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skyDIVE

starter



**The BPA's essential
guide to the sport**
Fancy taking up skydiving?

INSIDE: TRY A TASTE OF FREEFALL HOW TO BECOME A STUDENT SKYDIVER GUIDE TO SKYDIVING DISCIPLINES LANGUAGE OF SKYDIVING EXPLAINED MENTAL PREPARATION COPING WITH FEAR HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL DROPZONE ABOUT THE BPA



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Congratulations on making your first jump! Whether it was a tandem, a static-line jump or maybe even your first AFF level, I bet you're itching to get up in that plane again!

Skydive Starter magazine is here to help you understand skydiving as a sport.

It's exhilarating, empowering and great fun, not to mention scary! But it's also a sport that can enhance your life.

The first half of this magazine looks at the options that are now open to you if you want to become a qualified skydiver. As you might have guessed, getting to this level will require mental strength, so we also have various articles that give you advice on how to become an awesome skydiver. Right in the centre, we have an A3 poster for you to pull out and put on your wall, either at home, work or somewhere else. You can record why you did your first jump and how it made you feel in order to shout about it to the rest of the world! If you want to get publicity for doing your jump, we have some advice on page 55. Finally, skydiving is a competitive worldwide sport with many aspects – we give you the low-down on each area, along with information on what the British Parachute Association is and where you can jump.

Welcome to the exhilarating world of skydiving!

Liz Ashley

*Janusz Zasowski
over Jersey,
by Nigel O'Brien*

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www.skydivewings.com

Cover: Tandem Instructor and multiple National Champion Milko lands safely with a delighted student after her first jump. By Gary Wainwright

Contents: Sunset sloop, by Rob Lloyd



CONTENTS

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SOME OF THE PHOTOS IN THIS MAGAZINE MAY SHOW SKYDIVERS WITHOUT HELMETS OR ALTIMETERS, OR OTHERWISE NOT OBEYING THE BPA OPERATIONS MANUAL, IN WHICH CASE THEY WERE TAKEN ABROAD. IN THE UK, IT IS MANDATORY TO WEAR A HELMET AND ALTI FOR OBVIOUS SAFETY REASONS. STUDENTS WITHIN SKYDIVE STARTER ARE COMPLYING WITH BPA REGULATIONS.

SKYDIVING TRAINING AND SYSTEMS VARY IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING TAKING A SKYDIVING COURSE OR QUALIFICATION ABROAD, WE RECOMMEND YOU FIRST ESTABLISH ITS RELEVANCE IN THE UK, THROUGH YOUR CI.



CONTENTS

- 06 Tandem**
Try a taste of freefall
- 09 What next? Static line**
Become a skydiver step-by-step
- 12 What next? AFF**
The fastest route to become a skydiver
- 23 Skydiving changed my life**
It's more than just a sport – skydiving can change your life!
- 25 You don't have to be invincible**
The realities of skydiving
- 29 Coping with fear**
Overcoming the biggest challenge of all
- 33 Glossary**
A guide to the language of skydiving

- 34 Poster pullout**
Never forget your achievement!
- 39 It's all in the mind**
Mental preparation is the key
- 55 Tell the world!**
Don't keep it to yourself – share your experiences with the world!
- 59 Skydiving problem page**
The dive doctor answers some of your most common questions
- 61 BPA dropzones**
How to contact your local DZ
- 63 About the BPA**
Representing the interests of all UK skydivers
- 64 Progression routes**
How to progress in skydiving

Skydiving disciplines:

- 42 Formation skydiving**
Achieve your FS1, join a team and get jumping
- 44 Artistics**
Imagination and innovation rule in this fast-growing discipline
- 46 Wingsuiting**
The flying phenomenon
- 48 Style and Accuracy**
The classics of competition
- 50 Canopy Formation**
Performing 'precision collisions' with your canopies
- 52 Canopy Piloting**
Perfectly in control – turn your canopy into a flying machine



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It takes two to tandem

A TANDEM IS THE MOST POPULAR WAY TO MAKE YOUR FIRST JUMP AND MORE THAN 56,000 PEOPLE DO A TANDEM WITH THE BPA EACH YEAR. BUT WHAT NEXT?



66 Just done a tandem? Then you know how exhilarating it is to freefall through the sky. If you want to try it again, turn to page **99**

1 Safely back on terra firma, by Rob Lloyd

2 Exit – "Head back, legs back!"

3 Legs up for landing, by Rob Lloyd

4 Instructor Andy Page (10,000 jumps) and nephew (one jump), by Rob Lloyd

5 Head back and arching on exit, by Rob Lloyd



A TANDEM IS...

the best way to experience the exhilaration of a skydive without any worry, as you will be securely attached to an experienced instructor. You can leave the plane from altitude (around 10-15,000ft) in a dual harness.

YOU'LL HAVE ABOUT 30 SECONDS OF FREEFALL...

an indescribable feeling, where you can check out the view, feel the rush of air and savour the excitement.

A PARACHUTE MADE FOR TWO...

will then be opened by your instructor at 5,000 feet, about a mile high. This has dual control toggles you can both use to fly your way to the ground.

A SOFT LANDING...

will put you safely back on terra firma.

IF YOU'RE WONDERING ABOUT AFF...

a tandem jump is a fantastic way to try freefall and see if this sport is for you.

AS A ONE-OFF EXPERIENCE...

it's unique.

ASK AT YOUR CENTRE...

for prices and details. You can probably get your whole skydive videoed and photographed as a lasting reminder and entertainment for your friends. ●

Just done a tandem? Then you know how exhilarating it is to freefall through the sky and maybe you want to try it again. If so, turn to page nine where you can find out what to do next.



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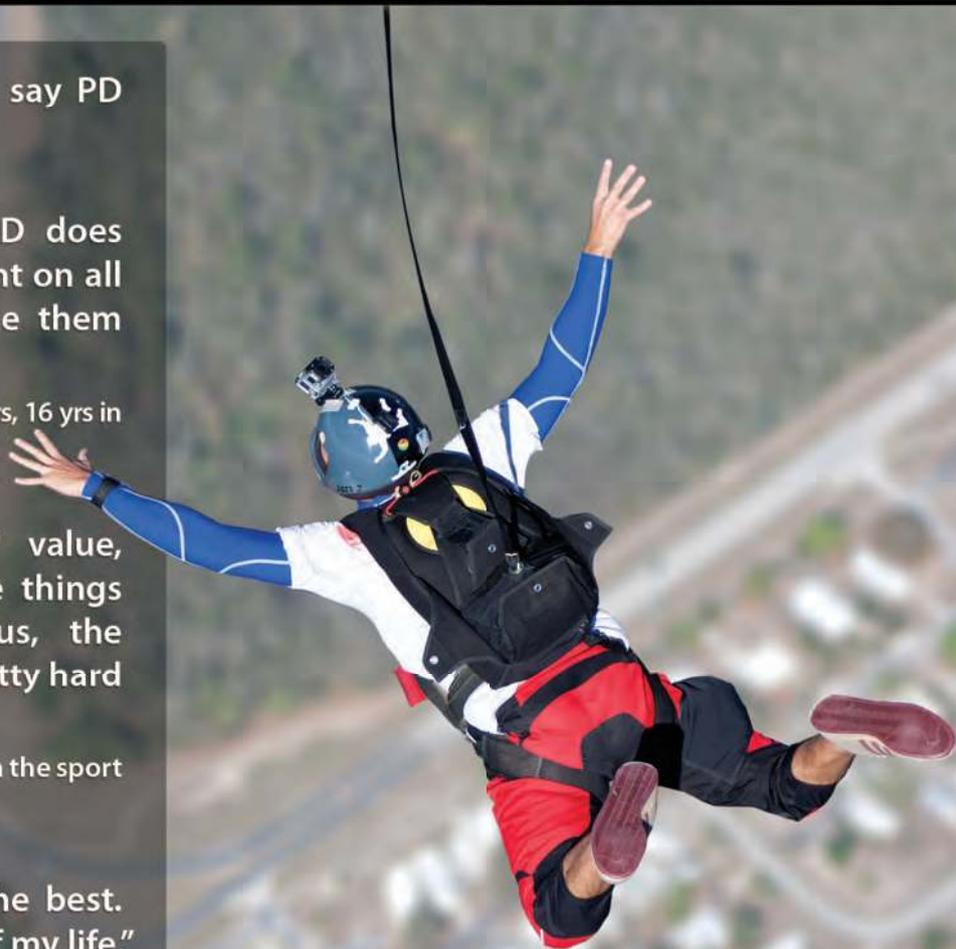
- Derek Vanboeschoten, Elsinore Honey Badgers, 16 yrs in the sport and 4,000 jumps

"PD represents the epitome of value, performance, and basically all the things that make a canopy good. Plus, the customer service and support is pretty hard to beat."

- Thomas Hughes, Arizona Airspeed, 14 yrs in the sport and 14,500 jumps

"Industry standards, the best of the best. That's why I'll fly them for the rest of my life."

- Doug Barron, Carolina Turbo XP, 9 yrs in the sport and 1,600 jumps



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Photo By: Brian Festi

We work hard, so you can play harder.



1

“The Progression System will take you step by step through student status to Category 8, when you qualify as a certified parachutist”

What next?

Static line

SO YOU WANT TO LEARN TO SKYDIVE. THE TANDEM JUMP WAS GREAT, YOU LOVED IT AND NOW YOU WANT TO TAKE UP SKYDIVING

WHICH ROUTE DO YOU CHOOSE?

You have two options: the Progression System or AFF (Accelerated Free Fall). The good news is that both courses can get you to BPA Category 8 in the same minimum number of jumps. Providing you are the perfect textbook student who passes each jump first time and stays current by jumping regularly, you can become a fully-fledged skydiver in just 18 jumps. Both courses involve a full day of training before the first jump and progression on both courses is directly proportional to the amount of time you can commit. The first option is Static Line Progression:

STATIC LINE (PROGRESSION SYSTEM)

The Progression System will take you step by step through student status to Category 8, when you qualify as a certified parachutist and are cleared to jump on your own or with a coach.

STATIC LINE JUMP

The Progression System will start you on a static line jump, where the parachute is opened automatically and almost instantly as you leave the plane – generally from around 4,000 feet. This is the first step in the BPA's well-established Progression System for learning to skydive. See the box on page 10.

DUMMY PULL

After two good jumps, you will do a 'dummy ripcord pull' where your parachute is still opened by a static line but you pull a handle in freefall to demonstrate that you could indeed operate your own parachute.

FREEFALL

A minimum of five perfect static line jumps later and you can progress onto freefall. This starts with a short delay of three to five seconds and progresses

gradually through five, 10 and 15, up to around 40 seconds or more. Initially, the challenge is to adopt a good stable body position in freefall and on deployment. After two good 15-second delays, you move on to turns, backloops and tracking (moving fast horizontally in the sky) – not forgetting the unstable exit where you leave in a little ball and bang on a big arch to recover a stable position in the air.

COST

You will learn all of the skills that an AFF student will, but without the in-air coaching. A student who starts on the static line system will initially pay less for their training and jumps. The overall cost by the time you have completed your course is probably similar, but is spread over a period of months. This course best suits those students who would rather pay for their jumping in smaller chunks. →

*1 The static line is attached to the aircraft so that when you jump out, your parachute is deployed automatically.
By Tony Danbury*

2



“At the end of your time as a student parachutist, you will be equipped to go out into the world and skydive”

EQUIPMENT

You use the same equipment as AFF students: a piggyback system with both main and reserve parachutes on the back in a neat harness. Your main canopy is a fun and manoeuvrable ram-air type, similar in design and construction to that used by more experienced skydivers.

FREEFALL SKILLS

The complete Progression System is designed to take you safely to skydiver status by building up freefall skills with each level. The number of jumps shown at each stage is the minimum required, assuming they all go perfectly. It may be necessary to repeat some jumps, as you will only progress to the next level when you have passed the previous one. Once you achieve Category 8, you have more freedom to jump independently and the many avenues of skydiving are open. Check out the various disciplines from page 42 onwards.

SURVIVAL SKILLS

Both systems will teach you the survival skills you need, as well as basic control of your body and movement in freefall. At the end of your time as a student parachutist, you will be equipped to go out into the world and skydive, both on your own and with others.

WHAT NOW?

So how do you go about booking a course? There is a map and list of all British parachute centres on page 61, or go to bpa.org.uk. Most people go to the dropzone (DZ) that is closest. If you are lucky enough to have more than one nearby, then shop around. Get the best value for your money. If possible, visit the DZ in person to book the course. You wouldn't buy a car without looking in the showroom first! Most clubs have a brochure that explains the different courses available. ●

Stuart Albon
BPA Instructor and Examiner

2 One instructor can dispatch a whole planeload of static line students, meaning you get to progress and make new friends.
By Rob Lloyd

3 Perched on the edge of a 4,000ft drop – and smiling!
By Paul Dewey

Progression System

Category	Requirements
1	Completed ground training for first jump
2	First jump and one further static line descent
3	Three dummy ripcord-pull descents
4	First freefall (three-five seconds) and five-second delay
5	Two 10-second delays
6	Two 15-second delays
7	Two 360° turns with precision
8	Dive exit Unstable exit Backloops Tracking and track turns Qualifying jump for Category 8 (including turns, a backloop, track, wave off and pull)

Congratulations! After gaining your CH1, you will be eligible for your BPA A Licence and can start learning how to develop your skills in a chosen area, such as formation skydiving or freeflying.

Note: The above is the minimum number of jumps required.



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What next? **AFF**



Accelerated Free Fall

AFF IS THE FASTEST ROUTE TO BECOMING A SKYDIVER, WITH PROFESSIONAL ONE-ON-ONE INSTRUCTION. IF YOU HAVE DECIDED THIS ROUTE IS FOR YOU, IT PAYS TO RESEARCH PRICES AND PLACES WHERE YOU CAN DO THE COURSE. HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHERE TO DO THIS? WITH WHOM SHOULD YOU PLACE YOUR HARD-EARNED MONEY?

The answer depends on you and your circumstances. But, as a newcomer to the sport, it can be a potential minefield! This article should help you make an informed choice of whether and where to become a skydiver through AFF.

When you are potentially parting with around £1,500 of your hard-earned cash, it is worth spending wisely. The problem is that many pitfalls only present themselves after the course. It's too late for a refund then! Here's an honest answer to the questions usually asked...

WHAT IS AFF?

AFF is a personalised intensive course with one-to-one instruction to teach you all the skills you will need as a fully qualified skydiver. A full day's hardcore training

will be followed by a series of jumps from altitude. The full course is described in the box on page 20. The first three levels will be with two instructors, from around 12,000 feet. Once you have demonstrated your ability to fall stable and pull on your own awareness, you are progressed to Level 4 and will jump with one instructor. Your freefall skills are increased at each level with a course that follows the skeleton shown on page 20 but which is fleshed out by your AFF Instructors, who add additional exercises to suit your own skills (or lack of!).

