

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2008

Present: Paul Applegate - Chairman
Kim Newton
John Curtis
Dave Major
Pat Walters
Bill Sharp
Rick Boardman
Pete Sizer
Ray Armstrong

Apologies: Bernadette Whitaker

In Attendance: John Hitchen - Chairman STC
Tony Butler - Technical Officer
Trudy Kemp - Assistant to NCSO/TO

Observers: Ralph Mitchell, Jeff Illidge, John Page (*from item 10*)

ITEM

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

The Chairman of STC took the Chair pending the election of a Chairperson.

Pat Walters proposed Kim Newton as Chair of the Riggers Committee, No seconder supported Pat's proposal.

Kim Newton then proposed, seconded by Pat Walters a motion that Paul Applegate continues in the post as Chairperson of the Riggers Committee for a further year. This was unanimously agreed by those present.

Carried Unanimously

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 22 NOVEMBER 2007

Page 2, Item 3 – To Consider a Request from Allan Hewitt Regarding Reserve Packing.

John Curtis raised some concern with regard to Allan Hewitt's proposed safety notice database trial. This followed his attendance at Allan's presentation and launch of his project at the AGM. John stated that from the information ascertained from the presentation was that Allan would not be contacting parachute manufacturers with regard to obtaining information from them to upload on to the site until Feb 08. John Curtis stated that he did not want people to think that this information was available on Allan's website at this time.

Kim Newton reported that she had contacted Allan Hewitt to advise him of the Committee's decision regarding his request. Allan had stated that he would contact Kim when his website was up and running so she could log on and start using the site. To date she was waiting to hear from him.

Bill Sharp advised the Committee that he had visited Allan's website and had noted that there was likely to be a cost involved for obtaining information from the website, unless you were a regular contributor.

The Committee noted the comments made in relation to Allan's proposed trial and safety notice database. However, the Committee had agreed to Allan's proposed 12 month trial at the previous meeting and as such they should await the outcome of reports following completion of the trial.

Page 3, Item 4 – BPA Rigging Course Request. The Meeting was advised that Allan Hewitt had cancelled this Course because he was unable to obtain the services of another Rigger Examiner. Kim Newton wished it noted that she had never agreed to examine on this particular Course, as some people may have been lead to believe.

Page 4, Item 5 (iii) – Advanced Packers Course Reports. Pete Sizer advised the Committee that Andrew Hughes had attended a packing re-assessment as agreed at the last meeting.

Page 5, Item 7 – Manufacturers Bulletins. Bill Sharp commented on the Advisory Notices issued by the French Parachute Federation, and asked the Committee what was their official status.

Bill was advised that the Committee had agreed previously that these bulletins should be treated as information only and were circulated as such. If the Committee then felt that the information should become 'official', they could then decide in turn to issue a BPA safety information bulletin.

Page 6, Item 8 – AOB (ii). Rigger Examiners Renewals. John Curtis referred to the requirement for attending Courses and stated that this issue had been addressed in the Riggers Course Report, which was on the main agenda that evening.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Pat Walters and seconded by Dave Major that the Minutes of the Riggers meeting of the 22 November 2007, be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

3. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 22 NOVEMBER 2007**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

4. **TO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL FROM JOHN RIX REGARDING RE-INSTATEMENT OF HIS ADVANCED RIGGERS RATING**

A letter had been circulated with the Agenda from John Rix requesting the re-instatement of his Advanced Riggers rating, which lapsed in March 06.

John had stated in his letter that this is the first time he had not joined the BPA since 1976 because he knew he would not be jumping in the UK during the period March 06 to March 07. He then re-joined the BPA again in March 07 and was advised that to renew his Riggers rating, he would need to apply through the Riggers Committee. As his BPA renewal was coming up again, he

wished to address the situation prior to the renewing his membership in March 08. John had supplied further details in his letter supporting this request.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by Pat Walters that the above request be accepted with the proviso that another Rigger Examiner endorses the rating renewal form.

Carried Unanimously

5. STUDENT HARNESS & CONTAINER SYSTEM INITIAL CLEARANCE REQUEST – BILL SHARP

A Student Harness & Container System – Initial Clearance Request from Bill Sharp had been circulated with the Agenda.

This clearance request was to update the usage approval of the Telesis 3 (S/L and Cable FF use – Riggers June 2006), to include usage in the AFF role, using the manufacturer's (Rigging Innovations) already BPA approved 'ripaway' BOC throwaway pilot chute system (Riggers Aug 2002).

Bill was present at the meeting and was able to provide further details of this request. He also presented a copy of the manufacturer's mod for information.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Bill Sharp and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

6. RIGGERS COURSE REPORT, 10 – 14 DEC 2007

A Riggers Course had been held at RAPA from the 10 – 14 December 2007. The Association wished to thank the Club for hosting the Course. A copy of the Course Report had been circulated with the Agenda.

