

Thames Valley HG Club

The “How do they do that?” guide  
to running a

# BIG FAT RE-PACK & SAFTEY DAY



Produced by: Mark Taggart & Richard Prout  
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## Some History

Sadly too many pilots have died. My father died in a HG accident at Hay Bluff, South East Wales he was 41 years old. He was a skilful and experienced pilot who in his time established the Joint Services Hang Gliding Centre and received an MBE from the Queen for services to Hang Gliding. He had helped pioneer the adoption of reserves and even had some Freefall reserves adapted by the military during the late 70's early 80's.

I can still remember a discussion my father had with a fellow pilot who had pulled his reserve. "Wow!" said Dad. "I reckon that would be the last thing I would think of". Some say the mind can be programmed by phrases like this. Had he programmed his own death by not developing instinctive deployment reactions? I don't think so, but no one will ever know for sure.

Many of us spend a small fortune ensuring we have good equipment. How many of us spend any time at all learning to use the most important part of it, notably our safety equipment?

The "BIG Fat Re-pack" was a name we came up with in 1995 for the first event. It's a catchy name but oddly doesn't describe the key focus of the day. The key focus is **reminding pilots about safety** and most importantly **getting pilots familiar with using their safety equipment**, which principally means making them deploy their reserve parachute.

It does of course follow that there will be a big re-packing session but much of this is left for local qualified schools / dealers to do after the event. All the same, many pilots do re-pack onsite, especially if they want several attempts at throwing their reserve. We also supply dummy parachutes for this.

Ready to jump?



# Event Aims

- To educate pilots in:
  - The principals of using their safety equipment
  - Appropriate first aid and accident management
- To improve pilots' use of their safety equipment by:
  - Making them practice, thereby improving their reaction time
  - Reducing panic by familiarising them with the procedure
  - Building confidence in its use by seeing it actually work
- To identify faults in pilots' safety equipment by:
  - Deploying using a pilot's actual combination of reserve and harness. It may be the first time this combination has ever been tested!
  - Checking that the equipment is correctly configured
  - Identifying faulty equipment and comparing designs
- Getting the reserves freshly packed for the season.
- Having a fun day:
  - catching up with mates
  - zooming down the Zip Slide
  - chatting to "Flying Super Stars" whilst waiting for your turn!



# What team do you need?

Running an event of this nature is not as difficult as you would think. I made it up with a couple of buddies and we got most of it right the first time. Most importantly it takes 3-4 friends that have a “can do” attitude and one that has a “can’t do attitude”. I’ll tell you what the latter is for later.

Planning should take place in the pub, paid for by the club. After all, what price a life!

First figure out the key skills of the team and then simply divvy up the tasks. I have found that it is a great help if the team has the following vocational skill sets.

## A Surgeon

- Someone who is in charge. They call the shots. Everyone else helps them.

## Sales People

- They do all the doing.
- Running the marketing campaign to get the delegates booking up
- Good negotiating skills – Hire of the hall, bullying people into lecturing and people into attending
- Know how to run a mail-shot or two. Ideally they will have access to Goldmine or another sales contact management system that can automate email-shots.

## Project Managers

- Can ensure the event runs smoothly and ensure safety isn’t left to the sales people!

## Accountant

- Will have a keen eye on the figures and thereby ensure that enough money is left to buy food / drinks for the team on the day.
- Can make sure the hall has adequate insurance etc.

## Final important skill

- Someone with a rope access qualification. It would be too ironic hurting someone in a safety day!

# Get the cash sorted!



Over the years we have implemented some ground rules. These really work and will make your life a great deal easier.

1. Delegates must pre pay to register. (you will be amazed at the numbers that drop out, especially if it's a flyable day.) You don't want to pay for those that let you down.
2. As delegates send you their payment, issue numbered tickets (in sequence order) as people register. This way the first person to registered gets to go down the zip wire first. Ask the delegate to bring their number with them.
3. Asking delegates to send you payment using an "self addressed envelope" saves a vast amount of administrative time and effort. Simply post back the agenda, their booking number, location map and other instructions (down to even what the they should wear).
4. Have the club make a donation. After all, what better way to spend the clubs money. The TVHG club makes a significant contribution to the event. (£700 is the amount we normally have to play with.) This level of support allows us to run the event the way it should be run.
5. Set your fee as high as you need. Better have some cash spare. We charge delegates £15 per person and average 100 to 130 pre-paid delegates. This gives us about £2,000 to play with. (We have 500 members in our club.) The surplus this year allowed us to hire the services of "Walking Talking Flying Superstars" these hotshots host lectures and chat to people as the day progresses. We paid each hotshot £100 and £150 each and asked them to develop a presentation which might be on racing or even their own scary experience. This helped widen the appeal of the event and encouraged people to attend. You'll be amazed how many people can't be bothered about saving their life but will turn up for a good story about someone else saving their own!
6. Get local qualified schools / dealers to come and do the re-packing for a fee.

