

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
SAFETY AND TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 4 DECEMBER 2003

Present:

John Hitchen	-	Chairman STC
Pat Walters	-	Tilstock
Alan Wilkinson	-	St Andrews
Phil Cavanagh	-	Black Knights
Dennis Buchanan	-	NWPC
Karen Farr	-	Skydive Strathallan
Paul Hollow	-	Target Skysports
Tony Knight	-	UK Parachuting
Ian Rosenvinge	-	Peterlee
Pete Szer	-	Headcorn
Paul Applegate	-	Riggers Committee

Apologies Ian Cashman, David Hickling, Brian McGill, Andy Guest, Rob Noble-Nesbitt, Dane Kenny, Dave Wood, Mike Rust, Steve Jelf, Mac MacLennan.

In Attendance:

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

Observers Richard Wheatley, Mike Carruthers, Max Hurd, Bryan Teeson, Dave Major, Tony Goodman, Chris Byrne, Keith Davidson, Carl Jackson, Phil Collett, Steve Thomas, Jeff Illidge.

ITEM

1. MINUTES OF THE STC MEETING OF THE 9 OCTOBER 2003

It was proposed by Phil Cavanagh and seconded by Alan Wilkinson that the Minutes of the STC meeting of the 9 October 2003 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 9 OCTOBER 2003

Page 4, Item 4 (Fatality – British Skysports). The Chairman advised the Committee that the Panel of Inquiry following the Board of Inquiry was a main agenda item.

Page 5, Item 5 (Fatality – Netheravon). The Chairman stated that the Board of Inquiry Report was a main agenda item.

Page 15, Item 10 (A.O.B – iv). At the last meeting the Chairman agreed, following a request from Phil Cavanagh, to investigate a possible breach of the Operation Manual concerning a TV programme where Tandem parachuting took place.

The Chairman stated that Chris Francis who organised the jumps had written clarifying the situation, including a risk assessment and standard operating procedure for the event. Copies of Chris' s letter was circulated to those present.

The Chairman pointed out that Chris Francis had stated in his correspondence that he apologised if he had inadvertently been in breach of the BPA Operations Manual. The Chairman gave the Committee time to read through the correspondence, after which he asked those present if they felt that any further action should be taken.

The Committee were satisfied with Chris' s explanation. However it was felt by those present that in future people wishing to organise events, which may contravene the BPA Operations Manual, must advise STC and seek a permission in advance of the event taking place.

It was proposed by Karen Farr and seconded by Phil Cavanagh that no further action was to be taken in relation to this matter.

Carried Unanimously

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS' SUB COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 9 OCTOBER 2003

There being no matters arising, it was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Pat Walters that the Minutes of the Riggers' Sub-Committee Meeting of the 9 October 2003 be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

Paul Applegate advised those present that at the Riggers Committee Meeting that evening, the Committee had been given details of correspondence received from Airtec. He stated that since October 2001 Airtec had modified approximately 100 Cypres units for BPA Affiliated drop zones from 'Expert' to 'Student' , which they had carried out free of charge. Airtec had advised the Association that they could no longer offer this service free of charge and any future modifications would now be charged for.

4. FATALITY – JSPC- NETHERAVON

The Chairman advised the Committee that a brief, interim report was given at the last STC meeting. He stated that the Board had now completed their report and a resume had been circulated with the agenda.

The report including the Board' s Conclusions and Recommendations need to be formally accepted.

At approximately 10:15 hrs on Sunday 5th October 2003, Esmond Liggitt, an Experienced Parachutist with over 1,200 jumps, boarded a Cessna Caravan at the Joint Services Parachute Centre, Netheravon, along with thirteen other parachutists, which was to be the first parachuting lift of the day.

The aircraft climbed to 2,000 ft AGL above the PLA, where the Jumpmaster released a WDI in order to ascertain the parachutists' release point.

The aircraft then climbed to 3,500 ft AGL, where two passes were made over the PLA, at which time three parachutists exited on the first pass and two on the second. All five were competitors in a 'Regional' Accuracy Landings competition.

