

SPORT PARACHUTIST





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Editor's Note —

The views of contributors to "Sport Parachutist" are not necessarily those of the Editor, or of the British Parachute Association, and no liability is accepted for same.

EDITORIAL

The British Parachute Association is currently having a series of meetings with the Civil Aviation Authority over the legislation of Sport Parachuting in this Country and its incorporation into the re-write of the Air Navigation Order. It is because of, (and not in spite of, as some would have us believe), the hard work by a small number of BPA members over the years that the sport's safety record in this Country is so good; this is something that the CAA may well have taken for granted. This safety record can only remain untarnished in the light of an expanding general aviation scene if the BPA has the support of the CAA in the forming of the sport in this Country. In return, however, members should co-operate fully with the CAA and there are occasions when this does not happen; the conduct of displays is the most common case in point. It is beyond comprehension why a Club should wish to disassociate itself with the BPA and operate as an 'outlaw' body, the advantages of being within the fold far outweighing the disadvantages (if there are any!). The justification to a coroner of operating outside BPA procedure (proven by our safety record) would be an acutely embarrassing one. Let us hope, therefore, that the current meetings between BPA and CAA produce suitable official recognition of the former's ability to govern our sport and make it safer still.

This issue of our journal has no major features, but the short article by David Greenwood on aircraft maintenance should spark off the thought that aircraft used for parachuting should not just be regarded as a lift to altitude. As a paying sport parachutist you have an undeniable right, not only to being flown properly, (crazy flying is for airshows in aerobatic aircraft), but to be carried aloft in a properly maintained aeroplane.

The British 10-Man Team were placed fourth in the World Cup Relative Meet held in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. They were beaten by 1st USA, 2nd France and 3rd West Germany. There were six teams competing. A full report will appear in the next issue.

In the meantime, soft landings.

CHARLES SHEA-SIMONDS

AT THE DROP INN

The Secretary General would appreciate information on any planned Water Jumps. He has received a number of enquiries from members who because of injury are cleared for water jumps only or require a water jump for qualification purposes.

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The following is quoted verbatim from a local newspaper: "Highlight of the Carnival on Saturday, following the huge and colourful parade, was the spectacular performance of the free fall parachutists known as the Sky Divers, who landed bang on target in the carnival grounds.

The divers plummeted to earth trailing clouds of coloured smoke.

As the gasping crowds watched, the men seemed destined to crash to earth, until they finally opened their parachutes, to an almost audible gasp of relief from a thousand throats."

They call it journalistic licence!!

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The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) is renowned for the obscurity and difficulty of his writings. It is a little surprising then to find the frequency with which his name is used by parachutists from the London area, particularly those from the East End. One assumes, of course, that the name is used to refer to anyone who is guilty of muddled thinking or clumsy behaviour, as in the phrase: " 'Ere wot's your gime, you silly Kant."

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Sometimes when you're feeling important,
 Sometimes when your ego's full cry,
 Sometimes when you take it for granted
 You're the best qualified man in the sky,
 Sometimes when you feel that your going
 Would leave an unfillable hole,
 Just fall without pulling your ripcord
 And see how it humbles your soul!

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Small boy to member of the Endrust Skydivers who had just put together a 12 man star over Cirencester Park for the Air Britain Rally:

" 'Ere mate, you a skydiver as well?!"

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We've just heard of the closing of Compton Abbas as a drop zone, a loss which will be sorely felt amongst Southern jumpers. Billy Boots centre always had the reputation of being a fun place to go and a grand atmosphere always prevailed. It is even more sad in the light of a super letter we've just received from that wandering parachutist Sally Cresswell who tells of a real great weekend that she had there recently. She sent the photo below which shows Billy with young Smiff rigged as a main; Jon Williams is the grinning onlooker—apparently the deployment was something else!



We have just received a fatality report from Buzz Bennett, the salient features being as follows:

The deceased cut away from a malfunctioned main, he was wearing a Pioneer Tandem rig with the reserve chest mounted; the reserve was not activated. The reserve parachute was examined and the following points came to light:

The deceased had worn the reserve upside down, (presumably to gain a higher centre of gravity), and had modified the pocket and ripcord housing so that the latter made a sharp 180 degree bend.

On test the ripcord pull was measured at 83 lbs. Once the ripcord pins had been removed there was nothing to hinder normal activation of the reserve.

MORAL: Don't carry out your own pet modifications to equipment—consult a qualified rigger.

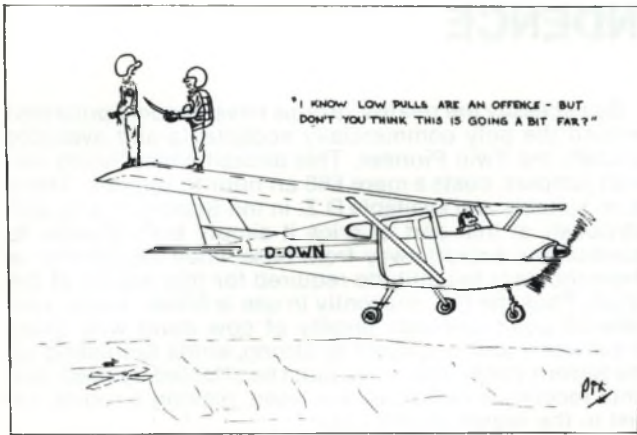
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What do you do when a gal with the biggest bust ever seen in British parachuting, says, "I can't fasten my chest strap." . . . and she can't!!

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Parachutist returns home to find a note from his parachutist lodger: "Dear ***, thanks for letting me stay at your place, if you can fix me up with some paying demos perhaps I can repay you the money I owe you!"

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After the display at Droylesden Carnival, Alan Morris is asked to autograph a bow and arrow — Irate mother to young son: "Now are you bloody well satisfied?"

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Overheard after the same display:
 "Where's the gorilla today?" (George Quick come back, all is forgiven.)

also:

"What's it like when you pull it Mister?" (Nice!)

and:

"I did it during the war you know." (Didn't everyone?)

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"Why isn't Cathy Burrows in the Embassy Skydivers?"
 Embassy Girls' Team Leader: "Cos she's a good parachutist!!"

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I LEARNT ABOUT PARACHUTING FROM THAT!

April 1st: auspicious day. I left the Rapide over HG on a cloud base of 2200 feet, adopted what passes with me for a stable position, pulled the main handle fairly immediately and then lay there and waited, having done everything I could think of for the time being. Some seconds later it was becoming clear to me that although the ground was behaving in an orthodox manner, rushing v at me, barking and so on, the main parachute was proving a great disappointment. In fact it was quite failing to discharge the function for which I expressly carry it.

Ten seconds after leaving the aircraft, seven seconds after the main handle, my reserve lifted off the pack tray and at the precise moment it began to take air the main developed normally. Everything was now more or less OK apart from the embarrassment of this prolapsed reserve thing which I sort of tucked between my knees. It was beginning to get dark and I could see no sign of the airfield but I still had both handles. Big deal . . . I landed in a ploughed field.

This small incident would certainly have passed off as a fairly severe extractor hesitation but that my instructor Albert Cooper had been watching me from the aircraft, I think he feels I am there largely to entertain him. He saw the extractor clear the pack, followed by the first two folds of the sleeved canopy, say four feet, and then stop very abruptly. Everything remained in this position until I

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Congratulations to Teresa Ford of the Embassy Team and Chris Simpson of the Red Freds who have just announced their engagement—we're wondering which team will be jumping in at the wedding and how long it will be before little Embassy Devils appear on the scene!

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By the time this issue appears in print the first World Cup Relative Meet will be history. The British Team were chosen from—Mark Miller, Dave Moody, Terry Fawden, Mike O'Brien, Dave Waterman, Alan Skennerton, Tony Unwin, John Partington Smith, Dave Fiddler, Jeff Lancaster, Terry Hagen, Robin Mills, Ian Merrick with John Beard as Team Coach.

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Watch those top plates on the pre-jump inspection—

photo John Nickolls

broke for the reserve handle, when normal deployment followed immediately. Clearly the sleeve had caught on something. Sure enough, when we examined the sleeve it had a tear in precisely the place Albert had predicted. But what had caused it? Repacking carefully, we found another small hole in the fabric of the pack itself exactly opposite the torn sleeve. This hole was small — no bigger than those cigarette burns you find in your best suit after a night out — and due simply to wear and tear. Could the hook of the pack-opening band have passed through this hole and captured the sleeve? It seemed unlikely. But when we came to look at the bottom pack-opening band on that side we found that part of the wire had worked free of its stitching, leaving a sharp, hooked projection. Without doubt this was what had just shortened my life by several years.

Anything to be learnt? Not much perhaps. Don't jump clapped-out kit. In particular maybe, don't dismiss unusual incidents too readily as "just one of those things". Try and find out what really happened. The next time it happens might be the last time.

When I got back to the DZ in the dark I found I had lost the reserve handle after all — on landing. Well, I surely learnt about parachuting from *that* . . .

R.Mc. B.P.A. 5720

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Charles,

Although it is somewhat delayed, I felt I must write to you regarding my attendance at the 1973 National Accuracy and Style Championships.

In the past I have been to most of the Nationals even though it is only for the final weekend, as was the case this year.

When one has not been present during the main jumping period of the Nationals one always wonders what the mood of everyone will be on the final weekend. I was very pleased to hear there had been virtually no aggravations at all during the week and that it had been a very happy competition for everyone concerned. This was verified during the Saturday evening which I was at Weston.

I am sure that this in no small part is a reflection on the organisation of the Nationals this year and of the effort put in by everybody concerned in ensuring that these championships ran smoothly. I would particularly like to mention Flt. Lt. Burgess and his staff at R.A.F. Weston-on-the-Green who accommodated, fed and helped to entertain the competitors.

We must not forget the wives who assisted with the Stats and of the Pilots who flew us during the week.

Special thanks must also go to Flt. Sgt. Doug Peacock who was our chief judge and who together with Marc Schneebeli from Switzerland, David Waugh and W.O. II Gus Martin from Netheravon worked so hard to judge fairly the championships.

Finally our thanks to the Daily Telegraph and The Sunday Telegraph for their sponsorship throughout the year and for supplying many of the trophies at the championships.

Whilst writing this letter I would like to mention, as I did at the prizegiving, the fact that that particular weekend was the fifth anniversary of us having the good services of Sq.Ldr. Bill Paul and I would like to take this opportunity of letting the membership know how well he has served us throughout those five years, quite often working many hours longer than we should expect him to. On your behalf I would like to thank him for being the best Secretary-General that this association has ever had. I sincerely hope that he will be with us for many years yet.

Yours sincerely,
LAURIE ST. JOHN
Chairman, B.P.A.

Dear Charlie,

On the eve of the 'Chuting Stars' departure to the States I would like to take this opportunity to express through the good offices of the mag. a few of my own personal views on the current situation in this Country of Sport Parachuting—the relative scene in particular.

I don't claim to be particularly well placed to make these observations, not having made it round too many D.Z.'s in the last few years, but my experiences of the relative scene and conversations with jumpers who do their own thing at other D.Z.'s have led me to believe that someone should say a few words for the relative workers — not to deny charges that have been made against us but rather to explain some of the less publicised facts about the operation at Staverton.

By necessity the relative groups have become polarised around the only commercially acceptable and available aircraft, the Twin Pioneer. This aircraft which holds sixteen jumpers, costs a mere £66 an hour to operate. There is no suitable and available D.Z. in the Staverton area and obviously at that sort of price it simply isn't feasible to position the aircraft away from base when 12,000 feet or thereabouts is the altitude required for this aspect of the sport. Thus the D.Z. currently in use is fifteen miles from take-off point, consists largely of cow dung with grass in between, and is subject to strong winds funnelling up the Severn Valley. Recovery must be effected by road, and until recently a hired van was used, making a round trip last in the region of one hour.

There are the facts of the situation and it must be painfully obvious to anybody that these are very difficult conditions to operate under—but we still have perhaps the most difficult, and least recognised problem to mention, a problem which to the best of my knowledge applies only here in the relative scene. The jumpers, as this aspect of the sport dictates, operate in groups, as a unit rather than as individuals. However, all these people who make up the groups are individuals and hold their own opinions as to how the operation should be run, as happens on other D.Z.'s. However, consider the difference between this scene and all the others. No Cessna 172 to operate here, but a very expensive 16-place aircraft which needs to be operated at full capacity to be commercially acceptable and then add the most crucial factor of all—no C.C.I. to organise his own operation. The responsibility for organising D.Z.'s, pilots, notams, timings manifests and payment of jumps falls most uncomfortably on a few who feel that the time and effort it requires is small price to pay for the sport. All good stuff I'm sure everyone agrees, but who gets landed with the blame when the collection doesn't match the bill, when the one day jumpers have left without paying, and when VAT rears its ugly head? You guessed it. A real case of "success is ours, failure is yours." But the odd jump or two makes it all seem worth it again, and overshadows the personal differences which surely exist on all D.Z.'s but are relatively unimportant elsewhere, where jumpers can do their own thing with their jump money. It may be all peace and quiet on some other D.Z.'s as two charming young ladies told me recently but let's be realistic girls, when you're paying £2 a jump and someone destroys a star just as you're about to dock, it requires a little more cool than when you screw up your own style or accuracy jump.

There lies the case for the defence, people. To those who knock the relative scene and criticise the 'aggro' I ask just one question. If relative work was your chosen aspect of the sport, and you too had to operate under the conditions which I have described, could you keep your cool when others around you lose theirs, and would your presence make the scene that much happier? Think about it.

To those who have given so much in many respects to the scene at Staverton, who have helped kill many a cloudy day with laughter, I say stick with it Gang, we have always managed to carry on the operation somehow despite the weather, air traffic controllers and cow dung and as long as we want it, its there. All it takes is a bit of effort.

It's a great sport, isn't it?
Cheers Charlie, see you soon.

ALAN (SKENNERTON)

P.S. Dug out a quotation from Petronius, somewhere around 50 A.D. He must have been a 'rely' worker!

"We trained hard, but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form a team we would re-organise.

I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by re-organising, and what a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation."

I LEARNED ABOUT PARACHUTING FROM THAT . . .

It was a cloudy morning early in the year. There were a few breaks, but they were not very wide so we were prepared for a quick climb up to altitude.

It was intended to make the jump from 8,500 feet. I would make an unstable exit followed by two 360° turns, one left and one right, then into a track, flare out and pull. I was jumping a seven gore T.U and the winds were 6—8 knots. A routine jump presenting no problems — all the manoeuvres were familiar.

The climb in the open doored aircraft is cold and gets colder; streamer run; winds O.K; opening point located—up we go.

