

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
SAFETY AND TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 7TH AUGUST 2003

Present:

John Hitchen	-	Chairman STC
David Hickling	-	BPS, Langar
Pete Szer	-	Headcorn
Paul Hollow	-	Target Skysports
Alan Wilkinson	-	St Andrews
Andy Montriou	-	Skydive Redlands
Dave Emerson	-	Hinton Skydiving
Ronnie O' Brien	-	PPC
Jeff Illidge	-	Black Knights
Pat Walters	-	Tilstock
Paul Applegate	-	Riggers Committee

Apologies Tony Knight, Mark Bayada, Ian Cashman, Mac MacLennan, Dennis Buchanan, Dane Kenny, John Horne, Ian Rosenvinge, Mike Rust, Brian McGill, Karen Farr, Steve Jelf, Phil Cavanagh.

In Attendance:

Tony Butler	-	Technical Officer
Trudy Kemp	-	Assistant to NCSO/TO
Mick Nealis	-	Panel Member

Observers Liz Ashley, Rupert Connell, John Curtis.

ITEM

1. MINUTES OF THE STC MEETING OF THE 5TH JUNE 2003

It was proposed by David Hickling seconded by Pete Szer that the Minutes of the STC meeting of the 5th June 2003 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 5TH JUNE 2003

Page 2, Item 2 (Matters Arising) – Panels of Inquiry/Working Groups The Panels and Working Groups were a main agenda item.

Page 3, Item 4 (Fatality – Hinton Skydiving). The Panel of Inquiry following the Board of Inquiry have completed their report, which had been previously circulated to CCIs and was to be dealt with under Item 6 of the Agenda.

Page 4, Item 5 (Fatality – RAFSPA). The Panel of Inquiry following the Board of Inquiry is ongoing and it is expected that the report will be available for the next meeting.

Page 6, Item 6 (Incident/Injury Reports Resume –ii). The investigation into the freefall collision is still ongoing and it is hoped that the report will be available for the next STC meeting.

Page 7, Item 6 (Incident/Injury Reports Resume – v). The formal investigation into the Tandem incident, which was conducted by Paul Moore and Kim Newton is completed and their Report was circulated to CCIs last week. The report made a number of recommendations, which need to be voted on by STC:

‘ During this enquiry, the past history and experience of the two instructors concerned has been taken into account, and it has been in mind that this incident passed without injury and was reported in the correct way. Since the incident all concerned have carried on instructing and packing, pending the results of the enquiry and STC’ s findings

The Investigators make the following recommendations:

- a. No formal disciplinary action is required.
- b. STC write to the following members in order to remind them of their responsibilities:
(1) Chris Harrison, (2) Dave Morris, (3) Owen Martin.

Pat Walters drew the Committees’ attention to the Report (Section 5 – Training Issues b) where it stated ‘ reserve drills had been carried out within the previous 90 days’ . Pat stated that this in fact should have stated 60 days.

David Hickling also advised the meeting that the Packer involved in this incident was stopped immediately from packing Tandem equipment until he had been fully checked out on his packing and allowed to continue.

Paul Hollow asked those present if anyone would consider a proposal to prevent Tandem Instructors being permitted to jump different sets of equipment, ie with different handles on the same day.

There was some support from the Committee for Paul’ s proposal, however, the Chairman stated that if Paul wished to make this a formal proposal, it would need to go out with the Agenda for discussion at a future meeting.

Pat Walters stated that that it was his opinion that the people who check out Tandem Instructors on the flight line should only be Instructors and not other jumpers. He had prevented other jumpers from checking out Tandem Instructors at his Centre because he saw this as a potential problem. Other members of STC also shared Pat’ s views on this matter and it was pointed out that Tandem Students are Students and therefore the Tandem pair should be flight line checked by an Instructor.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Alan Wilkinson and seconded by Andy Montriou that the above recommendations be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS SUB COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 5TH JUNE 2003

There being no matters arising from the previous meeting, it was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Pete Szer that the Minutes of the Riggers Sub-Committee Meeting of the 5th June 2003 be approved.

Carried Unanimously

Paul Applegate gave the meeting details of this evening' s meeting and stated that the Committee had accepted a proposal from John Curtis for acceptance of Wings containers either BOC ripcord or throwaway (ripaway) pilot chutes on Student RAPS and AFF equipment in Free Fall mode only.

