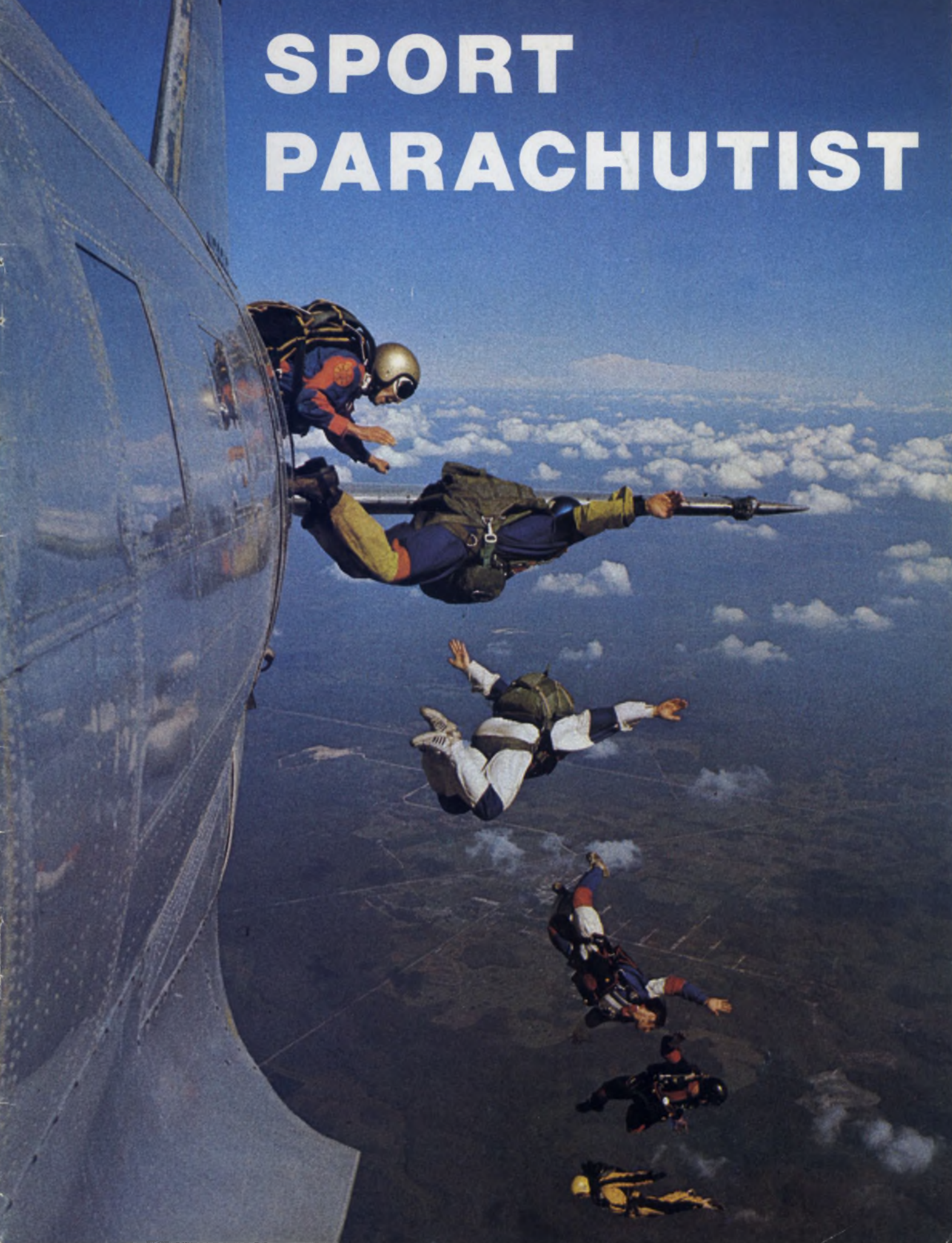


# SPORT PARACHUTIST





*Rear view of PATHFINDER assembly - manuals containing packing instructions supplied with each canopy.*

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*Front view of PATHFINDER Harness with the RFD-GQ PROTECTOR Reserve parachute assembly fitted.*

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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.

# Sport Vol. 11 No. 2

# Parachutist

APRIL 1974

## EDITORIAL

I managed to speak to a number of BPA members at the AGM about the magazine and its contents, with the result that some good ideas were forthcoming. Most were in favour of more than 6 issues a year, but as this will entail greater expense, and thus an increase in subscription, the project will have to be shelved until the next AGM. Many expressed the view that they would like to see more club news—a good point which I hope will be taken up by club committees; a lively article on your club's activities is free advertisement, so I look forward to hearing from you all. During the course of my conversations a number of people were rash enough to promise me articles, and I present their names to jog their memories: Johnny Boxall, ("it's being typed, Charlie!"), Pete Sherman, (something technical), Guy Sutton, (on parachuting and the law), Robert Acraman, ("something of utmost importance"), Bill Boot, (on Meteorology—remember Billy?!), and Mike Johnson (on Arthur Lowthorpe's behalf!); we look forward to hearing from you all!

It has been pointed out to me the Para Flite Inc. Manual on the U.S. Papillon has a disclaimer similar, and as strongly worded, as the one reproduced in my last editorial. Council have asked me to draw the membership's attention to this.

The first Sport Parachutist appeared in mid-1964, and to mark the 10th Anniversary of our journal the next issue will be a magnum 44 pages, and will appear in June. As with all issues, I rely on support from all of you.

Until the next issue then,

Blue skies and soft landings,

CHARLES SHEA-SIMONDS

# THE LONG FALL

At last I can answer Charlie Shea-Simonds' request for an account of the descent made by John Noakes with the Royal Air Force Free Fall Parachute Display Team—the Falcons, from an altitude of 25000 feet, which led to the Blue Peter film 'The Long Fall'. John was not a novice, having completed 17 descents from light aircraft with RAFSPA and the Army's Red Devils in 1970-71.

Authorisation for John to jump from Service aircraft was approved and he began refresher training at No. 1 Parachute Training School, Royal Air Force Abingdon, in early June. During this training period he attended the Aeromedical Training Centre at Royal Air Force North Luffenham for a day of lectures, medical examination and decompression test with several members of the Falcons. The comprehensive lectures ensured that everyone was conversant with the physical and physiological changes to the body with increasing altitude and also the pressure and volume changes of the atmosphere. The many associated problems and dangerous areas were discussed in detail and then followed the 'decompression run' simulating an altitude of 25000 feet.

The decompression chamber resembled a section of submarine complete with portholes. A doctor controlled the 'decompression run' from inside the chamber and after

the briefing we sat in our respective places with oxygen masks and aircrew inner helmets on. The oxygen and communication systems were tested and pressure decreased within the chamber until a simulated altitude of 25000 feet was reached. John was then instructed by the doctor to turn off his oxygen supply as we all watched with interest to the visible physical changes as he gradually became hypoxic through lack of oxygen. He had been given a simple addition to solve on a piece of paper which obviously became increasingly more difficult. His writing became very large and uncontrolled until he eventually just sat with his fingers trembling, his face pale, and his lips blue. His oxygen supply was turned on and he gradually resumed his written task until after 10 seconds his writing and behaviour had returned to normal. The doctor then discussed the particular symptoms John had experienced during the onset of hypoxia. It is of paramount importance that a parachutist can recognise his personal symptoms of hypoxia and check or change his equipment. Of course it is just as vital for the others to be able to recognise a person suspected of becoming hypoxic. If John's oxygen supply had not been turned on he would have collapsed and eventually died. The same procedure followed for the Falcons and then our descent rate of 33 feet per sec per sec simulated an actual free fall descent.



John on one of his twelve-thousand-footers — Note his escorts trailing smoke behind

photo — Ray Willis

John then continued his extensive ground training at Abingdon during which the BBC film crews were kept busy. Soon John was at an altitude of 12000 feet in a 4-engined Hercules transport aircraft ready for his first descent. He wore a Skydriver parachute fitted with an Irvin Automatic Opening Device. This is the altitude, parachute and AOD currently used for all service ab initio free fall trainees. John made his exit off the tailgate closely followed by his Falcons instructor who monitored the descent to his landing on the ground. A further 4 descents followed from 12000 feet and during all his descents I was shooting 'stills' and Bob Souter cine film of his free falling, canopy handling and landings. His standard of performance in every aspect was high and his fast rate of progress matched his enthusiasm.

The next stage was to fit all the equipment required for an oxygen descent, learning and practising the necessary drills and procedures. The method of communication for these drills is for the instructor to point to written words of command printed on a board since verbal communication is impossible because of oxygen masks and helmets. The parachute that John and the Falcons were going to wear was a military free fall steerable parachute similar to the Dominator, which would be fitted with an Automatic Opening Device. All military parachutists fit AODs when jumping from altitudes in excess of 12000 ft.



**Ready for the high one**

*photo—by courtesy BBC*

The 'Long Fall' day arrived and after a detailed briefing on positions, procedures, exit order and emergencies a group of 14 parachutists boarded the Hercules with 2 despatchers. The despatchers do not jump but control the procedures and check that each parachutist has carried out his drills, equipment changes and checks correctly. Aerial photography was the priority on this descent and to that end we had one still and 2 cine helmet mounted cameras. The Hercules took off with each parachutist sitting in his correct stick order wearing his main and reserve parachutes and sitting opposite his oxygen supply on the console. The pressure within the aircraft remained at 6000 feet during the climb to 25000 feet. The descent was to be made over Salisbury Plain with the navigator calculating the release point using his sophisticated

navigational equipment. Soon the despatcher pointed to the first command 'P-20' which indicated that there was 20 minutes to go before dropping, and everyone fitted their helmets and oxygen masks after checking oxygen flow. It was particularly uncomfortable for the 3 cameramen to sit with heavy cameras on their heads for 20 minutes. P-10 arrived and we removed the safety pins from the AODs. John looked relaxed and appeared to be looking forward to 2 minutes of free fall. At this time the aircraft was depressurising until eventually the pressure within the fuselage was the same as the atmosphere outside. At P-5 the tailgate opened and the temperature dropped noticeably due to the outside temperature of minus 35° C at 25000 feet. The main oxygen supply from the console was changed to our own 'walk around' bottles at P-3. By this time the cameras weighed very heavily and we were relieved at P-1 to stand up and move towards the tailgate. It was indeed an exhilarating view seeing the ground stretch out so far below through a layer of broken cloud. Everyone waited for the 'Green On' which signalled it was time to jump.

The light was on and John left the aircraft first, closely followed by Bob Souter with his cine camera. Bob and John linked, another Falcon made 3 and I dropped closer taking shots as I moved in to make a link of 4. The others had left the aircraft and were dropping down to join the relative group and they were being filmed by Doug Fletcher who was last man out. The next person to join the link hit it quite hard and turned John over on his back breaking the link. The link gradually built up to another 4 man, together with several other 3 and 2 man links. The cloud layer was between 12000 and 10000 feet and we were soon through with a wide expanse of ground below. The links were broken at 6000 feet as briefed, and each parachutist moved to a clear space of sky to fall stable and wait for the AOD to operate and allow the canopy to deploy. At 3000 feet canopies dotted the sky without a rip-cord handle being pulled—indeed, a very pleasant sensation.



**John on the high one with oxygen at 16,000 ft.**

*photo—Ray Willis*

The winds were strong under the canopy, and everyone attempted to move to the wind line. The camera crews filmed John under the canopy and when he landed. The current service system being used for dropping free fall parachutists from 25000 feet achieves excellent accuracy, as was shown on this descent when the furthest man was 200 yards from the impact point. We all joined John for a beer at a local pub en route for Abingdon where the descent was discussed in graphic detail. I'm sure it has left an indelible impression on John and I would add that John made a great impression on us: quite a guy.

**RAY WILLIS**

## "A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE..."

In spite of indulging in a rather unique sport which involves equipment peculiar to it, Sport Parachutists are not the only group who find themselves with servicing and packing problems relating to parachutes. Glider Pilots, with whom fields and air space are more and more being shared these days, have often similar problems and, generally in the spirit of good neighbourliness sport parachutists frequently get involved in helping out on equipment other than their own. Here it is the deed rather than the good intention that bears examination.

In order to get the message content of this note over adequately, it would be as well to get a few matters into correct perspective. Firstly it should be understood that design requirements for various types of parachutes can vary quite considerably and by the nature of these variations it can be dangerous to "read across" without due care certain criteria found in one type of assembly and apply it to another.

Secondly, some degree of caution should be exercised before undertaking a task when one is asked to "look at" or "do a quick repack" on a parachute assembly with which one is familiar. All the good will in the world is no substitute for knowledge and neither is an impressive total of jumps in a log book an accurate indication of competence to service an unlimited range of emergency parachutes.

Thirdly the type of individual that a glider pilot is, call it an understanding of group psychology if you like, should be appreciated. It can be found to be a bit different in a subtle way to that of "fun jumpers". The majority of glider pilots hold the view that, however nice the folk may be that leave of their own free will and for fun a perfectly serviceable aircraft in the air, they are in the ultimate reckoning "some kind of nut".