At 6,000 feet the pilot reports that the gap is moving over so it's now or never!

We turn onto a climbing run-in. Nearly at the exit point, my altimeter, and the aircraft altimeter read 6,500 feet. CUT!

Out of the door, knees bent and arms wrapped round them. "Thousand-one, thousand-two". I'm dropping back to earth. Flare out—PUSH for the arch, I flick over. Clouds all round below: I'm falling into a hole through them. I cannot pick up a reference point on the horizon, but directly below me is a distinctively shaped field.

360° Left.

360° Right.

I'm under the cloud and there is the opening point. Arms back and close the legs, point the toes, cup the hands, round the shoulders and push my backside up. Head back—here we go. The airflow shifts coming directly onto my face. I accelerate.

WHEEE—this is living !!

I am heading directly at the opening point controlling horizontal direction with my hands and head. Looking at the OP I'm moving forwards nicely. A quick glance at the altimeter.

1000 FEET! I stare unbelievably.

Reserve or main? I'm face down so it's the main !!

In half a second I arch, swing my left hand over my head, dig in my left knee to stop the resultant spin and tear the handles from the housing.

The parachute blasts open. From almost 300 feet/sec to 18 feet/sec in three seconds. The altimeter reads approximately 600 feet.

I'm heading cross-wind—turn in, hit—parachute landing fall left, gather up the chute and walk back to the clubhouse.

What went wrong?

1. I had planned the exit point and opening point against a jump from 8,500 feet, but had jumped from 6,500 feet so I could not get to the opening point.

2. I had forgotten that a track can result in an almost doubled rate of descent.

3. I had allowed myself to suffer target fixation and had forgotten everything else except my desire to make the opening point.

4. I had been relying on the look of the ground to tell me the opening height and was dependent on ground-rush to announce any emergency. But in the absence of roads, houses, etc., it is difficult to judge altitude. Likewise ground-rush is much reduced in the absence of objects of familiar dimensions.

What should have been done?

The track should have been aborted altogether. A stable delay with perhaps a couple of turns and a loop (½ series) should have been substituted instead.

Many student fatalities are caused through tracking into the ground.

- So** (1) Allow for rate of descent to almost double during tracking.
- (2) Don't track to a point, track for a set time 5, 8 or 10 seconds according to the jump height and bearing point (1) in mind.
- (3) Don't become obsessed with the target. Stay switched on!
- (4) Don't rely solely on the ground to tell you when you are at opening heights; fields on their own
- 8 LIKE OPEN WATER—are very deceptive.
- (5) Lastly don't learn tracking from less than 7,000 feet.

L. J. POCOCK.

Editors note—

This is not an uncommon situation and instructors should bear in mind that the tracking exercise requires meticulous briefing because of the many possible dangers.

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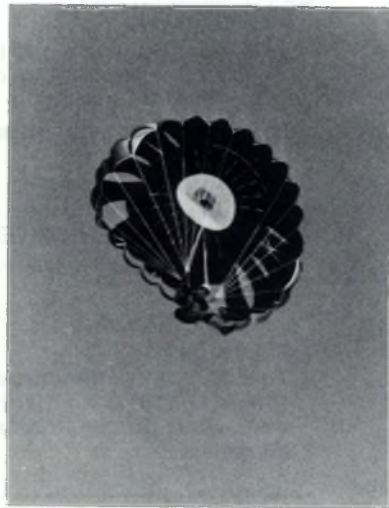
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HOW SAFE IS IT GETTING UP THERE

Needless to say most Parachutists have every confidence in their Parachuting equipment, but what do they know of the aircraft upon which they rely to take them up there?

A large percentage of Para-Clubs hire their aircraft, complete with Pilot, from the local Flying Club and this system, in my opinion, is the safest and in the long run the cheapest way. Flying Club aircraft, with a maximum all-up-weight of less than 6000 lb., used primarily for flying training, hold a two-year General Purpose Category Certificate of Airworthiness, and accordingly have to be regularly maintained in accordance with a very rigorous maintenance schedule, the latter being initially approved by the Civil Aviation Authority.

The content of this maintenance schedule consists of a cycle of inspections and operations, the frequency of which, has been arrived at after lengthy consultation with the Airframe, Engine and Ancillary Manufacturers; the Civil Aviation Authority; and the Operators, together with a certain amount of what's known in the trade as 'retrospective wisdom'.

Typical items in the Maintenance Schedule would, for example, call for changing the engine oil and inspecting the oil filter every 25 or 50 flying hours, and servicing the Spark Plugs at 50 hour intervals, whereas the Mainplane attachment fittings would have to be crack tested at 600 hours or 12 months whichever occurred the sooner.

An overhaul "life" is imposed on certain components — eg. Engine, Propeller (if it has moving parts) starter, generator, and instruments, and these "lives" vary according to the degree of success, or failure that a certain component has achieved under test and in service. All Radio equipment normally has a four year overhaul life, regardless of hours flown. After completion of the Schedules "life" a component is either replaced by a new or fully overhauled item, or the old unit removed and completely overhauled and tested prior to re-fitting for a further "life" period.

So far I have only covered the one aspect of operating a "hire and reward" aircraft to an approved Maintenance Schedule and already an explanation begins to take shape as to why operating light aircraft is an expensive business.

The licensed aircraft engineer, in addition to carrying out the physical servicing, has all the "lifed" components as well as Manufacturer's Bulletins etc. to check before releasing the aircraft for a further period of service. Upon completion of an inspection the aircraft is finally cleared by the licensed engineer signing a Certificate of Release which states how long the machine may operate before the next inspection is due. This Certificate can be seen by any interested party and is usually attached to the Journey or Technical Log Book held by the operator. At the end of the C of A period the aircraft is stripped and completely overhauled to a degree dependent upon its age, total flying hours etc. and satisfaction of the Civil Aviation Authority Surveyor, and engineer concerned.

So briefly there we have it, in theory, a very safe system, as good really as the integrity of the operator, pilot and engineer concerned.

Finally as a very rough yardstick for the layman flier; a clean, tidy and smart aeroplane is usually a well maintained aeroplane.

DAVID GREENWOOD
Chief Inspector, Yorkshire Light Aircraft Ltd.

BIG JAKE'S FIRST JUMP

One day me and Big Jake are cooling off with a gargle of the local brew, when Big Jake produces crumpled from his pocket a clip from the evening paper and pronounces as follows: 'Want to get high?' says he, 'Try sport parachuting. Heh heh Barstids must be mad' B.J. seeing it at first thought it was an invite to a way-out party, hence the interest.

For laughs we phone the number. A husky, slinky dame's voice answers — do we want to jump? Her voice is vibrant with invitation. Big Jake goes wild with lust. He must meet this dame — any way anyhow. It is going to cost him a quid to book a place on a course, but B.J. ain't going to do any parachute jump. He has other kinds in mind. He sends his loot; I send mine. She might have friends. Any case, where B.J. goes, I go. I am his minder. When B.J. flips as he always does, I pick up the pieces; mostly other peoples'.

We turn up at this airfield in the sticks. There are weird guys everywhere in bright boilersuits with long zips. Some of them call them zaps. They talk in code so us outside guys don't catch on too quick. One big freak announces he just had a zap on a double ell and figured he'd of done better with a tee you. Big Jake and me near blow our minds trying to decode that one, then we give up because here is our hostess, The Voice.

There is no disappointment. This dame doesn't wear any boiler suit. No siree. She has this sweater on so tight it is near to bursting under the pressure of her mighty tits. Now if anything is calculated to drive Big Jake over the edge, it is knockers such as these. B.J. will do anything to get his hands on them, even jump out a plane.

So you guessed it folks? Yes, B.J. shells out more loot and with the promise of better times ahead lopes over with me in tow to join a scraggly row of guys falling about on a pile of sand.

The Voice and Tits is to be our instructor. She has done more jumps than most guys have had hot breakfasts. Deep breathing in oxygen thin air could account for her amazing development.

V. and T. soon has us up in a kind of harness they call the Nutcracker. She demonstrates this thing called a stable position until a helper guy pulls a lanyard and she crashes through into the vertical but stays smiling.

Big Jake volunteers to be first to try it. He gets up there and spreadeagles gracefully with pointed fingers and pointed toes. He is smiling his biggest smile, more of a leer, at V. and T. and he is counting like they tell it: 'A thousand and one, a thousand and two, a thousand and ...' and just then V. and T. pulls the plug... Threeeeeeeeeee' Big Jakes demented yell shrieks its way across the airfield sending the pigeons exploding out of the trees and bringing heads popping out of all the control tower windows.

'That is why they call it the Nutcracker,' observes a wierdo beside me sagely. They lower B.J. to the ground and his eyes are watering so he can hardly see. For once he is speechless. I am afraid to hear how his voice will sound when it does come out. V. and T. is cooing with sympathy on the surface as we help him over to a seat, but beneath I think she is laughing at Big Jake. He only sees the sympathy and it is a good sign that immediately one hand starts groping round from the back towards her bazoom. A quick exploiter is B.J.

The day goes on. We roll on the ground. We hang in the harness. We sit in a room and they talk and talk. They ask us millions of questions. We sit in a plane and on it goes. I am shagged out. Big Jake has regained his interest in

his surroundings and tries at different stages to get his mitts on V. and T. I hope he succeeds. If she takes him to a quiet spot to validate his training, then him and me can go home. But she doesn't take him aside and B.J. never gives up.

We get in the plane again, hung down with parachutes heavy as all hell. The engine starts. 'this is it,' yells V. and T. in all the racket. 'Remember all you've been told.' And we're off, Big Jake huddled close to V. and T. near the door. I fall asleep.

When I wake up, Big Jake is gone and V. and T. is shaking my boot. 'You next,' she says.

Where B.J. goes I must follow. She tells me feet out and I comply. Then 'Go!' and a big slap on the shoulder. Even the proximity of the knockers cannot divert my thoughts from doom at this time.

I fall out. Between my feet I see V. and T. looking out the plane door. She looks surprised; startled even. Then I see the ground and there is a big WHAP that rocks my helmet forward over my eyes. It gets very quiet and I don't like it. I would even listen to Radio 3 to avoid this silence, which is eerie.

Below and ahead I see a golf course. Then I see a farm. Then the golf course again, then the farm. I seem to be turning slowly, which is okay because it needs no effort from me and I take in the view . . . golf course, farm, golf course. The ground seems nearer and I hear a human voice: 'Preserve! Preserve!' It is perhaps an incantation these wierdos shout in ecstasy at the sight of open parachutes. 'Preserve! use your preserve' Have they issued us with iron rations? The guy seems to be shouting at me. ' . . . off. Do not bother me,' I return the cry, intent on the view revolving round me. Then WHAM, before I know it I am in the trees, hung up like a monkey up a pole.

It turns out when they get me down and explain it to me that I had a thing called a bee pee, which I had heard of but had likened to a double ell or tee you. Lucky it wasn't a bad one.

But what of Big Jake all this time?

Voice and Tits seeing me rotating down is alarmed and decides to follow. She has a brightly coloured rag they call a pee cee. B.J., safe on land, sees all this and sums it up. He has a dilemma. Does he come after me, his minder, who is stuck up a tree, or does he follow the goal of his days activity and nail V. and T. when she lands.

Yes, you guessed again. He is right there, ready to leap as she touches down in a hollow well away from the crowd milling around me.

They get me down and we are in the van on the way back to the airfield when the driver suddenly brakes and says 'Christ Almighty, what of Big Jake and Voice and Tits this while? We return to the place they call the deezed but B.J. and V. and T. are nowhere to be found.

It is not until nightfall that B.J. and V. and T. make their reappearance, smirking, blushing, dishevelled and lightly speckled with bog moss.

After this they are inseparable, so B.J. becomes a big jumper and I am left behind.

They go on to bigger and better things until eventually they try to do in freefall what had not been done before. They succeed, but their world record is posthumous and Big Jake and Voice and Tits go down in history as the first people, who, if they could tell it, would know which is the better and the more ecstatic activity.

L. PULLER

BUZZ'S CANADIAN COLUMN

CANADA'S FIRST NIGHT NINE-MAN

On Saturday July 14th, 1973, at 11.50pm, the first night nine man-star in Canada was built over Abbotsford Drop Zone.

Night relative work has long been a regular occurrence at Abbotsford, and the last few years has seen many four-mans built after dark. The 'Black Skulker Club' has quite a large membership. However, it was not until February of this year that anyone thought about doing anything bigger. The idea was put forward by Bill Hardman, and was enthusiastically received by a small number of people. The main problem was lack of experienced night relative workers, and to rectify this, several people spent a considerable amount of time travelling to Abbotsford to get the necessary experience, and to improve technique. Aircraft problems prevented anything larger than four-mans, but night jumping is night jumping, whatever the size of star, and the experience proved well worth it.

Night relative work has two main problems:

- (i) impaired vision (lack of light and oxygen); and
- (ii) lack of depth perception.

While the former may not be particularly noticeable, the latter could have serious consequences. The ability to judge closing speed and distance correctly at night is only acquired with difficulty, and experience plays a large part in this respect. This ability is even more critical when dealing with large stars.

The breakthrough came during 'jumpers holiday' in the second week in May. On May 12th, using a C207, the first Canadian night six-man was built. (Sometime previously a night five-man had been made in Ontario). Participants, in order of entry, were Bill Wacey, John McGoldrick, Bill Hardman, Buzz Bennett, Charlie Gibbs, and Ron Dionne. The jump was made from 12,500 ft, in order to give us the best chance possible. As it turned out the jump could have been made from a much lower altitude, but that is hindsight. This was, I believe, the largest night star outside the USA. The success of that jump brought the possibility of a night eight-man that much closer. The elements and other things did not co-operate; that is until July 14th. We had ideal weather, a full moon, and the necessary jumpers. We had originally wanted to use one aircraft, but circumstances prevented that, and a C207 and C180 were used. During the afternoon, a practice jump was made, using one aircraft, mainly to sort out exit problems for the base, and to try out some white jumpsuits (for visibility). These latter were discarded as they did not work out.

After a short briefing, the planes broke ground shortly after 11.00pm. We almost went into shell shock when the 207 had to land again. Nothing was wrong and the second takeoff went off more normally. The lead 207 was flown by Owen Shannon, and the chase 180 by Dave Dougherty. The formation flight was an experience in itself, the effect on Owen was such, that on being told that Dave was

close in, he turned around to look, and could only produce the immortal words 'h--- s---'.

