

Photo: Lee Crudgington



**BRITISH**  
SKYDIVING

**REVIEW  
OF THE  
YEAR  
2019**

# **WE ARE BRITISH SKYDIVING**

*Martin Soulsby: Chair of Council*

2019 was a very interesting year: challenging, exciting, emotional and ultimately fulfilling as we have made many positive fundamental changes to develop British Skydiving for the future as we deliver our strategic plan.

The thing I love about our sport is the passion and enthusiasm everyone has for it, not just our current members but also former members. But sometimes that passion can cross the line and while we are a family who are very tolerant, there are times we must rein things in. Sadly, there have been a few occasions recently when we have seen this, and we do need to make sure we treat everyone with respect, especially the many volunteers who give us hundreds of hours a year of their valuable skills and expertise to ensure that British Skydiving is the envy of the skydiving world.

Now my purpose here is to give an overview of 2019, the COO, Treasurer, Committee Chairs go into much more detail in their reviews.

First, I must use the B-word here and I do so with no apology. Yes, BRAND! In 2019 we moved from British Parachute Association to British Skydiving. I first mooted this idea back in 2016 at the AGM and in 2018 we tried at selecting a logo (it's probably best to glide over that). In 2019 we were far more

successful with the help of Creative Sponge, a commercial branding agency who emerged from our open competitive tender process as our preferred branding partner.

We are British Skydiving, not just a logo but we got under the skin of our sport with a whole new identity true to the values and personality of British Skydiving which remembers the past but is very much focused on the future. We rebranded as British Skydiving on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019, just a few days before the International Parachuting Commission became the International Skydiving Commission.

Some members have been sceptical about the need to rebrand, and I can understand that perspective from inside the skydiving bubble. But your Council must engage with the wider sporting landscape, and the public, including through the media, in a future that is likely to present ever-increasing competition for leisure spend.

Another major leap forward is the introduction of our new membership database - our Personal Information Management System (PIMS), and new web hub. PIMS replaces a database from 1999 and the possibilities it offers with its greatly improved functionality are very exciting.

Following a review of our non-technical committee structure - Communications, Competitions and Development, Council has approved the recommendations of the Working Group it established to develop a committee structure to help to deliver our Strategic Plan for British Skydiving. The new arrangements will reduce the number of full Council meetings from six to four a year to make Council more efficient and effective and introduce a new committee structure - Communications, Élite Performance, Finance and Member Development. Our technical committees, STC and its Riggers' Subcommittee, will continue unchanged,



subject to future review.

The Member Development Committee (MDC) is the new venture that excites me the most, with the responsibility to attract and retain members throughout their varied journeys in our sport. This is a very wide and challenging remit. It offers opportunities to really change and develop the way British Skydiving interacts with current and potential members to meet their needs on their many and varied journeys in our sport through the range of services we deliver.

In 2019 at the Speed Skydiving World Cup, which was held at Skydive Buzz, Dunkeswell, I had the honour to present some of the medals. It was a great event run by Mikey Lovemore as Meet Director with DZ owner Jason Farrant, and where we celebrated Max Hurd setting a new World Record. I also had the pleasure, as a representative of the Royal Aero Club, to award the Queen's Cup at the Formation Skydiving 4-way Nationals, held at Skydive Hibaldstow, to the AAA National Champions Team NFTO, who also enjoyed medal success

***“We can be justly proud of who we are and what we have achieved together”***

at the World Cup in Female 4-way, winning a Silver Medal. This following a year during which the relationship between Council and NFTO has unfortunately been difficult but was, to the satisfaction of all, resolved with the support of an external mediator at Sport Resolutions UK.

In November, following a suggestion by our insurance brokers, Council approved a recommendation by the Development Committee to recommend to the AGM an increase in the indemnity limit of members' third-party public liability insurance by £5m to £10m per incident or occurrence. This was in line with the strong consensus of the Drop Zone Owners' and Operators' Specialised Interest Group meeting in August. It will add just under £7 to the insurance premium component of the full membership subscription, and approximately £1.80 to that of a student provisional member. The background is changes in injury compensation awards by the courts due to changes in the discount rate applied to the tables used by the courts which are known as the Ogden tables.

We have implemented an Equality and Diversity Policy, and Whistleblowing Procedure which sit alongside our Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures. To oversee these, we created a part-time role of Compliance Officer, which the COO covers in his review of staff changes.

After 23 years loyal service as our Finance Manager, Jon Gretton retired in November and Debbie Carter our Treasurer plans to stand down at the AGM, although she has generously agreed to continue as a volunteer member of our new Finance Committee to help to get it off to a flying start.

Debbie, a Chartered Accountant who works professionally with a wide range of third sector bodies, has been a stalwart of Council and the solid financial foundation of our

Association for 28 years. Thank you both Debbie and Jon for all your loyal hard work over so many years. The financial stability and underpinning of British Skydiving as an organisation is testament to Debbie Carter's solid and steadfast approach to this key office over so many years. It was evident at the time of the global financial crash in 2008 in which the prudent approach taken by Council to financial investment saw the capital value of our investments maintained at a time of instability in the markets unprecedented in modern times.

One of the main objectives of British Skydiving is to keep everyone who jumps as safe as possible. We know there is an ongoing challenge with new disciplines and equipment being developed, especially high-performance canopies. The STO summarises in his review the work of the Canopy Piloting Working Group, convened by STC in 2018, and chaired by Mark Bayada.

I have now had the honour of being your Chair for the last nine years and the AGM will be time for me to bow out. Chairing our Association has been a fantastic and rewarding experience.

During this time there have been massive changes in our Association, we have achieved so much together - a refurbished HQ, introduced long-term strategies, values and vision, seen full membership grow by over 20%, a reduction in membership fees of around 15%, improved financial stability, a new governance structure, agreed future changes to the schedule of Council meetings and committees, launched a new membership database and website plus of course launched our new, clearer identity as British Skydiving. In addition, we have brought on new members of staff, including specialists with skills we have never had on the team before, and said goodbye to longstanding members of staff.

Whilst I, of course, will take all the credit for these advances, it was really the teamwork of the Council members, volunteers and staff working together that has made all this possible.

Three years ago, when I was elected as what was called the Initial Chair under the new governance structure, I took the personal decision that I would not stand again for a further term. In reaching this decision, I recognised that governance provisions are designed to stop an individual becoming too entrenched and institutionalised as a Council member, such that an individual can now serve continuously for a maximum term of nine years (3 x 3 years). Whilst this does not affect anyone among our number yet, as the clock restarted with the new governance structure, I do think as Chair it is very pertinent. After such a long time, it is impossible for me not to have become embedded into the Association and for all those around me to become influenced by my behaviour, beliefs and views.

Also, our January 2020 AGM is a great time for a new Chair to take office, with the launch of the British Skydiving brand, a new web hub and PIMS. A great opportunity for them to help direct and develop British Skydiving as we go ever forward in this new decade.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in everything we have done in my time as Chair. To Craig Poxon as my Vice Chair for his long suffering listening to my ideas, his strong beliefs and honest opinions; to Adrian Bond who has chaired our Communications Committee throughout my whole nine years and has grown the AGM, sorry the Expo, to the hugely popular event it has become. To the legend that is John 'Hitch' Hitchen and Jeff Montgomery who has filled his shoes so well as his successor both as STO and Chair of STC. To the many chairs of the Competitions Committee during my tenure.

Thank you to all the various Council members - 35 during my time as Chair - discipline reps and volunteers over the years, whose passion, energy and commitment really do make British Skydiving what it is. Not forgetting the Vice Presidents whose advice and wise counsel have been invaluable. Finally, the backbone of the Association, our staff, who have put up with my many foibles, ideas, rants and even, I hope, the occasional brainwave. To Tony Butler, our COO, and Martin Shuttleworth, our Secretary-General, whose sage advice, moral integrity and common sense has made my task so much easier, well most of the time.

