

Australian **100th** SKYDIVER magazine



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ASM AUSTRALIAN SKYDIVER MAGAZINE
FLAGSHIP PUBLICATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN PARACHUTE FEDERATION





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FEATURES

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NATIONALS

38



JYRO BOOGIE

70



NUDE RECORD

UPDATE

Skydiving STOPPED

CP & ACC Nationals UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Equinox Boogie POSTPONED

Funny Farm RAN IN ISOLATION

Fiji Boogie CANCELLED

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FRONT COVER



Front Cover Winner of the ASM Photo Competition 'Ultra Oz' bigways celebrating the 100th issue with this special 100 formation, over Picton.
Photographer: Stephen 'Spot' Tonson

BACK COVER



Back Cover Winner of the ASM Photo Competition, Locked Down, Matthew 'Drewy' Drew reading the mag during isolation at Toogoolawah.
Photographer: Karen McEvoy

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The information in this magazine was, to the best of our ability, correct at the time of going to press. Production and mailing takes a total of five weeks, so some information may be out of date or superseded.

Photos submitted will be returned if supplied with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

The parameters of the Australian Parachute Federation lie in sport parachuting operations from aircraft and while the APF is aware that parachuting descents are being made from other than aircraft, APF rules do not cover these descents and the APF are not in a position to control them. Note: The ASM may include BASE jumping, providing the APF does not appear to condone the activity.

Pursuant to my contract with the APF in relation to the publication of Australian Skydiver Magazine, I am required to make a general statement about the nature of any pecuniary interest that I have in a particular brand of parachuting equipment, service or event being promoted in ASM. I am a Director of Toogoolawah Drop Zone Pty Ltd and I am a parttime employee of Ramblers Parachute Centre which organises various events and is a dealer for various equipment, some of which companies advertise in the ASM from time to time.

I was old enough to remember when my Dad produced his 100th issue of Rambling On. He was pretty happy. It was exciting times; a definite achievement. I also remember spending half my school holidays at his Wynnum Road shop surrounded by a couple of thousand magazines and envelopes, and yep, licking stamps and envelopes; plus stacking by postcode to mail; loading and unloading the van with heavy mountains of them. Fast forward 22 years and by the fate of the times, I might yet be finding myself stuffing and heat-sealing plastic envelopes, then sorting for postage, again. I'm not a religious person but I pray that working restrictions are eased and I don't have to do that. Or maybe that's one of those isolation things my family will be forced into, label a bonding experience and laugh about in years to come.

Being a creative person, or creating something, is an interesting mental journey. Especially if that something goes out for public opinion (or membership opinion in the case of this issue). You see, I had a bit of a 'judgement' blockage going into this issue, based on a few criticisms of the 50th issue. Thanks to Greg Smith for a Miffism (page 67) that got me through those kinds of times, and to Xavier Rudd for the lyrics, "*what other people think of me is none of my business*", helping me to not take things personally. I recently pulled out Issue 50 and thoroughly enjoyed it again ten years later. If you don't have a copy for yourself, you can read it online at www.skydiver.com.au. It's completely worthwhile to revisit, in my opinion!*

I see that a creation, as is success, is gauged by the eye of the beholder. I loved reading that Jason and Jeremy gauge their success not on sales figures of helmets, but on enjoying what they do and what they create. Twenty years doing anything is an achievement. It's been fun to run a parallel journey with Cookie Composites. I was a teenager working in Manifest when Jeremy and Jason started jumping and changed our weekends at Toogoolawah for the better and the world's head protection for ever. Profiling those guys has been on my list for years. "*Quantity is Vanity, Profit is Sanity*" is another -ism I've tried so hard to live by. I haven't quite mastered it yet because it's still written on my computer and reminds me every day to keep reality in perspective. I was planning on 150 pages, then the pandemic hit and it looked like I might only be able to afford 64 pages! Clearly,

the profit part of the -ism still hasn't properly resonated with me as I present 100 pages.

So I've had to cut back and be selective. Not an easy feat! I started thinking about the evolution of skydiving over the last twenty years. Every aspect of our sport has evolved. You can't really say what has evolved the most. So, it came down to what new concepts came along. The transformational, standout, most-welcomed skydiving entrants to our worlds have been – drumroll please: Freeflying, Wingsuiting and Wind Tunnels. The feature articles are as full of their author's personality as the disciplines they fly.

Twenty years means us youngins are now oldies, with more laugh lines but the same twinkle in our eyes and mischief to behold. This issue is very much about the people, our skydiving family, and also the skydiving families that have endured the test of time. I'm talking about the second generational drop zone operating families. I know I've talked about it before, but I feel so blessed to have won some lottery to be born into one of them, and there's currently only four of us in Australia. Think about it; imagine taking your kid on their AFF jumps, and imagine going Freeflying with your old man. The former is happening more and more, but the latter, well that's ridiculously rare and special.

It was an honour to finally get an interview from Phil Onis, as a willing participant, and Shane as a, erm, participant! Phil doesn't think he has that much to say. Around his 30,000 jump mark I asked him for a profile, again, and he said he's "*just a guy that's done a lot of jumps*". Obviously, we all beg to differ! And no surprise, the conversation, as always, was still centred around the sport and how to get more people into it. The man's passion has never faltered. Imagine having the head of the APF as your Dad. Poo Smith and his dad Dave Smith have both tried very hard to keep things separate. Funny how Poo, the alleged rule-breaker in his heyday, is now a Chief Instructor obeying all the rules.

Then there's the South Australian larrikins, the other Smiths, or as they call themselves the "*Two Too Many Smiths*" who've candidly interviewed each other. And then there's yours truly, the McEvoy's. A modest man like Phil, my Dad has been saying no to a profile for 100 issues, and fair enough I suppose, until now... it's time, whether he likes it or not! I can feel his alarm bells ring as he reads this!



The mag has always been about showcasing the magnificent jumpers and their flying prowess, and I've always liked to profile one or two people each issue. This issue is top heavy but I don't apologise for it even though Claude Gillard and Faye Cox have both been profiled before, many years ago. Here they are again, and well-deserved. Dementia is setting in for our God Father Claude so he will be chuffed to feel the love and see himself in the issue marking the 60th anniversary of the association that he founded, and our Dame Faye Cox has just been indoctrinated into the Skydiving Hall of Fame – that's huge! Another gorgeous second-generation specimen, Luci Martyn, talks about life as Jyro's daughter and running NZ Aerosports. The other Cookie, John Cooke, talks about life running Redcliffe.

When she first reads this, my absolutely-never-to-go-jumping graphic designer of 16 years, and gorgeous human, Amanda Hutchison of iGraphix will die of embarrassment. I want to give her credit for a job super well done. I have loved both our friendship and professional relationship. We've spent years of me not having to explain much, she's just known what I wanted most of the time. If you see a photo inserted here of her surrounded in ASM issues it's because I forced her into it and/or successfully bribed/guilted her husband for the photo!



Also big thanks to JT Press for printing a quality magazine and offering terrific service for the same number of years. Their business was lost in the Brisbane floods a few years back, so it's been great to support Aussie made and see them survive. A big shout out to The Cerebral Palsy League who've packaged and mail sorted the magazine for 19.5 of the 20 years. It was not my forté (the childhood haunt) and I'm always thankful that I can support a great cause too.

There's been a few proof-readers over the years who I thank my lucky stars for. Initially Dad, the most experienced skydiving mag proofreader ever, for about a decade, until I could let go of some of that unnecessary control I had and let other people see it before it went to print. Kim Hardwick in the APF for 12 years was a proofreader of school teacher calibre. It wasn't really her role to do so, but she couldn't help it. Perfect! I miss her! And one of my besties, Andrea Engler, who for years

just couldn't refrain from anything but perfect punctuation. Each incorrection came at her like a slap in the face. And I thought I was a perfectionist! And recently Jules McConnel and the APF office ladies, and another beautiful specimen of a human being, Vikki Girvin. You know, I read the same pages over and over, and still miss things. It's always a bit of a surprise and stab in the guts when mistakes are pointed out, or worse, gone to print.

Bravo to Kelly Brennan, author extraordinaire. She has a natural flair for writing a bloody good story. Her passion never fades, her creativity never subsides, her professionalism never falters.

Photography is a huge aspect of the magazine, with very few professional skydiving photographers out there jumping all the time. So, of course Steve Fitchett has been my knight in shining armour. If I know he's going to an event I relax about that article because I know he'll come through with more than just the goods. Often, I shortlist up to a dozen cover shots from one event. And he's never charged a cent, always for the love of our sport and its people. A gem and an absolute gentleman.

The wonderful advertisers put the food on my table, and in particular Parachutes Australia, Paragear and Airtec GmbH have been with me every issue, since Issue # 1. Heartfelt thanks, and brownie points for Airtec's special advert, it made me cry!

Massive respect is extended to the management and membership of the APF over the years, for continuing to enjoy and support the ASM. It's meant that I haven't had to go and get a 'real job', could work remotely from any drop zone and justify every Boogie by "being hard at work in the field", and all the while feeding my creative bug and jumping desire. The perfect storm for me, and being a sentimental person, I love that the ASM provides an historical account of Australian skydiving, a collection of the times.

I've never been one for giving too much away about myself, never voiced an opinion in editorials other than positivity (that I've sometimes thought equated to not being substantial enough). While I'm certainly not about to start getting negative, I did try to open up this issue, to give a bit more of myself, and I'm really proud to showcase my family in this issue.

I've always said that if I ever get to Issue 100 that I'd be super grateful and happy, and if it all ends there that I could never be sad. I don't know to what extent COVID-19 will change our sport, drop zones, our culture, our incomes and our lifestyles. And I don't know the future of the magazine. How do you gauge 'essential' anyway? Something akin to gauging success? Is the ASM in the same kind of 'essential non-essential' category as coffee? Can we live without it? Probably. Do we want to? Not really.

I didn't imagine a virus stopping us jumping. I did always think we took airspace for granted and that would be the evil that stopped us. How ironic that now those tables are turned. If only we could jump we wouldn't experience any ATC holds and get full height!

I'll leave you now to enjoy this issue and ponder the next twenty years of skydiving in Australia. I hope to see you on the other side, and if this issue puts some colour into your COVID-19 life, a smile on your face and a laugh from your belly, then I have created success.

Susie **EDITOR**
Susie McLachlan (nee McEvoy)
Aka Susie McMc

**I challenged myself to actually write "In my opinion" in this editorial*



Thanks to 'Ultra Oz' bigways and photographer Spot Tonson for this awesome '100' formation.



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VIRUS ALERT

HOW THE CORONAVIRUS INFECTED SKYDIVING... *By Kelly Brennan*

IN THIS SPECIAL 'SLICE OF TIME' EDITION OF ASM, WE CAN'T IGNORE THE VIRUS THAT'S INFECTING HUMANITY AND HOLDING A SOLID BLACK CLOUD OVER OUR SPORT.

AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRINT, DZS HAVE CLOSED, WHETHER BY CHOICE OR UNDER ORDERS. PROFESSIONAL SKYDIVERS HAVE LOST THEIR INCOME, PLANES ARE TIED DOWN ON AIRFIELDS, AND THE INEVITABLE RUMOUR MILL HAS BEGUN, SPECULATING ON THE FUTURE OF THE SPORT AND THE INDUSTRY.

THE UNCERTAINTY HITS EVEN HARDER, BECAUSE WE'D ONLY JUST EMERGED FROM AUSTRALIA'S WORST SUMMER OF BUSHFIRES, FOLLOWED BY FLOODS AND BAD WEATHER IN MANY AREAS.

For many jumpers, the COVID-19 crisis began as a bit of a laugh. We could snigger at Doomsday preppers fighting over toilet paper, and we could keep defying gravity. For working skydivers, it was about making a living while they could. Behind the scenes, DZ owners, who were already reeling from the awful summer, were hearing the alarm bells from health and financial experts.

Then, as the Covid-19 case lists grew, the toilet paper jokes eased off. When the crisis hit our sport, it hit hard, and nobody was immune.

A BUG WAS BORNE...

Mike Dyer is a skydiver who's seen this bug from some interesting angles. In early November, he was in the Aussie team at the Asiana Parachuting Championships in China's Hubei province. Mike became pretty crook with something in his throat and sinuses, possibly from the thick pollution. He got a mystery prescription from a local hospital but didn't pick up the medicine, and he managed to complete his five rounds of Style.

The following week, Mike went to a big Wuhan hospital which gave him a fresh script and sent him away. "I think we dodged a bullet there," he said. "It was later reported that the same hospital, possibly on the same day, was where the first case was treated."

AROUND THE WORLD...

Over the next three months, the world watched as Wuhan felt the first deadly wave and the health crisis spread to Europe. Despite Donald Trump's early denials in the US, it

soon became obvious that global financial fallout would be just as fierce and widespread.

In late February and early March, drop zones and tunnels shut down around the world. "By being together at the drop zone right now, we will only make things worse," said Dan Brodsky-Chenfeld, the Manager at Perris Valley Skydiving in California.

The Project 19 Women's Record effort was postponed, along with many other boogies and competitions.

Former emergency worker Rich Grimm was fresh back from organising the Maldives Boogie. Rich warned friends to avoid drop zones because emergency departments needed beds for sick people, not broken skydivers. "And, the last thing you want to do is spread this to your loved ones," he added. "Because nothing says 'germ infested Petri dish' like a jump plane or a packing mat couch!"

Skydiver LJ Wobker posted an analogy that he hoped skydivers would understand. "This virus thing is basically a high speed malfunction," he wrote. "And if you f*** around with it, it'll kill you."

The British Skydiving website originally published risk reduction advice, then, on March 21, the Association's medical adviser said jumping should cease. "The government advice ... has some inconsistencies and apparent illogicalities," observed Dr John Carter. "However, the temptation to pick holes in the advice should not allow us to ignore the important message behind the advice."

GAME OVER IN AUSTRALIA...

In Australia, we had ten days of turmoil, from March 13 to March 23, which descended into our horrible new reality.

“This will pass and we’ll be sharing our love for the skies and each other again soon.” *Dan Brodsky-Chenfeld*

Some DZs were calling it before others. Tourism had tanked so the enormity of the crisis was already extending beyond panic buying. Then the Australian Grand Prix was cancelled on Black Friday, the first of many sporting events to fall victim.

A week after the Grand Prix bombshell, a big crowd at Bondi beach made international headlines. Frustrated health officials said the message just wasn’t getting through to the younger generation, and they triggered a national shutdown of pubs, clubs and gyms, forcing everybody’s hand from Monday, March 23.

“The new restrictions announced today are going to make skydiving either prohibitive or impractical,” wrote the APF CEO, Richard McCooley, in an email to members. Each operator would need to reassess their circumstances. *“Undoubtedly, they will consider their staff, customers, and the social aspects of this fast-moving pandemic.”*

Tunnels and the last few DZs closed their doors. Most were temporary closures, but it was the end of the road for York and Redcliffe.

HITTING HOME...

At the same time as all this was happening, Covid-19 issued another direct reminder to the skydiving family.

Chair of the APF Board, Dave Smith, was forced into quarantine as soon as he got back from somewhat interrupted travels overseas. His wife Maggie had been unwell on the way back and turned out to have the coronavirus. *“The virus is debilitating but not life threatening in her case,”* he said.

Maggie rested in the house, coughing a lot, and unable to eat any of the food stocked up by Poo and Bec before the couple got home. Dave had the backyard to himself but had to handle some inside duties too, like washing and ironing. *“I have been involved in re-currency training on skills I have not used for many years,”* he said.

PREVIOUS PROBLEMS...

Many older jumpers remember the ‘recession we had to have’ back in 1990, and the ‘avgas crisis’ that grounded planes at dozens of drop zones over the New Year of 2000. Plus we suffered an inevitable blow to business after the fatal tandem accidents.

This is different because it hits everyone and it hits instantly.

In our small community, nobody wants to be quoted speculating on the next step. Everybody wants to save the industry and the sport, but it’s hard to be positive at this point.

“We can only hope that skydiving businesses do the right thing by their workers and that skydivers help their mates,” says one jumper.

“Most predictions are that these restrictions could last for 6 months,” warns Richard McCooley. *“As a sport and industry this is going to be an extremely tough time.”*

PLANNING THE COMEBACK...

Whether we’re out of action for a few weeks or a few months, let’s start thinking ahead.

The diehards will be good to go when the green lights come on. No worries there. But don’t forget the nervous jumpers, or the ones who don’t yet have a wide friendship group in the sport.

Everybody can step up to a role of mentoring and motivating those who need it most. Pick up the phone and call that jumper you know who isn’t on facebook. Also call the one who is!

Stay in touch with each other. Stay sanitised and healthy. Stay connected and keep the conversation going about how great it’s going to be when we get back in the sky!

Mike Dyer was competing in 4-Way at the Nationals in Nagambie. *“That really brought it home to me,”* he said. *“As social distancing was being introduced elsewhere, we were hugging each other and getting on with the competition.”* He realised the return to the real world would involve some important choices, and he cancelled catchups with vulnerable, older friends on the way home.

Mike was also planning to compete in the Australia and NZ Canopy Nationals. First, that event was split and rescheduled as international travel bans came in, then it was postponed indefinitely. *“I think we have far bigger priorities right now than whether a competition goes ahead,”* said Mike, who’d also been planning to attend the POPS meet in the UK later this year.

“The sky will always be there and, in a few months, things will hopefully be back to somewhat normal.”

Rich Grimm

JOHN "Cookie" COOK



Redcliffe's Chief Instructor reminisces

MY SKYDIVING JOURNEY STARTED WITH DARWIN PARACHUTE CLUB IN 1981. I DON'T WANT TO SAY TOO MANY NAMES AS I WILL FORGET SOMEONE PRECIOUS, BUT TREVOR COLLINS, YOUR ENTHUSIASM HOOKED ME. AND HAVING PHIL ALLEN AS MY EVER-PATIENT JM SEALED THE DEAL, AND SO TO YOU AS MY DZSO AT REDCLIFFE FOR THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS HAS BEEN A PLEASURE.

I loved Redcliffe from day one twenty years ago. We took off and I looked over to the glorious sand bars showing green amongst the blue ocean. It just felt like I was back home to somewhere my parents had taken me to in my childhood to visit a Great Aunty.

Initially we used to hire a C182 but soon after, the initial owner purchased a C206 and things picked up. The then owner wasn't real popular for his marketing tactics but he sure got things moving.

The beauty of Redcliffe is it's peninsular - we have a beach for all wind directions except due west, although one is like a drum roll for new players. Castlereagh Point - some guys with not many Tandems handle it, some with thousands have gone home never to return after jumping there.

A quote from a DZSO, **"Redcliffe is a place to apply your trade not learn it".**

We progressed to a Navajo and those who know me well will cringe as I did when JWH arrived. But all was well for many years with our longest serving pilot, Jamie Wallace, looking after the beast until the nose wheel collapsed on landing several years later. Soon after, the turbine times began, with three different owners, Skydive Australia being the last.

Before the turbine times we were just skydivers earning a buck part time but enough to make a living. We were good mates who knew our stuff, with a good person running the phones etc. On the ground, as Chief Instructor, it was pretty easy as I rarely had to make a call, the team did.



TM Brett Higgins - the last person to land at Redcliffe - carton!

Redcliffe has had a real "spirit de corps" from the beginning. We do the yards and we will make the calls no matter who owns the books. Owners come and go. They tell us their plans of how it's worked at other drop zones. I'm proud to say that after a few months they've watched us, examined us, and left us to get on with what we know best.

I spent many years pre 2000 running training DZs so some of my proudest moments are the achievements of those I've enthused along the way. When I first got to Redcliffe there was a cheeky young apprentice carpenter, Justin De Waard, renovating the pub I drank at, who'd have a beer with me and was interested in jumping. I took him for a jump, steered him to Ramblers and now he's a skydiving success story. Another one, Matt Ranken, the boy did two tandems with us 14 months ago and now he has 300 jumps and was last seen trying to steal my long-standing nude record from me! Love it!

I wouldn't even dare to make a roll call of who's jumped at Redcliffe because I'll miss someone. There's been so many legends here and it's been a privilege jumping with each and every one of you in a wonderful team environment. The vibe at Redcliffe has always been that our pilots, GCAs and office staff are as big a part of the team as any baggy arse TM!

Good luck everyone, see you all in the sky somewhere soon hopefully.



Last load at Redcliffe: Yasmine Holland, TM Paul Baker, TM Steve Hennessey, TM Brett Higgins, Renee Veenboer, TM James Evered, Jacqui Hiddleston, Ben Parfitt, TM Angela Hiesler, Roy Knight, Antonio Fragoso, pilot Roger Mulckey, CI John Cookie and Tina Bourne.

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FROM THE APF CHAIR AND CEO

The Coronavirus has shut down skydiving in Australia and seriously affected not only DZ Operations and members working within the industry but has also curtailed training of the Australian Team who would otherwise be making preparations for the World Parachute Championships in Russia.

As jumping has ceased completely on all platforms, including wind tunnels, both the Board and Management are working together to deal with the ramifications that this global virus will have on skydiving. We are not sure how our members are going to get their adrenaline fix for the next few months!

Until this pandemic is under control and jumping resumes, we hope this special addition of the ASM will lift your spirits. We know, when this pandemic is in hand and jumping resumes, our members will be chomping at the bit to be heading to their DZs. It will be an exciting time and we must ensure we'll be ready to meet the demands of this strong rebound.

It's unfortunate that this 60th year anniversary of APF's humble beginnings is shadowed by this worldwide pandemic; however it is also a temporary cloud over us. Let's look ahead as we deal with the consequences and be ready to rock and roll when the sun comes back out. On the upside many will have time to read ASM cover to cover.

For its part, Management has cut off all non-essential travel. Expenses have been heavily reduced without compromising services, including a number of office staff being gradually stood down or working reduced hours from home.

The good news, as always, is that APF has financial reserves to be able to sustain all that it is subjected to throughout this period. In effect, the APF, if required, is able to continue with a nil-income situation for six months or longer. This is an absolute credit to forward-thinking Board Members (past and present) who had the foresight to set funds aside for the '1:100 year unforeseen event' we are now experiencing.

A decision on the World Parachuting Championships will be determined in May 2020 when the International Skydiving Commission reconvenes, until then funding for team training is on hold - to ensure training is done as close as possible to the date of the competition, whenever that may be.

The Board have requested work to continue and increased speed on IT solutions to ensure improved service delivery to all our loyal members. This quiet time is an ideal opportunity to devote time and resources to this area.

APF is continuing to press CASA for its ASAO Certificate as a Part 149 organisation. Again, while we have time and our human resources are less committed on operational matters APF can progress this forward. This has been a long-term project and greatly required involvement by many people. Getting an ASAO Certificate will give the APF legal certainty as a legitimate aviation activity and that is to be welcomed.



Dave Smith
F221



Richard McCooley
F206



SPORT DEVELOPMENT

What has happened in skydiving in the last 20 years?

Skydiving is a sport that has become a very popular tourism industry.

Has the industry taken over the sport?

Can the sport rise up to overtake the industry?

Or can they work in harmony?

When I started skydiving only 25 years ago one of my first mentors, Bruce Hain said to me “you’ve got what it takes to make it in this sport, you could be on ‘Airspeed’” – for those of you who don’t know who *Airspeed* is - they were, have been and still are one of the top US 4-Way and 8-Way Formation Skydiving teams in the world. This was the motivation to start my journey in the world of competition...

I started in a 4-Way Inter FS team ‘*The Flying Zucchini’s*’ in 1998, dabbled in Freely with ‘*I Forgot My Rel Shoes*’ in 2000 but my real passion is Canopy Flight. So trips to the USA included the Pond Swoop Nationals at the Ranch in upstate New York, the first World Cup of Canopy Piloting at Perris Valley, California in 2003 – I was just a swoop groupie back then, but lapped up all the knowledge I could both on the ground and in the air from the best in the world. I came back home, mentored by Robbie McMillan and Drew Lipinski to learn how to swoop and compete in Canopy Piloting. Then teamed up with Michael Vaughan and Crash Bennett in 2007 with ‘*Ookoonono*’ to win four international medals for Australia in eight years competing together all around the world.

In 2007 I also got my Tandem and AFF Instructor ratings to help fund my career in the sport. By 2015 I was doing more coaching than instructing as the demand for canopy courses became more... By 2018 I was coaching canopy coaches as the demand for canopy coaches became more...

Why I am telling you this story? It’s my story – well, one of them... maybe one day I’ll tell you about when I was in the circus, but that’s for another time...

But to answer the questions I started with:

- Has the industry taken over the sport?
 - Statistically not – each year in Australia there are more sport skydives done than tandem skydives. Yet why does it feel like there are more tandems being done? Are they marketed better? Are they made a priority?
- Can the sport rise up to overtake the industry?
 - Statistically it already is, maybe we just need to change the perception...
- Can they work in harmony?
 - They already are – that’s what the APF do well – use funding from the tandem industry to support the sport. Can we do better? Yes, we all can – by reflecting on what we are doing and have done to improve what we will do in the future. You are the APF and you can make a difference!

- You can choose to do whatever you want in this sport, it all starts with a little encouragement from the right person at the right time.

So I am encouraging you right now to go out there and make what you want of it.

Be the best you can be.

Find the right mentors and coaches along the way - there’ll be more than one, I only named a few in this short version of my journey to honour and thank them for where I have gotten today.

Be patient, be humble to yourself and to others... and be grateful for the gift of flight you’ve been given!

Jules McConnel



In light of COVID-19 grounding every skydiver in Australia, the APF are driving an initiative to keep members engaged.

The weekly series ‘ON HOLD’ includes:

- Webinars • Chatrooms • Competitions
- Articles • Forums • Guest speakers • & more

Guest speakers have included Dan BC, Douggs, Brett Newman, Michael Crush, PD’s Albert Berchtold. Coming up is Jens and Regina from Airtec (Cypres), Tom Noonan from UPT, Melissa Harvie and Dekunu’s Brent Chandler.

Each week new topics will be introduced. Please submit suggestions for topics or guest speakers to apf@apf.com.au

Keep an eye on the APF private members Facebook group and E-news for weekly ON HOLD entertainment.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/apfmembersgroup/>





RIGGING

With all the restrictions on gatherings, social distancing and isolation requirements, now normal people know how skydivers feel on a weather hold (stolen from some genius). Have we all tired ourselves out yet from too much double clicking the mouse, doing the five finger shuffle, shucking corn, carrot waxing, worm burping, celebrating palm Sunday, liquidating the inventory, fishing with dynamite, shuffling your iPod, buffing the vampire slayer, hunting for red October, orbiting Venus, taking self-guided tours or scratching Yoda behind the ears? I can say occupying the crease all day and carrying your bat results in a good night sleep. Either that or a brain aneurysm.

THE NEW RESERVE PACKING CHECKLIST

For the most part the feedback has been positive. I appreciate change is difficult. Just ask my poor hairdresser when she finally talked me into colouring my hair bleach blonde. A display of stumpy feet and I spat my dummy to the floor. Change is hard.

The packing checklist is here. What we can do is support all reserve packers and riggers in their implementation of the checklist. If you don't know what to do, or don't understand what is required call me, email me.

In no particular order:

Option 1: Open an iAuditor account. You can access it for free, you have a limited number of uses each month. Download the APF (Mr Mike Tibbits) created template. Or you can subscribe and create your own checklist.

<https://public-library.safetyculture.io/products/apf-reserve-packing-checklist-duplicate>

Option 2: Create your own word document and turn it into a checklist. Here is a link to the word document we based the iAuditor checklist on. There is no editing or formatting. Just the bones of what is required.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/2xpf8lgmtbg7cg/Packing%20Checklist1%20copy.docx?dl=0>

Option 3: A form you can access on the APF website. Here you are limited to what is on the form. If you are happy with it, awesome, use it. If there are things you feel you can improve on, awesome, create your own form.

There are lofts around the country who have already implemented their own packing checklist, the feedback from people who have used their services have all been positive. A documented inspection of gear, a report on what (if anything) is likely to be needing repair and confirmation that the gear is compatible and airworthy. A positive step forward and great customer service.

Take care everyone. If you are struggling with this social isolation shenanigans FaceTime me, we can have a scotch together and hang shit on whatever needs to have shit hung on it.

Trish Vogels



Lisa Perdichizzi **SCHOLARSHIP 2020** By Jules McConnel

As part of its commitment to a diverse and inclusive culture, the APF and the Perdichizzi family offer an annual scholarship to encourage women in skydiving through upskilling, training and leadership development.

One scholarship, valued at \$2,500 is available to any individual (male or female, any experience level) to undertake training, coaching, education or personal development as part of their plan to improve female retention and growth in the sport.

This year there were 18 applicants and several very strong candidates. Jodie Mayo stood out the most as a new leader in our sport who wants to carve her career pathway in skydiving photography and videography. Jodie will use the scholarship to undertake an in-air photography and videography course. She plans to use this coupled with her current skills in content creation and digital marketing to produce content and strategy for retaining and growing female membership.

Jodie is ever present at events in Victoria with her camera taking quality video and photos on the ground. She will now have the opportunity to learn how to use her cameras in the sky safely and effectively.

Jodie has only been in the sport for five years and already showing great leadership as a Women In Adventure Sport (WIAS) Ambassador and social media coordinator for Victoria. She's an awesome chick, like Lisa (who also loved video and camera flying) so it is very apt she receives this scholarship.



JUDGING

I've been asked to reminisce a bit about judging in this anniversary year for APF and ASM. The APF turns 60, while ASM turns 20 and is issuing its 100th edition. Congratulations to both institutions. Let's look at 60, 20 and 100.

Sixty years ago marked the first use of the aluminium can, the introduction of the Xerox photocopier and a dance craze known as The Twist. It's hard to imagine life without the first two, while any 60 year old would be grateful the latter disappeared.

As for Judging, we are forever grateful the telemeters disappeared. I remember my first introduction to these huge double-barrelled binoculars mounted on a ridiculously heavy tripod was in an attempt to judge Style tucks. The crick in the back of my neck was as impossible to manage as it was to find the parachutist in the sky.

You may trust it was not those that got me addicted to Judging, rather it was the videos we watched to assess Formation Skydiving. VHS tapes were all the rage when I started judging in 1993, which is a bit more than 20 years ago but much less than 60 or 100.

Each team was allocated a tape, or there was a Master 1 and 2 that alternated between the dubbing room and the Judging room. We could fast forward to the start of the skydive through all the geeking and gawping inside the aircraft, pause at the stack up, make sure our stop watches were ready, and, hopefully, unanimously click together on exit. If a Judge mucked up their start, we'd rewind the tape.

It took about five minutes or more to judge a 4-Way, especially if three views were required, or slow motion was requested, something we accomplish today in less than two minutes. Also the risk with VHS was that the next team would over-dub the previous team's entry on the Master tape, so that the performance was forever lost. Rewinding was slow, tapes were bulky and the image was not great, let alone the size of the equipment that had to

be worn by the Videographers including chest packs and huge black cameras on their helmets that occasionally came off due to insecure mountings. And they cost thousands of dollars too.

I remember when Video 8 became Super 8, then digital, while women started jumping camera too as soon as the gear became less physical to manage. Today's digital world is Heaven for Judges sitting in darkened

rooms; we will see more and more cameras being used in Accuracy and CP also, in line with other sports where the Judges' eyes are honest but fallible.

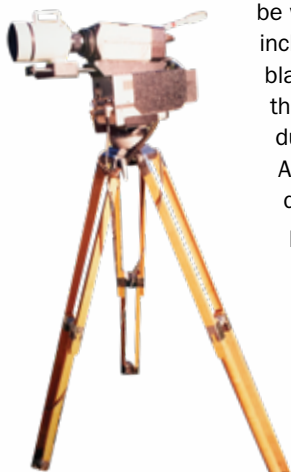
1960 also saw the birth of Hugh Grant, Bono and Maradona. The "Bono" discipline would be Accuracy – it was all about the truth and finding meaning and purpose in being centred. The "Hugh Grant" discipline was Formation Skydiving, but that didn't get going for about 20 years. (*Hi Historians, I know it was sooner than 1980 but I am trying to stay on theme here, ok?*) It was glamorous, sexy and difficult to see the truth of the dive. Everyone wanted to do it, and every Judge built their skills in this discipline. FS thrives today as one of the great parachuting disciplines, and not much has changed in its practice except it got much faster, so we see the addition of more rules to make it clearer to judge. And Maradona? Definitely Skysurf which reached popular culture in 1991 and demised about 20 years ago.

In those 60 years of the APF, we've had only a handful of Directors of Judging. I think it began with Claude Gillard, then Ray Williams, Julie Ward, Lisa Jonsson, Lindy Williams and me. From the first Accuracy and baton pass jumps when we only had two disciplines and our eyes, parachute judging has progressed to nine disciplines using digital technology to assess performances. At the 2020 Nationals, a team of 12 Judges presided over 14 events, requiring most Judges to be multi-rated. It's a big task to ensure we have Judges in all States to cover all disciplines. I remain incredibly grateful to those predecessors of mine who put in place the processes and training to allow me to carry the baton for the next little while. And I realise I haven't covered "100" very well at all.