At 12,500 nine jumpers exited the two aircraft and 50+ seconds later nine jumpers broke out of a neat circular nine-man star. Seven night star crests were earned. (To qualify for the Night Star Crest, the jump must be made at least two hours after sunset, which that night was approximately 9.00 pm). This is, I believe, the first night star (eight or bigger) outside the USA.

Participants, in order of entry:

Dick Poizer SCR CIO
Bob Smith SCR
Craig Peterson CIO
Bill Hardman NSCR, SCS, CIO
Charlie Gibbs SCS CIO
John McGoldrick SCS CIO
Gjerluf Mortensen NSCR SCS CIO
Buzz Bennett SCS CIO
Ron Dionne SCS CIO

(N)SCR (Night) Star Crest Recipient
SCS Star Crest Soloist
CIO Canadian Ten Man Patch

THE MANCHESTER SPORT PARACHUTE CLUB

Just over a year ago two instructors and three parachutists walked out of one parachute club and set about the daunting task of forming another one from scratch with no kit, no capital, no members, and no DZ. Since that time the Manchester Sport Parachute Club has trained and jumped over 150 students, established a display team, and is one of the few clubs lucky enough to boast its own Chief Rigger.

As a kick-off to the new season and for something of publicity reasons the team accepted an invitation to parachute on to a golf course some 20 miles from Ringway to help celebrate the golf club's Opening Day and publicize both clubs at the same time. AEC agreed to put a 5-man team in with smoke — after all, golf courses are big enough DZ's to provide bottle-free displays for even the most afflicted of the steamy-goggles brigade. Only RM, who knows the golf course well, and has trouble staying on it even when he is *playing golf*, had silent reservations.

It was decided the first lift would comprise Eric Finney and Derek Nicholls who would test the streamer and go for the centre of the first fairway. If the spot was good then the second lift, of AEC, RM and Tony Engbarth would make for the practice putting green in front of the main clubhouse. On the day, the windline turned out to be in wholly the wrong direction from our point of view—right across the main road and parallel with a housing estate, over the club car park and clubhouse before setting down in front of the main bar.

Albert arrived back at Ringway full of enthusiasm: the kamikaze lift had both covered the cross on the fairway from 3500ft, now the cloudbase was lifting to give us a chance of a run-in at over five grand if Preston air traffic control could be kept from bursting a blood vessel at the thought. The pilot ran in so flawlessly that RM sitting in the door was not ready for the cut and eventually went out, past the tailplane in a diving exit that would have done little credit to a one-legged Chelsea pensioner, preparing to pull on the bottom of the stack at 2000 feet. Predictably enough, RM chose this exact jump on which to have a stiff pull, one of those real two-handed head-down bottle-snatchers, and was reminded poignantly as he watched the sleeve come off Albert's old faithful red-white-and blue candy-striped Mark I, that he had only



Tony Engbarth flies his Papillon into the nineteenth hole at Rochdale Golf Club

two Younger's beer mats in his reserve in place of a kicker plate. This extra two seconds or so of mild hysteria had taken the stack low and in fact the ground party later said that we looked too deep to make it across the main road. Tony had the unusual and unnerving experience of not being able to make out the target at all from the surrounding terrain and had to settle, much to his dismay, for following RM who more by luck than judgement flew his PC round the clubhouse to land right in front of the bar, closely followed by beautiful standups from Tony and Albert, to be instantly surrounded by the inevitable hordes of children, all eager to pull your reserve and crawl inside your main canopy with ice-lollies and toffee apples.

Thanks to a good press officer the publicity from this little lob was very favourable and far-reaching and requests flooded in. The club has agreed to perform sponsored displays during next season to raise money for a heart-unit for a childrens' hospital in the Greater Manchester area.

All in all it has been a good year. There have been no serious incidents or injuries. Hardly anyone has asked for their money back, even for the parachuting. Albert went up and docked ninth in a ten-man star just to show he isn't past it just because he doesn't do it very often. Eric Finney chopped a perfectly good main because he realized just too late that it had cleared itself and denied later that he was just curious to see his new Protector flying. It's a full life. We're all at Halfpenny Green at the moment. Come up and see us sometime . . .

ROD McLOUGHLIN

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION INSTRUCTORS

ADVANCED RATINGS (EXAMINERS)

Name	Club	BPA No.			
Acraman, R. S.	R.S.A.	444	Harrison, J.	Old Warden	2734
Anderson, B.	A.P.A.	4590	Henry, T.	S.A.S.	3110
Boot, W. G.	T/Valley	3930	Herbert, C.	Singapore	1866
Catt, W.	A.A.C.	415	Hewitt, B. N.	Northern Para	6023
Card, R. G.	A.P.A.	1927	Hill, A. V.	Eagle S.P.C.	193
Cavanagh, P. D.	B.K.S.C.	2817	Holt, A. C.	Northern Para	2224
Charlton, A. F.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	110	Jarrett, R. G.	Parachute Regiment	8370
Crocker, J. T.	South Staffs	2066	Johnson, A. T.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	898
Dale, A. J.		845	Johnson, M.	Lincoln	1118
Day, T. J. W.	Met. Police	1705	Jones, A.	Parachute Regiment	1886
Dickson, T. G.	Scottish	472	Jones, D. J.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	6979
English, J. A.	Northern Para	3767	Kemley, J. M.		1952
Fernie, W. G.	Scottish	1859	Kirkham, R. N.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	6498
Francis, R.	Hard Ass Star Team	3437	Kirkman, G.	N.W.P.C.	8145
Gardner, E. A. J.	Parachute Regiment	178	Law, N.	Man. F/F C	2137
Griffiths, R.	Green Jackets	115	Lewington, E.	Parachute Regiment	5382
Hounsborne, N. C.	T/Valley	1598	Lonsdale, R. C.	R.E.M.E.	1151
Jackson, M. L.	R.E.	343	Louttit, I. A.		4001
Jacobs, K. E.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	471	Maddy, W.	R.E.M.E.	1430
Jerstice, B.	Lancs.	2101	May, C.		2643
Laing, J.	R.A.P.A.	1323	Melville, L. W.	7 R.H.A.	1016
Lewington, E. T.	Parachute Regiment	5382	Miller, I. G.	Lincoln P/F	772
McCarthy, D.	R.A.P.A.	949	Mitchell, C. E.	I.O.W.	1407
McLoughlin, J. E.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	175	McBride, E.	T/Valley	6852
Mapplebeck, K.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	1035	McCauley, J.	Peterborough	4416
Martin, M. A.	A.P.A.	1444	McGill, J. A.	7 R.H.A.	2066
McQueen, A. S.	R.A.P.A.	4318	McGuire, P.	Golden Lions	5105
Meacock, W. J.	Peterborough	578	MacLennan, J. A.	Scottish	3128
O'Brien, R. L.	S.P.C.	3550	Maclennen, W. M.		4060
Peacock, D.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	125	McMillan, A.	S.P.C.	6099
Raine, G. P.	R.C.T.	2229	McMillan, I.	S.P.C.	6099
Reed, M.	Yorks.	596	McNaughton, D.	Parachute Regiment	417
Reiter, R.	Hard Ass Star Team	4931	Morris, A.	N.W.P.C.	8163
Rumney, C.	Hard Ass Star Team	9492	Morrison, A.	A.P.A.	4848
Runacres, R. J.	R.A.P.A.	338	Noble, K.	Northumbria	4298
Schofield, B. S.	Para Regt	2332	Noble-Nesbitt, R.	Northumbria	6461
Shea-Simonds, G. C. P.	Hard Ass Star Team	475	Norris, J.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	2363
Sherman, P. W.	Old Warden	4757	O'Brien, M. J.	B.P.C.	332
Slattery, W. P.	Nomad	258	O'Brien, N.	A.P.A.	4378
Stephenson, E. W.	S.A.S.	7699	Oliver, A. R.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	2518
			Oxley, T. E.	R.A.P.A.	1442
			Parker, A. H.	A.P.A.	3138
			Parkinson, H. E.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	3276
			Parry, R.	B.K.S.C.	2735
			Patrick, J.	7 R.H.A.	1781
			Payne, D. C.	Paraclan	2370
			Peel, F.	S.P. Centre	7096
			Perkins, R. G. G.	Martlesham	7794
			Price, A. J.	R.M.	5489
			Prin, O.	Peterborough	6559
			Prince, D.	N.W.P.C.	1880
			Purves, M.	Martlesham	6882
			Pusey, D. C.	Parachute Regiment	2598
			Quick, G.	N.W.P.C.	7725
			Railton, K.	R.A.P.A.	5932
			Reddick, J.	R.A.P.A.	349
			Rees, B.	J.S.P.C.	874
			Reid, M.	Scottish	7054
			Ritchie, W.	Sport Para Centre	6632
			Rixon, T.	Peterborough	1250
			Riddick, A.	Martlesham	5529
			Robertson, I.	Scottish	7722
			Robinson, R. J.	Parachute Regiment	4059
			Rose, A.	R.M.S.P.C.	2587
			Rymer, D.	R.A.P.A.	5967
			Sansom, D. B.	Parachute Regiment	3232
			Savage, D.	Nomad	1671
			Scarret, W. T.		1428
			Scott, R. S.	S.A.S.	2899
			Seeger, R. A. M.	R.M.S.P.C.	495
			Sharpies, J.	Hereford	1891
			Shone, G. B.	R.Sigs.	2245
			Smith, E. H.	S.A.S.	759
			Smith, J. F.	Nomad	3847
			Souter, R. F.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	5594
			Standring, B. R.	Parachute Regiment	2191
			St. John, L. N. E.	B.P.C.	257
			Taylor, M.	Old Warden	1982
			Together, M.	A.P.A.	5077
			Walmsley, J.	Parachute Regiment	930
			Ward, M. R. L.	R.M.	5741
			Wright, J.	Parachute Regiment	1928
			Whitney, D. M.	Parachute Regiment	2163
			Williams, J.	Thames Valley A/S	5343
			Wilson, J. W.	R.A.P.A.	2900
			Winwood, M. J.	3 LI F/F C	2319

APPROVED RATING

Name	Club	BPA No.			
Addison, N. F.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	2566			
Armour, A. M.	A.P.A.	5649			
Aveling, M. F.	Parachute Regiment	7450			
Beard, J. A.	Green Jackets	2050			
Beavan, R.	South Staffs	6389			
Bennet, D.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	3024			
Bennigson, P. J.		8975			
Beynon, M. G. P.	T/Valley	4983			
Birch, D. T.	R.A.P.A.	3036			
Black, A.	R.E.	1106			
Bolton, M.	South Staffs	5114			
Bowles, J. A.	R.A.P.A.	1237			
Boxall, J.	Hereford	5455			
Bremer, F.	Peterborough	7398			
Burns, R.	Sport Para Centre	3445			
Cameron, K.	A.P.A.	7372			
Cathro, G.	Parachute Regiment	1547			
Cockburn, A. M.	R.A.P.A.	2749			
Coffey, J. P.	C.C.S.P.C.	662			
Cole, A. J. N.	B.P.C.	346			
Colgan, J. A.		6332			
Cooper, A. E.	Manchester	3026			
Cottrell, A.	Peterborough	8744			
Crawley, T.	Green Jackets	343			
Daubney, J. E.	S.A.S.	2290			
Deakin, M. D.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	4239			
Denley, P.		113			
Desoldato, D.	S.P. Centre	3764			
Dinneen, K. J.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	3507			
Dixon, A. C.	A.P.A.	6174			
Elliott, W. E.	A.P.A.	4064			
Ellis, G.	A.P.A.	3432			
Forsdyke, J. K.	South Staffs	3027			
Forster, N. J.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	5783			
Fraser, P.	S.P.C.	5548			
Fuller, I.	T/Valley	5532			
Gray, I.	Golden Lions	8374			
Hackett, D.	R.M.	878			
Hagan, T.	Nomad	1930			
Harper, I.	R.A.F.S.P.A.	5543			

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Yorkshire.
R. O'Brien,
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Hants.
R. S. Acraman,
7 Chartwell, The Hatches,
Frimley Green, Surrey.
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Kent.
The Secretary,
(at club address).
- Brunel University Skydiving Club**
c/o Students Union,
Brunel University, Uxbridge,
Middx. (Brunel Students only).
The Secretary,
(at club address).
- Eagle Sport Para Centre**
Lymgne Airport, Nr. Ashford,
Kent.
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- Hereford Parachute Club**
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Shobdon, Leominster, Hereford.
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- Independent Skydivers**
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- Martlesham Heath Para Club**
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- Vauxhall Skydiving Club**
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R. O. King,
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D. Waterman,
94 Hamlet Gardens, London, W.6.
- The Embassy Womens Free Fall Team**
Diana Tuck,
29 Whitcomb Street, London, W.C.2
- Boughton Aluph Skydivers Display Team**
L. N. E. St John,
'Malthouse', Pilgrims Way,
Boughton Aluph, Nr. Ashford,
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- Yorkshire Aeroplane Club Sport Parachute Wing**
G. C. P. Shea-Simonds,
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Tel: Abingdon 288 Ext 485
- Parachute Regiment Free Fall Club**
Major B. S. Schofield,
Para Regt. Free Fall Team,
Browning Bks., Aldershot, Hants.
Tel: Aldershot 24431 Ext 2446.
- Royal Marines Sport Parachute Club**
The Secretary,
R.M.S.P.C., Royal Marines,
Lymptone, Exmouth,
Devtn.
Tel: Topsham 3781
- Cyprus Combined Services Sport Parachute Club**
S/Sgt R. G. Card,
A.T.C. Anzio Camp, Dhekelia,
B.F.P.O. 53.
- 7 Parachute Regiment R.H.A. (The Black Knights)**
Capt. C. J. B. Copeland, RHA,
7 Parachute Regiment R.H.A.,
Lille Bks., Aldershot, Hants.
Tel: Aldershot 24431 Ext 3542
- R.E.M.E. Free Fall Team**
W.O.II. R. C. Lonsdale,
16 Para Workshop R.E.M.E.,
Arnhem Bks., Aldershot, Hants.
Tel: Aldershot 24431 Ext 3520
- Royal Green Jackets Free Fall Team**
Mr. J. A. Beard,
40 Brill Close, Cox Green,
Maidenhead, Berkshire.
Tel: Maidenhead 25195
- 22 Special Air Service Parachute Club**
Sgt. B. Anderson,
'D' Sqn., 22 S.A.S.,
Bradbury Lines, Hereford.
- Golden Lions Parachute Club**
Cpl. P. McGuire,
Glencorse Barracks,
Milton Bridge, Penicuik,
Midlothian, Scotland.
- Lincoln Pathfinders Free Fall Club**
Mr. I. G. Miller,
14 Cope Road, Ashby,
Scunthorpe, Lincs.
- Royal Engineers Free Fall Club**
9 Independent Sqn. R.E.,
Rhine Barracks,
Aldershot, Hants.
Captain A. Black, R.E.,
(at club address).
Tel: 0252-14431 Ext 2408
- Royal Corps of Transport Parachute Club**
Sgt. G. P. Raine,
Depot Regt. RCT, Buller Barracks,
Aldershot, Hants.
- 95 Cdo FOU (The Buccaneers F/F Team)**
Royal artillery,
A.T.U.R.M.,
Poole, Dorset.
Capt. J. M. Patrick, RA,
(at club address)
Tel: Poole 77311 Ext. 274.