Similarly the glider pilot regards his parachute in quite a different way to a sport jumper. To the glider pilot it is most frequently just an uncomfortable weighty cushion, something to be used when all else fails, somewhat like an insurance policy that one does not really believe one will need, rather than a mode of transport.

Lastly, when, and such times do occur, the glider pilot needs recourse to his chute the sphere of operation is often very different to the sport parachutists norm, in fact possibly embracing some aspect of all emergency eventuality that one hears of, sweats about when thinking of but thankfully has never experienced. All in all, problems which glider pilots and sport parachutists may meet in the air are not all that similar as at first seems to be the case, remembering too that the glider pilot only has one parachute.

Recently some parachute assemblies, owned by glider pilots, were sent for manufacturers servicing and two of these may be used in illustration of the points in question. At one end of the scale, and to illustrate the attitude that is sometimes adopted by, happily very few pilots, a parachute assembly in the condition shown in figures 1 and 2 was sent for servicing. From the available evidence this assembly had been used in flight often and in a steadily deteriorating state. Tensile tests showed that the strength of the lift webs had been reduced to about one quarter of the specified strength and, although ample safety factors are built into designs of this type, reductions of this order could very seriously prejudice the success of an emergency bale-out. Fortunately this demonstrates an extreme example but a more subtle and potentially equally as serious an affect on the airworthiness of an assembly can unwittingly be caused.



Fig 1

In further illustration another case comes to mind where a glider pilot took his assembly for servicing and repack by the manufacturer. On delivery the pilot commented that he had had it repacked one or twice before by a "fun jumper". This parachutist had criticised the design of the assembly and in consequence had changed and "improved" it. In effect what the albeit well meaning sport parachutist had done was to put the glider pilots life at considerable hazard. The changes made to the parachute could have delayed its opening under certain circumstances, it could also, if the pilot had collided with the gliders tail structure or other debris in the air during escape and with his parachute already partly deployed have quite successfully tied the pilot to it. A feature allowing for a weak-link is incorporated in the correct design. The design itself which had so casually been "improved" carried a full C.A.A. design approval.

Examining this case in more detail, the original design concerned an assembly consisting of a simple three point harness and a back pack incorporating a 24 ft. canopy using a Mk. 1 auxiliary parachute. The unauthorised changes made were the replacement of the "spider spring" type Mk. 1 auxiliary with a large square top vane type and a change of auxiliary parachute extension strop by submitting a double 1,000 lb. webbing in place of a single 400lb. cord.



Fig 2

Why these changes could have seriously affected the glider pilots change of successful escape are two fold. One effect could have been to delay the deployment of the main canopy after the ripcord had been pulled. In this respect consider the probable conditions in the pilots fall. It is most unlikely that stable face to earth free fall would have been attained, indeed the pilot may probably have never heard of such a state let alone achieved it. It is more likely that a back to earth position would have ultimately resulted thus the airflow against a centrally placed large top area vane auxiliary would inhibit its emergence and separation from the pack. The designed sequence of events in the approved design provided for the "spider spring" auxiliary to be flung to one side of the wearer as one of the main pack side flaps opened, thus, whatever the position of the pilot, the auxiliary would be thrown away from the body into a free air stream.

A change of strength of auxiliary connecting strop constituted another unnecessary hazard. It is not always possible on emergency abandonment of an aircraft to adequately clear the airframe before opening the parachute and in consequence one must face the possibility of fouling part of the airframe structure. In severe cases sometimes portions of airframe will have broken away from the stricken aircraft and the parachute auxiliary, being the first to emerge, could become entangled with debris or the cockpit hood in the air. Particularly in the case of fouling a major portion of airframe by an auxiliary, a relatively weak connecting cord between it and the canopy would break and still allow the main canopy to develop. An excessively strong connecting link would, on the other hand, have the effect tethering the pilot, by the apex of his canopy, to the airframe all the way to the ground.

Those readers who have the opportunity to read Mike Reilly's book "Alone in the Sky" can get a clearer idea of the relationship of the Mk. 1 Auxiliary to the main canopy from a good photograph of a canopy deployment opposite to page 33. From it one can better understand the features here discussed.

This aspect of leaving an aircraft in emergency conditions is quite interesting to compare with the more leisurely, if not gentlemanly, manoeuvre adopted by sport parachutists. Some time ago an informative article appeared in a sister magazine called "Sailplane and Gliding" which included a description of a "Bale-out". The author commented how he, the pilot, found himself sprawled across a wing of a rapidly descending broken aircraft, and this was after he and his passenger had decided to leave it at 1,200 ft.

A good example showing that collision with wreckage in the air does occur, and the type of damage it causes can be shown on a canopy in the writers possession. This particular canopy had been used in a successful and injury free escape from a glider whose wings had apparently come off following a loop. (N.B. This incident did not occur in the U.K.). Tears, paint work stains and bruising on the canopy depict clearly how it had developed in a debris filled air space. It is interesting to note that on examination the auxiliary parachute was missing.

What then may be learned from the above? As a sporting group, parachutists are, more than most, conscious of the need for high safety standards and a reputation for reliability. As a group also sport parachutists have to defend themselves against criticisms of recklessness and by demonstration must show in return that they are a responsible community. From this then it is no big step to appreciate that when it comes to servicing emergency parachutes, particularly other peoples, it must be done responsibly and with knowledge which will ensure a high safety standard of the work done.

And the moral? If you don't know—ask those who do (even to writing to manufacturers for proper packing instructions). If, as a sport parachutist, you do not personally agree with the design state of someone else's equipment, do at least appreciate that his problems are not necessarily the same as yours. Lastly and perhaps the hardest of all. When a pretty young lady glider pilot appeals to your manly prowess and asks you to do her a quick repack—if you don't know the assembly don't do it, without first checking on the right way—even if it means missing out on a dinner date. Better that than to pack in haste and repent at leisure.

IAN WRIGHT,  
Chief Inspector, IRVIN Great Britain Ltd.



Ram air accuracy

photo—Andy Keech

# BLACKBURN TO BRAZIL

The end of a hectic weekend of demos was nearing, having involved the usual dashing to and fro between DZs and airfields in our red, E type, 49 mph flat out down hill diesel 'meat wagon'! In case you haven't seen it, it closely resembles a large GPO wagon, the difference being that it's covered in Red Fred signs and doesn't carry mail.

We arrived back, yet once again to beautiful downtown Aldershot, home of the shorthaired, at around 0230 Monday, 10th September; the journey didn't take quite as long as anticipated, probably because it was downhill! plus the added incentive of getting prepared, packed and ready for going to the land of sun, nuts, coffee and señoritas—Brazil, the same day. Needless to say, nobody minded about missing out on a blanket pressing session and we worked through the night unpacking the wagon of DZ debris and refilling it with the necessary kit for the trip.

Pyrotechnics, that's a posh word for smoke bombs, initially presented a problem being listed as 'hazardous air freight', but with Sgt. Major Ted Lewington's various contacts and abilities of organising the impossible, they were transported by the RAF Harrier squadron from Wittering. Who said we don't have any friends amongst the blue jobs?!

The next problem was to transport 10 Red Freds, including 1 dolly bird, a gorilla and their kit to Sao Paulo, the city in which we were to stay for 2 weeks, the duration of Sao Paulo International Air Show, to be held at a military airfield with the romantic sounding name of Sao Jose Dos Campos—more about those two later.

Air France, with lovely hostesses and 'du cafe en route', no time for wine or sticky buns, took us to Paris. Within the hour and after a few renderings of schoolboy french, we managed to be on the right aircraft at the right time for the right destination.

Next stop Rio de Janeiro, at least that's what it said on the tickets. Instead we landed at a place called Recife; apparently the aeroplane was almost out of fuel, had we known, there would have been a mad rush for the cargo hold followed by a 10 man stack somewhere over the north of Brazil! sorry, 8 men, 1 bird and a gorilla.

The plane circled a huge effigy of JC, perched on the top of a mountain 2100 feet high, then landed on Rio's airport runway which sticks out to sea like a huge pier. Those that weren't sleeping were staring out the windows with a look of complete disbelief.

Whilst we were sitting in another aeroplane at the end of the runway revving up for take off to Sao Paulo, Deak Wright saw all our kit on a trailer headed off the airport, too late, we were almost airborne. No problems, a two week holiday in sunny Brazil without jumping. But yes there were problems, Major Peter Schofield had already been to Sao Paulo some days previous to do the necessary reces and arranging of PR coverage in the form of press and TV. As a result, just about everybody in Brazil knew that we were coming and why, but they didn't know that we didn't have any parachutes. Now we had the problem of retrieving the kit or facing a firing squad. This was put temporarily out of mind by an absolute barrage of press and TV who filmed, photographed and interviewed us for an hour to the great inquisitive pleasure of an airport terminal building crammed with locals. Similar, I would imagine, to a pop stars' reception, but there weren't hundreds of gorgeous young females ripping their clothes off shouting 'I love you', or what ever it is they shout. Seriously though, the big centre of attraction was Jackie

Smith, the rest of us were only there to make the numbers up. Jackie, as far as we could make out, schoolboy french being pretty useless where everybody speaks Portuguese, was to be the first lady skydiver in Brazil. This was big news in a country where females are second citizens, still traditionally chained to kitchen sinks, babies and housework and where their latin husbands assume masculine superiority.

The bus ride from the airport to the hotel was so unbelievable traffic wise, I honestly believe that a London taxi driver working there would only last 3 or 4 days at the most before having a nervous breakdown. There seems to be a general rule for drivers, they all go as fast as they possibly can without giving way to anyone or thing, all this accompanied by incessant hooter blowing. We later discovered that the easiest way to commit suicide was to cross on a zebra crossing—it became rather boring walking round the same block every day. I plucked up the courage one evening to cross a street. The front, 15 deep line of cars was stopped at a red light at a crossing, I was two thirds of the way over, beyond the point of no return when the green light appeared, with a rear everything surged forward. . . I'm by no means a prize sprinter, but I'm almost positive I broke world records both in running and vaulting getting to the other side. In my mad dash, using what little adrenalin I had left, I made the other kerb doing a one handed leap frog over the bonnet of a 'not about to stop' beetle. I stayed in a - - - bar sampling local booze until quite a bit later when the the traffic would die down before making the return journey.

Our bus, after an hour of carving up an endless stream of VWs and quite a few brave pedestrians arrived, somehow undented and unscratched at the foot of a 1000 foot monster, Hotel Planalto, where we were to stay for the duration of the air show. En route we saw a robe clad replica of JC walking nonchantly in the centre of a VW packed, 8 lane carriageway in the direction of the traffic ignoring completely the almost deafening crescendo of hooters. I sometimes wonder how far he managed to walk. You've no doubt noticed my constant reference to VWs; because of German enterprise and their ability to erect huge factories anywhere, as many as 90% of the cars in Brazil are VWs and *all* the buses are BMW.

The hotel housed us and most of the other military show participants from GB and the USA, this included RAF crews of the Nimrod, Vulcan and Harrier, the crew of the enormous American C5A and the USA Army parachute team The Golden Knights.

The next day Ted Lewington once again used his expertise with a telephone and organised the recovery of our lost para kit, and we had it parked in our respective hotel rooms by the ever keen porters who, after finding out the hard way how heavy the bags were, are now very wary of offering to carry parachutists baggage.

15 hours air travel later, which we were told was only 11 because of the four hour time difference between countries, two days of sorting ourselves out, a bit of sight seeing, accustomisation to eye watering atmospheric pollution, acclimatisation, and the sampling of local brews and gift shops, brought us to the reason for being there—parachuting.

Friday a.m., all dressed in black, red trimmed, Fred badged tracksuits, white running shoes, red hats and having said many no's to 'are you a football team?' we were in our bus once again an hour and a half away from Sao Jose Dos Campos. On arrival, much of the appre-





**Our jump ship—the 748**

hension of road travel had disappeared, I think being in a large bus helped quite considerably. We later found the complete cure, sleep.

The airfield, as are most was way out in the country, free from congestion and pollution. The impression that we had built up in our minds of Mexican type bandits, sombreroed and donkey borne with long dressed señoritas doing whatever they do with castanets and shoulder carried bambinos, was disappointingly non-existent; except for a few uniformed gentlemen armed with six guns at the hip, some with rifles, we could have been at Blackbushe on an air day.