It was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Pete Szer that the above equipment be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

Paul Applegate informed the Committee that Riggers had also discussed the Manufacturers Safety Bulletin regarding the tests on Capewell manufactured ripcords. He stated that some ripcord pins outside the dates of those specified by the manufacturer have also bent, one of which had been sent to Capewell for inspection.

Ronnie O' Brien stated that the Service Bulletin issued by Capewell stipulates that the test on the ripcord pins must be carried out by a Master Rigger.

Ronnie O' Brien proposed that any Rigger, Instructor or Advanced Packer be permitted to carry out the test. This was seconded by Paul Applegate.

Carried Unanimously

The Chairman of STC referred to a Service Bulletin issued by Sun Path concerning all adjustable main lift web Harnesses on Javelin Odyssey harness/container systems, which he became aware of whilst he was in Russia. He thanked David Hickling who had contacted parachute centres on his behalf with details of this Bulletin.

4. FATALITY – TARGET SKYSPORTS

Unfortunately there was a fatality at Target Skysports on the 4th July, which is the subject of a police criminal investigation. A Board of Inquiry report resume was circulated to those present.

At approximately 14.20 hours on Friday the 4th July 2003, Stephen Hilder, a ' B' Certificate parachutist with 212 descents, boarded a SMG-92 Turbo Finist aircraft at Target Skysports Parachute Centre in order to make a 3-way FSjump. The jump included a video cameraman.

The aircraft climbed to approximately 13,000 ft where it ' ran in' over the top of the PLA. When the aircraft was at the estimated ' Exit Point' the parachutists exited, in two groups of four. Stephen being with the second group.

Once the parachutes had deployed, only seven were observed and not eight as expected. A reserve parachute 'freebag' and a white deflated parachute were also observed in the air.

As there was a parachutist missing the CCI dispatched two members of the club to search for the missing parachutist.

After a short period of time one of the club members radioed back to the CCI stating that he had located the 'freebag' and a reserve parachute. The CCI then proceeded to where the club member had located the equipment and discovered that only a few inches of the risers were attached to the rigging lines of the reserve parachute.

At this time the CCI immediately instigated the Clubs' fatality procedures.

A short while after, one of the club Instructors located Stephen, approximately 150-200ft from the equipment.

A BPA Board of Inquiry was convened, consisting of the National Coach & Safety Officer and the Technical Officer. This inquiry was of a limited nature, as the fatality is the subject of a criminal investigation.

The Board were only able to carry out a cursory examination of the equipment in situ and during the removal of the equipment.

It was confirmed during the examination of the equipment that the main parachute bridle line had been severed. Also, all four reserve parachute risers had been severed.

Neither the main parachute cutaway pad, nor the reserve parachute ripcord were with the equipment. Also, the AAD had been activated.

The Conclusions of the Board are that Stephen had taken part in an FS jump, which went without incident until he attempted to deploy his main parachute. Once he extracted his 'throwaway' pilot chute and released it, it was unable to extract the main parachute from the container because the bridle line attaching the pilot chute to the top of the parachute had been severed.

Stephen then proceeded to carry out his emergency procedures, but as the reserve parachute 'freebag' and reserve parachute started to deploy, they detached from the harness completely because all four reserve parachute risers had been severed.

The Board believe that the Stephen' s parachute equipment had been deliberately tampered with prior to the descent.

The Recommendation of the Board is that parachutists should do what they can to ensure that their equipment is secure whenever they are not using it.

It was proposed by Paul Hollow and seconded by Andy Montriou that the Board of Inquiry Report and its Conclusions and Recommendations be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Chairman advised the Committee that, in this instance the Board believe it is not necessary to instigate a Panel of Inquiry.

It was proposed by David Hickling and seconded by Ronnie O' Brien that this be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Chairman stated it is important that the skydiving community should give any assistance requested by the police.

Paul Hollow advised the Committee that he would be shortly receiving a number of police posters for distribution and it is requested that these be displayed at Clubs around the country.

Also circulated to those present is a letter from Paul to CCIs regarding comments made by some, which he believed had been unhelpful.

