



Instructor and Coach **NEWSLETTER**

Welcome to the Spring 2004 edition of the Instructor and Coach News Letter

A mixed start to the season with a few notable cross countries flown already. Let's hope it turns out to be as good a year as the last one.

This edition of the news letter will be relatively small – partly due to lack of input from you lot, but more importantly because what is included is pretty important. I didn't want to thin it down with items previously published and detract from the main articles.

As usual it's time to remind everyone of the annual Spring warning of lively thermals and rusty pilots. I know you've heard it all before – but that doesn't stop the accidents at this time of the year. Be careful please.

And let's be especially careful with rusty students crawling back out of the woodwork at the first hint of sun: it doesn't matter what stage they were at when they last performed five or six months ago – students forget at a rate of something like one training day per month gap. They might have been 'nearly CP' when they went into hibernation: chances are that now they'll struggle to match EP ability level. What they need first and foremost is careful refresher training to bring them back to where they were before, with simple exercises well within their actual capabilities. (Don't forget to refresh plf's!) Only when they have regained their previous skill level can we think about progressing them to new exercises.

Thanks to those (few) who provided feedback to the last edition.

Please keep your letters and feedback coming in; you can make a difference.

All responses/contributions/suggestions/articles/letters to:

(in order of preference) NB please note new fax no. and new address.

Email: david-thompson@bhpa.co.uk (please send attached files as 'MS Word' or 'text')

Fax: 0870 873 4572

Snail mail: Typed, no hand written please. Dave Thompson, 18 Trafalgar Place, Brynmill, Swansea, SA2 0BU.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION AND MEDICAL PANEL

Yet More "Risk Assessment/Management"

Due to concerns over liability issues the CAA has convened a working group to consider the merits of licensing ALL forms of adventurous aviation. The working group are looking closely at the way the Adventurous Activity Licensing Authority (AALA), the government body responsible for the licensing of Outdoor Activity Centres, operate. We would hope to persuade the CAA that the system we currently have in place is sufficient and thus prevent us from being sucked into what would certainly be a very costly licensing system.

With this in mind we are currently in liaison with both AALA and the HSE to make sure that our systems are indeed adequate. This has thrown up some interesting points. The extract below was published in the last news letter, before all this came to light.

"A number of schools have now realised the importance of adopting comparable industry standards. The FSC strongly recommends that ALL schools carry out risk assessment analysis for each their sites and areas of operation. Risk assessment for sites should include the obvious such as hazards, but also things like optimum wind direction, max permitted deviation from optimum, max/min wind strength for safe operation, max number of students, access information/restrictions, emergency services info. etc. etc. and anything else you can think of appropriate to your site. This should all be documented for reference purposes."

This advice, given as a 'strong recommendation' by the FSC, would actually be seen by the HSE as a LEGAL REQUIREMENT – along with other additional information. According to the HSE all schools should have a written policy for risk assessment as well as more detailed site specific risk assessments.

On top of this all major equipment (gliders, harnesses and helmets) should have individual service records – another thing we've been recommending for some time now.

The Technical Manual provides a level of risk assessment; however, this is a general document relating to the running of the sport as a whole. It is not designed to act for individual schools as a risk assessment document.

We hope to be able to give more clear guidance after further consultation with the various government organisations. In the mean time all commercial schools are strongly advised to look into formulating risk assessment policies of their own. The booklet "An introduction to health and safety" can be obtained free from HSE Books by phoning 01787 881165. The booklet highlights the requirements (though these will need to be tailored to your individual school) and gives an example of a health and safety policy statement. Info on all their publications can be found at their web site www.hsebooks.co.uk

Incident Report Forms

It is essential that Incident Report Forms are sent to Head Office as soon as is possible. Failure to do so will almost certainly result in the removal of insurance cover by the insurance company. This is not a situation unique to the BHPA but an industry standard. We have a situation at present where a school failed to notify the BHPA of a broken leg sustained by a student. Given that a broken leg can go for anything between £5k and £50+k, the CFI concerned is now sweating in case the student decides to take legal action.