I may be stepping down from the limelight, but my heart and soul will always be a supporter and cheerleader for British Skydiving and our wonderful skydiving community. We can be justly proud of who we are and what we have achieved together.

I look forward to you all buying me a drink at the AGM/Expo and my final Gala Dinner as Chair.

# A YEAR PREPARING FOR CHANGE

*Tony Butler: Chief Operating Officer*

Much has been achieved this year. Our canopy working party, chaired by Mark Bayada, has been engaged in extensive research and consultation, nationally and internationally, on the relationship between canopy size and safety. The working party will be formulating its recommendations to our Safety & Training Committee (STC) in early 2020. This is likely to lead to new rules and restrictions and members should understand that we do not do this lightly, but in the wake of too many skydivers who have unwittingly sacrificed their lives in but a moment of misjudgement. We must make this aspect of our sport safer.

The excellent news on safety is that 2019 has been a fatality-free year for British Skydiving.

As the Chair has noted, 2019 was the year in which we celebrated the Silver Medal success of our Formation Skydiving 4-way Female team NFTO at the World Cup in Eloy, Arizona, USA. We also celebrated our member Max Hurd breaking the World Speed Skydiving record to become the fastest person in the world.

We have planned for a new committee structure from 2020, better to deliver Council's strategic plan. Full information will be available by the time of the AGM, but there has been a longstanding agreement that we need a Finance Committee as we have not had one since the Finance and Development Committee became the Development Committee over twenty years ago.

We signed a memorandum of understanding with the British Indoor Skydiving Association (BISA) for them to look after indoor competitions under a five-year licensing arrangement.

At the end of the AGM on Saturday 25 January, Martin Soulsby, our longest-serving Chair (he has been in office since 2011 and Communications Chair before that), will stand down. Martin's achievements as Chair have been major ones, culminating in our



emerging as British Skydiving with a new visual identity, robust values, a clear strategic plan, a completely refurbished headquarters building, and an even sharper sense of our mission and purpose in today's ever more complex world.

That Martin Soulsby has achieved all this in sometimes trying circumstances, whilst maintaining his professional enthusiasm and courtesy, and always being 'bright eyed and bushy-tailed', is to me the mark of a most exceptional individual to whom the sport owes a great debt of gratitude. You can thank him yourself at the AGM.

Our rebrand to our new trading name of British Skydiving has now taken place, ushering in a contemporary new visual identity with which we shall go proudly forward to the next phase of our development as an organisation and a sport.

Unfortunately, Council was inharmonious for much of this year, with passion for the sport extending to what appeared to me to

be almost a missionary zeal. As is so often the case, the issue boiled down to financial considerations, in this case of investment in performance, or sponsorship of elite performance.

Difficult meetings led to difficult and contentious decisions culminating in a day with a mediator at Sport Resolutions UK with one of our top teams in September. We need to learn from this to ensure it does not happen again and that we can work through issues constructively to resolve them ourselves.

I have also seen issues incorporating independent Council members into the warp and weft of our sport. Differences in perception came to the fore and fomented factionalism on Council that has helped no-one. Skydiving is not a stereotypical sport; neither does our leadership team spring from the pages of a management textbook. As an organisation, we are an artefact of our sport and at a delicate equilibrium at the nexus of it. We need to chime with our sport to justify the privileged place we occupy.

Towards the end of the year, our staff team faced a welcome yet nevertheless daunting leap of over twenty years in the technology of our membership database system. This is being replaced by our new Personal Information Management System (PIMS) based on the proprietary software OM.Net supplied by Eudonet (UK) Ltd. This happened at the same time as we launch our new web hub and phase 1 of our rebranding.

Our new digital system will also see significant changes to the mechanism of our routine administrative interaction with both members and Affiliated Parachute Training Organisations. We seek everyone's support and understanding as the new system beds down, and we start to reap the benefits of its many new features and capabilities.

Part of the ongoing development of British Skydiving has included appointing our first

Communications Manager, Angel Fernandez, who since April seems to have been at every competition or event since joining our staff team, so if you have not met him yet you soon will. In the autumn we welcomed James Potts, on his retirement as a Detective in Leicestershire Police, to the part-time contract role of Compliance Officer. Our staff team was also joined by Marie Kent, who succeeded Joy Ledger as Competitions and Awards Co-ordinator.

2019 also marked the 40<sup>th</sup> work anniversary of Trudy Kemp. Trudy joined us way back in 1979 and has been a highly valued member of staff and has been with us every step of the way since she joined, her first job straight from college. What staying power, and what an encyclopaedic knowledge of who's who in British Skydiving Trudy has built up since then!

It was lump in the throat time at the end of November with the retirement from our own staff team of Jon Gretton, our Finance Manager and Company Secretary, after 23 years sterling service. May I thank Jon on behalf of all his colleagues on the staff, the Treasurer and the rest of Council, for his good humour and stoicism in putting up with us, many of whom, apart from the Treasurer, are not financial specialists. May you enjoy a hale and hearty retirement, Jon.

May I also echo the Chair's thanks to Debbie Carter, our long-time Treasurer, who is standing down at the AGM but will continue as a volunteer member of our new Finance Committee. Debbie Carter's professional Chartered Accountancy skills have exerted a steadying influence for nearly three decades, during which British Skydiving has achieved solid financial underpinning. This, as Debbie will be the first to point out, is something that we need to continue to work on, and must never take for granted.

I should like to thank members of Council and its Committees, and my staff colleagues,

together with our valued team of specialist advisers and volunteers, for their contribution across the range of our activities during the year under review.

Running a national governing body of sport today has far more dimensions than it did even ten years ago. Only by bringing so much talent and so many skills together in a financially sound association can we achieve the success that we have in British Skydiving. I am convinced we are primed to achieve ever more. It has not been an easy road, nor for the last year in all respects a smooth one; but we have emerged from our triumphs and travails even stronger and more robust.

***“We shall go proudly forward to the next phase of our development as an organisation and a sport”***

# FINANCE

Debbie Carter: Treasurer

Competitions costs have fallen by £49,000. This fluctuates with the timing of funding. We have also suffered a £13,000 cost of providing for a debt from the European Parachuting Union that is unlikely to be recovered.

Overall this has resulted in a surplus of nearly £50,000 to be included in our reserves to sustain the future of the organisation.

As the COO has noted in his review, the complexity of running a national governing body of sport has increased considerably. New areas as diverse as safeguarding, a wider range of compliance requirements and social media have all come to the fore. This has led to us creating new staff posts during the year, such as Communications Manager and Compliance Officer. It has also increased the costs of external specialist professional advice which we have needed across a wider range of specialisms, including data compliance. We have also taken legal advice on more issues than ever before. This has led to an increase in operating costs going forward.

I am grateful to Tash Higman, a member of Council who is an accountant and a Warwick MBA, for her work as prime mover and developer of our business and financial risk register, which she has helped Council and staff to prepare through training sessions. This has been a helpful learning experience and the register provides Council with an additional management tool, and a timely one against the background of an increasing range of organisational functions.

Council's review of committee structure, which continues the good governance in sport initiative, and is to assist Council and staff to deliver British Skydiving's strategic plan, will see the composition of a Finance Committee in 2020. It is many years since we last had a committee to cover this function, and it is a much-needed step forward, as there cannot be many membership associations of our kind that do not have one. Our new committee structure is another welcome sign of the

engagement of British Skydiving with the wider sporting landscape.

We are also likely, as we go forward with our new Finance Committee, to be able to bring together several strands of our operation under a coherent framework. We have financial investments (reserves), investment in people (staff and volunteers) and we also have other kinds of investment, although we may not label them as such. What we used to call 'funding' and more recently 'sponsorship' - supporting our top athletes to train to represent GBR at World Parachuting Championships and other international events - is investment in performance.

Equally, investment in participation is important for British Skydiving. By recognising that there is a range of areas for investment and limited resources, the role of Council in balancing investment needs by deciding on budgets, guided by the objectives and deliverables set out in the strategic plan, is made more business-like. Council has faced challenges in seeking to adopt and adapt 'off the shelf' policies to be reasonable and proportionate for our small specialist sport without stifling its famously strong esprit de corps. The new committee structure will help in this.

