

Pothecary Corner

A Trip Back in Time

Bill Baulch sadly passed on in June this year. I don't think I ever met Bill but I know now of the wonderful collection of kites he had amassed over many years.



Andy King spoke fondly of him at a recent festival and remembered many of the kites Bill bought in his shop back in the seventies.

The Solent Kite club were asked to decide what best to do with the collection and settled on splitting the collection. I agreed

with their thinking that if it were kept together then it would have sat in someone's loft or garage and never seen or enjoyed by anyone. The ones with a maritime bent now supplement the club's collection on that theme whilst the rest were sold to fliers who would give them the best public airtime with all proceeds and pictures of as many as possible back in the air going to Bill's relatives who now live in Canada.

Among some of the fine originals were some lovely Benson Boxes but Marilyn and I were lucky enough to buy some of the two line sport kites, some of which we just about managed to fly at Portsmouth.

Everyone (it seems) had a Peter Powell at some point in their life and, so many have commented favourably at our attempts to fly them in the fickle winds, that we shall be attempting to slot them in to festivals we are invited to next year whenever wind allows.

For those that missed it, Marilyn, Mags and myself managed to get six in the air at the same time briefly on the Sunday with stirring music bringing lumps to the throats of many as they wallowed in nostalgia.

On the Saturday we had managed to launch a stack of ten, original Max

Puckeridge Aces. With the music rolling and after a few technical problems the wind dropped bang on cue leaving kites 9 and 10 flapping about, doing their own thing as I hauled the entire stack across the arena. We were so mad keen to fly them, we would have tried in any conditions. Next year, however, they won't come out of the bag much below 10mph!

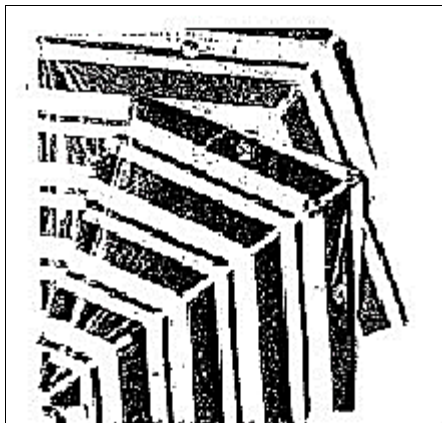
It was interesting to find the piece below from the "European Kite Flyer" published in 1978 containing some paragraphs the like of which you won't see these days.

Close Encounters Kite Display Team

You may have seen lots of people wearing our team colours (black and yellow) with "Display Team" on the back and have asked if we have changed our line up.



Well – no – not really Close Encounters refers to Marilyn and me and we will, hopefully, be flying old and new routines for a long time to come yet. However, since we gave



Ace Kite

The Ace is manufactured under UK licence by ASL of Gloucester and under Spanish licence by Es Cometas of Spain.

The new Ace kite claims indestructibility and, almost unbelievably, lives up to its claim. The new and especially formulated high density plastic sail is tearproof to a degree not yet seen in a kite. The spars of precision drawn fibreglass can be bent double without any damage and at long last the problem of the centre clip holding the longitudinal and transverse members in place seems to have been solved (see photo). We dived this kite 28 times onto a concrete pad from a height of 60 metres without even nicking the sail. Jet alone making an impression on the spars or shock absorber. We then tried scraping the wing-tip along the same concrete patch at full speed hoping to snap the cross spar, again without success. Dragging it nose down along the road should have made some impression, but a gentle pull on one line and the kite turned about and sailed into the sky.

At the suggestion of Max Puckeridge, the designer, we tore (with a lot of difficulty) four large holes in the sail and tried flying the kite – the performance suffered, but it still worked, and worked well!

The list of features to be found on this kite, from a technical point of view, deserve an article to themselves and will probably get one in the near future. The design has been evolved under the eagle-eyed supervision of Mr. Puckeridge over a period of two years and would do justice to any full scale aircraft designer. It flies exceptionally well as a two string kite, but with only a simple re-arrangement of the clip-on bridle it can be flown as a single string fighter. In this mode it lacks the zippliness of a traditional eastern design but is still a good flyer and an excellent trainer for this difficult art.

The makers are keen to emphasise the safety aspect of this machine, since, at less than two and a half ounces (about 65 gms) and with a highly energy absorbing spine, it could be nose-dived into a small child at full speed without doing any more damage than would a gentle clip on the ear!

At a recommended price of £3.75 this must be among the best value for money bargains of the year. I only hope some of the other manufacturers will take a few tips from it. It comes complete with line and full flying instructions in a portable carrying bag and is a far cry from some of the cowboy items we have been seeing during the last couple of years.

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up serious competition and relinquished our national titles we have spent much more time coaching and therefore picked up lots of new friends along the way. Some of these are so enthusiastic they wanted to become more involved than just as spectators so now come along and help with setting up and ground crewing. They have not yet put in the hours days months and years to have the experience for the demands of ever changing conditions in the festival arenas but hopefully that will change after winter in the practice field. Friend Mags got a taste of what to expect when we were desperate to get the Peter Powell's in the arena for Portsmouth. The Sunday before, we all got absolutely soaked for a few hours because time was short but the wind was reasonable when it did blow - and the Tuesday evening we flew until after it got dark before disappearing down the local Indian restaurant to talk excitedly about the coming weekend. All that - then no wind on the Saturday - and not quite enough in our allocated slot on the Sunday. That is why that, in 2008, we will continue in our efforts to always bring something different to the arena but now, only when the wind is right. Often the different, or the unusual kites require a little more wind to fly solo, more to fly as a pair (visa vie) "Sky-Dancers) and even more as a team - and then all that happens just the same when there is too much wind. Don't get me wrong though - we love it! - The buzz we get from when it goes well more than makes up for the times when it doesn't!

