

of the team broke a leg after landing badly at Wembley Stadium when Manchester United played Everton in the 1985 FA Cup Final.

At the start of a display, the Red Devils usually jump from around 4,000 metres and freefall at a speed of up to 120 miles an hour. After about forty-five seconds they open their parachutes to slow their descent. As with any parachute jump it can be very dangerous, so like most professionals each member wears a spare or reserve parachute

in case the first one doesn't work.

When he got into trouble Mike and his colleagues were taking part in a display at the Whitehaven Air Show in Cumbria. After leaping out of their aeroplane high above the display area the twelve-strong team was planning to perform a stunt called a 'stack'. To prepare for this the skydivers need to fly even closer to each other than they normally do. Then, in order to make the stack, they have to position themselves in very close formation, so close that each team member can place his feet on the parachute canopy of the person below.

Accompanied by spirals and swirls of coloured smoke from special canisters attached to the parachutists' legs, the whole thing looks spectacular from the ground, but it makes the jump even more hazardous than usual. Coming down in such close formation, it takes great skill to avoid endangering another member of the team or becoming tangled up in the lines of someone else's parachute.

This time something went badly wrong. As he drifted down