The aircraft then climbed to 13,000 ft AGL, where the remaining parachutists exited, singularly or in groups of two. Esmond being the third to exit.

Esmond was not observed in freefall and no one was aware that there had been a fatal accident until approximately two hours later when some parachutists returning to the parachute centre, having jumped on the sixth lift of the day observed him on the ground.

A BPA Board of Inquiry was formed, consisting of Tony Butler and John Hitchen.

During the inspection of the equipment, it was noted that the main parachute BOC deployment toggle was just inside its stowage pouch and was not visible. It was also noted that Esmond's equipment was not fitted with an Automatic Activation Device (AAD), or audible altimeter. He had been wearing glasses, which appeared to have been secured by a cord. No goggles were located and he was wearing thick gloves.

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

'That the initial part of Esmond's free fall descent was probably uneventful until he attempted to deploy his main parachute. He may then have inadvertently knocked the main parachute deployment toggle into the pilot chute stowage pouch as he reached to deploy it and was then unable to retrieve it. The Board believes he may then have continued to attempt to locate the toggle, instead of carrying out his emergency drills.

It is possible that Esmond could also have lost altitude awareness, or been unable to read his altimeter clearly, as he was not wearing goggles, his glasses could have loosened and the airflow could have blurred his vision.'

The Recommendations of the Board are as follows:

- a) That parachutists should be reminded that if they are unable immediately to rectify a problem, at, during, or upon deployment, they should instigate their emergency procedures without delay.
- b) That STC considers the mandatory fitting of Automatic Activation Devices (AADs) to the equipment of all categories of parachutists.

It was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Dennis Buchanan that the Board of Inquiry Report, including the Conclusions and Recommendations be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Chairman advised the Committee that Recommendation b) of the Board of Inquiry Report will be an agenda item for the next STC meeting. He asked if anyone had any input or proposals, they should be sent to the BPA office prior to the agenda going out in January.

The Chairman also advised those present that a Panel of Inquiry had now been formed to investigate any peripheral aspects to the fatality. The Panel is chaired by Paul Moore and the other members are Ronnie O' Brien and Andy Montriou. He stated that it was expected that the Panel report will be presented at the next STC meeting.

5. INCIDENT/INJURY REPORTS RESUME

- i) There had been 12 Student injury reports received since the last meeting, 9 male and 3 female. 11 were landing injuries, 1 Student was unstable on the pull and dislocated his shoulder. All the landing injuries were on ram-air canopies.
- ii) There had been 5 injury reports received for Intermediate/Experienced Parachutists. 3 male and 2 female.
- iii) Since the last meeting there had been 10 Student Parachutist Malfunctions/Deployment Problems reported. 8 male and 2 female. All were on ram-air canopies.
- iv) There had been 25 reports of Malfunction/Deployment Problems to Intermediate or Experienced Parachutists since the last meeting. 19 male and 6 female.
- v) There had been 9 Tandem Injury and Incident reports received since the last meeting. 4 injury reports had been received (2 broken ankles & 2 broken legs). There had been 5 malfunction/deployment problems reported.
- vi) There had been 3 reports received regarding 6 AADs firing. All FXCs. One involved a Category 8 parachutist with 29 jumps, who deployed his main low. The other two were FXCs that had been set incorrectly.
- vii) A couple of reports had been received of CF entanglements.
- viii) Three reports had been received of off landings. All at clubs.

6. PANELS OF INQUIRY/WORKING GROUPS

A) Panel of Inquiry – RAFSPA Nomad Incident

The Panel of Inquiry Report had been circulated with the agenda. The Panel was chaired by Tony Knight and the other members were Rob Noble-Nesbitt and Kieran Brady.

Tony Knight was present at the meeting and was able to answer any questions and provided further information regarding the Report.

The Chairman advised those present that an E-mail had been received that morning from the previous RAFSPA CCI concerning the Panel's Report and Recommendations, which was circulated to those present.

Tony Knight advised the Committee that he had only had sight of the E-mail that day.

The Recommendations of the Panel were discussed and voted on individually as follows:

- i) ' That all Clubs and Centres ensure that their SOPs place responsibility on their Chief Pilot for ensuring that all key personnel who are involved with the operation of aircraft (e.g. instructors, jumpmasters, manifestors etc.) are adequately briefed on the loading and other operational requirements which are specific to each aircraft type they use.'