At the end of November, we saw the retirement of Jon Gretton, our Finance Manager, who had been on our staff team for 23 years. During this time, Jon and I have developed an efficient and effective working relationship, and we have worked closely on matters financial with Tony Butler, our Chief Operating Officer, and the Chair of Council. We are sorry to see Jon go, and wish him every success for the next phase of his life. We currently have an Interim Finance Manager in place as we recruit Jon's successor in the New Year.

I also record my thanks and appreciation of Martin Soulsby's hard work during his tenure as Chair of Council, and for the fortitude, resilience and professionalism he has shown in challenging political conditions at Council meetings, especially during the last year.



# SAFETY AND TRAINING

**Jeff Montgomery:**  
*Safety & Technical Officer & Chair,  
Safety & Training Committee (STC)*



As the COO notes in his report, we have enjoyed a fatality-free year in British Skydiving. This is fantastic news. Far from making us complacent, it inspires us to redouble our efforts to make every year fatality-free.

We sometimes hear of near misses happening at our PTOs, unplanned events that have the potential to cause, but do not actually result in, injury or damage. We encourage reporting of near misses which are so important in predicting, and therefore preventing, skydiving accidents. Near miss reporting provides us with a wealth of valuable information, enabling us to build a rich picture of safety issues and to identify any trends that may help to avoid future incidents and accidents. It could even save a life.

In 2019 British Skydiving carried out 12 audits of our Affiliated PTOs. In turn, we have ourselves been audited by the UK aviation regulator, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), under whose exposition and schedule of approval we operate (reference GA/101/96).

We continue to encourage and promote safety management systems within our sport, which provide a systematic way to identify hazards and control the associated risks through a comprehensive management process. Safety management in skydiving should be proactive not just reactive after an incident has occurred - though we do of course investigate incidents and learn valuable lessons from them.

We continue to work with Drop Zone Operators, Chief Instructors and all in our skydiving community to embed this proactive approach, to reduce the occurrence of incidents and accidents. We work hard to assure that everybody learns as we move together as a sport, as a learning organisation, strengthening everybody's safety culture and always looking out for each other.

STC's Tandem Working Group continues to review our operational rules for Tandem Skydiving. In 2019 it made several recommendations to STC as we seek to maintain and improve still further our enviable safety record. Part of this involves enhancing our instructors' training and preparation, including what to do when things do not go to plan.

Tandem equipment is typically the hardest working equipment on any Parachute Training Organisation (PTO) and frequently it is subject to the most wear and tear. This, combined with the complexity of the equipment, means that it requires particular care and attention during packing and maintenance to ensure that it remains in a safe, serviceable and airworthy condition.

It is often the area of equipment maintenance regimes which, if they are not as robust as they might be, could lead to serious tandem incidents, which can potentially have huge adverse consequences on the lives of our instructors and our students and their families. Fortunately, serious tandem accidents are extremely rare but, just as with near misses, minor accidents need full attention as their underlying causes may presage more serious incidents unless the risks are properly identified, managed and controlled.

Unfortunately, we saw several serious injuries in 2019, both on high performance landings and through canopy collisions or entanglements. STC has now recommended that all first jump solo students are trained in actions to be carried in the event of a canopy collision. We also need to consider how we maintain the currency of that knowledge, by refresher drills and training, maintaining and improving skills and competence, and having a personal plan in place, so every jumper is prepared and ready should they find themselves in a canopy collision.

Our Canopy Piloting Working Group, chaired

by Mark Bayada, is continuing to review all areas of canopy handling from basic level to high-performance landings. It has been hard at work in 2019 and is close to formulating its recommendations to STC. As the COO notes in his report, this may result in additional operational rules to address a vital safety need in the wake of a pattern of fatal accidents in recent years caused by split-second misjudgements when landing high-performance, high-speed, canopies.

In 2019 British Skydiving delivered 12 one-week long instructor courses, covering eight different instructor ratings at five Affiliated PTOs. A total of 137 candidates were trained or coached from which 117 were assessed for their respective ratings with a total of 94 meeting the standard for award of the appropriate British Skydiving Instructor ratings. I would like to thank the DZOs and volunteers, our Instructor Examiners and Chief Instructors, who have given their time throughout the year in providing the facilities and supporting British Skydiving in delivering our Instructor courses.

We are grateful to Romero Sport & Leisure, our insurance brokers, for maintaining their support and sponsorship of British Skydiving risk management. In 2019, this included underwriting the cost of concurrent training days for tandem instructors and riggers on the Friday before the Expo the following day.

Other areas of support by Romero have included covering the cost of specialist aviation and airspace advice for the sport, of which there have been and are always likely to be many issues, both local, national and international.

As winter settles in and sport parachuting activity slows, and with it currency, I should like to encourage all skydivers to recognise the need to refresh their skills at the start of next season, to remain sharp and stay safe when taking to our skies.

# COMPETITIONS

Mark Bayada: Competitions Chair



2019 has been a very successful year for the activities overseen by the Competitions Committee.

At an international level, UK hosted the Speed Skydiving World Cup and European Championships at Dunkeswell. This is the second World Cup to be hosted in UK in the last five years and as the Wingsuit World Cup before it, was a great success with 28 competitors. Max Hurd won double Bronze and set a new FAI world record of 500.17 kph. This really does show that the UK is more than capable of hosting First Category Events with positive collaboration between British Skydiving, the Organiser and the host PTO. It is something I hope we shall see more of in the future.

In this year's World Cups across the disciplines, over 90 British skydivers competed at venues in Argentina, Italy, Romania, USA and South Africa. It was a significant increase in attendance in most disciplines.

As has already been mentioned by the Chair and COO, in Eloy, Arizona, Team NFTO won Silver in the Formation Skydiving 4-way Female and Team Nova came fourth in Freestyle, narrowly missing out on a Bronze Medal.

In most disciplines, our competitors are significantly closing the gap in scores to the winning teams, particularly in FS categories and accuracy landing. We also saw good year-on-year improvements in VFS, CF and WS.

At the Wingsuit World Cup, eight competitors represented GBR, 6 of them for the first time, showing the effect that the road shows are starting to have.

The UK Skydiving League and our Grand Prix - our domestic regional competitions - continued to be well supported in Formation Skydiving, Canopy Formations and Accuracy Landings.

National Championships were hosted at Hibaldstow and Dunkeswell with the Canopy Piloting being run at Klatovy in the Czech Republic. All disciplines continue to be well attended with large increases in attendance at VFS, CF and Wingsuiting.

As well as competitions, the committee has overseen a programme of Skills Coaching Roadshows held at British Skydiving Affiliated Parachute Training Organisations across the UK with the aim of making them accessible to all members. The programme of roadshows has been aimed at members whatever their current skill level, from the most junior jumpers needing help to get their first stickers in their licences to experienced competitors aiming to improve their scores. This year more funding was allocated to the Roadshows, to cover the full cost of the coaching, including the coaches' jumps, keeping the cost of participation as low as possible.

A programme of selecting athletes to be sponsored based on their performance at the National Championships continued in 2019 with a condition of accepting sponsorship being to put something back into the sport by coaching on the Roadshows. This ensures that all those attending the Roadshows not only get coaching by expert jumpers but also encouragement to compete in their chosen discipline.

The sponsorship scheme has had to be reviewed this year and the Competitions Committee or its successor may change it in future. However, the objectives will remain the same, to help organise domestic events and to increase participation. Also, we will be trying to better support our athletes with the aim of improving our international results and increasing our medal tally.

Training seminars for judges were run at the start of the season and further training was carried out throughout the year, qualifying more judges in Accuracy, Artistics, Canopy Formation and Wingsuiting.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



7.