THE UNION JACK IN SOUTH AMERICA

It all started when we had a letter from Tomas Beriolo in Buenos Aires asking us if there was a chance that we would be able to go to the 2nd Pan American Championships in Jujuy, Argentina. Not a chance! . . . or so we first thought. Perhaps . . . if I could get a sponsor . . . wouldn't it be great to go to Argentina . . . perhaps . . . perhaps.

I visited the Public Relations officer at P & O The British Cruise Line which has its headquarters here in San Francisco and asked if he would be interested in sponsoring the British entry to the Pan American Championships in exchange for whatever press coverage we could stir up. The next day he gave me the answer—yes. Talk about excitement! I had already written to the BPA Council through John Meacock and asked if I could get their permission to represent Great Britain and since everyone thought it would be a good idea I was given the “go ahead”.

There followed an intensive four weeks of weekend training and the odd jump during the week whenever possible. I concentrated mostly on style, knowing that style is what pulls one through on the overall slots providing that one's accuracy is reasonably consistent. I had a lot of difficulty getting critiques on my style because temperatures were rising for the relative workers who had a very important meet to face a few days after we left, and nobody had the time or inclination to watch a Cessna on jump run and time the little body that came out doing turns and loops. It was understandable—I was doing my thing and they were doing theirs. My training was interrupted one day when three of us from Northern California flew to Elsinore to make a 16-girl star attempt. There were 17 girls there, all very capable of making big stars. We got a 12-girl star which was, of course, still very satisfying. That was two weeks before Ned and I left for the big trip.

The P & O Cruise Line ship “The Spirit of London” was based in Los Angeles and was making 10 and 11 day cruises to Mexico and back. Since Los Angeles has a huge population, most of the press coverage was to be in that area. We flew down to Los Angeles and the P & O people arranged a big fancy press conference at the Beverly Hilton. Only one person came! Somehow we knew we weren't very important. Well, things improved and a few radio stations reported on us and most of the people in the news media seemed to be very interested in the fact that we planned to jump into the ocean beside the ship as it left the harbour on its way to Mexico.

This jump turned out to be the most miserable jump either of us had ever made. We took our luggage and put it in our cabin on the ship at about midday and then went to the airport with our parachutes, our swim suits, and our fingers crossed. If for any reason we had not been able to make the jump, we would have been in a very awkward position—our passports, travellers cheques, clothes, etc. were all on the ship, by now in mid-harbour and heading out towards the ocean. It was chilly on the ground so we knew we were going to be cold in the aircraft without the door on. The pilot had never flown jumpers before but this did not seem to be a problem because he listened carefully to instructions and carried them out without a hitch. We were in the air for half an hour before we got the flashing signal from the ship indicating that we could jump as soon as possible. The ship looked just beautiful from the air and the two small pilot boats which were to pick us out of the ocean looked like ugly ants crawling about the sea north



Our Heroine ready to go . . .

of the ship. Previously we had briefed the boat drivers about the safety procedures of picking us up; to approach us up-current so that the propellers would not get caught in the parachutes, to get to us as soon as possible and so on. Ned spotted and lit the smoke bomb we had attached to the step of the aircraft. Bang . . . it ignited and we climbed out onto the step, lit our hand-held smokes and off we went. We held the smokes in our right hands and linked up with our left hands, tucked in one leg and started a spin. Apparently it looked pretty good from the ship because the two smokes left spiralling trails down through the sky. We separated and Ned opened his parachute almost right away. It didn't look low enough to me so I went down a bit and then pulled. I should have gone even lower because the wind was a brisk 25 knots and the spot a little short! The boats were north of the ship and I could tell we were going to land south of the ship. Horrors—the pilot boats were motoring north! The next few important moments were fully occupied with opening snaps, activating my floatation gear and generally getting ready to land in the water. Since I was facing into the wind

the entire jump, I didn't have to do any last minute toggle work! Splash—I was in the water and Ned had already landed not far away. It seemed to take an age for the pilot boats to get to us, the water was very cold and I spent the whole time making sure that my lines didn't get tangled around my legs. I was surprised that in such a strong wind the parachute fell right on top of me and it took a couple of minutes to get out of the way. If I had not had efficient floatation gear it would have been very difficult to push up on the parachute in order to get enough air and then follow the panel down to the skirt. Also, hitting the water is quite a thermal shock for one's body! The boat was coming towards me and I could see it from time to time when the ocean swell had me on an up-wave. Once I was safely in the boat and could see Ned safely in the other boat we started across the water towards the ship, a brandy, and lots of hot fluffy towels. At the time it was miserable but it is fun to recollect the jump now that it is three months gone.

I am going to skip over the intervening time and merely say that the food on the ship was so good that we both put on weight, and if it hadn't been for the exercise we had washing and drying our equipment, we might never have disembarked in Puerto Vallarta in order to fly to Mexico City where we caught another plane to Buenos Aires.

Unfortunately, the flight we were supposed to catch to Jujuy had been cancelled and so we were forced to spend the night in Buenos Aires and catch another plane the following afternoon. The President of the local skydiving club arranged for a hotel room for us, refused to let us pay for it and then took us out for a fabulous meal and would not allow us to pay for that too. The following day we were taken to the airport and we boarded the plane for Jujuy together with Miro, an old skydiving friend from Brazil, who we had found wandering around the airport.

We landed at the international airport near Jujuy and were informed that the airport where the championships were being held was 10 minutes flight away and we would be flown there in a Cessna 206. Sure enough, a Cessna 206 flew in for Ned, Miro and me and a Dakota flew in to get our luggage! The pilot of the 206 flew us around the town and pointed out the little hotel where we would be staying. It really wasn't little, it just looked that way from the air. We landed at the airport and a delegation of people were there to meet us and show us around. First of all we were handed a large package of information which included general information on the area, a programme of events, a list of the competitors, meal tickets, and a list of the organizers for the different aspects of the championships.

We were shown the hangar which had been converted into a restaurant for the duration of the championships; we were shown the bar with its soft, comfortable seats, the scoring section, the well stocked hospital room next door, the manifest area and finally the control tower. From this high vantage point the Meet Director was able to control the entire operation. He had a view of the tents, the target, the aircraft, the manifest—everywhere. Also in the control tower were the radio operators, the announcer, the two interpreters, and the general office personnel who prepared the lists of results each day, mailed our mail and did any small shopping that we needed. Next, Ned and I were taken to the tents where some team members from other countries were standing around. The nearest tent to the manifest area was the Venezuelan Team tent and since we had requested that a tent should not be specially erected for us, the Venezuelan Team grabbed our bags and put them in their tent. These were old friends of ours.

It was now late in the day and they had closed down the jumping and everyone was making their way to the buses

to go back to the hotel. There were twice as many buses as was necessary and so we were at the hotel in no time and getting unpacked. Dinner, we were told, would be ready at 9.30 p.m. Our room was just delightful. There was an ancient old bed with a huge dip in the middle and we didn't think that we would be able to sleep on it very well. We were wrong—we were usually so tired by the time we got to bed that we didn't even remember getting into bed! And heaven knows, we didn't want to leave it when 5.30 came each morning. The view from our bedroom was magnificent. We could see right across the whole valley down onto the little town of Jujuy below us. We had our own bathroom—complete with bath, shower, toilet and bidet!

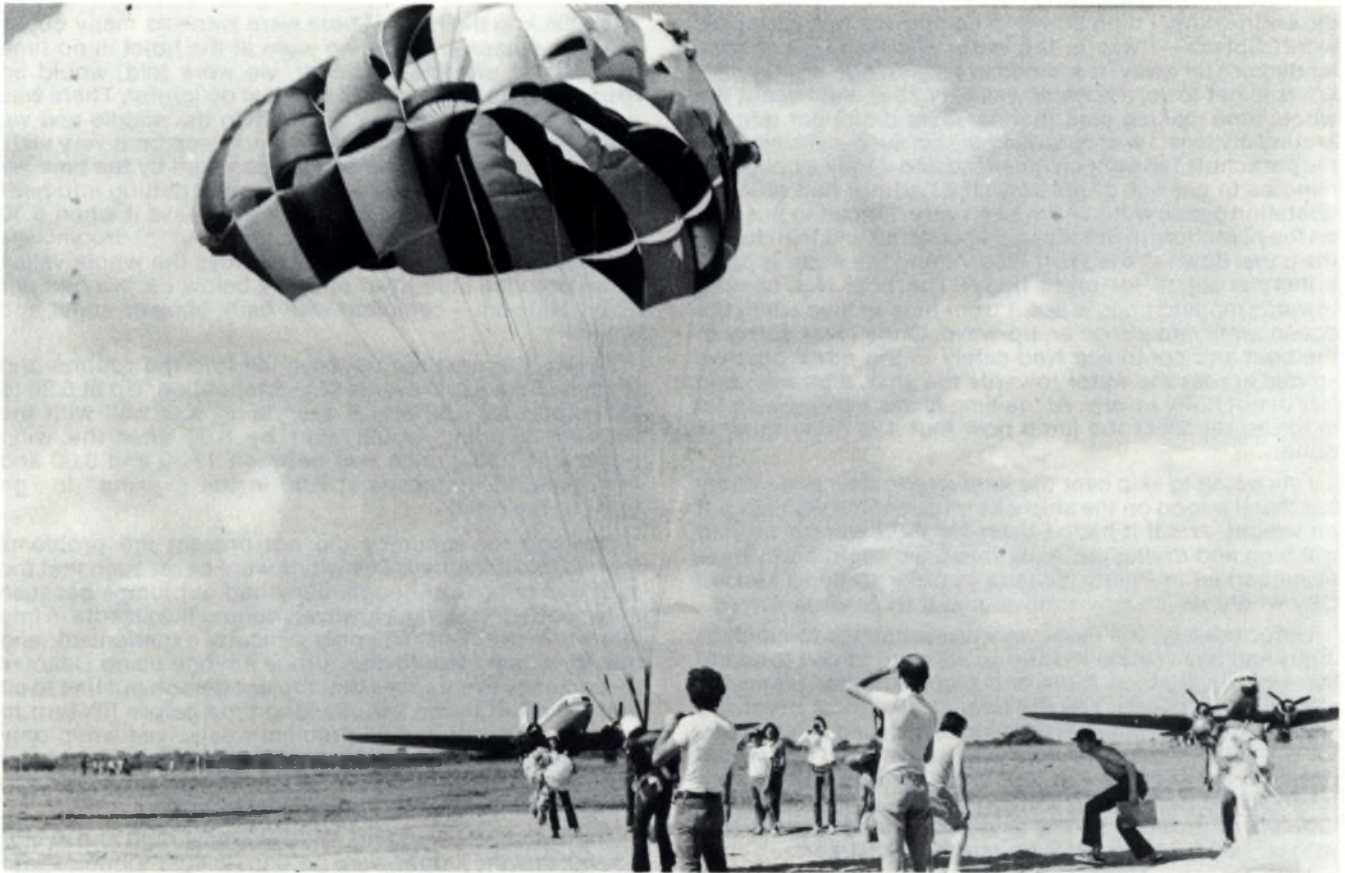
During the next ten days we fell into the routine and rhythm of the usual events of a competition. Up at 5.30 to the airport by 6.30 and if everything was well with the weather, jumping would start by 8.00 after the wind dummy at 7.30. Lunch was between 12.30 and 3.00 and then back to the buses at 7.30 in the evening to go back to the hotel.

Spotting for accuracy did not present the problems that we had imagined. The winds were never such that the spot was critical, although many had out jumps because they spotted too long. However, getting the Dakota in line was not a problem. The only difficulty experienced, and one for which I would discourage anyone using Dakotas for accuracy events, was that the last person out had to sit in the aircraft for an awfully long time before his turn to jump came around. This problem was solved when only 10 people at a time were put in the aircraft and when the aircraft did not leave the ground until the sixth or seventh person had jumped from the other aircraft.

The standard of judging was extremely high and everyone felt that the judges were getting on their tummies with good reason. I heard only one complaint and the competitor was pacified with a baby's bottle belonging to the Assistant Chief Judge! The pea gravel was not the softest I have known, but was pretty good by general standards. Woe betide anyone landing out—it was hard out there. Six holes had been placed in the ground in which the windsock could be anchored to the best advantage of the jumpers, and the judges were very conscientious about moving the windsock whenever necessary. Spectators were kept over 300 yards away and never presented a problem so far as concentration was concerned. The wind seldom exceeded 8 miles an hour and for the most part were below three or four miles an hour. However, wind changes were frequent and adjustments were constantly necessary. Only twice during the whole ten days was it impossible to jump because of high winds. In fact, conditions were about ideal for making all sorts of dead centres.

I lost my parachute packer, Ned, the first day when he was asked if he would like to compete in a non-competitor's event. Of course he did and that was about the last I saw of him except in the early morning and the late evening. We almost got to the point of asking each other "Did you have a nice day at the dropzone, dear?"

When it wasn't your turn to jump, you spent the time trying to get a few moments of sleep, trying to keep cool or warm (depending on the time of day), trying to pick up hints about the conditions or just plain watching other competitors in the hopes that one might learn something from them. I was very fortunate in that I was able to get a jump-by-jump critique from Bob McDermott of the U.S. Army Golden Knights. He would make special trips out to the target to watch my jumps and then he would go over each move with me. The Golden Knights gave seminars to the competitors and were very anxious to help in any



The DZ and the Jump Ships (D-C 3's)

way possible. They seemed keen to help on every occasion and in the evenings were seen making gallant efforts to communicate with other teams.

The ambulance was required only once to take a Peruvian Team Member to hospital after he had broken five ribs on landing. It had been one of those full breaks, up, charge, swing, down left toggle, down right toggle, charge, close your eyes, smash, type jumps. He was up and smiling three days later but unfortunately out of the championships. The full-time doctor was a jumper and would make the occasional wind-dummy jump in the mornings. We both had a cold during the competition and everyone had the usual tummy upsets that go together with parachuting championships. We were all well looked after. In the tents we had fresh water, lemon juice, toilet paper and towels—each item was well used and replenished when necessary. Lunches were a four-course affair and generally one could not finish everything for fear of going fast asleep afterwards. We found the food delicious—it was not uncommon to have steak for lunch with a salad, soup beforehand and some sort of cake or fruit for dessert all washed down with your choice of Coke, 7-Up or Fizzy Orange. Not bad.