The heads of the three parachute Teams taking part, Freds, Golden Knights, and Brazilians; Major Peter Schofield, Capt. Chris Needles and Major Carlos Prado respectively, went off to the show briefing to get timings etc. for us. They returned within the hour and we were to have the first of the three slots given, these were rotated on the following displays which were to have been one daily, some sixteen in all. But according to the briefing from which our now disappointed looking Major had just come, we were only required for that day, the press day and the following two Saturdays and Sundays. With a Buffalo C115 and all that beautiful weather at our disposal, all



**Deke spotted**

were truly disappointed. This we accepted, of course, having no choice anyway and started to get ready for the first jump. The line up, in jump order was: Jackie Smith Papillon, Steve Slater PC, Deak Wright PC, (Cut a way), Alex Scott PC (Cut a way), Jim Petherbridge and Dave Ritchie to alternate between a PC with the gorilla suit and the Wing. Needless to say neither Jim nor Dave were too upset about the other having to jump Red Fred. A jump later Dave stirred up an old knee injury, putting himself on the ground for the remainder of the trip and Jim poor fellow, was lumbered with what we call 'The Monkey Suit'. Joe Greig was on a wing followed by myself and Ted on the clouds, behind us the Major on his Sled. We had a spare Cloud with us which Alex started jumping owing to the disappearance of both cut a way canopies. The first show went super well. Jump Master Deak threw the streamers and the aircraft being as big as it was, we could all stroll to the back end and watch them delightedly land only a few metres away from the target. Hence, spotting was no problem, plus the pilot was so good he needed little or no correction. The exit point was over the cross in front of and half way along a five hundred metre long,



**Harrier escort on jump run**

several deep line of spectators. We were at 8,000 ft., the airfield already being 2,000 ft above sea level. Jackie, Steve, Gorilla Jim, Dave and Joe went out on the first pass. The first three got together whilst Dave and Joe on the wings tracked out either side: their smoke trails looked impressive from the air. The second and final pass, Deak and Alex went out, did a baton pass then separated for their double cut a way act. Meantime, above was Ted, the Major and myself max tracking out, the crowd seemed to enjoy it immensely, mainly because they had probably never seen freefall before, but the most satisfying thanks of all was the praise from the other two teams. The Golden Knights were their usual very professional selves, their four man formation and bomb burst being the highlight of their show. All their air work, for those of you who haven't had the pleasure to watch it, is close to, if not perfection itself. The Brazilians, although a relatively young parachute team, performed quite a spectacular stunt. Three jumpers all huddled together in the aircraft, leap out together and end up suspended together on the end of a

static line operated T10 at around 8,000 ft., pretty good eh? Here comes the best bit. From the ground it looks like one man way up in the sky until one of the three falls away, followed two seconds later by the second man, the feller left behind then streams the T10 like a regular cut a way and they all end up together under their Papillons. To a demo parachutist it's really impressive, it must be even more so to the public. We would do that stunt ourselves but I'm afraid the Islander isn't big enough, we only have one T10 which Albert Hooker jumps and we don't have three volunteers to do it!

Saturday and Sunday went well and according to plan, the weather was glorious and the place was packed both days with an excess of 250,000 people. As we were leaving at the end of the show people were *still* queuing up to get in.

All kinds of aircraft were involved in the show doing their various things. One of these was the Hawker Siddeley 748 manned by fellow Brits. Between themselves, Major Peter Schofield and Air traffic control, it was arranged for us to jump it for the remainder of the show with three extra days included, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday—Good News. Once again we were blessed with an excellent pilot who didn't need even one correction. The 748 is a civilian version of the RAF Andover, it will hold around forty jumpers and eight can stand side by side in the huge single door on the left hand side. A beautiful rele-ship but I'd hate to have to pay the flying cost.

Wednesday we jumped, all out on one pass because we were only given a six minute time slot. Because of mixed canopies we stacked out accordingly, round, pointed and rectangular in that order and everybody was on or around the target. Thursday and Friday were 'no go' days, the South American weather suddenly became British, a lot of the flying display stuff was scrubbed too.



**Steve took some piccies . . .**

Saturday and Sunday were the last two days, the weather still wasn't up to Brazilian spring standards but at least it was jumpable, and we jumped both days. On Saturday we had quite a unique experience, in the 748 with us were about a dozen camera crew once again from Brazilian press and TV. One little feller was half hanging out the door with the biggest cine camera I've ever seen, quite safely though, he was wearing a safety harness which in turn was hooked onto a strong point in the aircraft. Just behind him was his mate holding a huge frame on which were two illuminatory devices the size of Scammel head lights, making the inside of the aircraft



**. . . with this result**

absolutely floodlit. I'm no camera man at all and I couldn't really understand why he was there because outside there was a whole country full of daylight! If pictures were being taken inside I think I would have understood. At this time we were taking part in an Air Display; whilst circling the airfield at a 1,000 ft there was a Hawker Siddeley 125 executive jet 10 ft from our starboard wing tip and a Harrier 10 ft from his. The three of us flew around in close, line-abreast formation for ten minutes; from where we were it was quite a sight, almost enough of a sight to dispel the secret wondering or fear of whether or not wing tips would touch! The 125 then flew off somewhere and left us with the Harrier, he then came along side us on the left hand side, literally just outside the door staying there whilst the 748 climbed to jump altitude. In the seat behind the pilot of the Harrier was another cine camera man taking shots of us as we exited. We haven't seen any of the pictures but we are assured that they are good ones and should eventually be in our possession. All those camera people and we still haven't seen one picture!

The last day, Sunday, we only had 2,500 ft so it was just a fall out, save your life job, a line up, a salute, a repack, back in the bus and off once more to the Hotel. That evening all three Teams had a get together farewell dinner at a local restaurant. Two of us, out of sheer curiosity worked out the total number of jumps sat at the table, it came to 46,000, between 43 parachutists, that's more BPA log books than some BPA instructors have jumps!

The evening went well with an ample supply of steak, wine, beer, jump stories and an exchange of speeches and plaques between the three team leaders. Then the troops started, it became almost like an Arab bazaar, berets, cap badges, addresses, log book signatures and all kinds of things exchanged hands. A fine end to a fine trip. I could have written about all the off duty activities that went on but (1) the BPA magazine isn't big enough, (2) I'm a terribly slow typist and (3), the things that some of the single men did wouldn't get past the censor!

#### **Red Fred's Riot in Rio.**

Monday a.m.; now we're on the way home to Blighty via Rio de Janeiro, only this time we are to stay there for three days actually leaving for England late Wednesday evening. The reason for the three day stop was that it had been arranged for us to do an afternoon drop onto Copacabana Beach, South America's St. Tropez. This time, the arrival was quite sedate, the press and TV didn't know we were coming, so there was no make up cracking

or MOD false teeth showing. We were taken to the British consulate, luckily only ten minutes away, thus reducing the hair raising experience of driving through Brazilian traffic. Rio is bigger, cleaner, far more aesthetic than Sao Paulo, and best of all, there is relatively little pollution.

No hotel this time, for a pleasant change we were billeted, for want of a better expression, in ones and twos, in the homes of the consulate staff, all extremely nice people and excellent hosts.

Tuesday was a day off for sight seeing and trinket buying for all except the major, Jackie and Jim plus monkey suit. They were involved for a couple of hours with the press and TV. That afternoon the whole of Rio were informed of our presence and what we were about to do in their city, on the seaside edge of it anyway, as a result just about everybody turned up for the display.

We took off from Rio's airport, just four minutes flying time from the beach, laden once more with camera crews, this time accompanied by, to our delight, a beautiful, well built, bra-less reporteress who had eight male Freds queuing up to give her their life stories.

At 7,000 feet, after having thrown the streamers on the way up, the golden sands looked black with people except for a 75 metre square which was to be the arena. The wind was a steady 15 knots, the beach was 130 metres wide with the Atlantic ocean on one side, sky scrapers on the other, the wind was blowing from the sea so we couldn't afford to under or overshoot. With no time restriction this time we were able to do our full show, 4-1-4. Joe and Jackie did a baton pass, Steve and Jim went out on the same pass with Steve taking shots in freefall of Jim in the monkey suit. Next pass was Deak on the cutaway 'tout seul'. This was made possible by the Brazilian Team by their kind loan of a cutaway canopy, our own two still missing, probably being used as curtains in a hacienda somewhere in Sao Paulo. Although there was a PA system on the ground, it wasn't much use, Dave Ritchie being far from fluent in Portuguese, and even if he hadn't been so, not one of the throng were about to listen to him anyway, they were far too excited to hear anything but their own shouts and oles. This came to an ear splitting roar when Deak did his thing; we learnt later that just about the whole populus thought he was going in! When he was settled down under his PC getting set for an approach, the arena disappeared. Dave was running limpingly round in ever decreasing circles brandishing a ground smoke flare in one hand trying to maintain just even a little bit of arena for Deak to land in but was overcome by sheer weight of excited numbers. Now I know why they have barbed wire around their football pitches! The major, Ted, Alec and I came out on our flying machines and by this time complete chaos was all over the beach. None of us knew how to shout "stand still" or "heads up" in Portuguese but I think a few Anglo Saxon "get out of the f-----g way phrases were used but proved to be useless. Luckily nobody was hurt, even scratched, spectator or parachutist. After all shows, unless weather prevents it, we repack in public. We now have another reason for not doing so—mass latin type hysteria. I don't know who organised it, but each of us was grabbed bodily by a huge official looking, six gun toting military policeman who fought, with gun in one hand, a Fred in the other through a souvenir hunting, back patting, shouting crowd, across a six lane, vehicle packed dual carriageway, to an awaiting hotel. We made a vague attempt at repacking but the only way out was in, into the hotel. There was a minibus waiting to take us and the kit to the airport for a UK departure but it was impossible to go anywhere near it. The mob, as it now was, became completely out of hand, staying put outside the hotel for three hours. We were taken up to a balcony at the request

of a local VIP and it was like Adolf Hitler addressing his millions to 'oles' instead of 'zeig heils'. Later, Ted and I managed to sneak out to the back of the hotel and into a freshly arrived minibus and we took the kit to the airport. When we finally sorted it out there, three ripcords, four smoke brackets and Steve's red beret were missing, considering what has happened that wasn't too bad a post mortem. Just after we left the hotel the powers that be turned out the riot police in order to get the folks to go home and get Rio's traffic moving again. Behind them they left three large plate glass windows broken and several cars upside down—I hope we don't get a bill!

At 11.30 p.m. we were once more airborne and on our way home via Lisbon and Paris, looking forward to the vicarage tea party type demos where we sit next to sweet, old English ladies, sipping tea and eating sticky buns. With this in mind all were completely relaxed looking out at familiar London whilst circling, waiting for our turn to land at ever busy Heathrow. More excitement to come. Our Air France 727 did what even a first time flight passenger could sense, a rushed, emergency landing followed by an abrupt halt in the middle of the runway and was surrounded by fire engines, police cars and ambulances. A voice came over the intercom saying in various languages, "leave everything and abandon ship immediately by the rear exit, this is an emergency. "As each nationality received their particular message, mild panic mixed with bewilderment was increasing. We were all sat at the back and understood between us the first warning, which was in French, so ten brave Freds dressed in track suits were the first passengers off the aircraft. Somebody had phoned in informing Air France that there was a bomb on board—WELCOME HOME!

BOB HARMAN.

## PARAQUIP

French St. Christopher helmets, the most popular Skydiving helmet.

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# AT THE DROP INN



**S'LONG BERNIE DIERKER**

Not really a case of 'on yer bike Dierker!' as the picture suggests. Bob Styles, Chairman of the Duck End Farm Parachute Group presents Bernie Dierker—one of the Group's shareholders—with a racing bike frame on behalf of the club. The presentation, made at the 3rd Annual Charles Wells Meet was a farewell gift sadly marking the end of Bernie's happy two year association with British parachuting and his return to civilian life in the U.S.A. Since his posting to R.A.F. Lakenheath in late 1971 Bernie jumped regularly at the farm and became a shareholder in the aircraft. . . making over 600 descents, to set a high example in the competition world and providing much competition encouragement till his Westward return in October 1973. During that period he qualified for his 1000 jump U.S.P.A. Gold Wings and after great co-operation from the U.S.P.A. via Bill Jones the European League Director in Munich he became the first American to receive the award in this country. The wings were presented by Col. Unger of R.A.F. Lakenheath on behalf of the U.S.P.A. at a special surprise presentation at which Bill Paul presented the U.S. Gold Wings certificate and Bob Styles presented the Duck End 1000 jump certificate.

The attempt to foil his departure with no wheels failed as we have heard recently that with the help of the remainder of the collection he has a mobile that is the envy of St. Louis. . . and also gets him to his local DZ without an eight mile queue for petrol. Here's wishing you low 8's with many more discs Bernie. . . and a rapid return!

D.W.

Quote from an advert in the Wall Street Journal: 'IMPORTANT NOTICE: If you are one of the hundreds of parachuting enthusiasts who bought our course entitled Easy Skydiving in One Fell Swoop, please make the following correction: On page 8, line 7, change "state zip code" to "pull rip cord."!!

## EVENTS IN 1974

Army Championships (Netheravon).	13—24 May
National Championships (Weston on the Green).	1—10 June*
Rhine Army Championships	31 Aug—7 Sept.
RAPA Centre Closed	20 July—10 Aug.
World Championships, Style & Accuracy Szolnok, (Hungary).	25 July—12 Aug.