Although the majority of CCIs accepted this Recommendation in essence, it was felt by those present that the responsibility of this briefing to key personnel should not be just with their Chief Pilots, but with CCIs themselves.

Tony Knight said that the Panel had made this Recommendation to ensure that a system is in place and that the responsibility is placed on someone who should be fully aware of the technical information required.

Following further discussion, a counter proposal to amend the wording to this Recommendation, which reflected STC' s feeling on this matter was tabled by Phil Cavanagh.

“ That all Clubs and Centres ensure that their SOPs place responsibility on their Chief Pilot or Chief Instructor for ensuring that all key personnel who are involved with the operation of aircraft (e.g. instructors, jumpmasters, manifestors etc.) are adequately briefed on the loading and other operational requirements which are specific to each aircraft type they use.”

The counter proposal was seconded by Ian Rosenvinge and voted on as follows:-

For: 7 Against: 1 Abstentions: 1

Carried

- ii) ' That RAFSPA are requested to review their SOPs forthwith and are inspected by the BPA as soon as possible.

It was proposed by Tony Knight and seconded by Paul Hollow that the above Recommendation be accepted.'

Carried Unanimously

The Technical Officer advised those present that RAFSPA are currently reviewing their SOPs and stated that the CCI is in the process of re-writing them. He also stated that RAFSPA was inspected by the BPA on 10th & 16th July 2003.

- iii) ' That Nomad pilot Jakob Jørgensen be excluded from parachute flying at any BPA Club or Centre or on any display event conducted under BPA regulations.'

It was proposed by Tony Knight and seconded by Karen Farr that the above Recommendation be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

- iv) ' That the previous Chief Instructor is formally reprimanded and reminded in writing of his responsibilities. In making this recommendation the Panel acknowledges that in the matter of the removal of parachutist restraints the CCI had consulted the Pilot. He was nevertheless the person responsible under the terms of the DTLR Operating Permit for ensuring that restraints were used' .

The Chairman advised those present that the CCI had been unable to attend in person that evening.

The above Recommendation generated a great deal of discussion. Some members present believed that the CCI should be given the opportunity to attend STC to present his case in person and that a decision on the Recommendation be deferred until such time as he could be present.

The Committee were referred to the CCI' s E-mail correspondence where he had stated that he considered the Panel' s Recommendation, formally reprimanding him, excessive. He had therefore made his representations to STC on this issue.

Tony Knight stated that the Panel had not come to this Recommendation lightly and had spent many hours reaching this decision, but it did not detract from the CCI' s opportunity to appeal once STC had taken a vote on it.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Tony Knight and seconded by Karen Farr that the above Recommendation be accepted.

For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 2

Carried

The Technical Officer stated that he would write to the CCI informing him of STC' s decision and of the appeal procedure.

- v) ' That the Chief Pilot has his Pilot Examiner rating suspended and that he does not act as Chief pilot until he has been introduced to a systematic approach to the duties of a Chief pilot and Pilot Examiner. This is to be done by attending for a full day with an existing Chief Pilot / Examiner at a Centre to be nominated by the BPA Technical Officer.'

It was proposed by Tony Knight and seconded by Pete Szer that the above Recommendation be accepted.

For: 8 Against: 1 Abstentions: 0

Carried

Tony Knight advised the Committee that the Chief Pilot had now complied with all the requirements of this Recommendation and stated that he had attended Strathallan under the tutorship of Kieran Brady, who was satisfied with the CCP's approach to the duties of a Chief pilot and Pilot Examiner.

- vi) 'That the Chairman of RAFSPA has his attention formally drawn to this report by the BPA in the hope that it will encourage an overhaul of its organisational culture.'

It was proposed by Tony Knight and seconded by Pat Walters that the above Recommendation be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

B) Panel of Inquiry – Bridlington

The Chairman advised the Committee that this was the Panel of Inquiry following the Board of Inquiry into the Fatal Accident of Grant Hager at British Skysports. The Panel of Inquiry Report was circulated with the agenda. The Panel was chaired by Ian Rosenvinge and the other members were Ray Armstrong and John Page.