Since there were not four complete women's teams, the championships for the Pan American Women's Title were not held—instead we were just competing for the medals. One of the most impressive teams in the Men's Championships was the team from Peru. Jumping is free in Peru and sponsored by the Military there. There had been great competition to get onto that team. The team from Brazil was a scratch team put together at the last moment by anyone who could afford to go to the championships. They were, however, an excellent team.

Unfortunately the only non-cloudy day was the day off. If anyone had been able to forecast that this was the only clear day to come, then I know we would have stayed at the drop zone and got some style jumps off. Not one single style jump was made during the entire championships. This was very upsetting because I had been told that the fastest time any of the other girls had ever turned was over two seconds slower than what I had been doing in practice, not that that is so good!

On the day off we were taken in buses to a sugar cane factory where they also had a paper mill using the waste fibres from the sugar factory. We spent an interesting morning being shown the various processes and then we were taken to the owner's mansion not far away from the factory. This place had to be seen to be believed. We entered the grounds through a long avenue of trees and then through an opening through very dense bamboo. The buses all stopped in a little courtyard and we were shown onto an immaculate lawn which was spread with tables of fresh orange and lemon juice, fresh grapefruit juice and bottles and bottles of red, white and rose wine. Everyone drank the fruit juices to quench their thirsts and then started on the wine. We were all seated at long tables and they began to bring the food. "They" were mysterious people who appeared from behind bushes, bearing huge trays of salads, vegetables and then long skewers of barbecued meats. There were barbecued, spicy sausages, barbecued lamb, pork or beef; you just took off what you wanted and the skewer was taken on to the next person. More salad, meat and fruit later, everyone began to feel entirely satiated and half-full bottles of wine were left on the tables. Everyone lounged about on the grass for a while and we listened to naughty stories told in Spanish.



Plenty of room on the way up

We couldn't understand the stories but we laughed anyway. Then it was time to go home.

Towards the end of the championships things began to slow down and everyone was sad at the realization that the style event would not be completed, even if started. Slowly we began to realize that all our new friends would be going their own way shortly and it would be a long time, if ever, before we would see them again. On the last day they had a ceremony at the drop zone to present medals. The United States won just about everything and I think everyone realized their complete superiority. It was a proud moment for me to step up on the block and accept the silver medal. It was proud because the Union Jack was flying alongside all the other flags and somehow that was very, very important.

After the presentation of medals we all went back to the hotel to prepare for the farewell dinner. After a quick shower and change we were down in the lobby waiting to go into dinner, chatting with the members of the Panamanian Team when one of the organizers came up and asked me to follow him. I was led into a room where the Director General of Argentine Sports was waiting. He gave quite a long speech of which I was able to understand very little, but it was later explained that he had spoken to each team and expressed the pride of Argentina that we parachutists, representatives of our countries, should have thought it proper to come to Argentina to compete in the true fellowship of sport parachuting. His emotion was very evident and it was a solemn occasion. After his speech he smiled and presented me with the Argentine Federation of Sports' medal and indicated that this was a great honour. His emotion was quite infectious and I had to blink back the tears. A little subdued by this event, I

joined Ned and we went in to dinner.

The dinner was merely another delicious experience. The organizers made a few short speeches, presented beautiful bouquets of flowers to the women competitors, presented a marble plaque to each team and then said "On with the show!" The show was a half hour of folk ballet by a local dance company and they were very entertaining and colourful. After the show was over and the dinner finished, the tables were cleared to one side and out came the guitars and everyone started singing and dancing. Exhausted we went to bed at about 1.00 in the morning, knowing that we would have to get up at 6.00 to catch the plane back to Buenos Aires.

You may think that the excitement was over. Not at all. Ned and I were very fortunate in that we were able to get a free flight in the Air Force Dakota. We took off from Jujuy at about 8.30 and were scheduled to make one stop at a place called Cordoba which is half way between Jujuy and Buenos Aires. The flight was very smooth and I slept most of the way, until we started our descent to the civilian airport at Cordoba. When we were about 20 feet above the ground the Dakota assumed full power again and we never touched down. To our horror, the flight engineer came back into the passenger cabin and started to tighten and check our safety belts! In very broken Spanish we asked what was wrong.

He mumbled something about "wheels" and "down" and "nada" (we knew this word meant "nothing"). Crumbs. Some day *you* should try to tell a frightened man, who speaks no English, who thinks you are crazy anyway, that you want to jump out of the plane. Forget it and just sit there. We flew to a military airfield not far away and landed without a hitch. Apparently the light indicator for

the wheel lock had not been working but the wheels were in fact locked. Hours later, safe and sound in Buenos Aires, we settled down for three days of glorious sight seeing and three meals a day of the most delicious food we have ever tasted. Several times we bumped into other parachutists who were wandering about doing the same things that we were.

One afternoon we went jumping at the local drop zone just outside Buenos Aires and had a very pleasant time while everyone could not do enough to help us. We each made a jump and then retired to the club house to drink the local wine with our new-found friends.

After leaving Buenos Aires we stopped in sleepy Montevideo in Uruguay for a couple of days and then flew on to Sao Paulo in Brazil. We stopped there because we have a friend who I met at the 1st Pan American Championships in Mexico. My friend, Marylene Michael, met us at the airport and took us to a fashionable hotel in the central square of Sao Paulo where we were to spend the night. For the entire following week she would not allow us to pay for anything. As far as she was concerned we were her guests and that meant we could not pay even for the postcards we wanted to send home! Marylene and a close friend, Carlos, drove us to their club drop zone that Saturday and Ned made a jump with Carlos and another club member, and again we retired to the local pub for a large dinner and more vino.

Having spent a week with Marylene and Carlos in Sao Paulo, we left for a couple of days in Rio de Janeiro and then we had to fly back home and back to work.

This ended our South American sojourn. You must understand how difficult it is to give a suitable ending to a very personal story such as ours. Let it be sufficient to merely state that we felt we had returned from an



experience of a lifetime and the honour and enjoyment had been all ours.

SHEILA LUKER

As you may have read in the last issue of the magazine, Sheila won the Silver Medal in the Ladies Event having been beaten by 2cms over 10 jumps — *Ed.*

THIRD ANNUAL CHARLES WELLS ACCURACY MEET

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22nd/23rd SEPTEMBER 1973

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Dennis Hodge closely followed from the door of the Compton Abbas Cessna 180 by Mike Beynon.

photo Eddie McBride

LOST! STOLEN! or STRAYED!

ONE SET OF TELEMETERS, Serial 23075

These telemeters disappeared from the premises of the Rhine Army Parachute Association, Bad Lippspringe, during the early part of August.

RAPA will be grateful to anyone who can provide information which may lead to their recovery.

“Streamer run at Two Grand and then go for the Gravy”

It was only when I became a Jump Pilot that my outlook on life took a turn for the worse. Up till then I'd been a carefree, clean living full time instructor at Yorkshire Aeroplane Club.

What started the rot was the arrival of a smart young Army officer. Clean shaven, short haircut—the very model of a modern Major General. When I look at him now, I wonder what event in his murky past turned him into what he is today. The arrival of Charles Shea-Simonds into my normally peaceful life was the start of the trouble.

The life of the newest joined instructor tends to be a bit dull. Amending the Air Pilot, NOTAMs, filling the coffee machine and trying to knock some sense into the less able is his role in life. So, seeking for further amusement I volunteered to be registered as a Jump Pilot. I now know why this offer was accepted with such enthusiasm.

The first lift was a real let down. Releasing the brakes and opening the throttle produced no result at all. Which wasn't surprising because the chock was still under the nose wheel.

I could write a book on the antics of jumpers. Once they disappear into their jump suits and hats, they think that I don't know who's which—and I don't.

I know which was Dick Reiter—once he's gone—because he usually pulls his smoke inside the aircraft. It was Dick who produced the title for this little gem of a literary masterpiece as those were his instructions for the first run I did for him. Mind you, he is of American origin and is therefore allowed to be a bit odd.

I do like the blokes who lean back against the control column. It makes the flying so much more interesting.

The other thing I enjoy, is doing a Gala with Frank Peel spotting. I know where I'm going and so does he. We did once get the two points to within twenty miles of each other and it wasn't our fault that there were three Galas on in the same area on the same day. It's always a bit disconcerting to the organisers to have three pairs of size thir-

teens arriving from aloft when the Mayoress is judging the biggest marrow.

I'm sure that all Jump Pilots who do it regularly enjoy being associated with the sport. If the BPA had a section for Jump Pilots we'd be really proud of ourselves. What about us having a log book which jumpers we've never flown with before could have a look at. After all you have a right to know our experience in just the same way that we have an interest in yours.

I do wish that someone would invent a Father Christmas beard that didn't disintegrate in flight. It also makes me shudder for my licence when a Father Christmas jump is aborted and the boss decides to return the uniform to the organisers. I know that it upsets the kids to see a completely empty pair of red trousers fluttering down but it is bad for relations with the Police to send it out neatly repacked in a large cardboard box.

I think that the most memorable drop was one of Charlie's into Owlerton Stadium in Sheffield. Surrounded by the Manchester-Sheffield electric railway, factories, cooling towers and power cables of such fantastic voltage that the compass becomes erratic fifty miles away. The sort of pylons that have a notice on them saying "To Touch These Wires Is Instant Death". There's also an odd footnote that says "Anybody Found Doing So Will Be Prosecuted".

Just a passing comment about streamers. Why we have to have red streamers going down into a red-roofed housing estate I don't know. I like the black and purple ones at dusk too.

I've made many good friends since I started flying jump ships. I think that you are all stark raving mad for leaving a perfectly serviceable aircraft—even with me flying it. But there's a real feeling of achievement in carrying out a tidy drop and seeing ones former passengers arrive in untidy multi-coloured heaps, approximately in the right parish.

JOHN FENTON.

A Little Experience goes a Long Way, or, How to go a Long Way for a Little Experience

I made my first descent on November 23, 1969, at Kingsfield Airstrip. Cyprus, with the CCSPC, during my tour out there as an RAF photographer, so I was pleased to find myself back in Cyprus during the third anniversary of that jump, last November.

Although 'on business' I'd taken along my boots, helmet etc. 'just in case'. The day after I arrived, I set out for the Centre. That was an adventure all of its own, starting in a Nicosia taxi, and ending in a Canadian U.N. jeep. Which was the most dangerous I couldn't really say, but eventually I was walking up the runway at Kingsfield, past the old familiar hangar, to find the action.

Tony Dixon, busy packing, greeted me as though it was one of those weekends two years ago, when the Akrotiri crowd, "Bandits", and "Flamingoes" and others would turn up in a 32-seater coach. All eight of us!

Then it was time for the double-take and questions like what was I doing there, which I used to ask myself, and did I want to jump, which I also used to ask myself. Bob Card appeared, and after much form filling and money paying, I joined the Club.

Then came the fateful decision. Presented with two P.Cs, I chose one and fitted it. Soon we were off to 7,000 ft. Bob Card departed at 4,200 ft. on a Plane, and we carried on up. The intention was to perform some relative, but the less said about that the better, as far as my performance went. I was allowed to spot, and it was nice to see the area from the sky again. Even the spot was familiar, over the water tanks at the end of the strip.

Out we went, and 'performed'. After doing my own thing of PP&Hing, I arrived at 2,200 ft and pulled the ring. The 'opening shock' which followed reminded me of a friend's PTCH-8, which used to open very hard indeed. I became aware that Something Was Wrong! Unfortunately I couldn't see upwards as the risers had crossed behind my head. I tore my goggles down and saw a mess of flapping nylon where a P.C. ought to have been. I then noticed that there was still a howling gale blowing, and that I had just started a slow right turn. In complete disbelief I went into the cutaway drill, which I only got 50% for as I didn't get my legs out in front. I remember thinking as I pulled the reserve handle, "I'm safe", which came true 1.5 secs later, as a beautiful Protector appeared above me.



John Williams gets a grip of Sally Cain — photo Lou Johnson

I was a little too excited to do much after that, except avoid a hole in the ground, and take a gentle back landing, not far from a group of shepherds, who thought this was great. The P.C. meantime had landed not far away in a flock of sheep. The shepherd had just gathered them all together again when Tony, and Jim Douglas ran up. The shepherd had just gathered them all together yet again when I ran up. The shepherd gathered the flock once again, and went away with a crinkled grin!

Back at base we found that the sleeve had jammed just above the stabilisers, but for no apparent reason. Jim Douglas was concerned as he'd packed it, but he also packed the Protector, so I'm not complaining. Cheers Jim.

I endeavoured to 'settle the argument' with the P.C. the next weekend, but was beaten by the light and the wind, but I'll get it yet!

I hear you ask what the message is, after all that story, so here it is: Although the cutaway was successful, and fairly clean, even though my legs were still loose, it was slow. Tony Dixon drove it home in one comment he made to me after the heart rate slowed down again. It was Tony who awarded me my G.P. 18 months earlier on my last jump in Cyprus, and he came within a few seconds of seeing my Last Jump, in Cyprus. I will never forget the sincerity that relief lent him, when he said simply, "You took a long time."

I travelled 2,500 miles to hear that, and believe me, that lesson is staying learnt.

JOHN NICKOLLS

THE BIG UMBRELLA by John Lucas
(published by Elm Tree Books—price £2.40)

If you have read *Alone in the Sky*, *Skydiving*, *Parachuting and Skydiving* or *Parachutes and Parachuting*, then *The Big Umbrella*, (sub-titled 'the history of the parachute from Da Vinci to Apollo'), is unlikely to add very much to what you already know about parachuting's romantic development. It is, however, very readable and the stories of the early pioneers' successes and failures are light-heartedly recorded. The book is completely untechnical and from this point of view the sub-title is misleading—it would have been more correct to have called it 'the history of parachuting...'—so do not expect to be enlightened about the differences between Cloud, Paraplane and Sled, or how the sleeve came to be introduced into sport parachuting; it is basically entertaining rather than educational.

Sport parachuting is only sketched out in the 7 pages, (of the book's 159), devoted to it. I took exception to the Author's remark: 'Much of parachuting's progress as a sport has been due to commercial patronage'; for as we know its progress as a sport is due almost entirely to the unflagging enthusiasm of its participants, coupled with their rapidly diminishing bank accounts! As a sport parachutist you may, therefore, be disappointed in this chapter; but if you know nothing of parachuting's fascinating evolution then John Lucas' book covers it well.