\*—Entry forms available from BPA Office

(The Editor welcomes any further additions to this programme).

□ □ □



**Red Fred Chris Simpson with his bride, Embassy girl Theresa Ford, escorted by Embassy Team Leader, Sally Smith.**

It must be a combination of the fuel shortage and the poor weather at this time of year, because they're going down like ninepins. On 22nd December last Chris Simpson of the Red Freds married Teresa Ford of the Embassy Girls. The same day Dave Howerski (late 7RHA Black Knights) married Jane Stuart, B1016, daughter of Joyce and Watson Stuart who are the landlords at Grindale. The following Saturday Freddie Bremer, (well known Yank at Sibson), got halfway to becoming a Limey when he married Vicky Brice. AGM Day was also wedding day for Charlie Mahon, (D601 and celebrated exponent of the Boule position), and Lavinia Smith-Saville. Congratulations to you all! Whilst on the subject of weddings, Jon Williams and Sally Cain, both of the Endrust Team, have badly planned to hold theirs on the same W/E as the Innsbruck 10 Man Star Meet at Easter—tough!

□ □ □



Settle down Freddie—They're still there!

□ □ □



David and Jane Howerski.

□ □ □

Who just missed the power lines and then put his canopy over a barbed wire fence and into a hawthorn hedge on his 13th jump? Well done Dave Smith!

□ □ □

I was sitting here thinking,  
 How nice it would be,  
 If I were the owner  
 Of a big company.  
 I'd have a 180  
 With its own private loo;  
 I'd buy a big airfield,  
 With a Drop Zone too.  
 Then all could fly down,  
 In their Austers or Robin,  
 Open the door,  
 And do a quick lob-in! !

L.O.

□ □ □

'Sky Safari' is the name given to a round the world in 80 days parachuting trip to be undertaken this summer by 6 jumpers, 5 of whom are also experienced pilots. Leaving the USA in their own Lockheed Learstar in July, they plan to visit this country before proceeding to Hungary for the World Championships. Photographer Andy Keech and Chuting Star Ian Merrick are two of the lucky participants.

□ □ □



How not to throw a reserve by Ken Holt!

□ □ □

**Unrequited Love at Cark**

Blonde, curvaceous, Sandy Dogget,  
 Will not lend, nor give, nor flog it.  
 Saves it all for Paul, the sod,  
 Who earns his bread, with bricks and hod.

The guy whose name doth rhyme with 'pillage'  
 Has chatted all the ladies of the village  
 With some success, the word's around  
 He'd swop them all and I'll be bound,  
 He'd give her 50p as well  
 If just to break the spell  
 Of Paul, and dwell,  
 Within the arms of Sandy Dogget,  
 Who will not lend, nor give, nor flog it.

Cookie.

□ □ □

**WANTED!**

**PERMANENT INSTRUCTOR**

as from 1st May 1974 for the new full-time  
 South Staffs Skydiving Club.

*Contact Geoff Webster at club address.*

REMINDER: Ultra Violet rays adversely affect nylon so remember to keep your equipment out of the sun—if we get any this summer!

□ □ □



**The Control Tower and Anemometer at Swallowcliffe!**

□ □ □

Quote from Australian Newspaper: 'The jumpers, all from Melbourne, leapt yesterday from their aircraft at 35,000 ft. before opening their parachutes!!'

□ □ □



**Anna ready to go at Thruxton**

□ □ □

### INSTRUCTORS WANTED

Holiday relief Instructors required for a couple of weeks during the Summer at the Peterborough Parachute Centre.

## BUZZ'S CANADIAN COLUMN

The C.S.P.A. Board of Directors held a meeting of marathon proportions in Toronto at the beginning of December. Over 40 hours were spent in session, in a period of 56 hours from Saturday morning to late Monday afternoon. Some of the more notable things to come out of the meeting follow:

C.S.P.A. will be hiring an assistant to the Executive Director. This is necessary due to the increasing workload, and the need to provide the membership with better, more efficient service. This will bring the number of full time employees to three.

The format and editorship of 'Canadian Parachutist' have been changed. The magazine will become more in the style of a newspaper, and will be issued ten times a year. These changes were necessary, in order to provide regular communication and news to the membership. The publication of the magazine under the old format had become too unwieldy and time consuming.

The 1974 National Championships will be held in Edmonton, and will be hosted by the Canadian Forces Base Parachute Club. A ten man star event has been added, and with a four man event, ten accuracy jumps and five style jumps, it has been found necessary to limit entry, other than by invitation, to Canadian citizens, and certain classes of resident. Three bids to host the Nationals were received and the Board spent over five hours in deliberation, before a decision was reached.

Disciplinary action was taken against certain clubs and individuals, who had contravened both the letter and the spirit of their membership agreement, and had ignored certain C.S.P.A. regulations. This action is in line with the present Board's policy of taking a hard line with those who ignore regulations, for their own short term advantage.

### In the statistics department

Abbotsford was Canada's most active DZ (for the 'nth' year) with over 11,200 jumps during the year.

It was at Abbotsford also that the Canadian star record was raised to thirteen, and a night time mark of nine was set.

Several DZ's in Ontario recorded their first eight man, but nowhere other than BC, has a ten man been built.

During the year eleven sets of Gold wings (one thousand freefalls) were awarded to bring the number of recipients to thirty eight, and two sets of Diamond wings (two thousand) to make six recipients.

Three people made over four hundred jumps during the year, two at Abbotsford and one in Ontario.

C.S.P.A. membership reached about 3500 by the end of the year.

There were as I mentioned in the last column, seven fatalities, with all the attendant publicity.

See you next issue.

BUZZ.

### FOR SALE

Orange and White TU in B4 Pack and Harness  
Complete Assembly—£40

Tel: Farnborough 513874

# OUR AGM – A RECOLLECTION

Once again, on 19 January, 1974, The Imperial Hotel, Birmingham, had to suffer the extraordinary event of a BPA Annual General Meeting. The Instructions's Convention 'opened the batting' soon after eleven under Jim Crocker's able Chairmanship. An agenda had been produced and it was good to see items being discussed so rationally, and without any of the shouting matches that tended to feature in years gone by. Fifty instructors spent a total of three and a half hours discussing the various items and reaching the following conclusions which are to take immediate effect.

1. The recent STC ruling that those jumping with cameras may not use Ram-Air Parachutes has now been rescinded.
2. It was confirmed that it is a BPA recommendation that 'net-vane' pilot 'chutes should not be used on reserve parachutes.
3. It was recommended that all General Permit holders carry knives.
4. It was agreed that any instructor may attend STC meetings and have a say; but that voting be restricted to CCI's or their nominated representatives.
5. It was agreed that the Panel of Instructor Examiners be re-instated. The basis would be all those members of the original panel who are current advanced instructors, together with those advanced instructors who have been currently involved in running instructor's courses. The means of an advanced instructor becoming an examiner will be publicised by the STC in the near future.
6. It was agreed that quick release systems for smoke bombs be permitted.
7. It was announced that BPA Instructors are now covered by an Instructor Negligence Policy.



**Jim in the chair at the Instructors Convention**

After a short break by the instructors, the multitudes assembled for the AGM itself. Close to 325 BPA members and friends tried to cram themselves into the Connaught Room, adequately demonstrating the requirement for a larger meeting place next year. Bill Paul presented a number of apologies for absence in particular a list

of BPA members in Australia provided by Dave Moody. Then it was the turn of Lawrie St. John, our Chairman, to present his report. It is really only necessary to mention here those matters that didn't appear in the Dec. issue of Sport Parachutist. It looks as though the Nationals will be held again at Weston on the Green, but this is to be finalized.

The raffle produced a record £2160 of which £600 approximately has been spent on printing and prizes. The Chairman then asked Tom Dickson, Chairman of the Scottish Sport Parachute Association, to present an up to date picture of happenings North of the Border. Tom reported the financial aid given by the Scottish Sports Council, the 5 year plan being worked on and the reinstatement of the Chandy Trophy for the Scottish Nationals. Lawrie then asked Bill Paul to give an up to date picture of the fuel crisis which he did most thoroughly and the meeting were then asked to give support to Monty de Cartier's petition which was being prepared to abolish the ban on Sunday flying. John Cole's treasurer's report did not produce any embarrassing questions and it was then agreed that subscriptions and the auditors remain unchanged for 1974.

It was then the turn of Pat Howell to propose his motion that:

"A Committee be formed and empowered to simplify and modernise the Regulations of the Association, and to discard such Regulations as no longer serve a useful purpose; and that such Committee consist of one Council Member, one Member of the Safety and Training Committee, and three other members of the Association drawn from Affiliated Clubs."

Discussion was constructive, but favoured the view that as the job was already in hand by the STC, the motion be rejected.

Lofty Thomas then arose and proposed his motion that:

"Personal Accident Insurance be obligatory on all BPA Members and that the premium to cover such Insurance be additional to the Subscription Fee current at the time of applying for Membership or renewing Membership."

Whilst it was agreed that this was a good idea in theory, the majority (supported by three BPA members who are Insurance Brokers), felt that it was financially impractical and the motion was rejected.

Now it was time for Bill Paul to present the results of the Council Election. Only 447 BPA members had bothered to vote, and the 4,045 votes cast produced the following 14 as the New Council, (complete with No. of votes).

Charles Shea-Simonds	358	Bill Boot	192
John Meacock	348	Ken Mapplebeck	177
Bob Acraman	321	Ronnie O'Brien	177
Lawrie St. John	314	Mike O'Brien	160
Jim Crocker	291	John Cole	154
Dave Waterman	270	Mike Batchelor	153
Lofty Thomas	225	Joe Forster	142

John Boxall then presented the story of how he trained and despatched 75-year-old Archie MacFarlane (who was present), on his first jump last year; quite rightly, this resulted in a thunderous applause!

On a more sombre note Hugh Griffin then thanked BPA members for contributing so generously to the Brian Jerstice Appeal Fund for which donations are still pouring in.

The meeting finally ended with Lawrie St. John presenting BPA Gold Awards to those members who had achiev-

ed 1000 Sport Parachute descents. In alphabetical order they were: Bob Acraman, Norman Addison, Bill Boot, Fred Bremer, Bob Card, Graeme Cathro, Jim Crocker, Pete Denly, Bob Hiatt, Neville Hounsborne, John Kemley, Bob King, 'Mac' McCarthy, Ken Mapplebeck, Colin May, John Meacock (just coming up to his 3000th!), Ken Railton, Charles Shea-Simonds, Pete Sherman, 'Sooty' Standing, Tony Unwin and Dave Waterman.



**Lawrie congratulates Archie on his first parachute descent, aged 75!**

For the majority it was time for a pint, but for the new Council it was time for yet another meeting. The following were elected officers: Chairman—Lawrie St. John, Vice-Chairman—Charles Shea-Simonds, Treasurer—John Cole, Chairman STC—Jim Crocker. It was agreed that the following be asked to be co-opted members of Council—Gerry Turnbull, Sir Godfrey Nicholson, Chairmans APA



**John Meacock (just approaching his 3000th descent) receives his gold award**

and RAFSPA, Peter Prior and Ian Wright. The qualifications and job function for the National Safety Officer/Coach were discussed and it was agreed that Clubs be informed of the results as soon as possible.

As soon as this meeting finished the Riggers sat down in the Council's place and had a useful discussion. George Shone was elected to take over the job of Secretary from Steve Talbot.

Meanwhile Dave Waterman's film and slide show produced a full audience as did the Raffle which followed. The holiday in Majorca was won by P. Mitchell of Sutton Coldfield. The serious business of consuming incalculable amounts of alcohol was by this time well under way, new friends were made and old stories improved as the evening progressed.



**The Chairman addresses the multitudes**



It all ground to a hung over halt at breakfast the following morning and the Imperial Hotel reviewed the scars of the previous day. It was a good AGM and our thanks must go to Bill and Dorothy Paul for their hard work in setting it all up. Finally, thanks to all BPA members for making it such a well attended and memorable occasion—see you all again in 1975!

photos—Dave Waterman.

G.C.P. S-S.

The equipment reported missing by Alan Layton, a member of the Duck End Group, has now been recovered.

A special thanks to John Meacock for the loan of a rig, and all the others who offered their help in recovering the equipment or loaning gear.

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## THE HONG KONG PARACHUTE CLUB

By FEI LUNG

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The most recent addition to the list of BPA affiliated clubs is also the only Colonial one, the Hong Kong Parachute Club. The jumping is Joint Service run though there is a strong membership from "real-life". The Club has existed in many forms since its formation in the mid sixties; and has been quite strongly supported during the last three years, when it has provided a social rendezvous for anyone who had made at least one parachute descent, particularly for ex-members of various Airborne and Special Forces. Apart from this beer swilling aspect, there has been some fun jumping and a few demos done by the resident bandits; most of whom were serving soldiers though some with rather more exotic occupations graced the Colony skies. Two visits were made by "Proper" parachutists who caused a great impression and gathered much favourable press; these were the Freds and the Falcons.