To rectify that, I can only add that I think the 100th competition I judged was in France some decades ago, and that was a few hundred ago too. Am I addicted to judging? Because of the panels of Judges I've been privileged to work with and befriend, yes? Because of the competitors who just keep getting faster and better and constantly testing our skills? Yes. Because of the leaps and bounds in technology and software? Absolutely yes. But not because of telemeters! Let's twist again, like we did last year – keep on twisting competitors!

Congratulations, APF, on turning 60, a time of wisdom, freedom from judgement and deep friendships. You have accomplished all of those. Best wishes to APF and ASM for your years of service, support and entertainment – from The Judges of Australia.

Gail Bradley





Jerome Stanislaus

LBALTIMETERS.COM

Steepening the Curve

20 YEARS OF FREEFLYING

Photo by Kian Bullock

By Jill Grantham

Once upon a time Freeflyers were the renegades who didn't follow the rules. Now with Vertical Formation Skydiving being considered part of the Freefly genre of Skydiving, they are wearing matching suits and dirt diving and visualising in the plane like the Formation Skydivers they made fun of before.

My first Freefly jumps were in 2005 and they are what would currently be described as the antithesis of social distancing. Let's just say it was for the most part me practicing good personal hygiene... also known as a wicked backslide that kept me far away from my friends in the sky. I loved Freeflying immediately. There is something about the freedom of being able to move however you please that really appeals to me. There are a lot of synergies between this flying style and Yoga which I also love - like how they are both really hard until you actually learn the sweet spot and then they become effortless.

It is impossible to adequately represent so much history in Aussie Freeflying so I am just going to touch on a few moments that stood out to me, not to diminish anyone's personal journey over this time.

For some people this is just a small part of their skydiving career: maybe it was your formative jumping year or maybe it was your whole entire life.

Roger Mulckey talks about how his Freefly journey started, "Back in the day the social scene for people with 80 to 100 jumps was awesome. When you had between 30 to 40 jumps it was easy to get your Star Crest because there was an abundance of skilled

Formation Skydivers at the drop zone on any given weekend."

When he had 130 jumps Roger found himself doing 50 to 60-Ways. He remembers how great it was, "because when you did 40-Ways at the end of the day there were 39 other people to hang out with after the jump and drink at the bar, as opposed to the Freeflyers of the time who were few and far between."

In those times it was about the social jumping, "when you walked to the plane everyone knew each other". An element of that comradery has been lost while the Freeflying community built their skills to be able to perform the bigger jumps.

Roger initially started Freeflying because he "couldn't find anyone to jump with at the drop zone because they were all in 4-Way teams". Travelling internationally to go to skills camps and events was more of a rarity than it is today and he laughs remembering that he attended the first Go Vertical camp in Spain (1997) which was all he needed to be anointed a Freefly Coach upon his return to Australia. Continuing his trend-setting Roger held the first Funny Farm in its current location in 2001, which has gone on to be one of the biggest most consistent Freeflying events in Australia over the last 20ish years.

2000 - 2005

Freeflying in this era meant lots of colour and drag, big cameras, hours with a firewire cable getting footage, and jump buddies just shapes in the distance. Because in spite of the wide angle lens and its technical capability there just weren't many of us who were that good at Freeflying! A high five followed immediately by a backslide was regaled for weeks afterwards as that epic moment on the jump. There were all flavours of pizza you could imagine being delivered across the

countryside before *UberEats* was even a thing. When I could stop my cartwheel transition I favoured a Capricosa with extra olives. This Freeflying style made it hard to really achieve anything in the way of docks, making the records and big-ways of the time even more impressive.

An Aussie Freefly group *Off Track* (based on the principles of the French

team *Babylon*) started about 20 years ago. Buck and Crikey were doing Angle stuff - *Atmonauti* and *Tracking*. They later brought in *Pony* on camera, *Roger Mulkey* and others in the following year. They were a different type of team as they made a pledge to all the sponsors that they would never compete, and jump for 20 years. The sponsors at the time were tired of sponsoring people who jumped for 5 to 8 months of the year and then stopped jumping or put the gear in the cupboard. They were doing lots of coaching for many, many years, but fell to the attrition of the allure of outside life of kids and families etc. Crikey confirms they still have their gear and haven't given up quite yet, making the 20 year mark as promised, and more.

RECORDS 2000 - 2005

- Australia win World Cup Gold Mens Freestyle (Ash Crick and Jonathan King) 2000.
- Australia win World Meet Silver Mens Freestyle (Ash Crick and Jonathan King) 2003.

EVENTS

- First Funny Farm 2001
- Shane Onis was born 2001
- Pizzas are a-plenty, pepperoni flying around and gluten free is not a thing.
- Facebook was just being created. Jump footage was swapped at the end of the day by sitting down for hours with a beer and transferring it from one camera to another with a firewire cable.



Louie Armenis & Graham delivering pizzas



Ash & Jon



Coombsey leading a tracking jump with Lord Buwa & Adam Long, over Batchelor.

IN 2000 FREEFLYERS WERE SAYING:

- Tracking
- Atmonauti
- Freefly
- OffTrack

HEAD LEVEL

- What's head level? I'm just stoked to see my mate as a tiny figure in the distance.
- The leader of a back track needs to be the furthest out in order to shoot everyone with toilet paper.

EQUIPMENT

- Cookie Camera Open Face
- Gath
- Sony CX tape camera
- Pro Dytter
- Spirit Skysports & RMW super colourful, baggy, cotton jumpsuit

2006 - 2010

Jumps in these times started out slow with *Atmonauti* (*Atmo*) still being quite popular amongst the Aussies, but sped up very quickly. Probably the biggest impact on the Freeflying scene was the *Tracing* camp in 2009 and the introduction of the *Tunnel* to Freeflyers.

At the start of this period tunnel flying wasn't widely done by the Freeflyers, due to a number of factors, being cost, lack of access and some considered it cheating. I still remember at *Nagambie Full Moon Boogie*, a good friend at the ripe old age of 21 with 200 jumps, saying she would never fly in the tunnel because that was not "real" flying. *Nek* minit she is winning the Australian Indoor Skydiving Championships. We both wish we could go back to our youth when we knew all the answers.

I made my first trip to the tunnel in 2007, *Eloy Arizona*, pulling the wind straight from the desert with dust, bugs, static zaps and all. This is when I started wearing a full face helmet (quite unpopular at the time) then simply as

a defensive move against everything that was being pelted at me in the tunnel. By 2010 lots of the kids at the *DZ* had been to the tunnel and it had noticeably started to impact the flying style of the group - way less pizzas, way more shelves. It also meant more of us could get closer to each other on jumps.

One single event that had the biggest impact on the Aussie scene still today was in 2009 when Aussie expat *Nimmo* (of

Babylon) came to *Toogoolawah* for an experienced flyers camp. It was invite only, the best of the best of Aussie flyers at the time. They weren't going to be held back by those low level jumpers and they were just going to tear it up.

What happened? After two jumps they had to call

everyone in the camp for a meeting. There had been grumblings from the participants (best of the best) to the organisers that they weren't used to the Trace style of flying and Nimmo kept leaving them behind. The meeting was the most upsetting and liberating at the same time. In classic Nimmo fashion he said, "do you want to get better, do you want to be there today?" They all got burnt on every jump for two more days but after that they all learnt that style of flying. That is the moment you can pinpoint that it changed in Australia from Atmo to the faster Tracing.

RECORDS 2006 - 2010

- Largest Australian Women's Head Down Formation 6-Way at the first Skysisters event in Toogoolawah, Queensland on 21st April 2005.
- Largest Head Down Orientation 17-Way at Picton, New South Wales on 24th November 2005.
- National Record of 11 points in time set at the National Championships in Artistic Events on 27th March 2009 at Picton, New South Wales, Earth Leakage Intermediate Vertical Formation Skydiving Team.
- National Record 25-Way Head Down Formation, 18th May, 2009, Picton NSW.
- World Record, 108-Way Head Down Formation, 1st August 2009, Skydive Chicago, USA, four Aussies were on the record.
- Guinness World Record Balloon jump, in the Yarra Valley Victoria, where 22 Freeflyers simultaneously tried to exit Flat from a hot air balloon. It was terrifying.



EVENTS

- Nimmo held an experienced flyers camp in Toogoolawah that changed it from Tracking to Tracing, 2009.
- Equinox and Bachelor were the big boogies.
- Shane Onis went to Primary School.

IN 2006 FREEFLYERS WERE SAYING:

- Tracing
- Nah, Yeah. Nah
- Yeah, Nah. Yeah (Totally kidding we
- Wind Tunnel still say those two now!)

HEAD LEVEL

- It was mentioned once or twice that there is a head level thing, but not quite sure what exactly they mean.
- On Tracking jumps the back trackers would take off as fast as they could from the door and everyone needs to catch them.

EQUIPMENT

- Cookie G2 and camera. Gath with a flip down tinted visor for those super-trendy amongst us.
- RMW were joined by another Aussie based jumpsuit company Phantm from the now owners of Manufactory Rob and Shelly Delaney. Ouragan suits were very popular as well.
- Early Go Pros
- Sony CX tape camera
- ProTracks and Dytters



2011 - 2015

The first *Dynamic DownUnder* skills camp was held at the end of 2015. The camps and tunnel events led by Mason Corby with Keith Grealy were skill-based camps. Mason said he designed the format of the camps by taking the best from Flajflaj (a Swedish Skills camp started by Peter Nilson) and Voss Freefly Fest 2013 (organised by Norwegian Skywalkers Havard Flaot). Mason has seen a big change in the types of people who make up the Freeflying community, "they have morphed over the years. Back in the day there were more tradies and people who worked in physical jobs. Now the IT, project manager types are more prevalent in the community," which he attributes to the change in style from fewer boogies to more camp focus.

The first tunnel opened in Sydney in early 2014. This has had a huge impact on the Aussie Freeflying scene by speeding up progression of existing and new Freeflyers, and expanding their ranks. It goes without saying that the foundational body positions are way easier to learn and improve in the tunnel than in the sky, the wall has a subtle way of letting you know you're backsliding when before you would have looked at a few different camera angles and argued with your mate who in fact was causing the separation.



The tunnel rats quickly made it to the elite ranks in Freeflying from their times working in the tunnel. Inconspicuously it also allowed otherwise dedicated Flatflyers to dabble in Freeflying while breaking up the Belly session, who are now bossing the Freeflying as well. Tunnel has also seen kids introduced to Freeflying and lots of the kids are now flying circles, literally and figuratively, around the skydivers. It is for that reason that we shall not mention them again. Except to say Amy Watson, who did her first minutes as a nine year old in 2014 with The Matt Boags from Australia, has gone on to win the title of Junior World Champion in Indoor Skydiving.

RECORDS 2011-2015

- New Australian Performance Record – 33-Way Head Down Vertical Formation Record. This was achieved at Sydney Skydivers, Picton NSW on 29th December 2011.
- Open Vertical Formation Skydiving team 'The Addicted' achieved a new record of 11 points set on April 6th 2012 at the 2012 Australian National Parachuting Championships held in Toogoolawah, QLD.
- World Record of the Largest Head Down Formation 138-Way. This achievement was made on 3rd August 2012. Five Aussies were on the record.
- Unsuccessful Australian Head Down Vertical 50-Way attempts, at Toogoolawah after Funny Farm was flooded April 2014.

EVENTS

- October 2015 the First Dynamic Downunder camp was run by Mason Corby with Ty Baird, Keith and Joe Grealy coaching, in Toogoolawah. This was the start of the camp culture in Australia ramping up.
- The discipline of Dynamic Flying was created in 2012 and has been growing fast around the world. Flown in 3D, using all the space of the tunnel, it's a discipline that combines technical and artistic merits. Teams of four flyers (D4W) or two flyers (D2W) battle in a tournament set up on two different types of rounds: Speed Round and Free Round.
- Shane Onis goes to High School.

IN 2011 FREEFLYERS WERE SAYING:

- Vertical
- Vertical Formation Skydiving
- Head Up
- Head Down
- Vert and desert
- Carving
- Indoor skydiving
- Dynamic

HEAD LEVEL

- Apparently head level is a thing and turns out it's exactly the same as it has always been, you just need to adjust the horizon line to account for the orientation of the jumps, mind blown.
- On the Angle we start to let the Belly flyers fly ahead of the Back flyers, it goes swimmingly, why haven't we been doing this all along?



2016 - 2020

Downunder Dynamics is up to iteration 8 and the change in skill level across the sport is really evident looking at the base level around the drop zone for weekend jumping. State Councils, the Australian Parachute Federation and drop zones all over Australia have supported skills camps and events focused at progression. The skill in the Freeflying scene has benefited massively from this and the basic skill levels are now much higher, evidenced by the size of casual weekend jumps which used to be the size of the Aussie records.

Although there has been the progression benefit there is a dark side to this camp culture, which has also led to a lot of jumpers not really knowing what to do with themselves when there are no organisers or even worse, not going to the drop zone unless there is an event on. #campfree is making an appearance on social media posts as the push for more self-determined, fun Freeflying makes a comeback.

Whereas in previous years we would have sought international coaches to come and fly with us, we now have great depth of skills in our own community. Turns out that Aussies are actually pretty good all rounded Freeflyers. We have the European influence for the Dynamic and the American influence for the Static. Mason believes that, "Aussies are some of the fastest learners because of our cross training in different sports when we were kids." He has a lot of experience coaching people from all over the world, both in the tunnel and in the sky. He has noticed that in European countries, for example, the kids focus and excel in one sport, where the Aussies play footy, soccer, tennis, track, gymnastic,

climbing trees and any game they can make up, which gives us an edge when learning new skills with our bodies, like flying. So those games of handball and rounders you played while waiting for the bell to ring are actually making you a better Freeflyer.



Who would have thought? Mason also reckons that, "Aussies are some of the best Head Up flyers around the world and we are on the cusp of really unlocking the potential of what we can do with it, once we learn to fly just a little bit flatter." I'll get out my protractor and wait with anticipation.

I remember a jump at Funny Farm, year unknown, but one of the recent ones, we were on an Angle jump with Belly and Back flyers, Head Up and Head Down with Hayden and Woody carving around in their wingsuits. I can't honestly say that when I started jumping I could have really even dreamed up that sort of a jump.

RECORDS 2016-2020

- World Record 164-Way Head Down Formation, Chicago, USA, 31st July 2015, 9 Aussies were on the record.
- Team 'Focus' - 4 Way VFS, 24 points in time, 13th September, 2016.
- Team 'Focus' 4-Way VFS win a Bronze medal at the World Championships 2018
- Australian Performance Record of Largest Freefly Head Down Formation, 44-Way, 28th October, 2017.
- 200-Way unsuccessful World record attempts, Chicago, USA 2018. 22 Aussies were on the record attempts and were the only sector to nail the jumps every time, led by Scotty Hiscoe Sector Captain.
- World Record Head Up Formation, 84 people linked, 2019, four Aussies were on the record.
- Amy Watson wins Junior World Championship Artistic in Indoor skydiving, Lille France 2018
- Tunnels Open in Gold Coast, Perth, Brisbane and Melbourne
- Team 'Focus' 4-Way VFS, 26 points in time at Australian Nationals 2020

EVENTS

- Skills camps, Skills camps, Skills camps. Downunder Dynamic # 2-7
- Train the Trainers
- Weekend coaching and camps a-plenty.
- 2018 Shane Onis has an invite to the Vertical World Record but can't attend because he isn't 18.

IN 2016 FREEFLYERS WERE SAYING:

- Downunder Dynamics
- Low speed
- High speed
- Head up for dayz
- 2-Way
- Yeewt
- Theresa
- No way
- Flock and Roller
- Brodeo
- Pancake
- Mikey's Party Tent
- Outdoor skydiving (I wish I was kidding)

HEAD LEVEL

- Nailing our head levels on the Angle and Head Down. Turns out life is much easier when you get on level, who would have known?!
- We get Back flyers and Belly flyers in Angles to build to the centre of the formation.
- Now arguing about Head Up and whether it is the level head to head, or feet to feet, or head to feet.

EQUIPMENT

- Suits are tighter and cameras are lighter.
- Cookie G3 and G4, Tonfly Open face, Skyhelmets
 - Deem Crank, RSX, BoogieMan indoor Pro, Marvel. The tighter the better.
 - Bad asses jumping in their jeans and t-shirt. Tayne gets a skydiving t-shirt from Manufactory to mimic a t-shirt he bought at an Op Shop. Strange times.

- Sony FDX with a TonyFly helmet (so European)
- GoPro 360
- Dekunu SmartAlti



Conclusion

20 years later and Freeflying is now a complicated subset of jumping that requires lengthy discussion at the emplaning area to work out exit order. We have varying speed and trajectories, styles and techniques that make pre-jump briefings lengthy and essential in a way they never were before. The equipment has almost totally changed as well as our attitude towards the benefit and safety of our gear.

When I started this article in February there were lots of 2020 plans with records, boogies and camps, maybe if I was a girl who could actually stick to a deadline this is a story that would have ended differently, as by now the previous 2020 plans have all been put on hold as we await the outcome of a worldwide lockdown.

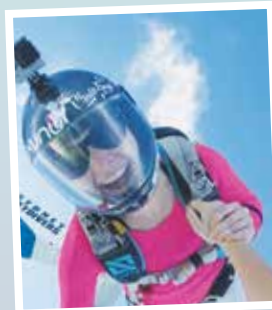
If nothing else, researching this article has made it clear to me that Freeflying is evolving at such a rate it is unlikely my brain can even comprehend or imagine where we will be in another 20 years. I look forward to the days when I can go to the tunnel or drop zones again and bear witness to (if not be part of) the development and creation of new techniques in flying style that we call free.

About the Author

Jill Grantham has been skydiving since 2005, and been thinking about quitting skydiving since 2006. She has previously held AFF, ID and FF Tutor ratings, but has given it all up for a simpler life and currently holds a 'D'



License.



You can spot her on the occasional Freefly load organising and being Chief Unicorn Herder at Dekunu Technologies, and she is the current regional captain for Project 19. Fun Fact: she has an above average word count both spoken and written.



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The ONISES

TWO QUIET ACHIEVERS

Phil and Shane Onis

What's the first thing that comes to mind when you say Phil Onis? Is it those Rugged short shorts? Or is it that guy who's got the most jumps in Australia? Or maybe it's, "is that Shane Onis' Dad?"?

I've been given the cold shoulder about an interview or profile with Phil for as long as I've been doing the mag. The man who says very few words at the DZ can otherwise be quite talkative on the phone, and on the rare occasion I've had the privilege to shoot the breeze with him. The planets aligned for me to be able to press record, with his permission of course. And I suspect, very reluctantly, Shane answered his phone and 'did the right thing'. Here's what I could get out of them!

Susie Mc



PHIL ONIS

How many thousands of jumps to do you actually have?

I have 35,500. I am slowing down a bit now after recovering from an injury. I am doing a lot more flying, in fact, I've flown more sorties than I've done jumps lately. I enjoy watching the last person exit, flicking the plane over and giving them my opinion on their exit.

I'm tipping you started jumping in the late 60s, so quick math makes that an average of 700 jumps a year, every year for 50 years. That's two a day every day, or twenty

a week every week. Have you ever felt slack or feel like you could've done more?

When I first started I had no money, still at school with just a casual job. I could afford 1 jump a week then I would just sit at the DZ and watch everyone else going up and down. I was amazed at the ability of some to afford this gig. One day I said to myself, "I will be going up and down like them". I can still remember the smile on Dave Smith's face as he dispatched me out of a piston Beaver over Picton. Seems just like yesterday.

What is your favourite plane to fly?

Definitely the Super Caravan. It keeps you on your toes and it is very fast. As soon as you rotate you are thinking ahead, and you don't have a moment to relax until you pick up the next

SKYDIVE SYDNEY SKYDIVERS **SKYDIVE TANDEM CAIRNS** **SKYDIVE ARLIE BEACH SKYDIVERS** **SKYDIVE SUNSHINE COAST SKYDIVERS**

load. That is good compared to a slow climbing Cessna, where you tend to fall asleep. Yep, definitely the Caravan. The plus side of the Super Caravan is the reduction in fatigue for both the jumpers and pilots. People don't realise how tired they get after jumping all day, plus a pilot going around in circles all day. This plane has, I am sure, reduced fatigue related accidents even when someone does a lot of jumps in one day, as the day draws on one still feels fresh. Jumpers get tired when they fall asleep in the plane on the way to height then suddenly have to be 100% active. Repeat this 10 times a day over 12 hrs and you see what I mean.

What are all the planes that you have owned over the years? The first turbine we had was a Nomad. Then we had twin-engine 402s, then Twin Otter and Skyvan. We experimented, but now it is definitely the 900 horse-power Caravan. It is just so cheap to operate if you've got the loads and can keep it running.

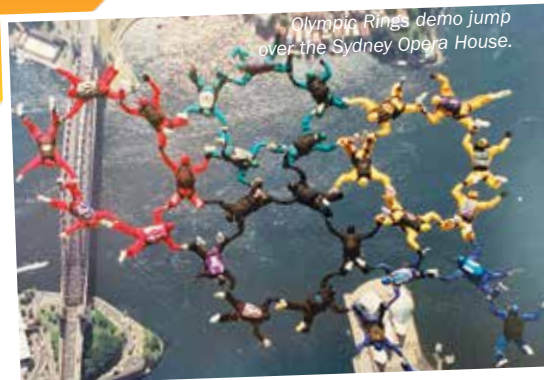
We all miss the Skyvan. Oh, definitely, but people don't realise the costs of two engines and the spare parts. It's a European aircraft and we were pulling our hair out trying to get parts for it.

Are you still worried about the sport? I see on Facebook these days so many people selling gear and not many people enquiring about buying gear. This is not what we want to see.

Drop zones have been shutting down one by one. What's your take on that? Look, a bunch of us got together, and we talk amongst ourselves all the time, and wonder what is going on. Even when putting our heads together about what we could do about getting more jumpers, the bottom



The TOWNISSES



line is that we just need more students.

We don't need more Tandems; we need more students as they turn into sports jumpers and keep the sport alive. Even at the APF office, the news came through that Pinjarra had not renewed their membership. At that stage York had partially shut down and Mossy had not renewed his membership at Townsville. It is just sad news. Especially years ago, like Faye and Jim Cox, they were fantastic. Townsville was just such a booming area for skydiving. It was awesome up there. There were so many fun jumpers.

And Mossy seemed to have a few students happening at Ayr. Yeah, we thought the military would come along. The last two years we did 200 first jump courses with the military, but I believe only one came to fruition with sport retention. That was pretty sad, considering Townsville is a military town. What is motivating these people to not continue in the sport? Is it fear? Is it money or something else?

I always thought that one of our biggest competitors, and maybe they'll be disappearing shortly, is the cruise liners. In the last few years, they have had unprecedented growth because they now have so many toys on board - wind tunnels, surfing, so many things in one spot. They also travel to different locations every night, so it's attracting the younger demographic. Thousands and thousands of them.

I hadn't thought about that. You were the one that first got me thinking that our industry's biggest competitors were other extreme sports. I'd never thought outside of our immediate skydiving competitors. The wind tunnel is also definitely a major competitor. There is no doubt about that. It is also getting cheaper. Penrith started off with \$1,500 an hour and are now down to \$700 an hour. BASE jumping is also getting increasingly popular as is evidenced on Facebook. Proximity flying and the like have taken quite a few people away.

I don't think it is the price. Prices really haven't gone up much over the years, and Tandem prices have dropped. I think the airlines are another major competitor. You can fly anywhere for much less now, and more people are travelling somewhere for the weekend.

We're not getting the whole weekend jumping vibe thing so much anymore. Yes, that has definitely changed. More people are going to an Airbnb and not sleeping in their cars or tents.

What do you think it comes down to? Do you have any answers? We just don't know. I think it might be a lack of publicity. We don't get free or cheap publicity any more like we used to. We don't do the number of displays. You don't

see us in the media. There are no television commercials. There are no movies to inspire. In contrast, say tennis. Every time you turn the television on there is something about tennis. Their industry doubled in the last seven years. The mums and dads, and the professionals. There is so much publicity about it and people just go and do it.

How long do you think it is going to take before we are back in the air again, with the current pandemic? I'm hopeful. I think jumping will come back sooner rather than later. China is back jumping. The tandem masters are all heading back to China. They are all self-isolating and they should be jumping on 15 April.

Something like this can feel like the end of the world. Some can't see past the here and now and the trauma of it all. My parents were refugees from World War II. Unfortunately, when we were young, I had to listen to all the horror stories of the war, and discussions on when World War III would come, and how there will be no food and no money. So, I think, this is World War III. I believe things will change after this.

Will the little drop zones survive? Well Poo's shut Canberra down permanently. I've seen a couple of downturns over the years. Thirty years ago, you couldn't even fill a Cessna at Picton. Slowly it came back. We need the movers and shakers. We need the Gary Nemirovsky's and the Mason Corby's and the like to come back out and start rattling the cage, get the small things happening. It will all come back.

What about the big guys? I think they will hang in there, for sure. They always seem to have a magic card up their sleeve. A secret weapon. The tourist industry will take a long time to come back. Today, I have been getting calls from the Brisbane area from people wanting to know if they can use their gift vouchers. So, I think the domestic market will kick-in first. Hopefully, we can get some training happening. That is what we need.

What happened to your drop zone at Caboolture? That shut down because they built all the hangars there. You are not allowed to land at the airport anymore. We have just had bad news at Caloundra too. We are not allowed to land at the aerodrome there anymore. They just don't want skydivers landing on the aerodrome, they have so many people learning to fly. The other sad one is Hervey Bay - Peter Agnew's gone.

When did you start jumping? Early 70s. Before the APF started. We got the call from down south that we had to join the APF and eventually the drop zone decided to join.

Was that a good thing? Ah, don't get me started.

So, there was good and bad then? They were an association then and now they are a business. That's two



different ideas. Claude wanted an association to oversee instructor ratings, licenses and the like. There are a lot of good people who work for and volunteer their time for the APF. It's just the modern day concept I disagree with.

Where did you start jumping? I started at Camden, just near Picton. Then I swung over to Picton when Camden shut down. There were about three or four drop zones at Camden airport. They all disbanded after they lost their landing areas.

Did you start Picton? No. I started Rylstone with Steve Whalan. When Hilly had the two fatalities, we joined forces as we both had no punters so we thought we may as well get together and do nothing together.

What year was that? Probably twenty-five or thirty years ago. Long time ago.

How many Nationals have you held? We did quite a few. We did all the Nationals down at Corowa as it was a better location with two runways and airspace. They were huge events in those days. That is another sad one, Corowa shutting down.

Those were the days. I remember there being over 500 people at my first Corowa Nationals, 1996 I think it was, there was twenty-five 4-Way Inter teams. One Nationals we had forty-four 4-Way teams, Open and Inter. We had ten 16-Ways, twenty 10-Way Speed Stars and countless 8-Ways. On top of that we had the Boogie running parallel. Oh, the fighting between the Boogie jumpers and the Competition jumpers for the planes! Oh, I can remember Simone Bambach saying, "Those fun jumpers shouldn't be here. This is our Nationals. That's our landing area." There was always fighting between the two groups.

The best thing was the presentation night. It was a big event. Most stayed until the end of the event and the competitors got what they deserved up in front of everyone. I think that was very important: that the presentation is done. Two Nationals we flew Steve Lewis and Ray Palmer in just to compare the presentation. Those two were pretty good together.

How about Ray and that Coca Cola skysurfing advertisement? That was another story in itself. Oh, the money Coca Cola had. Back then no one could ride a surfboard in the sky. They gave us \$150,000 then, which is like half a million dollars now, just to try. It was the best advertisement we had in Australia. If only we had more advertisements like that.



How many students have you put through over the years? Years ago, the numbers used to be huge, in the heyday we were doing twenty-five a week. We had a Saturday course and a mid-week course. Huge numbers going through.

Any idea how many people have you taken jumping over the years? A lot. That is part of the problem now because the planes are so fast. The jumpers turn up at 9am and go home at 3pm as they have done their eight or nine jumps. Years ago, when we had the Nomad, the slow climbing aircraft, we were still jumping until 9pm. We were jumping in Summer right until dark because people wanted to get their jumps in. Now with the faster aircraft, they get them in within a couple of hours and they've got their hit and they just go home, to the pub, or whatever. Drop zone dynamics have changed and we created the problem ourselves.

Were the World Meets a highlight? Yeah. We did two World Meets - the Swoop Meet at Picton and the World Meet at Corowa. I think I am still paying bills for it!

I remember after your first Fiji boogie you were laughing, telling me that you'd "lost \$100k, but you know, the jumpers needed it". You have always been about the jumping and the jumpers. We try. We had some bad news recently. We were running the Fiji Boogie again this May and then we got an email from the Fijian government cancelling all events due to the pandemic. We have had to can that and refund everyone. Tim Joyce has the drop zone over there and I talk to him every week. Fiji is in dire straits.

You sponsor a lot of instructors through the ranks? I enjoy that. There are a lot of instructors around Australia and overseas that have come through, got their ratings and moved on.

Great concept, how did it come about? It was a win-win situation to train and gain instructors. Unfortunately, we were let down and a few people absconded overseas and owe me a lot of money – more than disappointing.

The ONISES

Are you still continuing to offer the instructor course?

Yes. We have some guys coming through. It is getting harder as the government is clamping down on overseas jumper's options. Years ago, you just had to get a Tandem rating in Australia and you could stay here. In our staff, we have quite a few who have got their citizenship this way.

One of the instructors we trained is one whose story was made into a short film, 'Working On Air', about Eunsung Baek, a Korean jumper who came to Australia, got robbed, leaving him with no money and living on the streets trying to survive. He came to Picton and got all his ratings, married his childhood sweetheart and got Australian citizenship. Now he is happily married in Australia and is an instructor at Caloundra – a rags to riches via skydiving story. He's very proud of it. It can be watched on YouTube and is quite good. All of the staff on the drop zone are in it.

We have quite a few international fulltime staff and I think they are fantastic. We have people from Latvia, Germany, Korea, Japan and they are fantastic skydivers, and very dedicated. I can't wait to get them back working after this pandemic.

I believe these days it's good if a person gets their AFF rating first, then Tandem. This way the instructor can help support students' progress. If a person gets their tandem rating they tend to just do that and lose interest in the sport jumping side.

What is your take on climate change and how we affect the country's carbon footprint? I suppose we contribute to a detriment there. For example, when 9/11 happened and all the planes around the world were grounded, the average temperature around the world dropped one degree, so there was proof that we are causing our own demise.

You must be incredibly proud of Shane. I am definitely proud of him. He went through and got all his ratings, his AFF rating and his Tandem rating.

Is it true you didn't want him to do his Tandem rating? Yes, we held him back a bit. We waited even though we knew he had the skills. He's just so super keen. He started throwing drogues and working at the drop zone. Then he started getting into the rut, becoming like all the staff, "Oh, how come I missed out on that jump?" or "Why did he get camera?" That sort of thing. I thought, hooly-dooly, he is only eighteen years old and he has already started on that.

He loves it all, doesn't he? Yes, he does. He is pretty keen on it all. Sheepishly, one day at home, he said, "I'm off to Eloy, Dad. I am going on a training camp for the Nationals." He seemed a bit nervous to tell me. I said to myself, "Great!" I was so glad he was going somewhere else and he was going to look at other big drop zones, and he was going to start skydiving again. Then he said, "And as soon as I hit Sydney, I am straight off to Nagambie to the Nationals." I thought, you beauty, I am glad that he has got out of the



Phil & Cindi, with Shane and the rest of the crew on their Instructor D course

throwing drogues scenario. And he continued, "then I am off to the Swoop Nationals; and oh, Mason Corby has a Downunder camp, I've got to go down to that." I was really glad to hear it!

Does he have a girlfriend? Ah, I don't know. His surfboard?! He loves going surfing.

He is a bit quiet like you, isn't he? Yes, he is pretty shy, he is a bit of a gentleman I think.

So, what are you doing these days instead of jumping and flying? Mostly washing the jumpsuits and mowing the landing area. Doing a lot of mowing!

SHANE ONIS

How's your pandemic staycation going? It's all good, at the beach. It has only been a few weeks for me, so I am not super bashed yet.

Are you at the point now where you are a total addict? Yes, I think so.

How many jumps have you done in how many years? 2,800 jumps. This will be my fourth year.

Not bad going! Do you feel like you could have done more than that? I think while I was at school, I did the most I could do. Maybe once I had finished school, I could have done a few more.

Damn school gets in the way of having a good time! You couldn't do a school-based traineeship? That'd be cool, wouldn't it?

I guess you got your own special traineeship though didn't you? Yeah, sure did.

So during school did you just alternate weekends between Sydney and Innisfail? I would fly down to Sydney to visit Dad every second or third weekend and go jump then. Most of my early jumps were at Picton.

Did you get your pilot's license before your car licence? Yeah, I did. Mum had to drive me there so I could fly solo.

Do you prefer skydiving or flying? Skydiving for sure! I love flying but skydiving is way more fun.

What disciplines float your boat? I am a bit of an all-rounder. I like a bit of everything. I like flying my canopy. I like Freeflying. I like jumping on Star Crests. I like everything. I don't really have a preferred discipline.

Sounds like you've got your Dad's gene - just want to go jumping, doesn't matter what. Yeah that's it. It doesn't really matter to be honest. I just want to go jumping.

