

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2008

Present: Paul Applegate -
Chairman
Phill Elston
Rick Boardman
Pete Sizer
Steve Thomas
Bernadette Whitaker

Apologies: John Hitchen, Kim Newton, Dave Major, George Panagapolous,
Pat Walters.

In Attendance: Tony Butler -
Technical Officer

Trudy Kemp -
Assistant to NCSO/TO

Observers: Phil Cavanagh, John Page, Colin Fitzmaurice.

ITEM

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 31 JULY 2008**

Page 1, Item 1 – Riggers & Packers Questionnaire. Rick Boardman had produced a report based on the response he had received from the survey he had carried out amongst Riggers and Packers to see how much or how little round equipment was in use in the UK. A copy of Rick's report had been circulated to those present.

Rick reported that the survey followed on from a recommendation made at a previous Riggers meeting regarding the future of round reserve packing within the BPA. Those present had expressed concern about the ability of the qualified packers and indeed the variously rated people signing them up each year to maintain currency.

Rick gave the meeting further details of his survey, including a number of statistics, which confirmed that the use of round reserves in the UK was on the decline. However, Rick stated that of great interest were the additional comments on the questionnaire added by many of the respondents. He stated that apart from general approval for the survey, by far the most significant comments expressed concern that this was a skill set and depth of knowledge, which packers and riggers could not afford to lose.

Rick stated that many people were also concerned that currency was difficult to maintain. However, several respondents admitted that they considered themselves to be highly current because of the number of round parachutes they regularly pack on behalf of other sports. Rick stated that this was of relevance, because whilst these systems (and those packed in Europe by one of our number) did not come under BPA authority, they do keep the skills fresh, which was the real concern.

Rick summarised by stating that perhaps the BPA should consider a more in depth survey of personal equipment in the future to identify trends in deployment devices, canopy wing loading and many other factors. A copy of Rick's report would be available on request from

the BPA office.

The Committee thanked Rick for the work that he had carried out on this project.

Page, 1 Item 1 – Soft Links. It was agreed by those present that this item be dealt with under AOB.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Phill Elston that the Minutes of the Riggers Meeting of the 31 July 2008 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 31 JULY 2008**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

3. **TO CONSIDER A TANDEM EQUIPMENT CLEARANCE REQUEST**

A Student Harness & Container System – Initial Clearance request from David Gould of Point Zero had been circulated with the Agenda. The equipment concerned was the Basik Air Concept Advanced Tandem Harness container, which had been previously inspected by David Gould and Paul Applegate. However, at this time the equipment was not currently in the UK.

The Chairman reported that David Gould had sustained serious injuries following a motorbike accident that prevented him from being present that evening. He stated that a letter dictated by Dave Gould to a member of the Point Zero team has been received and circulated to those present requesting that the equipment be cleared for use at all BPA Clubs.

The Chairman reported that Basik Air Concept had also submitted a set of Drills and Emergency Procedures Guide for the equipment, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

The Committee considered this request at some length, during which a number of points were raised by those present relating to the equipment concerned, which required further clarification.

Following further discussion, it was felt by those present that until such time as the Committee had sight of the equipment and until such time as the manufacturers had produced a comprehensive set of reserve drills similar to those that the BPA had produced for each of the various Tandem systems in use in the UK, they were unable to accept the equipment for use in the UK.

4. **TO CONSIDER A BR EXTENSION REQUEST**

A proposal had been received from Rick Boardman and circulated with the Agenda requesting a BR extension for Niel de Wit.

Rick stated that Niel had attended his BR Course at Lippspringe in December 2007 and that he had worked extensively at Netheravon rigging room throughout this year and was planning to attend the PR Exam Course in December 2008. However, because Niel had been called away on active service, he could no longer attend this Course. As the next Riggers Course was unlikely to be until December 09/Jan 2010, Rick had requested an extension to Niel's Basic Rigger rating until January 2010.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Phill Elston that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

5. LIFING OF EQUIPMENT

A discussion paper from Rick Boardman on the subject of Lifting of Equipment had been circulated with the agenda. Rick had stated that he would like to discuss this matter because he believed there was a lack of clarity with the current system.

Rick reported that there was equipment in use in the sport where some manufacturers stipulate finite lives on their equipment and others that do not. He stated that the equipment manufacturers that have ceased trading or changed company name may or may not adopt designs from the previous company, or said kit could become an "orphan".

Rick stated that presently there were 3 main references for an Advanced Packer, which in his opinion conflicted each other:

i) Rigging Technical Manual, Technical Items, Page 8, "Lifting of Equipment"

"A reserve parachute assembly within the BPA system is lifted at each repack for a period of 6 months. "

ii) BPA Ops manual, Section 6, "Equipment"

8.4 "Where manufacturers' requirements conflict with those of the BPA, the BPA requirements will apply."

iii) BPA Forms 112,113,112a.

" In the personal opinion of the Inspector, the equipment at the time of examination was considered to be safe for further usage." Also...

" Whilst the equipment has been inspected with all reasonable care, the opinion expressed by the Inspector does not give or imply a guarantee that the equipment is free from defects other than any identified above."

This topic generated a great deal of discussion. The Committee felt that the whole subject of lifting of equipment needed to be re-visited.