*Photos*  
 1: Nationals medals by Martin Martinez  
 2: Angry Birds by Ellie Marshall  
 3: Wez Westley by Emma Reynolds  
 4: Team GB at Eloy  
 5: CRWSADERS by Peter Hughes  
 6: NFTO by Martin Martinez  
 7: Esther Reynolds by Dave Crowhurst

The central plank of our work this year has been development of our new Personal Information Management System (PIMS) with our contractor Eudonet (UK) Ltd (formerly 3Si Ltd) who were appointed as a result of an open invitation to tender in 2018.

We are hugely grateful to Graham Spicer for his pivotal role as client-side co-ordinator in which he has seen the project through from the specification he originally drafted. Graham has also, with Andrew Hilton, been an Archivist since the foundation of the archive project in our 50th anniversary year of 2011. Graham was both Chair and Secretary to our IT Strategy Group from its formation in 2015 until spring 2019.

For his significant and sustained contribution to British Skydiving, Council awarded Graham Spicer our most senior award, the British Skydiving Jim Crocker Sword Trophy for Outstanding Contribution to our Sport.

PIMS will take time to bed in, for staff, PTOs and members to familiarise themselves with its operation and the additional facilities it offers above the 'old faithful' membership database it supersedes. The old database was developed by then member Mike Gorman in 1999 and I am sure that he would never have imagined that it would go on to give 20 years service.

PIMS is a 20-year leap in technology and offers many more functions, with better tools for data analysis. Our interest is in trends from data that has been anonymised, not personal profiling. We do not give, sell or rent our members' personal data to any outside party. We continue to invest in data compliance through training and audit, retaining external professional advice, and through the new part-time contract staff role of Compliance Officer.

We held an additional meeting of the Drop Zone Owners and Operators Specialised Interest Group (SIG) in August to introduce PIMS for student provisional membership. This was in addition to the now customary annual meeting of the DZO SIG on the Friday before the AGM and Expo. From 2020, the DZ SIG meeting will be part of the Expo industry day, which will also include the safety updates and personal development training for tandem instructors and riggers that Jeff Montgomery, Safety and Technical Officer and STC Chair, has successfully pioneered over the last few years.

Championing diversity and inclusivity in our sport has been another key element of the Development Committee's work in 2019. Encouraging more women to participate in the sport is a referral from Council, the issue



coming to the fore as a consequence of a matter involving the criteria for the allocation of sponsorship funding by the Competitions Committee, that has triggered much discussion and consideration of possible research projects going forward.

The gender balance for tandems is broadly 50/50, yet female participation drops to 15-20% among full members, though it increases among active competitors. The percentage by gender of full members appears to be similar in other countries we have looked at, except for France where it is >30%. We seek to understand this difference, intuitively we think it may be related to government funding in France. Initiatives in other countries, such as Sisters in Skydiving and the Women's Skydiving Network in the USA and elsewhere, suggest that the gender balance of experienced skydivers may be stubborn to change and that achieving a 50/50 balance

## **DEVELOPMENT**

*Craig Poxon: Development Chair*

***“Personal growth and skills development are intertwined”***

may not be possible. However, the more we find out about the issues, the richer picture we shall be able to draw.

British Skydiving is inclusive to all, except where individuals must be excluded on safety grounds should a risk assessment indicate them to be a potential danger to themselves and/or others. Initiatives to underline our inclusivity to people with other protected characteristics are on our list too, as our social media support for Pride indicates, and we were pleased to note that Skydive Tilstock held the first Rainbow Boogie in the UK.

Personal growth and skills development in the sport are closely intertwined, and the Rise Up mentoring programme, developed and administered by Yassi Müller a member of Council and the Development Committee, has continued during the year to boost participating members' engagement and confidence in our sport. It has benefitted both mentees and mentors. Yassi is stepping down from Council at the AGM 2020 but has kindly volunteered to continue with her role in Rise Up. We are most grateful to Yassi for her commitment to this project.

The IT Strategy Group has been quiescent since May. I have taken the Chair and we are planning for a technical secretary, at least pro tem, from our IT suppliers Computerlink (Leicester) Ltd, whose managing director, Nathan Tutt, has been a member of our IT Strategy Group since it started. PIMS is cloud-hosted and migration from our on-premise server of other data on our server at HQ is an upcoming project. The architecture of information management is a key part in this, as our current digital filing system, the Shared drive on the HQ server, has grown on an ad hoc basis over many years and needs a review.

As the Chair has noted in his review, Council at its last meeting of the year approved a new committee structure from 2020 better to

enable Council to deliver the British Skydiving Strategic Plan. The Working Party on Committee Structure, of which I am a member, recommended a new Member Development Committee that will have oversight of the membership journey, or membership journeys as there are so many options. Development of coaching and, in association with STC, ratings and qualifications to encourage safety, performance, participation, personal growth and development and last but not least retention is among the wide responsibilities envisaged for this new committee. Its coming is timely, as we have seen a year-on-year drop in A licence numbers and full membership fell back by 3% to the end of the membership year ended 31 March. In the new committee structure, the IT Strategy Group is likely to report to the new Finance Committee.

I should like to thank my colleague committee members including Adrian Bond as Development Vice Chair, and Martin Shuttleworth of the staff as Committee Secretary, for their hard work and support during the year. May I also thank Martin Soulsby, Chair of Council, who is standing down at the AGM for his commitment and achievements during a record nine years in that demanding office, during which I have been proud to serve as Vice Chair. Thanks are also due to Tony Butler, our Chief Operating Officer, for his leadership during a year in which we have together achieved so much, but which was marred by what I perceive as a sometimes factional atmosphere among or between certain Council Members that gave rise to tensions that benefited no-one.



Photo: Martin Reynolds by Emma Reynolds

# COMMUNICATIONS

*Adrian Bond: Communications Chair*

Our three-year media partner contract with Archant Dialogue came to an end on 30<sup>th</sup> September, after our nine years as a client of theirs. With the development of our new British Skydiving web hub by contractor Eudonet (UK) as our new digital partners, we recast the media contract exclusively for publishing Skydive the Mag and associated print publications.

After a market benchmarking exercise, Council awarded the contract to Warners Group Publications from 1<sup>st</sup> October. To some extent, this was back to the future, as Warners had printed our Mag and been its advertising agents before we started with Dialogue. However, Warners have not been involved in design and production before, and we look forward to continuing evolution of the Mag from its new production base.

The first Mag produced by Warners, in December 2019, was the last under our old BPA branding as the February 2020 issue will be under our new banner of British Skydiving. Liz Ashley, Editor of the Mag, this year celebrated 50 issues under her Editorship.

As the Chair of Council has noted, branding agency Creative Sponge won our open competitive tender process in the spring to develop the new visual identity for our rebrand to British Skydiving. They worked with Angel Fernandez, a British Skydiving member, whom we welcomed to the new staff post of Communications Manager in April, in developing the new brand which has been solidly underpinned by research and development. From the main brand, Creative Sponge developed sub-brand identities for Skydive the Mag, Skydive the Expo, Stay Safe and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our foundation, which we look forward to celebrating in 2021.

This significant refresh of our identity, with an easier-to-understand name, is essential to effective communication in today's world and will help British Skydiving to maintain its rightful place in the pantheon of sports. It gives us the springboard we need to deliver other elements of Council's strategic plan.

With Angel's arrival and the repertoire of skills he brought with him as a communications professional from industry and commerce, we have significantly increased engagement across social media by improving the quality and quantity of content. This has included live reports from the UK Skydiving League, Grand Prix and National competitions and real-time reports from major international events such as the World Cups in 2019.

With social media, in common with most organisations we have suffered our share of disrespectful and even offensive comments - though thankfully relatively few and not always from current members. We have developed a social media policy approved by Council to uphold our values.

As the Chair of Council has noted in his review, Council's policy on Equality and Diversity was published during the year to amplify the commitment in our Articles and this builds on our support for Pride on social media that we started in 2018 and continued this year. Other committees have been looking at issues around increasing female participation rates, which is an international issue. A multi-pronged approach, time and understanding are prerequisites of progress in assuring that no sociocultural barriers will prejudice participation and performance in our fantastic sport. Every member is an ambassador in this, so please do your bit.