We make sure that we have a number of qualified repackers available. They take away the pilots reserve and harness and carry out the repack during the following week. They normally charge £25 per re-pack. This is good business for them, so it shouldn't be difficult to persuade them to help out at the event for free. They help out during the day, giving tips and wandering around keeping an eye on pilots that have chosen to repack their own reserves. Pilots will often re-pack at the event to have multiple attempts at throwing their reserve and then leave it for the professional before they go flying for real.

Don't forget to get a couple of helpers in the LZ to document the results. They need a clipboard, paper and pens, and ideally a camera or video. This is particularly useful when documenting failed deployments.

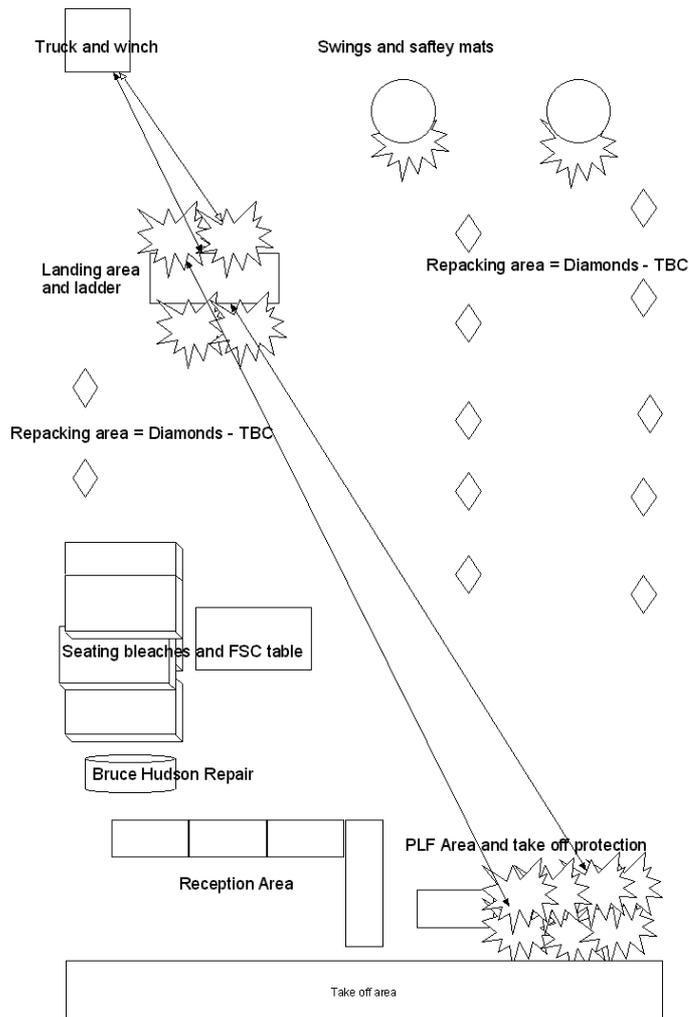
# The ZIP Slide

## The zip slide setup

Find a club member who is a climber and has a rope access qualification. You can hire one for almost nothing if you can't find one. These guys know how to rig up your slide.

Our club bought the following bits of kit – outlay was about £200. Much of it can be re-used HOWEVER, some parts can wear out on the day. So have some do a slide inspection at least once an hour.

- 100M of climbing rope
- 4 pulleys
- Carabineers
- 4 Tandem paraglider spreaders
- 8 hang straps
- Heavyweight cord and ring used to pull the pulley back to T/O
- Safety Mats from the sports hall
- A frame ladders for the LZ to get pilots down



# Moaning Minnie and their Mum

You will come up against life's natural moaners. I call them the "can't do brigade". However, here is my guide to using their attitude to your advantage:

Ask them to research how many people are seriously injured or die hang gliding and paragliding in Europe each year. Say that this will be useful in determining if we should do anything or not.