5. INCIDENT/INJURY REPORTS RESUME

- i) There had been 40 Student injury reports received since the last meeting, 27 male and 13 female. 37 were landing injuries, 1 was an AFF Student who dislocated her shoulder during a consolidation jump. An AFF Instructor saw what the problem was and deployed her parachute for her. A static line Student caught his arm on the lines during deployment, which took off his altimeter and grazed his wrist. One Student hit the aircraft on exit, bruising his finger. 35 of the landing injuries were on ram-air canopies and 2 were on rounds.
- ii) There had been 16 injury reports received for Intermediate/Experienced Parachutists. 15 male and 1 female. These reports included an incident where a parachutist was performing a low turn and struck another parachutist who was standing on the ground. Both parachutists were injured and taken to hospital.
- iii) Since the last meeting there had been 18 Student Parachutist Malfunctions/Deployment Problems reported. 15 male and 3 female. 2 of the reports were from the same club where 2 Students both experienced total malfunctions. After investigation the club discovered that the Students, who had recently been taught to pack, had tucked the pilot chute material under the spring, which had impeded the springs from expanding. The Students have now been advised how to pack the pilot chutes correctly. All the problems reported were on ram-air canopies.
- iv) There had been 45 reports of Malfunction/Deployment Problems to Intermediate or Experienced Parachutists since the last meeting. 39 male and 6 female.
- v) There had been 27 Tandem Injury or Incident reports received since the last meeting. 14 were injuries, nine of which were minor. One involved a jump which was aborted because the Student was unable to move to the door of the aircraft due to an arthritic condition and 4 of the injuries were broken or dislocated ankles. 13 of the reports were malfunction/deployment problems. Some instructors are not sending in malfunction/deployment problem reports on the Tandem Report forms. It is requested that the correct forms are used. It has also been noted that all the

malfunctions reports received this year are to parachutes that have been 'pro-packed' .

- vi) Four reports had been received of AAD firings. Two involved Cypresses going off on Student equipment whilst the aircraft was descending neither caused a problem as the aircraft doors were closed. Another involved an uncurrent Experienced Parachutist who cutaway a canopy with twists at approximately 1,000ft, activated his reserve, which deployed at approximately 300ft. The Cypres had fired after the reserve activation. The last one involved a video cameraman who opened low and his Cypres also fired.
- vii) Two reports had been received of premature deployments. One involved a funned FSexit, where the reserve handle was dislodged at 9,500ft. The other was a 'sit-fly' jumper who had a premature main deployment at 6,000ft. One jumper lost his helmet on deployment and one jumper' s skysurfing board came off in freefall.
- viii) A report had been received of two low-experienced jumper' s canopies colliding close to the ground. The canopies did not entangle and both landed without further incident. Also, on report has been received of a canopy entanglement, during a CF jump.
- ix) Six reports had been received of display misfires since the last meeting.
- x) There had been 4 'off landing' reports received. All at clubs.
- xi) A couple of reports had been received concerning aircraft problems. The first involved a jumper whose main deployed as he exited the aircraft. It is believed the canopy struck the tail or elevator of the plane, though no damage was found following an engineer' s inspection. The other involved an aborted take off, after which the aircraft wing struck some bushes, having strayed off the grass runway.

6. PANELS OF INQUIRY/WORKING GROUPS

A number of Panels of Inquiry/Working Groups are ongoing at this time. One had been completed.

- a) Circulated last week as an addition to the Agenda was the Report of the Panel of Inquiry following the Board of Inquiry into the Fatal Accident of Francis Charles Simmons.

The Panel was Chaired by Mick Nealis and the other members were Andy Montriou and Steve Jelf.

Both Mick Nealis and Andy Montriou were present that evening to answer any questions.

Following the investigation the Panel made the following recommendations, which were discussed and voted on separately:-

- i. 'If a parachutist is permanently grounded from a club then that club should endorse both the parachutists log book and BPA Membership card in red. The BPA must also be informed to prevent the re-issue of membership' .

Following a number of comments by those present concerning this recommendation, it was agreed that the last sentence be re-worded to read:-
'The BPA must also be informed to prevent the re-issue of ***a new non-endorsed membership***' .

It was proposed by Andy Montriou and seconded by Paul Hollow that the above recommendation be accepted with above stated amendment as highlighted in italics.

Carried Unanimously

- ii. ' No student over the age of 55 be accepted for parachute training, other than student tandem parachutists without the permission of STC. Exceptions to this may be permitted if the person has previous recorded parachuting experience (not to include student tandem parachute descents)' .

It was proposed by Andy Montriou and seconded by Dave Emerson that the above recommendation be accepted.

For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

Carried

- iii. ' Entries copied into log books from training record cards should be countersigned by the original instructor or the original critique card attached to the book' .