Skydive the Expo, on the day of our AGM on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at EMCC Nottingham, has continued to strengthen from year to year and we look forward to the biggest and best Expo yet. We expect to welcome friends from the United States Parachute Association, the Australian Parachute Federation, and our equivalent bodies in other nations to celebrate the best of British and International Skydiving with us.



I am grateful to our speakers and exhibitors from across the skydiving community and beyond, both from home and abroad, whose contributions together make the Expo the unmissable event that it is.

As others have already mentioned in earlier sections of this review, in 2020 we are including various specialist modules on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January, branded as an 'industry day', as part of the Expo. These are sessions for instructors, riggers, Drop Zone Operators and others who work in the sport (all are by advance registration only, subject to eligibility and availability). We are grateful to our insurance brokers, Romero Sport & Leisure and UPT, for their sponsorship of both days of the Expo. May I record the sterling support provided by Marie Moss and her team at our event partners Eventpro in the planning and development of the Expo, and in logistical arrangements on the day. Thanks are also due to Ally Adams and his team at EpicTech Media for their video and live streaming service to the Expo.

Lastly I should like to thank my colleague committee members Paul 'Apples' Applegate, Craig Poxon (Communications Vice Chair), Tash Higman, Yassi Müller as well as non-voting co-optees Liz Ashley (Editor, Skydive the Mag), Angel Fernandez (Communications Manager) and James 'Macca' McDonald who was contracted as our Digital Editor until the new post of Communications Manager came on stream. I'm also grateful to Martin Shuttleworth (Secretary-General) as Secretary to the Communications Committee, and to the rest of the staff management team led by Tony Butler, COO, and including Jeff Montgomery, STO and STC Chair, for their valued input across all our communications activities.

***“We look forward to continuing evolution of the Mag from its new production base.”***

# INTERNATIONAL MEDALS

2019 FAI WORLD CUP OF FORMATION SKYDIVING, ELOY / 4-WAY FEMALE CATEGORY / SILVER MEDAL / NFTO



# **INTERNATIONAL MEDALS**

*2019 FAI EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS OF SPEED SKYDIVING, DUNKESWELL / FEMALE CATEGORY / BRONZE MEDAL / KIERA CHAPMAN*



# **INTERNATIONAL MEDALS**

*2019 FAI WORLD CUP & EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS OF SPEED SKYDIVING, DUNKESWELL / OPEN & MALE CATEGORIES / BRONZE MEDAL / CHARLES 'MAX' HURD*



# RECORDS 2019

CHARLES 'MAX' HURD SET A NEW WORLD SPEED RECORD OF 500.17 KM/H AT THE 2019 FAI WORLD CUP OF SPEED SKYDIVING, DUNKESWELL



# RECORDS 2019

KIERA CHAPMAN SET A NEW BRITISH FEMALE SPEED RECORD OF 364.26 KM/H AT THE 2019 FAI WORLD CUP OF SPEED SKYDIVING, DUNKESWELL



Photo: Rob Lloyd

# RECORDS 2019

**UK WINGSUIT RECORD 16-WAY AT SKYDIVE HIBALDSTOW IN SEPTEMBER** - Kraig Evans (organiser), Oliver Ellis, Chris Berte, Rob Tormey, Alastair Bradie, Dave Green, Mike Kassabian, Paul Cain, Elana Cain, Colin Preece, John Parker, Philip Tzourou, Peter Coville, Liam Byrne, Sean Chu, Konrad Wysocki and Jonathan Charles (camera).



# RECORDS 2019

2-POINT 130-WAY TOTAL BREAK WORLD RECORD AT SKYDIVE PERRIS WITH 22 SKYDIVERS FROM GREAT BRITAIN



Photo: Gary Wainwright

# RECORDS 2019

IN NOVEMBER WEZ WESTLEY BEAT HIS OWN BRITISH SPEED RECORD WITH A TIME OF 1.992S AT THE 10TH FAI WORLD CUP OF CANOPY PILOTING IN SOUTH AFRICA



Photo: Emma Reynolds

# RECORDS 2019

LOGAN DONOVAN GAINED FEMALE EUROPEAN AND BRITISH RECORDS WITH A DISTANCE OF 130.70M AT THE 10TH FAI WORLD CUP OF CANOPY PILOTING IN SOUTH AFRICA



Photo: Emma Reynolds

# RECORDS 2019

**A TWO-POINT, 12-WAY, UK VERTICAL FULL BREAK HEAD DOWN SEQUENTIAL RECORD WAS COMPLETED AT SKYDIVE HIBALDSTOW IN AUGUST** - Paul Cooper (organiser), James Moran, Weed Stoodley, Pete Dennett, Stuart Todd, James Round, Gary Crisp, Martin Roberson, Greg Lucas, Dave Bloomfield, Steve Smith, Tim Gaines and Dan Guest (camera).



# RECORDS 2019

**21-WAY, BRITISH HEAD UP RECORD WAS COMPLETED AT SKYDIVE HIBALDSTOW IN MAY** - Ally Milne (organiser), Paul Cooper, Peter Hutchinson, Michael Wilson-Roberts, Pete Dennett, Lee Crudgington, Mark Guyatt, Matty Mitchell, Jan Zackl, Karim Shokraee, James Moran, Ming Chu, James Round, Dave Bloomfield, Jakub Langowsky, Anthony Andrews, Gary Crisp, Steve Smith, Elise Sharp, Phil Webley, Hutch and Chris Cook (camera).



Photo: Chris Cook

# RECORDS 2019

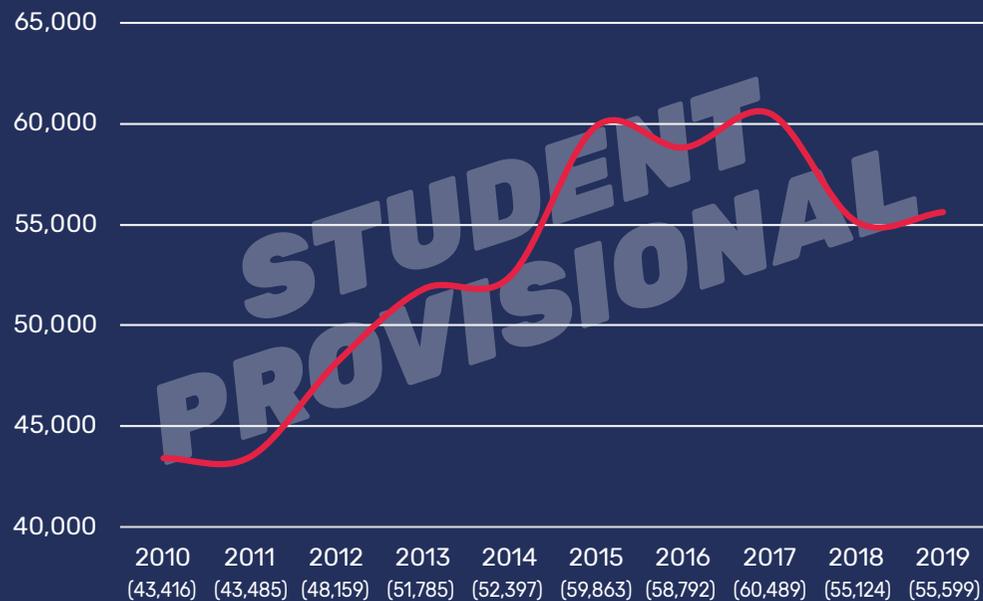
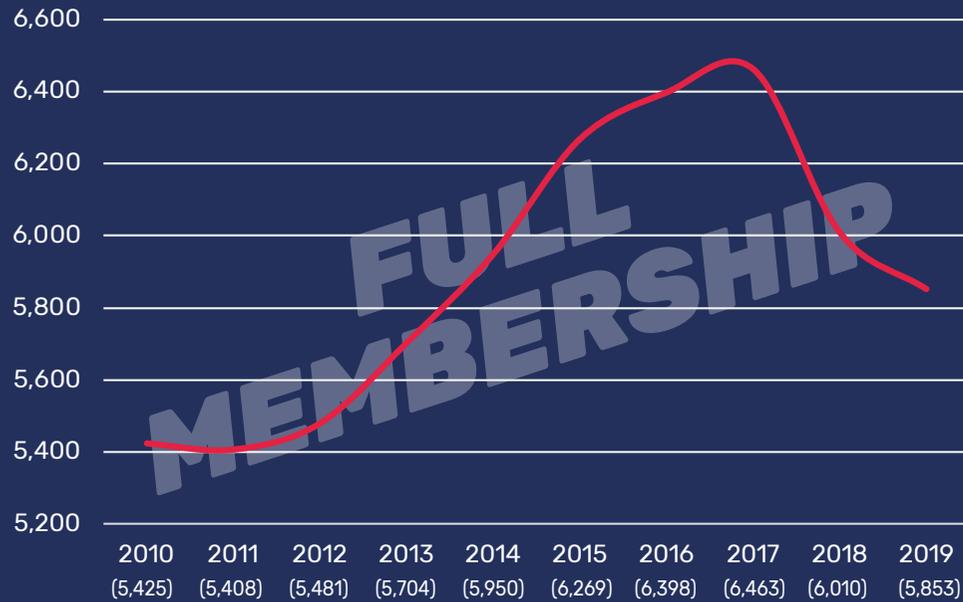
**PETE STONE WAS ON 2 WORLD RECORDS AT SKYDIVE EISENACH IN JULY. THE SKYDIVERS OVER SIXTY (SOS) GAINED A 5-POINT 8-WAY WORLD RECORD AND THE JUMPERS OVER SEVENTY (JOS) ACHIEVED A 3-POINT 9-WAY WORLD RECORD.**