On the same subject, when filling in the form remember to keep the information factual. Do not include your personal thoughts as to why something might have occurred, especially if this could be construed as an admission of liability. Again, as with all other forms of insurance, an admission of liability could mean cover is withdrawn by the insurer.

Certified Helmets... and Back Protection

In the last News Letter it was announced that from 1st Jan this year ALL schools must use only CE 966 airports helmets. It has come to

our attention that some schools are still using older – non-certified helmets and some using helmets not designed for flying at all eg. climbing helmets. Schools found failing to conform risk immediate suspension of their BHPA licence until such time as the situation is rectified.

This is not a draconian imposition but a reflection of our times. The equipment exists (at a reasonable price) and so it would be difficult to argue in court if an incident occurred where the helmet was an issue and a non-certified helmet used.

On the same note I would suggest a similar view of the use of back protection in PG schools. While there is no arguing that a well executed

PLF is preferred, back protection is now a norm in the sport. Again it would be difficult to argue a case where the use of back protection may have lessened the extent of an injury. The difficulty comes in choosing the correct type. Ideally it should not restrict the movements of the student and not be too heavy. In any case it should not be in the form of the 'old' rigid back protectors that were proved to be worse than useless.

It is likely that this will follow the same course as helmets in that the use of back protection will become mandatory. Please bear this in mind when upgrading/replacing school harnesses.

INSTRUCTOR AND COACH TRAINING PANEL

Revalidation for Instructors

The system for the revalidation of instructors and senior instructors was agreed at the recent FSC meeting and is as follows:

Instructor revalidation will be carried out 'in-house' by the CFI using a pro-forma to be supplied specifically for that purpose. The pro-forma to be sent in with the renewal (and signed declaration of support) for the instructor concerned. Full instructions regarding the revalidation will be sent when the pro-forma has been finalised.

Senior Instructors will be re-examined at least once every 3 years by an independent examiner. The exam will include all aspects of BHPA paperwork, practical training of trainees and instructors, and personal instructional ability.

Senior Coach Course.

The instructor course has now been adapted slightly to make it more convenient for those wishing to gain the senior coach ticket to attend. There will still be two instructor courses each year however one will be over a weekend rather than midweek which is currently the case.

Those there for the senior coach ticket will not be required to attend the last day. From 2005 the spring course (usually in April) will be Saturday to Monday, and the autumn course (usually October) will remain Tuesday to Thursday, with the senior coaches not required for the Monday or Thursday respectively. Cost to prospective senior coaches is currently £160 (instead of £210) – and includes accommodation and all food.

** LATE NEWS

The first weekend course will be 14/15(16) August 2004 at Bisham Abbey. For further details contact Tony at the BHPA Office.

Trainee Instructor registration.

From 1st January 2005 those people wishing to register as a trainee instructor must first achieve their PILOT rating. This does not affect those currently registered as TIs. The aim is to raise the level of TI by ensuring a basic level of knowledge before they can even register.

PILOT TRAINING PANEL

Student Training and Risk Assessment.

There have been calls recently from a few PG hill CFIs to remove the top landing and soaring tasks from the CP syllabus. Their logic appears to be based on the theory that these tasks are dangerous and that this is where the expensive insurance claims originate. It is true to say that of the large claims a proportion have involved students attempting soaring tasks. However, what they fail to grasp is that in these instances the instructor concerned has not followed proper procedure.

In all the instances being quoted had the instructor carried out a proper risk assessment (that included the student themselves) then the incident would almost certainly not have occurred.

This seems to be where the problem lies.

I'd like to think that all instructors are carrying out thorough risk assessments on sites and weather conditions etc. as a matter of course. Unfortunately the most important area 'THE STUDENT' is often forgotten. There is no point deciding that the conditions are perfect for soaring and top landing tasks if the student has had a 6 month lay off for whatever reason. The training books and accompanying 'instructor notes' (remember them?!) are quite clear in that when a student has had a gap in training then some level of refresher training is essential. Added to this is the problem of the 'friendly student' who is always around the place, who you get to know on a more friendly basis and becomes part of the scenery. You then fail to realise that he has only done 3 days and hasn't actually been on the hill in the last 6 months. This information only becomes apparent during the investigation of the accident.

