

Pothecary Corner—Allan Pothecary



Hoffman's Bow

With Kiteworld already starting to report good interest in Hoffman's bow by HQ, I was pleased to receive the one TKC had been using on their exhibition stands for me to test, review and to let interested kites fly before they buy. Unfortunately, as is the norm at any exhibition, bits get jumbled up or lost in the confusion of packing up. Happily though I managed to get some spares from Hayley at 'Kites Up' and I had a picture to work from, so it wasn't that long before I was airborne.

As you would expect from a large kite of this design it wasn't the easiest of juggling manoeuvres in a 12mph wind on first assembly but it can be put away leaving only the spine to be slotted together next time – and there is a knack to keeping it under tension as you go. You'll need about 7mph minimum to get the Bow away and it's better not to go too high be-

cause although it is a fairly large kite, it starts to lose its obvious presence after about 50 meters.

There is a weighted bag to keep the kite vertical. Some attention should be paid that it does not tangle itself with the bridle during launch as this will undoubtedly affect the kite leaving the ground. At first sight Hoffman's Bow appears to be a little flimsy but it is made and tensioned in such a way that it is quite robust and won't easily fall apart. Once airborne the Bow is very impressive and sits nicely stable in the sky but the sideways on spectator gets a better view than the flyer. Then without prompting, it starts to dance about on its own. It is supposed to do this apparently (by accident or design) but whether this is caused by the tails on the back or by an interaction between the sails is a matter for further discussion.

My only concern with this kite – it's not expensive at £150 when you compare the work in it to some of the delta kites around – is that the bag provided could have been better designed (perhaps with pockets or even zip fastened) because the rods keep falling out and could be easily lost.

STOP PRESS

I have just received another Hoffman's Bow (having had to give the other one back) and the bag is now of much stronger construction and an internal pocket stops the rods from keep falling out. Because of the awkward shape of the kite it comes in a rather large bag and partly assembled- I'm not complaining about that - I don't do fiddly.

The Slave

Mixed bag of stories to tell after Rougham. We (Close Encounters) didn't do well in the music ballet on Saturday due to 2½ mistakes by yours truly and a mid air collision. Probably the scariest thing I've ever seen as a big Manta Ray was set free by a severe gust of wind and shot off at about 30mph with its big metal stake dragging and bouncing along behind it. As conditions continued to worsen the organisers sensibly brought the festival to an early, first day, close.

The STACK competition carried on where they could between squalls – you have to give it up for the three judges and field director, Marie Anne, who stood out in it all for two days!

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The picture shows Andy Preston telling me about the finer points of his latest freestyle kite.



Andy could be seen putting the 'mark two' version though its paces in testing winds earlier on Saturday surprising himself that this lightweight version didn't explode in the quite severe gusts that brought the festival to an early close. A launch date will be announced for this kite soon and there will probably be a new DVD with it too, but you shouldn't be expecting to see one in your 2006 Christmas stocking.

Unlike the long awaited and recently released Benson, Deep Space there will be no speculation over the name. "The Slave" is designed to be just that. Mr Preston is, without doubt, the Master and he says the kite will do exactly what he wants it to do and it will **not**, get away.

There will be the inevitable comparisons with the DS, the most obvious with Andy Wardley's idea of putting roll bars on the back designed to catch the lines in roll-ups and help stop the sail from bunching as they wrap around. There are more ideas to come on this though and as I write, the mark four version is already being tested and Andy is in China finalising the production of his "Depower – Powerkite". There will be no compromise on quality with The Slave and at the same time the price will be kept to an affordable level.

A full review can be expected as soon as the first batch of pre-production models arrives.

Sunday and the weather started off OK and we fared much better in the precision disciplines but decided not to risk putting the tent up after the fight we had to get it down yesterday. The

rain soon came in again so we spent a big part of the day in our sponsor's tent (kiteworld.co.uk).

The Rougham festival has now firmly established itself as "one of the biggies" of the festival season so much so that veteran commentator and P.A. provider, Paul Redhead couldn't resist it, defying doctor's orders and arriving to take turns with his very capable stand-in (Kay Redhead) on the microphone.

The organisers really did deserve better weather and the bigger crowds that would have come with it to enjoy it all.

The Jazz

Another inexpensive kite recently on the market ideal for beginners is the Prism, "Jazz". It's also a kite that the experienced flyer might like to add to his/her collection – why?

Well it performs very well in experienced hands through just about all of the tricks you can think of and, a major feature, it packs down in just one fold of the leading edges in to its own bag of just 25 inches (63.5cms) in length! That's small enough to take anywhere and keep with you just in case you get a chance to fly.