It was therefore proposed by Phill Elston and seconded by Rick Boardman that a Working Group be set up to look at the whole subject of lifting of equipment.

Carried Unanimously

6. ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORTS

i) An Advanced Packers Course had been held at Point Zero/Hinton Skydiving Centre from the 11 – 14 August 2008. Ray Armstrong had submitted a Course Report a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

The Instructing Riggers conducting the Course were: Ray Armstrong and Paul Burns. The Course was attended by six candidates: Kristopher Sheppard, Sandra Keith, Mark Piper, Michelle Caldwell, Simon Asquith and Philip Gunton. All candidates were advised to return for final examination at a later date.

ii) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had taken place at Hinton Skydiving Centre on the 15 August 2008. Ray Armstrong had submitted a Course Report a copy of which had been circulated to those present. Matt Abram successfully

attended the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

- iii) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had taken place at Hinton Skydiving Centre on the 16 August 2008. Paul Burns had submitted a Course Report a copy of which had been circulated to those present. Simon Asquith successfully attended the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.
- iv) Ray Armstrong had reported that Dave Emerson had presented himself to be examined for conversion examination from his original 'grandfather rights' reserve packing qualification to an Advanced Packer Square rating at Hinton Skydiving Centre on the 3 September 2008. Ray had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Dave successfully completed the Course and had been awarded with an Advanced Packer (Grade S) rating.

- v) Paul Burns had submitted an Advanced Packers Examination Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. The Course had been held from the 26 – 27 August 2008.

Alan Westley and Lee Thomas had successfully attended the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

- vi) An Advanced Packers Tandem Course was held at the Headcorn Parachute Club from the 15 – 17 September 2008. Pete Sizer had submitted a Course Report a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

The Course was attended by Tony Goodman and Chas McNeil both of whom already held an AP (Grade S) qualification. Both candidates were successful and had been awarded AP (Grade T) status.

7. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

There had been no BPA Safety Notices or Information Bulletins issued since the last meeting.

8. MANUFACTURER'S SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

A Product Service Bulletin had been received from Strong Enterprises concerning the Vigil II AAD and the Dual Hawk Tandem System, a copy of which had previously been circulated.

The Committee was advised that the Service Bulletin authorised use of the Vigil II DoM 10/2007 or later, and Cutters DoM 11/2007 or later, and when installation is accomplished according to Dual Hawk Manual, P/N510045, Rev. H, 05/08, Sec. 5.1 and Vigil II instructions. Included on the Bulletin was a note stating that the Vigil II should only be used in the Tandem mode.

9. A.O.B

- i) Following a recent incident where a set of main soft links were fitted to a reserve parachute, Phill Elston had volunteered to undertake a manufacturer survey on recommendations/rulings on soft links.

Phill had contacted a number of manufacturers and had prepared a paper detailing the various responses he had received to date. A copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Phill gave the meeting further details of his findings so far after which he agreed to produce a summary of his report, a copy of which would be available on request from the BPA office.

- ii) The Committee was advised that Ray Armstrong had registered Matt Abram and Simon Asquith as Method 2 Basic Riggers.
- iii) The Committee was also advised that Phill Elston had registered Gerry Cepelak as a Method 2 Basic Rigger.
- iv) Ray Armstrong had advised the office that he would be running an AP Tandem conversion Course at Point Zero situated at Hinton Skydiving Centre from the 2 – 3 October 2008.
- v) Jason Thompson had also advised the office that UK Parachuting would be running an Advanced Packers Course from the 10 - 14 November 2008.
- vi) Pete Sizer advised those present that he would be running an Advanced Packers Course from the 17 – 20 November 2008.
- vii) The Chairman advised those present that an e-mail had been received from Allan Hewitt concerning Rigging Courses, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. He stated that Allan had asked for some feedback on his comments.

Allan's letter had referred to the previous Riggers meeting whereby Bill Sharp had submitted a request to run two Rigger Course with a number of exemptions from the approved system.

Allan had stated that his reason for writing was that Bill's request in his opinion proved his argument that he has been pushing for many years now, which was:

- a) The system to train and qualify Riggers was a good one, but there are not enough examiners to accommodate those who do show an interest
- b) Our system is not adequate enough to retain qualified Examiners
- c) We do not have enough facilities available that are suitable for courses
- d) We do not encourage Riggers to progress in a manner to sustain our system

Allan had stated that it had been many years since a Course was held in the UK and that the BPA was now totally reliant on one facility. If this facility was lost, Allan was sure a solution would be found however, he stated that he believed the current situation was not acceptable and he urged the Committee to think about those who want to train as Riggers and to put themselves in their shoes and see how many hurdles they have to overcome to achieve their goal.

Allan had reported that he had always intended to keep his Rigger Examiners rating and run courses, but he had finally given up as he felt it was just too complicated. Allan had stated that he was not alone in his thoughts as he had spoken to other Examiners over the years and they also agreed this was a subject that Riggers need to debate.

Allan had stated that he had his views on what should be done and what the problems were and requested that the Committee look into this subject and prepare for the future.

The Committee considered the points that Allan had raised in his correspondence. However, it was felt by those present that although the Association had a limited number of Rigger Examiners, there were a sufficient number for its current requirements.

Date of next Meetings:

Thursday 20 November 2008
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester
at 4.00 p.m

26 September 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 BY MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2008**