A Single Line

When have you ever known me to have a single line to say about anything?

Besides the festivals we also do a lot of 'private gigs', shows, school fetes and the like. For these events, we like to put up a lot of static displays - large and small. We have nine inflatable Red Devils which are great for encouraging



chaperoned youngsters into the arena for a single line fly. For the bigger ones we have a couple of HQ pumpkins called Tommy.

Some of the new ones given to us by HQ we have tested are very good. We really liked The Zeppelin. It's not an inflatable but made up of 3, large flat panels in the shape of a star fruit and I seem to remember about 7 feet long - but don't quote me!

I needed Marilyn to discipline me, as usual, in to following the instructions or I would still be out there, but once it was together it was surprisingly strong and flew really well in the gusty wind we had that day. It moved about quite a bit, but never once took a nose-dive toward the ground. The silhouettes of the passengers add to the fun and the spinning turbos give it that extra finishing touch. It does take a while to assemble though and, therefore, would probably stay in the bag when we do a show, so we put it in the auction at Portsmouth for some lucky person to own.

The Garden Kite has got to be great value for money it looks great as a static but spinning in the wind, garden kite but has an ingenious attachment so that it flies in a very stable and eye catching fashion. My only problem was in choosing the best photo because everyone I took showed it in a different colour as it spun.



The Umbrella has been about for a while. You have to constantly tend it and remember the dihedral shape to aim for during assembly. It will stay up for quite some time in the right wind and certainly draws a smiling crowd to join in the fun. See Mags looking silly with that one on the web-site.

Charlie - did you want a good sized delta which flies from slight to strong winds and will 'stay there all day'? HQ have a range of different ones just like Charlie - some cheeky person asked why I didn't have the "Bald Eagle" version



We have taken Charlie on holiday twice this

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year as he fits cosily into the case and we used him successfully as a barrage balloon against some inconsiderate kite surfers who wanted to take up all the beach just to park their kites.

Visit our website for the link to HQ or our sponsors Kiteworld.co.uk for an idea of prices.

COMPETITION RESULTS



No dear. I don't think they'll notice if your nail varnish matches the kite

All season we have been running a competition sponsored by Kiteworld.co.uk who put up the prize of a Prism Hypnotist complete with lines and the flight school dvd together worth nearly £100-00. we had about 70 entries – many of which I will put on the website (time allowing). We nar-

rowed that down (with great difficulty) to eight – it was going to be four! – and Michael from [Kiteworld](http://Kiteworld.co.uk) chose the winner – Ann Girling from Southampton, who was ever so pleased when I phoned to say her cheeky entry had won. Thanks to all those who entered.

LINES

Flyers often get asked the length of the lines they are using and what length is best. Most sport-kite flyers use 85 to 100ft when flying freestyle/tricks as an individual but pairs will need to be using something longer. When we started teams and pairs all seemed to be using 150ft to give themselves more room to manoeuvre. But there is a compromise here. The longer the line the more weight in light winds to consider and more bend in the line giving slightly less direct feel! Also we quickly found that changing to 125ft lines made the arena bigger. However we have now moved out to 131ft(40 meters) as we are happy to recommend lines from Flexifoil. The lines come pre-stretched on a winder which looks clumsy but is easy to use – and are sewn into the sleeves. The ends have tags that make it much easier to separate line from the towing points on the

kite, the lines are different colours (one red, one blue) and have very little stretch therefore giving a great instant response.

I'm going to ask that anyone who wants to join in with us team flying in future brings a set of these with them. Considering what good lines cost when we first started these are an absolute steal at around £20 per set.

COACHING

Time allowing I will try to keep a "news page" running and up to date on the web site. This will announce things that are happening with us such as festivals and coaching days, if you would like any coaching – we don't charge if you come to our practice sites – you just have to fit in with our schedules and cover the costs of any breakages if you use our equipment. Contact us through the website at (don't forget there are 2 e's in the middle www.closeencounterskites.co.uk).

At the end of another season we would like to say thanks to all those people who have come to see us and taken the time to chat and even email us – see you next year and bring some good wind this time please!

Some of you will remember me writing before about a friend of mine, Dave Goss, a kite enthusiast who travels in his mobile home around the USA enjoying his retirement in a way most of us can only dream about.

Dave usually fits a few kite festivals in to his travels and runs an interesting blog which you might find worth a visit <http://goss-travels.blogspot.com/>

Allan and Marilyn Pothecary

Regarding Bill Baulch, we received a letter from David Webster.

I am sorry to tell you sadly Bill Baulch (aged 86) from Southampton died on the 7th June 2007. Bill had a large collection of single line kites from several well known kite makers. He was the organiser of some of the Royal Victoria Park and Hengistbury Head kite festivals in the 1980s. The Wessex Kite Group greatly appreciated Bill's hard work to ensure the smooth running of these festivals.