training Syllabus & Coaching Manual, whilst still a member of the British Canopy Formations Team.

The Chairman pointed out that STC has not usually permitted someone whose rating has expired for so long to have their ratings reinstated without first attending another course, usually a CSBI course, where the Examiners make a decision as to whether to award a CSI rating.

It was proposed by Dave Emerson and seconded by Pete Sizer that Ian Marshall attends a CSBI Course for evaluation by the Examiners on the Course and that he also sits the 'closed book' examination.

Carried Unanimously

- v) Circulated to those present was a request from Alan Wilkinson for the Saints parachute display team to be permitted to carry out a water display into Anstruther Harbour on the 12th July, without having to have ram-air reserves, as per BPA requirements. Alan was present at the meeting and was able to give details of his request.

It was proposed by Alan Wilkinson and seconded by Pete Szer that the above permission be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

- vi) Circulated to those present was a letter from Ian Cashman requesting a six month extension to the CSBI rating of Noah Stephenson. Noah had not been able to attend a CSI course due to military commitments.

It was proposed by Tony Goodman and seconded by Mike Rust that the above permission be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

10. A.O.B.

- i) Circulated to those present was some paperwork from Dave Wood requesting that two sites in Cyprus be cleared as alternative PLA/DZs for the Cyprus Parachute Centre. One, the main airfield at RAF Akrotiri, the other, a sports field at the airbase, which is 500 metres in diameter, with overshoot on three sides. It is intended that PLAs will only be used for Tandem and Experienced Parachutists. A permission against the use of flotation gear, (the playing fields are approximately 1,000 metres from the water) is also requested. Brian McGill was able to provide the meeting with further details of the proposed sites, both of which are already cleared as military DZs.

It was proposed by Brian McGill and seconded by Dave Emerson that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

Date of next Meeting:- Thursday 7th August 2003
At 7 p.m.
BPA Offices, Leicester

9th June 2003

Distribution

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