As your jumps progress, you will also receive comprehensive ground-school training in vital areas such as canopy control. After completing AFF Level 7, you do a low-altitude jump on your own. If successful, you qualify for AFF Level 8.

The final step to Category 8 is to complete 10 consolidation jumps, which are done on your own but your AFF Instructor should guide and advise you through this stage. The important thing to bear in mind, as someone who knows little about the sport, is that AFF is far more than a week's jumping or a jolly holiday. It is a course to do if you want to take up skydiving. As such, think it through. Be clear you do want to take up the sport. If you are not sure, find out if your chosen centre offers a Level 1 jump only, so you can try before you commit to the entire course. Research places and prices following the guidelines here. But also think about what you want to do after your course; where you want to jump and, if possible, plan to purchase equipment soon after your course. →

1 Since you can't hear your instructor in freefall, they will communicate using clear hand signals.
By Gary Wainwright



“Each level, on the way to altitude, I would convince myself that the fear wasn't worth it and I'd quit as soon as I got to the ground in one piece – and each time I'd spend an hour after I landed babbling like an idiot about how fantastic it had been **”**

Vicki Priest, AFF student



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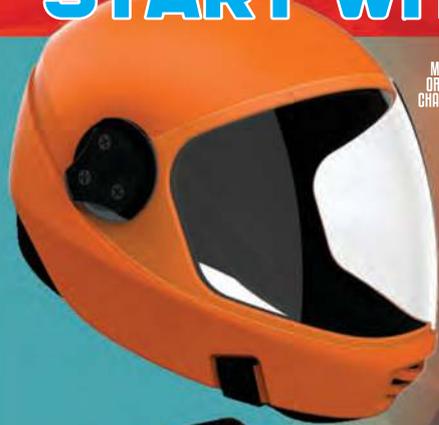
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WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AFF?

If you know you want to take up skydiving, AFF is the quickest, easiest and most motivating way. It is a true taste of real skydiving from the start with professional, personalised instruction. It gives you time in freefall to get used to the surroundings and to overcome the 'sensory overload' you feel on first entering freefall, where all your senses are overwhelmed and it is difficult to think. The ethos of AFF is continuous exposure to freefall and the ability to correct problems through in-air instruction.

“ An excellent experience – best of my life so far ”

Ivan Betts, AFF student

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO AFF INSTRUCTORS HAVE?

In the UK, the AFF Instructor must have at least 1,000 jumps and 10 hours in freefall. In countries that operate to the United States Parachute Association (USPA) standards (that's pretty much the rest of the world), the AFF Instructor must have at least 500 jumps and six hours in freefall. There are other requirements, but these are similar. Both systems require the budding AFF Instructor to pass a course including a series of jumps, with an examiner, to prove their ability to fly relative to a student (who may be spinning on their back at the time) and provide in-air instruction.

“ AFF is only a start but, in my opinion, it is the best start you can get ”

Kevin McCarthy, AFF Instructor

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES OF AFF?

There aren't really any disadvantages, other than that it makes sense to be sure you want to take up skydiving before you part with the cash. Financially, it seems more expensive than the static-line progression system as you will pay the money in one lump. However, in the long run, the cost is probably similar. Even if you pay as you go, the cost may hit you harder as you are very likely to finish in a far shorter amount of time. Be aware that, when you have completed your course, you will need to buy a rig and canopies in order to continue jumping (without having to wait for hired equipment). In the static-line system you have more time to prepare for this.

WHERE CAN I DO AN AFF COURSE?

Most UK dropzones (DZs) run AFF courses of their own; there are also British instructors who either take or send students to DZs abroad. Many overseas DZs also run courses.

WHAT RULES GOVERN SAFETY ON A DROPZONE?

DZs in the UK have to be affiliated to the BPA. The BPA is, in turn, allowed to govern parachuting under an exemption given by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which is audited on a regular basis. The CAA is governed through the statutory powers of the Civil Aviation Act. The BPA makes use of an Operations Manual to list all the procedures that are to be used for parachute operations in this country. This document must be abided by for legal reasons as it could be used in a court of law.

2 From Level 4, you'll jump with just one instructor.
By Gary Wainwright

Overseas dropzones do not have to be affiliated to the USPA; this also includes dropzones that are based in the USA. The USPA's version of the BPA Operations Manual is only advisory and wouldn't necessarily be accepted as evidence in a court of law. DZs in foreign countries work to their own governmental rules.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF DOING A COURSE ABROAD?

If you enquire about doing a course abroad, you will probably be told it will have better weather, shorter courses and cost less. Sounds great – but is it true? Here are some factors worth taking into account...

COST

It might sound cheaper but remember to add on air fare and medical insurance which covers you for skydiving. This is an absolute 'must' if going to the USA. If you are going to a European country, the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) (available online or from the Post Office) will cover you for a visit to a state-run hospital but will not cover repatriation to the UK or loss of earnings on return. Also consider the cost of accommodation, car hire, BPA membership and having a check-out skydive at the dropzone you choose to jump at on your return to the UK. →

“ If you go abroad you will, unless you are incredibly disciplined, spend more than you would here on things other than skydiving ”

Andrew Parker, AFF student



“AFF is a true taste of real skydiving from the start with professional, personalised instruction”

WEATHER

The weather might be better at foreign dropzones during the winter period. However, and contrary to popular belief, it is not always better during the summer season. Most suffer then from extremes of weather such as hurricanes, tornadoes, seasonal high winds and tropical storms. The trouble is that going on a holiday commits you to a time limit. If the weather is bad during your stay or you are ill, your investment has been lost and will lead to either taking another trip out or paying extra trying to complete the course back in the UK. Many UK dropzones will not accept partly trained students for understandable reasons.

“AFF is meant to be intensive in order to accelerate the learning process. Waiting days or weeks between jumps makes it more likely that you will need to repeat a level, which can be expensive. This needs to be balanced with enough time between jumps for you to take in the instruction needed for each level, without putting yourself under excessive pressure”

Stuart Albon, BPA Instructor and Examiner



3 Your instructors skydive right next to you, although you are not strapped together like on a tandem. *By Gary Wainwright*

4 Your instructors stay by your side until you have safely opened your parachute. *By Olly Burgin*

5 Tracking is an essential skill that you'll learn on Levels 6 and 7; using your arms and legs to move forward through the sky. *By Swoop*

6 Once you have proved you can exit well on levels 1-3 with two instructors, you will be trusted with just one instructor. *By Gary Wainwright*



SHORTER COURSE DURATION

Many American dropzones are not that busy during the summer period due to extremes of weather. This may sound like an advantage but, if there aren't enough people to fill the aircraft, you will not get to jump. Ask the dropzone how many AFF students they graduated in the same month you intend to travel from the previous year.

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES OF DOING A COURSE ABROAD?

Most disadvantages of doing your course abroad only appear on your return to the UK. This is particularly highlighted when a student returns to the UK having not completed at least 10 consolidation jumps after the AFF course or, even worse, not completing the course at all. →

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DIFFERENT SYSTEMS

If you are doing your course abroad, you are being trained under a foreign regime and it is not the same as doing your course in this country – regardless of what advertisements say. Some adverts state that you will be doing the British course abroad and others go as far as to say that they adhere to the BPA Operations Manual. British instructors operating abroad are not covered by BPA instructor Liability Insurance, and will not be covered by USPA insurance if you have not joined the USPA or the instructor is not USPA rated. It is almost impossible for a dropzone that is not 'affiliated' to the BPA to operate to the BPA Operations Manual; they are legally bound to operate to their own governmental procedures. Page 61 lists all BPA Affiliated dropzones in the world; there are 26 in the UK and two abroad.



7 Your ground training will include recognising good canopies, malfunctions and other situations

8 Skydive The Mag Editor Liz Ashley takes her sister Rose on AFF Level 1. By Ash Hollick



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GET BACK TO THE UK?

"If you do a course with us, you will be fine to jump in the UK afterwards."

If this statement is made, you should ask the salesperson or instructor to tell you which dropzones in the UK will accept you. You should then call the UK dropzone to find out:

- if the dropzone will accept you after your AFF course
- if they will, that they will do so at any stage of training (just in case you don't finish the course while on holiday)
- if they will charge for a check-out jump and how much
- how much consolidation jumps cost at that UK centre (ranges from about £25 to £85 a jump)

DIFFERENT TRAINING

British AFF courses contain eight levels; most foreign courses only contain seven levels. The foreign Level 7 is normally missing performance criteria that are required to pass a British Level 7.

66 Be very aware: AFF training in Britain is absolutely second to none 99

Andrew Parker, AFF student

DIFFERENT EQUIPMENT

Some foreign dropzones use equipment known as the SOS system. This is different to standard types of equipment used at UK dropzones and requires a different technique to operate if you have a malfunction. This can lead to an expensive bout of retraining on return to the UK. In addition, for safety reasons, you may prefer not to change your equipment and emergency procedures at an early stage in skydiving. Some UK dropzones will not accept students who have been trained on non-standard parachute equipment.

66 Be aware that reserve drills may differ – I had to change mine when I returned to Britain. Be fully familiar with the type of rig you were using, where all the handles were. Be very confident in the skills you have learned because, if you are not confident in what you have learned, I really don't expect an instructor would be either 99

Ben Moreton, AFF student

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE AFF COURSE?

In the UK, you must perform 10 consolidation jumps before being awarded your Category 8 and BPA A Licence. During these jumps, you have to be dispatched from the aircraft by an instructor, watched from the ground (or in air) from exit to full canopy deployment by an instructor and have your logbook critiqued and signed by an instructor. The consolidation jumps are an important part of your transition from jumping with an instructor to jumping on your own. This is a critical part of your training and safety that should not be taken lightly. Ask your intended foreign DZ if they conduct the 10 consolidation jumps, what form of coaching they provide during this phase and if there will be an instructor set aside to either jump with you or watch from the ground through telemeters/binoculars (they may charge extra for this service).

66 It was an eye-opener coming back to the UK... the process here is much tighter. You are assigned an instructor who works very closely with you, whereas in Australia I was jumping with a variety of people – which meant that the briefings were a little inconsistent 99

Kim Fossey, AFF student

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF DOING THE COURSE IN THE UK?

TIME

You aren't on any time limitation if going to a UK dropzone either on a weekend or midweek basis. If the weather is bad for the weekend or you are ill, you can just stay at home and try again the next weekend. It is possible to complete an AFF course in the same time frame as a foreign dropzone without having the pressure of a return flight date looming.

COST

Although at first glance the course may appear to be more expensive, there are no hidden extras. Many centres run courses on a pay-by-the-jump system or an interest-free credit scheme; either of these will allow you to spread the cost of the course over a longer time frame.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Because there is no time constraint on getting the jumps done, there is more opportunity to receive tuition. Your instructors will continue to look after you during the 10 consolidation jumps.

TRAINING

Having been coached by the same school throughout the AFF course, 10 consolidation jumps and beyond, you will find that your instructors become friends for your skydiving life! They are always there to give advice at whatever stage for years to come and not just a couple of weeks while you are on holiday.

SOCIAL SCENE

Skydivers have very close-knit social groups. It can take a long time to get into the social scene of a new club. Doing the course at your home dropzone will allow you to meet and make friends with the people who you will be jumping and partying with in the future. There will also be jumpers on the dropzone who have recently been through the same course as you with the same instructors and have experienced the same feelings of anxiety and elation. As with most things in life, it is easiest to communicate with those who have had similar life experiences; indeed, it is the basis for a fulfilling and real friendship.

“There is no substitute for establishing and maintaining a relationship with a DZ, AFF school and instructors... this makes the whole nerve-wracking process a lot easier and, let's face it, it may be beyond bliss as an experience, but it is also THE most challenging”

Kim Fossey, AFF student

Level requirements

- 1 Has completed ground school and achieved the following:**
Heading awareness
Awareness of altimeter and instructors
Reasonably co-ordinated practice pulls
Pull on instructor's signal
Additional exercises may be introduced at the instructor's discretion at any subsequent level
- 2 Free arm time**
Practice pulls
Reasonable body position
Solo pull on own altitude awareness
- 3 Leg and arm awareness**
Heading maintenance (while totally released)
- 4 Start and stop turn(s)**
- 5 Turns left and right**
- 6 Solo exit**
Sub-terminal control
Attempt backloop(s)
Tracking
Wave off
- 7 Dive exit**
Alternate 360° turns
Backloop(s)
Track and track turns
Wave off
- 8 Solo exit and pull stable within 10 seconds**

Congratulations, you have now graduated. A further 10 solo consolidation jumps, plus CH1, and you will be eligible for your BPA A Licence.

9 AFF instructors have a minimum of 1,000 skydives each. By Gary Wainwright

10 Your instructor will never be far from your side. By Gary Wainwright

SUMMARY

There is a major difference in ethos between teaching attitudes in different countries. On the whole, the foreign ethos is that you are responsible for your own skydives. In the UK, it is more along the lines of the instructor being responsible for your skydives. For someone who has done a course abroad, it can often appear that British dropzones are stuffy and bound by lots of rules. The rules are in place and adhered to for your safety and the safety of others. The consequences of breaking the rules in the UK bear higher penalties for instructors and clubs in general.

“If you learn to jump outside the UK, then always get qualified. At least get your A Licence and do as many jumps as you can before you come home. Returning to the UK as a partially trained, unqualified jumper is always a problem. You'll have to face jumping at a new DZ with different equipment, aircraft, instructors and rules. All this with only a few jumps' experience means much more risk of a problem or injury. Any UK dropzone will want to give you a thorough check and retrain; this, of course, means more expense. Learning to skydive at the centre you plan to continue jumping at is the safest way. At the end of the day, you're statistically safer in the UK both during and after your course”

Richard Wheatley, BPA AFF Instructor

WHATEVER AFF COURSE YOU CHOOSE

Shop around. Go and visit a couple of centres, talk to the instructors and other students that are on the course. If the instructors are too busy to talk to you, then this attitude is unlikely to change once you have started the course. Are the students happy or do they wish they had gone somewhere else?

Paying for an AFF course is making an investment in your future skydiving career. It is well worth spending time researching all the options available before parting with your cash. In short, skydiving is a service industry; cheapest is not always best. Avoid gambling on an unknown quantity; ensure you are happy about where you are going before you get there. There is much more to an AFF course than eight jumps! ●

Chris Allen
BPA Instructor and Examiner



“You will find that your instructors become friends for your skydiving life!”



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“ The great thing about skydiving is that we all have one thing in common – we all have a slightly wild streak which runs through us ”

SKYDIVING CHANGED MY LIFE



Skydiving

changed my life

I read this magazine a few years ago. It was the day after I had completed a tandem jump and I knew that I wanted to do it all over again.