Ask them to contact the BHPA and ask if the normal membership insurance will cover a training day like the Big Fat Re-Pack. You of course, want to make sure you are insured.

Get them to contact the local "Health and Safety" representative. Get them to present the findings about injuries and deaths and then ask whether it seems a good idea to do nothing or run a safety event. When they get the "yes", which they will, have them ask the HSE representative for any guidance with regard to the event. Rope access qualifications etc.

These steps are important. You must do them to protect yourself in the unlikely event of any problems. Believe me, Mr Moaner, will really put his heart into all of this, which actually is what you need.

# The Agenda

9:30 Taggart, Batty, Brading, Prout and Hammond to arrive (My “can do” mates)

9:45 Helpers “Build Up” briefing by Taggart - then split into teams

11:00 FSC arrive for their meeting in the RLC offices

11:30 Helpers “GO Live” Briefing with refreshments

12:00 Introduction and welcome by Bruce

- Aims of the event
- The program for the day

12:05 First Aid Lecture Starts

12:35 First Aid Lecture ends

12:30 Zip Slide, PLF and swings open

14:15 Lecture room opens – First Aid and XC Talks breakout

16:30 Event closes

17:00 OFF TO THE PUB!!

## **TVHGC - BIG Fat Re-Pack 5 – Helpers Instructions**

I hope the following makes sense. (Call me on 07970 811168 if it does not).

Please can you arrive at 9.45am. (If this is a problem, please let me know.)

Breakfast and refreshments will be provided throughout the day, as you need them.... They are free; just ask one of the gofers to get what you need.

### **To help, I have broken down the event into two stages:**

1. Build Up
2. Go-Live

The major change to this year's events is the addition of some "walking talking flying superstars" These XC Hotshots and BFR ambassadors will wander round engaging discussions about XC, Safety, racing etc and providing help, support and flying advice to our delegates. This should help reduce some of the boredom whilst queuing

- Robbie Whittall
- Bob Drury
- Russell Ogden
- Matt Taggart
- Johnny Carr

### **1. Build Up**

#### **Agenda**

*Zip Slide and Ropes – Ready and tested by 11am – 3 Helpers*

- This is the only pre-defined team. (Mark Taggart, Ken Hammond and Richard Prout)
- MT will give instructions as to the build
- As soon as this is ready we will get the early birds going down the zip

*Reception area – Must be ready by 11am – 3 to 4 helpers*

- Lay out the tables to form a check in barrier for the delegates to go through.
- Welcome the delegates and check them off against the list
- Encourage non TVHGC members to join (where appropriate)
- Give out hand books
- Tell delegates about Bruce Hudson repair facility for flying suits, harnesses and bags etc
- Direct delegates to the seating area

*Lecture facilities in the main hall*

- Set up table for speakers, Check bleaches are out and safe
- Set up TV and video – set videos playing

*Flight Safety area within the main hall*

- Set up 6 tables for the Flight Safety Committee in the main hall.
- The FSC arrive at 11am for a meeting in the offices
- Check that reception know where to direct the committee to the correct meeting room
- Check that catering have delivered the refreshments (tea, coffee and pastries) to the FSC
  
- Take refreshment orders from other helpers and ask catering to deliver

*Further lecture facilities*

- At 2pm set up 20 chairs and 1 table in classroom style in the dance room.
- This will be for our guest speakers to talk further about first aid, cross country, deployments etc

*Landing Area, PLF area and Rope Swings – Ready by 11am – 3 to 4 Helpers*

- Place thick safety mats below take off
- Place hobby horse and step next to take off safety mats for PLF practice
- Place landing mats in the LZ zone and have ladders ready to access pilots
- Place mats under and around the swings

*Repacking Area – 2 helpers*

- To pull out curtains if necessary to separate room into efficient packing areas
- To lay out badminton net post at regular intervals (one packing parachute apart)
- To place bundles of rubber bands at each post
- To place a tie at each post

**2. Go Live = 11:30am**

Please make sure you are all fully “refreshed” by 11:45am

*Reception – 4 to 8 Helpers (to quickly check the delegates in)*

- Welcome the delegates and check them off against the list
- Encourage non TVHGC members to join (where appropriate)
- Give out hand books
- Tell delegates about Bruce Hudson repair facility for flying suits, harnesses and bags etc
- Direct delegates to the seating area
- *Martin Brown to keep the delegate list and act as fire marshal*

Bruce to welcome the delegates, and do the introductions – Encourage delegates to get stuck in and help one another to speed things along. (Bruce I will fully brief you on this)