In the dust jacket blurb about the Author it is admitted that he has: 'never, to his regret, had occasion to make a parachute jump.'—Any club want a new student?

G.C.P. S-S.

**MINUTES OF THE SAFETY AND TRAINING COMMITTEE
OF THE BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
HELD AT LEEDS/BRADFORD AIRPORT
ON THE 23rd MARCH 1973**

PRESENT

J. Crocker—Chairman
C. Shea-Simonds—Y.A.C.S.P.W.
A. Cooper—Manchester Sport Parachute Club
B. Jerstice—North Lancs Parachute Club
D. Prince—North West Parachute Club
B. Burn—Sport Parachute Centre
B. Acraman—R.S.A.
M. Reed—Yorkshire Parachute Club

IN ATTENDANCE

P. Cavanagh, B. Parry

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Messrs. St. John, Sherman, Meacock, Peacock, Martin, Boot, O'Brien.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by Mr. Shea-Simonds and seconded by Mr. Jerstice that the previous minutes be accepted. Carried unanimously.

Instructors Renewals

Messrs. B. Acraman and G. Martin Advanced Instructor ratings were renewed. It was unanimously agreed by the Committee that Messrs. T. Dixon and P. Cavanagh be upgraded from Instructors to Advanced Instructors.

Incident Reports

A report from Mr. Mal Reed was read to the meeting. This concerned a Student who activated his reserve parachute dangerously low to the ground. There appeared to be some confusion concerning the permanent grounding of a parachutist by an Instructor. The recommended procedure is as follows :

"The Instructor must ask the Parachutist concerned to hand over his log book, medical certificate, B.P.A. membership form, and general permit (if any). The Instructor must make a full report to the S.T.C. and submit the parachutists' personal documentation itemised above. The Instructor must inform the parachutist of his recommendation for permanent grounding and advise him that the matter will be brought before the S.T.C. and that the parachutist concerned will be entitled to attend if he so wishes. The matter will then be brought before a full S.T.C. meeting and if the parachutist concerned is permanently grounded the appropriate entry will be made in his log book and his personal documents returned to the Secretary General.

If the recommendation for permanent grounding is not ratified by the S.T.C. the parachutist's personal documents will be returned to him".

The above is a guide to the course to be adopted where a recommendation for permanent grounding is being made, but is not necessary where a parachutist is being grounded for a short period of time for disciplinary reasons by his Club Chief Instructor.

An incident report was submitted by the Red Devils and was read to the meeting.

The Chairman regretted to inform the meeting of a fatal accident at the Shotteswell drop zone on the 18th March 1973. A Board of Enquiry had been convened to investigate the fatality and would be reporting as soon as possible.

FOR SALE

Sage Green EFA pack and harness with US
Capewells phone Miss Lynn Baines 01-228-0634.

Training Aids

Mr. Cooper produced the amended and new training aids in Artwork form prepared by Mr. Hinson.

Mr. Cooper specifically asked that it be recorded in the minutes that Mr. Hinson had not yet received an official order form.

It was agreed that quotes for the cost of printing ought to be obtained as quickly as possible and the printers ought to be asked to bear in mind that a laminated finish was required.

The Committee unanimously agreed that Mr. Hinson had done a first class job which would be of considerable assistance to the Association and its members.

Letter from Sport Parachute Centre

A letter was read from the Sport Parachute Centre requesting permission to train and despatch a blind student. The matter was discussed at length and it was unanimously agreed that permission could not be granted.

Advanced Instructors Course

Mr. Boot had specifically asked for this item to be put on the Agenda but he was not present at the meeting. The matter would be adjourned to the next meeting.

A number of the Committee Members pointed out that they felt that the present system of allowing all Advanced Instructors to examine new Instructors was really inadequate and possibly a system of panel examiners ought to be considered again. It was agreed that this matter would be discussed at the next meeting and so enable people to consider the matter carefully beforehand.

Potential Instructors Qualifications

Letters from Messrs. Forsdyke and Meacock were read to the meeting.

The main points which seemed to arise were :

1. Whether it was necessary to make a prospective Potential Instructor wait until he had been in the sport two years before being allowed to go on a potential Instructors Course and—
2. Whether the minimum number of jumps for a Potential Instructor ought to be increased from 100 to D Licence.

It was felt that these were important matters and they would be adjourned to the next meeting in order to enable people to consider them carefully.

Any Other Business

Mr. Acraman requested to know why the Instructors Course at the Sport Parachute Centre had been concluded in four days when the minimum laid down requirement was five days.

Mr. Acraman raised the following points:

1. In his opinion the lesson plans for student training were inadequate and he would submit his own lesson plans for discussion at the next meeting.
2. Main harnesses could be jumped with only a single seat strapped providing it was made by a recognised manufacturer or rigger. Confirmed.
3. A reserve hook was produced which had been smashed on opening of the reserve whilst attached to V rings on a main harness.
4. Mr. Acraman commented that already the five packing checks referred to in the previous minutes was not being complied with. Chief Instructors are reminded of their obligations in this respect.
5. It was suggested that Instructors sign lesson cards in students log books. Mr. Acraman would produce a specimen lesson card for the next meeting.



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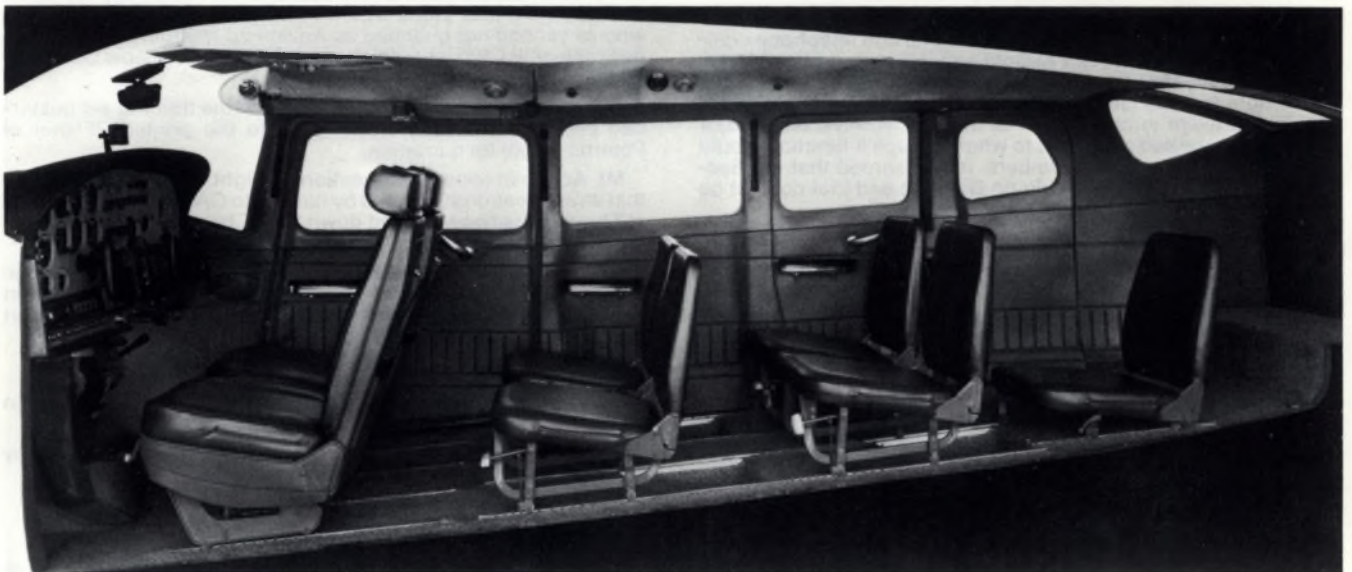
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BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY 26th APRIL 1973
ARTILLERY MANSIONS, 75 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON SW1 0HW

PRESENT

L. N. E. St. John—Chairman
G. C. P. Shea-Simonds
Major B. S. Schofield
P. W. Sherman
A. J. Unwin
A. J. N. Cole
R. S. Acraman
D. Waterman
J. T. Crocker

IN ATTENDANCE

Sqn. Ldr. W. Paul—Sec-Gen BPA
Flt. Sgt. D. Peacock—RAFSPA
C. Rumney (Observing)

APOLOGIES

W. J. Meacock
J. L. Thomas
R. O'Brien
W. G. Boot
Wg. Cdr. G. F. Turnbull

Item 34

PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

A proposal by J. T. Crocker and seconded by G. C. P. Shea-Simonds that the Minutes of the Council Meeting of 14th March be accepted was unanimously agreed.

Matters Arising

a. **'Sport Parachutist'** (Item 24a). The Editor, Mr. Shea-Simonds, reported that it would be mid-May before the next issue of the magazine would be ready—this was due to the pressure of work on the printers because of the introduction of VAT. Every effort would be made to get back to the bi-monthly issue dates.

b. **Article for 'Sport and Recreation'** (Item 24b). The Sec-Gen reported that the article which had been handed over by Mr. Waterman would have to be brought up to date before being submitted.

c. **25th Anniversary of Sport Parachuting.** (Item 24c). The Sec-Gen reported that he now had the name and telephone number of the owner of Denham Airfield and understood from BLAC that the owner, Mrs. Beatrice Paul, was in fact the best contact from whom to ascertain if in fact Denham was a suitable venue for a social event in celebration of the 25th Anniversary. Major Schofield expressed doubts as to whether such a function would attract the support of the members. It was agreed that the Sec-Gen continue with his checking on Denham and that contact be established with 'Dumbo' Willans.

d. **Loan to Flight One Ltd.** (Item 24e). The Sec-Gen confirmed that the second £1,000 had been paid over to Flight One Ltd. Mr. Crocker reported that Flight One Ltd. would pay the money back by the scheduled date or if preferred the money could be used to offset jump bills. The second method may be advantageous to BPA since the £2,000 could be looked on as payment in advance not subject to VAT. It was agreed that the matter be discussed with Flight One Ltd.

e. **National Championships** (Item 24g): Mr. Sherman pointed out that the rule concerning visiting teams was worded in such a way as to prevent Bernie Dierker jumping with the Old Warden Team i.e. that members of visiting teams should be of the same nationality. It was agreed that the wording of the rule be amended.

f. **Club List.** (item 25). The Sec-Gen had to report that as yet he had been unable to prepare the acquired draft letter but that this would be done as soon as possible.

g. **BPA Insurance.** (Item 26). The Sec-Gen reported that the BPA Third Party Public Liability Insurance had been transferred to another Broker and that because of this transfer it had not been possible to send each club a copy of the policy as had been agreed. The new policy was in fact not yet to hand—only a cover note was available at this time. The new policy covered all the liabilities of the previous policy but had the added advantage that the cover was World Wide without exception whereas the previous excluded Canada and America. Copies of the cover note had been produced and these would be sent to all clubs and teams. The cost of the new policy was a deposit premium in advance amounting to £750, to be adjusted at the end of the year according to membership strength. The financial gain would only be felt once we had every member round to the common renewal date and then the cost should be halved. Mr. Meacock had in fact established the contact with the new Broker and for this the meeting approved a vote of thanks. On the matter of Professional Negligence, the new Broker was investigating this but didn't hold out much hope of being able to come below the existing premium because it was a very limited market. A quotation was awaited.

h. **Advertising.** (Item 33). The meeting agreed to a proposal by Mr. Sherman seconded by Mr. Shea-Simonds that a sum of £250 be set aside as the advertising budget for the current financial year. Mr. Waterman would produce ideas for advertising taking into account the possible use of a standard BPA Block which if wanted could be used by clubs.

Item 35

SAFETY AND TRAINING COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Crocker, Chairman of STC reported on the meeting of 23rd March:

a. **Renewal of Instructor Ratings.** There had been a tightening up in renewal of Instructor Ratings and the upgrading to Advanced Instructor—specific evidence of suitability was now called for and this seems to have met with approval. Mr. St. John raised the matter of CCI's and the requirement for them to be Advanced Instructors—he pointed out that in his case he still required to complete a night jump before he could be upgraded. Mr. Crocker stated that the rule could not be rigidly applied and it was accepted that clubs would continue to operate with CCI's who as yet had not qualified as Advanced Instructors but it was desirable that CCI's should attempt to acquire the now laid down qualifications.

b. **Training Aids.** The final art work for the training aid posters had been completed and had gone to the printers (Fisher of Peterborough) for quotation.

Mr. Acraman raised the question of Night Jumps and reported that an application submitted by himself to CAA to do night jumps at Thruxton had been turned down. The Chairman of STC agreed to take the matter up with Southern Division.

Mr. Unwin asked if there was anything to report on the fatal accident at Shotteswell and the Chairman replied that the report was only just to hand—it was hoped to make the necessary report at the next STC Meeting.

Item 36

APPLICATION FOR AFFILIATION—95 CDO FOU (Captain J. M. Patrick).

The application proposed by J. T. Crocker and seconded by G. C. P. Shea-Simonds was approved.

Item 37

PARACHUTE-SKI WORLD CUP—1974.

Notification of this event had been received from the Aero Club of Austria—it is to be held in the Province of Styria from 3rd to 10th March, 1974. Application for one team of three must reach the

Aero Club of Austria before 1st October, 1973. It was agreed that details be published in 'Sport Parachutist'.

Item 38

DISPLAY TEAMS

The Sec-Gen reported that he now had a list of 26 known Parachute Display Teams and suggested that this list be published in the Journal from time to time. The list was useful from his point of view when answering enquiries about teams, additionally it could help to avoid duplication of titles. It was agreed that the Editor of the magazine invite teams to register with the BPA Office and that the list be published from time to time.

Item 39

NEW JUMP SUIT BADGE

The Sec-Gen presented the manufacturer's sample of the new jump suit badge and asked the meeting for a decision on the choice of colour. Two colours had been produced for the side arrows of the design, one gold and the other orange. The meeting

agreed on the orange and also agreed that the badge be sent to John Partington-Smith, the designer, for his observations on the production of the design.

Item 40

BRITISH TEAM COACH— WORLD CUP RELATIVE MEET— 1973

The Chairman, having asked non-Council members to leave the meeting, informed Council members of reports he had received concerning Mr. P. Gruber who, at the Council meeting of 1st February, had been appointed to act as the British Team Coach for the 1973 World Cup Relative Meet. The meeting having duly considered the information received, it was proposed by Mr. John Cole and seconded by Major Schofield and agreed by 6 votes to Nil (with three abstentions, Messrs. Crocker, Waterman and Unwin) that the decision of 1st February to appoint Mr. Gruber as British Team Coach be rescinded and that a letter be sent to him informing him of the Council's decision. The Sec-Gen to prepare a letter for the Chairman's approval.