Ian Rosenvinge was present at the meeting and was able to answer any questions regarding the report.

The Recommendations of the Panel were discussed and voted on individually as follows:

- i) 'The Panel recommend that Centres be encouraged to undertake a re-assessment of their own PLAs to take account of potential problem areas. Not just within their overall boundaries (such as runways) but also upon their borders (such as spectator areas).'

It was proposed by Ian Rosenvinge and seconded by Alan Wilkinson that the above Recommendation be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

- ii) 'The Panel further recommends that Centres take measures to discourage parachutists from occasionally seeking to land in areas not commensurate with their level of skills in canopy control; i.e. close to spectator areas which may border the designated PLA and serve to cut off any safe overshoot. Such measures should include clearly marking such areas of the PLA upon an aerial photograph, which should be readily available to all parachutists in such as a flight line area. Centres should ensure that all parachutists are briefed on the purpose of these markings as part of an Initial or Updated DZ Familiarisation. Thereafter parachutists new to the Centre should receive similar Initial DZ Familiarisation Briefings taking account of such marked areas, with student and intermediate parachutists receiving regular additional briefings on the same subject.'

It was proposed by Ian Rosenvinge and seconded by Alan Wilkinson that the above Recommendation be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Chairman advised those present that the above Recommendations are being included in Club inspections and he encouraged Centres to include them in their SOPs.

C. RAPS Panel of Inquiry

The Chairman advised those present that this Panel had been ongoing for a considerable length of time, but stated that they have had a great deal of work to carry out. A draft report had now been compiled by the Panel Chairman, David Hickling, who unfortunately is out of the country at this time. Because of the complexity of the report, it had been decided that the NCSO, the TO and the Panel should meet, in order to prepare a set of recommendations/discussion topics for presentation to STC. This may necessitate a special STC meeting.

D. Low Turn Panel

The Chairman advised those present that this Panel, chaired by John Horne, is still ongoing and it is hoped that some recommendations may be available for the next meeting.

E The Chairman advised those present that two other Panels of Inquiry had been formed since the last meeting. Both concern the flying operations at two different Clubs.

7. INSTRUCTOR COURSES

The course was held at the Headcorn Parachute Club from the 10th – 19th November and the Association thanked Headcorn for hosting the course. There were no recommendations to be voted on. The Report was for information only.

8. PROPOSAL REGARDING TANDEM PARACHUTING – PAUL HOLLOW

A letter from Paul Hollow went out with the agenda regarding Tandem handle configurations. Paul was able to give the meeting details of his proposed changes to the Operations Manual.

Firstly, Paul apologised for the lateness with which his proposal had been submitted. He stated that he had intended to submit this for the last STC meeting, but unfortunately work and a lack of time had prevented him from doing so. Paul advised those present that at the STC meeting of 7 August 2003, a report of the investigation into a Tandem incident had been discussed. He stated that there seemed to be a general consensus amongst the CCIs present that it is unsafe practice for Tandem Instructors to regularly change between Tandem equipment having differing handle configurations and that this may well have been a contributory factor in the incident.

Paul had therefore made the following two proposals to the BPA Operations Manual:

Proposal 1

Section 4 (Instructors), Paragraph 4 (Tandem Instructor), Sub-para 4.6 (Tandem Instructor Currency). Add new sub-para 4.6.4. to read:

4.6.4. “ Tandem Instructors must not change between differing handle configurations on tandem systems during the same operational day. ‘ Differing handle configurations’ is to be defined as differing handle locations or differing modes of operation (for example, where a secondary drogue release may or may not be routed through a cutaway pad, changing the operation of the cutaway pad)” .

The Committee discussed this proposal at some length. A number of CCIs present were not in agreement with preventing Tandem Instructors from jumping two different types of equipment, with different handle configurations during the same day. They believed that if this proposal was accepted it may be restrictive to the operation of some Centres.

Although safety was their paramount concern, it was felt by those present if a Tandem Instructor was changing from one handle configuration to another that Tandem Instructors could spend some time carrying out suspended harness drills prior to their next Tandem jump.