This year has seen the break through, students have jumped for the first time and regular weekend sessions are now being held. That this should have occurred this year was the result of a combination of favourable factors: first Tom Oxley and Doug Peacock came out and cleared the DZ for student jumping (with limitations): then Roy Mawdesley was posted out here, giving the Colony its first

resident instructor: finally Tom Oxley and Joe Reddick from RAPA and Bob Card from Cyprus provided a stream of advice, documents, gifts loans and sales of equipment. Their generosity was quite breathtaking and really cannot be repaid fully by money or thanks. Having got so far, the rest began to fall into place. The Army kindly moved a lot of barbed wire from the DZ and provided a generous grant with which to purchase some kit. The Director of Civil Aviation allowed use of the airspace and the Aero Club granted limited use of the Cessna 172, a great concession here where flying-student time is so critical and the number of aircraft that could be used so small. Acting as backstop with all kinds of avuncular advice was of course . . . Bill Paul. A young Club has never had better friends.

The DZ is in the New Territories, at a flat place called Sek Kong, where a small Army Garrison surrounds an airstrip. It is the best DZ in the Colony because it is the only DZ in the Colony. The radius of the zone is about the diameter of Netheravon pit and it does have the concrete strip running through it. The area is surrounded by hills, through which the wind whistles, ensuring that it crosses the DZ at its narrowest. For those who miss, the penalty, at best, is to paddle through knee deep paddy; at worst to get eaten by guard dogs or to go over the Border to the



Roy Mawdesley—on the wrong side of the wire?

place where they jump bamboo chutes. The incentive to spot well is strong and Roy Mawdesley, with a professionalism that does credit to his upbringing as a Black Knight, seldom puts students far away. Noticeably though the least humble students walk the greatest distances.

The bandits occasionally are favoured with an Army Scout or a Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force Islander lift to keep them quiet but the bread and butter is the 172. It is the best student aircraft in the Colony as it is the only student aircraft in the Colony. It can only be hired for early morning sessions of 3 hours, of which about half an hour is transit time from Kai Tak International Airport to the bucolic charm of Sek Kong. The pilots are kindness itself, mostly earning their living in the commercial air world; some have expressed wishes to try the sport. With luck we should be able to accommodate them.

There are about half a dozen C and D licence holders in the Club then a great gap to new students, however with the progress being made by these new enthusiasts it won't be too long before that gap is filled. The star turn of the show is Tony Perry, who spends more money on various National Association subscriptions than most do on jump bills. As he has twice as many jumps as anyone else he wears his hair twice as long . . . and when primed with the correct lubricant will illustrate the difference in attitude of senior jumpers in UK, Australia, Canada and the States towards their students and rising stars. Is it really as bad as that in UK? The rest are an ugly military lot, who refer a lot to something called "The Brigade"; this is said with the reverence of a recent and close bereavement.

The students are a splendid lot and the Club is blessed by having, from the outset, a good blend of servicemen and women and people from "real life". The former are typical of the cheerful bunch to be found at Badnether-weston-on-the-Greendekhsprunge, birds and all, whilst the others are a grand collection who are making the most of something that they have waited a long time to do. This dedicated body includes British, Australian, Canadian, American and German influences—even a Policeman called Leary. The international battle for stability is on. Herman-the-German gets a special mention for, being a scientist, has turned the count of from one to ten into a new mathematical discipline. Mention must also go to the first man to jump as a student in Hong Kong; Joe Flinn,



**The Senior Student, Joe Flinn, embarking on his first jump since 1947—also the first student jump in the Colony.**

aged 50, who last jumped whilst serving in the Regiment in 1947! He wonders if Peter Schofield plans to put an Old Freds team on the road.

The advent of the Colony Air Show was the opportunity for the elders of the Club to demonstrate to Hong Kong in general and the students in particular, what it was all about. Press releases that would have made Waterman gasp, radio interviews, new jumpsuits provided by an unwary sponsor—The scene was set. A modest performance and the reputation of The Flying Dragons (FEI LUNG) would be established. From the moment the Committee meeting started on the skid of the lead scout helicopter, during the jump run, the whole thing became simply an entry in the log book with an exclamation mark behind it. As a demonstration stand off event it had possibilities; as a Demo it was a monster: the reputation of the Flying Dragons has still to be made.

Socially one cannot plead deprivation in Hong Kong, for literally all tastes (really) can be catered for. The Club with commendable taste and lack of ostentation have neither a committee chamber high up in the Hilton nor a part share of a sampan in Yaumati Typhoon Anchorage. Instead, some social gatherings are held in the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Officers Mess, when Arnhem is refought at length and others are held in a pub called the White Stag, where even greater lies are told about the backloop of the week. The latter establishment is a sort of urban George at Thruxton (circa 64-67), situated in picturesque surroundings opposite Dock Gate No. 5, Canton Road, Kowloon (for those who might be passing some Wednesday evening). Beer is served in jugs by a bird with a strong physical resemblance to V & T (one imagines) who, it is hoped, will be persuaded to grace the DZ if not the manifest line. There is room in any organisation for shapes like that; would be a pity to spoil them with a chest strap.

The Club is still very much in infancy and there is a long way to go before survival is assured. A welcome will be extended to any jumper who finds his or her way here, and it is hoped that they would be given some sport. It is worth noting however that it will be a few months yet before the Club could cope with an invasion by Robert Sidney and his horde.

#### FOR SALE

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# PLANE TO SEE ...

## a critical review of the aircraft situation

Few parachutists around the Clubs in Britain today realise they are facing potentially the greatest single threat to their sport - shortage of aircraft - a lack which the more perceptive amongst you, gentle readers, will be quick to point out, could lead to the state of purgatory parachutists most fear, to wit, no jumping. The purpose of this article is to give you some appreciation of the problem, to set out a basis for discussion as to how it can be tackled, and to invite constructive criticisms.

Any discussion on parachuting aircraft must involve an appreciation of the three major factors involved, suitability, scarcity and expense. For a start there is an extremely limited range of aircraft suitable for jumping, usually confined to the high wing variety. Amongst the types currently in use throughout the country are (with max. numbers of parachuting places in brackets) the Cessnas 172 (3), 175 (3), 180 (4), 182 (4) and 206 (5), Tripacer (3), Beagle (3), Cherokee Six (6), D.H. Rapide (8), Islander (8) and Twin Pioneer (16). Besides the relevant positions of door, wheel step, wing spar and wing, and the requirement that each individual aircraft must at present be approved by the Airworthiness Division of the Civil Aviation Authority for parachute dropping, the choice is further limited by the size of Club and the number of active parachutists in attendance on any one day. For instance, it would be clearly senseless to use a Rapide for a small Club where perhaps there are only a dozen or so parachutists in regular attendance, since it would be difficult to make up lifts and the plane might only land up doing 5 lifts the whole day. Secondly, even having located a suitable aircraft does not mean that you can have the use of it. It is amazing the number of looks of horror I have seen engendered on aircraft owners faces when a suggestion is made over a pint of beer that one could jump out of their beloved flying machine. Because Clubs are paying on flying time (and sometimes even on tachometer time i.e. engine on to engine off), somewhat naturally the pilots are urged to get the aircraft up and down as quickly as possible, a situation which leads to a full throttle, engine heating climb and a no throttle engine cooling descent, which are far from ideal conditions of operation for reasonable engine life. The Cessna 175 is particularly prone to cylinder head problems if abused. As a result of this and general scuffing of the plane interior and exterior paintwork, owners are in general reluctant to let their aircraft be used for parachuting, especially as they can't often get a regular week-end use of a less drastic type in private aviation, where the weather minima are not so critical. Reluctant though I am to suggest it, if there is no other way past this objection, I think the answer here with any particular owner is to suggest a slightly increased hourly charge in order to compensate for the additional wear and tear. The only alternative seems to be to inveigle any likely looking owner into either going up with a lift, or, if he is of the right mettle, getting him onto a jump course, since many of his preconceived and often misconceived ideas and attitudes may then turn to positive support.

I have implied above that your club is considering hiring an aircraft on an hour to hour basis, which is undoubtedly the least risky way of providing an aircraft where the club is operating hand to mouth and has no capital. It is however the least satisfactory method because it frequently involves paying for positioning the aircraft from its base to the D.Z. and back, and because one does not have the security which is essential for a Club to

flourish. I can well remember that the W.A.S.P.S. had a certain 182 on a regular week-end basis, and when jumping came to sudden standstill when the owner decided one week, without reference to the Club, to sell it. Also if the owner is one of those who is prone to take a weekend off in Paris without notice, this can prove disastrous to the reputation of the Club.

The alternatives to hiring on such a basis are unless you find a benefactor prepared to put up £5,000+ for an aircraft, to buy or to take on lease. While this has the decided advantage of cutting out positioning, and enabling you to dictate the manner in which the aircraft is used, this brings you straight away into the realms of high finance - something to which most parachutists are unable and often unwilling to face up. With the exception of the Beagle Airdale and the Tripacer, there are few parachuting aircraft which will cost less than £3,000 to purchase, and you could easily exceed the £10,000 mark. With interest rates on bank borrowing topping the 16% mark, the borrowing of any sum in excess of £1,000 could prove an extremely expensive proposition - even if you could find the parachutists to stand as and be acceptable as guarantors. The alternative to raising the money by loan seems to be to form a syndicate of pilots and jumpers who would each contribute a still appreciable amount towards the capital costs. I know of only one group in this country who have successfully done this, and then the parachutists concerned are all experienced and dedicated men, a situation which would not pertain in your ordinary weekend club. I myself tried to form such a syndicate but with lamentable lack of success. Even if you can raise the money, there is the question of overheads and running costs to be examined very carefully indeed before embarking on the purchase of any particular type of aircraft. Taking an aircraft valued at £5,000, for instance, the insurance is likely to be not less than £400 per annum, and depreciation £500 per annum. Hangarage costs would obviously depend on where you kept the aircraft, but could be as much as £250 p.a. Provision for the two year Certificate of Air Worthiness should also be made, and any prudent operator would, dependent upon what work was carried out at the last C of A, provide for, say £350 p.a., towards this expensive and compulsory ticket. On the above figures, therefore, the purchase of a Cessna 172 costing £5,000 would attract standing charges of about £1,500 p.a. BEFORE the bloody thing ever moves. Besides standing charges of the above order, one has also to allow for fuel, oil and repairs, which might give an hourly running cost of say, £5.00. It is not necessarily an answer to the situation to have an aircraft which climbs and descends quicker because by and large these aircraft tend to have a higher hourly running cost and in addition, because the lifts are shorter, the utilisation per annum is going to be less. A little simple arithmetic on the above example will show therefore that the first flying hour in the year has cost you £1,505, the second £752 and so on until the overheads/flying hours ratio evens out at about 500 hrs. or 10 hrs. PER WEEK. For this reason, you are going to want to get in as many hours as possible in order to keep the cost per hour down, with a minimum certainly of 200 hrs. p.a. Now that is an awful lot of flying, and if you miss two foggy winter weekends in a row, you are going to have to make up your lost 8 or so hours the following weekends, otherwise your jump costs are going to soar sky high. Assuming even that you select your aircraft type, a lot of care is needed in your actual choice

of aircraft and its use, in order to ensure that it stays in flying condition week after week, without lay offs for expensive repairs caused by unforeseen defects, or careless flying or ground handling.

A final alternative to hiring and buying is to take an aircraft on lease for a certain period. Here again, because the overheads are paid by the owners, they will obviously want a return on their overhead expenses in addition to a return on their capital, by insisting on a guaranteed number of hours, which number I venture to suggest will be beyond the capacity of most weekend clubs, **unless** they find an alternative use during the week e.g. private aviation. If one is operating on the basis of finding an alternative use, then not only does this limit the type of aircraft to be chosen because it will have to be suitable for that alternative use, but also the aircraft has to be kept fairly presentable inside because not everybody wants to fly a stripped down jump aircraft for pleasure!

In order to come to grips with the problem, I think it essential that a number of realisations should be made. Firstly, jump aircraft of the 3/5 seat variety, which are the most commonly required, are nearly impossible to obtain on a guaranteed regular hour to hour basis, and those clubs which are fortunate enough to have them tend somewhat naturally to hang on to them rather than see if it is possible to work out some shared use with neighbouring clubs.

Secondly, we must reconcile ourselves that ours is an expensive sport which will continue to be so. My first jump in 1959 cost me 35 shillings, and even now one can get 7,000 ft. for about that, a situation which is unlikely to continue with the imposition of V.A.T. and general

escalation in prices and wages. Our jumping is in general cheap compared with other countries, even those where the sport has more active encouragement from their particular governments. Few owners make money on their aircraft, and we are relying very much on their goodwill and lack of commercial sense. We must be very much more conscious of the expense of running aircraft, making the aircraft account balance rather than subsidise it from other club money spinners such as demos, which income should surely be devoted to improving club equipment and facilities or indeed towards the purchase of the club's own aircraft. Lifts should be economically structured according to the climbing capacity and full load of the aircraft; we should cut out the cloud dodging to gain more height; we should seek out the most experienced pilots rather than just those who are anxious to clock up free flying hours towards a particular pilot rating; perhaps we should put out more on a pass if safe to do so; and there are many other ways of saving money. Thirdly, we should analyse the different requirements of the clubs, who use a variety of different aircraft and perhaps expand our horizon as to the types we use.