This might sound far fetched but it is almost exactly the cause of the incidents being quoted by the 'concerned' CFIs mentioned earlier who think the answer is to get rid of soaring/top landing tasks. **Any risk assessment system that does not include the student will eventually end in an accident.**

Part of the daily routine must include checking how current the students are rather than merely where they are up to in the syllabus.

Instructors are reminded that this area is covered in some detail on the 'Assessment' session of the Coach Course – remember 'SITE ALOT'? If you don't then get on a Coach Course to refresh your memory!

Student training abroad.

The system for training abroad has been simplified to make the paperwork easier for all concerned. From now on any school wishing to train students abroad must fill out the following form which is then filed at head office.

All the current rules and regs still apply – the only difference being the way schools notify the BHPA.

A form must be filled out for each trip and be lodged with Head Office before the trip commences.

The form is available from BHPA Head Office in both hard and electronic format and will eventually be available as a PDF on the BHPA web site.

Student training record books.

This is a reminder that the student training record books are the property of the BHPA and should stay at the school where the training took place. They should NOT be given to the student nor should they be passed on to another school if the student moves school. In the event that a student does move school then the record book should be photocopied and the copy passed on to the new school.

The books are your only cover in the event of an incident (which may manifest itself in up to 3 years time) so look after them!

STUDENT TRAINING ABROAD NOTIFICATION
(NOT VALID unless lodged with Head Office prior to each individual trip)

School _____

Instructional Staff _____

Venue (exact destination) _____

Dates (inc. travel) _____

Student names and level (pre EP/post EP)

Name Level Name Level

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I confirm that the proposed trip is fully in accordance with the BHPA Technical Manual.

I understand that failure to comply with the BHPA Technical Manual may result in the loss of any available insurance cover and may also lead to disciplinary action being taken by the Flying and Safety Committee.

I am aware that the BHPA insurance cover only extends to a period of 60 days in total in any given school registration year whilst outside the UK. Note also that no cover exists for any activities in USA, Canada and limited provisions apply to Australia.

Signed CFI..... Date.....

EXAMINATION AND INSPECTION PANEL

New Examination Pro-forma

There is a new Examination Pro-forma out for PG (hill) with other disciplines to follow asap. CFIs should take note that the pro-forma is available from head office for use with TIs having their mock exam prior to full examination. NB. A copy of the completed pre-exam pro-forma must accompany the usual records such as 1st aid cert., TI log book etc. etc. Failure to do this will delay the exam.

Examination candidates.

Examination candidates are reminded that it is their responsibility to contact the examiner in order to carry out the exam.

A number of exam candidates have been removed from the exam list due to lack of communication with their respective examiners. If you decide not to go through with the exam please let us know (contact Tony at Head Office).

ADMINISTRATION ISSUES

Declaration of support.

The 'Declaration of Support' at the bottom of the renewal notice has been amended to reflect more closely the rules and regs. of the BHPA. There will now be a separate declaration section for each licence held by the individual concerned; so an instructor who is also a dual pilot will need two signatures etc.

A typical example of the amended wording is as follows:

"As the licence holders' CFI over the last twelve months I have carefully monitored and frequently observed his/her instructional performance within my school. In addition, I have checked their logs and note that he/she has recorded (in the last twelve months) _____ flights/hours flying and _____ days instructing.*

I have confirmed that this licence holder has a current first aid certificate.

I support/cannot support the renewal of his/her licence (* delete as appropriate)*

The new wording makes quite clear the responsibility of the CFI concerned. The signing of the declaration of support should not be undertaken lightly as it is effectively a legal document which may be closely scrutinised in the event of an incident.