The Examiners conducting the course were Bill Sharp (RE 53) and John Curtis (RE 18). There were a total of 6 people attending the Course (3 x Basic Riggers, 2 x Advanced Riggers and 1 x Examiner (part 3) upgrade.

Noel Purcell, Andy Montriou and Niel de Wit successfully completed the Basic Riggers Course and had been awarded Basic Rigger status.

Rick Boardman and Steve Studders successfully completed the Advanced Riggers Course and had been awarded Advanced Rigger status.

Kim Newton successfully attended the Rigger Examiner Upgrade Course and was awarded Rigger Examiner status.

There was one item of note regarding the Advanced Riggers Course (Pre-Course Qualification Issue) concerning Steve Studders that Bill Sharp wished to update the meeting on.

Bill stated that in early December, one of the AR candidates (Steve Studders) informed him by email that upon checking his actual PR qualification date (16th Dec 05), he suddenly realized he was actually 5 days short of being a PR for two years prior to attending an AR course. This was an oversight on his part as his PR course qualification date in Dec 2005 was the same week (2nd full

week in Dec) as was the Dec 07 course that he would be attending. At the time, and since he was coming out regardless, Bill said he would speak to the 2nd Examiner (John Curtis) once he arrived for the course on the 10th December.

However, due to various circumstances Bill advised Steve that he had to remove him from the course due to him being unqualified by reason of time as a PR. His only lifeline to being reinstated was that Bill said he would ring Paul Applegate, in his position as Chairman of the Riggers Committee, explain the situation to him and leave any further action to him.

Paul Applegate had advised Bill that he believed the situation was a matter for common sense in that Steve had been a PR for a 2-year period (albeit 5 days short), and this was being declared before the start of the course. There was no intent on Steve's part to deceive the system.

The Committee were then advised that a recommendation linked to this matter had been made in the Riggers Course Report of 5 – 10 January 2008 (Agenda Item 7), which would be discussed then.

Bill then reported that the two Advanced Rigger candidates both arrived with their completed container systems. The problem that was identified is that AR candidates arrive with a complete rig, hopefully to get the course Examiners to clear it, not only as a viable rigger project but also as a jumpable concern in the future.

Bill stated that during the construction process, many important stitch patterns (diagonal back strap onto the back lateral, some leg junction areas, and the complete 3 ring main ring area for example), are or can be subsequently covered up by the back pad, fancy mud flaps or leg pad covers, making it almost impossible to fully check the suitability of those patterns.

Bill said that we should also bear in mind that there was no requirement for a PR upgrading to AR to have a supervising rigger to check some of this work and that maybe there should be.

Fortunately on this course, one candidate had taken full digital photos of his entire construction process so the stitch patterns could at least be seen. The other candidate made his rig himself but did it at TSE's facilities under their supervision, and made to their plans, with Chris Thomas pre-checking all stitch patterns etc prior to them being covered up.

Bill then advised the Committee on the recommendations from the Course, which he stated were in twofold:

- 1: Was it necessary for an AR candidate to have a supervising Advanced Rigger to oversee certain parts of the AR candidate's container system?
- 2: If not the above, then AR candidates must provide good clear digital photos, accurately showing the important stitch patterns and/or any important construction parts of the container that will be covered up when it is complete. Failure to do so could mean the Examiners have no other option than to fail the rig through lack of construction information etc.

Following some discussion on this matter, the Committee had agreed in principle to these recommendations, but that Bill Sharp draft a more formal proposal for consideration at the next meeting.

7. **RIGGERS COURSE REPORT, 5 – 10 JANUARY 2008**

A Riggers Course had been held at RAPA from the 5 – 10 January 2008. The Association wish to thank the Club for hosting the Course. A copy of the Course Report had been circulated with the Agenda.

The Examiners conducting the Course were Bill Sharp (RE 43), Andrew Hilton (RE 179) and Kim Newton (RE 167). There were seven candidates attending the Basic Riggers Course.

All candidates successfully completed the Course and were awarded Basic Rigger status. The successful candidates were: Richard Bishop, Christopher Gilmore, Richard Green, Dominic Hines, Paul Jordan, Steve Thain and Dave West.

Bill Sharp advised the Committee that the recommendation was not directly linked to the outcome of this Jan 2008 BR course, but rather to try to alleviate future problems which were highlighted on the Dec 07 course held at RAPA, and that could happen with this course's BR's in the future.

Bill stated that the actual course qualification date of a BPA member's rigger rating starts from a time dated period from which the candidate must upgrade/re-qualify "within a year/within two years" etc or "must hold a qualification for a minimum of two years" etc.