Did you feel any burnout from doing Tandems? No, I don't think so. The only thing I missed while I was doing

Tandems was watching my mates do fun jumps and I was sitting there with a Tandem passenger.

How many Tandems have you done? Only about 150 now. I love them. They are good fun. Definitely challenging. A whole new skill to learn.

Are you as quiet as your Dad? No, I don't think so.

Does he chat to you? He and I probably chat more than the average person, but that's about it. If you can get him chatting, he chats. But on the drop zone and it's busy, it's only a couple of words.

When your Dad does speak, do you listen? Yes, for sure! When he does talk, I definitely listen.

What is your first early memory of being with your Dad on the drop zone, jumping? Probably him flying loads in the Skyvan while I sat next to him – back before there were rules about that sort of thing.

That's a fantastic memory! Cruising around with Dad in the air... Yeah, watching everyone get out on their loads.

Did you always think that you would jump too? For sure. 100%. Ever since I was little, I always knew it.

Did you hassle him to take you jumping all the time? I think he might have got sick of me in the end and told me to just go on my own.

How old were you when you first jumped? I was eight years old.

In hindsight, do you think you were too young? No, I think I was fine, the perfect age. Any younger, I might have scared myself, but I loved it straight away. Any later, I would have felt I had missed out. Eight was a good age.

At eighteen you've done a lot already, we all wonder where you will go in this sport. Where do you see your future in skydiving? I have NO IDEA. As long as it has something to do with skydiving I will be happy. I would definitely like to travel and visit different drop zones all over the world. See what others are doing that I could try. There are so many branches to skydiving that I have not explored yet.

How do you think your Dad would feel about you heading out into the world visiting other drop zones? I think he would like me to

go do that. His main hope for me is to not get stuck doing the same thing in the same place.

You also have a very supportive, beautiful mother. Yeah, I sure do. It is totally awesome - we check out different countries, different planes and drop zones together.

I've always kind of likened ourselves as being similar, definitely not in age as I could be your mother! But in so much as we are second generation drop zone operator's kids. There's not many of us around. Our parents are so encouraging of us to go jumping. Can you imagine what other 'normal' parents are like? Yeah, they'd go NO WAY. In the last year or so I've met a couple of other DZ kids and it seems like they go one direction or the other, they either jump like us or they don't want ANYTHING to do it. Like Don Cross's two kids. One loves and one doesn't. And Dustin, my brother, never wanted anything to do with it.

Do you think we got some crazy gene? Must have.

Do you feel lucky to have been born into this life? Yeah, for sure. Even if I could choose another life, I would choose this one. I've got it the best in the world I reckon.

I'm pretty sure most of the jumpers in Australia agree with you on that!



Shane with proud mum Milly Spinoza, at the Botswana Boogie





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AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL

SKYDIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS

NAGAMBIE

2020



By Tom Fletcher Photos by Steve Fitchett www.fitchimages.com Happy snaps by Trish Vogels

ONCE YORK WAS NO LONGER IN A POSITION TO HOST THE 2020 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS, THE FORMATION, ARTISTIC, WINGSUIT AND CRW COMPETITIONS WERE MOVED TO NAGAMBIE. DESPITE THE LATE CHANGE, THE EVENT WENT INCREDIBLY SMOOTHLY, WITH COMPETITORS ENJOYING THE EARLY VICTORIAN AUTUMN WEATHER AND THE FAST NAGAMBIE SUPERVAN.

This year the championships hosted both the Australian and the New Zealand Nationals together, and we welcomed our Kiwi friends who came across the Tasman Sea to join us. The competition was hot this year, with a place on the Australian Team and a chance to represent the country in Russia waiting for the top placed teams and individuals.

The Nationals opened with a great Aussie flag jump from Paul Murphy, accompanied by a spectacular Parabatics display from the Lower Light Line Dancers team. Following a few words by the local Shire Mayor and dignitaries from the APF and NZPF, it was time for the first draws and the competition to start!

The next few days saw 4-Way Formation Skydiving AAA, AA categories and Canopy Formation get underway. Kinetix took the AAA Gold with an 18.1 average, Lower Light Line Dancers won CF 4-Way Rotations and Line Burns took gold for CF 2-Way Sequential. This was then followed by 4-Way Formation Skydiving A and Blast! categories – and once again it was fantastic to see new junior teams this year competing for the very first time.







Wingsuit and Speed have both soared in popularity recently, and it was tight competition in both. Chris Byrnes narrowly pipped Jason Dodunski to Gold in Wingsuit Performance Open, with everything to play for going into a nail-biting final round. And in Speed, one of the newest competitions on the block, ten competitors battled it out to be the fastest. Congratulations to Shane Turner for taking overall Gold.

The 8-Way, Freely and VFS competitions were equally spectacular to watch, with live video streaming into the hangar as the judges scored – and sometimes bust! – each round. 8-Way Open and Freely competitions were called after only two rounds due to inclement weather on the last day of comp. So Jyro8 took Gold in the 8-way Open category, whilst John Rumbo took the top spot in Freely. Some teams took advantage of the judges remaining behind on Sunday to continue getting scored on competition jumps even though these scores didn't go towards their placings. Focus maintained their medal winning streak with Gold in VFS Open.

Particularly noteworthy were the new Australian records set in Speed - with Natisha Dingle clocking in a staggering freefall speed of 463.46km/hour to make her the fastest female in the country - and in VFS - with Focus completing an amazing 26 points in time.



It was an amazing week – and Skydive Nagambie would like to thank all the competitors, volunteers, APF officials and staff who helped make this event. Thanks to the APF and the VTPC for supporting this, and assistance was also provided from the Vic Government. We look forward to seeing you all back at Nagambie for Nationals 2021!







Another lovely trip down to Melbourne for Nationals 2020 at Nagambie! Good to see all the teams competing before being selected to go to Russia, lots of excellent work being done and it was great to see all the previous year's efforts all coming together.

Top marks to the Wingsuiters for their efforts with the growth of WS and their results when compared to world events certainly placing them up the very top of the table.

Being able to watch some live judging was a great reminder of how intense the judging room can be, Shane Onis had his first experience of the judges room, but I'm pretty confident that because you have to sit still for more than five minutes he won't be hanging up his jumping shoes just yet :) Thank you Judges!

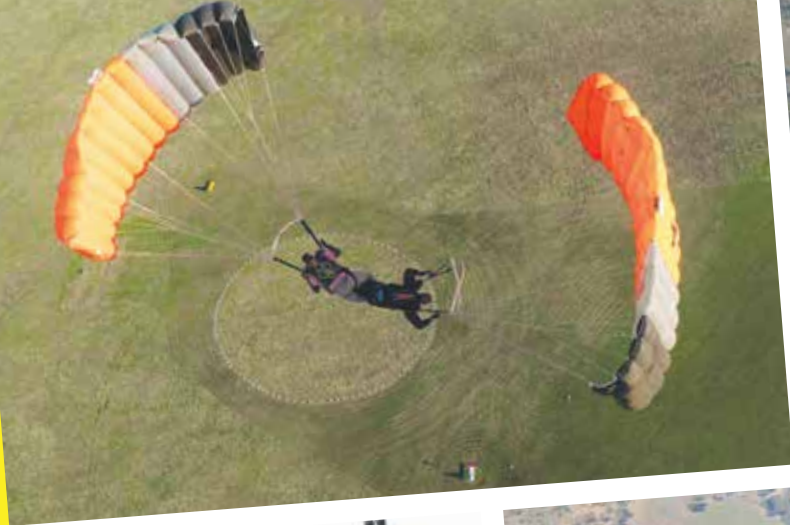
It was a pleasure to be able to work alongside and observe FS coaches Kate Vaughan and Riss Anderson who kept their respective teams tight and clean. Dan Smith worked some magic with the VFS and judges commented on some improvements. Seeing the coaches go for a couple of fun-jumps and their smiles after landing reminded some people that it is ok to have fun when you jump out of planes :)

Excellent hosting by Don and Lou Cross and their team and big thanks to Don for the use of his executive space during the week, it certainly made life a lot more agreeable while working at an event:)

As we read this article, who knows where we will be? If the enthusiasm and dedication from the teams competing this year is anything to go by we should be in a great place!

Ronnie Perry
National Coach





RESULTS



ARTISTIC EVENTS - FREEFLYING - OPEN											
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	JO	TOTAL
1		901 - Down to Fly	4.2	4.5	4.9	-	-	-	-	-	9.4
2	AUS	903 - John Rumbo	6.0	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.0
3		902 - Glitterpuss	0.7	1.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.7

CANOPY FORMATION 4-WAY ROTATIONS - OPEN												
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	JO	TOTAL
1		601 - Lower Light Line Dancers	9	7	0	7	9	5	9	8	-	54

CANOPY FORMATION 2-WAY SEQUENTIAL - OPEN												
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	JO	TOTAL
1		202 - Line Burns	6	3	5	5	4	4	4	2	-	33
2		201 - Line Ends	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	-	4

FORMATION SKYDIVING 4-WAY - A														
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	JO	TOTAL
1		303 - Bruise Brothers	10	11	11	8	11	12	11	17	10	12	-	113
2		307 - Goulburn Supermax	7	8	9	7	6	10	7	9	8	10	-	81
3		301 - Spinnny Things	7	4	7	5	5	6	7	11	5	9	-	66
4		302 - What's Next	5	5	2	3	6	8	5	7	6	7	-	54
5		305 - Little High (NZ)	1	3	5	4	5	7	5	8	5	7	-	50
6		304 - Stray Dogs	3	1	6	5	3	5	7	8	5	6	-	49
7		306 - Yankin' My Chain (NZ)	3	6	3	5	6	2	5	7	3	8	-	48
8		308 - Jigsaw	5	5	5	1	3	0	6	8	4	3	-	40



FORMATION SKYDIVING 4-WAY - AA														
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	JO	TOTAL
1		455 - Wild Cards	9	10	8	10	10	8	8	6	12	15	-	96
2		454 - Halcyon	9	9	9	8	8	5	8	6	11	14	-	87
3		452 - Send Noobs	6	9	7	6	9	8	8	5	10	8	-	76
4		453 - Drop	6	9	7	5	8	6	8	7	6	8	-	70
5		451 - Bradley Urners	4	8	4	8	5	4	7	7	8	9	-	64



FORMATION SKYDIVING 4-WAY - AAA														
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	JO	TOTAL
1		402 - Kinetix	16	24	17	17	20	15	16	16	16	24	-	181
2		403 - Whitefish	10	19	14	12	14	15	13	13	13	17	-	140
3		401 - Daddy Issues	12	17	12	12	14	13	9	11	12	19	-	131

FORMATION SKYDIVING 4-WAY - BLAST!														
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	JO	TOTAL
1		353 - Bellas	8	9	9	12	10	8	10	9	10	6	-	91
2		351 - Kriss Kross	5	12	6	7	8	9	7	7	10	8	-	79
3		352 - Soft Docks	5	6	3	5	6	7	7	6	7	7	-	59

FORMATION SKYDIVING 8-WAY - INTERMEDIATE														
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	JO	TOTAL
1		701 - Craig's List	9	9	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
2		702 - SA GR8	1	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
-		703 - Yeahnah (NZ)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

FORMATION SKYDIVING 8-WAY - OPEN														
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	JO	TOTAL
1		803 - Evacu8	9	12	9	11	11	12	-	-	-	-	-	64
2		802 - Jyro8 13	14	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41
3		801 - Exanguin8	8	9	9	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32

WINGSUIT FLYING - PERFORMANCE				
Pos	Nation	Competitor		
			1	
			m	%
1	AUS	Chris Byrnes	3969	100.0
2	AUS	Jason Dodunski	3939	99.2
3	AUS	Luke Rogers	3793	95.6
4	AUS	Jeff Weatherall	3231	81.4
5	AUS	Marc Rochecouste	2964	74.7
6	AUS	Jaak Saega	3083	77.7
7	AUS	Guillaume Cornet - Inter	2375	59.8
8	AUS	Peter Kerr - Inter	2865	72.2
9	AUS	Jake Lapham - Inter	2297	57.9
10	CAN	Katelyn Escott (CAN)	3330	83.9
11	AUS	Tomic Kluzniak	0	0.0
12	NZL	Nicholas McDonald (NZ)	0	0.0
13	AUS	Tom Davies	0	0.0
14	AUS	Fiona Jansen - Inter	0	0.0
15	AUS	Ariel White - Inter	0	0.0
16	AUS	Talia King - Inter	0	0.0



SPEED SKYDIVING - OPEN											
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
1	AUS	108 - Shane Turner	478.42	487.11	498.15	-	-	-	-	-	1463.68
2	AUS	106 - Ash Crick	465.76	463.78	450.78	-	-	-	-	-	1380.32
3	AUS	107 - Natisha Dingle	463.46	439.11	455.66	-	-	-	-	-	1358.23
4	AUS	104 - Tim Kolln	434.55	454.40	454.90	-	-	-	-	-	1343.85
5	AUS	101 - Mervyn O'Connell	430.85	436.39	432.78	-	-	-	-	-	1300.02
6	AUS	105 - John Hannan	415.04	407.48	423.03	-	-	-	-	-	1245.55
7	NZL	111 - Louis Trerise	380.76	426.85	437.50	-	-	-	-	-	1245.11
8	AUS	102 - Jessica Johnston	387.25	403.76	409.79	-	-	-	-	-	1200.80
9	AUS	103 - Luke Everett	322.47	331.40	345.88	-	-	-	-	-	999.75
10	AUS	109 - Karamveer Singh	289.80	291.06	326.98	-	-	-	-	-	907.84
-	AUS	110 - Susann Guettler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.00

VERTICAL FORMATION SKYDIVING - VFS 2 WAY INTER										
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	JO	TOTAL
1		573 - That's What She Said	1	4	3	-	-	-	-	8
2		571 - Messer & Spit	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	3

VERTICAL FORMATION SKYDIVING - VFS 4 WAY OPEN														
POS	NAT	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	JO	TOTAL
1		502 - Focus	16	16	15	22	26	25	13	23	20	15	-	191
2		501 - Block Party	10	9	6	12	19	13	4	9	9	7	-	98



OPEN WINDOW: 3000M - 2000M, DZ ALTITUDE: M ASL

Distance (m)		%	Speed (m/s)						%	Time (s)						%	Total		
2			3		1		2			3		1		2				3	
m	%		m	%	m/s	%	m/s	%		m/s	%	s	%	s	%			s	%
3616	99.2	4320	100.0	99.7	280.1	100.0	261.4	100.0	313.2	100.0	100.0	76.7	92.0	79.8	99.9	85.0	99.1	97.0	296.7
3646	100.0	3904	90.4	96.5	271.4	96.9	250.2	95.7	312.8	99.9	97.5	83.4	100.0	78.6	98.4	79.5	92.7	97.0	291.0
3389	93.0	4209	97.4	95.3	266.8	95.3	245.9	94.1	302.0	96.4	95.2	83.1	99.6	79.9	100.0	85.8	100.0	99.9	290.4
2835	77.8	3693	85.5	81.5	231.0	82.5	220.0	84.2	297.7	95.1	87.2	66.9	80.2	71.2	89.1	72.4	84.4	84.6	253.3
2940	80.6	3714	86.0	80.4	234.4	83.7	216.7	82.9	268.6	85.8	84.1	65.5	78.5	70.0	87.6	69.9	81.5	82.5	247.1
2777	76.2	3667	84.9	79.6	216.7	77.4	209.9	80.3	257.8	82.3	80.0	62.4	74.8	62.5	78.2	70.1	81.7	78.2	237.8
2720	74.6	2544	58.9	64.4	222.5	79.4	203.4	77.8	262.4	83.8	80.3	43.6	52.3	47.6	59.6	53.5	62.4	58.1	202.9
2630	72.1	3457	80.0	74.8	233.6	83.4	217.1	83.1	281.9	90.0	85.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.1	63.1	21.0	181.3
1679	46.1	2101	48.6	50.9	200.2	71.5	180.4	69.0	243.4	77.7	72.7	44.2	53.0	44.7	55.9	31.2	36.4	48.4	172.0
0	0.0	3943	91.3	58.4	207.7	74.2	0.0	0.0	271.1	86.6	53.6	70.8	84.9	0.0	0.0	71.5	83.3	56.1	168.0
0	0.0	3456	80.0	26.7	255.2	91.1	235.1	89.9	297.0	94.8	92.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	63.1	73.5	24.5	143.1
0	0.0	2669	61.8	20.6	212.4	75.8	200.5	76.7	265.3	84.7	79.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	57.2	66.7	22.2	121.9
0	0.0	3779	87.5	29.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	303.1	96.8	32.3	0.0	0.0	65.8	82.4	73.9	86.1	56.2	117.6
1358	37.2	1883	43.6	26.9	0.0	0.0	109.8	42.0	191.2	61.0	34.4	36.9	44.2	0.0	0.0	40.7	47.4	30.6	91.9
0	0.0	2117	49.0	16.3	0.0	0.0	173.5	66.4	217.1	69.3	45.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	51.0	59.4	19.8	81.4
0	0.0	2193	50.8	16.9	0.0	0.0	147.2	56.3	218.9	69.9	42.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	45.2	52.7	17.6	76.5

TWO SMART Cookies

The team behind Cookie Helmets
Jeremy Hunt & Jason Cooke

By Kelly Brennan

Actor James Stewart once said: *"We all look the same with our helmets on."* That certainly seems to be the case with Cookie, transcending the different disciplines and proving popular around the world.

So, who are the guys behind this Aussie success story?

Cookie Composites started out as a post-injury recovery project and a potential way of saving money for a world meet. The company has gone on to sell countless helmets, used by the vast majority of national teams and also by military jumpers in several countries.

The men who make the must-have accessories are champion skydivers and generous sponsors of our sport. In many ways, it's a classic rags to riches narrative with a couple of great characters. But they define 'riches' differently to most.

"Our biggest success is that we really like what we do," explains Jason Cooke, aka Cookie. *"Hence, it's not really a job!"*

Jeremy Hunt certainly didn't predict this result. *"I think at the time I was just being dragged along by a passion to tinker with helmets and design ideas,"* he said. *"Not much has changed actually."*

Even though sales have fallen in a hole thanks to the Coronavirus, Cookie and Jeremy are as motivated as ever.

How it began...

Jason Cooke started jumping at Toogoolawah in early 1991, borrowing \$100 from DZ owner, Dave 'Macca' McEvoy, to upgrade to AFF. The young apprentice instrumentation technician blew two weeks' wages on his second jump, repaying his debt and covering Stage 2. From there, he kept spending his limited funds wisely, doing 100 jumps before the year was out.

Jeremy also started skydiving at Toogoolawah, in 1992 and the two became good mates. Since then, they've notched up nearly 15,000 jumps between them, plus records and world meets, so they know a bit about our sport.

Cookie first got thinking about helmets when he was at a 50-Way event with less than 200 jumps. On exit, his head hit the Twin Otter door frame and he saw stars. And blood.

At the time, helmets weren't popular. Novice jumpers would use a Protec or Gath helmet for as long as they had to, keen for the freedom to go bare-headed, or maybe use a frap hat, as soon as they got their 'C' Licence. The Factory Diver became the first helmet of choice for Belly teams, while Freeflyers tended to use camera helmets.

Top team...

Cookie and Jeremy became successful competitors, heading to World Parachuting Championships in Turkey and Corowa in the late 90s with the Australian 8-Way team, XLR8, as well as the Portugal World Cup.

Jeremy went to a Russian event as a spectator in 2000, where he suffered bad injuries in a balcony fall after partying one night. *"He busted himself badly - back, pelvis and elbow,"* recalled Cookie, and it was a long recovery.

After Jeremy came back, he was living at his parents' place and needed to save some money for the 2001 world meet. Cookie had started making camera helmets in his garage, and he recruited Jeremy to help put them together.



M1

MXV

ROK

OZONE

ATOMIC

GAS



XLR8



XLR8



“Our biggest success is that we really like what we do.”



First 4-Way team "Downdraft" - Jason & Jeremy, Geoff 'Cisco' Little and Doug Pryor

When they went to the world meet in Spain, they'd made 20 boxes for the latest Sony video. They were all sold before the pair returned, so they used the money to formally start the company, Cookie Composites.

So why isn't it called Jeremy Composites? Jeremy says he was the one who floated the idea that they should be called 'Cookie'. "From memory, Jason had a design called 'Air Force', or just 'Force' or something completely different, but skydiving folk would just refer to it as a Cookie Helmet," he recalled. "I guess in that case a handful of now aged and local skydivers named the company!"

While it carried his name, Jason said it was always 'absolutely' a 2-man business. "Jeremy definitely complements the skills that I don't have," he said.

Jeremy's background was in engineering and he left school early to do an apprenticeship. "But I was locked and loaded to be a full time Tandem guy if Cookie Composites didn't come along," he said.

The dynamic duo was still on top of the game in the sky, heading off with XLR8 to represent Australia again at the WPC in France in 2003. Cookie was also in the national 4-Way team that year as well.



G2



G3



FUEL



M3



G4



Turning point...

After they stopped competing, Cookie and Jeremy were mainly making camera helmets to start with. But they were able to go to the top teams around the planet and ask what they wanted.

“We’d build stuff and go and do a bit of marketing and show off our prototypes.”

It was good timing when they went to the World Challenge in 2006 and Craig Girard’s helmet had just broken. A Cookie prototype hadn’t been tested in the sky yet, but Craig took it up with Arizona Airspeed. *“I remember looking at him fly round one of the competition jumps praying it wasn’t gonna come off his head,”* laughed Cookie.

Craig gave some great feedback after the event so the Cookie boys went home and made changes, and they did a similar trip in 2008.

Success and failure...

Cookie was proud to make effective products for people they knew well. But he didn’t want to discuss market share

or sales figures. He said they’d never gone out and added up the world’s total number of skydivers, because they’d never measured their success that way.

Fortunately, they haven’t dwelled on business failures either, even though they’ve had ‘some proper clangers’ along the way. *“I remember spending about 18 months putting a visor on the G2,”* said Cookie. *“We burned a fair chunk of our savings trying to build a visor that had optical clarity and failed pretty poorly.”* They finally found a supplier, with more expense, and the product was rolled out. *“And then the anti-fog coating failed.”* They had to replace everybody’s visors for a year’s worth of customers.

The increasing popularity of tunnels helped boost the brand’s success while the G3 was at its peak. *“Freeflyers who’d previously been happy wearing their camera helmets while skydiving, were choosing to wear full face helmets in the tunnels,”* said Cookie.

“Our products cover several disciplines, and they cover indoors and outdoors.”





CX100 CAGE RAW



CX150 BOX RAW



FLATLOCK LARGE



FUEL DUAL TOP MOUNT



LIQUID

They're also used by skydivers in several European and USA military services.

Birth of G4...

Cookie said a 7-figure investment went onto the G4, and five years of work. They were already wrestling with ideas for certified head protection in 2015 when the French Parachute Federation called on their expertise. The French wish list was as problematic as it was challenging. They wanted a certain level of protection plus a complex automatic release system. Cookie and Jeremy knew that, to appeal to skydivers, it would also have to be as small and light-weight as possible.

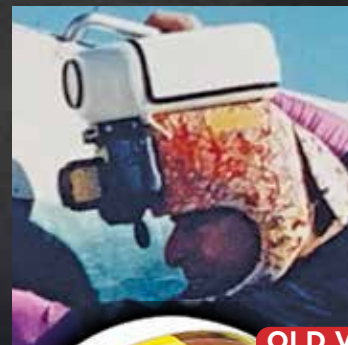
Plus they had extra pressure to perform because skydivers heard a new helmet was in the pipeline, so sales for the G3 tanked. "We didn't expect to see such a dramatic decline in people not wanting a G3," said Cookie. "There were some stressful trips to the testing lab in Europe."

The release system was impossible. R&D work revealed that if it could automatically release under a 20kg load pulled from one direction, it could also unintentionally release if much less weight was applied in another spot. They didn't want to risk a helmet that came off the head in an impact, so it took a lot of discussion to avoid that requirement.

The new helmets have a good level of protection, but the Coronavirus has delivered a much greater impact than anything the Cookie team ever expected. Even though business has dried up, Cookie still sees an opportunity to test a few ideas.

"We're in a great place, business-wise, to weather a storm," he says. Some of the projects have been put on hold because it's not the right time to drop a new product. "But we've got a bunch of development going on."

As for Jeremy, what's he most proud of from his time with Cookie Composites? "The stuff that you'll see in the next 10 years!"



OLD VS NEW



JYRO BOOGIE 2020

“There’s Fun To Be Had”

Jyro boogie is a special time for me, a time to celebrate the life of a friend and a crazy soul, a time to remember and share some laughs and tears with the NZ crew. I was a little concerned that the boogie was moving away from NZ, however I couldn’t be more wrong. Jyro would have been proud!

Gary Nemirovsky, FS Coach

Jyro Boogie, what a ride! Hundreds of skydives, 0 chops and Icarus put on around 50 cartons (not kidding). It was such a pleasure to be there with everyone, good vibes all round. The legend of JYRO lives on! I can’t wait to do another one of these epic events.

Matt Boag, FF Coach

Jyro boogie is like nothing else you have experienced, everyone is there to celebrate the amazing life of an amazing human, the parties are crazy and the jumping is non-stop. If you haven’t been to a Jyro boogie make sure it’s on your Bucket List.

Irish, the MC





When NZ Aerosports approached us with the question of would we like to host the legendary JYRO Boogie for 2020, you know our immediate answer was HECK YES!! It was so amazing to walk around the drop zone seeing World champions, Aussie champions, Icarus athletes, Red Bull athletes, and 90 frothers all learning, having heaps of fun together, and just generally enjoying the wicked atmosphere that an event like this creates. Over the three day event there was a massive 624 slots, plus 110 coach slots and a total of 47 loads. And that was with a weather day on the first day! Well done guys, you all ran HARD! It wouldn't have been possible without the amazing support of the APF Fi Fund, NSWPC, NZ Aerosports and Skydive Oz. So a big deserved THANK YOU is heading your way.

**Shana Harris, Skydive Oz
Organiser**

Jyro boogie, what can you say? Feel the stoke, embrace the love, push those skills, jump with legends... and that's not the half of it. What a great way to remember Jyro, who for a fair number of us didn't really know him personally but know how much he means to the sport, and keeps on giving to all of us through his designs and spirit... for sure, there's fun to be had.

The Jyro experience for me was more than could be expected, and was my first boogie having started jumping at the Moo just last year. Where else could a wobbly newbie do Star Crest jumps with a three times world champion, 400-Way record holders, Icarus canopy test pilots, and mates from your home DZ? Any other sport... it just wouldn't happen... brilliant. Then for the first time, get taken Head Down, knock out a 3-Way Track, and give Sit fly a crack. Cheers boys, SASman (one day we'll find out your real name), Josh, Harrison, and Lucas and Boagsie you brave lads!

On Saturday night no doubt we showed a good understanding of the 'full' in Jyro. I reckon Lazy Susan won the outfit competition in keeping with the Summer of Love theme, and the big Canadian a close second place for hanging it all out. For sure, the vibe had lots of love and warmth, friends made, and for me Luke and Cherita taking extra special care, nice one guys.

Then the day tapes, when we got to see what everyone gets up to... badass Freefly, some very tidy formations, swoop and swoop some more, and proper Wingsuit skills. Something of everything, and for the new arrivals to skydiving, so much to do and look forward to, and gives massive motivation to go hard. If you haven't seen the tapes, see them quick, if you have, watch them some more. For me, when the headphone jack falls out of the laptop at work, its Public Enemy's "Harder than You Think" that gives everyone around me a blast. Don't tell anyone out there, but after the Jyro Boogie, productivity at work is starting to slide...

A huge thanks to Poo Smith, Shana and all the crew at Moruya for organising and welcoming everyone to the best DZ in the world. Irish, you're a nutbag and we love it, and all the NZ Aerosports crew, it's a big deal for us to jump with you, thanks for giving back guys. It's full JYRO from here on!

Ian Smith, Participant





LUCI MARTYN

NZ Aerosports' Omnipotent Dictatoress

Interview with Shannon Seyb

Icarus
CANOPIES NZ

FROM TWENNY DROP ZONE KID TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD'S COOLEST PARACHUTE MANUFACTURER, LUCI "BLAHFAIRY" MARTYN IS FULL OF LAID BACK CHARM AND CREATIVE GENIUS JUST LIKE HER DAD – WITH HER OWN BRAND OF SPARKLE. THE 24-YEAR-OLD OMNIPOTENT DICTATORESS OF NZ AEROSPORTS IS A BUNDLE OF POSITIVITY AND PIZAZZ, AND IS CURRENTLY SWIMMING HARD IN THE DEEP END OF RUNNING A COMPANY. WE CATCH UP WITH HER ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE JYRO'S DAUGHTER, HOW IT FEELS TO FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS, AND WHAT PATH SHE IS CARVING OUT FOR HERSELF.

YOU'RE A SKYDIVE BRAT BORN AND BRED.

HOW MANY JUMPS DO YOU HAVE, TIME IN THE SPORT? Yes, this lil skydiving brat has done 180 jumps! When I was 19 or 20 years old I did my first 50 skydives and then I started jumping again when I took over NZA.

WHAT CANOPY DO YOU JUMP AND WHY? Safire3 because it's the best canopy in the world (not biased at all...!) I've been designing my rainbow canopy since I was, like, 5 years old. But back then the plan was for all fluoro pink and sparkly.

DID YOU EVER SEE YOURSELF RUNNING NZ AEROSPORTS? IF NOT, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO DO INSTEAD? I was always somewhat involved with Icarus since I was a little kid, the crew here are like my family. After I left high school I worked full time making line sets. A few years later I went to get a Goldsmith diploma and within a week all of that changed. Dad died and I had an amazing opportunity to be involved with Icarus from a higher level. It came as a shock at the time, but I am not surprised to be here.

WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST PASSION? I love people, music and art.

DO YOU HAVE A MOTTO OR FAVOURITE QUOTE? I have so many quotes that I love, but this one always stands out, "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."

WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE AS A BUSINESS OWNER? Realising everything is way more complicated



than it looks from the surface! And as the first serious leadership role I have been in, everyone looks at me to have a say – I was a little shy at first! So speaking up has been my biggest challenge.

A post we made a few months after Jyro passed – Luci stepping up to be the new NZA Omnipotent Dictator.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR NEW ROLE? The learning curves have been huge and challenging but have made me grow and learn, and I am thankful for that.

DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN FIVE WORDS OR LESS? Positive, expressive, I like to have truckloads of FUN, a bit goofy/silly... that's more than five words but that's me!

WHAT DOES NZ AEROSPORTS STAND FOR FOR YOU? NZA for me is my FAMILY and FUN.

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST GOAL THE COMPANY HAS? Our slogan is 'Fuck Yeah'... so naturally our biggest goal is to leave skydivers saying exactly that after every jump.

WHERE DO YOU SEE NZ AEROSPORTS IN FIVE AND TEN YEARS TIME? Automate the boring stuff, do the fun stuff, still playing with R&D and have demos available to all the skydiving peeps!

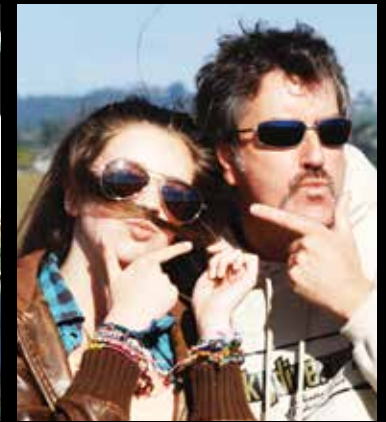
WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT FOR THE FUTURE WITH NZ AEROSPORTS? The release of Anna. Keen to get a new bigger factory too, we are a bit squashed at the moment!

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL GOALS FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS? OR LONGER TERM? I would love to do an installation piece of art at Burning Man, and this year my goal was to backpack South America but that might have to move to next year after the travel bans are lifted!

WHAT BOOGIES DID YOU ATTEND ALREADY THIS YEAR? I attended JYRO boogie of course, Max Manow's canopy course in February and FlajFlaj in March but that got interrupted by the whole Coronavirus situation, and now it looks like I'm staying put in NZ for a while!

WHAT LESSON IN LIFE DID YOUR DAD TEACH YOU THAT YOU MOST VALUE? Dad was a genius and looked at things in completely different ways to the norm, which was always intriguing. His conversation was very thought provoking and he respectfully challenged some of my opinions, but was always in full support of whatever decision I made and backed me 100%. Dad was always open with me when I changed his mind on an opinion, I respect that so much because it made me feel it was a safe space to challenge opinions and ideas.

A lesson that I am still learning from him and am valuing right now is that I don't have to fit into others definition of success and I can make my own definition for success. He taught me to always stay true to my own path, no matter people's judgements. Dad didn't just teach me this but



he inspired many people to write their definitions for success and follow their own path. He found what made people tick and (in his own words) he would 'light a fire under it'.

That is what made him so special.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO HAVE JYRO AS YOUR DAD? WHAT WERE SOME OF THE ADVENTURES YOU GUYS GOT UP TO? It was fun and chaotic.