Photo: Rob Lloyd

# MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

Full / Temporary (inc JSAT) / Student Provisional

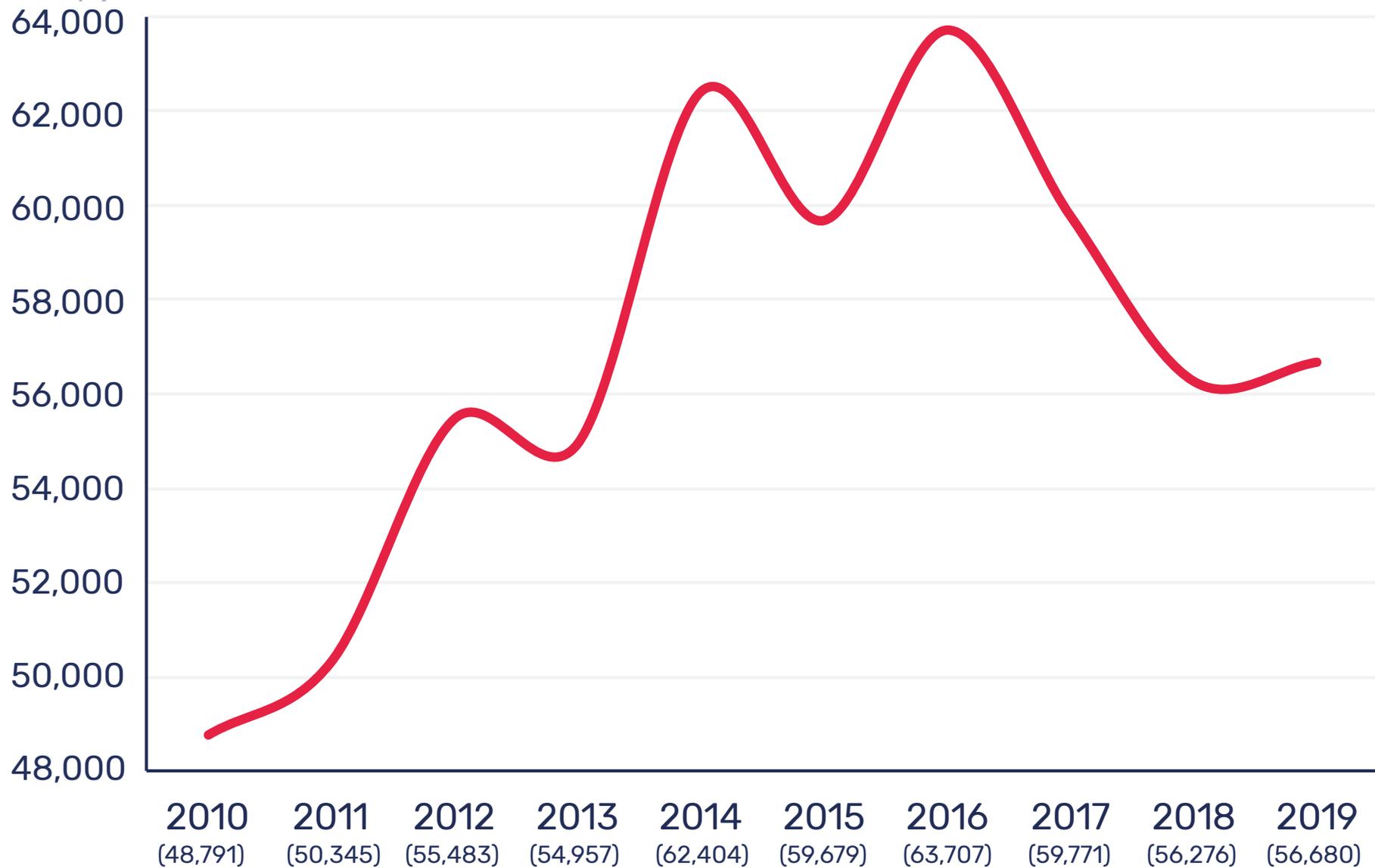


# FACTS & FIGURES 2019

<b>BRITISH SKYDIVING RATING (N.B. An individual member may hold more than one rating)</b>	<b>QUALIFIED IN 2019 (2018)</b>	<b>TOTAL RATINGS AT END OF 2019 (2018)</b>
Category System Basic Instructor (CSBI)	14 (21)	13
Tandem Basic Instructor (TBI)	12 (13)	4
Accelerated Free Fall Basic Instructor (AFFBI)	12 (15)	15
Category System Instructor (CSI)	9 (24)	217 (238)
Category System Instructor (Ground ) (CSI(G))	3 (2)	12 (10)
Tandem Instructor (TI)	29 (36)	347 (347)
Tandem Instructor (Ground ) (TI(G))	2 (3)	22 (21)
Accelerated Free Fall Instructor (AFFI)	14 (16)	213 (215)
Accelerated Free Fall Instructor (Ground) (AFFI(G))	1 (0)	6 (4)
Advanced Instructor (AI)	3 (4)	87 (87)
Instructor Examiner (IE)	1 (3)	46 (46)
Basic Rigger (BR)	7 (8)	9
Parachute Rigger (PR)	4 (8)	48 (47)
Advanced Rigger (AR)	0 (1)	21 (25)
Rigger Examiner (RE)	1 (2)	7 (6)
Advanced Packer (New)	13 (13)	
Advanced Packer (Upgrades)	7 (5)	166 (174)
Formation Skydiving Coach	59 (49)	536 (569)
Basic Freefly Coach	8 (28)	92 (92)
Freefly Coach	9 (9)	97 (100)
Basic Tracking Coach	20 (13)	60 (43)
Tracking Coach	11 (17)	98 (102)
Canopy Formation Coach	7 (3)	60 (59)
Canopy Handling Coach	30 (38)	385 (406)
Canopy Piloting Coach	1 (7)	56 (63)
Wingsuit Coach	7 (4)	51 (56)
Judge	3 (2)	24 (27)