I set off on a pursuit across the internet for more information about skydiving. How do I get into it? How much will it cost? Where can I jump? All valid questions which I am sure you have been asking yourself while browsing through these pages. I found most of the answers in this magazine and, a few weeks later, started an AFF course.

Becoming a qualified skydiver is probably one of greatest achievements of my life so far. I've experienced first-hand the fear and pressures of a first jump and witnessed them slowly ebb to become a feeling of euphoric freedom and a sense of belonging. It is a feeling to savour and probably one I haven't experienced anywhere else in life.

I remember struggling on my AFF course with Levels 4 and 5, where you are introduced to left and right turns. At the time, I couldn't seem to grasp turns which seemed agonisingly simple on the ground, but which frustratingly evaded me in the sky. It was here that I learned a key lesson about skydiving: when you first start, half the battle you will face is going to be a mental one. At some point or another, you're going to hit a brick wall and struggle with something; be it your first jump or your FS1 graduation dive. But the great thing is we've all been there and chances are we'll all be there again at some point in the future. The best advice I could offer anybody looking to learn to skydive is to

not give up or become frustrated. Instead, remember that even the skydivers with World Championship gold medals probably hit the same hurdles that you are facing.

The great thing about skydiving is that we all have one thing in common – we all have a slightly wild streak which runs through us. After all, you've got to be slightly mad to consider jumping from an aeroplane 15,000ft above the ground, right? It is this which makes skydiving feel as if you are part of one huge family. We're all there to jump, have a good time and drink beer! As soon as you start doing your first solos and progress to jumping with your friends, the feeling of community only builds. If ever you find yourself needing some help, you'll find that you'll always have someone to turn to and it is this sense of family and comradeship which I love about the sport.

Skydiving now forms a cornerstone of my life. I'm typically at a dropzone every other weekend – there's *always* something to do or learn about during the bad weather days. In a year since qualifying, I completed about 150 jumps, gained my FS1, placed fourth at the National Championships with a rookie team and culminated the year by winning New Skydiver of the Year at BPA Skydive the Expo – something which came as a great surprise and I am proud of. Yet there is still so much more I want to try and learn. So I finish by asking – What are you waiting for? Come and join the family. Blue skies. ●

Jack Davies



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SKYDIVING SEEMS FULL OF LOUD, ALOOF AND INTIMIDATING TYPES WHO TREAT GETTING INTO FREEFALL WITH THE SAME CASUALNESS AS BUYING A CUP OF COFFEE. DO YOU HAVE TO BE INVINCIBLE? OR WILL PRACTICE MAKE PERFECT SO YOU TOO CAN BECOME THIS BLASÉ?



1

How are you, with all your enthusiasm, potential and attitude, ever going to overcome the hurdles in your way and get to the standard of those heady individuals who jump every weekend? Well, you don't have to be a hero, you just need to have the desire, set your goals and apply yourself.

At the same time, bear in mind that, if this game was easy, anyone could do it. Even the bland, sulky individuals we meet every day. The ones in the bank, those at the supermarket, or maybe even the ones who look at you like you're mental when you say you're going to devote yet another weekend to staring at a windsock. This sport makes its own selection and right now, for however long, it's chosen you. So what's in your way?

"WHENEVER I GO TO THE DZ, THE WEATHER'S AWFUL"

Yes, it's true that there seem to be more non-jumpable days than there are jumpable ones in the UK. As students, you are justifiably confined by weather restrictions. But you must keep your eye on your goal, make sure that you are there when the weather is good and get your name down early. If you do three jumps on a good weather day, you will perform better than if you do one every three weeks.

Everyone has demands on their time – family, work, etc – but the time that you do have to give to skydiving, give it all. Get up early. Be there!

"I'M BROKE!"

Fair one, me too – but here's a tip. It sounds patronising, but it worked for me. Every

bad weather day you are at the dropzone, presumably you came to jump. Put the money you would have spent somewhere safe and use it to jump more when the weather's good. Does your dropzone pay for packing? Learn! What is the breaking strain of one of your rigging lines anyway?

"WHEN I JUMP, I GET ALL TENSE AND I SCREW UP!"

Yep. So did everyone else who skydives. It's hard because it's dramatic and scary out there, but there are things you can do to help. Make use of your time on the ground (those bad weather days again). Even outside formal revision, practise exits, rehearse your exercise repeatedly and really understand just what your instructor wants from you. There's a brilliant article about visualisation on page 39. Read it, read it again and apply it. →

1 *Rockin' out while hanging on to the outside of an aircraft, by Kye Bromley*



“Positive mental attitude is something of a bland cliché these days, but it works. Fool yourself that you’re really good and you probably will be”

Never be afraid to ask. If ever you get a critique that you don’t understand, ask. Watch as many videos as you can; even if they seem advanced, they show people feeling the air and those people started from exactly the same place that you are in now.

“I’M WORRIED I CAN’T COPE”

If you did AFF or a static line jump, you have already been taught two types of skills; sport and survival. Sport skills relate to the routine of skydiving, the things that happen on every jump – exits and progression exercises, canopy control, etc. Survival skills include cutaway and reserve drills, hazard avoidance and aircraft emergency drills. Both skill sets need to be practised regularly. But remember this: if you doubt your ability to cope in a given situation, such as a malfunction, this doubt will turn to fear. It will increase on the ride to altitude and affect every aspect of the subsequent jump. You cannot progress in skydiving if you believe that you barely escape with your life every time that you jump. An intermediate jumper once confessed to me that he was praying he never got a problem with his canopy, because he was convinced he would freeze. How could he ever expect to progress (or survive) with that attitude? If this sounds like you, grab an instructor NOW. Get in a suspended harness and go through hell until you are sure you can cope. Then your survival skills can sit where they belong in the back of your mind, ready to leap out, slick and practised, if they are ever required. Now you can get on with skydiving.

What do you think about on the climb to altitude? How scared you are? How you’ll probably get it wrong? If you do, then you will be scared and you will get it wrong. Positive mental attitude is something of a bland cliché these days, but it works. Fool yourself that you’re really good and you probably will be.

“I’M SCARED!”

First of all, you are not alone. Skydiving, in the early stages, is a very scary thing to do. Remember that, even though the students around you feel the same fear, some are better at looking cool about it. You are not the only one who hopes the weather will clag in again so you won’t have to jump! You’re not the only one who thinks about developing a ‘fractured leg’ in the aircraft so you won’t have to jump. You’re not the only one who holds their risers tightly on the way down in case their legstraps suddenly de-materialise. How do I know? Well, I was that student! There, and now about a million people know about it, so you’ve got nothing to worry about. That kind of irrational fear will simply fade as you make more and more jumps. Eventually only a small fragment will remain, and so it should. It will give you respect.

Incidentally, if you talk to most people who have dealt with malfunctions, you will find that there wasn’t the mad screaming panic that one expects. People almost invariably perform calmly and as a product of their training. One of the most perfect first ‘dummy pulls’ I’ve seen was done by a student I dispatched in an aircraft emergency at 1,800 feet!

Fear actually has its place within our sport and people who are completely without it are buying a dangerous ticket – but its place is to edge our enjoyment, not to cloud it. In the meantime, remember – you didn’t take up this game to get bored.

“MOST OF THE EXPERIENCED JUMPERS SEEM COLD AND ALOOF”

I know what you mean – I’ve got 4,000 jumps and no one talks to me! Seriously, I do know exactly what you mean. This can seem like a very exclusive game sometimes. The thing is that we’re all tribal. We all relate to our own and people at the dropzone naturally gravitate towards their friends. Every new social situation requires a little ‘breaking in’, but you jump out of aeroplanes, for God’s sake – don’t be timid of a little active socialising. Don’t wait for it to come to you.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

You have already done the hard bit. You’ve crossed the line from the person that said “I’d love to do that”. You made a decision that most people don’t and now you can say “I’ve done that”. But you haven’t done it all. There’s always more. That’s the challenge. Don’t give up! If you do, then I and a bunch of others will have to get proper jobs and interface with the real world and that, folks, is a prospect too horrible to contemplate. ●

Chris Donaldson
BPA Instructor and Examiner

2 Skydivers are a happy and welcoming bunch of people – stick with it and become part of the family.
By Rob Lloyd

3 If you’re scared, pretend you’re enjoying it and sooner or later you will be!
By Kev McNab



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1

Coping with fear

SKYDIVING IS A SO-CALLED 'DANGEROUS' SPORT. YET MANY OF US WILL COME TO THE SPORT PRECISELY IN ORDER TO MEET THAT PERSONAL CHALLENGE OF FEAR. IN THE EARLY STAGES THE COMPETITION IS PRINCIPALLY AGAINST OURSELVES AND OUR NATURAL SURVIVAL INSTINCTS

Before we examine how to overcome fear, we should first try to understand it better – both the causes and the effects. If we approach it with the right attitude, fear can be employed to produce positive results.

Fear tends to be felt in three different ways. Let's refer to them as levels:

Level one: 'the butterflies'
Anticipation/excitement (enjoyable)

Level two: 'fight or flight'
High apprehension/nervous agitation (challenging)

Level three: 'frozen'
Terror/all-consuming e.g. panic attacks and catatonia (debilitating)

These are not sharply defined, but are more like shades of grey – level three being the darkest.

LEVEL ONE: 'THE BUTTERFLIES'
We have all met people who say that they don't feel fear when jumping. I disagree with this perception. What they probably mean is that they only experience level one fear. For mere mortals to reach this same level, we only have to ride big rollercoasters or watch horror films. This lower level is achieved because of the relative safety of the environment and the certainty of a 'happy ending' outcome. We just sit back and enjoy the thrill of the ride.

LEVEL TWO: 'FIGHT OR FLIGHT'
Clearly a skydive is a very different situation. The speed and noise create

a much more hostile environment and, on top of that, we now have to actively participate in our own outcome. The extreme nature of skydiving will throw the majority of people straight into level two fear. This is the level we will concentrate on, as it is at this level where we can modify our behaviour to bring us down closer to level one.

LEVEL THREE: 'FROZEN'
Level three belongs principally to those who are too scared even to contemplate leaping out of perfectly good aircraft. A small number of those who do come to skydive will experience this by 'freezing' in the door or bottling out completely. If that is you, please read on – this article might be of help to you too.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT
What are the full implications of being in 'fight or flight' mode? Fight or flight hits us at the deepest level. It is our primal instinct for basic physical survival. As such, it has a profound effect on our brain chemistry, our sensory abilities and our perception. As our heart rate increases, pumping adrenaline and noradrenaline around our systems, we feel it everywhere. Nobody is immune to this effect. How we manage it determines our reactions.

Developing a strong mental attitude is essential when trying to counteract the body's powerful defence mechanisms. Instinctive actions don't always work in our best interests. It is ironic that the things our bodies will do to keep us safe are precisely the things that can compromise our safety in a skydive. To override our instincts, we need to concentrate on mental strategies and

learn how to utilise this altered brain state in positive ways.

The physical effect of 'fight or flight' makes our bodies do everything they can to distract us from the right actions. As the heart pumps harder, our breathing changes as well. We take rapid, shallow breaths, or even hold our breath completely. This creates tension and a high level of preparedness for action when, in fact, we need to get more relaxed in the air.

CONTROLLED BREATHING
Controlled, regular breathing patterns have been proven to alleviate pain, tension and stress in many situations. The way we breathe is the key to physical and emotional relaxation. That inner conflict between the body's natural survival instincts and right, safe action is strongly at work.

FOETAL POSITION
Another, often overlooked, physical effect that can cause problems with exits and body position in freefall is the foetal position. Again, that survival instinct seems to be working against us. The foetal position is a natural position we adopt at times of great danger or stress for self-preservation. This tightly curled posture serves to protect the head and genitalia, the two most vulnerable and vital areas for continued existence. Unfortunately, it also happens to be the complete opposite of the stable spread position we need. We hear that 'hips down, head up' is the right way to fall and our leading edge is the pelvis (assuming it is belly flight). It's hardly surprising that all these contradictions can feel overwhelming. →

1 *Feel the fear and do it anyway!* By Gary Wainwright

2 *Despite the paint job, this aircraft is not going to eat you!* By Rob Lloyd



3 Making friends in the sport will help you share your fears and overcome them. By Rob Lloyd

PROJECTED OUTCOME

Let us return to the example of the horror film for a moment; because we know it isn't real, we quite rightly can expect no consequence from watching it. Real life is less predictable. The drive to the local supermarket, like many other day-to-day activities, can have tragic results.

It's a sad fact that the media, family and friends only turn their attention to one single aspect of our sport; the boring reality is that we are more likely to have a fatal incident on the way to the dropzone than actually at it.

Fearful thinking is based on projection of the potential outcome of events. Who can blame us if, in unguarded moments, our minds automatically lock on to the least likely potential outcome of a skydive. When this thinking combines with our primal need for survival, we create a vicious circle.

THINKING IT OUT

It is a good idea to address physical symptoms first. Techniques learned and used here are involved in mental preparation. I strongly recommend the regular practice of any of the established 'controlled breathing' exercises such as meditation or self-hypnosis; these exercises will make you consciously aware of your own 'relaxed' breathing pattern. If you feel your breathing change when you are on your way to altitude, you can 'remind' yourself to breathe properly. This should enable you to become more physically relaxed and able to focus clearly on your skydive.

Leaving the plane is a moment of the highest intensity; heart rates of 200 beats per minute have been recorded. When you really shout the exit count

("one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thousand, check canopy!") on exit, you break the tension held in the chest by forcing an exhalation. The natural consequence, of course, is then to inhale; this sets you into a good breathing pattern right at the start of your skydive.

MENTAL PREPARATION

By consciously using our minds to regulate our breathing, we can change how we feel. We can carry that forwards and apply the same technique to the way we think. It is commonly said that 75 per cent of a skydive takes place on the ground. Mental preparation is crucial for all levels of experience, but is especially important for the novice who is still dealing with 'the fear'. The repetition of sequences of events and/or actions develops muscle memory and consciously familiarises you with the location of different handles etc.

This, in itself, will help to remove some of the tension, but it is also an opportunity to practise your relaxation strategies. Build the awareness of your breathing and state of relaxation into the skydive at this early stage and it will be easier in the air.

Rather than thinking about what might happen, you should be focusing on what you want to happen. Remember, you are in complete control of your skydive; everything you do in the air is going to have an effect. The ground work and your time in the plane should be spent with a fully conscious attitude to your physical relaxation and your mental preparation. If you let your mind wander, it will invariably drift towards that unsettling area of projection.

USE YOUR FEAR

Not many people address the beneficial effects of fear but we will here as it is another way to combat its impact on us.

So long as you stay aware of the dangers, you will not fall victim to avoidable accidents. Be scared, but let it prompt you into affirmative action. If you are concerned or worried about any aspect of the equipment or the jump, talk to someone, reassure yourself and give yourself one less thing to get stressed about. Above all else, use your fear to make you practise those emergency drills. After all, the only time you might actually need to be scared is if you don't have a good canopy over your head after the safety count. This is the time when those troublesome survival instincts that were giving us problems before turn back in our favour; as long as you know where the handles are, you will use them instinctively!