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEETING THURSDAY, 24th MAY, 1973 ROYAL AIR FORCE, WESTON ON THE GREEN

PRESENT

L. N. E. St. John—*Chairman*
G. C. P. Shea-Simonds
W. J. Meacock
J. T. Crocker
D. Waterman
A. J. Unwin

IN ATTENDANCE

Sqn. Ldr. W. Paul—*Sec-Gen BPA*
Flt. Sgt. D. Peacock

APOLOGIES

W. G. Boot
R. S. Acraman
T. J. W. Day
Major B. S. Schofield
Sir Godfrey Nicholson, Bt.

Item 41

PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Mr. Waterman referred to the fact that no reference had been made to the possibility of reclaiming VAT on bills paid to Flight One Ltd for the use of the Twin Pioneer. The Sec-Gen pointed out that VAT on the advance payment of £2,000 was referred to in Item 34 (d) but that he had treated the reference to other payments as an aside which he and the Treasurer would investigate.

As the result of an observation by Mr. Waterman it was agreed that the following be added to the previous minutes: The Team for the World Cup Relative start training from the Twin Pioneer with the cost met from BPA Funds. It was however pointed out that the list of team members nor a copy of the training schedule had yet reached BPA.

A proposal by Mr. Crocker and seconded by Mr. Shea-Simonds that the minutes of the Meeting of 26th April, with the addition of the points raised by Mr. Waterman, be accepted, was unanimously agreed.

Matters Arising

a. '**Sport Parachutist**' It was agreed that the changed over of Editor had been done with no detrimental effects to the magazine. Mr. Shea-Simonds stated that Vol 10 No. 2 was now out and apologised that it did not contain Minutes of the STC and Council Minutes—these had not been available in time for inclusion but this would be made up in the next issue.

b. **25th Anniversary.** It was agreed that the Last Saturday in September be the date subject to contact being established with 'Dumbo' Willans and if sufficient support was forthcoming to justify holding a social event to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Sport. It was pointed out that Denham being the accepted 'birthplace' of the sport, may present problems from a point of view of clearance to parachute there because of air traffic problems. It was agreed that the social aspect of the event was the prime factor but to be able to parachute would be an advantage. The Sec-Gen would sound out Southern Division re parachuting and the membership to ascertain what support could be expected.

c. **National Championships.** The Sec-Gen reported that all domestic and technical facilities were now ready for the competitors to assemble on Friday 25th May and for jumping to commence on Saturday 26th May. He pointed out that the insurance cover required by the MOD had been considerably increased since last year and that for this year he had been required to produce insurance cover to the extent of £350,000—this had ultimately been got and would possibly cost in the order of £100. Despite his recent tragic loss, Mr. John Cole had agreed that he would attend as Meet Director. Mr. Marc Schneebeli of Switzerland had again offered his services which we had been most pleased to accept—he and his wife would arrive on Saturday 26th May. A suggestion that Mrs. Schneebeli be invited to present the trophies and prizes was unanimously agreed, as was the suggestion that because there was to be no Public Day, the presentation should take place immediately following the end of the Championships on whatever day this should be.

d. **Insurance.** A quotation for Professional Negligence cover, embodying all ages, was still awaited.

e. **Advertising.** Mr. Waterman reported that a plan was being drawn up with the help of Mr. Partington Smith and associated with this would be a questionnaire to be sent to club which it was hoped would provide information as to the best outlets for use by clubs.

f. **Training Aids (Posters).** Mr. Meacock now had the art work for the training aid posters and was seeking quotations from other sources other than Fishers of Peterborough. The plan was to have the posters laminated on to board so as to give longer life.

g. **British Team Coach.** (Item 40). A letter submitted by Mr. Shea-Simonds alleged a breach of confidence by Mr. Waterman concerning confidential discussions at the Council Meeting of 26th April when, as a result of these discussions, Council decided to rescind its decision to appoint Mr. Peter Gruber as the British Team Coach.

Before answering the allegation, Mr. Waterman expressed doubt as to Council's right to conduct business in camera and requested that his reply and any ensuing discussion should not be in camera. The Meeting agreed Council had acted within its rights and since the matter now before the meeting was related to the previous confidential discussions, and each member was still bound by their previous agreement, the present discussion would be in camera. Mr. Waterman accepted this decision but asked that his request be recorded.

In answering Mr. Shea-Simonds, Mr. Waterman contended that the information which formed the basis of the discussions at the meeting of 26th April was in fact common knowledge amongst non-Council members before the meeting and, that apart, must have been talked about by other Council members. He had been placed in a most difficult position when confronted by Mr. Gruber who at the time had not received the letter from BPA but was aware of the decision and full details of what had been said by whom at the Council Meeting. Mr. Shea-Simonds had to leave the meeting early but having heard Mr. Waterman's reply wished it placed on record that he did not accept it as being satisfactory. The meeting discussed the information and counter allegations raised in Mr. Waterman's reply. The Chairman in summarising stated that in his view Mr. Waterman, albeit because of the difficult circumstances in which he had been placed, had betrayed a confidence. Mr. Unwin and the Sec-Gen were of the opinion that the information to hand indicated that others may not have respected the confidence. The Chairman in bringing the matter to a close referred to the antagonism which seemed to exist between Relative Work groups and hoped that we could now look forward to harmony and progress in what could be a most interesting and exciting aspect of the sport.

h. British Relative Team. (Sponsorship). Mr. Waterman produced to Council a 'visual presentation' which had been drawn up and designed by Mr. John Partington Smith and which in Mr. Waterman's view was the ideal manner in which to present ourselves when seeking sponsorship. Negotiations were currently in hand with a Company which had expressed interest and has a large American market. The Company was interested in a three part involvement which could mean a publicity stunt in this country, followed by an involvement in America which had already been passed over to the American part of the Company and finally an involvement in a programme of displays after the Team returns from America. The present situation was, the first part had been agreed 100% and that the other two parts had been agreed in principle, pending confirmation from America. Contact had been established with a second Company associated with the Midland Bank and interest had been shown—a deadline of one more week had been quoted to both companies. In addition letters had been sent to Sports and Documentary Departments of every Television Company outlining the World Cup involvement and type of material that could be available. Two separate sections of BBC has expressed interest and would be shown the film 'This IS A Sport' in the coming week to give them some idea of what can be produced. It was hoped that a documentary film could be produced and whilst this in itself would not be a source of income, it would enhance the prospects of sponsorship with other Companies. The Meeting was unanimous that the presentation was excellent and endorsed a vote of thanks and appreciation to John Parting-

ton Smith for his work in producing what was without doubt a first class presentation.

Mr. Unwin raised the question of training for the British Team and pointed out that support such as was given to the Style/Accuracy should be available for the 10 man Relative Team—in the case of Style/Accuracy the aircraft was laid on and the team had only to get themselves to the appointed training venue. The Chairman pointed out that the situation was somewhat different in that a special aircraft was required and the team coach was the organiser. This of course raised the team coach issue and after discussion it was agreed that Mr. John Beard be appointed the team coach to assist in the organisation of training and coaching. It was agreed that subject to enough money being available Mr. Beard should travel with the Team as Coach and Judge. Mr. Waterman confirmed that the venue for the World Cup was to be Fort Bragg, the dates were 4th to 12th August and the cost of entry was US \$120 per team member—this information had been got by Mr. John Shankland who had telephoned Mr. Norman Heaton at USPA. It was the plan for the team to go to USA two weeks before the Meet to carry out concentrated training.

There was considerable discussion on the matter of aircraft loading commensurate with training the British Team and the economical operation of the aircraft. The difficulty of filling up lifts and the subsequent loss of training time was expressed by Mr. Waterman and Mr. Unwin, Mr. Crocker emphasised that in his view the prime consideration should be economical to ensure there was no waste of PBA money. It was generally agreed that the problem was made worse by the transportation time lag at Cheltenham—this should ease when, as was planned, the aircraft was operating at Halfpenny Green or Weston. The problem was recognised and it was agreed that Mr. Beard should be the co-ordinator and be helped by other relative jumpers giving maximum co-operation to overcome the difficulty.

Item 42

Safety and Training Committee Report

Mr. Crocker stated that the only item of major importance to arise from the last STC Meeting was that the Committee had agreed, with the full approval of two members of the B of I which investigated the Shotteswell fatal accident, that the Shotteswell DZ be again open to all categories of parachutists. The next meeting of the STC was scheduled for 6th June.

Item 43

Civil Aviation Authority.

The Sec-Gen referred to a letter received from CAA and distributed copies to members. The letter was in fact a follow up to the correspondence between BPA and CAA in September and November of 1972 and now suggested a meeting between the two bodies to consider the future control of sport parachuting as envisaged in the proposed amendments to the Air Navigation Order. It was agreed that a sub-committee be set up to consider the letter and the proposed Agenda. The Sub-committee would be: Mr. St. John, Mr. Meacock, Mr. Crocker, Mr. Unwin and the Sec-Gen and would meet on Tuesday 5th June in London. The Sec-Gen would in the meantime arrange a suitable date for the meeting with CAA.

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BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY 21st JUNE, 1973
ARTILLERY MANSIONS, 75 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON SW1H 0HW

PRESENT:

L. N. E. St. John—*Chairman BPA*
W. J. Meacock
P. W. Sherman
D. Waterman
R. S. Acraman

APOLOGIES

R. O'Brien
W. G. Boot
G. C. P. Shea-Simonds
J. T. Crocker
J. Thomas
A. J. Unwin

IN ATTENDANCE

Sqn. Ldr. W. Paul—*Sec-Gen BPA*
J. A. Beard—*British Team Coach*
I. Merrick
D. Waugh
T. Crawley
M. Miller
O. Prin
A. Engrath

The meeting had been especially called to consider the latest position with regard to financing the British Team for the 1st World Cup Relative Meet to be held in the USA from 4th to 12th August 1973.

Item 44

WORLD CUP RELATIVE MEET—1973

The Chairman opened the meeting by reading a letter received by Mr. I. Merrick in which a possible sponsor for the British Team stated that a meeting to have been held on 21st June had been postponed and no decision on the possible sponsorship would be available for a further week.

Mr. D. Waterman reported on the progress with Raleigh Industries by stating that the £1000 fee for the publicity stunt had been agreed and would be paid over when the stunt was successfully completed. There were indications that the American interest in the sponsorship may not materialise because of the lack of time available to set up the necessary publicity machinery in the USA. The position concerning the £2000 sponsorship from Raleigh seemed to be at a stage of uncertainty—the result of a meeting was to have been passed to Mr. Waterman for him to give Council the result at the present meeting but this had not been received. Mr. Waterman expressed his disappointment but felt that all was not lost and was confident that his contact would be striving to get the support we had been led to expect. He emphasised that the £1000 to be received by the Team for the publicity stunt would be handed over in full to BPA as part of the finances for the British Team. The expenses involved in mounting the stunt would be met from a separate budget of £500 to be provided by Raleigh.

Mr. Merrick was invited to report on the results of his contacts with Air Lines and the training centre in the USA. He produced estimated costings based on the information received and these combined with costings produced by the Sec-Gen resulted in the following estimated expenditure:

Entry Fees	624
Air Fares	1900
Insurance (Medical)	280
Training to Date	500
Badges/Clothing	450
Transportation (USA)	100
Training/Accommodation (USA) ...	2000
Excess Baggage	250

£6104

Taking the known income of £3500 a further £2604 would have to be found to meet the present estimated costings.

Mr. Waterman speaking for the team members stated that if necessary they would themselves meet the cost of clothing and feeding during the training period in USA. He pointed out that there could be another source of income from the BBC in connection with a documentary film now being considered. There would be an income of £200 in the form of 'artists fees' which the team was prepared to put to the Team Fund—he also felt that there must be some financial value that could be placed on a documentary film which would provide a good form of publicity for the sport as a whole. Mr. Waterman further stated that should Council decide to send the Team, he and the other members of the Team would guarantee the £1000 from Raleigh and the £200 from the BBC. He emphasised that the Team Members had to date spent a considerable amount of their own money in travelling to training sessions because it had been agreed that a Team would be entered for the World Cup.

Mr. Meacock suggested that the proceeds from the next raffle, which would normally go to the National Team Fund, should be earmarked as an income for the present team budget, and taking into account the guarantee from Mr. Waterman that £1200 would be forthcoming, we should go ahead with preparations for the team.

Mr. Sherman proposed and Mr. Meacock seconded, that a British Team be entered for the World Cup Relative Meet with the utmost economy being exercised on expenditure which should not exceed £2000 over the already known income of £3500 and that the income received by the team for their publicity ventures be paid over to the Team Fund.

Carried by 5 votes to Nil against

Mr. Beard pointed out that in view of the fact that the team members may now be faced with additional personal expenditure, it was unlikely that they would be in a position to spend money on additional jumping before going to the USA—he hoped that this fact would not lead to criticism of the team at a later date. The meeting appreciated Mr. Beard's point and assured him that so far as Council was concerned this would not be the case.

Mr. Meacock asked what the position was with regard to the £2000 loan from Flight One. The Sec-Gen reported invoices amounting to some £1400 had now been received and of this amount approx £500 had been for team training and the remainder was being paid to BPA by the other Relative Workers. We should soon be at the stage of having recovered the £2000 loan which is now being utilised as 'advanced payment for jumps'. A letter from Flight One indicated that in their opinion the aircraft was not getting full utilization and that unless they could have a guarantee of 10 hours per week consideration would have to be given to finding other work for the aircraft. It was obvious that we could give no such guarantee. Mr. Waterman made the point that if Flight One would be prepared to position the aircraft at Weston on the Green greater utilisation could be affected but it seemed they were not prepared to do this. There was an instance of the aircraft not being available because it had been hired out for a display and only one days notice of its non-availability was given. Mr. Crocker was discussing with Flight One the content of their letter concerning guaranteed hours.

OTHER BUSINESS

Item 45

Annual Salary/Wages Review

The meeting unanimously agreed that the wages of the Assistant Secretary be increased by £2.00 per week and that the salary of the Sec-Gen be increased by £175 per annum.

Item 46

Major B. S. Schofield

The Chairman informed the meeting that he had received a letter from Major Schofield in which he had outlined various reasons why he now felt he could not continue as a Member of Council. The Chairman would reply regretfully accepting his resignation from Council.

Item 47

Affiliation—Dunkeswell International Skydiving Centre

The application for Affiliation which had been previously submitted but without details of the Centre's Officers other than those of the Chief Instructor was submitted for consideration. The meeting unanimously approved the application.

