



Details of clubs and courses are available from:  
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Dave Waterman, Andy Keech, Geoff Horan, *Soldier Magazine*.

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# THE SPACE AGE SPORT





Control of the sport is vested in the British Parachute Association which is the governing body of the sport by the Civil Aviation Authority, the Royal Aero Club, the Sports Aid Foundation, and the Sports Council (which provides Grant Aid for Administration/ Coaching and British Team participation in World Parachuting Championships).

The Association is responsible for training and safety standards, development of techniques and equipment and for encouraging participation. More than 150,000 parachutists have joined the Association since its formation in 1962 - the current membership is in excess of 25,000.



# SPORT PARACHUTING





The first scientific approach to parachute design is to be found in sketches of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). With modern design and techniques the parachute and parachutist are no longer at the mercy of the wind.

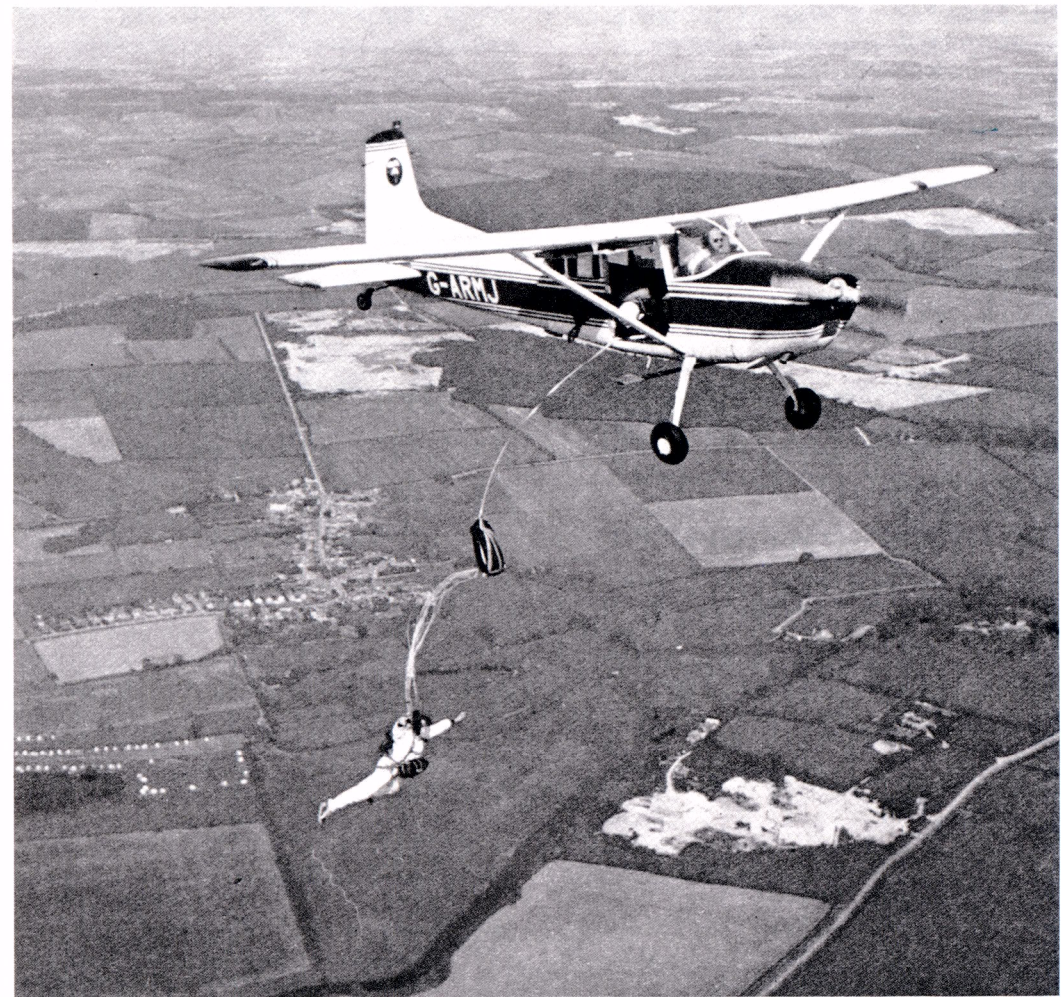
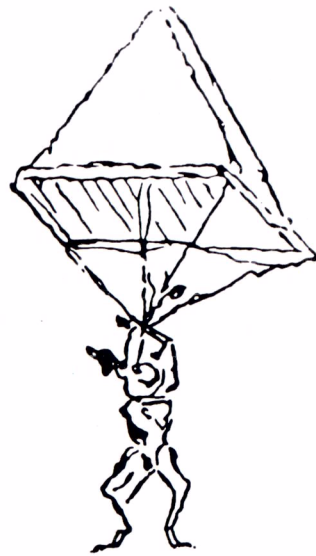
The student parachutist undergoes 6 to 12 hours of ground training spread over two days (at the week-ends if preferred).

During this ground training the student is taught the various BPA approved techniques involved in making a jump with an automatically opening parachute, that is, with a parachute opened by means of a static-line attached to the aircraft.

These techniques include the method of exit, the basic 'spread eagle' position, canopy handling (to enable the jumper to guide the parachute after opening), the landing fall, parachute packing and emergency procedures.

Training is available at some thirty clubs around the country - most operate at week-ends only but there are a number of Full-time Centres where trainees can undergo courses lasting one week or longer. The minimum age for sport parachuting is 16 and parental consent is required for those below 18 years of age.