IN SUMMARY

To sum it up, accept the fact that skydiving is dangerous and it will trigger fear of some description. Acknowledge and embrace the fear. Let it help you to stay safe without letting it interfere with your enjoyment of this exhilarating sport. It won't always be as scary, as with experience comes familiarity. With every jump, you will further integrate this 'highly conscious' way of thinking into your unconscious thoughts and actions – and here's the bonus. When you learn to manage the level of fear that skydiving can induce, it will carry through into your whole life. ●

Neil J Biscoe

“Rather than thinking about what might happen, you should be focusing on what you want to happen”



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Glossary

4-WAY

Formation of four people or canopies; similarly 8-way, 16-way...

A/C

Aircraft

AAD

Automatic Activation Device, initiates reserve deployment at approximately 750 ft if needed

ACCURACY

Discipline in which jumpers try to land on a 2cm disc

AFF

Accelerated Free Fall, intensive course to learn skydiving

AFF BI

Accelerated Free Fall Basic Instructor

AFF I

Accelerated Free Fall Instructor

AGL

Above ground level. (e.g. 12,000 ft AGL)

ALTI (METER)

Mechanical device used for measuring altitude (height above the ground)

AUDIBLE ALTI

A device placed in the helmet which beeps to indicate preset altitudes

APA

Army Parachute Association

ARTISTIC EVENTS

Freeflying, freestyle, skysurfing and speed

ASPECT RATIO

The width of a ram-air (rectangular) canopy divided by its length

ATC

Air Traffic Control

BAG LOCK

A malfunction where the lines have deployed but the canopy is still in the bag

BCPA

British Collegiate Parachute Association

BELLY FLYING

Freefalling in a belly to earth position i.e. formation skydiving

BI

Basic Instructor

BIG-WAY

Big formation, around 20 or larger

BOC

Bottom of container (main parachute deployment)

BOOGIE

Fun skydiving event

BOOTIES

Shoe-covers on jumpsuits which add power to formation skydivers

BPA

British Parachute Association, the UK governing body for sport parachuting

BPA A LICENCE

Parachuting qualification by way of a licence awarded by the BPA to someone who has achieved Cat 8 and CH1

BPA B LICENCE

Awarded for achieving BPA A Licence, 50 descents, CH2 and JM1

BPA C LICENCE

Awarded for achieving BPA B Licence, 200 descents and another grade 1

BPA D LICENCE

Awarded for achieving BPA C Licence and 1,000 descents

BRAKES

Used to steer ram-air canopies

BREAK-OFF

When jumpers in freefall leave each other to find space to deploy safely

BRIDLE

A line attaching the pilot chute to the top skin of the canopy

BUM SPOT

Leaving the aircraft at the wrong place

BUNGEE

Rubber band used for stowing lines

CAA

Civil Aviation Authority, a government body responsible for safety and operations in UK airspace

CATEGORY 8 or CAT 8

BPA qualification where the jumper progresses from student to intermediate skydiver

CATEGORY SYSTEM

BPA progression system for student skydivers

CI

Chief Instructor of the parachute centre

CF

Canopy formation, linking ram-air canopies

CF1

BPA canopy formation qualification, grade 1

CH1 and CH2

BPA canopy handling qualifications, grades 1 and 2

CLASSICS

Style and accuracy

CLOSING LOOP

Piece of line used to close the parachute container

CONSOLS

10 solo consolidation jumps by AFF students before being awarded their A Licence

CONTAINER

The harness and pack that parachutes are contained in

CORK

To fall off a freefly position, decelerating rapidly and popping up like a cork in relation to others

CP1 and CP2

BPA canopy piloting qualifications, grades 1 and 2

CRAB

Point canopy across wind line (you travel sideways relative to the ground)

CREEPER

A board with wheels which formation skydivers manoeuvre to prepare their skydive

CREW

Canopy relative work, old term for CF

CSBI

Category System Basic Instructor

CSI

Category System Instructor

CUT

Command given to the pilot to slow the aircraft speed for jumpers to exit

CUTAWAY

Jettison of main canopy, usually after a malfunction

CYPRES

Type of AAD

DC

Dead centre, the top score in accuracy

DELAY

A period of time in freefall e.g. 10 second delay

DEMO

A parachute jump performed at a public event

DIRT-DIVE

Preparing skydiving sequences on the ground

DIVER

Exit position where the jumper is inside the aircraft

DOCK

Take up a grip on a formation (canopy or freefall)

DOWNPLANE

Canopy formation with two jumpers linking legs and flying their canopies straight down

DOWNWIND

Flying a canopy in the same direction as the wind

DP or DRCP

Dummy pull or dummy ripcord pull (same)

DUMMY PULL

Simulated pull sequence

DUMP

Deploy canopy

DZ

Dropzone, landing area for parachutists

ESL

European Skydiving League, a series of competitions over Europe

EXIT

Leave the aircraft and enter freefall

F111

Fairly porous fabric used on accuracy canopies

FAA

Federal Aviation Administration, US equivalent of the CAA

FAI

Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, the international governing body for airports

FF1 and FF2

BPA freeflying qualifications, grades 1 and 2

FLARE

To pull down both brakes on a ram-air canopy to turn forward speed into lift for a soft landing

FLAT FLYING

Formation skydiving

FLAT LINE

Continuous warning tone from audible altimeter at the lowest preset altitude

FLOATER

Exit position where the jumper is outside the aircraft

FLOCK

A group of wingsuited skydivers flying together

FORMATION

Two or more jumpers linked, in freefall or under canopy

FRAPPE HAT

Leather helmet with neoprene padding

FREE BAG

Bag the reserve canopy is packed into; this is not attached to the canopy, hence 'free'

FREEFLYING

Freefalling in any orientation

FREESTYLE

An artistic event of aerial gymnastics

FS

Formation skydiving

FS1

BPA formation skydiving qualification, grade 1

FUNNEL

Skydive formation or launch which collapses

FXC

Type of AAD

GATW

Good all the way (student critique)

GLIDE RATIO

Ratio of forward movement to descent rate under canopy

GPS

Global Positioning System (Navigation system used by aircraft)

GRAND PRIX

Series of BPA competitions leading to an overall award

GRIP

Handle on a jumpsuit used for formations and exits

GROUND RUSH

The illusion of the ground appearing to accelerate towards you

HALF SERIES

Style manoeuvre; two 360° turns and a backloop

HARNESSES

Parachute webbing assembly, part of container system →



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At

It was

I did it because

and **skydivethemag.com** to find out more

GLOSSARY

HEAD-DOWN

Stable freeflying position where the jumper is upside down

HOLDING

Facing canopy into the wind

HOOK KNIFE

Small knife with protected blade carried in case of emergency

HOP 'N' POP

A very short freefall delay

HYBRID

Combining freeflying and belly flying

IPC

International Parachuting Commission

IS1

BPA individual style qualification, grade 1

JM1

BPA Jumpmaster qualification, grade 1

JSPC

Joint Services Parachute Centre (group of five parachute centres around the world, formed for servicemen and women)

JUMP RUN

Final line the aircraft takes to reach the exit point (the spot)

JM/JUMPMASTER

Experienced skydiver responsible for jumpers in the aircraft and where to exit

KILL LINE

Line which collapses the pilot chute after a canopy opens, to reduce drag

LAC

Launch and accuracy (competition scored on exit and accuracy landings)

LAUNCH

Two or more jumpers exiting together

LIFT/LOAD

Group of people going to altitude in one aircraft

LEVEL 8

The final level of AFF, a solo hop 'n' pop

MAIN

Primary parachute

MAL

When a parachute fails to open properly; also called malfunction

MANIFEST

List of jumpers on board the aircraft

MANIFESTOR

Person who allocates jumpers to each load

NATIONALS

National Championships, annual BPA competitions to select British teams for World Meets

OPENING POINT

The point on the ground above which a canopy should open to be set up to land in the target area

OPENING SHOCK

The force felt on the body due to sudden deceleration as the canopy opens

PARA-SKI

Event combining parachuting accuracy and slalom skiing

PILOT CHUTE

A small parachute released by a skydiver to open the main parachute

PIN

1. When a jumper joins another, in freefall or under canopy

2. Closing device for container

PJI (MILITARY)

Parachute Jumping Instructor

PLA

Parachute landing area

PLF

Parachute landing fall

POINT

A successfully completed formation

POPS

Parachutists Over 'Phorty' Society, for jumpers aged 40+

POROSITY

The amount of air that will pass through a given area of material (see ZP)

PRO-PACKING

Way of packing a ram-air parachute

PTO

Parachute Training Organisation. A modern name for your local DZ/club.

PULL-OUT

Method of deployment where the pilot chute is packed inside the container, the owner pulls out both the pin and the pilot chute

PULL

Deploy a parachute

PULL-UP CORD

Length of binding tape used to close a parachute container

RAeC

Royal Aero Club, the UK representative of the FAI

RAPA

Rhine Army Parachute Association (at Bad Lippspringe, Germany)

RAM-AIR

Aerofoil parachute, also called square even though the shape is nearer rectangular

RDS

Removable Deployment System, used by swoopers

RELATIVE WORK

Old name for formation skydiving

RIG

A container and harness including main and reserve parachutes

RIGGER

Person qualified to construct, modify and repair parachutes and related equipment

RISER

Webbing strip joining the parachute lines to the harness

ROUND

A circular parachute of classic shape

RSL

Reserve static line, joining the main parachute to the reserve ripcord, which deploys the reserve on releasing the main

RUN-IN

Final line the aircraft takes, into wind, to reach the exit point (the spot)

RUNNING

Flying the canopy in the same direction as the wind

RW

Relative work i.e. formation skydiving

SERIES

Style manoeuvre; two 360° turns and a backloop and repeat in the opposite direction, also called full series

SIT-FLYING

Freefalling in a sitting position

SKYDIVE U

Skydive University, a worldwide training system for formation skydiving

SKYSURFING

Skydiving on a surfboard

SLIDER

Device to control the deployment of a ram-air parachute by sliding down the suspension lines

SNIVEL

Extremely slow opening of a canopy

SOS

Society of Skydivers Over Sixty

SPEED

A competitive event where jumpers build a formation as fast as they can

SPEED SKYDIVING

Competition where jumpers try to freefall as fast as possible, usually in a head-down diving position

SPOT

1. The ideal exit point allowing for wind drift to reach the target
2. The action of finding this point

SQUARE

A ram-air parachute (actually rectangular or elliptical)

SS1 and SS2

BPA skysurfing qualifications, grades 1 and 2

STACK

Ram-air canopies linked vertically above each other

STALL

Pulling the brakes down on a ram-air canopy so far it loses forward speed and collapses

STAND-UP

1. Vertical freefall position, crucifix style
2. Landing without rolling or falling over

STATIC LINE

Line attached to the aircraft which deploys the main parachute as the jumper exits

STATIC LINE PROGRESSION

A course to learn skydiving

STC

Safety and Training Committee

STREAMER

1. Malfunction where the canopy is out of the bag but not inflating
2. Slang for WDI

STYLE

A discipline where the jumper does a set series of turns and backloops as quickly as they can

SWOOP

1. High-speed landing
2. Fast dive to a freefall formation

TANDEM

A skydive for two in a dual harness

THREE-RING CIRCUS

Device to attach the main risers to the harness, which provides an easy release mechanism for the main canopy

THROWAWAY

Type of deployment where the pilot chute is packed externally in a pocket and is thrown into the air

TI

Tandem Instructor, qualified to take a student for a tandem jump

TOGGLES

Steering loops on the risers, also called brakes

TOTAL

Malfunction where there is nothing slowing the jumper down

TRACING

A type of freeflying where skydivers fly at a steep angle between head down and tracking

TRACKING

To move fast horizontally in freefall, often to achieve separation from others

TUBE

Large windsock structure taken on a skydive for fun, usually freeflying

UKSL

United Kingdom Skydiving League, a series of linked 4-way FS competitions (run in parallel with ESL)

USPA

United States Parachute Association

VIGIL

Type of AAD

VGT

Very good throughout (student critique)

VFS

Vertical Formation Skydiving, building formations while head-up or head-down. Also called VRW

VRW

Vertical Relative Work, another name for VFS

WDI

Wind drift indicator (pronounced 'widdy'), thrown from the aircraft to determine the opening point

WIND LINE

A line through the PLA in the wind direction

WIND TUNNEL

Freefall simulator for skydiving

WINGSUIT

Suit with fabric between the legs and arms to increase lift and freefall time

WHUFFO

Person who doesn't skydive

WRAP

One or more canopies wrapped around each other or a jumper

WS1 and WS2

BPA Wingsuit qualification, grades 1 and 2

ZOO

A skydive that has turned into chaos

ZP

Zero-porosity fabric which does not allow air through it, used for high-performance canopies

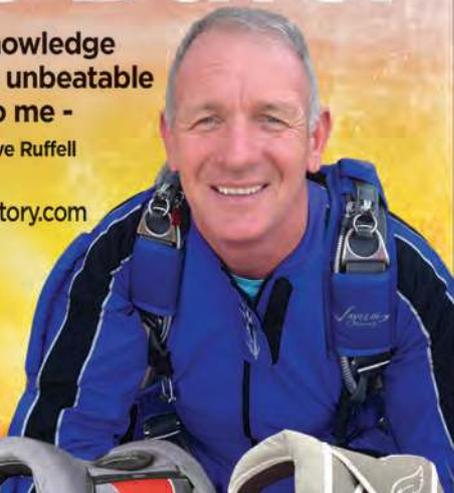


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The price is plus extra charge options.
Standard options vary by rig.

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With Safire Main - add \$25
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The price is plus extra charge options.
Standard options vary by rig.

Wings

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With Sabre Main - add \$25
With Safire Main - add \$25
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The price is plus extra charge options.
Standard options vary by rig.

Mirage

Container with Pilot Main and Smart Reserve
\$5465*
With Sabre Main - add \$25
With Safire Main - add \$25
Contact us for pricing with other canopies.
The price is plus extra charge options.
Standard options vary by rig.