This means that those licence holders with no direct link to a school may not be able to have their licences renewed unless they can show the appropriate experience in any given year. This will almost certainly be the case for licence hold-

ers who live abroad and who don't actually teach BHPA EP and CP in a UK school. This is unfortunate; however, a BHPA instructor licence entitles someone to teach EP and CP level paragliding in a BHPA school following the BHPA syllabus in UK conditions. Those who do not fall into this category (eg. those who now live abroad) will no longer be able to hold a BHPA instructor licence. In order to help these people the BHPA can supply certificates stating that the person concerned achieved BHPA Instructor status on ---- date, if required.

Schools/pilots are also reminded that the BHPA insurance cover only extends to a total aggregate of 60 days (inc travel) in any school registration / membership year.

Note also that no cover exists for any activities in USA, Canada and limited provisions apply to Australia.

New codes on membership cards.

The database has just undergone a significant overhaul in order to bring into line the current system and relevant licence/rating codes on membership cards. You are advised to have a really good look at your membership card at next renewal to check that the new easy read coding is exactly what you would have expected. If anyone has any issues/concerns they should contact the Technical staff for resolving. We have notes of all the old coding so nobody need fear anything being lost.

FLYING ISSUES

GPS and cross countries (XCs – that's for you CR).

GPS is undoubtedly a fantastic tool that has obvious values to hang gliding and paragliding. That said it is not infallible and is subject to a number of problems – most of which stem from misuse by the owner.

There is a worrying trend for pilots to assume that all they need to go XC is a vario and GPS unit – the GPS taking the place of the air map.

Even given the electronic gizmos available today you would not only be very stupid but also breaking the ANO (THE LAW) by not carrying an up to date air map.

The very minimum requirements for flying XC would be an up to date air map and a decent compass. Then if you've got the money a vario and perhaps a GPS.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD GPS BE SEEN AS AN AIR MAP ALTERNATIVE!

IT'S YOUR LETTER.. IT'S YOUR LETTERS....

Cross-bracing and certification. By Gavin Foster

Many UK pilots are obsessed with DHV ratings and the necessity to have a wing which conforms with the latest ideas. Yet safety lies with the pilot and not the wing or certification. More importantly, even if a pilot buys a DHV 1 or 1/2, if they fly with their harness chest strap setting outside that of the certification the DHV is valueless. The tested harness setting is written clearly on the certification sticker on most wings and on the DHV report.

Bob Drury's recent article in XC magazine about flying with his chest strap at 50cm may be fine for him, but would be a disaster for most other pilots unless they fly in very gentle conditions or on the coast.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of respecting the standard setting as on the wing. As soon as you change the width setting the glider's behaviour during recovery from asymmetric deflations and spiral dives will change and may become more unstable. Yet modern gliders turn so well there's no need to use huge weight shift. What's the point in buying (or trading down to) a DHV1/2 if you fly the glider like a comp wing with an open harness setting?

The latest Parapente magazine has a great article on asymmetrics in which they state that the standard setting must be respected. It seems that the UK lags behind and the guys who fly at 50cms are the ones who are setting the pace. When pilots get a good thrashing out here in thermic conditions, with one side unloading and then the other, they slowly begin to think that perhaps they should change.

It is really about harmony, with the pilot and the wing moving in unison. The good pilots who can fly actively can of course overcome this through their skill and experience, but I believe that many pilots do not understand that if they change the standard setting on their nice shiny DHV1/2 they invalidate the tested flight characteristics. Often pilots actually have no idea what their harness's are set at! Is it time you checked?

Gavin Foster, Alpine Ascent, gavin@skiweek-end.com

Just to back up Gavin's letter it may be worth noting that in at least one of the fatalities last year the harness setting (which was about 8cm more than recommended) was a factor!

COURSES 2004

Instructor Courses

12th – 14th October Bisham Abbey

Senior Instructor Course

Non scheduled as yet. Organised on demand.

Coach Courses.

The following dates in 2004 have been allocated, and can be booked by Clubs.

2nd/3rd October Isle of Man. Contact Dan Wood 07624 471514 DWood@INBIS.com

30th/31st October Airways. Contact Andrew Rastall 01335 344308 office@airways-airports.com

20th/21st November TBA

Clubs should contact Tony Mitchell, BHPA Office to organise a course.