Item 48

Manchester Free Fall Club—Loan

The Sec-Gen reported that Manchester Free Fall Club had repaid £50 of the £100 loan to the club which was due for repayment this month. A letter had been received from the club treasurer stating that if Council insisted, the full amount could be paid but requesting that the repayment of the remaining £50 be extended for a further six months in order that the club could continue with its present plan for reequipping the club. A six months extension for the repayment of the £50 was agreed unanimously.

Item 49

Martlesham Heath Parachute Club

Mr. Meacock asked what was the situation with Martlesham Heath Para Club to which we had agreed a £200 loan. The Sec-Gen

It came as a shocking blow to learn of Lou Johnson's death in a parachuting accident at Halfpenny Green on Sunday, 19th August. Lou originally started parachuting in Airborne Forces but it wasn't until he was nearly forty that he started sport parachuting. He soon became a regular figure at 'The Green' and over the last three years had established himself as a leading free fall photographer whose splendid pictures have appeared regularly in Sport Parachutist, reflecting his consistent ability at this difficult aspect of our sport. Lou never had an unkind word to say about anybody and his cheerful outlook will be sadly missed by all who were fortunate enough to know him and parachute with him. All members of the BPA send their deepest sympathy to his wife Gladys and to his three little girls. Lou's memory lives on in his photographs and a photographic tribute will appear in the next issue.

G.C.P. S-S

reported that the cheque had not yet been handed over as there had been a change at the club in that Mr. Perkins had now ceased as the CCI—it was understood that Mr. Purves was to be taking over and would contact BPA. The Sec-Gen felt that in view of the present uncertainty about the club the loan should be held in reserve. This was agreed and the Sec-Gen would endeavour to find out what was in fact the present position at the club.

Item 50

Loan to Flight One Ltd.

Mr. Waterman raised the question of the Invoices being received from Flight One in respect of aircraft hire and including VAT and felt that unless we could reclaim the VAT element we would be out of pocket. Mr. Crawley made the point that the money being reclaimed from non-British Team members did not include the VAT element and therefore BPA would be the loser. The Sec-Gen would check with Flight One and the Accountants in order to clear the position so that BPA should not be the loser.

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THERE MUST BE AN EASIER WAY TO ENJOY MYSELF!

"Why not treat yourself to a Parachute Course in 1973?" said the caption in the paper, showing a photograph of a Skydiver smilingly leaping backwards into space. "Now that", I remarked, pointing at the article with my marmalade knife, "is something that I wouldn't mind having a go at."

The rest of the family almost fell off their chairs at the breakfast table as they collapsed with laughter. The children went off to school with shouts of "The aircraft would never get off the ground", "They don't make parachutes big enough for you Dad!" and other such morale-building comments. They hadn't had such a funny start to the day for a long time.

Helping myself to another piece of toast, I studied the item carefully. "Why not?" said a little voice inside me, and for an instant I visualised myself floating down with arms outstretched, a smoke flare attached to my boots. "You know bloody well why not" said a bigger voice inside me "You go dizzy on Rafiq's balcony unless you sit down". Still...

"You'll be welcomed with open arms" went on the article... I rang the number given, DHE796, and a voice answered: "Good Morning! Dhekalia Dog Pound". "Parachuting Section?" I enquired. "Sorry, wrong number" he replied, "Try 769". (Crafty eh? Only the determined succeed?) I finally got through, and the Captain who answered was full of enthusiasm. "Certainly," he replied, "I am sure we can give you a course, ring the Major, he will soon fix you up".

Feeling quite heartened I rang this number. "Yes?" barked a voice. Nervously I explained that I would like to try a Parachute Course. "Civ Wing eh?" he replied slowly "Y-E-S, I've heard about you. Can't get leave at short notice there can you?" "Well" I defended stoutly, "the book is quite empty for the next couple of months if you can let me know a date". "You fit?" he barked. "Reasonably" I replied, with fingers crossed. I heard a grunt. "Ever jumped before? — No? — Right then, we'll give you a one week course, then you can come back if you still like it. O.K. then, leave it with me, Goodbye" — and he was gone.

A week passed while I anxiously kept watching the leave book fill up. Finally I wrote requesting a provisional date for a vacancy. Back came a prompt reply asking me to report to the 'Adventure Training Centre' in three weeks time. Equipment required was quite modest, Track Suit, Boots and a Medical Certificate. My luck was in — there was space in the leave book, the Doc. pronounced me 'Fit to Parachute' after checking my feet and blowing through my ears, and we were ready for the off...

Most of the initial enthusiasm had worn off by the time Monday morning came round. Only twice had I attempted to obtain information about the course, by asking the R.A.F. lads. The first one immediately recalled that his friend had got himself caught on the aircraft wing on his first jump and was rescued only by some miracle, and the second chap also knew a friend who had got tangled up in his lines and only released himself when perilously close to the ground. I hoped that their knowledge was as little as mine.

The children thoughtfully waved me off with a chant of "He jumped from forty thousand feet without a parachute..." and I reported at 8 am to the Adventure Training Centre, Dhekalia — a place that reminded me of a Cowboy town from an M.G.M. film set. A large square with wooden

buildings all round. I struggled into my boots, and feeling rather like a deep sea diver, clumped over to join the rest of the students nervously clustered outside the Sheriff's (sorry) Chief Instructor's office. There we were, eight disturbingly fit young lads from the other end of the island, myself, and to my relief another Civvy (Bill Brown) from D.O.E. Ay Nik. We were the grandfathers of the course, almost double their age.

We started on the three days of intensive groundtraining. "Welcome to the Parachuting Section" said the Instructor, leading us out onto large mats. "Basically your first lesson is to learn and practise over and over again, the art of falling to the ground from any direction, without hurting yourself. It must become second nature to adopt the 'Parachute position' so that upon landing you continue into a roll to absorb the impact, first on the feet, rolling the shock up the legs and thighs, across the back and over the opposite shoulder". He demonstrated by hurling himself sideways to the ground, as agile as a cat, which looked the easiest thing in the world, and invited us to try it slowly.

Patiently they showed us over and over again, until at last even I began to improve. Then into the classroom to learn all about the theory of 'Canopies and Flight' and study aerial photographs of the Dropping Zone until we knew all the landmarks off by heart. Then into the Parachute Packing Hall to learn this skilful task. Slowly they taught us, pointing out our mistakes and checking at every stage. The Instructor had the knack of keeping our attention. It was amazing the effect one simple sentence had. All he said, quite calmly, was, "Oh, by the way, the parachute you are each packing is the one you will jump with on Thursday morning!" We hung on to his every word. No instructor ever had such a class of attentive students before. What the devil did they do with 22 elastic bands and five pieces of string in the Parachute anyway.

Next day was a continuation of the first, we gradually became proficient on the mats until we were running up a 4ft high ramp and landing safely. Then down to the airfield to practice exits from the aircraft, manifesting, and all the regulations concerning airfield control and discipline. We were shown the Dropping Zone and the danger spots such as concrete airstrip, power lines and quarries. "The ground will appear to come up fast" said the Instructor, "keep your head, and at all costs, resist the natural temptation to scream an oath and climb back up the parachute lines!"

On the morning of the third day our training reached its peak. Individual performances were checked and double checked for the last time. In the afternoon all was tense as the Chief Instructor screened every student to see if he measured up to the rigid safety standards required. First the mats, then aircraft exits on a simulated model, parachute packing and finally, emergency drill, each student swinging from the roof in a harness, and his reaction noted as various malfunctions of his main parachute were simulated. To quote the Chief Instructor: "After this lads, if you ever have to pull the ripcord on your reserve chute, make it quick — it will be for real." Shortly afterwards all the successful students — myself included — assembled at the stores to be fitted with equipment and with butterflies in the stomach we began to realise that the crunch was almost upon us ...

Thursday dawned fine and clear, the thunderstorm that I had been praying for did not materialise. We assembled on the runway at 5 am — all the students drawn together

by a common feeling — terror! "Don't worry about it" said the Instructor "it's a normal feeling, after all it isn't natural to jump out of an aeroplane is it?" We agreed with him wholeheartedly. "Right then, kit on, let's get the show on the road!"

I strapped on my parachute with shaking fingers, then my reserve and helmet. I was ready. Out to the Cessna aircraft where my equipment was checked and double checked by the Instructors. Ripcord out, then I was in the aircraft sitting next to the Pilot with my last minute instructions ringing in my ears. "Keep your flaming big feet away from the petrol switch, flaps control and trim wheel, and above all, keep your hand over your reserve 'chute ripcord handle all the time in the aircraft." "O.K. Pilot, take her away." In desperation I wondered if the aircraft was out of fuel? No such luck — as sweet as a bird she took off in a steady climb while I whistled gaily and smiled at the other student to convince him I was totally unconcerned with the noise of the air rushing past the open doorway alongside me, and the sight of the ground already vanishing at an alarming rate. I recalled a conversation I had with Moysha, the Israeli Pilot the day before, when I asked if he had a parachute in the plane. "Who me?" he replied, aghast at the thought, "I no trust my life with them damn things — prefer to go down with the plane." I began to wish I hadn't remembered that.

We reached 1,000 ft and the Jumpmaster clipped my static line to the aircraft with a loud click that made me almost jump out of my skin. I tested it vigorously and acknowledged. There wasn't going to be any doubt in my mind that it was secure. A few minutes passed while I anxiously watched the altimeter climb nearer and nearer to 2,600. It was there! Came the fearful words that gave the Pilot and I our orders: "Brakes on, Throttle back". Time stood still!! Everyone looked at me. As if in a dream I felt with horror my body respond to the drill. I sat in the doorway, banged my feet firmly out onto the wheel, heaved myself out by the strut into the blast of the slipstream, balanced on one foot, and began to wish like hell that I had stuck to playing football for Civvy Wing — or any sport but this.

"GO!" The command frightened me so much that I let go and that was enough. (The remarks on the Jumpmaster's sheet said 'Blown off the wheel'.) Eyes shut tight, all my training completely forgotten I sailed through the sky for about four seconds, until with a jerk that will never be forgotten, I was upright and dancing like a puppet on a string on the end of a glorious orange and white canopy in complete silence. The quiet after the noise of the wind and aircraft was beautiful and there was no sensation of movement whatsoever. Far below the fields looked like a patchwork quilt, and I was singing to myself with sheer relief, and sailing, sailing ... Hello! What was that? Sounded like someone bawling through a loudhailer. What's he saying? Faintly through my helmet I caught the words "Turn towards the target you bloody fool..." Target? TARGET! Oh Christ, yes! Reaching up for the steering toggles I did a quick 540 degree turn and there was the target cross, in the centre of a ploughed field to my left. All ears now I carefully obeyed the voice. "Left a little. O.K. Keep on coming. Turn into the wind. Get into parachute position. Hold it" — and there was the ground rushing up. Instinctively I adopted the position that we had practised and I was down. I looked up and there was an experienced Skydiver helping me up and congratulating me. I was a Parachutist! Yahoo! Singing my favourite John Wayne commando song, I field-packed my 'chute and trudged back to the airstrip.

"Don't just stand there grinning" said Bob, "You're on the next lift. Kit on!" Oh no! Muttering "There must be an easier way to enjoy myself", I went through the performance again.

There I was, once more perched on that wheel 2,600 ft up. This time determined to remember my instructions, and adopt the correct skydiving position. On the 'GO' I kicked my feet out first, then shoved off the strut and flew backwards... On the disaster scale it must have been rated 'Above Average'. The position was fine, but unfortunately my feet came together for a fraction of a second. That was enough. The extra lift provided by the upward pressure on my legs sent me bottom-over-apex onto my back, in which position the parachute proceeded to deploy between my legs. I knew what was coming and I was not disappointed. The canopy opened and I proceeded to do a reverse 270 degree somersault in about 0.5 of a second. My eyes were still rolling like a one armed bandit machine at 1,000 ft. This time intent on getting into the ploughed field at all costs that I forgot about the landing roll and did a most undignified landing that knocked all the breath out of me and scared the wildlife for miles around.

As I lay there among the weeds, rubbing my bruises, I was ready to call it a day. Then I remembered my promise to the Editor to do an article — and how the devil was I going to end it if I gave up now?

There was a quick de-briefing session for all the students, our faults and successes all analysed, then off for the third and qualifying jump. Again I was on that blasted wheel, this time more confident and I was off. Perfect dive and into my emergency count "One thousand-and-one, one thousand-and-two, one thousand-and-three, one thousand-and- Thank Gawd!" With scarcely a tug the 28 ft 'chute came cleanly off my back and I was upright. No messing this time. Into the drill. Check canopy, O.K. Check no other parachutists close, O.K. Check wind direction, O.K. Locate target, fine. But was it? Unknown to us all the wind had sneakily done a 90 degree turn while we were actually airborne and even facing the target I was being steadily blown away from it. As I floated past the prison I could hear the plaintive cries of the loudhailer fading into the distance.

With a groan I wondered for the hundredth time why the devil I had started this. What was the time? 10.30 am. On a Thursday — my shift was on duty! By rights I should be sat in the sun outside Rafiq's and here was I floating round the sky. Unfair to Civil Servants, that's what it was! However, to get back to the problem in hand, for once the emergency drills clicked through my mind as I checked through the details. 360 degree turn at 300 ft. Hell — a quarry — steer away from it.

Feeling like Neil Armstrong approaching the Sea of Tranquility I managed to steer that wonderful 'Double L' parachute smack into the centre of another ploughed field and made a perfect landing. Hardly had the shout of "Geronimo" left my lips than I was on my back, being dragged backwards through the only prickly bush within 100 yards. Oh no! My parachute, caught by the wind, was racing across the field. A quick roll, pull like hell on those lines. With a sigh the canopy collapsed and that was it.

The course was over and I had qualified to become a proud member of the British Parachute Association and the Cyprus Combined Services Parachute Club. My thanks to the latter for an unforgettable experience.

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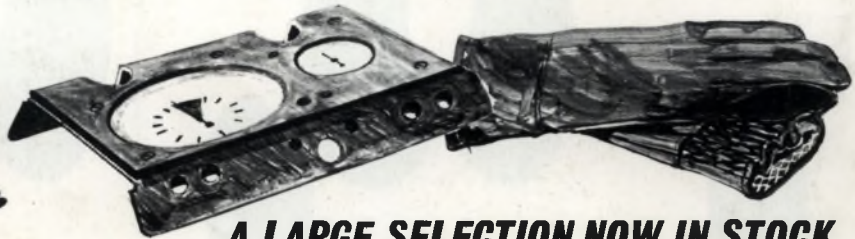


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