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it's all in the mind

MOST SPORTS ARE A HEAD GAME BUT SKYDIVING IS EVEN MORE THAN MOST. BEING MENTALLY PREPARED FOR YOUR JUMP WILL INCREASE THE CHANCE OF IT BEING A GOOD ONE. SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST WARREN SLINGSBY EXPLAINS HOW TO USE VISUALISATION TO IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE

Parachuting is similar to many other sports in that there are learned skills and sequences that must be carried out correctly for safe, successful performance. The problem is that practising them is not always easy. For example, the Premiership footballer can practise taking penalty kicks during training. However, there are vast differences between taking penalties in training and during a match! The largest difference being 40,000 people, most of whom are against him – booing, whistling, jeering – and perhaps the relegation or promotion of his team resting on his shoulders. This different environment will bring with it a different set of feelings, emotions and a totally different anxiety level. This poses the question: how does the footballer prepare for that penalty kick? Effectively, taking the kick during the match is the best simulation, but the worst possible time for a practice. Similarly, the best time to practise jumping from an aircraft is when actually doing it because it's the best simulation. However, when you're paying for your jumps and when slots are limited due to available aircraft and weather, it would be better if you were able to practise on the ground to get the skill right. This is where mental rehearsal is an important stepping stone. It costs nothing, can be done practically anywhere and is simple to learn. Additionally, it can be adapted to almost any sport or activity. →

1 Spend the ride up to altitude visualising your jump.
By Mark Harris



Go through the whole jump including you performing your exercises perfectly in slow motion, using all your senses to make the picture as real as possible

VISUALISATION

Mental rehearsal is when an action is practised or seen mentally as opposed to physically. Visualisation is the process of seeing yourself performing an action and is used to practise or rehearse. There is a body of scientific evidence to say that visualisation increases or improves performance in several sports. There are two types of self-imagery – internal and external. External imagery is mentally viewing oneself as if from a video camera and has two main benefits; it is easy to do and it's possible to see yourself from many different angles. Internal imagery is viewing actions as if through one's own eyes. This is generally more difficult and can be more limited than external in terms of what you can visualise. An example is that you wouldn't be able to visualise head positions.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

If the body is relaxed and the mind focused and really concentrating on the task of visualising a skill, the brain actually sends the correct signals to the muscles to make them contract and perform the tasks. This just happens at a very low intensity and not enough to physically move the limbs. However, if you try this you may feel your arms and legs twitching – 'wanting' to move. During this time, the muscles are learning the correct patterns of contraction.

APPLICATIONS IN SKYDIVING

As a supremely mental sport, skydiving is an ideal situation to use visualisation to improve performance. When you are at the dropzone, you will often see experienced jumpers with their eyes closed, imagining every part of the dive, often with their hands moving and taking imaginary grips. Or they will dirt-dive in groups, visualising key

2 Skydivers visualising a big-way formation skydive, by Tony Danbury

elements of the skydive. These jumpers have learned how to make the technique work for them.

MENTAL PREPARATION

The body and mind must be relaxed and focused. The best way to do this is to make sure you are in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed, lie or sit down and make sure you're comfortable. Take a few minutes to relax yourself by concentrating on your breathing. Correct deep breathing should use the stomach as opposed to the chest. When you breathe in, your stomach should enlarge and should drop when you breathe out. Spend a few minutes in this state. Make sure that your arms, legs, head and neck are also relaxed and pushing down deep into whatever you're lying or sitting on.

When you are fully relaxed, you can start to go through whatever actions or skills you want to practise. It's best to begin with external visualisation, so start by seeing the actions happening slowly – almost as if you were watching them in slow motion on an action replay. Make sure that you concentrate on whatever parts of the technique are important. See this several times. Follow it with internal visualisation. The beauty of it is that you can practise without having to take off or spend any money. You will also find it builds confidence due to jumps being more successful. It will become easier to visualise the events as your mental picture becomes clearer with each jump.

TRY IT!

Build up a complete sequence of events, beginning with external and moving on to internal visualisation of each element. Start by getting your kit, putting it on and waiting at the flight line. See yourself from your instructor's eyes, see them assessing your readiness for the jump.

See yourself getting in the aircraft, smiling at your instructor on take-off, and see yourself calm and relaxed on the ride to altitude. On run-in, see yourself getting in the door and notice, as if from other eyes, how focused you are. Watch your jump in great detail from your instructor's point of view and notice how perfect the jump is. Continue this imagery as your canopy opens and all the way to the ground, including gathering up your kit and walking back with a big smile on your face.

Now move on to internal visualisation. Concentrate on your emotions at this time – you are likely to start feeling hyped up just at the thought of getting your kit! But see, from your own eyes, your hands putting the kit on and feel yourself becoming calmer as this happens. Go through the whole sequence you have just done from the outside, this time seeing the walk to the plane, getting in and the ride to altitude from your own eyes. Imagine what it will look like as you get in the door and feel how perfectly prepared you are. Include all your senses; the noise of the aircraft, the cool rush of air, the sight of your instructor. Go through the whole jump including you performing your exercises perfectly in slow motion, again using all your senses to make the picture as real as possible. Finish by seeing your mates asking how the jump went and you telling them how fantastic it was, your best ever!

If you're waiting for the weather to clear, try to repeat this every half hour. When you are called, you will find the jump easier and your head-state calmer because, in a way, you have already practised. And we all know that practice makes perfect! ●

Warren Slingsby
Sports psychologist



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Formation skydiving

PROBABLY THE MOST WIDESPREAD FORM OF JUMPING, FS OR FORMATION SKYDIVING IS LINKING WITH OTHERS IN FREEFALL, OFTEN REFERRED TO BY NON-JUMPERS AS 'HOLDING HANDS'. THESE FORMATIONS CAN BE AS SMALL OR AS LARGE AS YOU CAN IMAGINE. IT IS A POPULAR WEEKEND PASTIME; JUMPERS WILL MEET UP AND FORM GROUPS. FS IS A HIGH-SPEED COMPETITIVE DISCIPLINE AS WELL AS A RECREATIONAL PURSUIT



4-WAY COMPETITION

Teams of five (four, plus a camera jumper) leave the plane at 10,500 feet and are scored on the number of set formations they achieve in 35 seconds. The first point of the skydive is generally launched – the jumpers will take the correct grips and present the whole thing to the slipstream to fly out stable in the same way as first-time jumpers try to leave the plane in a stable position.

The formations are drawn from a set pool (see fai.org/parachuting) but, of course, can come up in any order. The formations can either be 'randoms', which are single formations, or 'blocks' that have a second formation, built by splitting the first one into pieces and rotating or moving these to make a second formation – sometimes the same and sometimes different to the first one. The camerajumper will wear a helmet-mounted camera to record the dive for judging purposes. The current British record in 4-way is 47 points, achieved by team *Satori* at the 2010 World Championships in Russia.

8-WAY COMPETITION

Teams are of eight people (plus camera) and leave from 13,000 feet, with 50 seconds of 'working time' within which they are scored. Again, the dives are drawn from a pool of blocks and randoms. Having eight people to play with makes for interesting and varied formations, with a few different permutations possible for the same dive.

BOOGIES AND BIG-WAYS

FS1, Formation Skydiving 1, is a BPA qualification awarded to someone who has demonstrated the ability to fly on their belly. Once you have gained FS1, you are free to jump with other qualified individuals as you wish, both in the UK and abroad. Boogies are popular skydiving parties where a number of large aircraft are brought to one place for a jumping festival.

Big-way events are organised, sometimes for fun and sometimes to try to set new national or international records jumping from a multitude of different aircraft. It's possible to go and make jumps with people even though you don't speak their language. It's a great way to make friends! ●

Formation skydivers tend to wear:

- ▶ Jumpsuits with chunky grips for taking hold of people and booties – bits of material which cover the shoes and add power to leg movements
- ▶ Hard, full-face helmets in case of freefall collisions
- ▶ Audible warning devices which signal break-off (time to leave the group, find some sky and deploy your canopy)

3



Did you know...?

- ▶ The women's British record is a 68-way red cross built in 2007
- ▶ The biggest formation built over Britain is a 100-way, in 1999
- ▶ The world record is 400 people, set in Thailand in February 2006. A 500-way is in the planning stages.

4



1 The formation skydivers must fall on the same level as each other, with any camera person staying a short distance above them.
By James Stevenson

2 The BPA 4-way FS Nationals are the biggest in the world!
By James Stevenson

3 A fun 60-way formation skydive, by Dave Butterell

4 The UK has won many medals in the Female 4-way FS event.
By Pete Allum

5 The current world record 400-way, by Gary Wainwright

5



Artistics

SKYDIVING IS STILL IN ITS INFANCY AND IS STILL CHANGING AT A GREAT RATE

1

66 Freely was born of pure fun but has grown into a multi-faceted discipline that offers the highest level of international competition 99



Freeflyers tend to wear:

- ▶ Video – nearly everyone wears a tiny video camera
- ▶ One, if not two, audible altimeters, as well as the traditional altimeter because the high freefall speeds make it difficult to hear
- ▶ Small, hard helmets
- ▶ Freely suits in heavy material to add power to arms and legs, and with small grips for making formations

Artistics (which refers to freeflying, freestyle, VFS, skysurfing and speed) is the fastest-growing and most innovative area of the sport. It evolved from a desire to have fun through exploring the almost limitless ways to fly your body in freefall. Freeflying started in the early '90s with a small group of guys who were looking for a new direction in human flight.

FREESTYLE

Freestyle is a form of aerial gymnastics where the emphasis is on pointed toes, pleasing moves and aesthetic beauty. Men and women compete alongside each other in the same category. They jump with a cameraflyer, who adds to the visual image by flying a routine with the performer. There are compulsory moves and free rounds, similar to figure skating, and judges mark specific areas such as technical merit, fluidity, style and originality.

FREELY PROGRESSION

Freestyle led to the development of freeflying, a more fun-based approach where smiles are more important than style. The BPA runs a freely progression system including a comprehensive manual, which is available from the BPA website: bpa.org.uk

HEAD-UP

Most freeflyers start out learning how to fly head-up in a sit-fly position, so called because it is similar to the position for sitting in a chair. This position can be manoeuvred around the sky in three dimensions. The great thing about sit-flying is that, with hard work, you can soon become proficient. It's the sort of thing that, once you get the feeling, you never lose it. Straighten your legs from the sit position to a crucifix and you're in a stand-up, a position where you can admire the view and feel on top of the world! Skills in head-up are recognised by the BPA's Freely 1 (FF1) qualification. The Nationals includes two levels of competition; a basic one for head-up flying only and one for all orientations.

HEAD-DOWN

As the name suggests, you fly upside-down using your legs to provide balance and support in the same way a shuttlecock falls. By deflecting the passing air in different ways, it's possible to go faster and slower with the potential to cover great distances forwards and backwards horizontally. Head-down is the most aerodynamic way for the human body to fly. Attaining a basic level of skill in head-down flying will gain you the Freely 2 (FF2) qualification.

COMBINATIONS

You can combine head-down and head-up with people who inevitably develop their own styles and techniques. Hybrid dives involve people 'flat-flying' (in a standard stable position) too. Follow-

Did you know...?

► The current World Record fastest average speed in competition is 330mph! The fastest speed ever recorded by a human in freefall was 843.6mph, by Felix Baumgartner when he jumped from the edge of space!

► The world record head-down formation is 164, set at Skydive Chicago in July 2015



1 Freely team Volare, by Jim Harris

2 The current European record 96-way included fifteen Brits. By Tom Naef

3 Dan Curnow on his skysurf board, by Duncan Haynes

4 Airkix Freestyle have medalled at the last three World Championships running, by Rolf 'Kuri' Kuratle



Unlike other freefly competitions which are subjectively judged on artistic elements, 4-way VFS has objective judging with a point scored for each formation built in the planned sequence drawn from the VFS dive pool. The British team, *Bad Lieutenants*, took bronze at the 2010 World Championships.

SPEED

The aim of the game is to go as fast as you can! Competitors' average speed over a vertical kilometre is measured, and the highest average over the best three jumps determines the winner. Speed Skydiving became an official IPC discipline in 2014.

PHILOSOPHY

Freefly is fast-paced and dynamic, requiring an increased level of safety awareness and a willingness to share knowledge within a friendly and super-enthusiastic bunch of people. This environment is enhanced by a progression system that encourages the individual to experiment and learn in their own way – hence the variety in styles and flying techniques. Freefly was born of pure fun, but has grown into a multi-faceted discipline that offers the highest level of international competition. New techniques and ideas are emerging all the time. The rise in head-down world records, for example, has been meteoric: from 18 in 2002 to 69 in 2007 and 164 in 2015. ●

Mark Swarbrick

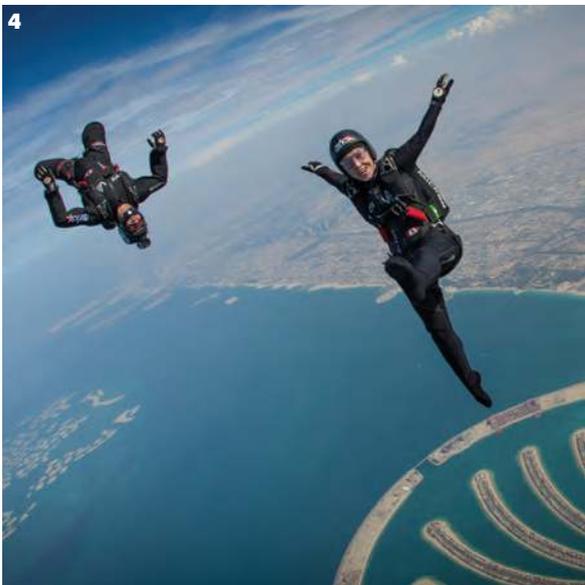
my-leader tracking dives are a popular way to end the day, with belly flyers joining their freeflying friends.

FREELY COMPETITIONS

Teams of three include two performers and a cameraperson, who flies interactively with the others to create a routine. Like ice skating, the competition involves compulsory rounds – flying set manoeuvres – and free rounds where the team creates its own artistic interpretation. British freefly team *Volare* won the World Cup in 2009, for which they were additionally awarded the accolade of a Royal Aero Club gold medal.

VFS

Vertical Formation Skydiving teams compete in 4-way like the formation skydivers on the previous page but, instead of being belly to earth, they are head-down, head-up or even a mixture.





66 The wings enable the wearer to 'fly' forward through the sky, creating lift **99**



WINGSUITING IS STILL A RELATIVELY NEW DISCIPLINE, HAVING TAKEN OFF IN ONLY THE LAST 10 YEARS OR SO. HOWEVER ITS POPULARITY HAS EXPLODED, WITH MANY NEW SKYDIVERS HAVING HEARD OF IT BEFORE THEY START JUMPING, AND SOME EVEN STARTING TO SKYDIVE BECAUSE OF IT

Wingsuiting

Wingsuiters wear large suits with fabric wings that stretch from each arm to the main body and between the legs. This creates drag, which results in a slower descent rate in itself but, more importantly, the wings enable the wearer to 'fly' forward through the sky, creating lift. Wingsuiters experience freefall times of double or even triple that of other skydivers, and can cover thousands of

metres across the ground. Some wingsuiters like to challenge themselves to see how long they can fly for or how far they can go, and some like to 'flock' with other wingsuiters in tight formations. The Guinness World Record is of 100 wingsuiters in a pre-determined 'arrowhead' formation. Smaller groups, sometimes pairs with or without a cameraflyer, can perform acrobatics around each other, barrel rolling and flipping for fun.