To these ends I think it essential to assess the extent of the problem. Only when we have assessed the size of the problem can we then think in terms of what ought to be done to tackle it, and whether the B.P.A. as our parent body ought to be asked to do something positive about it.

PAT HOWELL

*Thanks to the response from clubs, a list of available jump ships will appear in the next issue.—Ed.*

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Build up to a sort of snowflake

photo—Andy Keech

# THIS LITTLE WIGGY WENT TO MARKET

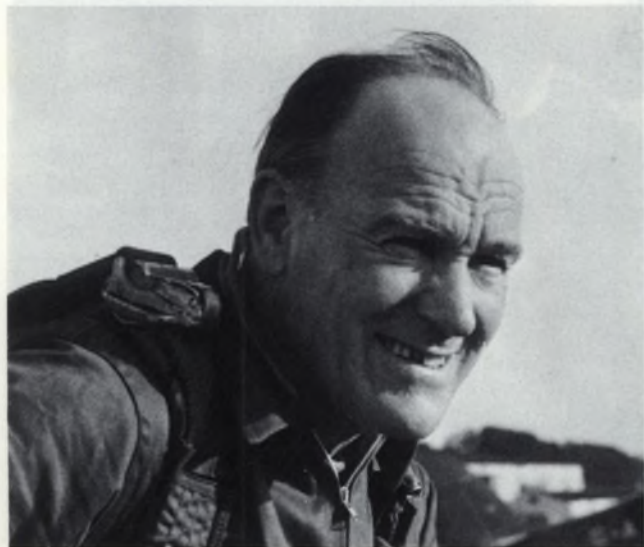
Well, it sure landed up somewhere "truly rural", and that's a fact. Although the events mentioned took place several years ago I thought they might amuse the general parachuting populace, particularly those who remember them, and fill a space for dear old Charles.

Better than that spate of interminable ancient Aussie anecdotes which I once complained about when Baggy was on the throne—(Sorry, Ed!) And apologies to you Sports, as well.

This is the tale of what may befall one when trying to get a sponsored, (that's a well-paid and buckshee), jump instead of paying and losing out as lesser mortals do.

As some of you lot know I am not quite as well thatched as I was when defending the Suez and other saucy spots in the forties. One day I happened to notice an advertisement for a toupee, (wig to us everyday morons, which would apparently stick like syrup to a blanket and had apparently been wind-tunnel tested to speeds equivalent to 100 mph and still stayed boncebound. It suddenly struck me that a spot of the old free-fall would tear it loose if anything would and if it stayed put then things couldn't be bad. The thought that I might tear some lolly loose at the same time also crossed my mind! I approached the makers and after a course of concentrated conning (i.e. negotiation) I got their OK on favourable terms, and was immediately led away to have a mould made of the old top hamper. This was rather a messy business, but after a swill down I left for home in a slightly stained condition and dutifully wrote to the safety officer requesting permission to jump minus tifter. This caused him such amazement that he was immediately shocked into acquiescence. So I set about devising a method of attaching the helmet so I could put it on for the landing. This was surprisingly simple and more to the point it worked on the day. Surprise, surprise!

Came the day when I was told the toupee was ready for collection as they say, and I went up to town and had a fitting or whatever they call it. I was mightily impressed and when offered a box to take it away bravely declined saying—"I might as well give it a try out now as later." Alas, I was cowardly when I reached the station and funk'd using my usual compartment in favour of a seat at



**The Genuine article!**



**The transformation!**

the rear of the train! On disembarking at my home station the local porter, who knew me well, gave me a very odd look indeed. I could practically hear him wondering if he really did know me or not? When I reached my own gate, one of my brood said incredulously—"Is that you daddy"?? The others were mercifully speechless, but my ex-wife(!) said "Oh, you've had your hair cut." Strange, when I had in fact added some! She always did get things backwards!

I did not wear the wig again until a few "Before and after" photographs were taken at Booker. Soon after this my troubles began.

In spite of the fact that the principal of the company seemed reasonably intelligent, it was extremely difficult to get him to understand the numerous snags and pitfalls which might be encountered, Cloud, wind, pilot absence, aircraft ditto, non-co-operation etc., etc. I don't have to tell you the lot, do I?

It was decided to do the jump at Booker, then altered to Blackers and finally we all met there complete with the wig "Putter onner". This chap, although only a minor minion, was really clued up and in fact the only one of the Wig faction who was! Needless to say, on arrival at Black-bushe, the Rapide we were using had not turned up and visibility looked fine but did not satisfy control, so we weren't allowed to jump anyway. The delay went on for ages—(When doesn't it?)—and I began to get twitchy and irritated at the continual moaning of those who were paying! Damned unreasonable, I thought. In fact I feel that only the thought of the lolly held back my arm and stopped me from panning the sponsor. He was only a tich; just my size! I didn't of course, hardly the thing, really. At last the chief wiggite could no longer stand the delay

(Sorry, no pun intended) and departed muttering, leaving me and the "Putter on" to cope. Yes, you've guessed it, at once the cloud cleared and fixing of the dreaded appendage began. This was really quite something, the toupee was affixed by double-sided "Sticky" tape and having had a suitable criss-cross applied, on it went. A satisfactory stick was effected by butting my head up against the door of a refrigerator pressing like Hell and rolling it around. My head, not the frig, stupids! Some of my jumper pals laughed. How could they?

As it happened the finished article (Me!) was most impressive and ribald laughter turned to remarks like "Blimey, it ain't 'arf good, ain't it?" etc. Rather a case of "They laughed when I sat down to play." (Only older readers will get that one!)

At last the photographer and self embarked, the plane was duly filled with non-fare paying passengers who couldn't wait to jump out and amidst shouts of "Good old Jeff" and all that; (Can't beat something for nothing, can you?) we took off for Odiham.

As I was not exactly over brimming with confidence in the photographer, I decided I would ride across the airfield standing outside thus getting a suitable "wind-blown" shot if the stunt failed in action. The wig stayed very put and I was pleased, impressed and hopeful. We could only get 4000 ft and I settled for an exit shot, in any case I thought "Stable" was something you kept a horse in; still do in fact! As I left the plane the wig went with me as planned, but alas on opening, it disappeared up into the canopy somewhere and then floated away with a mind of

it's own. I landed perfectly as no doubt did the wig, but to this day it has never been found, Hardly surprising I suppose as we never looked for it. All those fields!! As a pal said, "I bet it shook the farmer to see a rabbit suddenly come flying by." Well, maybe it did, again we shall never know.

My forebodings regarding the photographic results were justified, as his exit shot was perfect in every way, except for one small detail. Like Charles I, my head was missing! One could even read my altimeters, but this interesting technical point utterly failed to comfort the sponsors. As the expensive rabbit, (sorry, wig), was missing I was asked for a rebate on my fee, but unkindly I told them I would gladly have helped if they had not been so bloody minded. I did offer to do the whole thing again for free, as I felt there was a sporting chance it might work — (Don't ask me why, I might tell you!) However they didn't want to know, and although I cried all the way to the bank—on the way back, I laughed!

After quite a long time had elapsed, I was all set to repeat the stunt with another company, but they proved so unreliable that they defaulted after I had wasted thirty quid over them, so perhaps poetic justice was done in the end. I was however, handsomely in hand over the two incidents.

Now, if you're all good kiddy-winkies I may tell you the story of Bill Boot's aerial ferry across the Bristol Channel; but he hasn't told me yet, so you're safe for a while!

JEFF ORCHARD.

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# THE MANCHESTER FREE FALL CLUB

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Staverton, Nr. Bristol with Dave (Aussie) Brown,  
Kirton in Lindsey with Paul Starkie,  
Shobdon with Pat Slattery and Mike Reeves,  
Flamingo Park with Mal Reid and  
Halfpenny Green with Albert Cooper.

These are just a few of the D.Z.'s and Instructors, the one time wandering Manchester Club associated with. 'Have Chute will travel', or 'Had no Chute and still travelled', seemed then to be the Club motto.

Trials were constant companions of the club but tribulations almost non-existent. There were Aircraft problems, Pilot problems, Instructor problems, D.Z. problems and not least of all, weather problems. But then in the company of such characters as John Utano, Les, Hinson, John and Nita Partridge (nee Buxton), Norman Law, Mike and Sylvia Cassidy, John Wildgoose and many others—who I hope will forgive me for not mentioning, but stalwarts just the same—who bothered too much about the disappointments anyway?

There was great rejoicing when we did at last acquire our own D.Z. at Prees Heath, Tilstock, Salop, but then none-the-less a shock when we saw the allocated runway for the first time on the ground. Between each section of concrete and down both sides of the strip was at least twenty years of natural growth—most of it five feet high, and rock boulders—some ten stone in weight—which had previously been placed there to prevent 'Ton Up' motor cyclists from burning the place up. However, having got over the initial shock everybody took off their coats and with great enthusiasm set about clearing the place up. Despite a raging snow storm which continued almost non-stop throughout the first working day, the runway was eventually cleaned and made safe for aircraft use in just one weekend, but the weekend represented some thirty labouring hours per person. The following weekend saw the D.Z. opened for parachuting activities with Paul Starkie at the helm and John Graham—a very magic pilot of the Lancashire Aero Club at the controls of a Cessna 172.

All this happened over seven years ago, and today the Manchester Club continues to enjoy the use of this very modest, but safe D.Z. by the kind permission of Mr. R. L. Matson who owns the airfield and surrounding land. He is the Chairman of Whitchurch Magistrates Court. His son Richard manages the land surrounding the airstrip and wasn't content to view the club's activities from the ground. He has indeed experienced two para-descents with us and each time landed in his own Beet Field. I suppose that was better than landing on his neighbours crops. To the Matson family we extend our eternal thanks for permitting and putting up with hairy para-bods plodding over their land for so many years. Good relations are enjoyed with other local people and in particular I mention Jean and Ted Lewis who run the Sub-Post Office and Grocery Store at the nearby village of Ash. They are truly kind and wonderful people to whom the parachutist, is someone special. They are always ready to help in any way they can and never hesitate to put on the kettle and cut sandwiches whenever any of the boys or girls call. Many thanks to Jean and Ted and Oh! I almost forgot, you too Penny.

I am happy to report that great progress has been made on the D.Z. Packing and Lecture Rooms. Surprising what a difference a touch of paint makes. Thanks to our resident painters, Derek Wood, Peter Dawson and John Quinn, the place looks a real treat. It is noticeable however, that one set of brush marks is slightly different from the others; must be that left hander whom shall remain anonymous. Anyway perhaps Alan Roberts—our Welsh Rozzer—will be able to sort it out: But in the meantime A1' just keep getting down to the D.Z. first and don't forget to put the heater on. A word of warning to our two current limpers—Kevin Kelly and Mike Foster. If you do have to play football, then play it at home in Tilstock. Anyway hurry and get right we need you.

The student situation is quite healthy and despite our number one aircraft being prepared for its C of A over the last six weeks, we have had about forty students trained and jumped over the last seven weeks. There is about the same number or more waiting to undergo a course. It isn't true that Norman Law and John Reeves have opted



Members of the Manchester Free Fall Club with DZ owner Mr. Richard Matson.



to instruct a group of 'Au Pair' girls from Whitchurch instead. Well at least, not until they have cleared the backlog. Hurry up lads: Get the mats and blackboard out and clear this lot. Your rewards will come later.

We welcome Lieutenant Mike Milne of the T.A. Mercian Brigade at Stockport and Crewe, and at the moment of writing I am pleased to say he has progressed to Free Fall and making great strides to becoming a first class parachutist. Also a great welcome to our two very keen lady members—Nurse Christine Leigh and Nurse Janet Heywood—both from Davyhulme Hospital. In addition to jumping out of aeroplanes and making themselves useful at the D.Z. they add a little glamour to the place. Well done Mike, Chris and Jan.

Thanks to great efforts and hard work by Jim Law, both the Manchester Clubs got together at the Regency Club in Heaton Mersey and enjoyed a pre-Christmas Social Evening and Dance. This was indeed a great success and popular demand calls for a repeat. Get cracking Jim and thanks again for that one. Whilst on the social side I would like to say that arrangements are being made to have a joint social evening with members of the Knutsford branch

of the Parachute Association. Nobody is going to miss this one and I will report the result in due course.