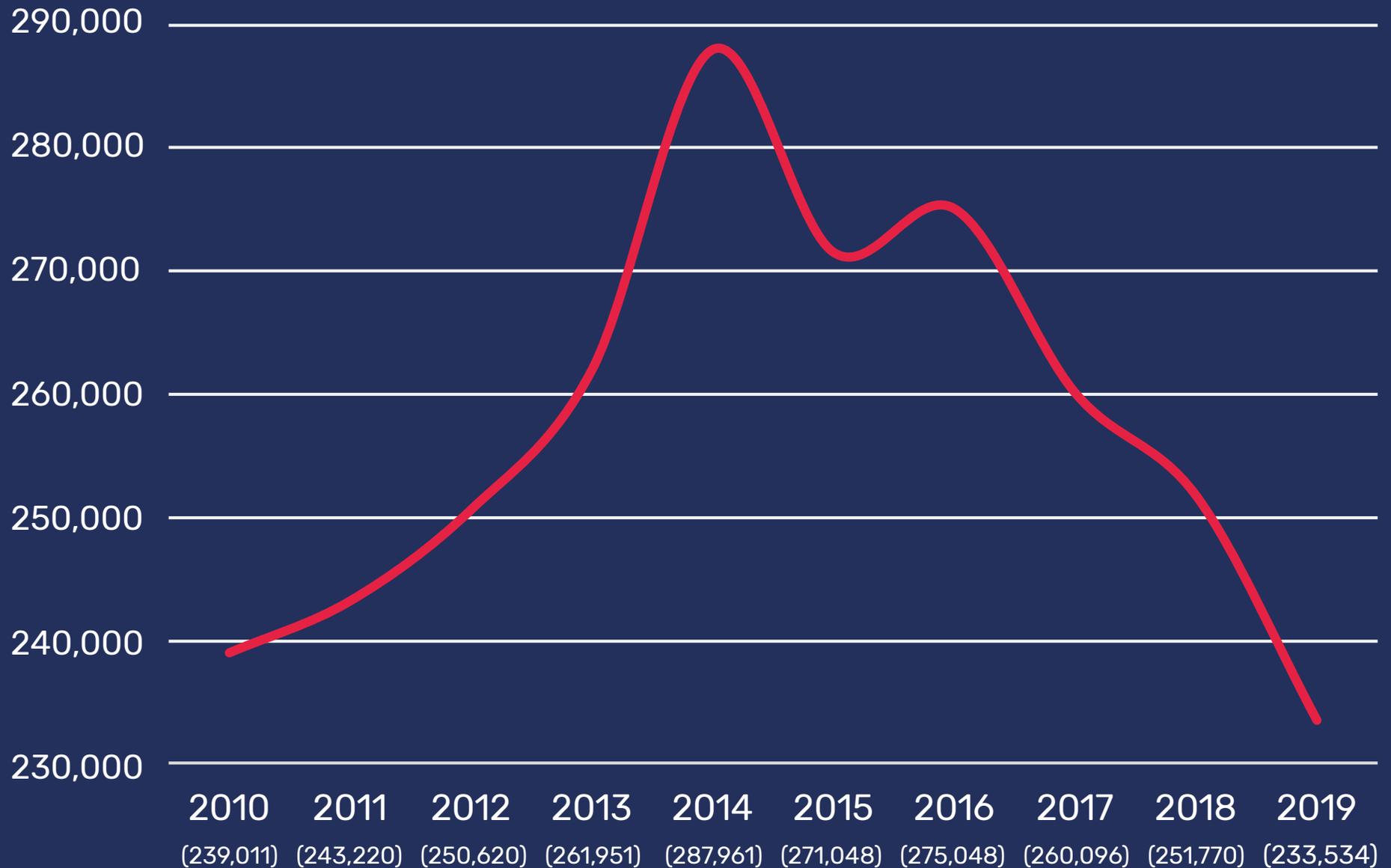
# TOTAL STUDENTS TRAINED

AFF / Static Line / Tandem



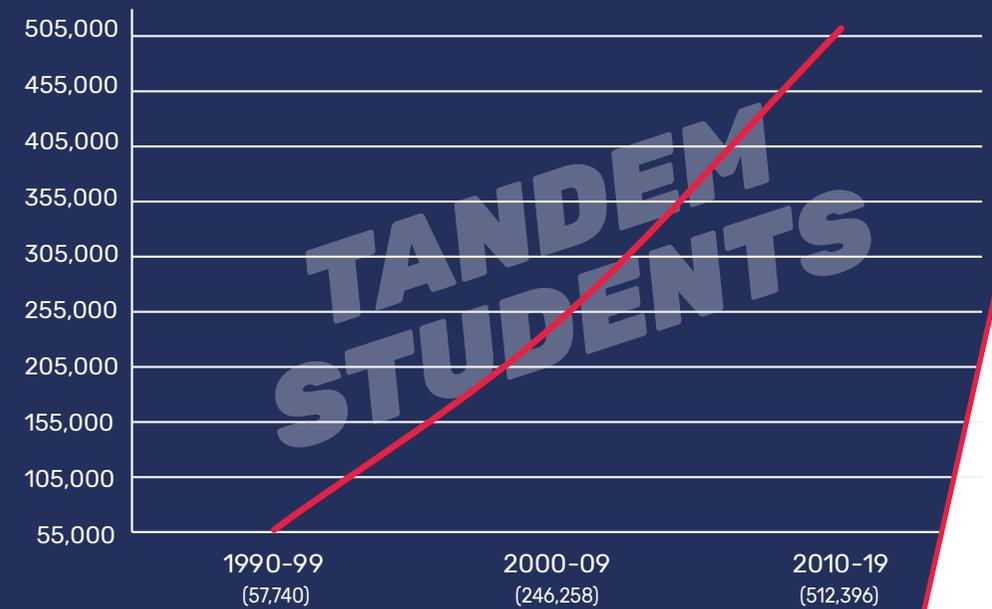
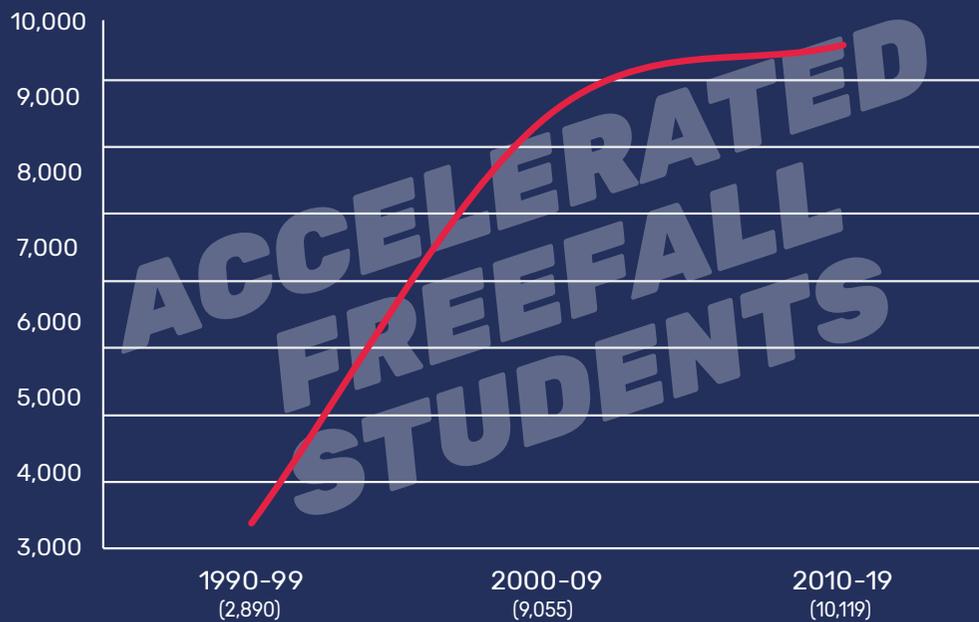
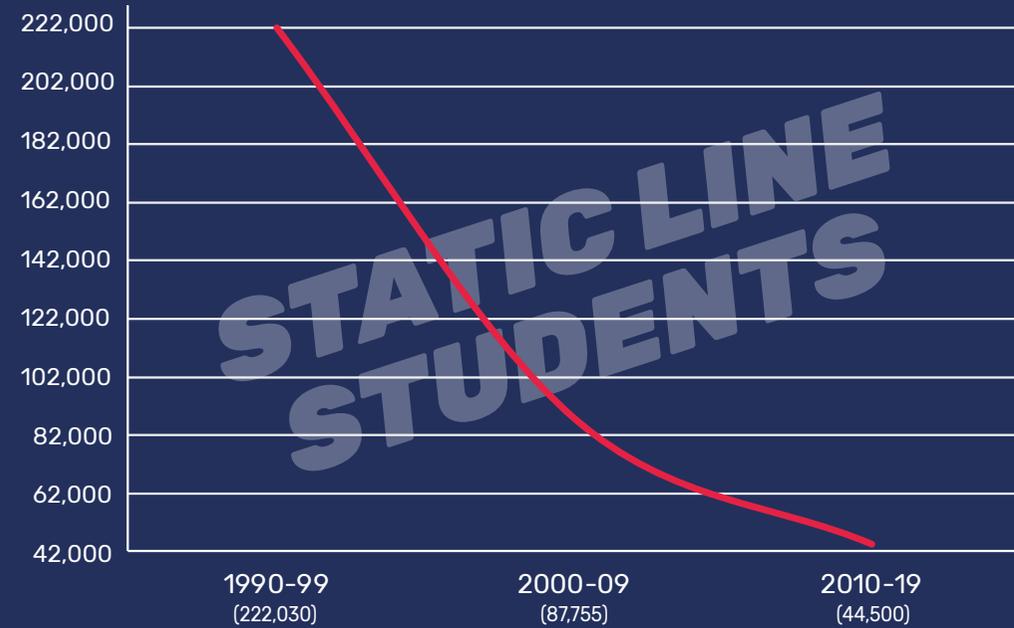
# TOTAL JUMPS