For a small kite the Jazz isn't as fast as you might think and its deep sail also gives it good precision with a firm but light pull. I couldn't help but keep comparing it with the "My Fly". I did the slamming it in to the ground test and it didn't break, but it did come apart on the bottom spreader – probably due to the large wing span? I didn't like the graphics as much as the HQ kite but then I thought that I could do more in flight with the Jazz and I really liked the fold down size. I had to give the My Fly back but I should have another by the time you read this, so why not come over and give them both a try.

As is much the norm with Prism you get a fairly decent set of lines with the kite. I'm glad to see that Manufacturers are starting to give straps and a winder for the lines much more now, instead of providing lines on hoops. This means that the new flyer has no option but to let out all of the lines and then, of having them level..! This in turn means that the chances of them getting real enjoyment from the sport and wanting to carry on are better too!



As a present for someone - for a beginner – or as another, very portable toy - at under £35.00, the Prism Jazz is a must have in my book.

My Fly

It's always difficult when someone asks "what two line kite should I buy for my child?" or "is there a cheap sport kite I can start off with to see how I get on?" Often the less expensive end of the range kite would only serve to put people off. They are not going to get any fun out of it because often, either it won't fly too well or it will very quickly break.

Well HQ Invento now have an answer with their new "My Fly". This distinctive kite measures 145cm x 72cm high and is framed in fibre glass. TKC asked me to take this and several other kites out for a test and report - and I have to say that it was one of the best two, out of a mainly good bunch – I had a great time flying it and so did my novice friend.

There are, particularly, a few good points as far as beginners (and their usual mistakes) go with this little gem – the lines are not on hoops – you get straps and therefore **all** of the line has to be let out before launch and, on the kite I had, they were of equal length!!!. The line was not stretchy which is also good - it did bind a fair bit once there were more than about eight or ten wraps in it but then hey – how many beginners can put in that many turns before hitting the ground?

In lower winds or on the window's edge tricks like yoyos axles and flat spins were surprisingly easy so I tried just waving my arms about all

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over the place and the 'Fly' just did some stunning manoeuvres then, amazingly, just corrected itself and carried on.

I let my novice friend loose with it and with the wind increasing much delight was shown as it shot around the sky looking like a demented – well.....fly! However having found that an experienced flyer can get some really good fun out of it as well as a novice I thought about what would happen if an absolute beginner tried it - you know the sort of thing – "It's nice and windy today, just right for flying a kite!" (Not!)

So off they go and no sooner than it has launched it has slammed back in to the ground. The wind was around 25 to 30 mph when I took it to the top of the window and (how many times have you wanted to do this?) walking backwards as well, the My Fly was powered straight down, nose first, in to the ground - and do you know what? It actually bounced off the ground back in to air and carried on. Again I deliberately, (yes it was!) hit the ground and this time it stayed there.

We went over to inspect the damage and there was none! Nothing broken, not even a spar or a stand-off dislodged.

The only annoying fault I found was that you have to push the lower spreader through its rubber retaining ring to fit the My Fly back into the bag – pity they didn't make it about 2cms longer.

At around £28.00 – Yes! - I would recommend this as very good value for money!



Dongdail

I have heard the expression "cheque book kiting" but there are lots of people out there who don't have either the time, skills or, like me,

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the patience to design or copy build the own kites.

There are those (again like me) who get a tremendous amount of enjoyment and relaxation from just being on the end of lines - and playing!

and so yes, there is always another point of view but I think most people are always going to buy a few kites before they even contemplate making their own and if you are going to buy a kite then why not buy something which is of a reasonable size and not give you too much trouble.

I have been flying just such a kite recently – The 184cm x 130cm Dongdail from HQ that comes ready to fly at a relatively inexpensive retail price of around £60.00.

I have been a fan of Lutz Treczoks since I acquired one of his Cody kites. Treczoks seems to have a certain methodology in his designs which is very recognisable in its complexity, yet with a logical simplicity.

I know us blokes don't need to read instructions but I would advise to at least look at a picture first if you are going to attempt your first assembly out of doors. Of course if you have a



woman handy she will have read the leaflet and be pleased to advise or you could try to ask a teenager while they still know everything!

Seriously though the Dongdail can be quickly put together and is launched with no trouble at all. It comes with a tail to help with stability if you want to leave it unattended for a while and, because of its shape, has a wide wind range of 4 to 18mph

Try as I did, I couldn't find anything wrong with this one – it had a good bag, went together with no problem (after Marilyn read the instructions) and the 80lb x 200ft line on a spool that came with it was just the job!

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 Kite bags in various sizes to carry upto 25 kites - heavy duty and very strong

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