We went on many, many adventures. Travel was a big part of my childhood and is still a big part of my life. But my favourite memories are actually more the little things, especially the silly challenges we made up;

- I wanted to make a tower out of edamame beans so he ordered \$100 of edamame beans we ate them all and tried to find the most effective way to stack the shells. This became a regular occurrence when we went to Japanese restaurants, and I am proud to say, it's now a skill of mine.
- I sprayed him with the hose as a joke once, it snow balled into a water fight, and of course dad got enthusiastic about the water fight and he came out with the fire extinguisher. Next minute our beautiful tropical Icarus (old factory) garden turned into a winter wonderland in the middle of summer.
- Dad got really into flying model helicopters, he gave away his car and made our garage into a model helicopter course. No room for cars in there! He branded the course with Icarus helipad stickers, hula hoops to fly through, a full repair station and last but not least, he bubble wrapped our garage to try save him money on spare parts. He ended up buying 140 model helicopters, all with Icarus branding on them. Ridiculous but brilliant.
- I taught him to sit fly in the tunnel! That was super fun. Also hilarious because I accidentally brought his shoes a few sizes too big for him and they would occasionally fly off. We challenged each other to get an Icarus sticker stuck to the top of a tunnel, but we didn't even get close! No one would let us even take one in.
- Holly and I thought we would prank him and hide all of his clothes from his luggage and replace them with everything pink we had. We thought his reaction would be hilarious. He rocked up to the swimming pool in my pink pajamas, he didn't even blink an eye and just owned it. I was mortified. Jokes on me!
- When I was a kid, he used to challenge me to get the swing at the park to swing around 360 degrees... I got close but no cigar. Safety 3rd.



- I wanted an ice block (Fruju or something) and he told me I was doing it wrong and I should aim higher and have a Magnum. I never had one so he brought every single Magnum flavour and put them in our freezer for me to try. hahaha.

For those of you who knew Dad – you know I'm keeping these stories brief.

WHAT PART OF HIM DO YOU MOST WANT TO KEEP ALIVE AT NZ AEROSPORTS, AND HOW WILL YOU DO THAT?

The Icarus culture is strong and I consider a lot of the people at NZ Aerosports my family! The thing that has changed is there are a few more people in the driver's seat now. Naturally Dad and I have very similar values but we do have different styles. I'm just going to do me and my style with Aerosports – but our very similar values will carry on.



Flying the wave

20 YEARS OF WINGSUITING



David Shen

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FLIGHT

By David Shen

Secretly, every modern skydiver started jumping because they saw a Youtube clip of some yahoo buzzing some trees between some cliffs and thought, "Wow! That's cool! How hard could it be?!", only to discover the answer to be "Very!", after failing Stage 3 of AFF. Some give up on their dreams, some meet halfway at Freeflying, but only the best make it to a high performance suit with fins and lasers and rockets and shit.

But how did we get here? Man didn't evolve from apes to flying bat suits by chance. Jesus walked on water, but even the son of God did not fly. Hitler never devised a secret army of human fighter-bombers with terrible glide ratios and a high risk of being single use, though the Japanese tested this idea. Even Icarus, the first one daring enough to take feathers and wax outside of the bedroom, died.

Thankfully for the ADHD kids, the history of Wingsuiting is about as long as the lifespan of a first-time BASE jumper in an Aura 3 and a skydiving rig.

Franz Reichelt

Austrians are to Europe what Krist Novoselic is to rock. Who's Krist Novoselic, you ask? Exactly. They are as inoffensive as weak cordial. "The nicer Germans".

Not Franz though. Dressed in what could only be described as a badly storm damaged tent made from sticks and leftover curtains from an op shop, he leapt from the Eiffel tower in 1912. He would've made it, had he stopped for a second to think about what he was about to do,

taken off his totally stupid makeshift-broken-tent, built himself a time machine, travelled to the present and borrowed my Strix 2 and a BASE rig. Instead, he fell



straight past glory and into the first entry of the BFL, with a platinum Darwin award medal firmly flung around his neck. Now I'm pretty bad at golf, but even I have never left a

divot that big. And he didn't even wear a helmet.

The real tragedy? He never actually made the first entry on the BFL. His stupidity was way ahead of its time. His optimism wrote cheques his body couldn't cash.

Since Franz, the history of early flight innovation is paved by the blood of a long list of total nutcases like him, so we'll fast forward to the fluorescent splendour of the 90s.

Patrick de Gayardon

Physics has Einstein. Art has Picasso. Wingsuit flying has Patrick de Gayardon. Not only was he a total badass, he didn't let the illustrious allure of glory cloud his judgement. If Franz Reichelt was the weird uncle who left the family to pursue a career as a drag queen, Patrick de Gayardon is the calm, astute grandfather who held the family together during this difficult time.



The modern wingsuit design is mostly attributed to him. He was the first to use a ram air design which, by what I've read, applies aerodynamicalistic wizardry to keep the suit inflated. He was also the first pilot to fly at close proximity to the ground and survive, all in 1997.

In 2017, Fred Fugen and Vince Reffet made international news when they flew their wingsuits back into a plane.

No doubt an impressive feat, they neglected to mention* that Patrick performed the same stunt a full 20 years earlier. No biggie. He didn't have a big suit, a Wingsuit Coach, a GoPro or even an Instagram account. This was the 90s! While the rest of us were still figuring out Minesweeper, this croissant eating stealth fighter was shredding so hard it took decades for the rest of us to catch up. Merci, Patty. Merci.

*this may not be true.

Recent innovators

In more modern times, names like Robert Pecnik (formerly Birdman, then of Phoenix Fly, one of the earliest commercial manufacturers still around today), Stéphane Zunino (S-Fly, another early manufacturer), Tony Urzagallo (Tonysuits, largely responsible for the shape of the modern large suit) and Matt Gerdes (Squirrel, popular modern innovator), continue to push the technology forwards, and my bank account backwards.

What's on the back of everyone's mind, though, is the prospect of commercially available jet propelled wings. Someone needs to shut up and take my money

TYPES OF WINGSUITS

By David Shen

You wouldn't wanna stick a student pilot in an F22 fighter jet for their first flight. As funny as it is to see people poop their pants, it wouldn't be recommended by a responsible adult. You want your introduction to danger as well lubricated as possible: no ejection switches, missile launch codes or vector thrusting to worry about.

Beginner Suit

In Wingsuiting, you want to start with something small and easy to fly. Less fabric in the wind equates to less staining in the underpants. The smaller suits can also be easy enough to Freefly with, for the ninjas who enjoy only an occasional skid mark.



Intermediate Suit

After a decent number of jumps in a beginner suit, a slightly larger suit gives you more power without sacrificing acrobatic ability. Everyone knows more power is better. More is more, no matter what common sense tells you*.



*Undeniable truth.

Large Suit

Once you're comfortable flying in all positions, slots, speeds and of course, "inverted", it's time to get serious and order your F22 equivalent, with the associated ejection seat, laser guided air-to-air missiles and flux capacitors. These suits take no prisoners. They're big, they're bad, and they'll eat your mother for breakfast if you don't pay attention. The plus side though, is that worn by you, who by now is among the most 1,337 of Top Guns, you'll be able to shred harder than Edward Scissorhands playing Edward Scissorhands in the movie, "Edward Scissorhands".



Large & Specialist Suit

Many companies also make specialist suits, designed for specific purposes in mind. These might be speed, agility, range, flare power, short starts for BASE, thermonuclear warhead capacity, or any combination of these. If you're in the market for one, you won't need me to tell you about it; and if you're not, best to avoid test driving one through cloud, in the crack, unless your first name starts with a "J" and ends in "onah".

50 SHADES OF WINGSUITING

By David Shen

Anyone who says Wingsuiting is gay is secretly scared. Literally everything that can be done in Freeflying can be done in Wingsuiting, except Wingsuiting is harder, more powerful, more intense and more dangerous if you wang out.

Angles are self explanatory. Wingsuiting means you could fly at the same glide as a plane or a canopy, or as steep and as fast as your craziest, most streamlined burn in a human condom. Partly, it's down to skill, but mostly it's down to having the bollocks to hold that shit without getting blinded by the tears overflowing out of your helmet.

Head Down is another near impossibility unless you possess the unique combination of skill, bravery and friends dumb enough to fly with you while you're dressed in a turbocharger of physics.

I've made numerous jokes about Head Up Wingsuiting, until I met a man by the name of Dave Hyndman. If you see him, ask his knees why it's possible but highly discouraged to try this in a tunnel.

Link it all together and you could fly the most fluid, dynamic lines on earth, where every movement emanates aerodynamic poetry, and every mistake could result in instant death. But you're not worried about the latter, 'coz you're a Wingsuiter, and you got balls.



GAINING POPULARITY

By Woody

Much like COVID-19, Wingsuiting has definitely spread faster in Europe and the USA. This is obviously because of the far larger cliffs these countries have

to offer, opening up the option of Wingsuit BASE. Put a Wingsuit on at an exit point in the Alps and you're a rock star. Put one on at your local DZ and you're probably the guy/girl/binary with no friends. At Scotty & Woody's School of Wingsuit however, we are still confident it will one day be cool. More and more often, I'm seeing fellow Wingsuit pilots colour co-ordinating their Wingsuits with their helmets, rigs and shoes. Having been around for long enough to witness the rise of Freeflying, I know for certain this means the sport is gaining popularity.

Yay Wingsuits!



Kristina Hicks dressed as Wonder Woman docking with Russell Blacklock & Tony Thomas chasing, 2016.



RECENT EVOLUTION

By Chris Byrnes

Flying a Wingsuit is a super fun way to skydive and it is my favourite way to fly. Over the years the discipline has changed a lot. The Wingsuits themselves have evolved from home made experiments, to state of the art, custom flying suits. The style of flying has gone from basic extension of freefall to advanced acrobatics and extreme performance. Competitions have sprung from grass roots organising to recognition by the FAI with hotly contested World Championships. Wingsuiting has come a long way, this article takes a look at the recent evolution of Wingsuiting.

Competition

There are two disciplines within Wingsuit competition - Performance and Acrobatic. Performance consists of Distance, Speed and Time rounds with the aim of the competition to see who can fly the furthest, fastest and stay in the air the longest. Acrobatic consists of two Wingsuit pilots flying together with a cameraperson filming them. They alternate between rounds of Compulsory maneuvers and a Free routine showcasing the acrobatic flight capabilities of Wingsuits.

Wingsuiting was recognised by the FAI in 2015 with the 1st World Cup of Wingsuiting being held in Netheravon, England in May 2015. Since then competitors from all around the World have met once a year for the tightly contested World Cups and World Championships. The recognition of Wingsuiting by the FAI has

accelerated the evolution of Wingsuit technology with major manufacturers striving for the top of the podium. Not only have the Wingsuits improved, but coaching, training, sharing of knowledge and competitiveness have driven the level of competition higher each year. This has created a perfect storm which has seen performance, creativity and acrobatics taken to the extreme in the Wingsuit world.

Wingsuit Development

Wingsuiting is a broad discipline which involves lots more than just competitions. However, the technological advancements that are made in the racing Wingsuits,

trickle down to improve the other Wingsuits on the market. An improvement that will allow a racing Wingsuit to glide further will allow a beginner Wingsuit to have more range on a Flocking jump. It is not all about performance though, ease of use and safety features allow pilots to access more of a Wingsuit's potential performance. Wingsuits today not only have greatly increased performance, but they are easier and safer to fly than ever before. Wingsuits are similar to canopies, there are many different models on the market ranging from beginner to expert. There are wingsuits designed specifically for racing, acrobatics, XRW, BASE and all styles of flying. When buying a new Wingsuit now, customers can buy a suit specifically suited to their experience level and flying style.

Wingsuit aesthetics have come a long way recently also. Custom wingsuits are now able to be ordered in every colour of nylon and zips imaginable. Designs can be printed with patterns, logos, text or pictures or any colour. Custom Wingsuit design is now truly only limited by your imagination.

Safety

Like in all disciplines in skydiving, safety is improved by learning from mistakes and aiming to be proactive. As Wingsuiting knowledge has progressed, training and coaching has become better and more standardised. Communication and understanding has also improved between Wingsuiters, aircraft Pilots and drop zone staff. This has allowed Wingsuiting to be safer and more fun than ever before. It sets a good foundation for Wingsuiting to continue to progress and grow in the future.

Chris Byrnes, Luke Rogers & Royce Wilson 2015



ADVENTURE WINGSUITING

By Heather Swan
and Glenn Singleman,
BASEClimb

We started Wingsuit skydiving in 2004 with a specific goal in mind – to break Glenn’s World Record for high altitude BASE jumping. We succeeded in 2006 when we climbed and then jumped in Phoenix Fly Vampire2 Wingsuits, from 6,604 metres on Mt Meru in India. This journey ignited our passion for what we call ‘Adventure Wingsuiting’ – flying beautiful locations in Australia and around the world.

Flights such as Sydney CBD, Melbourne CBD, Brisbane CBD, the Grand Canyon, Mt. Connor, Wilpena Pound, Lake Eyre, William Creek and Union Glacier in Antarctica were all challenging and spectacular.

We could not have imagined, when we did our First Flight Course with Jimmy Freeman, how far and how high the sport would take us. When we were learning the suits were small and the fear factor large.

Most of us had Birdman suits in the early days. Jari Kuosma of BirdMan International trained Neil Fergie and Greg Cox to become the first Australian Birdman Chief Instructors. Fergs, Greg and Elaine went on to develop the first structured training programs in this country and ran countless first flight weekends. With the focus on learning and fun ‘Flockers’ built formations with varying degrees of success culminating in an unofficial Australian Female Record 8-Way at Skysisters 2007 and Australian Record 13-Way in 2009.

In 2005 we got the first Phoenix Fly Vampire1 Wingsuits in Australia. They were the faster suits in the sky at the time.

Early in 2006, we travelled to Italy to Wingsuit BASE jump Monte Brento. With Jimmy Freeman, Robert Pecnik and James Boole we did the first 5-Way Wingsuit BASE from the cliff.

After the Mt Meru expedition we wanted to try for a Wingsuit Distance record. We planned to hitch a ride on the South Polar Vortex - a high velocity jet stream wind that clips southern Australia each May. We planned to exit a balloon at 38,000ft over central Australia. The supplemental oxygen we needed for the flight was carried in bottles attached to the sides of our rigs. We



made two unsuccessful attempts at this record in 2005 and again in 2011.

In 2005, Heather and Jimmy Freeman exited at 24,500ft when the balloon’s pilot light went out (featured in Australian Story episode titled “*The Flying Doctor*”). In 2011 Glenn’s oxygen supply was briefly interrupted so he fell from the exit platform at 38,000ft. With his oxygen returned Glenn enjoyed a long flight and landed safely. Heather stayed in the Balloon. (feature story on 60 Minutes and article in ASM).

With help from US oxygen guru Tad Smith, Glenn redesigned the oxygen delivery systems to combine the best of military and civilian technology. Tony Uragallo from Tony Suits designed a system so the oxygen bottles could be carried inside the wings of our Apache Rebel Wingsuits for one of our most ambitious projects – to fly across the Grand Canyon from rim to rim. After three years of paperwork and training our team of Paul Tozer, Roger Hugelshofer and Vicente Cajiga, we exited Ray Ferrel’s Grand Supervan at 28,000ft (and -50 degrees celcius) over Toroweap Peninsula (the north rim of the Grand Canyon) on 9th April 2015. We flew 11.6km in formation across the Canyon before opening at 11,000ft and landing in a forest clearing at 7,000ft.

Interestingly our flight over Sydney Harbour had been more difficult to organise than the Grand Canyon flight. Our first and second attempts were grounded by ATC before the plane even took off. Sydney Airport is 9km from the Harbour with the main runway oriented at 340 degrees. We planned to land at Barangaroo (before there was a Casino on it) so our flight path could intersect the flight path of aircraft approaching Sydney Airport from the north. Not a good thing. Our solution was to jump and land before the 6am airport curfew. To do this and comply with APF regulations to jump after sunrise, we had to jump on (or near) the longest day of the year. The final approval was granted at a meeting in the NSW Premier’s office with the Barangaroo building authority, Sydney Harbour Master, Sydney Water Police, Sydney

L-R: Pilot Terry Riddle, Greg & Elaine Cox, Jari Kuosma & Neil Fergie





Traffic Police, Sydney Harbour Bridge Authority, Maritime Services Board, CASA, Aviation Australia (ATC) and the APF. Grahame Hill helped us get it over the line. We were given a six-minute window from 0537 on 11th December 2011. Phil Onis helped us with the Sydney Skydivers plane. We and Vincente Cajiga exited over Shark Island then flew 5.2km down the Harbour to open over the Rocks and land on target at Barangaroo. We used Apache Wingsuits by Tony Suits.

With the help of Dave McEvoy and his brother John our Brisbane CBD jump was more straightforward. On 25th January 2015, Roger Hugelshofer, Paul Tozer and us exited VH-DJV over the Brisbane River near Newstead then flew over the Storey Bridge and the CBD before turning towards The Gabba stadium and landing at Raymond Park. Paul's iconic photo of us flying over The Gabba made the cover of ASM. We used Rebel 1s from Tony Suits.

In April 2016, Lake Eyre (Kati Thanda) filled with water a few months after heavy rain in Queensland. It was a rare natural phenomenon not to be missed. So we worked with Greg Smith, Trevor Wright and Andy Mulholland to hire a plane and do the first Wingsuit jumps over Wilpena Pound, Kati Thanda and William Creek. We were the first people to get a Wingsuit perspective on the icons of the South Australian outback. William Creek closed the main street so we could land our canopies in front of the pub. The flights were surreal. We used PF Hunters and Heather flew camera in her Tony Suits Rebel 2.5.

Full of confidence in the ability of our team we tried to arrange a flight over Melbourne CBD in January 2017. We got a permit for one day and the fickle southern weather blew out the day. It was 25-30 knots on the ground and 40 knots at opening height. Aviation

Australia thought we would just go away when they told us we could "apply for a permit the next year". So we did just that. With help from Ralph Hamilton-Presgrave we applied months in advance and again were given six minutes on Sunday 21st January 2018. The weather was not ideal – cloud ceiling at 10,000ft with strong inversion layer winds. But Aviation Australia (ATC) guided us across Port Phillip Bay in between 'heavies' approaching Tullamarine. We got out over West Melbourne railway yards and blasted across the centre of the city. Once again Roger Hugelshofer was with us, and this time Chris Byrnes was filming. Everything seemed to be on track until we opened at 4,000ft. We were in a 25kt headwind that was not forecast to be there. It quickly became evident we weren't going to make our landing area at Citizens Park in Richmond so we headed for an unnamed park in front of an apartment block. It's times like this our manoeuvrable 7-cell Wingsuit canopies prove their worth. We used Tony Suits Rebel 2s and all landed safely.

Our next Adventure Wingsuit flight was one of our most memorable – over Union Glacier in Antarctica. Antarctic Logistics & Expeditions (ALE) asked us to help set up a skydiving operation at their private Antarctic base near the Ellsworth mountain range. The weather is challenging with exit temperatures around -40 degrees, plus crevasses and katabatic winds to deal with. It took us a week to plan every aspect of the jump with rigorous precision. There could be no off-DZ landings as rescue from a crevasse was not a realistic option.

With all the logistics and protocols sorted, we had the best jump of our career - a dream flight, unimaginably beautiful, over a fairy tale landscape.



TIMELINE OF HEATHER SWAN & GLEN SINGLEMAN BASECLIMB



First Wingsuit Flights in Birdman 'Classic' suits with Jimmy Freeman instructing.



Heather and Jimmy Freeman exited a balloon at 24,500ft, the highest exit at the time. Phoenix Fly Vampire 1 Wingsuits.



First 5-Way Wingsuit BASE jump from Mt Brento in Italy - Glenn and Heather, Jimmy Freeman, Robert Pecnik, James Boole. Vampire 1s.



World Record Wingsuit BASE jump from 6,604 metres Mt Meru, India. PF Vampire 2s.



Furthest Flight Project - Glenn exits at 38,000ft over central Australia in his PF Stealth.



First Wingsuit flight over Sydney Harbour from Rose Bay and Vicente Cajiga. Apache WS by Tony Suits



First Wingsuit flight over Brisbane City - Glenn, Heather, Roger Hugelshofer and Paul Tozer. Rebel 2s by Tony Suits.



First Wingsuit flight over Brisbane City - Glenn, Heather, Roger Hugelshofer and Paul Tozer. Rebel 2s by Tony Suits.



First WS flights over Lake Eyre, Wilpena Pound and William Creek - Glenn, Heather, Roger Hugelshofer, Ash Darby and Vicente Cajiga. PF Hunters and Tony Suits Rebel 2.5 (prototype).



First WS Skydive over Antarctica. Tony Suits Rebel 2s.



First WS flight over Melbourne city - Glenn, Heather, Roger Hugelshofer and Chris Byrnes. Tony Suits Rebel 2s.



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The SMITHS

AVIATORS AT HEART

Dave & Poo Smith

For as long as I can remember, Dave Smith has been a wise and gentle stalwart of the APF. Always smiling, always social, always thinking. Whether it be inventing the Single Action System

SOS Piggyback system 30 years ago, which allowed First Jump Students to use piggybacks instead of fore and aft gear, or not stopping for decades until the CASA Part 149 was approved, Dave is as dedicated as they come, with a never-ending passion for the betterment of our sport.

Poo's definitely not as lovely as his old man! I can say that because he's always acted like an annoying older brother to me. Credit where credit is due, he's achieved incredible things in competition, instruction and aircraft, and most recently in developing such a popular and successful, fully functioning drop zone.

It was a hoot to interview them, if only there were more pages because there's so many more stories that both of these great men have.

Susie Mc



Interviews with Susie Mc

DAVE SMITH

Can you give me a timeline for when you started jumping and getting into other aspects of the sport? I started jumping in Canberra in 1968 – 52 years ago. I became a Static Line Instructor and in 1971 was offered a job by John Mahaffy who was running Wilton Parachute Centre. I had been there a few times with other Canberra jumpers.

Parachutes Australia was a drop zone? I only know PA as the equipment manufacturers. Yes, Parachutes Australia owned Sydney Skydivers with John Mahaffy and Lou Johnston being the founders. It had been operating since 1968 at Wilton after moving from Camden. I got the job after Ian Swinbourne broke his leg. It was in the days when the Cessna 182 was used so I guess Swinnie couldn't despatch students with a broken leg.

When was Poo born? Poo was born in 1971 just before I started work with John Mahaffy. My wife Shirley and I had a caravan which we kept at the DZ and used on weekends. So Poo was at the DZ most weekends from an early age.

A drop zone kid born and raised. From when he was in nappies, he was on the drop zone most of the time. There were other kids around the drop zone at that time too. They would go catch drifters and find lost ripcords and the like, bring them back and sell them back to manifest for a few bob. I left after a year to spend time in Tasmania where my wife Shirley had family, that was the deal, one year what I wanted and one year what she wanted. But less than a year later John Mahaffy invited me to return as the DZ manager which was better paid so I took the job. By that time my daughter Kim came along. It became a hassle to be at a drop zone on the weekend with two young kids as there were more social things going on.

I also wanted to concentrate more on the Parachutes Australia equipment side of things and less on going skydiving each weekend. A jumper and the DZ pilot took over Wilton first, but eventually Grahame Hill bought the drop zone from us and ran it for many years. I wasn't out there very much after that, but in that time, Poo was.



Early days at Wilton with a Beaver



Dave's first jump, Hoskinstown, Canberra



Maggie & Dave after jumping into the opening of PA's new premises

When did Poo start jumping? He had his first jump on his 16th birthday, jumping a T10.

Did you encourage him? I didn't really want to encourage him to jump, because I thought, when you hang around jumping all the time you think that is what everyone does, and there is a certain element of danger involved. I didn't want to be one of those parents egging him on to do it for my own ego. I purposely didn't take a lot of interest in what he was doing or go out there very much. He continued to go out there and do it, maybe to spite me. So, staying away thinking he would probably lose interest and get into something else, didn't happen. He stuck with jumping, got onto the Australian Team and did a lot of overseas travel. Therefore, I wasn't there for when he was doing most of his early days of jumping. He was there when I was jumping but we weren't jumping together. We have done a few jumps together in different places, but not that many.

How was Poo involved in Parachutes Australia? When Poo started jumping, and soon after he finished school he started a job with Parachutes Australia as a rigger, he and Zipper (Greg Sitkowski), were around when we were making 228s and Pigmees and S18s. He probably worked at PA for around four years. Both were involved in test jumping the Aerolite reserve, Airforce Reserve and the less popular Meteor and Viper mains.

Dad still raves about how fantastic the Pigmees and SOS was for student training, how it changed everything for the better. The Pigmees was a big thing for PA. It was a piggyback intended for student training, to replace training on fore-and-aft gear. The SOS (single operation system)

was the key, pull one handle to cutaway the Main and deploy the Reserve. Your Dad at Ramblers was the first training organisation to use it, and it became mandatory by the APF which was a very progressive move in those days.



Opening the new premises at Ingleburn, Dave Smith, Mike Carre and John Mahaffy

Revolutionary! How did the SOS Pigmees concept come about? You are right, it was revolutionary, and it was a stretch. My motivation was as a Static Line Instructor having to teach students how to throw out a chest mount reserve, under a spinning mal, into the direction of rotation and shake it to help it inflate. It was not a convincing reserve deployment method to teach students.

So when piggybacks became popular for tight exits on Rel jumps and particularly the 10-Way Speed Star it seemed logical to move students onto a piggyback but, it needed the SOS to make that practical. I remember touring around DZs doing intentional cutaways to demonstrate the SOS. But it was your Dad who took the leap of faith and introduced the Pigmees and SOS. He was first and others soon followed. I'm pretty sure it was the first piggyback system used for student training in the world.

How old was Poo back then? Around eighteen to twenty-two years old I would guess. He was getting enough money to have a car and go jumping then. I probably don't want to know all the things he was getting up to. He may have done a bit of BASE jumping for all I know.

And now he's a responsible Chief Instructor. Yes! He worked for Phil at Sydney Skydivers, and some time at Temora with Garry Gnapp. After that he became an instructor and worked down in Wollongong for Bowie. He was an instructor, flew the airplanes for quite a while too, then became CI. The opportunity came up for him to take on Moruya, sometime after Don Cross had left. Poo thought it was a great opportunity and thought it was time to make his own mark, so he went down and setup the drop zone. This was about twelve years ago. He's really turned the place around. He bought better planes, built all the facilities that are now down there, and became a legend in his own right; independently of his old man. I am very impressed with what he has down there. His attitude, the facilities he has there, it is magic.

You must be proud of him. I am very proud of him. There was a time when Poo was Dave Smith's son, now I'm known as Poo's father!

When did you start in the APF? When we sold Parachutes Australia around 1990 to a British Company who wanted it as a manufacturing facility here in Australia to make industrial belts and harnesses, they wanted a ready-set-go place and we had all the technology and approvals. I stayed on for two years part-time. While I was there, I convinced them to sell the parachute side of the business which Mike Carre and Zipper bought. I eventually started to lose interest as the business was moving into different areas of manufacturing, so I took a part-time position as the Executive Officer for the APF, which is now the CEO position, around 1990. It eventually became a full-time position and I stayed there until about 2002. After 12 years it was time for them to get a new Executive Officer and it was time for me to get out. You outlive yourself if you stay too long.

Did you get bored or grow out of it? We actually achieved some good things including having jumping through cloud legalised, getting everybody the use of an AAD by making them sales-tax exempt. But then I ended up solving problems that the jumpers brought on themselves and I lost my mojo.

That's a good way to put it. Yes, bailing people out for silly things they've done. I then bought back part of the old business from the Parachutes Australia days from the company we sold it to. I bought the aviation safety line of products side of things - search and rescue equipment for supply dropping and emergency medical service equipment used by helicopters. I set it up in my garage at home in Queanbeyan, not too far from the APF Office, and built it up for twelve years. It goes by the name Air Safety Solutions.

I think I bought some single point restraints off you. Yes, we did seat belts, restraints, life preservers, a lot of stuff for dropping out of airplanes and emergency services equipment for Australian Maritime Safety Authority, aircraft seat belts and some military drop-master harnesses.

Are you still doing that? No, I am now retired and working in my office at home for the APF. I sold the business to Craig Morris who became my business partner. At the time I thought, I don't want to be doing this much longer, so I searched around and found a rigger who was looking for an opportunity to buy into a business and Craig Morris came and joined me. In the beginning I sold him half of the business and after a few years he bought the last half. Now he and Trish Vogels own it and it's going pretty well.

You called yourself retired but you never really left the APF, unfinished business? Yes, I have been busy with the APF wanting to get the Instrument Part 149 through CASA, which happened just last week. It was a huge amount of work; about three to six months full-time work for me, and a lot of input from others, going back to when I worked in the APF office.

That's a success. What does that mean for us? Yes, huge success. The APF has been operating under a regulation which, in essence, says, except for the permission of CASA, parachuting is illegal. You can't jump unless you have the permission from CASA. That means at any stage they could take permission away making it an insecure way to operate. This Part 149 is an approval of an aviation administration organisation to provide certain types of facilities for a certain type of aviation activity. The APF is now approved by CASA and its functions are to control parachuting, issue licences, certificates, authorise jump pilots, run parachute training etc. etc. - all those things that we do. Therefore, they can no longer take parachuting away from us.

That sounds like it was a huge threat! Congratulations, and thank you very much! The first notice for proposed rulemaking came out in 1998, so that is twenty-two years ago. This has been discussed and worked on before that, I think it has been going on for twenty-five years, and I have been there from the first discussions with CASA about how it was going to work, and the industry consultations for many, many years. I didn't want to walk away until it was settled and waste twenty-five years working on a project that never got off the ground.

For the betterment of the sport. It is, but is not one that members will notice. It doesn't change jumping out of aeroplanes, but it is one of the things that go on in the background and gives legal certainty and security to the sport.



What's your next big job in the APF? We have a constitutional change coming up, which is to change the voting so that all the people who live in the council area get to vote for their delegate in the council who will become a Board member. We are getting the documents ready, the constitution and a new council committee charter, which is now called an Area Council Charter, and matching regulations. Hopefully, it will all get through the AGM in June - a virtual AGM due to gathering restrictions. This will mean when, say, the South Queensland's Board member's term is up, we will call for nominations for people who want to be considered to be the Board member for South Queensland, and the APF will put those nominees out for vote to all eligible members living in that area. This enables everyone to have a say. Considering we have reached a point where 60% of all the clubs are owned by one organisation, it is a threat for the APF to be taken over. This way, we avoid that possibility and ensure a fair and democratic way for members to vote for their Board member who can stand in their position for up to three years. It should also ensure that the calibre of the Board remains high with quality people.

Glad it's you and not me, sounds like a lot of paperwork. Yes well, good timing in one way being stuck at home. If I wasn't tied down with this coronavirus restriction I suppose we'd be wanting to travel around having a good time like we were before. Maggie got the virus when we were overseas in March. I didn't, just bloody lucky. We're still ok but we've got restrictions. There's two aeroplanes out in our hangar at Wollongong I'd like to be working on.

How many jumps has your wife, Maggie, done? About 2,000, but neither of us jump anymore. Maggie was an instructor too and on the 32-Way Womens Record in Corowa in 1990. We're now has-beens really, we both do a bit of flying with Maggie having a pilot's licence too. I have my own toy, a Corby Starlet sport airplane, and we have a 2-place touring aircraft. In the last ten years most of what we've been doing is flying safaris around Australia. We've also been doing a lot of overseas travel - it's called spending Poo's inheritance.

Good for you! Any dirt I can hang on Poo? Well I've never heard it from Poo, I never do. Other people say to me to ask Poo what happened. Only then might he confess. You could ask him about that one time a pilot chute went out the passenger window...

"Poo is our only remaining child and he is not going to have any children so there will be no third generation of jumpers."

POO SMITH



I was expecting your Dad to tell me a bunch of stories about you being a ratbag kid at the drop zone, but he said he didn't really encourage you to go to the drop zone or jumping.

No, he didn't. He always left it to me to make my decisions to do it. No encouragement, no pushing, nothing. And he never would pay for anything, except for my first jump course which was \$150, and then anything else after that I had to do by myself.

Me too! The buggers! I didn't have to pay for my course but I had to pay for every jump after that, and manifesting, so much manifesting. Well I had to go and do test jumps in order to get any free jumps!

You win! Test jumps are extreme! Yeah that's right. As many test jumps as I could possibly do to get free jumps.

At what age? Well I started working for Parachutes Australia when I was 15 and then started re-lining canopies on school holidays. From there I started jumping and by the time I had a couple of hundred jumps I was able to do some of the basic test jumping stuff, like throwing things out of planes at 500ft and other random things.

What made you want to become a drop zone operator, to start up a drop zone? I didn't have any intention really to do any of that, but I always made a pact with myself that by the time I was 30, after all the competing, I would actually try to make some money and go somewhere. So after the last 1999 World Meet, I said righto, time to get your Chief Instructor rating. I bought an old tandem rig and re-built it myself, and then once I got the C.I. rating I hired an aeroplane and started a drop zone at Dubbo. It was just a once a month operation doing tandems. I'd do the tandems and have someone else film me and my mate Stewie was flying. I did that for about a year and built it up from there.