Bill stated that recent courses are being run at more or less the same time every year, plus or minus a few weeks. On the last course at RAPA (10th – 14th Dec 07) an AR candidate attended the same 'second week in December' rigging course at RAPA that he attended two years earlier when qualifying as a PR. As was reported (Agenda item 7), he was 5 days short of the 'two years as a PR' attendance requirement. Bill stated, if the course was moved to one week later, the AR candidate would have been OK but one of the Examiners would have then been out of date by falling outside the 'Examiners need to attend a rigging course within two years' (The Examiner also attended the same December course two years ago).

Bill advised the Committee that the three Examiners on this course (with agreement from John Curtis from the previous course), would like to propose the following:

That the time requirements for the following rigger ratings are allowed a leeway of up to plus or minus one calendar month from the official requirement date.

- A Basic Riggers attendance on a Parachute Rigger exam course
- A Parachute Rigger's upgrade to an Advanced Rigger
- An Advanced Rigger's upgrade to a Rigger Examiner
- An Examiner Rigger's time period between attending rigging course to retain their Examiner rating.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Bill Sharp and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above recommendation be accepted. However, it was stipulated that anyone falling outside of this one month period would need to apply to the Committee for an exemption.

Carried Unanimously

8. ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORTS

- i) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had taken place at Headcorn Parachute Club from the 4 – 5 December 2007. Pete Sizer had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Jude Walker successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

- ii) An Advanced Packers Training Course had taken place at Netheravon from the 28 – 31 January 2008. A Course Report had been received that morning from Ray Armstrong. A copy of which had been circulated to those present. The Instructors and trainees wished to thank the Centre for the use of their facilities and hospitality shown to everyone.

The Instructing Riggers were: Ray Armstrong, Dave Ballard, Paul Burns and George Panagopoulos. The candidates attending the Course were: Ashley Hollick, Pelham Georghiades and Lee Thomas.

All packers were instructed on the lessons outlined on the syllabus, given all of the relevant paperwork/handouts and carried out practical packing tuition on various containers. All of the trainees achieved a level of competence that the instructors felt with practice they would all be able to reach the standard required to attain an Advanced Packer qualification when presenting for the exam phase.

Ray Armstrong advised those present that due to the Rigger Examiner pulling out from running the course at short notice, he had been asked to run the course in their place. Ray explained that this left AR Dave Ballard in the unfortunate position of not having an Examiner Rigger present for him to then be qualified to run Advanced Packing courses in his own right.

Ray stated that he consulted Chairman Paul Applegate, whom in turn consulted with BPA Technical Officer Tony Butler about allowing Dave to be assessed and examined by himself.

Ray said that although he was not an Examiner Rigger as yet, he was an Instructor Examiner, Advanced Rigger, and CCI who regularly runs Advanced Packing Courses and examines Advanced Packers. He stated that he appreciated the time and consideration shown by both Paul and Tony, and that although given the go ahead to proceed with Dave Ballard's involvement with the course, acknowledged that the final decision would lie with the Riggers Committee / STC. He stated that he would like to recommend that Dave Ballard be allowed to run Advanced Packing courses.

Following some discussion on this matter, the Committee fully supported the Chairman's decision to allow Dave Ballard to be assessed and examined by Ray Armstrong on this particular occasion because of circumstances as highlighted above. However, it was agreed by those present that all the requirements must be met for any future Courses.

Following further consideration of this matter, it was proposed by Ray Armstrong and seconded by Pete Sizer that Dave Ballard be permitted to run Advanced Packing Courses.

For: 6 Against: 1 Abstentions: 1 (Bill Sharp)

Carried

Ray Armstrong stated that further to this he would like the Committee to consider that due to the serious lack of BPA Rigger Examiners that Advanced Riggers with a current Instructor Examiner rating that are also current with running AP courses and examining the same be allowed to assess / examine riggers, allowing them to run AP courses and Advanced Riggers to carry out the Examine phase for the AP rating.

Following some discussion on this matter, Ray agreed to draft a more formal proposal for consideration at the next meeting.

9. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

There had been no BPA safety notices/information bulletin issued since the last meeting.

10. MANUFACTURER'S SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

A number of Safety Information Bulletins or Advisory Notices had been circulated since the last meeting:

- i) A Service Bulletin (C/1/2 0108) had been issued by Airtec on 22 Jan 2008. This concerned the necessary actions to follow in case of an unsuccessful or incomplete selfset and/or switch-on procedure on all Cypres 1 and Cypres 2 units, all versions.

This followed an incident in the USA in Dec 2007 where a Cypres 2 unit activated a few seconds after exit. The Cypres showed problems with the switch-on several times the day before. An attempt to switch on the unit before the skydive was made, and nothing was seen on the display, but it was decided to use the parachute anyway. Fortunately there were no injuries.