Having listened to the comments from those present Paul Hollow decided to withdraw this proposal and said that he would re-submit another proposal to the next meeting, which reflected the comments made by CCIs that evening.

Proposal 2

Section 4 (Instructors), Paragraph 4 (Tandem Instructor), Sub-para 4.6 (Tandem Instructor Currency). Change sub-para 4.6.3. to read:

4.6.3. All current TIs must have practised Tandem Reserve Drills in a suspended harness within the previous 60 days. The harness handle configuration must be as per the equipment to be used. It is the responsibility of TIs to ensure that the drills are observed and signed for in their log book by a CCI, or CCI nominated TI.

It was proposed by Paul Hollow and seconded by Karen Farr that the above proposed change to the BPA Operations Manual be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Paul Hollow.

9. **ATSU NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (PRESENTATION BY TONY KNIGHT)**

Tony Knight gave a short presentation to update the STC members on the current situation with regard to the ATSU Notification System.

The CAA had received suggestions from representatives of other airport organisations that the system was not being implemented as it should be by some drop zones. The main thrust

of their argument was that drop zones were failing to notify ATSUJs of sufficient downtime during many operational days. They believed that some drop zones were simply declaring themselves 'live' at the beginning of the day and failing to declare themselves inactive even when parachuting had been suspended for several hours. This was, in effect, denying the use of airspace to other users at times when it should have been freely available.

Tony Knight stressed the importance of operating the system conscientiously (which most drop zones already do) and of keeping records on the BPA Form 193 to prove that they were doing so in the event that any unjustified complaints were received.

In the ensuing discussion it was agreed that the Operations Manual could be amended to ensure that club SOPs actually detail the person responsible for ensuring that the system is operated correctly. It was agreed that an appropriate amendment would be drafted for discussion at the next STC.

Tony Knight also stated that a revised Form 193 would be sent out with the Minutes.

The Chairman thanked Tony Knight for his presentation.

10. PERMISSIONS

The Chairman advised those present that there had been no request for 'Permissions' received.

11. A.O.B.

- A) Circulated to those present was a letter from James Rae requesting that Cults Airfield (OS Sheet 309, Grid ref: NX 118 598) be cleared for all types of parachuting. The DZ/PLA was inspected by the NCSO & TO on the 23 October 2003. The primary PLA will be north of the main runway. (All sheep fencing will be removed before parachuting takes place). Only one Student will be dispatched per pass.

Due to the proximity of water, it is requested that permission be given against the flotation aid rule for, FAI 'B' Certificate parachutists and above, providing they are jumping ram-air mains and ram-air reserve parachutes and also for Tandem Parachutists.

The above proposal would be subject to the Club being Affiliated and fulfilling the requirements of the Operations Manual. e.g. qualified CCI.

The Committee discussed this request at some length, after which it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Dennis Buchanan that Cults Airfield be cleared as requested with the above stated restrictions and with the proviso that there is suitable rescue equipment in place including a boat (details to be included in the Centre's SOPs). Also that prior to the Centre commencing its operations, the CCI attends STC to give full details.

For: 8

Against: 1

Abstentions: 0

Carried

- B) The Chairman asked CCI's that if they have anyone they wish to nominate for the Mike Forge Trophy (New Skydiver of the Year). They should send their nominations, providing full details, before the end of the year.
- C) The Chairman advised the Committee that in October the TO sent a letter to CCI's with draft risk assessment forms for comments. Also, an invitation was given to send a club representative to a one-day seminar on risk assessment, which takes place on Tuesday the 9 December at the BPA offices. There were still a couple of places available for this seminar. Anyone wishing to attend was asked to let the TO know by Friday 5 December.

The Chairman stated that Stuart Morris had done a great deal of work on behalf of the Association and we are most grateful.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to all CCI's for their support throughout the year. He wished everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and he stated that he hoped that 2004 would be a successful and fatality free year.

Date of next Meeting:- Thursday 5 February 2004
At 7 p.m.
BPA Offices, Leicester

8 December 2003

Distribution

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