Was that the beginning of all the Outback Tours? Yes. I'd talked to people like Tony Edwards and Paul Osborne who'd done a bit of the outback stuff before. There was nobody servicing the outback towns and I like the bush. At one period there we did 35 towns in a year. I loved it, I really, really loved it. But it was just tandems and I really wanted to get into training students. That was the next thing, so I started a drop zone at Marulan near Goulburn, leased a few hundred acres from a farmer, had a Cessna and a few bits and pieces, and off we went. We actually got really busy really quickly. We were only an hour and a half down the road from Picton and everyone wanted an alternative drop zone like always. Then we got shut down about six months later because of noise complaints. Truth be told we didn't really have a proper approval to operate there via the Council.

So you got your taste of students? Parachutes Australia gave us a good deal on two student rigs that we could pay off. When we got shut down we started doing the outback tours again, and we did a few tandems at Trangie, and a mate of mine who owned the Ag company really

encouraged us to start doing students out there, so we set up an AFF operation. We would take two people every fortnight, and fly them from Wollongong out to Trangie, put them up in a Pub, and do their AFF course for the week, then fly them home. They'd have their 'A' Licence when they got home. It just turned into a winner because it was like a big holiday for them, an experience, living at the pub and do the 'pub thing' at night and go jumping during the day. We trained so many people back then who are still jumping now, that are Instructors and Chief Instructors.

How did Moruya come about? I was C.I. for Wollongong for a fair while and we had Jaspers Brush going, which was Bowie's property, and that ended up lasting for a couple of years before getting closed down for noise. After doing the tandem thing for a really, really long time it was just time. And then it had to be near the beach. I went down there and did a few tandems in the town once, and the Council actually rang me up on the Monday and said, "come and have a meeting with us, we're really keen for you to come and set up here".

Wow, that's the tides turning with the Council ringing you! Absolutely. So I ended up going down there and started up out of a bus with a couple of student rigs and a tandem rig, living in the plane and the bus, and away we went.

Is this home now, you're pretty set? It's been twelve years now and we've got everything, we own all the infrastructure, built up all the hangar and it's a full drop zone with accommodation and everything. Very happy. Love it. It's a great lifestyle.

You making any money though?! Not currently! Slowly going broke.

An old Miffism. Yeah, it's in the Chief Instructor's handbook.

Have you managed to sneak in any jumps during the COVID-19 lockdown? We went out to a friend's farm about two weeks ago and some of the boys did a couple of helicopter jumps before it was going unserviceable. Other than that, we have not done anything in about two months. I've been busy with drop zone improvements, we've done so many things, it's looking fantastic. I've not had one day off. It's like unpaid long service leave, something you would never get in this business. There's no way we'd ever get paid or have three months off!

I was thinking with all this social distancing that you and Bec could go and fly each other up for a jump? You could be one of the very few in Australia actually allowed to jump! Everyone would be so jealous! If I was that enthusiastic!

But you've been flying? Yeah, I dropped a friend over to Miff's drop zone the other day as her father was critically ill, and then flew home.

How many planes do you have? Four. Well three - the 185 that I have had forever, it's my pride and joy, but I had to sell it, sold it today actually. I bought the turbine Beaver

and have been doing that up for the last year. I'm not far off getting it going but I need the money to finish it off, so I sold the 185. It's a shame as I loved it. We've still got a 206, the Beaver and a RV4, which is a little acrobatic plane that we run around in everywhere.

What happened to the Caravan? It was sending me broke, so I got rid of that. It was insane – \$1.8 million dollar loan. It was good when everything was busy a couple of years ago, but the industry has gradually declined, I couldn't sustain keeping it. Six months of the year was great, and the other was a struggle, \$5,000 a week in repayments. I don't need that much stress.

Everyone LOVES the Beaver! I look forward to just having the Beaver going. It'll be a lot less stress and it's less than half the cost of the Caravan. And it's better than it was before too. We've made it longer in the cabin using a kit that extends the back end, added two more windows down the side, so there is a lot more room inside – about a meter more in length. We took the second control column out too so now it fits ten people very comfortably inside, and legally.

That's great news. You love your flying, you'd especially love flying the Beaver. That's all I do these days is flying. I hardly ever jump. I do about 600-700 hours a year jump flying. Put me in the seat any day and I will fly all day.

Not jumping much? Probably only about 50 a year at the moment. If I didn't do another jump, it wouldn't really bother me that much.

Woah, that's a big call! I just don't have the desire and haven't had for the last twelve months.

Why's that? Anything in particular? I think it's because I am on the drop zone every day. On your own drop zone, you are always busy, always working. Maybe going to other drop zones I would be interested in jumping as you are independent, and you have no responsibilities.

I hear you, other people's boogies are the best! Yeah, going up to Batchelor or Toogs or anywhere else, no problem whatsoever, but not at home. Once we get the Beaver going and have the opportunity to get away more often, then I think the desire to jump may return.

Bec flies too? Yes, the RV4 aerobatic plane is hers.

What are some of your happiest flying highlights? The one that really sticks in my mind is flying at the World Meet on the Gold Coast. Having the opportunity to go and do what we did with all those different planes from different operators, in that area, how busy it was, so professional and well organised, makes it the top of my list for flying. All the pilots who were flying during the event were really cool and great to fly with. There were no hassles whatsoever.

You didn't lose anything out of the windows of those aircraft? We don't talk about that. I don't know what you're talking about.

Last World Meet in Australia jumping, and this World Meet flying. Both pretty cool achievements. I still love being around the people, such great people, and



the industry is fantastic, but after a while it's nice to do something else while still being so involved. It's always been about the people. It's what has made the industry.

When I first started jumping you were killing it in your 4-Way team 'Lightspeed'. That was the beginning of a time when big number points started being achieved. When we formed Lightspeed we chose the people that we really wanted to jump with. That was when I did the best skydiving I have ever done. Not only that, but with the best teammates that I could possibly have: Coey (Lloyd Cofield), Johno Garlick, Johnny Mac, and Geoffro Abraham on camera. It was a very easy-going team who worked hard at getting somewhere. We still keep in touch all the time. We are all pilots, so we regularly fly somewhere random to do something. For an unprofessional team we achieved a lot considering the other teams we were competing against - the French, U.S. and the Russians were all professionals. We held our own against them and our average score wasn't beaten for nearly fifteen years.

Your rivals 'Entity' came close. Did you ever feel sorry for them? Never! The enemy! No, they gave it a good go, but they were young guys and they were doing a French style of skydiving and we were doing the American style. They were a good bunch of young lads and they did very well for their experience level. They certainly made us work harder to up our average scores. They made us a bit nervous, that's for sure.

You were all so competitive and those huge Nationals in the nineties were unreal. That was a time when 4-Way really took off. I still feel very grateful to have been skydiving through the 1990's and early 2000's because that was, without a doubt, an unreal time for skydiving.



Phil Onis was buying turbines.

It was a time when we could only have the Nationals in one place, but it made everything so great and everyone went. I know the APF are working hard at trying to bring back that kind of situation, but I don't think we will be able to achieve it. That was the golden age and we were lucky to have been a part of it. Those days were the Woodstock of skydiving.

Before Lightspeed there was 8-Way team 'Rijidij'.

I was in the last team line-up of 'Fourth Force' for the 1991 World Meet. Rijidij formed after that and I was lucky enough to get a start on that team. We did some big training camps, a three-month stint in North Carolina, at Raeford, which led into the World Meet training with the 'Golden Knights'. Then we did the Gap World Meet in France in 1995, after that Lightspeed formed. Our first World Meet with Lightspeed was in 1997 in Turkey, and then 1999 in Corowa.

You just rattled off five World Meets. After a decade of high-level competition, you can almost be forgiven for not jumping much now. I do look back sometimes and think I am pretty happy with what we did and where we were. I did a lot of things I am sure I regret, but I look past them to all the really good stuff.

Bad stuff? All the rules and regulations these days has taken the 'Haha' out of the sport. Compliance has become more important than fun, or so it seems. It's not just with us though, it seems to be the way of the world now. The continuous changes frustrate me when we are still just jumping out of aeroplanes. We are doing the same thing. The drop zones are cautious about trying to keep everyone safe and alive and they don't need anyone else to tell us how to do it.

How does it work having your Dad in the APF? We have always maintained a distance with everything that is to do with APF. We do our best to avoid any possibility of conflict of interest so we can never be accused of any favouritism. We are both really cautious to avoid that and never let it happen, despite what some people might think. Our relationship on that level is no different to anyone else in the sport.

Your Dad is somewhat devoted to the APF. We always laugh within the family because he is so obsessed with the APF, helping out and making things better. I don't have the energy that he has for it; in no way, shape or form. He comes from that generation like your Old Man, the ethics, the old Club mentality where they put everything into it. Your Dad, my Dad, they love the sport 100% and have an absolute passion for it. They both see the different sides of the sport, in the different fields, and if we didn't have debate or challenges, we probably wouldn't get anywhere.

Are you proud of your Dad? Unbelievably!

Do you feel lucky to be born into this? 100%. What a lifestyle! I sit in my hangar looking at my four aeroplanes parked and think, wow, I wouldn't have had any of his. For all the bad there is a lot of good to compensate.



At Gap World Meet 1995. Top: Team Rijidij - Jonny Mac, David (Bart) Redfern, Pete Bambach, John Garlick, Geoffro Abrahams, Greg (Zipper) Sitkowski, Greg Mackintosh, Don Cross and Poo Bottom: Team Extreme - Peter (Wally) Waller, Willy, Scott (Chopper) Ryan, Lloyd (Coe) Cofield & Dee Watkins (nee Bowring).

Have you had many malfunctions? About 30-odd Reserve rides over nearly 16,500 jumps.

That's a lot for not being a CRW dog! Remember I did a lot of test jumping back in the day, so we definitely had a few Reserve rides then. I have not had one in thirteen years, and the last was a Tandem chop. Even though my jump numbers have dropped, I've probably still done 3,000 jumps since then.

What about plane crashes? Had a couple of them too, yep, I've been in a few. One with Phil Onis, Nick Haggerty, Lew Mascord and myself, we crashed off the end of the runway at Wilton. We took off to look for Grahame Hill who'd landed in the bush with a Tandem. I think we had too much water in the fuel, or too much fuel in the water.

Were you flying? No, I was in the back, prior to single point restraint days. Another was not a crash, but an engine failure in my 185 with two Tandems on board, out at Dubbo, landed in a paddock in town. That was alright, got away with that one. And then we were going out to do tandems on an Ag strip a couple of years ago. The wheel snapped off the 185 and we crashed that on landing.

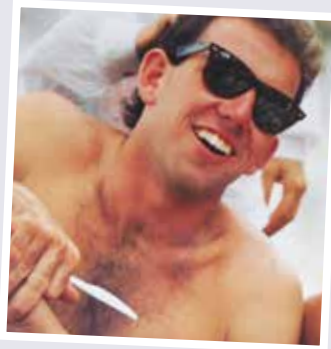
The 185 has had a few lives by the sounds of it. Yes, it has had a few lives. There's another one I just can't think of it at the moment.

Was it the one where something went out the window and went over the tail? Ok then, we're going there are we?! We did have a little bit of an incident once, yes, where a window was open, and a parachute went out the door, and got caught around the tail, and then came off, and we eventually got the plane back level and landed it, and tried to keep it quiet.

You shouldn't get into trouble now, it was more than twenty years ago wasn't it? Yes, the Statutes of Limitation can clear that one up.

Was it true you were flying but you handed over the controls to take a leak? Yes, I was flying at the time, on our way home from a training camp, and yes, I handed over to my colleague next to me to steer so I could pee in a bottle. We opened up the window to pour it out, and someone in the back lifted up my rig to stop getting

sprayed by it. When they lifted the rig the Reserve handle got caught on the edge of the seat, pulled it, and the pilot chute went straight past me and out the window instantly, and before I realised, the Freebag went past. He was trying to hang onto the container while the Reserve was inflating out the back of the plane all over the tail. We managed to throw it all out of the plane and we rolled over and were in a dive by now. It eventually came off the tail and we levelled out.



You must've thought you were goners? We didn't think anything was going to work out as well as it did. By then someone in the back had a broken hand, it had been caught in the rig when I threw it out the window. We flew around for a while watching my rig with the Reserve inflated just floating around over the bushland. But because someone had blood pouring out and were carrying on a treat we had to keep flying to get him to hospital instead of rescuing the rig. So yeah, went to hospital and swore everyone to secrecy! It was a very, very, very lucky escape. We always laughed how if they ever found us, if we crashed, they would've tried to work out the whole scene... so the pilot's facing backwards with a pee bottle in his hand, there's a parachute wrapped around the trail... try to piece the possible scenarios together and explain that one to the Safety Bureau!

What about that jump off El Cap? Yes, that was a good one. We were training for nearly four months in Arizona and had the weekend off. Jonny Mac, Greg Macintosh, Wally and I bolted up El Cap and jumped off with our sports rigs, our Stiletto's. We were getting close to the World Meet and hadn't told the rest of the team that we were going to do it. We got hauled into the Headmaster's office at the end of it all and got a good dressing down for potentially risking going to jail. But I tell you what, that jump was unreal.

Is El Cap high enough to jump a sports rig? It was 3,200ft, so we had normal pack jobs, sliders up, and we ran off, tracked to 1,500ft, then deployed. It was unreal. That was one of the best jumps I have ever done.

That's probably enough talking Poo. Yeah, I don't want to give any more away, I don't want to get arrested!



Lightspeed and XLR8, Corowa 1999

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safety matters

2019 - THE MEMBERS:

Total members with a sporting license: 2872.

Between 20-25 members have more than 20,000 jumps (0.7%).

Approximately 120 members have more than 10,000 jumps (not including above people) (4%).

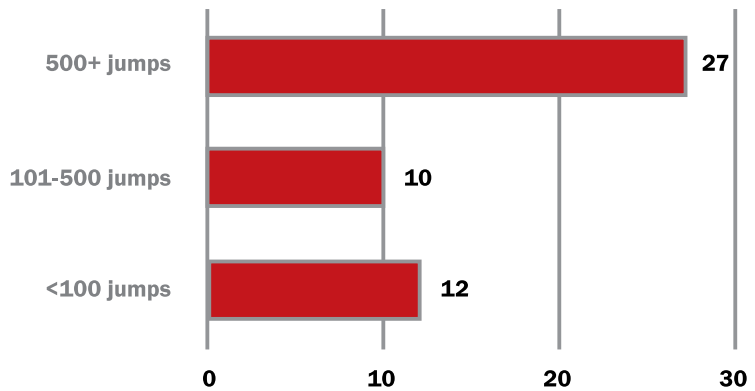
Approximately 200 members have more than 5000 jumps (not including above people) (7%).

FATALITIES

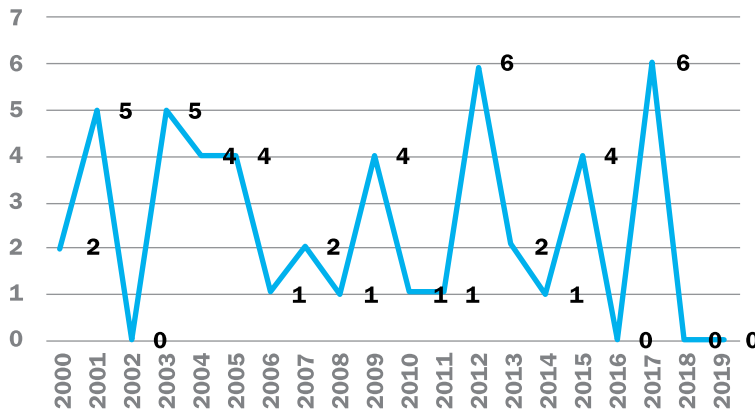
The past 20 years 2000 - 2019

Over the past 20 years, Australia has had a total of 49 skydiving fatalities. That equals one fatality every 128,910 jumps.

Fatality per Experience Level



Number of Fatalities per Year

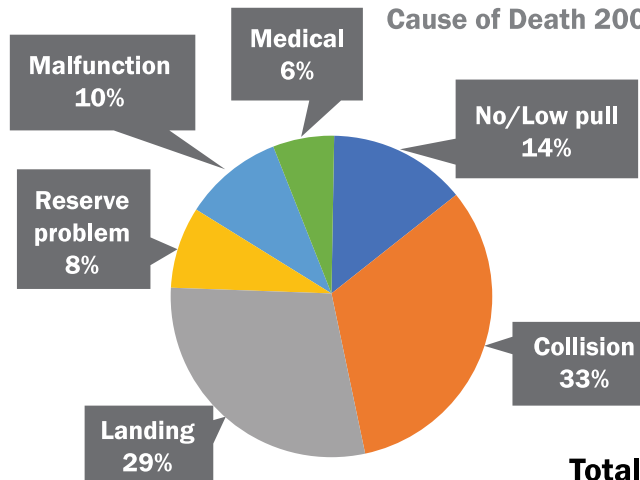


20 YEAR STATS- 2000-2019

TOTAL JUMPS IN AUSTRALIA THE PAST 20 YEARS: APPROXIMATELY 6,316,639

- Over **12,000** incident reports
- Over **5,500** malfunctions/cutaway/reserve used
- Reported line twists: **approximately 2,100**
- Incidents with two canopies out: **150**
- Broken bones: **880** (this is assuming one break per incident and doesn't account for multiple breaks)
- Dislocations: **300**
- Canopy and freefall collisions: **approximately 450**
- There were A LOT of heavy chin and mouth contact to the plane step and strut.
- There were A LOT of chest strap misroutings from all experience levels.

Cause of Death 2000-2019



Total: 49

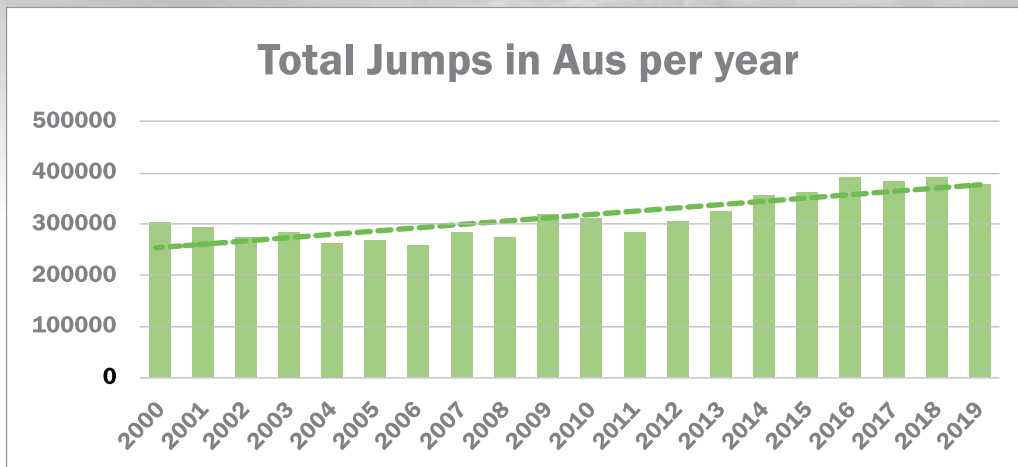


Compiled by:

Ria Peck

Technical Officer,
F#815

Total Jumps in Aus per year



INCIDENT REPORTS - A selection of the most head shaking and unique submissions from the last 20 years.

Incident Focus: The following are a sample of incidents lodged with the APF over the past 20 years and are published in the interest of safety education. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, neither the APF nor ASM make any representations about their accuracy, as information is based on incident notifications as submitted.

Note: These are taken verbatim direct from the incident forms.

- Certificate B Jump 104** Parachutist was borrowing equipment and picked up wrong rig by mistake (which had an 84 Leia instead of Sabre 170)! Upon opening from hop'n'pop the parachutist noticed the wrong colour parachute, then tried steering the parachute and became nervous when it was so twitchy. Opted to cutaway and deploy reserve. Landed 126 reserve without incident.
 - Student Jump 2** AFF Stage 2 freefall OK and good deployment of canopy. Student unable to locate blue steering toggles but located red reserve steering toggles packed inside container and tried to steer main canopy! Later located main canopy toggles but landed off drop zone.
 - Certificate F Jump 4,623** Our Great and Noble jumper was flying the world's most hardcore angle at 3,000,000 miles hour, like an eagle with space and time rippling at it's wingtips! Hero! Legend! Softly spoken deity! When he was all done with his utterly superlative angle and he deigned to deploy his super turbo fast lightning beast canopy; shock, horror! The canopy, until now a faithful friend, was twisted and distorted like the memory of a long ago traumatic event! It spun, it screamed, we couldn't breathe as we watched! Could it be? Could it be a tension knot!
- No, not to our hero! May he'll live 10,000 years and show us how to be, how to act, how to live! On the ground, we sobbed as we watched! True, we did not think our most noble warrior to be immortal, but to be confronted with such bleak scenes! We cried, we comforted each other! Take solace friends! That he lived is enough! Then he chopped at 4,000ft. Reserve deployed normally (hooray!). Like the brilliant, irreplaceable space genius he is he even swooped the reserve! What a beast ladies and gentlemen! Hooray for him! Hooray for us! Handles kept, main recovered, freebag yet to found.
- Student Jump 1** After the instructor deployed the main parachute for the student, the canopy was seen to have a clean opening. After about 10 seconds of flight the student elected to cutaway. Student claimed the canopy was smaller than she expected and mistook the canopy for a pilot chute and thought she had a pilot chute hesitation, saying she felt like she was having a high speed malfunction. Student landed the reserve successfully on the DZ despite a cross wind landing.
 - TWO** separate incidents from 2003 where a jumper was doing a camera jump and got into the plane without a parachute!
 - Student** forgot to count after deployment, so cutaway to be sure.
 - Certificate F** 4,200ft jumper had a bird strike (suspected eagle), impact on temple/face area. Able to continue to deploy in usual manner at 3,500ft. Eagle to be assumed a total loss! Isolated incident, unlikely to reoccur. Possible broken finger.
 - Certificate D**, On exit nipple ring became caught in weight vest.
 - Student** slipped and grabbed struts, dislodging Jumpmasters. Student climbed back in and landed in plane.
 - Student** Jumper's rig popped open in aircraft, intended to descend with plane but pilot bunted the aircraft after others exited, too close the door and the jumper hit the roof and was thrown out. Canopy deployed and landed off drop zone.

- **TM** lost contact lens on opening.
- **Student** mistook SOS for steering toggle...??
- **Certificate F** Jumper carrying freefall toy, 50ft line with 30+ plastic shopping bags tied on at intervals. Jumper deployed main whilst holding streamer in left hand. Streamer caught in A/B lines, slider and pilot chute. CC checks OK but EPs due to potential for collapse.
- **Student** confused as to the shape of the slider. Was unsure so completed EPs.
- **Certificate D** Under canopy - 500ft approach, went for front riser turn in to land, heard a loud bang, felt impact and looked up. Saw person taking my canopy away, so cutaway and deployed reserve approx. 200-300ft. Turned and landed reserve.
- **Experienced jumper** rode to height on the skids of a helicopter (not inside or restrained). Action severe reprimand by CI of pilot and jumper.
- **Certificate D** High altitude (38,000ft) jump from a balloon with supplemental oxygen supply. Approx. one minute after changeover from basket to bail-out O2, jumper became dizzy and fell off platform. Recovered from hypoxia and commenced WS flight. Deployed at 4,000ft.
- **Certificate E, Aircraft: Airvan**, 5-Way exit with camera. Aircraft stalled during prolonged climbout and threw skydivers off the frame. Two jumpers hit the tail.
- **TM** Whilst on climb in the aircraft, another TM noticed one of TM's main risers was disconnected, yet still attached. Situation was rectified in the aircraft. Jump went ahead.

INCIDENT REPORTS - THINGS THAT GET CAUGHT

CAMERAS! CAMERAS! CAMERAS - camera snags on reserve handles, bridles, planes - the incident reports for camera snags are plenty! The good news is seeing a decrease in camera related reports with the introduction of snag free mounts and restrictions at drop zone level about who can wear what on certain jumps!

There were also A LOT of cutaways caused by handles being caught and dislodged from collisions with other jumpers in freefall.

- **Outside Camera jump** on exit, TM caught jumpsuit on my ring sight, eventually ripped free.
- **Collided** with jump partner and cutaway handle was carried away by him. Opened reserve with successful on drop zone landing.
- **Certificate F Jump 8,500** On AFF4 JM2 put thumb through D ring reserve handle while exiting aircraft. Whilst moving hand from aircraft grip to student's left shoulder gripper, pulled own reserve pin. JM1 and student continued jump as normal since this jump only requires one JM. JM2's jump was done on borrowed

gear whilst their's was in for maintenance. All parties landed without further incident.

- **Certificate E, TM** I was the second and last tandem out. As we exited the plane the Y mod on the student harness snagged the step of the plane holding us hanging upside down under the plane. I pulled out the hook knife and tried to spot where the harness was caught. I attempted to pull us back up in sync with the pilot's manoeuvres. As the negative G dives became longer, we were forced back up towards the door and I was able to push us off when we became unstuck. As soon as we were free of the plane I deployed the drogue, waited for a few seconds then deployed the main at around 7,500ft as we were over the ocean. I then proceeded to fly back to the land. We made it back over land at around 3,000ft and continued with landing as normal.
- **Certificate E, TM** Tandem Pair exited aircraft with one single point restraint still attached to the Tandem Master's leg strap. Within two seconds, TM was able to release the SPR as designed and dropped away from the aircraft, quickly gaining stability and deploying drogue. Remainder of descent was uneventful.
- **Student** Rig opened on plane strut, canopy hit aircraft tail and came off. Pin was checked before climb out (note- student was jumping with a KAP3).
- **Certificate F TM** Tandem Master did a quick throw of drogue upon exit, but felt a bump on back and paused it's release. Camera person had missed the exit count. Drogue got caught around neck and arm of camera man. It was removed as TM released the drogue.
- **Certificate E and Certificate F** Exited 4-Way wagon wheel, during the jump one jumper reached back to take hold of my leg strap (I was behind him) to complete wagon wheel. He felt what he thought was webbing and took hold of it, then felt velcro dislodging so let go and then chased me to ensure cutaway was not dislodged. He noted it was dislodged and flapping so made indications in freefall to let me know, I understood his signal and elected to pull slightly higher than planned after checking proximity of other jumpers. I pulled my main and checked the amount of cable through the loop which was at least four inches. I secured the cutaway handle back in position and landed my main without any further incident.
- **TM** Tandem pair got caught under aircraft after exit as right side student attachment was through the pilot's shoulder seat belt (not done up). After unsuccessfully trying to pull in the TM pair, the pilot cut the seat belt with a knife, releasing the pair.

It just goes to show – it doesn't matter who you are or what experience level you are at - everyone makes mistakes! If we can learn from other's mistakes and pay more attention to the little things, we can avoid repeating them!

HAPPY 20 YEARS ASM!

By Kelly Brennan, David 'Bully' Bailey
and Adam Hoppe

Blowing the Curve

A TALE ABOUT TWO WIND TUNNELS

Australia's oldest and newest indoor skydiving centres were built 30 years apart, different in appearance and performance. One was a little ahead of its time. The other was well overdue. Both were driven by enthusiastic entrepreneurs. And both had some big challenges to overcome.

OLD AND NEW...

Australia's first commercial wind tunnel was opened at the Sunshine Coast in 1989, and instantly had to close for a year because it was just too noisy. Our most recent, in Melbourne, opened after many delays in late 2019, and was soon forced to close for an unknown duration because of Covid-19.

In the first tunnel, newbies flew giant balloon suits with elbow and knee guards underneath, and the brave ones could give the nod to be released by their instructor. Modern day customers look a lot more streamlined, and a high flight to the top of the tunnel is a carefully managed option rather than an unplanned adventure caused by the loss of a hard arch. Those early beginners paid \$29 for up to 3 minutes, about a third of the price for today's first-time flyers.

In the years between the two tunnels, there have been many changes, many millions of dollars invested, and some massive benefits for skydivers.

FREE FLIGHT INDOOR SKYDIVING...

Keith Gardiner was a Queensland businessman with a sense of adventure and a willingness to try something new. He was a shopping centre investor in the entrepreneurial 1980s, and a trio of aircraft engineers persuaded him it could be worthwhile to get a wind tunnel going.

Keith and his son, Darren, went to visit a tunnel in Las Vegas, but it burned down while they were en route. So they detoured to Pigeon Forge Tennessee, and checked out the Flyaway centre, which had opened in 1982.

They liked some of what they saw, but instantly decided which bits weren't for them. Such as a diesel engine system to power the fixed pitch DC3 propellor. It was started with a key and had to be revved up like a truck. "They needed nightly maintenance to fix leaks and replace blown seals which were covering their guests with oil," said Darren Gardiner. "This was the main reason we chose to use electric power. It was much cleaner and more efficient."



A young Catriona Rowntree on one of her first TV presenting gigs.



1991 Wind Tunnel



1993
Chris 'Pepe' Scoffell



Pepe Scoffell, Darren Gardiner
and Customer

The Tennessee tunnel also had a big heat build-up with its recirculated air and would have to stop between every few flyers to vent some heat out the top. (Mike Michigan later showed him a burn mark on his neck. He always wore a chain and it had got so hot in the tunnel that his neck was marked.)

The Gardiners took the best of what they could from the US version and made some modifications. They came up with a mix of fresh and recirculated air to reduce the heat build-up, especially in Queensland conditions. Their driver could adjust the pitch of their DC3 prop to vary the speed. Plus, the original nylon net tended to bow up in the middle so they created a woven stainless steel version, with trampoline springs around the edge.

IFLY MELBOURNE...

In contrast, Australia's newest tunnel came with a 1400hp, 4-fan system, capable of up to 300km (186mph) of wind. It had the benefits of learning from others, but it too had issues to overcome. *"The question should be what problems did we NOT have in Melbourne,"* laughed Nir Davidson, Managing Director of iFLY Australia.

Sydney's tunnel had opened at Penrith in 2014, and Melbourne was supposed to be not far behind. But frustrated Victorians waited as tunnels opened in the Gold Coast, Brisbane and Perth.

First they had a battle over the height. After a tricky permit process, they started building for 21m, only be told they couldn't go above 18m. The team had to re-engineer the whole building to drop it 2m further into the ground. Six months and many dollars later, they got started again. Then a fiery fatal plane crash put a halt to all construction on the Essendon Airport land. *"Next, we were told we'd have to go from 18m down to 12m,"* said Nir. But that just wasn't an option. He spent the next two years with a legal team finally persuading multiple authorities.

And then, just 3 weeks after opening, the unthinkable happened. *"We had a mystery ghost shatter the glass,"* said Nir, wondering if the location was cursed. One of the tunnel's specially-made glass panels had simply broken, for no apparent reason. *"We had to air freight a 700kg piece of glass from China and, thankfully, that was done super-fast."*

TRIAL AND ERROR...

Darren Gardiner recalled a lot of negativity from local authorities, when they opened that first tunnel in Caloundra back in 1989. *"They assumed it was going to be like a human mincer,"* he explained.

When it was first turned on, the noise was so bad it vibrated the cars parked across the road. They closed straight away and, with the help of a sound engineer (aptly named Rumble), they spent about a year making more modifications.

The original plan was to use the tunnel as a test venture for potential franchisees. The Gardiners wanted to explore its viability in a low traffic area, expecting it to take off in bigger cities and tourism destinations. It featured on the "Wonder World" TV show, with a very young Catriona Rowntree enjoying a flight.

Free Flight Indoor Skydiving centre operated for three years before closing down in 1993. *"That was only because I blew it up while showing off,"* said Darren. 150mph was the usual top speed, but he was turning it up to impress a freestyle team. He reckoned he got it to 160 mph that fateful day before something went bang.

They had two injuries in the three years of operation. There was a woman who sprained her ankle falling over before she even flew. She sued but later settled for the insurer's offer of a few thousand dollars. There was also a woman who bruised her elbow on one of the metal support poles, because her elbow guard was loose.

THOSE BIG SUITS...

"We found that beginners would sometimes react fearful to the new experience and quickly reposition from a stable body position, to a concave body position, cupping the air and rocketing them upwards to bounce off the top safety net," explained Darren. *"While this was exhilarating for the average punter, it sure gave our instructors a hell of a fright!"* And sometimes the customers would come thumping down on the instructors.

"The concept of the big suits originally was to be able to fly on less air speed, so if someone did get a fright, we could control their height much faster," he said. Regular skydivers who went to the tunnel could have higher speeds without needing to wear the big suits.

1993 father and daughter



1993 Adam and Pepe



"These days I am older and heavier so haven't had the pleasure of flight in one of today's sophisticated tunnels. But like most of us armchair thrillseekers I have witnessed some amazing acrobatic synchronised flying in chambers that dwarf my little snow globe of a tunnel. It just goes to show, maybe it is better to suck than blow."

David 'Bully' Bailey, Australia's first indoor skydiving instructor



WHAT DID SKYDIVERS THINK?

The first tunnel was 3m (9ft) across, compared with 4.3m (14ft) for Melbourne's iFLY. Darren recalled a very tight 4-way in there once, but it was mainly treated as a bit of fun for solo practice or creative two-ways.

David 'Bully' Bailey was part of our world champion CRW 8-way team, Early Openers. He became Australia's first indoor skydiving instructor, thanks to his father's glass and aluminium business. "Dad built the tunnel and I was hired as number one test dummy/pilot who had to tame the windy beast," said Bully, who was 23 years old. "Heady stuff for a young man just looking for a good time."