Following some discussion on this recommendation, it was agreed by those present to add the words '***where practicable***' to the end of the recommendation.

It was proposed by Andy Montriou and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above recommendation be accepted with the above stated amendment as highlighted in italics.

For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

Carried

- iv. ' The current rule regarding log book entries Section 2, Para 5, NB 3, creates a long winded and laborious task for the jumpmaster. This task could be simplified by writing " Good all the way" abbreviated to GATW or a similar phrase for a good exit this would allow the jumpmaster to concentrate on the more important (regarding safety) negative aspects of the exit / descent. As this is a practice that is by and large being employed at the moment it seems more common sense to endorse it rather than fight an uphill battle.

Change BPA Operations Manual, Section 2, Para 5, NB 3 to read:

Details of release, count, position, arch, pull and recovery must be entered in the Student Parachutist' s log for Categories 2-4 inclusive. These may be in the form of abbreviations such as GATW (Good all the way) all negative

aspects must be written in full. All details of performance of Student Parachutists will be entered in their logs by an instructor)

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Andy Montriou and seconded by Alan Wilkinson that the above Recommendation be accepted.

For: 6

Against: 2

Abstentions: 0

Carried

- v. 'Following a parachuting fatality or related fatality within a period of 24 hours, all parachuting is to be suspended until the Board of Inquiry deem it safe or pertinent to continue' .

David Hickling stated that his understanding was that the current guideline was that following a fatality, parachuting must cease for the rest of the day. The purpose of which he believed was that during that period the attendance of a Board of Inquiry would take place.

David Hickling stated that he believed that the system that we have in operation is satisfactory. If the TO, NCSO or Head of the Board of Inquiry say parachuting is suspended until they say so, then it is suspended. He felt that the 24 hour period may catch somebody out.

The Chairman of STC advised the Committee that the Panel of Inquiry considered this aspect because parachuting continued after the fatality, after being requested not to. The Panel were trying to ensure that in future there was no doubt that all parachuting should cease following a fatality.

Other members of STC supported Dave' s views on this matter and it was felt by those present that the BPA Form 146 adequately covered this area.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Andy Montriou that the above recommendation be accepted. This proposal failed to find a seconder.

The Chairman thanked the Panel members for the work that they had carried out on this investigation.

David Hickling referred the Committee to one of the points in the Panel of Inquiry Report, which stated:-

“ The Technical Officer (TO) arrived on the scene of the fatal accident and found there was a lift kitting up. He asked the CCI that this lift be stopped. Approximately 15 minutes later the TO saw canopies in the air” .

Mr Hickling asked if the Committee were going to accept this. He stated that he was appalled by Dave Emerson' s attitude and to his total disregard to a request from a senior member of the BPA staff.

Dave Hickling stated that you cannot have a disciplined organisation if a senior person from the BPA tells you to stop parachuting then you carry on. If the TO or NCSO arrive on a drop zone following a fatality and they say that parachuting should stop, then parachuting should stop. David Hickling stated that in his opinion of Dave

Emerson, he believed he should not have any ratings if he did not conform to the discipline required by the BPA.

David Hickling's comments on this matter were supported by other CCIs present.

- b) The Chairman advised the Committee that the Panel/Working Group chaired by John Horne looking into the problems of Low Turns and canopy handling (which is also the Panel of Inquiry following the fatal accidents, of Rachel Gray, Oliver Reynolds and Pete Lambson) is ongoing.

John Horne had written an Interim Report, which was circulated to those present and he and the other Panel members, Chris Allen and Mark Bayada have produced a CD, which was handed out to CCIs at the meeting and will be sent to those CCIs who had not attended that evening. The CD contained details of a questionnaire, which is being sent to over 300 newly qualified FAI 'A' Certificate holders, together with a collection of articles on canopy handling. Also on the CD are photos/lessons for coaching canopy handling etc.

The Panel have also produced a canopy handling poster which refers to the 'STAY SAFE' section of the BPA web-site, which should be sent out with the minutes of the STC meeting. This web-site section now contains many of the articles on canopy handling which are on the CD.

John Horne had requested that CCIs study the contents of the CD, as the Panel would like as much feedback as possible.

7. INSTRUCTOR COURSES

The report on the AFF and Tandem Instructor Course held at RAFSPA from the 7th – 10th July was circulated with the Agenda. The BPA wish to thank RAFSPA for hosting the Course.