- House Keeping
- Aim of the event and introductions
  - Mention Bruce Hudson and repair service
  - The Flight Safety committee
  - The XC champs walk and talk

- The team of helpers
- Professional repacking - process
- The First Aid lecture will kick off at 12pm
- The zip slide will open at 12:30pm
- Talks and lectures will commence again at 2.15pm

**Take Off – 3 people – MT to oversee this**

- 2 Launching pilots
- 1 briefing pilots

**Landing – 3 People**

- 1 Person noting how the deployment went on the delegate form
- 1 Person helping the pilot off the wire
- 1 Person running the pulleys back to take off

**PLF Area – 2 People**

Helping pilot up on to the horse

Checking the landing and offering help and advice

**Repacking Area – As many as possible**

Offer help (if you feel you can) to pilots. You are NOT there to repack for them. There is a professional service. Dave Sollom and Ken Hammond (£25) if delegates need it.

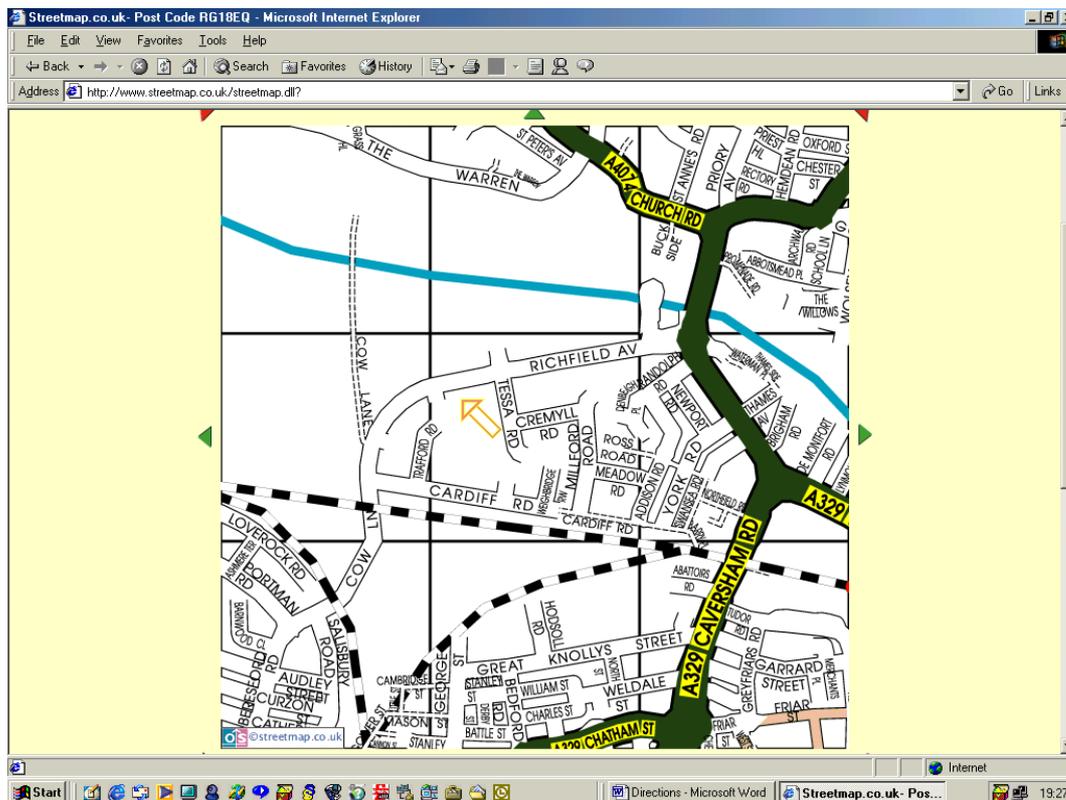
## Sent to the delegates

### Big FAT repack 5 – 2001 - Directions

**Date:** Saturday 3rd March 2001  
**Time:** 9.45am Sharp  
**Bring:** Harness, helmet, reserve, repack manual, rubber bands, gloves, boots  
**BFR Location:** Rivermeade Leisure Centre, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EQ

- Follow signs to the centre of Reading
- Head for Caversham Bridge or follow Rivermeade signs
- Turn down the Richfield Ave between the petrol station and Hotel

**Location Map URL:** <http://uke.multimap.com/map/browse.cgi?pc=RG18EQ>



Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries:  
All the Best, Cheers

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