1 Wingsuits can be flown on their backs or their fronts. *By Willy Boeykens*
2 On the way to the current wingsuit world record of 100 people in tight formation. *By Matt Hoover*

HISTORY
There are many historical references to the idea of wingsuiting, from Icarus and Daedalus in Ancient Greece to sketches and writings by Leonardo da Vinci in about 1500. However, it was not until the 1930s that jumpers such as Clem Sohn and 'Yorkshire Birdman' Harry Ward made successful repeated wingsuit flights. This was an experimental era of wingsuiting, often using crazy suits made with wood and cloth, and most pioneers died along the way. More big

2



3



Did you know...?

Freefall speeds of less than 50mph are regularly achieved when wingsuiting (normal terminal velocity is about 120mph)

4



Wingsuiters tend to wear

- ▶ Larger, more docile main canopies
- ▶ Audible altimeters
- ▶ One-piece suits that can be easily folded away once under canopy

advances were made by Leo Valentin in the 1950s, but he too came to an untimely end.

Fast forward to the 1980s and skydivers were using small wings when jumping with a camera. However, these were to aid in fall rate control only and not for forward speed. In the mid-1990s, modern-day skydivers such as Patrick de Gayardon started making and experimenting with wingsuits for flight. 1999 marked the first commercially available wingsuits, so the discipline has come a long way in a short time.

3 Wingsuiting can be enjoyed solo, in pairs or in 'flocks'. By Mark Harris

4 Wingsuiting is a truly three-dimensional discipline. By Willy Boeykens

Due to its added complexity, skydivers must have a minimum of 200 jumps before starting wingsuit training and progression is carefully regulated.

Despite the low descent rate, high forward speed means that it was not considered possible to land a wingsuit without first opening a parachute. However, Gary Connery made history in 2012 when he landed his wingsuit in a huge pile of cardboard boxes and did not deploy the parachute that was on his back just in case.

That said, this one-off landing has not yet led to any further attempts by anyone.

COMPETITION

Wingsuiting became an IPC-recognised competition event in 2015. The first ever Wingsuit World Cup was held in the UK in May 2015, and the UK is a major player on the world wingsuit circuit. The current world record for the longest freefall time in a wingsuit – just under six minutes – is held by a Brit too! ●

Style and Accuracy

THE OLDEST COMPETITION DISCIPLINE, CLASSICS ARE STILL POPULAR WORLDWIDE



“Classics are great disciplines to become involved in and provide excellent experience for improving parachuting skills in general”

Classics consists of two different disciplines: Style (in freefall) and Accuracy (under canopy). They are individual events, but accuracy is also a team event as well. Men and women jump in separate events but some of the great women do beat the men's scores.

STYLE

Style is a complicated discipline that is all about speed and precision. Jumpers exit the aircraft at 7,000 feet and perform 360 degree left and right turns followed by a backloop (backwards somersault), before repeating the sequence. They are competing against the clock, with penalty

points for being as little as five degrees off heading on any of the set manoeuvres. The professionals out there are doing these 'sets' in less than six seconds – about a second for each manoeuvre.

The faster you are falling, the faster you can turn. But the faster you turn, the less controlled it becomes. The key is to get the right balance between the two. 'Stylies', as they are called, jump in a tuck position, which increases freefall speed and gives maximum manoeuvrability. You can see from the pictures on the left and right how inherently unstable the position is compared to the student arch. It takes about 50 jumps just to crack the basic position, before adding any turns.

1 Pete Sizer strikes the accuracy pad with his heel, by Nigel Rowlan

2 Style competitors use a 'tuck' position that is dynamic and allows great speed of movement. By Max Dereta

3 Halfway through a backloop, by Simon Ward

4 Jackie Smith going for yet another DC (dead centre), by Doug Peacock

Style skydivers tend to wear:

- ▶ Skin-tight, stretchy, shiny suits which are easy to move in and very aerodynamic
- ▶ The smallest of rigs (with small canopies)
- ▶ Frappe hats as helmets, because they do not constrict

The skydiver tries to minimise drag so they can fall as fast as they can.

Style is a highly individual discipline. It is a skydiving event which is solely your responsibility; just you that wins. It's a great feeling standing on the podium knowing that you, just you, are the best.

ACCURACY

Accuracy is both a team and an individual event. There are five in a team, with the top four scores counting and the worst being thrown away. All five jump consecutively, a few seconds apart from 3,500 feet and all have to land on the same target. Thus, you must work as a team to ensure that you don't get in each other's way.

Large, accuracy ram-air parachutes are used – most commonly a '252' (this is the size in square feet). Such parachutes have a relatively slow forward speed. This makes it easier to judge the angle of approach, which is done 'into wind' (in the opposite direction to the wind) to minimise the approach speed. The canopies are designed to 'sink'; i.e. in deep brakes with toggles pulled a long way down, they will virtually descend straight down. They may be equipped with 'flares' – triangular pieces of fabric that attach the lines to the canopy, keeping the parachute locked in on a straight course without wavering. These predictable, rectangular canopies



Did you know...?

British jumper Jackie Smith became a world champion in 1978 when she was the first and only competitor to gain 10 consecutive discs in as many jumps (note: at that time the disc was 10cm).

5 Jane Buckle on the pad, by Nigel Rowlan

6 Ever-decreasing circles: the target is a 2cm disc on a 32cm pad, on a tuffet measuring a couple of metres, in a large gravel circle that could be 25m across! By Nigel Rowlan



Accuracy skydivers tend to wear:

- ▶ Shoes with pointed heels to improve precision when striking the target with their foot
- ▶ Casual clothes – jumpsuits are considered unnecessary as they are only in freefall for a few seconds
- ▶ Frappe hats for all-round vision
- ▶ Large, docile accuracy canopies

Style and accuracy competitors at the highest level wear different rigs for the two disciplines. Intermediates can compromise to reduce the amount of equipment that they need.

are very different animals to the small, nippy, 'hot' ones jumped by most other skydivers, some of which are elliptical in shape for higher performance.

The accuracy jumpers have to land on a target the size of a dinner plate (radius of 16cm), which is an electronic scoring pad. The first part of the jumper to touch the ground is used for scoring, which is registered automatically by the electronic pad. Hence, jumpers practise precision placement of their leading foot as this can make up for a slightly off-centre approach.

The skydiver is scored for each centimetre they are away from the centre, which is about the size of a one pence piece (2cm).

Landing on this is called a 'dead centre' and scores zero. It used to be a 10cm radius but, with greatly increased skills, it was reduced to 5cm, then 3cm and is now down to 2cm.

If the jumper lands off the scoring pad, judges will mark the place of first touchdown and measure the distance from the centre of the target. The winners are the teams and individuals who score the lowest. This is a great spectator sport, as the accuracy target can be surrounded by a crowd who can see the action clearly as it happens.

PHILOSOPHY

Classics are great disciplines to become involved in and provide excellent experience for improving parachuting skills in general. They are the only disciplines that can be performed completely individually and this makes training as flexible as you like. ●

Al Macartney

“The 100-way weighed eight tons and was more than 300 feet high and 200 feet wide!”

Canopy Formation

CANOPY FORMATION (CF) IS ABOUT 'PRECISION COLLISIONS' WITH YOUR MAIN CANOPIES

It goes against your training about steering as far away from others as possible but, if you're willing to open your mind to new ways of thinking, a wealth of new opportunities awaits. Guessing where the canopies are going to be and getting there in time is what it's all about. The game is played while we are all moving and, at first, is a little tricky. The convention is that you dock from below so the last people to join a formation will generally be the ones at the bottom.

GROUP EXITS

With talented people, you can exit as close as a 4-way FS team by split-second timing in the sub-terminal air and the placing of your pilot chutes into the slipstream. You'll be close enough to hear the crack and feel the material of the other canopies as they lift off their backs; they fill your whole field of vision. When starting out, a more conservative exit technique is used!

1 View from the bottom of the stack, by Craig Poxon

2 Big-way canopy formations are physically large and look impressive from the ground and air. By Bruno Brokken

3 British team CFUK in training, by Ming Chu

ROTATIONS

The most popular competition event is called 4-way rotations. This event is really 'more balls than brains!' You build a 4-stack formation as quickly as possible, then rebuild with each jumper stalling their canopy off the top and re-docking on the bottom as many times as possible. Precision, consistency and brute force are what this event is about. Deceptively simple to grasp, extremely difficult to master. When you get it right, your canopy (or body) will clip the tails of the other canopies. When you're in the formation and you feel and hear the contact on the tails, you know it's going right. Too close and, at best, you'll bounce off and upset the balance of the formation or, at worst, you'll end up practising your cutaway drills!

SEQUENTIAL

This event is more like canopy chess – this can best be likened to FS (Formation Skydiving) as it is building different

formations using the parachutes. A delicate touch and mental engineering of the entire dive is required for this event. Rather than just building a straight stack, the grips may be taken on the end cells and the centre cell.

Competitions include 2-way sequential, a natural place to begin learning this discipline, and 4-way sequential.

SPEED

This event is like drag racing; it's all about speed in building a single formation as quickly as possible. There are four different formations in the dive pool but only one to build on each dive. Complete formations have to be held for a minimum of five seconds, so you don't get any bonus points for looking pretty or holding longer than required.

LARGE FORMATIONS

The numbers may not be as big as with FS formations but the physical size definitely is. Big formations are very fragile and won't



Did you know...?

The world record canopy formation is 100, set in November 2007 using PD Lightning canopies, at Lake Wales, Florida.

tolerate the big hits and aggressive docks that smaller formations can take. The Royal Marines hold the world record 24-stack, where the parachutes are directly in-line with each other. This was set many years ago before the game changed and the French realised the future lay in engineering diamond-shaped formations. This allowed the size of formations to grow tremendously, with the current record standing at 100 set by an international group at Lake Wales, Florida and the 24-stack being confined to the history books. To put it into perspective, the 100-way weighed eight tons and was more than 300 feet high and 200 feet wide!

ENGINEERING

The construction and breakdown must be orchestrated to ensure the formation flies. Breaking it is just as organised as the build.

IF IT GOES WRONG

There are a lot of lines and material around! Remaining calm, using logical thinking and keeping an eye open for the early warning signs are hot tips. Most problems do work themselves out.

JUST FOR FUN

Perhaps the most enjoyable type of CF is when two or three people have fun hooking up in small stacks, downplanes, pendulums and side-by-sides. The BPA runs coaching roadshows to teach CF, offering free kit hire and skills coaching from national champions. ●

Adrian Bowles

3



CF skydivers tend to jump with:

- ▶ A Protec helmet, frappe hat, cycling helmet or a modified full-face helmet with no visor – all protect and allow easy communication by shouting
- ▶ Gloves to prevent line burns
- ▶ CF canopies, which are 7-cell, with extra reinforcement designed to open on heading
- ▶ Some use radios
- ▶ Red front centre lines for easy identification; all are made of Dacron, which is wider and easier to grip than the more fashionable microline
- ▶ Canopies with 'retracting' pilot chutes which are pulled onto the top skin of the canopy so they are not trailing behind the canopy, risking entanglement
- ▶ Rigs which have been optimised specially for CF and adjusted for long periods of hanging in the harness
- ▶ Pack jobs which look peculiar with no deployment bag and may have risers hanging out

2



Canopy Piloting

PARACHUTE TECHNOLOGY HAS HUGEY ADVANCED IN THE LAST 10 YEARS. DESIGN, SHAPE, MANUFACTURING PROCESSES AND THE FABRICS USED HAVE ALL DEVELOPED RADICALLY. THE RESULTING CANOPIES ARE INCREDIBLE FLYING MACHINES. THE LIMITING FACTOR, FOR BOTH PERFORMANCE AND SAFETY, IS THE PERSON IN CONTROL. CANOPY PILOTING, A REALLY EXCITING EVENT FOR SPECTATORS, HAS EVOLVED AS A RESULT

Did you know...?

There are currently 22 basic freestyle manoeuvres and a further 112 possible combination moves listed in the pool!

Parachute technology has advanced greatly in recent years. Previously, landing safely under a good parachute was just something everyone had to do after a freefall jump. It was almost taken for granted. The first ram-air parachutes were large and forgiving.

The modern sport of skydiving has unfortunately seen an increase in accidents resulting from human error under a fully functional parachute. With the development of smaller, faster and more radical canopies, basic individual piloting and landing skills were no longer enough. As a result, the sport has had a change of focus towards landing parachutes safely in every condition. Canopy progression systems and canopy schools are now considered a must in order to develop individual skills to land safely every time. Ongoing canopy instruction reinforces and develops the basic skills learnt during initial training.

BPA CANOPY PROGRESSION SYSTEM

Introduced in 2005, the BPA Canopy Progression System gives the UK skydiver a clear, concise system to reach defined skill levels and obtain current internationally recognised licences. It consists of two basic levels; Canopy Handling 1 and 2 (CH1 and CH2), and two advanced levels; Canopy Piloting 1 and 2 (CP1 and CP2). These progression systems introduce the jumper to essential knowledge and skills at an early stage in their skydiving career. Free manuals for both are available from BPA dropzones and bpa.org.uk

CANOPY HANDLING 1 AND 2

Basic canopy skills such as flat turns, landing in the target area and using a variety of toggle and riser inputs are augmented with written tests.

CANOPY PILOTING 1 AND 2

These grades further develop the range of control inputs mastered by the pilots, who also have to pass written tests. CP1 is mandatory for those wishing to carry out high-performance or swoop landings. CP2 is only needed if you want to enter an official BPA Canopy Piloting event.

CANOPY PILOTING COMPETITIONS

With the development of more efficient canopy designs, a new and exciting

2



discipline has now evolved. Started by a few pioneers experimenting with radical speed-inducing inputs, the discipline of canopy piloting has developed into a highly competitive, spectator-friendly sport. Competition in this event is very technical and a highly advanced level of piloting is required. International canopy piloting competitions currently consist of three events: speed, distance and zone accuracy.

SPEED

A course is laid out on the ground or over water with a 1.5 metre high, 10 metres wide entry gate, showing the start of the 75 degree, 70 metre carving course that ends with an exit gate. Both have electronic sensors, activated by the jumper as he/she passes between each gate. The speed is measured and the competitor's cumulative score is recorded over three rounds. To score, the jumper must fly cleanly through each gate and remain within the course.

DISTANCE

A course is laid out over water with a series of 1.5 metre high, 10 metres wide entry gates. The competitor must break through the sensor on the entry gate and then fly as far as possible, scoring a further four gates before making contact with the ground. The distance is then measured from the first entry gate to the first point of contact with the surface of the course. The current world distance record is 161.19 metres and the British record is 153.91 metres.