The club equipment position is sound both in number and quality. We are in the process of increasing the number of Mains and Reserves. All our current reserve chutes have been converted to top pull. Happy to report that we have repaid the loan of £100, interest free, back to the B.P.A. with it our appreciation for their generosity. Taking everything into account, the club have enjoyed a reasonable happy 1973 with the club finance in quite a sound state. This happy position came about perhaps because of the meanness of the Club Treasurer—Wilf Austin. It is well known that when expenses are sought the treasurer is missing, but what a different story when subscriptions and the like are due. Only kidding Wilf, I'll need the stamp money for this letter when I post it. Congratulations on the success you have made of the job which we all know is time consuming and a thankless task.

To Parachutists everywhere, best wishes from all of us in Manchester.

J. HOSKINS.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Charlie,

What the - - - is all this about who is Lowe Puller?

I, Lowe Puller, am alive and well and living in Achterordure. B.J. whose demise was falsely reported in your rag to fool the state mental authorities, is at present in the Amazon having heard tell of some females of like name with even more amazing knockers than V & T.

V & T is following him up to see for herself, partly to safeguard her reputation of having the biggest bazoom in the western hemisphere, but mainly to prevent B.J. getting too familiar with female gorillas, orang-utangs and native women.

B.J. has taken his rig with him with the intention of doing the first nood water jump into Lake Axolotl 15,000 ft. up in the Andes. The fact that the lake is teeming with piana fish does not deter B.J. who intends to paint the more vulnerable parts of his equipment with some blue powder that a scientist mate has made up. This powder will have a hallucinatory effect on any marauding piana fish or even scuba divers who will have the impression that a monster sea serpent is upon them and will finish up twitching their last upon the pebbled shore.

When B.J. returns we may hear more of this. As it is his first time away without his minder no good can come of this trip and Anglo-Amazonian relations are in jeopardy.

Yours sincerely,

LOWE PULLER

Dear Charles,

Threequarters down on the club page of the magazine Paraclan Parachute Club is noted. This is the second club in Scotland formed two years ago by yours truly: late of North Lancs SPC and Tidworth, Shrewsbury, Clatterbridge and Bangor General Hospitals, now enjoying an unprecedented run of non events.

We have moved our DZ from Charterhall to Strehallen where we have use of a pit, club room and a Cessna 207.

High spots in 73, apart from the "flying Machines" antics, was a display up in the hills at Killin by three members in kilts. George Phillips, the only true Scot in the team, had

the pole position in the plane and spent 40 mins trying to keep his kilt over his Y-fronts. Unbeknown to him at the time the draught was a blessing in disguise for it caused local anaesthetic thereby he felt nought when plonking his Y-fronts etc., over an electric fence.

With all the water up here you would think it impossible to stay out of it, however, it took us five trips before conditions allowed us to jump into the 'clear blue', and that was in November—whew! no kilts!!

Our Bug-Zee-Pots No Star Relative Team has been blessed by God for he has seen fit to throw us together on occasions.

We believe we are getting what Sport Parachuting is all about—we have the minimum of admin and the cheapest civilian rates in the UK. We extend a warm new year to all old and new friends, and hope to see as many as possible in 74. Just remember the name when coming up to Scotland—Paraclan—address etc., is in the magazine.

DAVE PAYNE. BPA 2370.

Leyland, Lancs.

Dear Charles,

I wish to thank you and all your friends and associates in the BPA Parachute Clubs who have been so kind in sending cheques and donations since Brian's death. I must also thank you for attending the funeral and for the lovely flowers you sent. I am writing to you particularly as editor of Sport Parachutist with the hope that you will publish a letter of thanks from me on behalf of my family and also the Black Knights. I am very grateful for all the wonderful kindness and offers of help shown to me over the past weeks since the accident, but since I cannot write to everyone personally, I feel a small notice in the magazine would be the most appropriate way to reach everyone concerned. I will leave it to you to word it as I am sure you are well able!

May I wish you all the best and happy flying in the coming year.

Yours sincerely,

GAYE JERSTICE.

# JUMPING DOWN UNDER

First of all—a big Hi! to all you Pommy jumpers! Got off the boat at Fremantle exactly a year ago, and since then Mike Deakin and myself have been keeping the old Union Jack flying high.

Stayed with Mike and Judy at the start, only to find I was sharing a bed with big Jim Smith! Smiffy was making lots of bread up North on an oil rig, and got down to Perth for every third week.

The City of Perth must be one of the nicest cities in the world, and the view from the air is second to none. The D.Z. is situated down South at a place called Rockingham, and is very roughly a mile from the beach. The backdrop for air-air pics is truly magnificent, and the climate of course a haven for colour photography.

A couple of weeks after arriving Mike and I judged at the '72 West Australian Championships, which gave me a good insight into the standard of W.A. parachuting. The accuracy was really a spotting competition with the odd exception landing in the pit! Style too was a little weak most of the jumpers getting the dreaded ZAP.

However, the 90° temperature and cloudless skies did wonders for the old sun tan.

We started the Western Parachutes Sky-Diving Centre in early December, and have gone from strength to strength ever since. Most weekends we have students for our first jump course, and for this we charge \$35. Thereafter, student rates are \$6 per jump, with normal a/c rates after 15 seconds. Over the last year we have had a number of problems with the D.Z. aircraft, etc. etc. . . . but have simply pressed on and right now things are pretty well organised. Not only do we have the *exclusive* use of a 180 (6000 feet for \$3), but we have just completed an airstrip on our own D.Z. some 50 miles inland from Perth. Rockingham will be built on before very long, but the main reason for the move is to escape the normal "sea breeze". This comes up most days, and often calls a halt to jumping from mid-morning to mid-afternoon.

Having arrived in the country and having started parachuting! the next thing, of course, was to find a job. I did 4 days as a labourer, 3 weeks as a Pest Control Operator (hence the wicked lies that I was a rat catcher!), and then 6 months delivering bread for a bakery! Not a bad job for \$72 a week, as I started at 7.30 a.m. and was down on the beach by 2 p.m. most days! Not a lot of future in bread of that sort though, so I got a real good job as a rep. for Remington Rand selling Mailing Machines! Believe me, 14 years in the R.A.F. is *good* training for selling Mailing Machines.

Anyway, getting back to the story, a terrible thing happened to Smiff early in 1973! Lo and behold Sally Gardner appears on the scene, hot from her triumphs as Miss Embassy! Hadn't been here 10 minutes before she puts the hard word on our Jim and the next thing — a bloody wedding invitation. Couldn't believe it, but sure enough, Mike and I end up as witnesses! Deakin was so smashed, the Judge refused to have him as a witness, and half way through the proceedings turned to the Bride to tell her off for giggling, saying that it was no laughing matter! Poor Smiffy just sat there in a daze and kept asking for another beer.

Not long after the wedding I had a 'phone call from Dave Waterman and all the boys in the "stars" to ask if I was interested in returning to the U.K. to train for the 1st world R.W. Cup. Very unfair, as I almost did! But I had just bought a new car, moved into a new place, and fallen in love *again*, so I decided reluctantly to say No!



Jim and Sally Smith (right) before their wedding

We have a number of Pommy jumpers here, so anyone thinking of coming over only needs to give us a call (60 2616) to be sure of some good jumping. Things have almost reached the point where, if you haven't got a British passport, you don't get on a load. Among those who have been with us for some time are Hugh Parsons, ex-R.A.P.A., and now the proud owner of a solid gold P.C. Mike Hickey, ex-Nuthampstead and T.A. Para Regt., whom we hope has finally learnt the art of stopping the tremendous turns he winds up. Bryan Haley and John Jones, both of whom started from scratch with us, are now capable parachutists with an excess of enthusiasm.



Tony Dale takes the plunge!



**Mrs. T. Dale celebrates her 100th descent.**

Back in August I put myself on the first lift one Saturday morning, along with one of our good looking female students, hoping to do a little R.W. from 5000! Still not quite sure what happened, but the D.Z. crew consisted of a Preacher and "Dirty" Deakin as Best Man! Now I'm no longer the carefree jumper I once was, but a respectable *married* man. Some consolation though as "we" now own 2 P.C's. One Foil and a new Nikon F with motor! !



**Mike Deakin (centre) welcomes Mood and Jood down under.**

A few weeks back who should turn up at the D.Z. early Sunday morning but MOO--D and JOO--D (Bradley). After the normal round of stories and lies we all got in the air to record their "first" down under! "Dirty" of course is hogging the best slot, but it was a good jump and only a *few hours* after leaving the boat at Fremantle. Other recent arrivals from "home" include Jenny Thomas, Bob—"The Beard"—Hull, and Tony Engbarth who have all now left for the East and the Aust Nationals. "Dirty" had a small do before they left, and at one time out of 14 jumpers present only 2 didn't have British passports! !

Well, this story is just about thru! But would like to say how much we all look forward to hearing from you "Pommy Bastards", so when you get the *odd* rainy cold cloudy windy day, drop us a line! Weather here is really fantastic with Summer now well under way, and next weekend we plan to complete the move to our own D.Z. Plenty of sunshine, plenty of room, plenty of ice cold beer, and temperatures in the 90s, THIS IS THE LIFE! !

TONY DALE, D.319.

## AUTUMN IN KENYA

For us it was a bright day when we were told to go to Nairobi and parachute. The object was to put on a display for the International Agricultural Show at Jamhuri Park, Nairobi, a six day job, one jump a day.

Off we set and some fourteen hours later we landed at Nairobi, 5,500 ft ASL, only to find that it was cloudy, raining and windy in Africa too.

The Kenyan Air Force were to provide jump ships, which they did very well in the form of a Caribou, and for fun one day a Beaver. Our jump programme gave us five practise days of two jumps per day, but nasty weather stopped the afternoon descent on two days. The Caribou crew and I differed somewhat during the first day as they felt that 600 ft with a one-minute-to-jump bell, followed by lights was good enough for both the Kenyan Army and Bob Card, although I just wouldn't agree somehow, so we did it my way and after a while all went well. My only complaint is that after the Cessna 172 I found the Caribou far too roomy with only six jumpers on board. One tends to go for walks to break the monotony of climbing, although it doesn't take long. However, it's not quite as painful as those coveted C130s.

On the third day the Kenyan Police felt that we would like to grace their Dakota and after some discussion I managed to persuade the team into giving it a try! So, five of us, as Mick McIntyre was still incapacitated, put on the old kit and flew off to take a crack at Jamhuri Park. The crew did a wonderful job and once I managed to stop the team walking about in the back, they were dispatched and landed safely in the arena.

As we all know, a free-fall display always goes down well with the crowd, but never as much as in Kenya I'm sure. A rarely seen past-time such as ours was, to many, really beyond belief, and one incident goes like this. Whilst part-taking of an after-show beer, the servant of our hostess, an elderly lady, sat quietly in the corner, just staring. I had to ask what was wrong and our hostess, after some exchange of Swahili said, "She saw you jump from the aircraft and therefore knows that you can't really be here so she's waiting for your spirit to go".

Another great moment was after our performance before President Kenyatta. We were lined up paying our respects and I pondered my earlier idea of asking him for his famous fly-whisk as a memento for the Clubhouse. Well it seemed like a good idea at the time! However, our 'manager' at the time, Major John Growse, knew of this and ushered us away to avoid an International Crisis and shut me up by presenting us with one he'd kindly purchased. This naturally was greatly appreciated and gratefully accepted BUT—it's not like the real thing.

Unfortunately on the final day only four of the original six could make it, myself, Ted Strawson, Dick Kalinski and Jock Cussiter, Mick McIntyre still being ill, and Bob Dowling had fallen foul of my earlier warning that when landing at 5½ thousand feet it stings a bit if you're not careful. A couple of sore heels and a touchy ankle for him proves my point.

With that I must have sparked off a little envy and maybe the odd smile. Now all that remains to be said is my sincere thanks to the Kenya Air Force for the pleasant jumping, the Agricultural Society of Kenya for the lovely hectic social evenings, to Major Growse for all his help, patience and for 'joining' us as he did, our very kind host and hostess, and last but not least the team themselves who behaved remarkably well—what's the catch lads?!

Hope to see some of you readers for Winter in Cyprus.

BOB CARD

# THE HOTTEST RANCH IN THE WEST

It is only 11 hours non stop, over the pole to San Francisco — 11 hours and then you're there, in California, Mecca of Meccas, standing, grip in hand under the burning Californian sun.

Fend off the airport taxi drivers and take the Greyhound Airport bus to its downtown terminal. Notice the colourful streets of San Francisco as you whizz by. You can see those later—first you must jump.

Buy your ticket to St. Helena, board the Calistoga bus and away you go, round the bay and out into the postcard Napa Valley vineyards. You notice for the thousandth time the cloudless blue sky and blazing sun. This is it.

From St. Helena, the last fifteen miles is public transportless, so you must either hitch or ring the Ranch and persuade someone to come and get you. Contrary to the stories of difficult hitching in the USA due to fear of mugging, in these parts it is easy, people stopping whether you show your thumb or not and regardless of how winning your personality is (which is I am told fortunate).