"I had to figure out how to run the engine without blowing it up, learn how to fly in it and how to teach newbies to float safely around the chamber without splattering themselves into the glass walls!"

"I have vivid memories of blasting my buddy Adam Hoppe to the ceiling of the tube and keeping him stuck there with the throttle open to full max. He couldn't come down if he wanted to!"

Bully also developed a system for Accelerated Freefall. He gutted an old sports rig, so it was just a harness with a ripcord. When the ripcord was pulled, a pilot chute came out, pulling the 'jumper' upright, like a parachute opening. "Even the Australian Army was interested in our system for training their recruits," he said.

One of the problems was a vortex generated by the prop being too close to the flyers. The tunnel was more square than round at its base, so it made for some weird turbulence. They managed to smooth out some of the square corners, but it was a constant annoyance. It took a bit of experience to fly in the choppy air.

PIONEERING MOVES...

Bully's 2IC was a young gun skydiver, Chris 'Pepe' Scoffel, who later took over as the main instructor. "He and I came up with all manner of crazy tunnel tricks," laughed Dave. "We did two-ways chasing each other's tail, like a crazy carousel."

"Doing a half backflip at the top and grabbing on to the net, was called the 'scared cat'." Bully also loved just looking at the view outside and turning 100 points against the wall. But he said Chris was slimmer and more acrobatic, and he developed many new manoeuvres.

"Today's tunnel rats would laugh at what we thought was innovative flying but, hey, we were pioneers!"

MODERN MISSION...

Over the decades, as hundreds of tunnels popped up around the world, skydivers well and truly came to embrace them. A professional new generation of instructors and coaches evolved, and competition teams - in flat and vertical disciplines - honed their skills indoors. The APF even supported the development of indoor skydiving training before students moved into the sky on a modified AFF table.

Skydivers are very much part of the iFLY plan for the Melbourne tunnel. "You have to have the skydivers there to keep the vibe, to keep the community, to keep growing," said Nir. "And obviously the first timers fill in the rest of the gap to ensure it's commercially viable. So, they go hand in hand."

Nir was aiming for an ideal ratio of 50/50 ratio, with many special events, like ladies' nights and huckjams to attract skydivers. "Anything that we can think of to try to grow more first timers into pro flyers who'll hopefully become skydivers as well."



COMMON GOALS...

The two tunnels were three decades apart, but there was a lot in common. *"I have so many fond memories of the ecstatic faces that graced our wind tunnel and will never forget some of the stories we were told about how we had changed lives for the better,"* said Darren Gardiner.

It wasn't just about the physical fun. *"We flew everyone from an 18 month old baby, through to a 86 year old fellow who'd had a double bypass operation, deaf, blind and even some paraplegics, all of whom left us happy and excited to have experienced something that was about as close as you can get to freefall!"*

WHAT NOW?

The Gardiners provided a consulting service after their tunnel closed in the early nineties. Once an innovator, always an innovator for Darren, who ran several more unusual businesses, perfecting the art of adaptation. As Covid-19 kicked in, his graphic design business became a very busy supplier of sanitisers and face masks. His father, Keith, was in a nursing home, and looking forward to reading about the changes in indoor skydiving.

For now, Nir Davidson is making the best of the enforced hibernation that forced him to stand down his staff and himself. He's discovering the challenges of home schooling his sons, and he's using the down time to learn guitar and pick up some new cooking skills.

Each of the Australian tunnels has a staff member to fire up the fans and maintain the equipment so they're all ready to go as soon as the lockdown is lifted.

Nir knows that some of iFLY's plans for Australia might have to wait a while, like a central Sydney site and a possible second tunnel for the other side of Melbourne. Fortunately, most of the customers have opted to hold on to their vouchers and leave money in their accounts.

Even though it's all uncertain, Nir can't help but look to the future. He says iFLY's new tunnel designs will be even more exciting, because it's all above ground.

"You don't even have to dig into the ground anymore! So you can find better real estate to put it on."

"We had steel supports with curved, bulletproof, polycarbonate sheets in between. So it was actually round, with no sides. It was powered by a soft start, 1,100hp electric motor, mounted vertically with a direct drive gearbox and a modified, hydraulic pitch controlled DC3 Propeller. Some air was recirculated through side mounted recirculation ducts and some fresh air was induced and expelled through large mufflers, for want of a better descriptive word, to reduce external sound emission."

Darren Gardiner, Free Flight Indoor Skydiving

MEET NIR DAVIDSON

A former DZ owner behind some magnificent media moments, who's now Managing Director of iFLY Australia.

Nir Davidson started skydiving in 2001 and soon collected a few freeflying medals in the flying pizza position. He did around 6,000 jumps in eleven years, including his Tandem and LDO ratings. In the seven years that he and Ossie Khan ran Melbourne Skydive Centre, they went from 200 passengers a year to 4,500.

"Display jumps were by far my favourite part of skydiving," said Nir. ***"I did some very cool commercials, pushing a car out of an aeroplane, kicking a footy around the air and bringing flags into the MCG, SCG and the Gabba."***

After selling the skydiving business, Nir planned to get a tunnel of his own so he stepped up his research and started bringing investors on board. But he ended up investing in iFly. *"So rather than just having one location, I could get involved with the whole Australian entity which worked out a lot better in the end,"* he explained.

Now he's Managing Director of iFLY Australia, which operates the tunnels in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.



Nir and Ossie



Hamish and Andy bomb crew

20 REASONS & TIPS TO TUNNEL FLY

- 1. TRY SOMETHING NEW**
Do something that you've never done before!
- 2. BECOME PART OF THE COMMUNITY**
Follow iFLY Perth on Facebook and Instagram to keep up with our weekly events and training camps.
- 3. DO SOMETHING OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE**
Speak to our friendly coaches for some guidance to push your skills further.
- 4. FLYING IS A FANTASTIC FORM OF EXERCISE**
So don't forget to treat it like a sport. Be sure you are well rested and hydrated to get the most out of your flying.
- 5. LEARN A NEW SKILL**
Who doesn't like the challenge of learning a new skill? Perhaps mixed with adrenalin, endorphins, thrill excitement and fun while doing so?
- 6. FLYING DEFIES GRAVITY & BLOWS YOUR MIND**
OK, so flying wasn't really for humans. However, that's why we dared to do so. It is so unnatural that it will blow your mind.
- 7. FLYING GIVES THE FEELING OF FREEDOM**
And can be a great escape from a busy week at work or a break from day to day chores.
- 8. GREAT FOR REHAB BOTH MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY**
Some of us have "footy-knees", bad ankles or just need a release from the pressures of daily life
- 9. THERE'S NO NEED FOR A CAMERA MAN**
With 360-degree glass, a high definition camera positioned in an optimal spot, none of your footage will be lost for coaching or showing your mates your epic moves or interesting learning curves.
- 10. MARKERS**
With tunnel flying you can hone your skills and use markers to make sure you are vertical and not flying on an angle.
- 11. TUNNEL FLYING GIVES YOU TIME TO THINK**
With eternal free fall, you can practice your formation, moves or routine. Hone it, edit it, love it, master it and then take it to the sky!



iFLY
INDOOR SKYDIVING

TOP TIPS

- 12. BRING A FRIEND**
It halves the cost and doubles the fun!
- 13. REMEMBER, EVERYONE STARTED WHERE YOU DID**
So enjoy the process of learning – You may think your instructor is a flight ninja, but trust us when we say: there was a stage when they were the freestyle swimming first time flyer, squabbling around flapping their hands up and down as if performing an erratic macarona dance. They genuinely know what it's like learning from the start, sharing in the excitement and awesomeness of achieving your flying milestones.
- 14. DON'T BE AFRAID TO LAUGH AT YOURSELF,**
It's all part of the fun.
- 15. STRETCH & WARM UP**
Before you fly.
- 16. REMEMBER TO TIE YOUR SHOELACES BEFORE YOU FLY**
(Double knots help!)
- 17. GO TO HUCKJAMS!**
A party with flying... say what!
- 18. INVEST IN SOME CUSTOM EARPLUGS**
A little bit of extra comfort goes a long way.
- 19. KNOW YOUR END GOAL**
And focus on small goals to get you there.
- 20. FINAL TOP TIP... ALWAYS SMILE!**
You're flying afterall!



EVENTS

To get everyone in the competition mood we have a few upcoming events to look out for:

- »» WEEKLY PROGRESSION CLASSES
- »» IFLY PERTH'S FIRST ALL ABILITIES NIGHT
- »» LADIES NIGHT
- »» BRAZIER BROTHERS CAMP & HUCKJAM
- »» DANE BAIRD CAMP
- »» CARNAGE MONDAY'S

For more information email: experienced.perth@iflyworld.com



iFLY Perth is halfway through its third year of operation and what a fantastic few year's it has been! With 2x state championships, countless scrambles, tunnel camps and ladies' nights the progress and the community we have here is incredible. With the 3rd WA Indoor Skydiving State Championships just around the corner, we hope to make this event even bigger and better than last year. Last year's event saw over 90 competitors from all over Australia battle it out across 7 different disciplines, this year we are expanding our competition to also include solo speed as well as open dive pools in 2-way Dynamic.

Photos by Sam Millington.



A huge shout out goes to the staff at iFLY Perth helping to train the next generation of tunnel flyers with our flight school program. Our Flight School program is for kids aged between 4 and 16 years and provides an opportunity for all skill levels to not only improve their flying, but also gain some important life skills. All sessions include customised coaching in the wind, goal setting, journaling, and activities designed to help boost confidence and encourage positive social skills, in and out of the tunnel.

At present, we have a great variety of "little shredders" ranging from those on their belly who have had their first flights in the program, all the way through to those who are now starting head-down. The encouraging and supportive environment quickly sees any new participants become a part of the community and progression is celebrated equally among all the levels. We can't wait to continue to watch their progress.

In light of COVID-19 all keeping us at home we are now, more than ever, very excited to welcome everyone back to the wind as soon as possible.

iFLY PERTH INDOOR SKYDIVING, 143 Great Eastern Hwy, Rivervale, WA 6103

1300 435 928

IFLYWORLD.COM.AU

BRISBANE MELBOURNE PERTH

PERFORMANCE
DESIGNS

“EVERY NEW BEGINNING COMES FROM
SOME OTHER BEGINNING'S END.”

-LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA



PERFORMANCEDESIGNS.COM/FIRST-TO-KNOW

The OTHER SMITHS

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

An Interview with Miff and Jed

SA SKYDIVING
LANGHORNE CREEK | GOOLWA

The first time I got to really appreciate and adore Miff was at my first APF Conference in Cairns, the year 2000. I was a young girl shaking in my boots about to pitch my magazine idea to the 20+ men in the APF Board room. Miff found me the day before to learn all about my grand ideas, and proceeded to tell me in his distinct voice (unique yet normal high level of passion and somewhat gravelly), to **“GO for it!”** That, **“we NEED to HARNESS your energy”**. He gave me confidence and esteem for that big day, and one of his many other Miffisms has rung in my ears through harder times, **“if we cut down all the poppies we are just left with weeds”**. He's a staunch supporter of not just me, but EVERYONE who comes into his world with a sparkle in their eye. He's the same era, same story teller and same calibre as my own Dad. I know father/daughter drop zone upbringing. Miff's son Jed knows father/son. We share a somewhat parallel life as second generation drop zone operator's kids. Jed's now a grown up, some say maybe more so than his Dad will ever be. He's Paramedic by midweek and Chief Instructor by weekend. Miff and Jed got pushed into doing this interview of each other and ended up being grateful for it, saying, **“it was a fun experience and good to get a lot of this on paper. A lot more stories didn't make it, we'll have to save that for the book.”** They were given a very loose brief, enjoy the tale of these two characters.

Susie Mc

WHAT'S HAPPENED IN YOUR SKYDIVING WORLD IN THE LAST 20 YEARS - THE GOOD AND THE BAD, THE UGLY AND THE BEAUTIFUL.

Miff: Well 20 years ago, year 2000 I was at Rollos Airfield with the likes of Dean Mustard, Steve Boekel, Roger Mulkey, Buck Rogers, Pete Anderson, Marcus Priem, Mick and Karen Hardy and many, many others who were there at the time. There was a very high calibre of skydiving but also those guys were pushing things to the limit. At one point we had Roger and Buck coming back and forth with the Caravan doing load organising for just free food. The guys flew Jonathan King down one time for coaching. Those were the early days of Freeflying and I remember Pete, Paul Truman and many of the others just giving it a go from videos they had seen - monkey see monkey do.

Jed: 20 years ago I was being that annoying DZ kid and just generally running amok. You still fondly tell the story of how I cost you a reserve repack because I urinated off the balcony at Toogoolawah once, straight onto someone's rig below.



Miff: Yeah that's right, you shit. The jumper wasn't happy with me. I said, *“hey, what are you gonna do? He's just a kid, and that's what he does at home”*, and so had to pay for the rig to be fully disassembled, washed and repacked. Expensive piss that one.

OTHER The SMITHS



Jed: Hey wasn't my fault! My pastimes at the DZ consisted of riding my Honda Pee Wee 50 around the DZ and asking skydivers to drop my Action Man parachutist out of the plane. There was an Accuracy Comp amongst the skydivers about who could land him closest to the DZ. I kept a very detailed log book to note every one of Action Man's jumps, It's still around somewhere. Bad weather days were always fun, 'cause at least everyone was on the ground and hanging out, not busy jumping! Another very distinct memory was when I was probably 7 or 8 years old and jumping over you, Mustard and Boeks on my push bike with the whole DZ cheering on. Good memories.

Miff: You weren't really jumping over us, more just riding across our stomachs.

Jed: Yeah probably! Way to crush my dreams. I remember feeling like Evil Knievel at the time.

Miff: So not long after that we kicked off of Rollos and I purchased 330 acres of land and built the new drop zone at Langhorne Creek. We opened the DZ on July 8th 2007. Jazz (daughter) was born the exact same weekend as the opening of Langhorne Creek. Safe to say it was a pretty busy weekend. We only had a frame and a roof on at that stage, the building was wrapped in building plastic and we had a single portapottie out the back. We were not ready to open but as they say, "the show must always go on..."

Jed: It's definitely been something to watch the place grow. It's taught me the old adage, "from little things, big things grow". Oh yeah, and your age old saying of, "chip, chip, chip away". That one is a real classic to live by. I can still remember the Langhorne Creek DZ as a cattle paddock. I couldn't believe that you were going to build an airfield here and start a DZ. I honestly couldn't see how you were going to do it. It was a barren paddock with cows, shit loads of flies and a big salt lake in the middle. But hey, where there is a will, there is a way.

Miff: I bought that land in late 2004. There was nothing on it. I remember going out to the block with Greg and Holly and we couldn't stay out there because the mosquitos were so thick. I remember thinking, "what the hell have I done?". But it was too late by that stage, I had already borrowed the money and there was no turning back. Within four months of getting the development application approved we built the clubhouse and were open for business on the 8th of July, 2007.

Jed: You didn't even know if you were going to get the building permission from Council, right?

Miff: Yeah, well, that's it. The best advice I got was from Poo Smith who said, "don't you fly anywhere near that property until you have the developmental application in." Which I didn't. But then I had to make all sorts of promises to the Council, to revegetate the block in three years. I had no idea how I was going to do that at the time. I just thought, oh well, cross that bridge when I get to it. And I just got lucky. You were in the Scouts and I was a Scout Leader, and it just came up in conversation with the right guy at the head of the Scouts. Next thing you know I had over 900 kids at the DZ, with 60 crew managing them and teaching them about the different varieties of trees. They planted 30,000 trees in two plantings over two days. It was amazing to watch child labour in action. And that was a massive turning point for the DZ, that was a massive transformation.

Jed: I still can remember the first time I saw birds at the DZ, and it's just flourished from there into a literal oasis - kangaroos, lizards, snakes, bees, spiders and all kinds of birds. It's been amazing to watch the wildlife come back to the area. It definitely feels like the place is alive now.

Miff: Yep it was a ghastly block of land before we replanted those trees. And that was the forming of the relationship with Steve from the Scouts, and the many flag jumps we did for the Scout Centenary celebrating their 100th year. We did flag jumps into Glenelg, the Gold Coast for the Indy 500, the Superboats with Team Off Track, the MCG Boxing Day Test where you and Nic Fleet were Ground Crew, and we jumped in two flags with Pete A and Digger filming. That jump gave me a whole new appreciation for the size of the MCG stadium.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MORE MEMORABLE JUMPS OR MOMENTS YOU TWO HAVE DONE TOGETHER?

Jed: My first tandem jump is an obvious one. I jumped with you and my Mum and a bunch of other close friends for what was termed 'Jed Day' at the time, haha. After that we did a shit load of tandems together before I turned 16 and could go solo. I would estimate I did 50-60 odd tandems. We definitely pushed the limit of what could be done in tandem.

Miff: Yep we did all sorts of jumps Tandem. We did Demos, Flag Jumps, Relative Work, CRW —

Jed: — Non contact of course —

Miff: Yeah, of course. Probably the best one was the raft jump at Funny Farm, you were? What? 15 at the time? We



brought a raft across and took it out the back of the Skyvan. I was talking to Brett Newman and I said he would be learning to skydive soon, and he said right then, let's take him Head Down.

After the jump you guys swooped the pond.

Jed: Yeah that was a pretty fun time. Remember that flag jump that we stuffed up?

Miff: That's right! We were doing a Demo and I thought this would be a good opportunity to teach you about demos and flag jumps. As we left the plane we caught the cutaway which meant when we dropped the flag it ended up releasing straight away.

Jed: We went through the motions, you saying, "ok, make sure to check you're in a good spot, you've got a clear place to drop the flag, ok when you're ready, drop the flag" and I remember pulling the handle and listening to the flag feed out from below me and about 10 seconds later I asked, "so when is the flag meant to take up?" There was just silence hahaha. And then you said, "please God, don't let that hit anybody".

Miff: And thankfully the flag ended up landing in the nearby golf course, and we proceeded on with the demo, landed on the oval. It was amazing how few people realised something had gone wrong.

Jed: I remember you saying, "well the show must always go on, so when we land just remember to smile and wave for the crowd".

Jed: The Father/Son BASE mission was a pretty memorable moment.

Miff: That was when Douggs came down, for your 18th birthday, and I said, "what's the matter mate, are you running out of people in your sport and you're coming down to my DZ to recruit some more?" That's when we made up the 'We Want You' Uncle Sam posters. And sure enough, you wanted to go BASE jumping and I wasn't too happy with the idea. But I said well shit,



if you're going to go it's probably better if I go with you. Your Mum wasn't too impressed with me. She said to me, "whatever happens to Jed, happens to you..."

Miff: A memorable one was when you did your first solo with your mate Bryce Sellick, who's still a major part of it all and jumping at the DZ. You guys did your 'A' Licence in a day, 'cause I pushed you weak as piss boys to do your final hop'n'pops and get your accuracies'.

Jed: Well in our defence we were pretty screwed by jump number seven! Although we did cheat slightly and did our Stages 1 -3 as a tandem before that date.

Miff: Which the TOMs say you can do. Gotta work within the rules, which we did. But you guys did all 10 jumps and the accuracies. It did reinforce the power of Tandems as a training tool, which is what they were originally designed for. But not what they're being used for today.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN SKYDIVING EVOLVE OVER YOUR LIFETIME?

Miff: The safety side has come through in leaps and bounds. The equipment and the teaching. I remember being at the APF Conference and there was a presentation from Airtec explaining how their product (CYPRES) works. They were explaining how there was a computer that was connected to a detonator, and that detonator would fire a blade that would then sever your reserve loop... I remember hearing all this and leaning over to the guy sitting next to me and saying, "that will never take off"! And then my Mum bought me a brand new Cypres when she heard about them! And I promptly sold it to buy a new canopy! But you have to appreciate that this was in the days when the mantra was, "if you needed a Cypres you shouldn't be jumping". Through to now when you don't feel comfortable if you don't have an AAD. The attitude changed dramatically.

Jed: And you guys introduced DOS, the Dual Operation System, and the Throw Away Pilot Chute for students in Australia, right?

Other The SMITHS

Miff:

Yes, yes we did. At the time we didn't realise it but we were trailing a lot of the world in the equipment we were using for our students. We were using SOS (Single Operation System) emergency handles and ripcords. The reality was the SOS was the best system before Tandem was introduced. You have to imagine that before Tandem, a lot of the people you see going for a Tandem today, they were signing up for their First Jump Course. It was crazy, you got some real interesting characters coming out for solo jumps. So it was very important to keep it simple. Once we were doing Tandem though, we could spend the time teaching people the right way the first time, and anyone who we didn't have confidence in we could send them up as a tandem instead.

And credit to Katie Fluin, she sent off 640 surveys to DZs all around the world and the returned surveys showed that we were trailing most of the world - most of Europe, a lot of the USA, even all of NZ had throw away pilot chutes, and a lot of them were even teaching students on straight twin action gear. Roger Nelson from Skydive Chicago was a big proponent of teaching students the right way the first time. And that was the major benefit of DOS, it allowed you to teach your students the right way the first time, and it gave them a safe back up if they pulled the handles in the wrong order. Poo Smith, Ralph Nichols and Parachutes Australia all helped me get it off the ground. And this eventually led to the progression of the system you see on the mainstream harnesses today, in which DOS is no longer being used because it didn't work in conjunction with the Skyhook, but it did lead to a successful pathway with students being trained on a Twin Action rig, as is done today. But yeah, it took Australia a long time to catch on. It was a big progression forward and it was a huge shit fight to change the thinking of senior people in the community.

Jed: Any close calls testing the equipment?

Miff: Yes, we did. I remember having to simulate a Bag Lock, to show the DOS system would work under all sorts of conditions. So I tied two belts as tight as they could go around the bag so the canopy couldn't get out. I pitched and the bag came off my back, and I remember

watching the tiniest bit of canopy catch some air, and that bit of canopy caught some more air and before I knew it the whole canopy was feeding out the bag. The two belts ended up sliding down the lines and I ended up with them around my neck! Well that was a failure, but it did show how much your equipment does want to work as intended. Geoff Cooling had a close call, we were doing a Ghost Plane (where you have the canopies docked, and the bottom jumper does the test cutaway, and the top canopy can guide the canopy back to the DZ). He got one foot caught in the riser and the two canopies went into a Downplane. He only just managed to disentangle his foot pretty close to the deck and recover. That was certainly a close call.

Jed: Shows that sometimes you need to question the status quo, and ask is there a different way of doing this.

Miff: Jyro was all about that. He wasn't afraid to push the status quo. I remember in the old days when Jyro brought out a 200sqft canopy. You have to imagine that there were no sub 200 canopies out there and this was a pretty big deal. We weren't even sure if we were able to land them. Anyway we took these canopies for a jump, and I remember coming down just blown away and saying, "there is absolutely no way that canopies can go any faster than this. Just no way." And now that's what we put our students on! Well now everyone wants to fly sub 100. I get it, everyone wants to progress and do new things, but what I tell them is, I say, "hey you, see this fellas ('cause it's normally the guys that are the problem), you see this fellas?" And then I walk up and down past them and I say, "not a limp to be seen. You cannot downsize too slowly".

Jed: Miff I remember you took my J VX 89 for a spin by mistake once.

Miff: Ahh yeah. But I still nailed it, didn't I?

Jed: Yeah well if you wanna call pulling a dirty low turn out the front of the clubhouse then being in deep brakes nailing it, then yeah, sure.

Miff: Well I still have no limp mate!

Jed: I've seen you've run a few angles with the boys Miff?

Miff: Yea I've run a few angles with the boys. I was last out and first there.

Jed: Bullshit.

Miff: Nah, nah I don't think so mate, we exited and I was last out, then we were shoulder to shoulder and I remember beating you there. And then at the end of the jump, you guys felt so inferior that someone came on top of me and burbled me from the formation at the end of the jump. AND I was pretty uncurrent too. Still had it mate.



"One of the most caring, kind and generous people I know. Also lots of fun, adventurous and mischievous memories." Karen Hardy

Jed: The sport has and is continuing to evolve from my point of view. My partner Jana and I shared our thoughts on this in an article we wrote called 'Elephant in the Room' (published ASM a few years ago). I think the evolution of skydiving and the DZ into a professional sport and business is more of a reflection of society as a whole. I don't think it's a problem in skydiving exclusively, but more parallel with where we are headed as a society, potentially. You see a lot of other adventure sports having a similar identity crisis. But we need to continue to search for ways that can make Sport Skydiving a sustainable enterprise. 'Cause right now, it isn't. The optimist in me likes to think that there will always be the odd balls out there searching for something different. I just hope that there will be full service DZs left to cater for them. Certainly the environment is getting harder and harder to exist in.

ANY SPECIFIC CHALLENGES OR HARD TIMES THAT COME TO MIND?

Miff: Well it's always been just hanging on by a severed boot lace. That's what my Dad said to me once, "Greg, you're always just hanging on by a severed boot lace", and he was right in some ways. But this is just what it is, it's what keeps it exciting. But otherwise I've been relatively lucky in the grand scheme of things. The incidents we've had have almost always been aeroplane related but thankfully nothing major has come of them. One skydiver had his reserve pull him over the tail. We had a bit of a shit fight with the insurance agents on that one 'cause the aeroplane insurance said that the skydiver had exited the aircraft and it was nothing to do with them, and the APF insurance said no, he had not yet started the skydive and was still in contact with the aeroplane, so contact the aeroplane insurance. Another 206 we had slammed back into the runway shortly after take off due to a partial engine failure. And just recently we had the crankshaft of our second 206 snap and literally take out the entire engine. That was a bit of a kick to the guts. But hey, life goes on.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS UNIQUE ABOUT SKYDIVING IN SA?

Miff: Oh well, you know, um, just better people.

Jed: I would say we're a small business but a big family. We don't have a Caravan in the state, but I swear that you can have just as much fun with six people in the sky as sixteen. It's all what you make of it. Although we still place emphasis on people getting out there to do bigger and better things, I feel it's most important to contribute to the grass roots. The jumps should always be designed

to include the least experienced jumper on the load. It always has to be about the grass roots, as that is where we all started from, and if you don't nurture at that level then you will have no one to jump with in the future.

Miff: And with the Cessnas we've always had a big canopy focus. Zack Rosser (a young up-and-coming jumper) is carrying this forward now which is great to see. So many jumpers I see put too much focus on the freefall component before learning the basic survival skills like a clean and stable exit, canopy piloting and the most important part which is reconnecting with planet Earth. That's the most important part of the skydive.



"Miff has been a patriarch of sorts for our circle of friends, and taught me many life skills that my parents just didn't have the ability to teach me." Cath Vogelesang

"Mentor, teacher, knows everything, always the best shit student at the AFF courses, extremely knowledgeable of the sport as a whole, always one to ask for advice. Everyone's friend. Always looking after everyone's kids like they're his own. A natural born entertainer." Pete Anderson

Favourite Miffisms

"Never say die. If you're going to go in, go in fighting and pull all of your handles!"

"Life is a roller-coaster, expect some bumps and bruises along the way"

"Why live a shit life when you can live a good one?"

"Just slowly going broke."

"Well it's been a good weekend. No ones dead and we're not broke."

"You have to fly it all the way through the crash, whether it be an aeroplane crash landing or crisis in life."

"If you're doing one thing wrong, don't be doing two."

Putting on a fitted sheet to a bed as a lesson for life, "Always start with your hardest corner first".

Referring to the skydiving industry as a whole, "Can the last one's standing please turn the lights off on their way out".

"When they were defining the qualities required for a Chief Instructor rating, they based them on Miff. The only question in the C.I. Oral should be, "will you strive to do what Miff does?"" Mick Hardy



FROM FEBRUARY 29TH - MARCH 1ST, 2020, SKYDIVERS FROM ACROSS AUSTRALIA CAME TOGETHER FOR MS EXPOSED, AN EVENT TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, BY ATTEMPTING TO BREAK THE WORLD RECORD FOR MOST NAKED SKYDIVERS IN FORMATION.



My partner Kaitlyn and I came up with the idea to use a naked skydiving record attempt to raise funds and awareness for Multiple Sclerosis, which Kaitlyn was diagnosed with in late 2018. We felt naked skydiving was the perfect way to spread our message about early diagnosis of MS symptoms, which can include temporary vision issues, tingling, numbness, and loss of balance.

In the last issue I wrote about the first MS Exposed Training Camp, where skydivers slipped into spandex in the wind tunnel, and then stripped down to their undies at Skydive Ramblers to train for a naked skydiving world record attempt.



Over the next few months, an additional four training camps were held, with skydivers from across Australia taking part in wind tunnel and bigway training in preparation for the record attempt. All things considered, the camps went relatively smoothly, with the exception of a couple of close calls on deployment (track like your life depends on it, because it does!) and a chop that put an early end to one of the training weekends (don't pack step-throughs!)

Tremendous levels of dedication were shown in committing to the training. We faced scorching temperatures over summer, and as the bushfires raged around Australia, we jumped in smoke haze so thick it was hard to see the DZ. Then suddenly the weather turned, and record rainfalls hung over Queensland for weeks on end. On one jump after a weather hold we exited into a cloud and felt the fury of a thousand tiny shards of ice at terminal velocity IN NOTHING BUT OUR UNDERPANTS.

As the record attempt weekend approached, we were faced with two key questions: Would we have the numbers for the record? And would the weather hold out?

Although more than 70 skydivers initially expressed their interest in taking part in the record, it was becoming clearer that it was going to be tough to find the 24 jumpers required to break the world record. It can be challenging to organise skydivers at the best of times, but asking them to get their kit off and commit to multiple weekends of training and jumping weeded out many of those who originally showed interest.

One week before the attempt, we were still short by a handful of jumpers and the weather forecast looked terrible. With a bit of hustle and a lot of begging we got the word out to as many skydivers as possible, hoping that we would have the numbers.



*By Ryan McStay
Photos by Steve Fitchett
www.fitchimages.com*



The day before the event, Channel Nine's Today Show came out to the drop zone, where we did a number of live crosses on morning TV wearing nothing but parachutes or strategically placed helmets. Even the weatherman got in on the action, going for a tandem in a skin-tight lycra suit. This was one of the highlights of the event weekend and brought a huge amount of exposure to our cause, and a flood of donations from around Australia.

In the days leading up to the event, the weather forecast started to slowly but surely improve. And with less than 24 hours to go before the record weekend, a handful of jumpers confirmed their attendance, giving us the numbers we needed to attempt the record. It seemed as though things were finally coming together!

On the Saturday morning of the attempt weekend, we all gathered bright and early ready to take on the record. It was a false start though as somehow the pilot wasn't prepared for the early start. We nervously distracted ourselves with coffee and dirt dives until the pilot arrived a couple of hours later.

We treated the first jump as a low pressure familiarisation jump, and kept our undies on. For many of us, this was the biggest jump we'd ever been on, as well as the first time jumping with each other. Without jumpsuits to assist with fall rate and stability, there was the potential for things up there to get very ugly very quickly.

Hearts were pumping as the two planes took off down the runway. The first jump went relatively well, though nowhere near the record with around 17 linking up in formation. We decided our best shot at the record was going to be taking the two planes for 18,000 feet with oxygen for the rest of the weekend to buy us as much freefall time as possible.

It was on. Time to nude up and give the record a crack, so to speak!. With the added complexity of oxygen and high altitude, the mood was tense as we took off on the second jump. Those sitting in the door had blankets ready to fend off the sub-zero temperatures that we would be withstanding on the long ascent to 18k. I don't think I've ever been in a quieter plane on the ride to altitude, with a mixture of focus and nervous energy filling the silence.

We exited calmly and cleanly and the base formed, followed by a steady stream of nudies filling in the formation. As we reached break-off height it was clear that we had come very close, but hadn't quite broken the record. As it turned out, we managed to get 21 skydivers in formation, with a few jumpers getting tantalisingly close but not quite making it in.



Unfortunately, that's where the weekend took a sudden turn for the worse. Upon landing, I saw what no skydiver ever wants to see – a fellow skydiver down on the ground with people running towards them. My stomach dropped as I ran over to them. Suddenly the record attempt meant absolutely nothing and I was just hoping that they were ok.

Our coach Ben Nordkamp had suffered an extremely hard opening, which resulted in his femur snapping on deployment. He had massive bright red bruises across his torso from where his harness had ripped across his body without the protection of a jumpsuit, and he was in a lot of pain. Although he was seriously uncomfortable, Ben remained in good spirits while waiting for the ambulance, and was in even better spirits after taking a few good hard hits off the green whistle once the ambos arrived! Eventually he was stabilised and was airlifted from the drop zone to a standing ovation from everyone at Ramblers.

We then had to ask the question: do we continue with the record attempt? It didn't take long to answer – there was unanimous agreement from the jumpers that we wanted to continue. Many thanks to Alan Moss who appeared out of absolutely nowhere and seamlessly slid into the coach role for the remainder of the weekend.

We had lost much of the day to Ben's injury and a weather hold, but we still had time to get a few more jumps in. Unfortunately however, the bad news kept coming. The planes had somehow run out of oxygen, and it wasn't going to be possible for Ramblers to get more over the weekend. This was bitterly disappointing, and meant that we would need to break the record from 14,000 feet.