ZONE ACCURACY

This is split into two sections; a water course and an accuracy course laid out on the ground. The competitor must break through the sensor on the entry gate, then score as many water points as possible and finally land in the correct zone. In order to receive a perfect score (100 points), the competitor must make contact with the water through each water gate, then land in the correct zone on the shore. The high-scoring zone is

3



1 Setting up to swoop the pond at the World Championships in Dubai, by Bruno Brokken/EAA

2 BPA National Champion Wez Westley on the pond

3 British CP competitor Gary Davidson, by Gary Wainwright

only two metres in length and the competitor is penalised if a stand-up landing is not achieved.

COMPETITION FREESTYLE

The most recent event to be added to the canopy piloting competition circuit is freestyle. This is a very spectator-friendly event where the canopy pilot defines and performs any number of freestyle tricks and moves during the landing process. Points are awarded for the approach to the course, the execution, degree of difficulty of the move and the landing itself. The tricks can be chosen from a set pool of moves or the competitor can define a new move as long as it is declared to the judges beforehand and it is landed properly. The moves include, for example, a 'Blindman' where the competitor faces backwards in the harness during landing. ●

Brian Vacher
Flight-1 Coach, PD Factory Team

Canopy pilots tend to wear:

- ▶ Tight clothing
- ▶ Trousers with a large pocket for the removable deployment system
- ▶ Digital visual and audible canopy specific altimeters
- ▶ Weight belt(s)
- ▶ Hard aerodynamic helmet
- ▶ Protective clothing, e.g. knee-pads



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WHAT NEXT?

Well, of course we look forward to you trying our awesome sport again very soon and, as you can see, this magazine can guide you a little further. But, in the meantime, why not share your experience?

WHY?

If you've taken part in a charity or fundraising event, then extra publicity in papers, news websites, magazines, radio and even TV will go a long way for the cause. You deserve it too; this is something special. You made that huge leap – why not shout it from the rooftops?

HOW?

Editors need news, especially exciting stuff for local papers – give them a story on a plate. You don't have to be JK Rowling, just a few pertinent paragraphs will be great.

HEADING

Make it bold and to the point. Tell the story in a line: 'Teachers raise £1,000 by skydiving'; 'Mum jumps for cancer awareness'.

STORY

The five magic Ws – 'What, When, Where, Who and Why' – will ensure you tell the full story. Add 'How' for a really complete picture. Keep to the point, make it interesting and relevant to the media you are aiming at. Make one sentence or paragraph a quote, this is a super way to make the account more personal. Don't write more than a page. End with your contact details – email and mobile.

LINKS

It helps to include links to relevant organisations, e.g. British Parachute Association (bpa.org.uk), the dropzone, your charity, workplace, sports centre, local area, etc.

PHOTOS

A picture tells a thousand words and will really help sell your story and catch readers' interest. Send one or two photos with your release. Hopefully you had an in-air cameraflyer and can share freefall photos but, if not, a ground shot wearing your kit would be almost as good. List who is who on any photos and include the photographer's name.

WHO AND WHERE?

You will already have an idea of where to send it to in your area: your local newspaper, regional or national press – even TV if you've done something extra special. Also try further afield: charity websites, work noticeboards, company newsletters, social networking sites, anywhere there is an interest.

The relevant email address will be printed in the newspaper and on their website. If in doubt, pick up the phone, explain you have a story and ask to whom you should send it.

Your basic press release can easily be tweaked to make it applicable to the different media by varying the quote.

EASY OPTION

If you are short of time or not sure what to write, then there is a photocopyable template on the facing page to make it easier. Fill it in and fax, post or email to your chosen contacts with your photos. Keep in touch with the reporter and make sure you get a copy when you hit the papers!

AND FINALLY...

We hope you enjoyed your first experience of skydiving, that this article helps you get the coverage you deserve and that you continue in this amazing sport. Good luck! ●

Weed Stoodley

1. Tandem instructor and BPA Vice Chairman Craig Poxon takes a student on her first jump. By Alex Turner



British Parachute Association

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To the Editor of _____

Dear Editor,

We believe that this achievement by a local person is a good news story likely to be of interest to your readers. Our new skydiver has kindly agreed to us making this approach and is prepared to provide further details should you so wish. If you or a colleague would like to visit your local dropzone to experience skydiving first-hand – perhaps with a view to producing an article or photo spread on our exciting sport in your locality – then I'm sure you will receive a warm welcome.

Kind regards,

Martin Soulsby
Chairman, British Parachute Association

Leap of faith – first ever skydive!

On (date) _____ Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/etc _____

Of (address) _____

Occupation _____ Tel/mob _____

Email _____

Completed their first skydive at _____ Parachute centre _____

Tel _____ Website _____

Photo(s) attached YES/NO

Photo caption (names from left to right) _____

Motivation for the jump was: charity/birthday/anniversary/other

Brief details _____

Quote _____

Amount raised (if applicable) _____ Charity/event _____

Other interesting facts/info _____

Notes for editor: Approximately 270,000 skydives are made over the UK annually at 26 locations countrywide. Women make up 45 per cent of the 60,000+ people making their first jump each year. 6,000+ full time BPA Members include people from all walks of life, aged from 16 to 80+. UK sportspeople are at the pinnacle of skydiving internationally, some even being multiple world champions. See bpa.org.uk and skydivethemag.com



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problem page

Dive doctor

I AM ALWAYS VERY SCARED IN THE AEROPLANE

Don't worry, this is quite normal. Even if everyone around you seems unafraid, they are probably all scared to some extent. Some people are just better at maintaining their external 'cool'. Talking to others about the 'F' word (Fear) may make you feel better.

Things will improve with experience. Read the article on page 29. Practise slow breathing to calm yourself down. Keep jumping as much as possible – try to do as many as you can on the one day or weekend. Try and eliminate as many rational causes of your fear as possible, such as any uncertainty about your equipment or drills and, eventually, the irrational fear will lessen too.

I GET BORED WAITING FOR THE RIGHT WEATHER

Spend your time on the ground constructively. You will only be bored

When will I qualify? It's taking forever!

Try not to lose heart. Everyone around you has gone through the same thing, they are just the ones who stuck at it. If you only ever show up at the dropzone once every two months, do a bit of a retrain, then leave after an hour if the weather is no good, you cannot expect to progress. You need to spend lots of time at the DZ – you may have poor luck with the weather, but eventually you will get there. It will be worth it in the long run. Apply yourself to the sport as much as possible when not jumping and you'll find your jumps themselves are better.

If your parachute centre is full-time and you can take a week off, you will find yourself progressing more quickly. Even better if there is a progression week planned – this is a great way to boost your jumping career while making new friends.

if you allow yourself to be; there is lots to do. Learn to pack, go through your next jump until it is second nature, revise your emergency procedures, practise the exit from the mock-up, use a mirror (or a friend) to look at your position, read skydiving articles and magazines, watch skydiving videos, talk to other jumpers, practise packing again, watch experienced jumpers under canopy, just immerse yourself in the whole scene.

Ask instructors for any help you need and use the time to make friends. You may be surprised how well people react if you just start a conversation. No one is going to pretend that it is all really easy, but you will save time and money by practising everything you learn on the ground – something your instructors will encourage you to do anyway. Dropzones can seem the most boring and frustrating place to be when you are not jumping, but it is surprising what you can achieve with a positive attitude.

HOW COME THE INSTRUCTORS SAY IT IS TOO CLOUDY FOR ME TO JUMP, YET THE EXPERIENCED JUMPERS ARE GOING UP?

If you are a static line student, you will most likely be jumping from 3,500 feet and you could be getting out of the aircraft a fair way from the target before spending about four minutes under canopy. In the case of AFF, you are opening even higher. This gives you quite a chance to go through any bits of cloud that are floating around. Cloud can be very disorientating. If you were to fly into one after opening before you have worked out where you are, you could find yourself heading off in completely the wrong way and be unable to reach the target.

If you are a student on freefall or an AFF consolidation student, your jump

Richard Wiggins took this photo of his girlfriend Jenny on a balloon jump into still air

Why do I have to use the radio when I'm sure I could do better myself?

The British Parachute Association (BPA) rules state that a student on a square canopy must have a radio for at least the first three jumps.

Some parachute centres have local conditions which increase the length of time for which a radio is to be used. For example, if there is a hazard that, though not dangerous enough to prevent parachuting, is still enough of a risk for students to benefit from a radio, especially in the event of a sudden wind change.

Under a square canopy, the potential for travelling a long distance and getting yourself into trouble is quite considerable. So, even though the radio cannot make you do the right thing, it can certainly tell you to! Similarly for landing, even though a student canopy is by design reasonably forgiving, it is nevertheless much better to flare at the correct height and, for this, the radio is invaluable.

In summary, the Chief Instructor (CI) at your centre will have a radio policy and it will be there to help you and keep you safe. Even if you are made to carry a radio, if you are doing well under canopy, you will be spoken to less and less. When you are given an instruction, try and work out why. Then you will not just carry out the action, but also increase your understanding of canopy control.

must be watched. If this is being done through telemeters from the ground, clouds will naturally mean that your jump is not seen and you may have to repeat it – extra expense!

Experienced jumpers are more likely to suss out where they are quickly and the odd bit of cloud may be less of a problem. Trust your instructors to have your best interests at heart. They want you to jump possibly more than even you do! ●



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DROPZONES

AFFILIATED DZS AVAILABLE TO BPA MEMBERS – HOW MANY HAVE YOU JUMPED AT?

BPA Affiliated DZs (PTOs) in the UK

1 Black Knights

Black Knights Parachute Centre
Hillam Lane, Cockerham, Lancashire LA2 0DY
DZ: 01524 791820
Mob: 07970 764850
bkpcinfo@googlemail.com
bkpc.co.uk
Blackhawk Caravan

2 Bridlington

Skydive GB
East Leys Farm, Grindale Road, Bridlington, E Yorkshire YO16 4YB
T: 01262 228033
Mob: 07522 335713
info@skydivegb.com
skydivegb.com
GA8 Airvan

3 Cark

Skydive North West Club
Cark Airfield, Flookburgh, Nr Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 7LS
DZ: 01539 558672
T: 01229 889516
skydivenorthwest@totalise.co.uk
skydivenorthwest.co.uk
PAC 750XL

4 Chatteris

North London Skydiving Centre
Chatteris Airfield, Nr Stonea, March, Cambs PE15 0EA
DZ: 01354 740810
T: 0871 664 0113
info@ukskydiving.com
ukskydiving.com
Twin Otter, Nomad

5 Cornish

Cornish Parachute Club
Perranporth Airfield, Higher Trevellas, St Agnes, Cornwall TR5 0XS
Mob: 07790 439653
cornishparachuteclub@hotmail.co.uk
cornishparachuteclub.co.uk
Cessna 206, guest aircraft

6 Dunkeswell

Skydive.buzz Ltd
Dunkeswell Airfield, Dunkeswell, Devon EX14 4LG
T: 01404 890222
Mob: 07718 638000
office@skydive99.com
skydive99.com
Three Beech 99s and Caravan

7 Headcorn

Skydive Headcorn
Headcorn Airfield, Headcorn, Kent TN27 9HX
T: 01622 891670
info@headcorn.com
headcorn.com
Cessna Caravan, Islander

8 Hibaldstow

Target Skysports
Hibaldstow Airfield, Hibaldstow, Brigg, N Lincs DN20 9NN
DZ: 01652 648837
T: 01132 505600
info@skydiving.co.uk
skydiving.co.uk
Dornier G92 twin turbine, SMG-92 single turbine, Cessna Caravan

9 Hinton

Hinton Skydiving Centre
Hinton Airfield, Steane, Brackley, Northants NN13 5NS
T: 01295 812300
info@skydive.co.uk
skydive.co.uk
PAC 750XL

10 Jersey

Skydive Jersey Ltd
C/O Jersey Aero Club, L'Avenue de la Reine Elizabeth II, St Peter, Jersey, Channel Islands JE3 7BP
T: 01534 747410
info@skydivejersey.net
skydivejersey.net
Cessna 206, guest turbines

11 Langar

British Parachute Schools
Langar Airfield, Langar, Nottingham NG13 9HY
T: 01949 860878
info@skydivelangar.co.uk
skydivelangar.co.uk
Two Cessna Grand Caravans, guest aircraft

12 Netheravon

Army Parachute Association
Airfield Camp, Netheravon, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 9SF
T: 01980 628250
generalenquiries@netheravon.com
netheravon.com
Three Cessna Caravans, guest aircraft

13 Paragon

Paragon Skydiving
Errol Airfield, Grange, Errol, Perthshire PH2 7TB
T: 01821 642454
billy.gollan@btinternet.com
paragonskydiving.co.uk
Cessna 182

14 Peterlee

Peterlee Parachute Club
The Airfield, Shotton Colliery, Co Durham DH6 2NH
T: 01915 171234
enquiries@skydiveacademy.org.uk
skydiveacademy.org.uk
Cessna 182, Cessna Grand Caravan

15 Reading

London Parachute School
Chiltern Park Aerodrome, Icknield Road, Ipsden, Oxfordshire OX10 6AS
T: 0845 1307 194
info@londonparachuteschool.com
londonparachuteschool.com
Islander, Cessna Grand Caravan

16 Salisbury

Skydive Southcoast Ltd
Hangar 3, Old Sarum Airfield, Old Sarum, Salisbury SP4 6DZ
T: 01722 323628
info@skydivesouthcoast.co.uk
skydivesouthcoast.co.uk
Airvan, Cessna 206 and 172

17 The Silver Stars

Silver Stars
29 Regt, Duke of Gloucester Barracks, South Cerney, Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 5RD
DZ: 01285 868111
T: 07716 792942
Cessna Caravan

18 St Andrews

Skydive St Andrews
Osprey Road, Fife Airport, Glenrothes KY6 2SL
T: 01592 882400
skydivestandrews@mail.com
skydivestandrews.co.uk
Cessna 185, Turbo Cessna 206

19 St George

Skydive St George
Durham Tees Valley Airport, Darlington DL2 1LU
T: 01325 337929
info@skydivestgeorge.co.uk
skydivestgeorge.co.uk
Airvan

20 Strathallan

Skydive Strathallan
Strathallan Airfield, Nr Auchterarder, Perthshire PH3 1LA
DZ: 01764 662572
T: 07836 201953
kbrady@btinternet.com
skydivesthathallan.co.uk
Three Cessna 206s, guest turbine

21 Swansea

Skydive Swansea
Swansea Airport, Fairwood, Swansea SA2 7JU
T: 07779 019655
info@skydiveswansea.co.uk
skydiveswansea.co.uk
Cessna Caravan

22 Swindon

Blue Skies Freefall Club
Redlands Airfield, Redlands Farm, Wanborough, Swindon SN4 0AA
T: 01793 791222
info@skydivelondon.co.uk
skydivelondon.co.uk
Airvan

23 Tilstock

The Parachute Centre
Tilstock Airfield, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 2HA
T: 01948 841111
skydive@theparachutecentre.com
theparachutecentre.com
Airvan