So then you're there—Pope Valley Parachute Ranch—the hottest Ranch in the West. Your wandering eye looks for the guys in ten gallon hats gunfighting from corral dusty P/C's. You look for the prairie worn cowpuncher rolling a cigarette in one hand while the other neatly packs up a Parasled, and you listen for the sound of a thousand hooves stampeding round the drop zone intermingling with the whistle of the Apache's arrow as it claims yet another relative worker. You look and listen for all these things—but in vain.

What you see however, is better. A large silver packing shed, a neat looking motel which looks as though it might serve up a good ale or two (and it does), and a row of coloured aeroplanes poised ready to leap into the air. This is it then, you know you've arrived at what must be one of the world's greatest D/Z's.

But let me substantiate that statement. What other D/Z can boast the attractions of Pope Valley? A restaurant, well stocked bar and swimming pool are just for starters, without mentioning the numerous water sports of nearby Lake Bearryessa, or the gliding and hot springs of Calistoga. Then there are the wineries of the Napa Valley, all more than willing to dole out free samples to the thirsty wayfarer and ninety minutes drive away the vast metropolis of San Francisco with all its wonderful roads to sin. Boredom is indeed difficult.

What however of the jumping; and here things really get good. The weekend I arrived they had a crack at a 30 man star and only just failed to make it. The sight, however, of

thirty sport parachutes all popping open at once overhead was something to blow the most blaze spectator's mind, let alone those of the guys attached to the risers. Stars are big at Pope Valley.

The jump fleet consists of two twin Beeches and two '180's', and lift costs compare very favourably with the UK. Equipment rental is however considerably more expensive so take your own with you if you possibly can. The weather and scenery are free, though worth paying for. Accommodation is also free if you are prepared to risk the sin and debauchery of 'the Ghetto'—an area of the airfield set aside for camping purposes. It is however where everything happens (once the bar is closed), though if you are willing to forsake this and are feeling rich, you can stay in the motel.

Pope Valley Parachute Ranch is owned and run by 'Curt' Curtis and Tim Saltenstall, both jumpers of high repute. Allowing for a large (British made) motorbike in lieu of a horse, Curt fits the wild west ranchers image to a tee while Tim would take some beating as a Sheriff. Before I am sued for libel however, let me add that they are a couple of the nicest guys you could hope to find anywhere, and this is reflected in their establishment. Billy Hammell and Ed Matlin are airport and lodge managers respectively and seem to be able to perform the feat of blending efficiency with good atmosphere. Thanks again Ed for the loan of your P/C.

Finally, a mention of Bob Freit—instructor, bar proper and manifest booth builder extraordinaire—should be made if only for the reason that he is the owner of a British D licence given to him by the worthy Chairman of the B.P.A. council. It is Bob I have to thank for succeeding on the difficult task of getting me off the static line and enabling me to finally come away with a '45 second' and two hook ups under my belt, which, looking at the comments in my early log book entries, can have been no mean task. Cheers Bob, and cheers to all the many others from Ned and Sheila Luker to 'Little T--s, who helped make my stay such an enjoyable one.

So, fellow jumpers, there it is. We live in the era of charter flights and hitch hiking. You may be able to afford it if you stay off the beer/cigarettes/womanizing etc. for the next few months and send your bank manager a Christmas card. I would be glad to supply anyone with further information if they feel like contacting me (Headcorn or Thruxton—weekends). Guys and Galls, Pope Valley awaits You.

WILLIAM GRUT B.P.A. No. 12077

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# EXIT OCTOPUS

Having completed the ground training of nine newcomers to the sport, with the help of Peter Evans, a great amount of deliberation was taking place as to whether one of them should be allowed to continue with his first jump or not, "a situation not uncommon with most active instructors".

This particular chap was unbelievable. When asked to perform a simple forward right P.L.F., he hurled himself into a fantastic dive, landing on his right shoulder, ass over breakfast, face buried in the ground, finishing up in a perfect track position after nearly vanishing up his own apex. Think what the back landings were like!

The decision was painfully made to take him to some quiet corner of the airfield for further ground training. It was bloody hilarious; Morecambe and Wise would have looked sick at the side of this lad: nevertheless, after coaxing, coaching—pleading—bleeding—sweating—laughing my head off, a tiny inclination towards progress was sighted. Pouncing on this we worked hard, and after a further three hours a marked improvement was achieved (miracles do still occur at times). The weather was against parachuting, so the remaining daylight hours were spent on packing lessons. Living locally, 'Octopus' bade us farewell, saying he would be back on the morrow—I secretly hoped he'd sleep in for 2 or 3 days, but 2 miracles in one weekend would be stretching it a bit.

With the hope of better conditions on the following day, we made our way into Whitchurch and the 'White Bear', of which Peter and Chem were the perfect hosts. I was tucked into bed, "Not being, as think, as you pissed I was, Dyson". The crux of the conversation during the evening had been centred around dear old Octopus (try to imagine what it would be like teaching an octopus to play the bagpipes—the mind boggles). Bets were being made on whether he would jump or not; some were betting against him even turning up. For my part in the conversation I was keeping an open mind.

The following morning brought absolute chaos: Sunshine—no clouds—no rain—no wind and no bloody aircraft. Sorry Joe? Still, as there was a promise that it would be arriving soon, we went about the business of kitting up in readiness, with no sign of Octopus (perhaps miracle No. 2 was taking effect), could there be another Rip van Winkle in the making? Alas, five minutes later my dreams were shattered. Walking down the runway, like some apparition from a Charlie Chaplin movie, came our hero, Octopus, with his quarter-past-nine feet adorned with a sparkling new pair of jump boots. According to the body position he was walking towards us, but the position of his feet defied logic and seemed to be going in another direction (it would have baffled you too Cookie!). A great deal of planning and preparation went into kitting him up and putting him way down the manifest.

A droning was heard, the aircraft's here fellas. It turned out to be a low flying Capri. It did arrive, eventually, in the shape of a shiny 172. The first lift was airborne with the first two static lines nothing to shout about. Next two aloft, average for first timers. Third lift was rather funny; No. 2 on the wing, looked down then looked back, anguish written all over his face, shouted something that sounded like "I must be effing crackers". Good performance from those two though. Jesus, what have I done? Octopus is on the next lift, I'd completely forgotten about him. There was something rather odd which I couldn't quite put my finger on, then I realised he had his helmet on back to front and his boots on the wrong feet—I wondered why all the other guys were laughing at him. I decided to join them for 5 mins. but I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Oh well, back to business; helmet righted, boots lefted, we toddled

off to the aircraft with a tumultuous sound of mirth in the background. He hadn't the foggiest idea as to what all the hilarity was about.

In position, right hand hold of strap, left hand covering reserve handle. Funny? Without telling him. We soared aloft with all kinds of inhibitions flitting through my mind. At 1,000 ft. he promptly tried to point out where he lived. Result? an Octopus elbow bang on target. You silly Emmanuel. With blood streaming from my nose I told him to settle down, not in those exact words. Running in 2,500, aircraft corrections—five left, his clambering out. "Come back Emmanuel, we've a long way to go yet". Mother, what have I done to deserve this. Exit point, CUT—ON THE WING. "What did you say?" shouted he. ON THE BLOODY WING. "Oh, alright then", (Jesus. Buckley, where do you get them from). All this time, blood was still trickling from my nose. He proceeded to climb out, right foot on step, left foot on wheel, left hand on strut. Good, good; keep it up. Swing your right leg clear, right hand on strut for poised exit position. But he was having none of that, with a clear 'I'm only here for the beer' look over his right shoulder, he made a beautifully executed dive exit, classic spread, head well back and the loudest shouted drill I've ever heard. This lad's been having me on. Perfect deployment, canopy checked, toggles located, he proceeded to steer down to within 30 feet of the target cross, face into wind, finishing with a fine P.L.F. observed by the ground personnel.

I was washing the blood from my face when he walked up in the now familiar fashion, for de-briefing. Restraining hands were placed on my shoulders. I looked as if I'd just done a long session with a Kung Fu expert whilst he just stood there looking cool, calm and collected. But back to reality; dive exit and busted nose apart everything was near perfect. Asked why he'd dived from the aircraft, he replied "I can't remember but it seemed the most natural thing to do". Star pupil. The mind boggles. EXIT OCTOPUS.

FRANK PEEL, D894

P.S. There's a moral in there somewhere.

## RIGGING NOTES

*Steve Talbot, B.P.A. Chief Rigger.*

A fatality occurred recently in U.S.A. when a jumper became disconnected from his chest mounted reserve canopy on deployment, after cutting away from a malfunctioned main.

It was thought possible that both Q.A.C. snap hooks became detached from the main harness 'D' rings. This is possible to duplicate on the ground by twisting the snap on the 'D' ring in a certain way. Cases have occurred in this country where snaps have become disconnected leaving the jumper to descend, trusting to one snap hook and the spreader bar.

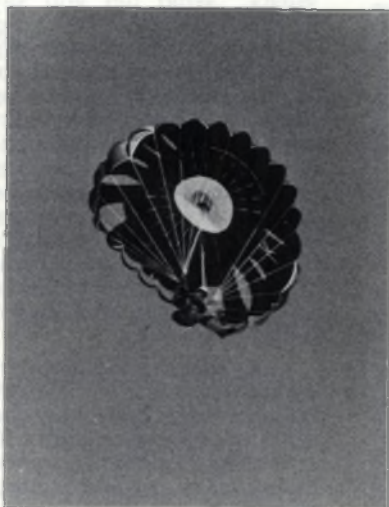
The remedy is simple and inexpensive and can easily be done to all reserve snap hooks, whether high or low mounting systems are used.

1. With a 1/16 in. dia. drill a hole through the spring mounted cover of the snap.
2. Either purchase through a parachute dealer or, manufacture a pin 1/16 in. dia., long enough to pass through the hole in the snap cover. Attach one end of this pin with a short piece of cord to any convenient part of the reserve tray or riser to prevent the pin from being lost.
3. Now with the pin in place the snap cannot be removed from the 'D' ring but the snap still operates normally when the pin is removed.

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- I Red and Blue, with a touch of Black and Gold.
- II Mostly Green with Black, Red and Gold and a touch of Blue.
- III Gold 'sunburst' with Black and Red.
- IV Red and Blue with White in the tail.
- A Red, Black and Gold (similar to III).
- B Green, Black and White chequer board.
- C White, Blue, Red, Black, Gold and Green radial stripes.
- D Gold Maltese Cross with Red crown on Blue.

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- I Blue and Gold.
- II Black and Gold.

## THUNDERBOW E.F.A. CLOUDS

- Red
- Black and Gold
- Blue and Gold
- Red and Black
- Black and Gold
- Red and Black
- Green and Black

- Red and White
- Blue and White
- Black and White
- Orange and Black
- Solid Gold

## SLEDS

RFD-GQ PROTECTOR RESERVES

## C9 'LL' & 'TU' RIGS

We now hold a comprehensive selection of Security Rigs

## CROSSBOWS

Solid Red, Blue, Black or Sage Green.  
Combinations of Black with Gold or Red trim,  
Red with Black Trim and Gold with Black trim.

## THUNDERBOWS (Mini Plgs. and Conventional)

Solid colours — Red, Blue, Gold, Black, Sage Green.  
Combinations — Black with Gold or Red trim,  
Red with Black Trim and Gold with Black trim.

## A LARGE SELECTION NOW IN STOCK

### SHORTBOWS

Solid colours — Red, Blue, Gold, Black or Sage Green.  
Combinations — Black with Gold or Red trim.

### MINI SYSTEMS

Red with Black trim or Gold with Black trim.  
Blue with Black trim.  
Gold with Black trim.  
Red, White and Blue.  
Black with Red trim.

B.4 Pack and Harnesses, Risers and Ripcords.  
CENTRE PULL reserve pack trays and centre pull reserve conversion kits.

## ACCESSORIES

### ALTIMETERS

(Altimaster and North Star)

### STOP WATCHES

Instrument plates and wrist mounts Smoke Brackets (Top of foot type) . . . and a multitude of small items

such as ROD and PORTIA GOGGLES, ANEMOMETERS, CAPEWELL CONVERSION KITS, POP STUDS, BELLY BANDS, KICKER PLATES, etc

### PARABOOT

Most sizes

### GLOVES

S.P.S. are pleased to introduce their new 'Jump Glove'.

### HELMETS

Everoaks Jumpmaster (without studs on the brow) Bell.

**SMOKE GENERATORS Schermully & Paynes Wessex. DEMONSTRATION PATHFINDER, PAPILLON and PARA BEACH available on request.**

Badges and Name Tapes to order

Dan Poynters Manual and Sport Parachutist binders.

H.P. Facilities available on orders in excess of £200.00



British Made

## BADGES & NAME TAPES

Badges available in Silk or Wire embroidery on Felt background to any design.

Silk screened Name Tapes. Block letters or script as shewn.

All prices include freight and duty subject to exchange fluctuations

# SPORT PARA SERVICES

25 CROOKHAM ROAD, FLEET, HAMPSHIRE

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Fisherprint