We vowed to push on and to break the record in honour of Ben, who had only just returned to jumping after coming back from a previous injury, and who was already battling other health issues.

Despite our very best efforts however, we were unable to break the record during the weekend. It's not possible to point to any one event that caused us to miss out on the record. On a jump like this, it only takes one mistake, one rushed grip, one burble, to ruin the jump. The combination of added time pressure from 14,000ft, relatively inexperienced and unfamiliar jumpers, and the mental distraction of Ben's injury made an already challenging task insurmountable.

It's hard to describe how gutting it was to spend six months planning the record attempt and to fall just short. Many of our jumpers felt that we could have got the record with one more jump from 18,000 feet. But it wasn't to be. In the lead up we were concerned about getting the numbers and the weather forecast, and never imagined the weekend would turn out the way it did. But it's a sobering reminder that what we do in the sky isn't without its dangers, and I'm grateful that things didn't turn out any worse than they did.

Even though the record remains standing, we managed to raise over \$20,000 for MS Queensland, and had the opportunity to spread awareness for MS via national TV, radio and newspapers. Over the last six months I've gotten to know a lot of skydivers and shared a lot of laughs and lessons along the way. It was an incredibly special experience to see so many skydivers coming together in support of the cause, and to hear stories from those living with MS and their families and friends across Australia.

With all drop zones in coronavirus lockdown there's no possibility for a re-attempt at the moment. But plenty of our jumpers have expressed a desire to have another go at the record in the near future. We'd love to hear from any other jumpers who would like to get involved if a re-attempt does go ahead.



We received support from so many people, but I want to express my deepest thanks to a few amazing individuals in particular:

- My partner, Kaitlyn Sapier: For pouring your heart and soul into this project over the past six months, and for giving me the strength to push on even when things seemed impossible or hopeless. This was all for you.
- Ben Nordkamp: From day one you were there to provide support and coaching, even while dealing with your own injuries and health issues.
- Sonya Gelman: Your enthusiasm and guidance in regards to the media allowed us to spread our message further than we ever could have imagined.
- Steve Fitchett: For turning up to multiple training camps and the event, capturing the jumps, and editing countless photos and videos to allow us to share the experience with others.
- Leanne Critchley, Kristina Hicks and Vikki Girvin: The support and generous funding provided by SQPC allowed this event and all of the training camps to take place.
- Every single jumper who got their bits out: Many jumpers spent thousands of dollars on jump tickets, tunnel time and interstate flights to take part in this event. Thank you all for dedicating your time, money and energy towards this crazy idea in the name of charity.





BEN NORDKAMP

ON A NUDE JUMP... WITH A BROKEN FEMUR ON OPENING!



Back when Ben could taste the beer.

On the nude record jump I was jumping a Sabre2 190. When I purchased the canopy it had recently been relined, and I'd done about 60 jumps on it. But the canopy had to go into hibernation while I had eleven months off from a dislocated shoulder.

When I came back jumping, I did seven hop'n'pops and decided the canopy was flying nicely and opening okay. A week before the record attempt, I did a terminal opening and it seemed to open quite fine. On the day of the record, we did a normal jump from 14,000ft to see how everyone looked in the jump, before going for the nude record attempt, that's when I had the real hard opening.

During the record attempt, I was part of the base. I watched all the outside people track away, then it was our turn to track off at about 5,000ft. I turned and tracked for a while and realised I was catching a couple of people, so I stopped. Once they were far enough away, I deployed.

During deployment, I had a very hard wrenching from the left-hand side of my canopy upwards, which whiplashed sideways through my body. As soon as the left side opened the right side opened and whipped me through the opposite way.

When it first happened, I wasn't sure if I had dislocated my hip or something else. I did a quick adjustment on the harness and I thought I had better turn the parachute around to see where I was going and make sure I could get home, where all the traffic was, etc. Once I had done all of that, I decided to adjust my legs again. It was then I realised it was not my hip that was dislocated, it was something else.

My first thought after that was that I must have pulled the spear out from the femur, as I have an artificial hip. I did not have a lot of time to adjust around and my leg was swinging in the breeze. I just grabbed my leg with my left toe and hooked it so when I did turns it wouldn't swing out.

My next venture was to find a nice, safe place to land. I didn't know where to land. Down the back? Obviously, I was naked. I decided the best place to land was maybe in front of the Snake Pit, because, maybe there were fewer people there. I was hoping I could land there and get a nice, safe landing... I was very lucky, there was a little bit of a traffic problem, but that went away, and I was able to land bringing the canopy to a full stop at about 20mm from the ground. I half-stood up on my left foot and then fell backwards on my left hip. It was then very clear that there was definitely something wrong as my leg was sticking out at a funny angle.

I remember having to yell for help. Because my landing was not too bad, nobody had really taken much notice of it. Robin Spedding ran over and asked, "Is your shoulder alright, mate?" I responded, "Robin, my shoulder is

fine, don't worry about my shoulder, it's my leg, there is something wrong with my leg." He said, "Do you need an ambulance?" I said, "Yep, I DEFINITELY need an ambulance." I can't remember all the faces but there were quite a few people around to see how I was going and Wayne covered me up with a towel.

I don't have any answers for what went wrong. I know there were a couple of inches line difference in the risers when I packed it. I have packed thousands of parachutes, and I have had them more out of alignment than that with no problem on deployment. Other than that, I will have to check the trim on the canopy when I get it back and do a full check of not just the trim but where the cascades are made. I think it was a non-factory line set put on it. I will need to check that to make sure, in my own mind what happened.

If it wasn't that then what can I say? That this was one of those – one in nearly 12,000 jumps – pack jobs. Other than a Mr Bill I did a few years ago that was pretty hard, this was the hardest opening I have ever had in my life.

Obviously, breaking your femur on an opening is an unusual situation. It's pretty rare! The only other one I know of was down in Goulburn in September last year where a student was very unstable, and on his head when he deployed, resulting in a broken femur.

My situation was completely different. I wasn't tracking. I was poised. I just deployed on the spot. The harness was in a good position. Everything was as it should be. I have never heard of a case similar to mine. To investigate, I asked on social media, contacted people I know, riggers, including people overseas, and no one has heard of anything similar.

My doctor seems to think that, possibly, because I have a metal hip, the bone is compromised and that there might be a bone density issue, which I will need to get checked once I am back up and about. The reason it broke where it did was because of the spear holding my femur to the metal hip. The break was straight across, an inch below the spear. There's a big pin attached to the outside of the bone, not in the middle of the bone.





INTERNATIONAL SKYDIVING HALL OF FAME

Faye Cox

By Kelly Brennan

A LOVE STORY AND A PUB TAUNT BROUGHT ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST ENDURING SKYDIVERS INTO OUR SPORT, AND SHE HAS SPENT THE NEXT 55 YEARS MAKING THINGS HAPPEN. FAYE COX IS ONE OF ONLY A HANDFUL TO RECEIVE THE APF'S HIGHEST HONOUR, MASTER OF SPORT PARACHUTING, AND NOW SHE'S BEING RECOGNISED ON THE GLOBAL STAGE, JOINING THE INTERNATIONAL SKYDIVING HALL OF FAME.

Perth-born Faye Glassford stopped in Tully during travels around Australia, and found herself at a skydiver's party. Jim Cox made a loud arrival in the room and she first thought, "Who's that smart arse?" But that didn't stop her going home with him that night!

Faye did her first jump soon afterwards. And a second which also went well.

On her third jump, Faye landed on a roof, and she rejected the offer of a ladder. When she jumped down, she injured her ankle. During her recovery, she bought herself an old Navy container and a patched up canopy. But a macho skydiver had a go at her in a Sydney pub. "You'll never use that, girl," he said. "You're only bullshitting. You probably won't do any more jumps!"

He obviously didn't know Faye very well. In the next six years, she became the first Australian woman to do a thousand jumps. She did 5,000 all up, representing Australia at five World Championships. Plus she gave back to the sport in many different ways.

Faye never set out to be a role model. "I was just a silly young girl doing it because I wanted to prove what I could do," she laughed.

She said many of today's women in our sport have been doing what they want to do, and haven't wanted to be seen

as role models. But she thought leading by example was still important. "You have to think about what you're doing because people are watching," she said.

But, back to the love story part of it. Jim and Faye married in Perth in 1968, and they started their first DZ near Townsville in 1969 with another married couple. Sadly, their friends were shot dead a few years later, when Faye was pregnant with their daughter, Carolyn.

Faye's hair was finally allowed free during the pregnancy, after 15 years of high maintenance hair straightening, even when she was living on the most basic drop zones.

After their only child arrived, the curly-haired Coxes ran a drop zone at Manton, north-west of Townsville, for 27 years. The DZ was dubbed Golliwog Farm. Carolyn and the family dog also had the trademark curls.

Faye gave away jumping in 2003 and kept up her tireless volunteer work with Asiana, as well as her APF judging. She lost Jim to mesothelioma (a swift and aggressive form of asbestos cancer) in 2009. There was more pain when Carolyn's family had a car crash. It was a time of great reflection on life priorities, and it shaped the next phase of Faye's life.

Nowadays, Faye has stepped away from our sport and is into writing music, singing, playing table tennis



Jim & Faye



INTERNATIONAL SKYDIVING HALL OF FAME 2020 CELEBRATION

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and staying fit. She keeps in touch with many skydivers, and she enjoys time in the wind tunnel with Carolyn and the two grand-children, Cayden and Jameela.

Faye was awarded the Asiaia Lifetime Achievement Award when she retired last year after 25 years of driving things along. *"I had free reign,"* she explained about the early days of the organisation. *"I just invented things and tried to keep it simple."* It got pretty challenging along the way with up to thirty member countries at one point, and many of them were military-based.

"I hope it continues to develop and provide competition and safety in the Asian and Australian region."

After years of simply sticking with 35 as her magic age number, she's says, *"I'm not planning on getting old yet!"* She certainly doesn't look it.

Faye is due to be inducted into the International Skydiving Hall of Fame in October. Like many skydiving events, this celebration in Florida is up in the air. She's hoping to take the family on a special trip to celebrate.

She's shocked, surprised and really humbled to be given the honour. *"I'm just so lucky to think that people have good things to say about me!"*

Faye's Achievements

- FIRST JUMP IN TULLY, 1965.
- COMPLETED 5,000 JUMPS IN 38 YEARS JUMPING.
- 1971 - FIRST AUSTRALIAN WOMAN TO DO 1,000 JUMPS.
- 1970 TO 1986 – COMPETED AT FIVE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS.
- RAN DROP ZONES FOR 30+ YEARS.
- HELPED FORM NQPC AND QPA. ALSO LONG TERM ADMINISTRATOR.
- JUMP PILOT.
- CHIEF INSTRUCTOR, INSTRUCTOR EXAMINER, BOARD MEMBER, BOARD OF REVIEW CHAIR.
- FIRST SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ASIANIA. INVOLVED 1994-2019.
- FAI JUDGE – CANOPY FORMATION, STYLE, ACCURACY, ARTISTIC, CANOPY PILOTING.

1970 Aussie Team heading to Bled



1982 Aussie Ladies Team going to Lucenec



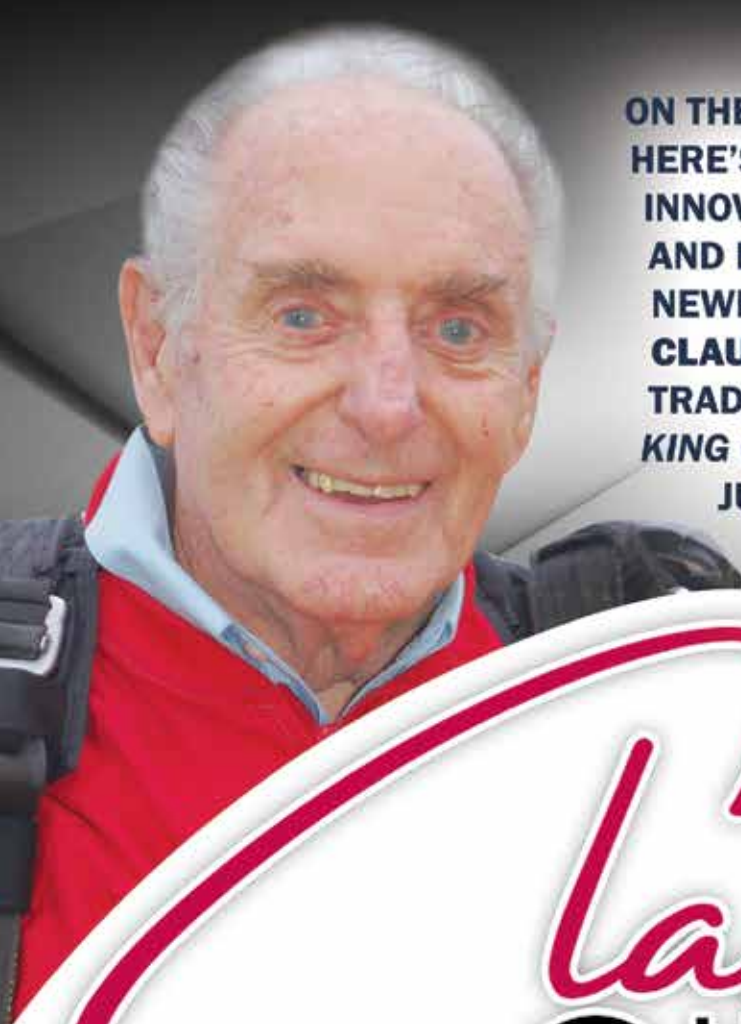
Masters of Sport Parachuting: Claude, Col, Faye, Macca and Andy

Still having fun



Jean Burns & Faye



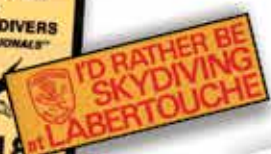


ON THE APF'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY, HERE'S A TRIBUTE TO OUR ORIGINAL INNOVATOR, INFLUENCER AND ENTREPRENEUR. MANY NEWER SKYDIVERS HAVE SEEN CLAUDE GILLARD BELT OUT HIS TRADITIONAL AFTER DINNER SONG, KING OF THE AIR, WITHOUT REALISING JUST HOW MUCH MOVING AND SHAKING HE HAS DONE, OR FOR HOW LONG.



Claude GILLARD

Living Legend



By Kelly Brennan

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS...



Claude Gillard Junior was born in March 1928, not long before Charles Kingsford Smith flew the *Southern Cross* from California to Brisbane. His parents, Iris and Claude, would have marvelled at the feat, unaware their own bundle of joy would also become an aviation pioneer.

Claude grew up through the great depression in Melbourne. He worked a few different jobs over the years, including time as a merchant marine, a waterside worker and 11 years with the Victorian Railways.

He found his calling in the 2 Commando Company

of the Citizens Military Forces. That's where he first earned his parachuting wings in 1959, launching a remarkable career that would shape the future of Australian skydiving.

THE APF'S EARLY DAYS...

According to popular legend, Claude started the APF and ran the whole thing for decades. That's an exaggeration, but it isn't too far from the truth.

Claude was a self-described 'stirrer' when Bob Milligan started the APF in 1960. He said he only got involved because he wanted affiliation with FAI and officials in local areas. Claude wrote a manifesto for the federation's leaders and was installed as Secretary two years later. He worked on a constitution and paperwork for the new structure, which introduced state councils. (Fun fact: In those days, members at council meetings would hand write copies of the Op Regs, partly to learn the regulations and partly to save on printing costs.)



In 1966, Claude became the APF's fifth President, and he took on much of the federation workload, running the APF Office from his home in suburban Melbourne. He served stints as National Safety Officer, Chairman of the Board, National Coach and Executive Director. Through this time, there was plenty of Vic v NSW rivalry, so Canberra was chosen when the APF bought its first building, APF House, in the late 1980s.

COMPETITION AND SPORT SAFETY...

While Claude Gillard was best known for his admin roles, he was also quite the superstar in his early days of jumping. He achieved many impressive firsts in safety, development and competition.

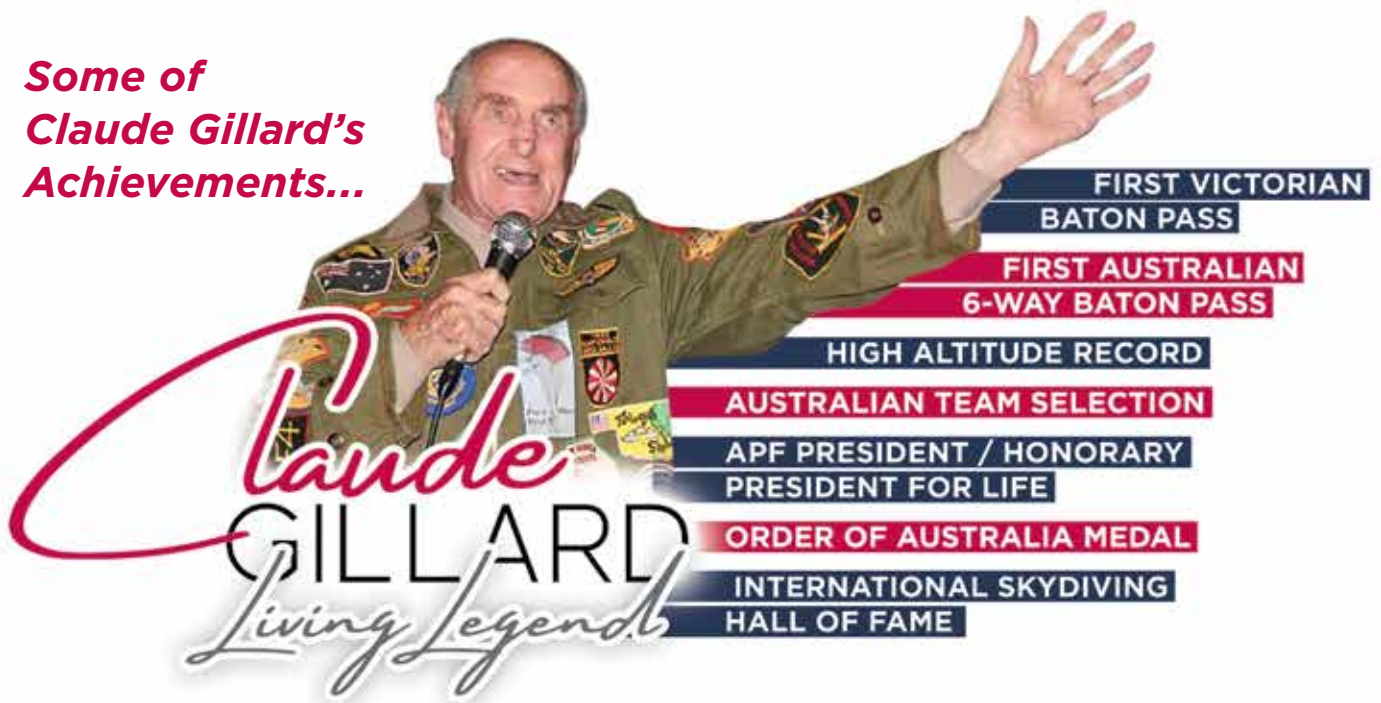
Claude was involved in Static Line training when they were only just learning about the benefits of a hard arch, thanks to some visiting Puerto Ricans. He was passionate about training, writing the original

Parachute Instructor Manual which was ahead of its time in the early seventies. He also developed instructor courses and introduced the first coaching accreditation requirement.

In 1961, Claude was on a record high altitude jump from 23,600ft. In the earliest days of relative work, he was part of Victoria's first 2-Man baton pass (1962), and later a national 6-Man baton pass record (1964).



Some of Claude Gillard's Achievements...



FIRST VICTORIAN
BATON PASS

FIRST AUSTRALIAN
6-WAY BATON PASS

HIGH ALTITUDE RECORD

AUSTRALIAN TEAM SELECTION

APF PRESIDENT / HONORARY
PRESIDENT FOR LIFE

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL

INTERNATIONAL SKYDIVING
HALL OF FAME

Claude was a successful competitor in the earliest Style and Accuracy competitions. He secured a place on the Australian team for several of the World Championships in the sixties, but he elected to stay here and concentrate on APF duties instead of making the long and expensive journeys. In later years, he attended more than 30 WPCs as a judge or team official, and he likened them to a drug. "Every time Australia won a medal, it was a high that you will never forget!" he said.

CLUBS AND BUSINESSES...

Claude's name was front and centre for several of our earliest clubs, but he was also one of our first commercial entrepreneurs.

He was involved in the Victorian Parachute School at Pakenham, along with Commando Skydivers and Southern Cross Skydivers. In those pioneering days, the clubs only had one or two rigs, and jumpers would arrive before dawn to get their name on a list for a turn at leaping from a Tiger Moth or an Auster. The pilot would usually be the dispatcher. "A student refusal to jump was considered to be a slur on the club," Claude once said. "So we kicked em off!"

Good old-fashioned club 'politics' were the trigger for Claude starting the Labertouche Sport Parachute Centre with a mate, Bill Molloy. Members at Southern Cross Skydivers wouldn't spend £200 on landing mats, but they voted to spend £300 on a Christmas party.

Labertouche was Australia's first commercial centre, and it soon had a Pilatus Porter taking 11 people to 17,000 feet. "We all wanted to move ahead, do new things and do them well," explained Claude. He felt that going commercial made skydiving professional, so people could earn a good living from it.

Claude was also an equipment innovator. In the early days, he'd dabbled with dyeing the various round chutes to make them more colourful. He also established Southern Cross Parachutes and put his name to the Gilstar canopy. Later, he introduced the Piggyback system to Australia and he brought in the first Ram Air (square) canopy.

KING OF THE AIR...

It's hard to summarise just how much respect Claude earned as an influencer, not just back in those early days but for several decades. He had the ear of government and aviation leaders. He was elected to significant positions in Australian aviation bodies and around the globe.

From the late sixties, for about 30 years, Claude took on numerous volunteer roles with the global bodies, the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) and the International Parachuting Commission (IPC).





He gets a new angle on the parachute divers



SKY FILMS WITH NO HANDS

SKY DIVERS Claude Gillard was the source of the aerial shots for the ABC film, "The New Zealanders" has tripped up the unusual attraction to hold and light his 16mm camera.

Sky Divers in Record Baton Pass

Six parachutists, including a woman, equalled a world record and set up an Australian and Commonwealth record at Fakenham East yesterday.

HIGH ADVENTURE IS JUST A STEP AWAY AT LABERTOUCHE SPORT PARACHUTE CENTRE



He received the first Order of Australia Medal for parachuting in 1981 after twenty years of contribution, and his efforts were just as strong for another 30 years after that.

RETIREMENT PROJECTS...

Claude has been driven by two major goals in his retirement years.

In the 1990s, he devoted all of his time, energy and savings towards creating a national Sports Aviation Centre at Wangaratta in Victoria. His aim was a Centre of Excellence for instructor training and a world class DZ to host competitions. But it wasn't to be, and Claude eventually conceded that his vision wasn't widely shared across the sport.

Claude's other big mission has been to preserve the history of skydiving in Australia. He has gathered photos, stories and manifest records about thousands of people and events.

Like many of the other 'old boys' of skydiving, Claude moved to Queensland for his sunset years. He lived on the DZ at Toogoolawah at first, helped out by Dave McEvoy. And he kept travelling to as many skydiving events as he could manage, often on road trips with his old mate Bruce Towers.

Claude feigned reluctance each time he was dragged up to sing 'King of the Air', often wearing his iconic coat

of many colours which is covered in skydiving badges. During one performance at an APF conference his false teeth went flying, but Claude laughed as hard as the audience.

His friends travelled from all over Australia for his 90th birthday, and Claude had a ball.

CIRCLE OF LIFE...

Last year, aged 91, Claude moved into an aged care home in Toogoolawah. He'd had some injuries and health issues, and his memory was playing up on him. "From his courtyard he can keep an eye on the jump runs," says APF CEO Richard McCooley, who helps look after Claude's wellbeing and finances. "Dave McEvoy takes him to the DZ for regular visits."

"Claude still likes to know what is happening in Australian and world skydiving," says Richard, who began jumping at Claude's Labertouche DZ back in 1980.

He has made friends around the globe, and he has never stopped dreaming of ways to make our sport better.

Claude Gillard has carried many different titles during his years at the forefront of skydiving. He was originally "Gillard of Doveton", aka GOD. He was later dubbed the 'Father', or 'Grandfather', of Australian Skydiving. To many he simply reigns supreme as 'King of the Air. Long may he wear the crown.'



Guess Who?

**ICARUS
CANOPIES
NZ**

For T&Cs and How To Enter go to
nzaerosports.com/guesswho
to guess who's who in this zoo.

WIN 30% OFF A CANOPY FROM NZ AEROSPORTS.

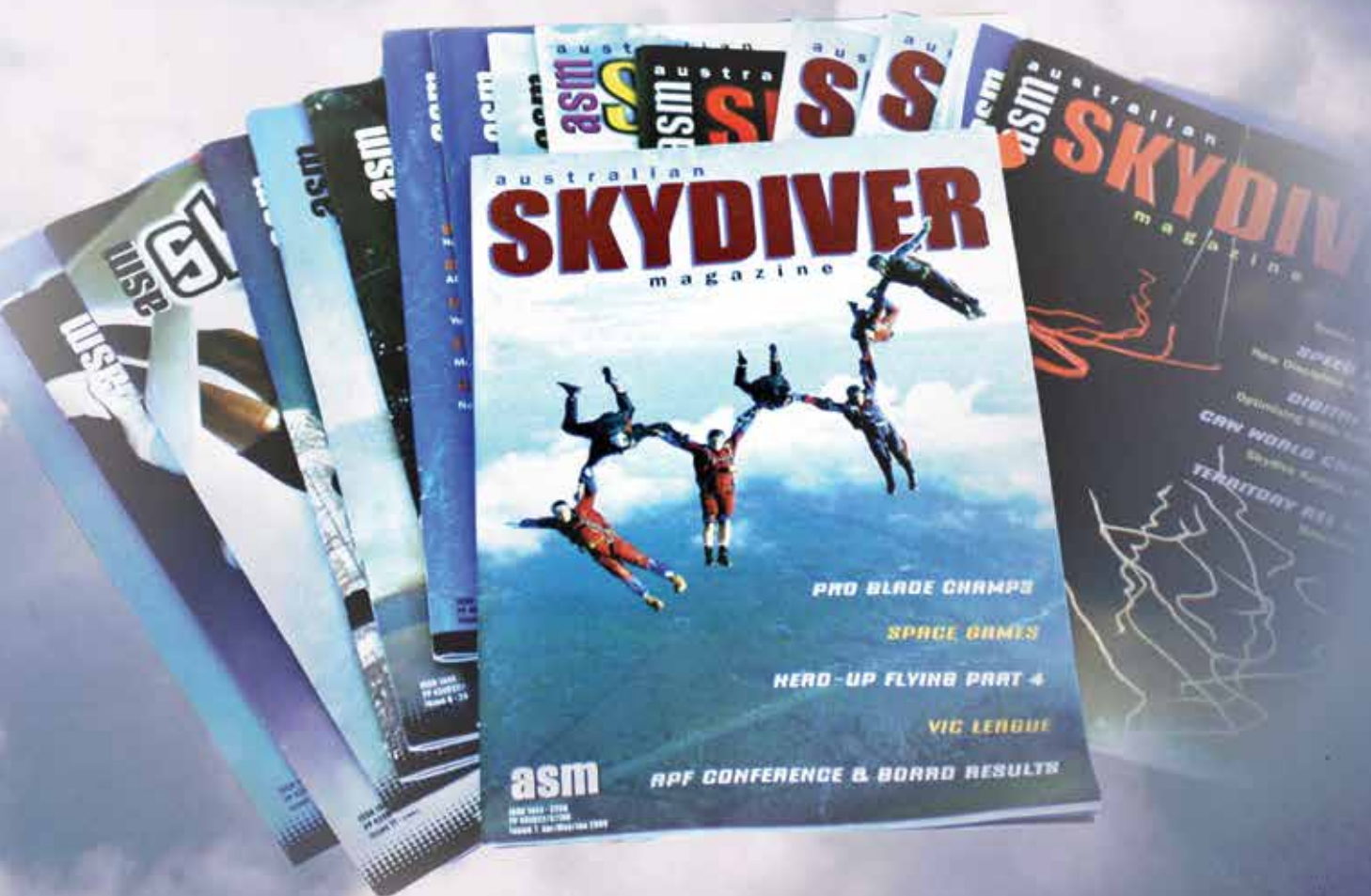
HINTS

1. All these people are regular jumpers and quite well known.
2. All have been jumping for at least 20 years.
3. All are APF members, except one who lives in NZ.





**CONGRATULATIONS
COVERING 20 YEARS
OF SKYDIVING**

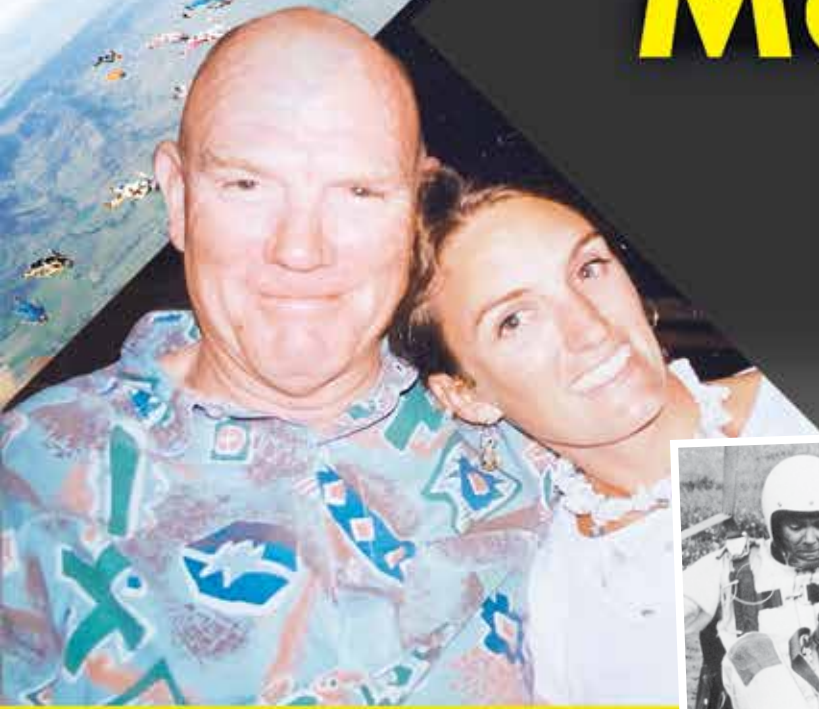


*THANK YOU ASM FOR KEEPING US CLOSE TO THE
AWESOME AUSTRALIAN SKYDIVING COMMUNITY.*

The McEVOYS

A DAUGHTER'S PERSPECTIVE

David McEvoy & Susie McLachlan



Dad and Uncle John late 60s

Give him a XXXX Gold beer and a sunset, a bonfire or a bar, and Dad can tell tales 'til the sun comes up. Ask him to do an interview with me and he goes quiet. Not interested. So modest. Really doesn't see why people may find his stories interesting.

Give him a will to make a change in the sport for the better or to keep the bastards honest, he'll stand up tall and make his voice heard regardless of the backlash. Ask him to tell me a couple of my favourite stories for the mag and he doesn't answer my calls. Not interested. Zero ego. Doesn't want me to get into trouble for being too McEvoy or too South Qld heavy.

My grandiose ideas of theming the content of this special 20th anniversary magazine included showcasing the very few outstanding second generation drop zone operating families such as the Onis's, the Smiths', the other Smith's and us McEvoy's. There's no issue more special to me right now than this 100th one. He had his chance to tell, now it's up to me to give the daughter's perspective. It feels a bit naughty, in a reversed twenty first speech kind of way!

My official justification to him and to you is: He's the only one of the elite six Master of Sport Parachuting award recipients who hasn't had a profile in the mag. Boom.

So here goes... Susie Mc

He first saw parachutes as a little kid and was immediately hooked. Years later he had to choose his career in life. His inherited position as great and noble Publican was ripped away from him (and his siblings).

As much as it still hurts to this day, he's realistic about it, and figured he would have definitely drunk the profits of the Madang Pub and would probably be six foot under by now.

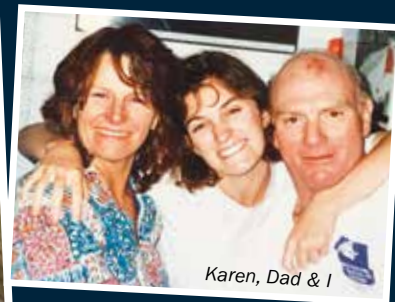
So after boarding school at Nudgee College he followed his big brother John to the Gatton Agricultural College. While doing a field practical lesson a Cessna 182 flew over. The teacher was a member of the Queensland Parachute Club and the tractor slippage practical lesson turned into a parachute training recruitment session. Dad forged his mum's signature and organised his first group of nine new students. They all did their first static line jump 18th June 1967 at the QPC DZ at Purga. And that was the end of Nudgee College and any 'normal' existence.