24 UK Para Beccles

UK Parachuting
Beccles Airfield, Ellough, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 7TE
T: 01502 476131
jump@ukparachuting.co.uk
ukparachuting.co.uk
Cessna Caravan

25 UK Para Sibson

UK Parachuting
Sibson Airfield, Wansford, Peterborough PE8 6NE
T: 01832 280490
skydive@ukparachuting.co.uk
skydivesibson.co.uk
Cessna Caravan

26 Weston

RAF 22 Training Group
Currently military only

27 Wild Geese

Wild Geese Skydive Centre
Movenis Airfield, 116 Carrowreagh Road, Garvagh, Coleraine, Co Londonderry, N Ireland BT51 5LQ
T: 028 2955 8609
jump@skydivewildgeese.com
skydivewildgeese.com
Cessna 206, Cessna Caravan

BPA Overseas Affiliated DZs (PTOs)

Cyprus

Cyprus Parachute Centre
CJSATC, BFPO 58, Dheketia Garrison, Cyprus
T: 0035 724 744337
info@skydivecyprus.com.cy
skydivecyprus.com.cy
PBN Piston Islander

RAPA

Skydive Bad Lippspringe
Flugplatz 1, 33175 Bad Lippspringe, Germany
T: 0049 5254 982 2378
info@skydive-badlippspringe.com
skydive-badlippspringe.com
Cessna Caravan 208

Parachuting Societies

BCPA

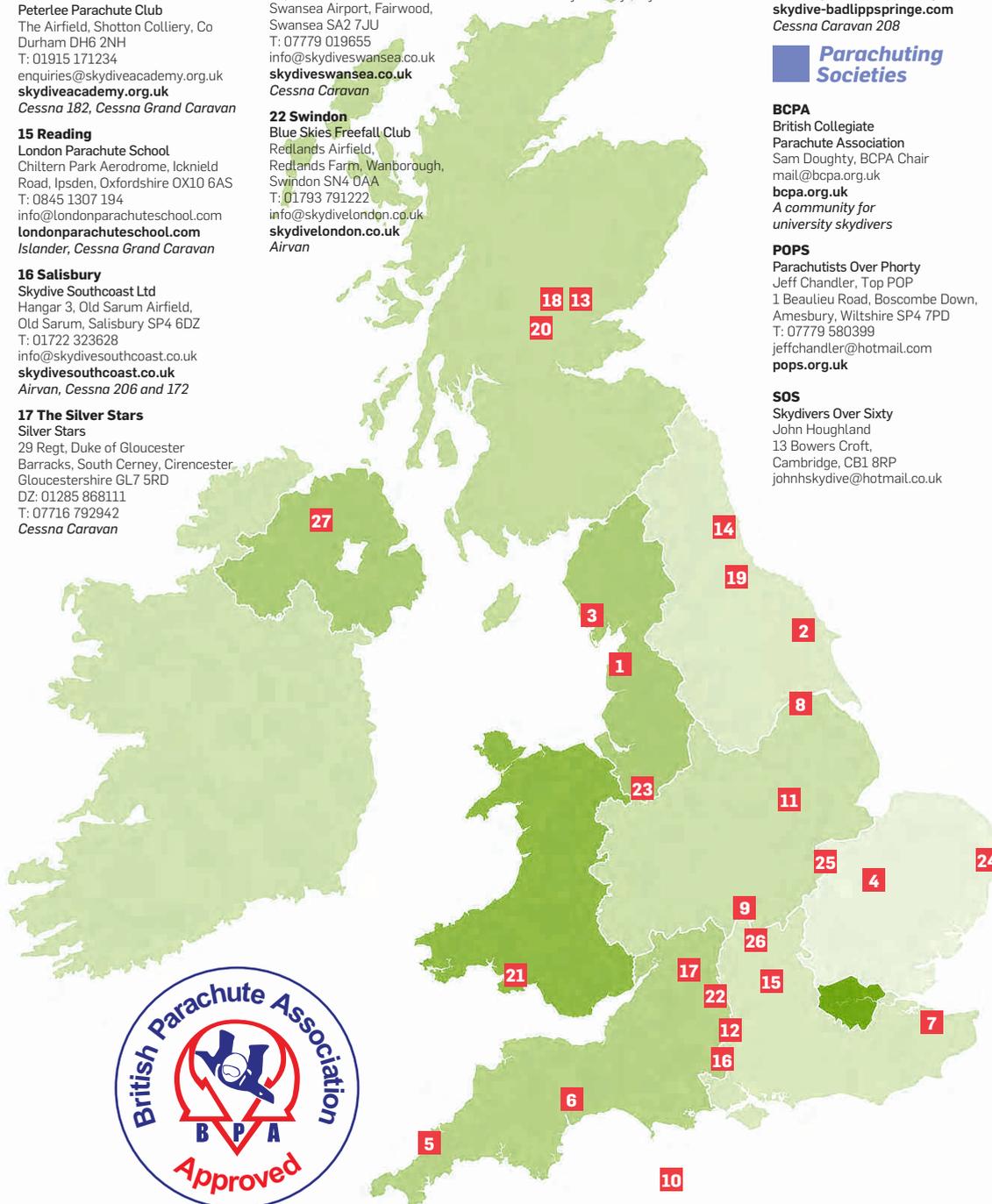
British Collegiate Parachute Association
Sam Doughty, BCPA Chair
mail@bcpa.org.uk
bcpa.org.uk
A community for university skydivers

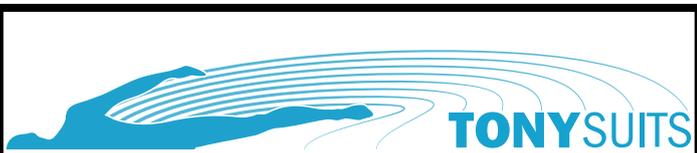
POPS

Parachutists Over Phorty
Jeff Chandler, Top POP
1 Beautieue Road, Boscombe Down, Amesbury, Wiltshire SP4 7PD
T: 07779 580399
jeffchandler@hotmail.com
pops.org.uk

SOS

Skydivers Over Sixty
John Houghland
13 Bowers Croft, Cambridge, CB1 8RP
johnhskydive@hotmail.co.uk





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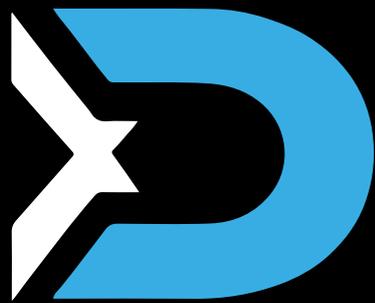
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About the BPA



THE BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION (BPA) IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT BODY RUN BY ITS MEMBERS FOR ITS MEMBERS. IT WAS FORMED IN 1961 TO GOVERN, ORGANISE AND FACILITATE SPORT PARACHUTING IN THE UK AND REPRESENTS THE INTERESTS OF ALL UK SKYDIVERS, AS WELL AS BEING OUR VOICE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SKYDIVING COMMUNITY

BPA OPERATIONS MANUAL

With a sport as potentially hazardous as skydiving, the need for a clear set of safety rules is obvious. The BPA established its Operations Manual in 1984, which is approved by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the controlling body for UK airspace. Hence, you can only train to skydive in the UK at a BPA Affiliated Centre. This means training methods, equipment and instructional qualification is standardised throughout the UK.

There is a well-established progression system designed for parachutists to gain the skills they need. The BPA's safety management system and Instructor courses are widely respected both nationally and internationally.

There are around 27 of these BPA Affiliated Centres in the UK, plus two in Germany and Cyprus. All are run in accordance with the BPA Operations Manual. A map is on page 61.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION

The BPA is the National Governing Body for sport parachuting in the UK and is affiliated to the FAI, the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (or World Air Sports Federation) through the Royal Aero Club of the UK. The BPA represents the interests of skydivers in the UK through the FAI's International Parachuting Commission. The BPA is recognised by the government's official agencies for sport such as UK Sport.

JOINING THE BPA

Every British sport parachutist must be a member of the BPA. Initially, the 60,000 or so people a year who make their first jump join as provisional members, which covers them for up to a year or until they progress to freefall. At that stage, membership is converted to full status with the cost of *Skydive the Mag* and the App included in the membership

subscription. Should individuals wish to receive the magazine and App before they convert to full membership, a magazine and App-only subscription is available – which is a good way to keep in touch with the sport. See page five.

BPA COUNCIL

A committee of up to 15 elected members, called the Council, sets the BPA's policy. These unpaid volunteers are elected each year by the full (voting) members. Members of Council are Directors of British Parachute Association Ltd, a company limited by guarantee, according to its legal governing instrument, the Articles of Association. The Council, in turn, elects a Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Chairs etc from their own number. The Council usually meets six times a year and the minutes of its meetings and those of the BPA Committees are published on the BPA website to keep members up to date with everything that is going on.

BPA COMMITTEES

Council Members also serve on Committees:

COMMUNICATIONS

Facilitates the flow of information and news for members and potential skydivers

- Oversees *Skydive the Mag* and its website
- Publishes *Skydive Starter* magazine
- Oversees the BPA website
- Publishes the BPA e-newsletter
- Publishes the BPA Skydiving Calendar
- Plans the AGM and associated events

DEVELOPMENT

Develops the sport and BPA membership

- Encourages membership recruitment and retention
- Improves the BPA's services and systems
- Develops the functionality of the BPA website
- Extends the BPA's influence

COMPETITIONS

Encourages and supports competitive skydiving and the pursuit of excellence

- Selects host Centres and writes the rules for British Open National and Grand Prix/UK Skydiving League competitions
- Selects the British team for World Championships and other FAI international sport parachuting meets
- Allocates funding for our top-level athletes
- Arranges coaching for non-seniors
- Co-ordinates judging and judges
- Seeks sponsorship

Committees of appropriately qualified members oversee other areas:

SAFETY AND TRAINING

Consists of every Chief Instructor (25-30 members)

- Updates the BPA Operations Manual
- Sets rules for skydiving
- Reviews incident reports and takes action as necessary
- Clears equipment for use
- Sets criteria for Instructor ratings: new, advanced and examiners
- Sets criteria for demonstration events
- Assesses new parachuting activities

RIGGERS

Consists of every UK rigger qualified for two years or more (approximately 50 members)

- Parachute manufacture, assembly, modification and repair
- Certificates new riggers and qualifies reserve parachute packers.

SPECIALISED INTEREST GROUPS

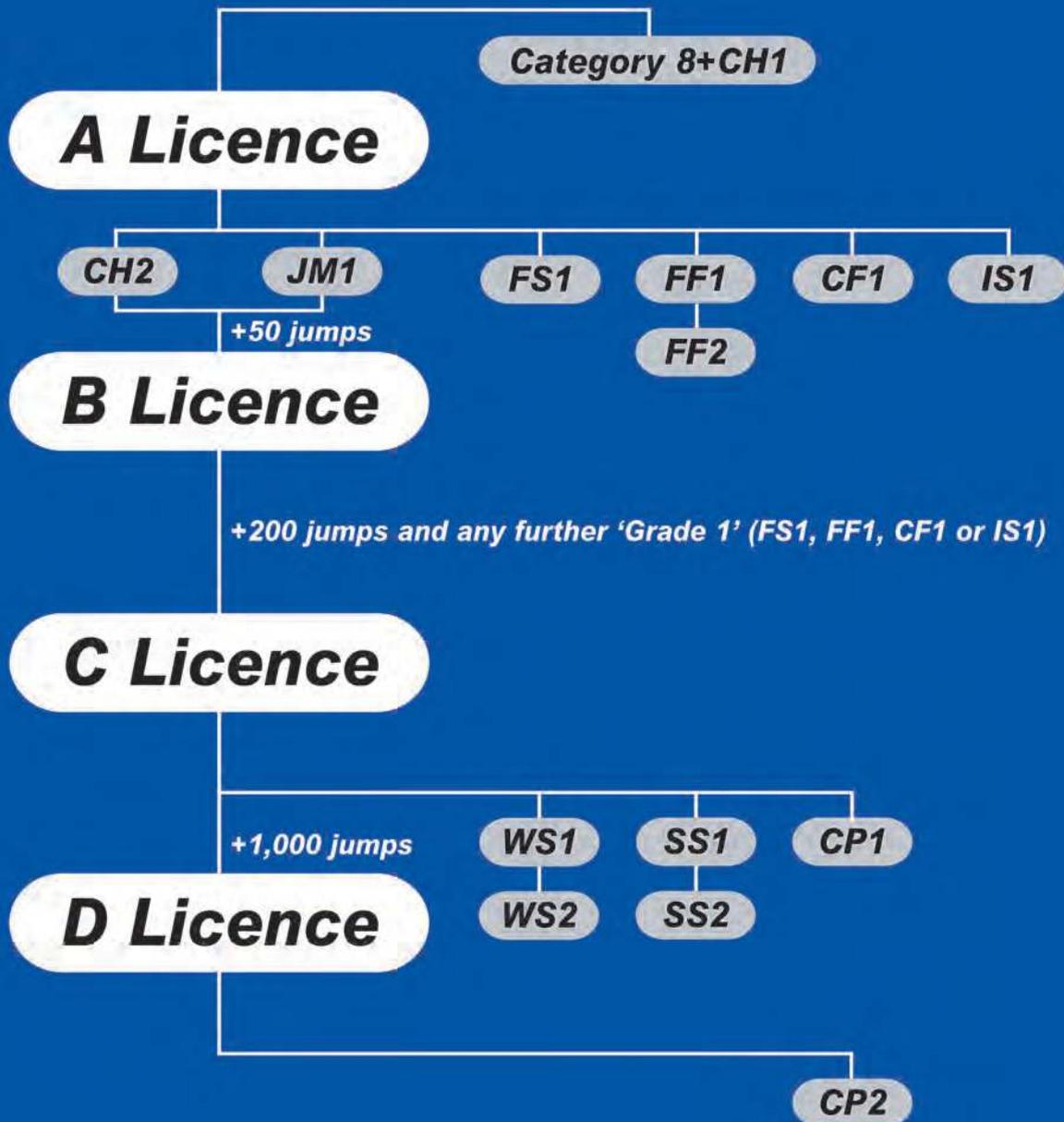
The BPA has four Specialised Interest Groups, which are:

- Competition Judges
- Display Teams
- Drop Zone Operators
- Pilots



British Parachute Association

Progression



Stay safe 

Source - BPA Operations Manual, Section 2: Designation and classification of parachutists.

Skydiving & Sport Scuba Diving Medicals

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Dr Margaret Clamp
MC Occupational Health
The Corner House
Rectory Road, Colwick
Nottingham NG4 2DU.
Mobile: 0780 2850084
Email: mclamp@doctors.org.uk

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Photo: Jeff Harris.
*The skydiver by Jeff Harris, 1987, first man to reach the stratosphere



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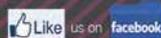


PHOTO-WOLFGANG LIENB

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