All instructors are BPA qualified and operate within the training requirements laid down by the Association for this exciting, exhilarating and challenging activity - so aptly named 'The Space Age Sport'.





The British Parachute Association organises the annual British National Parachuting Championships and sends a British Team to the annual World Parachuting Championships. There are four distinct aspects of competition parachuting, namely: 'Accuracy', 'Style', 'Relative Work' (RW), and Canopy Relative Work (CRW).

On an 'Accuracy jump' the object is to land on a 5cm diameter disc in the centre of a gravel pit.

On a 'Style jump' the competitor has to perform an International series of manoeuvres during free-fall, for example, a 360° right turn, a 360° left turn and a back loop. There are six manoeuvres to a series and points are gained for speed and complete execution of each movement – or lost for incomplete execution.

In Relative Work teams are required to form a set of formations in sequence during free-fall.

Canopy Relative work is the newest discipline, and here the jumpers formate one on top of the other and either rotate the 'stack' or form differing configurations or attempt the fastest 'stack'.





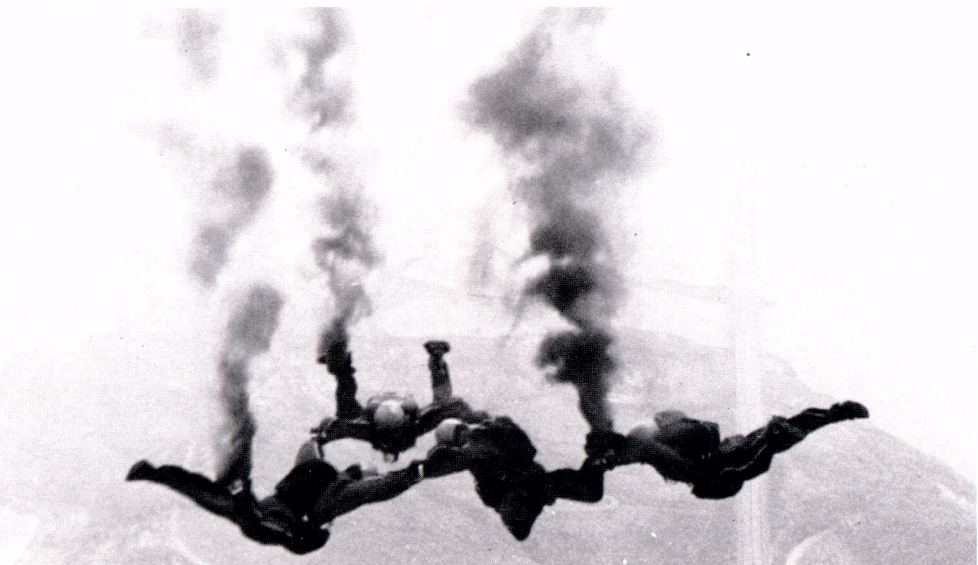


'Relative Work' in free-fall is the ability to work in relation to other parachutists while falling earth-bound at 120mph. In free-fall the body can be controlled to perform 'Aerobatics' and formate on other jumpers. By using these 'relative work' techniques a group of jumpers, having left the aircraft separately, can link-up to form a circle or 'star' or one of the other formations which has been accepted as part of competition parachuting.

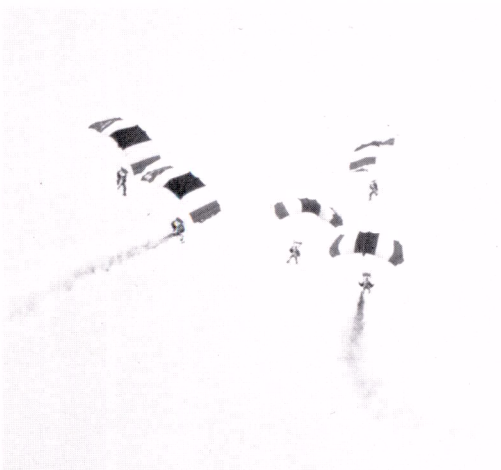


BPA members make in excess of 150,000 jumps each year, including thousands when spectators are thrilled by the brilliant free-fall capabilities of the skydivers, falling and manoeuvring leaving coloured smoke trails behind, until, with a reassuring 'crack' their multi-coloured parachute canopies of various designs blossom out to be guided to their target areas.

Whether landing their multi-coloured canopies centrally in a tiny area at a County Show attended by Royalty, or at a local 'Donkey Derby' to raise funds for old folks' homes, the parachutists show the courage, skill and artistry that is symbolic of this Space Age Sport.







World Parachuting Championships in Classic and Relative Work are held every year. Teams from as many as 20 nations compete in these events.

The British teams are chosen following the annual National Championships held at various centres throughout the country. The 1978 team travelled to Yugoslavia where Jackie Smith took the Gold medal in the ladies individual accuracy event. 1979 saw the two Relative Work teams, 4-man and 8-man, competing in France. The 4-man team won the Silver medal and 8-man team took fifth place. Future seasons should see the British squad continuing to excel in all events.



**Golden Girl Jackie Smith's parachuting career began after attending an Adventurous Training Course at Netheravon. Soon asked to join the Red Devils Display Team she jumped with them for five seasons. A British team member in 1974, 76, 77, 78 and 79 she won the World Ladies Individual Accuracy event in 1978. 1979 saw her win a Silver medal in the 4-man event, and fifth placing in the 8-man event.**