Fun Jumps / AFF / Static Line / Tandem



# THREE DECADES OF BRITISH SKYDIVING

Total Jump Numbers / Students Trained



# APPENDIX

British Skydiving Awards & Presentations to be presented immediately after the AGM 2020

AWARD	RECIPIENT/S
Jim Crocker Trophy for Outstanding Contribution to the Sport	Graham Spicer
Instructor of the Year Trophy 2019	To be announced at the presentation ceremony
Mike Forge Trophy for New Skydiver of the Year 2019	To be announced at the presentation ceremony
Star Awards 2019	Yolande Lee, Simon Soper
FAI World Record Diploma - Speed Skydiving - 500.17 km/h	Charles 'Max' Hurd
Judges' Certificates: Formation Skydiving - FAI Canopy Piloting & Canopy Formation - National Formation Skydiving & Canopy Formation - National	Lucy Westgarth Jimmy Frith Amanda Kenny
Jump & Freefall Certificates	To be announced at the presentation ceremony
50 Years of Skydiving Certificates	Dane Kenny, Scotty Milne

AWARD	RECIPIENT/S
<b>Accuracy Landings</b>	
Junior Overall Champion	Darren Strafford
Intermediate Class Overall Champion - Gold	David Houghton
Senior Class Overall Champion - Gold	Les Carroll
<b>Canopy Formation 2-way Sequential</b>	
Rookie Class Overall Champions - Gold	<b>Team 'Kark Kandy'</b> Kevin Cassidy, Andrew Bate, Don Tompkinson, Neil Hodgkinson
Intermediate Class Overall Champions - Gold	<b>Team 'Cark Corner'</b> Becky Higham, David McMinn, Richard Dixon
Senior Class Overall Champions - Gold	<b>Team 'Snakes on a Downplane'</b> Marcus Muir-Smith, Jason Hobbs, Max Holmes
<b>Canopy Formation 4-way</b>	
Senior Class 4-way Sequential Overall Champions - Gold	<b>Team 'Airspace Invaders'</b> Marcus Muir-Smith, Jason Hobbs, Wes Guest, Simon Perry, Max Holmes
Senior Class 4-way Rotations Overall Champions - Gold	<b>Team 'CRWSADERS'</b> Pete Thornton, Jordan Dickinson, Derrick Blyth, Richard Coggin, Mark Bayley, Peter Hughes

# APPENDIX

British Skydiving Awards & Presentations, to be presented immediately after the AGM 2020

FORMATION SKYDIVING 4-WAY	RECIPIENT/S
<b>Rookie Class</b>	
Bronze Medal	<b>Team 'RAFSPA Tempest'</b> William Stuart, Oli Smith, Vicky Hocking, Graham Holt, John Wilson, Tom Cilvert, Keira Chapman
Silver Medal	<b>Team 'Random Precision'</b> Simon Cassia, Arnaud Isnard, Callum Fitzsimons, Alex Hale, Gordon Wong, Bobby Islam, Nick Heywood
Overall Champions - Gold Medal	<b>Team 'Tilstock Tumbling Turkeys'</b> David Titcombe, Steve Pugh, Lauren Mann, Craig Anderson, Dan Griffiths
<b>A Class</b>	
Bronze Medal	<b>Team 'Algorythm'</b> Richard Owen, Fabrizo Colonna, Mark Walker, Malcolm Cowton, Nigel Rowan
Silver Medal	<b>Team 'RAFSPA Tornado'</b> Ram Younesi, Lewis Travers, Kara Beacock, John Marshall, Stuart Dobson
Overall Champions - Gold Medal	<b>Team 'Volt4ge'</b> Sei Hughes, Stacey Briggs, Gemma Perkins, William Ross, Stefan Campbell, Emma Reynolds
<b>AA Class</b>	
Bronze Medal	<b>Team 'RAFSPA Phantom'</b> James Hodgson, Ady King, Matt Winkler, Andrew Beney, Josh Clark, Ollie Smith, James Betts
Silver Medal	<b>Team 'Nebula'</b> Catherine Brown, Paul Milburn, Paul Monaghan, Jess Straub, John Welsh
Overall Champions - Gold Medal	<b>Team 'Funtastic 5'</b> David Wickes, Blanaid O'Sullivan, Alison Peock, Jill Owens, Tony Labbadia, Peter Leach, Craig Hicks
<b>AAA Class</b>	
Bronze Medal	<b>Team 'Chimera'</b> Laura Hampton, Sarah Ashworth, Matt Wilson, Chris Judd, James Woods, Chris Cook
Silver Medal	<b>Team 'NFTO'</b> Anna Hicks, Vana Parker, Siân Stokes, Kate Lindsley, Julia Swallow, Simon Brentford
Overall Champions - Gold Medal	<b>Team 'Pajama Pumas'</b> Matt Cumming, Jodie-Leigh Foster, Paul Wilcock, Stefan Cocksedge, Paul Rimmington, Marc Fletcher, Pete Harries



Photo: Alola, FreeBurds and NFTO at the British Skydiving Nationals in FS 4-way by Joe Mann

The logo for British Skydiving features the word "BRITISH" in a bold, red, sans-serif font. Below it, the word "SKYDIVING" is written in a white, outlined, sans-serif font. A white curved line, resembling a skydiver's path or a stylized 'S', starts from the top left and curves around the "BRITISH" text, then continues down and across the "SKYDIVING" text. A thin red diagonal line runs from the top left towards the bottom left of the page.

# BRITISH SKYDIVING

*British Skydiving (British Parachute Association Ltd)  
5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva,  
Leicester LE2 9TF  
Tel: 0116 278 5271  
[www.britishskydiving.org](http://www.britishskydiving.org)*

*A company limited by guarantee  
Registered in London No 875429  
VAT Reg No. 239 4696 20  
© British Skydiving 2020  
Published January 2020*

*Designed and produced in-house by British Skydiving*