Dad absolutely idolises his big brother John and when John started jumping too all those years ago Dad was thrilled. He and John spent years jumping together, and John was flying too. John did about 1,000 jumps and flew 1,000 loads back in those early days, and has since made a career as a commercial pilot and flying Casa's for the Military, and now the Caravans at Toogoolawah in his semi-retirement. (I don't think either of them could ever give up jumping or flying). Fast forward to 2010 and the addition of Homer (yellow Caravan) to the family, and Dad couldn't be happier to have John on board again, it's a magic brotherly love and respect they have.



Funny TV Advert

The MCEVOYS



Dad's little sister Karen was always following her two big brothers around, they were New Guinea kids, "adventures were ours" and she wanted to be wherever they were and do whatever they did. She recalls being twelve years old when 'Butchie' told her he was doing something so exciting that she would love too, "it's called Skydiving he said, but you'll have to wait until you're 16. Now, that was a long wait!" she recalls. At Duck Holes Creek, Caloundra Airport and with Dad as her first jump instructor and John flying the load she says, "that Static Line jump on a T U Cheapo was very thrilling on every level."

Straight away Dad was in awe of Bob Morrison and his crew, the Ramblers. They were having so much fun and he was honoured to be invited to be a Rambler with them. Dad still has an old newspaper clipping of Bob on his fridge from those days, and still thinks of him as an absolute legend. He doesn't tell too many stories about Bob as I'm certain he's still mourning his early death from a motorbike accident. Bob's tragic death left Ramblers needing a new leader and Dad was the natural successor. He'd done around 900 jumps, was an Instructor and a natural born leader.

Dad lived and breathed skydiving, so much so that he went to the 1973 Nationals (six week round trip in his 1955 MG-TF) instead of going to the hospital when I was born. Mum knew then that Dad's heart would always be with jumping, that she and I would always be second best, and so she left him so he could be at one with his true love.

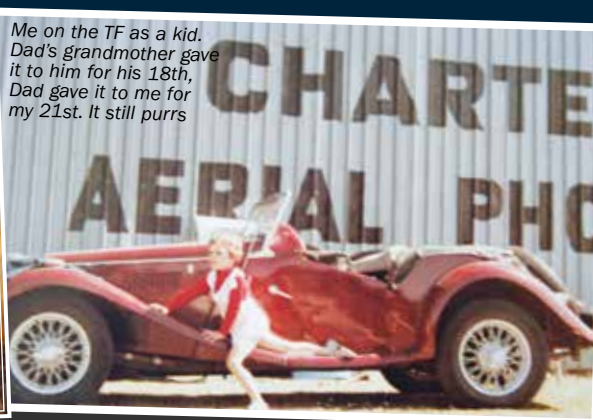
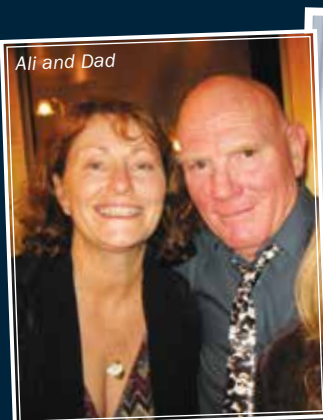
Dad kicked off his new life as a bachelor. He has always had such a soft spot for girls, yet runs a mile when he's ever remotely hit on by one. It's been funny to watch over the years. None-the-less a couple of outstanding ladies tried claiming his heart for the next 16 years, but he has been a bachelor at heart, or so he reckons, when reality is that he's been in love with Ali for nearly four decades now! I wouldn't say he's been an easy person to live with, but she understands him too, and she explains it like this, "when I say that Macca's loyalty to his sport is truly incredible, I'm not exaggerating at all. He is abhorrent of any lack of integrity within the sport and fights tooth and nail for the good of all jumpers, the APF and all within the sport and industry,

prepared to even lose his ratings if necessary. Skydiving is his life, and apart from family and friends, it has taken absolute precedence in his life."

Always so modest. He doesn't claim to be a great skydiver by any shape or form, even though he's been to a few World Meets over the years, was in the 21-Way World Record Canopy Stack and won two medals in 8-Way Sequential CRW. His first WM was in 1970 at Bled, Yugoslavia as a member of the Australian Style and Accuracy team where he placed Top Australian. He talks so fondly about Col King and Phil Whatmore, not just as great personalities, but their incredible ability. Col nailed 10 dead centres in a row at the 1968 World Meet, and Whatmore, he was the up-and-coming gun and would've been World Champion if not for landing a roundie Reserve on powerlines and being crippled.

Even as a paraplegic Phil continued jumping and his amazing accuracy skills gave him almost guaranteed pit landings every time. Phil 'went in' jumping at Gatton in 2012, and while the death of his mate was heart breaking, Dad took solace that in a crazy way it was the perfect way for Phil to go. He even said once that he was almost jealous of Whatmore bouncing, that he couldn't do it himself but what a fantastic way to go! WTF?! Phil and Dad were the best of friends and Phil's legacy as a remarkable skydiver and an extremely talented painter/artist also inspired Dad to open "The Phil Whatmore Gallery" and proudly display the art works in a specially designed building at the drop zone. Very recently, the loss of Col to Parkinson's Disease was a big blow to Dad and the world of skydiving. Col was a legend and Dad looked up to him and regarded him as a true and dear friend. Dad has many people that he looks up to, too many to mention! He is quick to give credit where credit is due.

It was after the 1970 World Meet when Dad found himself contemplating life, love and the universe in the Black Forest of Germany. He had an epiphany. He was going to go home and start a parachuting school, a proper respectable and professional one. He was going to teach people, and he was going to charge people \$5 each, and he was going to hire the planes and charge people an extra dollar per jump. He no sooner got home with his bright ideas and the knockers labelled him "Dollar Dave". He took the knocks and followed



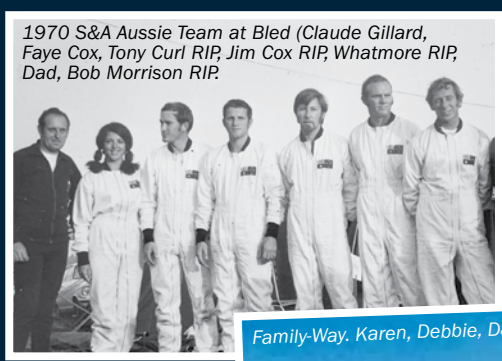
Me on the TF as a kid. Dad's grandmother gave it to him for his 18th, Dad gave it to me for my 21st. It still purrs



Dad, Chris Lee, Brad Turner, Jon Kent, Ralf Jaeger, Adam Hoppe, Stewie McNee. Bottom: Bully Bailey, Geoff Holmes & Peter Nobbs



Dad and Nobbsie over Brisbane



1970 S&A Aussie Team at Bled (Claude Gillard, Faye Cox, Tony Curl RIP, Jim Cox RIP, Whatmore RIP, Dad, Bob Morrison RIP)



My first jump



his heart, just as he's always done. Thank goodness!

He told me that story years and years ago when we were going on one of our McEvoy Family holidays in the Twin Bonanza. "White Knuckle Airways" they called him. Anyway there we were, burning down to Lismore to visit Aunty Barbara, Nun of Diamond year proportions. Yes we had a proper Nun in our family, probably to balance out all our mischief! Anyway, Dad had just had the Bonanza done up and he was in love with it... beautiful paint job and slick interior, complete with 10-stacker CD player, unbelievable technology at the time. We were roaring along, headphones on, music cranking, loving every second of it, when SuperTramp's "Dreamer" came on shuffle. That song reminded him of all those years ago, being told he was 'just a dreamer'.

Dad's probably reading this right now and thinking, oh no, she's not going to tell the story about taking Aunty Barbara for a joyflight in the Bonanza when her passenger door flung open and her nun's veil came off exposing her head... Or the time we flew to Tyagarah and slept under the wing only to be woken up by a fuel drip on our heads.

He has definitely dreamed big. Mostly it's been a raging success. Airshows, hiring big planes for big events, 25 years of night demos into the Ekka, TV shows and crazy advertisements, Equinox Boogies, bringing the Bell to the bar. The list goes on, and it's a long list after 50+ years going for it.

The irony of Dollar Dave is that skydiving has never been that profitable for him. He's driven around in beat up cars for most of my life and as Ali says, "it always makes me chuckle when I watch him walking out to the plane with the ass hanging out of his jumpsuit. People think he's rich, and he certainly is, but money plays no part in his wealth."

He's not much of a material person, but he has spent every cent that he's had, and not even had, on



Family-Way. Karen, Debbie, Dad & Kylie, me & Junior

Toogoolawah. First buying the land and developing it with two partners 40 years ago, and then in later years having to buy the drop zone again, and then again! (Death of one partner and business breakdown with the other). Setbacks that made him stronger.

He moved the old Queensland homestead onsite (the Clubhouse) and then later more accommodation buildings (the Huts) to accommodate the jumpers and the international jumpers coming for training camps and other big events he was planning. He hasn't stopped developing the drop zone – the Turkey Hut (that name came about from a rival DZ jumper after an old local who referred to the DZ as McEvoy's Turkey Farm), then the Rigging Loft and the Snake Pit for even more packing shade, the various toilet blocks, and recently he's put more lavish style ensued accommodation in.

On the other side of the 'Stanley Dallas Airstrip', which he also built from scratch, are the two hangars to house his beloved two Cessna Caravans 'Homer' and 'Marj' and little 'Charlie' the 182. There's more accommodation there for pilots too. Then there's all the parachuting equipment and student training facilities etc. and various comforts which he delights in adding to his dream DZ. He wanted to buy land for a drop zone all those years ago because they kept getting kicked out of places all the time for having too much fun and being a bit rowdy. Truth be told it was probably because the locals were fed up with hearing the next drunken rendition of the incredibly offensive "Ramblers Raiders". He wanted somewhere for



Stewie McNee, Nobbs, Holmes, Dad & Paddy McHugh



One night after Ekka night demos in Elvis suits from Four Roses Commercial

The MCEVOYS

Landing a 3-stack into the 1988 Commonwealth Games



the jumpers to go, somewhere to call home and never have to worry about being kicked out of again. And that will no doubt be his legacy.

Back in the 80s when tandems had not long been happening he had two tandem rigs and it was great times. Tandems revolutionised everything. Things were going great and he had another two tandems rigs on order and then the "Point Break" movie came out. He promptly changed the order to ten rigs! To this day he still says, "Thank you Mr Swayze" for saving his business that time and putting skydiving on the to-do list for so many.

He also thanks ex-jumper and his long-time friend come bookkeeper come business mentor, Margaret Anderson for saving his business again. He's always saying, "she's the brains" and "if it wasn't for her". He had a bit of luck along the way too, about to file for bankruptcy one time and he scratched \$100K. True story. He used to buy the scratchies that you could scratch off one section and know you've got a winner, but not scratch off the prize for ages as he liked to savour the idea of maybe having the big one. He reckons he walked around with that winning ticket in his top pocket for a month before he sat down one night and actually scratched the big one. He then had to endure the night with his celebratory self not losing the ticket, flushing it or doing something stupid with it before he could go to cash it in the next day.

He's had his share of bad luck too. I had about 50 jumps when I was out in the landing area with a couple of people watching Dad and the boys take off for a Demo at Lindville. The 172 took off into the west, then next minute was coming back in to land to the east, then was too deep so tried to take off again, and hit the powerlines over the road and crashed big time. It was a horror show. Dad had a broken back and his bald head was scalped, with blood dripping from head to toe. He was on the stretcher arguing with the ambulance when I got to him. He said to me, "Susie darlin, tell these guys I don't want no (bleep bleeping) blood transfusion, and can you ring the Lindville demo and tell 'em we're not coming." And that's the point in time that take-offs have since scared me senseless, especially when we're all going for a jump together, with John flying. The scenario of orphaning my children is not easy to shake off sometimes!

When I think about growing up at the drop zone, well, visiting on the occasional weekend and most school holidays, the first word that comes to mind is 'spontaneous'. Personalities would suddenly arrive, planes would fly in or do beat ups, parties would erupt out of nowhere. Something was always happening. We'd always be going to a demo somewhere. I think that's why I love to Ground Crew, it's just an extension of so many great childhood memories. Whenever I strike a smoke flare it takes me back to my childhood. I think it's also why I've never done demo jumps myself. When it's good, it's good. When it's bad, it's bad. None moreso than when Auntie Karen and cousin Dave Jnr collided under canopy over the Ekka at night, and spiralled into the arena in front of everyone. Words don't describe.



My 1,000th, Dad's first hybrid hang



Bethany



TM Karen with Pru after a tandem



Another fun TV Commercial

Or how about the time I was sitting in the grandstand with Nana watching the test jump for the 1988 Commonwealth Games, when a big hail storm rolled in after they exited. We saw parachutes briefly and then never again, vanished. The storm sent them flying back up, and eventually landing suburbs away battered and bruised by hail stones as big as cricket balls. So many stories!

Dad was laid up from the plane crash, and Karen was still recovering from breaking nearly every bone in her body at the Ekka, and Junior was still on crutches, when I broke my leg on my 79th jump. Damn that ditch! So the whole lot of us were out at this stage, the week before the second Equinox Boogie in 1996. We all watched from the good times from our verandahs! My then friend, and future husband, gave me a pair of binoculars for the boogie. He's always been a provider.

My husband Wayne is one of the finest human beings on this planet, and was a great mate to Dad and a real asset around the drop zone. Dad (and many others) didn't approve of our 'fling' as Dad didn't, and I quote, *"want to lose another good mate"*. Twenty four years later and it turns out he gained grandkids as well as a best mate.

Wayne and Dad share the same passion and love of skydiving, the undying kind of love. Sometimes I think Wayne loves his Leia more than me! We all love jumping for sure, but they are in that rare breed of people who have taken it 10 steps further. Addiction has too negative a connotation, it's a beautiful love affair they have with jumping. Both couldn't care less what kind of jump they do, or with whom they jump, where, when or why, and it's their natural safety first instinct to look after the entire plane load of people. Wayne hates empty slots in the plane, he considers that the ultimate of waste.

Toogoolawah has made more than one great marriage, and wedding. I won't tell the one about Mikey & Rhianna's wedding... So many life-long friendships, relationships, babies are still being made there all the time. Dad loves it. He loves all the people. He is proud of his family of jumpers. Little Sister Karen inspires him, now that she's not so naughty! She's done thousands of jumps and never let that Ekka accident beat her. She's still jumping, Dad says she's still the best First Jump Course instructor he's ever had. She says, *"it's because he taught me, and he also taught me to be proud to say and be a skydiving instructor."* You'll see her at the drop zone every day, cheeky smiles, taking happy snaps. Karen's oldest daughter Pru worked manifest and office for years, and youngest daughter Debbie was a talented jumper, clocking up thousands of jumps, Freely medals and instructing full time for nearly a decade.



David McEvoy Jnr is actually John's son. He always wanted to be an instructor and Dad made him finish high school before giving him a full time job. He was one of the first full time staff more than 20 years ago when Dad was trying to get midweek jumping happening. Dad was so proud of Junior (and Martin Hutchinson) when he bought the concept of Freeflying to the DZ. Junior resisted the push to do his Tandem rating for years, Macca persisted. Dad gets a kick out of the annual phone call from Junior, letting him know he's done another thousand jumps and thanking him for making him go to the dark side.

Dad's youngest sister Amanda worked in the office for years too, her son Zach did his AFF Course. Dad's eldest daughter, my 'Secret Sister', Kylie (another censored story) is the Rock Star that Dad always wanted to be, and has clocked up a couple of dozen tandems while she's organised the 'Nox Rocks' Music Festivals alongside the boogies. Now we're up to third generation as Kylie's daughter Bethany is currently doing her B-Rels.

Dad's always been about student training, and regards Toogoolawah as a breeding ground, where jumpers get their wings. I've always struggled with jumpers/friends leaving for greener pastures or worse, giving up jumping! But I've learnt that it's all part of the gig. So many people have come and gone over the decades. Some never leave, like Ben Nordkamp, staunch, has been part of the furniture for 30 years. Some come back, like Jon Kent 20 years later.

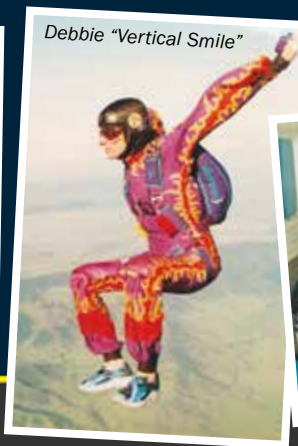
Me? Well, I never really wanted to jump solo, I've always been too much of a fraidy cat. Tandems were always a bit different though, the security of being strapped on to your big, tough Dad took away all fears there. My first jump was



Junior and Martin



My two favourite men



Debbie "Vertical Smile"



Putting all our eggs in one basket for John's return to the skies a few years ago.



Wayne and I with future manifestor Charlee



Blair, the future, hope he's got big shoulders

a bit of a publicity stunt - Australia's first father/daughter tandem, for my 17th birthday. I can still remember climbing out onto the strut, so scary, it still takes my breath away to this day climbing out onto the strut, and the TV helicopter buzzing around us under canopy. I did plenty of tandems in the early days, 18 of them, into demos, at night, over the city, with pyrotechnics to ignite, on very long spots... even so, I always felt safe on tandems, ignorance is bliss, no responsibilities, just like going on a ride at the show.

I was at Uni full time and working manifest on the weekends. I used to get asked when I was going to do the course ALL the time. It became a bit of a problem. Some die hard skydivers couldn't accept that I wouldn't jump when I was so privileged, "had it all on a silver platter" they'd say, "what a waste", trying to guilt me into it. He's always said the skydiving is the easy part of running a drop zone, it's the personality managing that's the hardest. My wise father gave me an excuse, he said that I, "wasn't allowed to do the course until I finished Uni". At 21 years old I was sick of Uni, wanted in on the fun, and finally realised the skies were calling me. I just needed to get over my fears. When I said I was ready to do the course Dad's response was, "well Susie darlin, you WILL hurt yourself and you MIGHT die. Come back to me when you're really ready." My First Jump Course lasted three days midweek, plus all day Saturday and he was ready to jump me on Sunday! Crazy really, because I reckon I'd subliminally heard hundreds of first jump courses over the years sleeping next to the student training room!

But there's a few of Dad's greatest qualities right there - care factor through the roof, and be it for better or for worse, to tell you the stone-cold truths. No beating around the bush, no fancifying anything, just the facts, whether you want to hear it or not. Many have said over the years that Dad is unapproachable or kind of scary. I see what they mean by that shiny bald head with the massive scar, but for me his words have always been spot on.

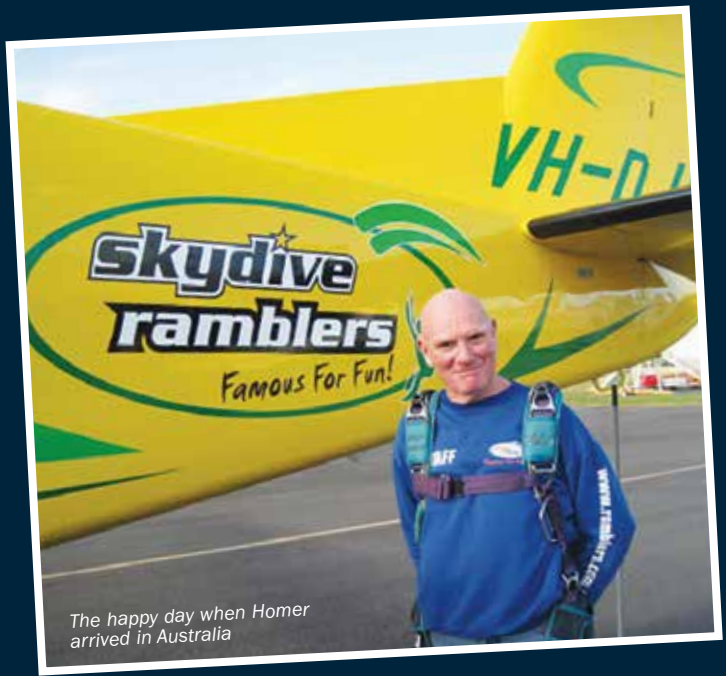
- "The truth never varies, sweetheart."
- "Believe nothing of what you hear and half of what you see."
- "Spot long into the west and short into the east."
- "This is not for the faint-hearted."
- "Common sense prevails."
- "Yes is the answer."

I've only seen Dad as a people person, a fearless leader and a fantastic story teller. There's obviously so many stories - the man is 71 years old, has been jumping for

over 50 years, is still jumping strong and is completely immersed in the sport, the drop zone and the people. My most favourite jumps are when I'm jumping with him... sit jumps at night, him leading tracking jumps, racing each other to be last out on sunset loads. It never gets old.

I am often asked about the future of Toogoolawah. I'm serious when I joke about the day Dad retires is the day he dies. There is nowhere else he wants to be except his "Home of Terminally Bewildered" and nothing else he wants to do except jump-party-sleep-repeat. Toogoolawah will be perpetual - it will always be there for the jumpers, and I'm tipping my three year old Blair will be driving it into the future.

Dad was awarded the Master of Sport Parachuting years ago because he deserved it. It's not just for winning medals at a World Meet, which is one of the tough criteria of the award, it's for the lifetime commitment to student training, to providing a place for the jumpers, to raising the bar. He also deserves an award for drinking at the bar too. Only Dad can get his favourite beer to sponsor his teams! And with that, "A for Away, B for Blast Off and C for Cya Later!"



The happy day when Homer arrived in Australia

**Got
Questions?
Get
Answers!**

Learning Curve Camps

Charmaine Nielsen and pilot Dom Greener putting the bins out during DZ isolation. Photo by Drew (Matthew Drew)

2020

29th June - 3rd July

31st August - 4th September

19th October - 23rd Pre-Nox Get Current Camp

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**EQUINOX
2020**

BREAKING NEWS

LIVE FROM RAMBLERS SKYDIVING AUSTRALIA



**THE 2020 EQUINOX BOOGIE
HAS BEEN POSTPONED TO
THE 17TH - 24TH APRIL 2021.
OFFICIAL.**

IF THE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS ARE LIFTED BY THE GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020 TO ALLOW JUMPING TO START UP AGAIN RAMBLERS WILL RUN A NOX LITE BOOGIE ON THE ORIGINAL EQUINOX DATES OF 24TH - 31ST OCTOBER 2020. WE'LL KEEP YOU POSTED.

**JUST TO CLARIFY... NO MATTER WHAT,
THE EQUINOX BOOGIE IS NOW SCHEDULED
ON 17TH - 24TH APRIL 2021.**

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Time to Bed

Compiled by the APF at ASM deadline time.

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 JAMIE ANDERSON
 JAKE ANDREWS
 DALIE BAFVERFELDT
 DAVID BARCLAY
 REECE BEAZLEY
 JAMES BOADEN
 CHRISTOPHER BOLTON
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 MARIO ZAMBON
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 MARK DIGNUM
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MATT GODFREY
 JACOB JUNAKOVIC
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 NATHAN SPOWART
 MARIE TARDY

WINGSUIT CREST

BRANDEN DUBERY
 TERRY FREY
 CHRIS LEE
 CHUANG LIU
 YONGLEI ZHANG

FREEFLY CREST HU

ANTON BORLASE
 ROSIE DODGSON
 JAMES FEWINGS
 SAM JONES
 LUCINDA MARTYN
 SHANE MCGREGOR
 NICK MELNIK
 VIVIAN MERZ
 ARNAUD MESUREUR
 NELLIE MOODY
 HANNAH MORT
 LUCY SCARBOROUGH
 NATHAN THOMAS
 JAYKE WALTERS

FREEFLY CREST HD

ANTON BORLASE
 CHRISTIAN BOWERS
 GEM HODGES
 SHANE MCGREGOR
 VIVIAN MERZ
 ARNAUD MESUREUR

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 STEPHEN BELL
 CHASE DICKSON
 PAIGE FOGARTY
 DANIELLE GOODWIN
 SAMMIE GRAHAM
 TIWAI GREENING
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DISPLAY PRO

THOMAS ANDREWS
 AIMEE SOUTHWELL
 MATT TEAGER

FREEFLY COACH

ISAAC JOHNSON

CERTIFICATE 'B' COACH

ISAAC JOHNSON

LEAH SMITH
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 KYE KIMLER
 ROBSON SILVA
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 SARAH BREEZE
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THEN & NOW

By Kelly Brennan

ASM'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY AND THE APF'S 60TH ARE AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO DO SOME ARMCHAIR TIME TRAVELLING, BACK TO CRAZY BALLOON SUITS, EXPERIMENTAL GEAR, SHORT SHORTS AND PORN STAR MOUSTACHES. MANY SKYDIVERS OFTEN REFLECT ON FANTASTIC DZ FRIENDSHIPS AND WILD WEEKENDS OF THEIR YOUTH. BUT, WOULD THEY GO BACK IF THEY COULD? OR, DO WE HAVE A MUCH BETTER SPORT NOW THAN THEY DID BACK IN THE DAY?

Would you go back if you could?

Instead of just inviting long-term jumpers to bang on about the past, I decided to pitch it a little differently with an imaginary experiment.

Suspend belief, if you will, and picture 25 veteran jumpers at the door of a time machine. All of them have at least a decade in the sport, but most have 30+ years. They all fondly remember the days of drifters, POG landings, and a smelly 'gunge' brewing in the back corner of the hangar.

All these skydivers are being offered free slots on a load back into the good old days. (Note: The actual date of 'good old days' is hard to pinpoint. But it's always before the person asking the question came along!)

The bar is open right beside the imaginary landing area, the beer is cold, and the slots are free. But there's no coming back. It's a choice of THEN or NOW.

WHAT WAS VERY DIFFERENT BACK THEN?

As the jumpers ponder their mis-spent youth at the DZ, some great memories emerge. Many started on round chutes, or they at least had round reserves. Exits were self-spotted, often at less than 9,000 feet, with break-off at 3,500.

Christine Collins started jumping when everybody did static line courses on roundies. She recalls no AFF, no tandems, no AADs or RSLs, and rarely a camera in sight.

Camera flying was the domain of a handful of skilled and very popular people. Steve Fitchett remembers waiting at least a week to see the pictures and even longer for the movie film.

"In the day, we used to be able to go up, do a 4-Way, build a stack or diamond, and have an accuracy jump on the same load," laughs one of the jumpers.

Sandy Nieuwenhoven lists a few more points of difference. *"B-Rel coaches didn't get paid, we didn't wear single point restraints, we did hop'n'pops from 2,000 feet and boogies had 300+ people at them,"* she says.

Luke Oliver recalls turbine boogies being a very special treat. *"Everyone has one now,"* he observes. *"The 'Aunt Mabel Baked a Cake Boogie' is a far cry from the annual specialty aircraft at Corowa."*

Melissa Harvie chuckles about her early days, exiting at 3,000 feet, getting stable, tracking and pulling at 2,000. People would end bigway jumps back then with stand ups.

For rigger, Garnett Znidaric, it's all about the gear. *"Cutting away was a much more complicated process back then,"* he says.

"Everybody used to buy their mates a POPS membership when they turned forty," says Justin de Waard. *"It was a rite of passage. Now, we never even hear about them."*

"We gave and received lippy passes unexpectedly," says one jumper who was prolific with both before full-face helmets came along.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH JUMPING NOWADAYS?

Everybody agrees that too many people look at weather forecasts now, and they just stay away from the DZ. They miss out on stacks of valuable information.

Mason Corby recalls when DZs had a much larger weekend community and everybody would stay around after jumping pretty much every weekend.

"When we went skydiving, it was for the whole weekend," says another jumper from Mason's era. *"We would arrive, rain, hail or shine, and if we weren't skydiving, we'd get up to mischief regardless!"*

It's a common theme while herding this load of potential time travellers. Back in the day, bad weather was a chance to share information and tell 'No Bullshit, there I was...' stories. *"It was also a time to help people coming up through the sport,"* says Shirley Cowcher.

Helen Perry remembers more time on the DZ dirt diving and packing than actually jumping. *"We did learn a lot by watching what happened on the DZ and we got to help with displays, ground control and manifest,"* says Helen.

Ian 'Robbo' Robertson has noticed the impact of commercialisation, compared to the inclusion of traditional clubs, and he thinks it's less fun nowadays. Another former club jumper says skydivers *"just don't light fires like they used to!"*

Mark "Stretch" Szulmayer remembers staying on the DZ no matter what, and he felt a better sense of family amongst everyone back then. *"But there was effectively only one game in town,"* he says. *"We all flew flat with maybe a bit of CRW after the freefall."*

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BETTER NOW?

Like many of the long-time players, Stretch misses the camaraderie of the old days. But he reckons it's much better now, thanks to faster planes and more ways to enjoy skydiving.

Nigel Brennan also loves being able to jump out of the faster Caravans we have now. John Winkler agrees that it's more fun now, thanks to more skilled bigway players, turbines, altitude and canopies 'that actually fly'.

Another jumper is very glad that helmets became the norm. *"In the past two years or so, my helmet has saved my head and my life,"* she declares.

THEN OR NOW?

So, in between all this 'back in the day' reminiscing, who is deciding to go on this FREE load back to the good old days?

Here's where events take a strange turn. (As if free slots on a time machine wasn't strange enough?)

Robbo doesn't want to board this load. *"You can't go back,"* he says. *"We just have to make now the best we can."*

Christine Collins opts to stay in the 'now'. So too does Helen Perry, who's grateful to see more women instructors around and more cameras on loads.

Paul Murphy is also pulling off the load, saying we've had plenty of time to learn from the mistakes of others.

Melissa Harvie is choosing 'now'. *"Whilst the learning curve of the 80s and 90s had its own fun, it was also a highly toxic environment for women and inclusion was certainly not performance driven,"* she says.

Another player says 'no' to going back. She loves wind tunnels and she enjoys the specific events that still bring us all together. *"Plus everyone still enjoys a rip roaring party!"*

Heather Little and Shirley Cowcher are both a bit torn between the two. Heather thinks it's almost too big now. *"Sometimes the quieter, lower key family skydiving stuff is*

better," she says. But both of them are leaning towards 'now', thanks to the boogies and big events.

Luke Oliver says equipment and training has never been better. And he reminds us of something important: *"The ability to fly for recreation might not be with us forever."*

WHO'S GOING BACK?

Well, that's sorted out the vast majority of the imaginary load. But who are these last stragglers still making up their minds?

Sandy Niewenhoven isn't yet persuaded to stay here or go back. She liked the older days when there were more people on the DZ. The planes are bigger now, but it's much more commercial. *"There's a big focus on tandems and beaches, and not as much interest in AFF from the general population."*

Steve Fitchett thinks 'then' and 'now' are both good, for different reasons. *"I really enjoyed the fun element of the past,"* he says. *"Today, the skydiving is better but more serious."*

Joining them on the fence is Mason Corby. But he's quite determined to wait for the next load. The one where the time machine goes FORWARD in time. *"I think we are in a bit of a lull right now,"* he says. *"But we have the opportunity for further development to learn and combine the positives from our past and present to make for a better future."*

That leaves us with three old-timers, standing around in their French hats, goggles and neon lycra suits. They don't want their names printed, which is a pity because they have important stuff to say. Out of 25 people offered the chance to go back, only three are keen to do so.

The first says it was more fun in the 90s.

The second says it was a much better time socially, when jumpers ate, slept and drank skydiving, and lifelong friendships were made. *"Skydiving today is not a lifelong sport, mainly due to so many competing activities,"* he/she adds. *"But technology today probably keeps some alive longer for that short time they stay in the sport."*

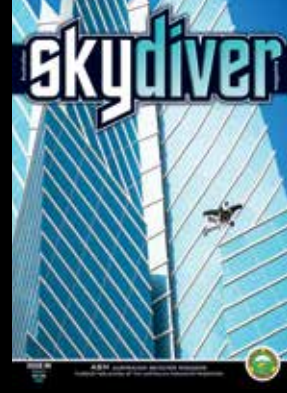
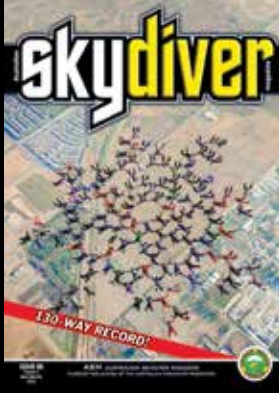
The third willing time traveller thinks skydiving was better in the early days when we all jumped together in one or two disciplines. *"I feel having so many disciplines in Australia is ripping our sport apart,"* he concludes.

2000 - BLAST FROM THE PAST

In the same year that ASM began:

- Aussies Ash Crick and Jonathan King were the Freestyle world champions.
- Skysurfer and accuracy competitor Pauline Richards became Australia's second female Tandem Master.
 - Entity was the reigning 4-Way open FS team, holding the national record of 26 points.
 - XLR8 held the 8-Way record of 20 points.
- Skysurfing was a demonstration event in the Planet X Summer Extreme Games, with three Aussie teams.
 - Rob McMillan was educating jumpers about canopy safety through a series of 'Pull the Strings' articles in ASM.
 - Rules were being developed for Tandem Masters to use handcam.
 - 110 skydivers received special Australian Sports Medals, with plenty of debate around the selection process.
 - CRW flyers built a record 17-Way diamond.
- International freeflyer Eli Thompson ran a coaching camp at Nagambie, and Australia's first 4-Way head-down line was built.







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