



# SAFETY NOTICE

Issued by Angus Pinkerton - Chairman of the Flying & Safety Committee - 3 December 1996

*All paraglider and hang glider pilots (including Safety Officers, Coaches and Instructors).*

*If you hold a copy of the BHPA Technical Manual this notice must be inserted into it and retained until it is withdrawn or superseded on instructions from the Chairman FSC.*

## Parachute Packing Errors

The fatality resulting from the mid-air collision at Devils Dyke on November 22nd brings to an end the longest period without a fatal accident in our sports' history. The primary cause of this accident was (of course) the collision. However, the hang glider pilot had enough height to deploy his parachute, and did so, but it did not deploy correctly.

Apart from photographs, the wreckage and eye witness reports, we also have a video of the event. All the evidence is so far consistent with the parachute having been seriously incorrectly packed. The parachute in question has a 'clover leaf' deployment bag, which is held closed until the bag reaches the full extent of the bridle by the bridle being looped through a small elastic loop. The rest of the bridle is then S-folded on the outside of the deployment bag, the folds held neatly by two elastic loops.

In the case of this parachute, the bridle line itself (rather than a loop of bridle) had been passed through one of the elastic loops. The result of this was that, on deployment, instead of the deployment bag falling away it remained attached to the bridle line, and at some point during the deployment sequence the cover and elastic loop moved up the parachute lines and held the mouth of the parachute tightly closed.

We have met this re-packing error before. At least one pilot had decided that he didn't want to risk losing his deployment bag and attached it to his parachute in just this way. Fortunately this error was discovered during a repacking event. More worrying is that we have discovered another identical error since the accident, so it is clear that this repacking problem is by no means unique.

Please, please, please learn from this fatality. A reserve parachute is not worth carrying if it is not going to work.