The recommendation from the Examiners on the course needs to be voted on, as they recommend a change to the Operations Manual.

'It is the recommendation of the Examiners that CSBI, AFFBI or TI ratings should no longer be acceptable for attendance on an AFF Instructor Course and only current CSI Instructors should be permitted to attend. Therefore, the Examiners recommend that the AFFBI rating is discontinued and only full and current Category System Instructors be permitted to attend AFF Instructor Courses'.

Circulated to those present was a formal proposal from Ian Cashman regarding the Course Examiners recommendation, together with a letter from Mike Rust supporting the proposal. Also circulated to those present was a letter from Pete Sizer opposing the recommendation.

Ian had stated in his letter that following a lengthy discussion with the Examiners on both the last two AFF Courses it has come to light that the standard of ground school instruction from AFFBI candidates is well below the high standard required.

Over the past few years it has become clear to the Examiners that the majority of candidates attending the AFF instructors courses who do not hold a CSI rating have performed badly during the 'ground school' phase of the course. The Examiners believe that this lack of instructional ability is unacceptable for this type of instruction.

This proposal generated a great deal of discussion.

Pete Sizer stated that he was against this proposal as if it was accepted then all Instructors would need to qualify on the static line system whether they wanted to teach S/L or not. Progression via static line is decreasing whereas progression by Tandem and AFF is increasing

Mick Nealis advised the Committee that he was an Examiner on the previous Course. He stated that he disagreed with the wording of this proposal. He would like to see AFFBIs attend a CSI Course where they can have their lessons examined to a formal standard. This would ensure that everyone was of the same standard at the start of an AFF Course.

It was believed by some members present that ethos may have crept in whereby AFFBI' s don' t feel they have to put in the same amount of work to reach the same standard as CSIs.

Dave Hickling stated that STC may in the future, need to look at the possibility of running separate Courses for potential AFF Instructors.

Ronnie O' Brien stated so that we do not have to take such a drastic step, can it not be made obvious to CCIs and potential AFF candidates what the situation is instead of forcing them to do a course which they are not going to use. AFFBI' s must work or they will fail, should be made to work harder on the AFF Course.

It was proposed by Ian Cashman (proxy) and seconded by Mark Bayada (proxy) that the above recommendation be accepted.

For 7 (incl. 4 by proxy) Against: 4 Abstentions: 1

Carried

As the above was accepted it is proposed that those already in the system be permitted to attend an AFF instructors course on the basis of the requirements at the time of their ratings.

For: 5 Against: 1 Abstentions: 2

Carried

David Hickling stated that he was a bit disappointed that so many proxy votes had been received for such an important issue, particularly in light of the discussion that had just taken place.

8. PERMISSIONS

- i) Pete Sizer requested that Chris Lynch, who holds a BPA Tandem and AFF rating and has previously been a BI, be permitted to attend a CSBI Course and dependant on the recommendations of the Course Examiners be awarded a CSI rating.

It was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Andy Montriou that the above recommendation be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

- ii) A letter had been circulated from Mike Frost requesting permission to make a number of descents, for publicity purposes without a helmet.

Mike had stated that he recognised that the BPA wishes to promote the sport in the UK utilising headgear and with this in mind and in agreement with the CCI, he planned to complete the descents during the mid-week, when sport jumpers are not present at the DZ. Unfortunately, work commitments prevented Mike from attending STC in person.

The Chairman advised the Committee that a formal proposal had been received from Brian McGill regarding this request, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

It was proposed by Brian McGill (proxy) and seconded by Dave Emerson that the above recommendation be accepted.

For: 8 (incl 1 by proxy) Against: 1 Abstentions: 0

Carried

- iii) Circulated to those present was a letter from Dave Emerson requesting permission for Mike Beeden to attend a CSBI Course, being short of the two year rule required to attend the Course.

It was proposed by Dave Emerson and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above recommendation be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

9. A.O.B.

Circulated to those present was a letter from Mark Bayada requesting that a situation at RAPA be formalised, where jumpers with over 100 descents, or holders of IC1 or above be given permission to parachute without the need to wear floatation devices, if they are jumping ram air main and reserve canopies.

It was proposed by Mark Bayada (proxy) and seconded by David Hickling that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

Date of next Meeting:- Thursday 9th October 2003
At 7 p.m.
BPA Offices, Leicester

11th August 2003

Distribution

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