Paul Applegate advised those present that Airtec's Bulletin states "to always observe the complete selftest until the '0' appears. In the event an error code being displayed, please consult the appropriate Cypres User's Guide for appropriate action(s). In the event that there are any irregularities or conditions during the selfset and/or switch-on procedure, which are not explained in the Cypres User's Guide (such as unknown error codes or numbers, missing numbers, no red light, blank display, etc.) – please contact Airtec or SSK before the next jump".

The Committee were then given details of a number of incidents that had involved misreadings on the Cypres AAD.

Pete Sizer said that there was no physical 'off' switch on the AAD and that AADs are merely on standby until the unit is reactivated by pressing the appropriate button. However, if nothing then happened, i.e. if the screen was dead, the unit could still be 'on'. He stated that if an AAD does not turn on correctly it should not be used, as it could fire at altitude.

The Committee were concerned that there seemed to be some misconception certainly by some jumpers that because they were unable to switch the AAD on, they could still use it. This was not the case and should be considered as an irregularity. The Committee wished to get this message across to jumpers that if there are any irregularities with an AAD, then they should not use it.

John Page commented that there was a great number of electronic equipment in use that is classed as being turned on as soon as a battery is inserted. This brings the equipment from being in a 'sleep' mode into an 'awake' mode. He stated that some equipment was active as soon as a battery is inserted and not everyone may be aware of that.

Following further discussion, Paul Applegate agreed to contact Airtec with a view to obtaining some more definitive answers to some of the problems highlighted at the meeting.

- ii) The European Aviation Safety Agency had recently published a Safety Information Notice (SIN) ref 2007-51 regarding two DGAC France Airworthiness Directives F-2007-25 and F-2007-026 issued on 19 December 2007 covering temporary grounding of reserve canopies and a reserve parachute mandatory packing mod slider and steering lines replacement. To view these documents and any other SINs that have been issued, click on this link to the EASA website: http://www.easa.eu.int/home/c_sin.html

It was noted that EASA Airworthiness Directives are mandatory throughout the EU.

- iii) A Service Bulletin (SB271107) had been issued by Aerodyne regarding all Icon Harness/Container (Part Number _120) manufacturers after and including 1 September 2007. The Bulletin had stated that a report back from the field had revealed that there had been some damaged grommets on an Icon Container. The Icon was returned to the manufacturer where it was determined that the grommets had been damaged by the grommet press. The damage can be seen on the inside of the grommet where the closing tool has scratched the inside surface of the grommet. The seating of the grommet needs to be inspected to ensure correct and flush seating of the grommet. This could be an isolated incident, but as a matter of precaution Aerodyne had recommended that all grommets on the Icons listed above be inspected.
- iv) An Advisory Notice (CS147) had been issued by the French Parachute Federation regarding Vectra and Module manufactured since 12/1996 from the French company Parachute Shop. This had been circulated for information only.

11. A.O.B

- i) Pat Walters advised the Committee that he had recently carried out a reserve re-pack on a set of equipment and gave the meeting details of a problem he had identified with the previous pack job and also to the Record of Inspection List accompanying the equipment, which he said had not been completed correctly.

The Committee felt that Pat should contact the person concerned in the first instance. There was a system in place for the confidential reporting of incidents, which Pat should have followed.

- ii) Rick Boardman advised the meeting that a colleague of his within the gliding community had received a document and questionnaire from the British Gliding Association (BGA) referring to both BPA and GASCO decisions concerning the packing of round parachutes.

Rick stated that the document refers to our 'decision' of last February (Riggers 2007) to no longer train our packers in round parachute packing. It also refers to the GASCO setting up a round parachute working group to look into the problem they have perceived with this decision.

Rick Boardman stated that he had already contacted his colleague to advise him that we have not ceased to teach round parachute packing, but merely moved the requirements for the qualification to the Advanced Rigger level.

Tony Butler advised the Committee that GASCO had already been advised on this issue previously and that the Kieran Brady, the BPA representative on GASCO would be reminding them again at the GASCO meeting he was attending that day.

- iii) Bill Sharp reported that Steve Studders had produced a document, which included categorised information and guidelines to obtaining packing and rigging qualifications. Bill presented a copy of the document and asked if the Committee wished to take it a step further with a view to making it available on BPA website in the future.

Following some discussion, the Committee believed that with a little more work, Steve's document would make a good reference guide and they agreed that it was certainly worth taking further.

Bill Sharp said that he would liaise with Steve Studders on the matter.

Date of next Meetings: Thursday 10 April 2008
Thursday 5 June 2008
Thursday 31 July 2008
Thursday 25 September 2008
Thursday 20 November 2008

BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester
at 4.00 p.m

20 February 2008

Distribution:

Chairperson Riggers Committee
All CCIs
All Riggers
Advanced Packers
Council
D. Beaven (CAA)
Lesley Gale

PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE BPA OFFICE NO LATER THAN MONDAY 31 MARCH 2008