



Scottish Airsports Club

Latest News

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Forthcoming Events

Saturday 12th June - Kippen Fly-Past

It's the annual Kippen Gala Day on Saturday 12th June, so we'll be doing a Red-Arrows style flypast to help the celebrations along. The fly-past is planned for 1pm, although the exact time is still to be confirmed. Please come along and join in - the more aircraft the merrier. Plus it's the only time in the whole year we can fly over the village, so make the most of the opportunity!

It's a New World Record!

The date: 25th April 2004, the place: The Scottish Airsports Club at Thornhill. It was an excellent day for aerotowing and the place was jumping with lots of gliders, lots of towing and lots of microlights. There were plenty of thermals, and even I managed a half-hour flight. However it was Geoff on his Laminar MR who showed us how it's all done.

After an earlier brief flight where Geoff and his tug pilot Andy seemed to have a misunderstanding over the instruction "Tow me upwind", Geoff picked out the cloud he wanted to be towed to, and Andy took him up for another go.

All seemed to be going well until Geoff got about half way between the airfield and the hills to the North, when he spent ages struggling at around 500 feet already too far away to get back. However his perseverance paid off and he made it to the hills. From there on the lift was easier to find, and Geoff managed to make it all the way to the South side of Perth - a distance of around 30 miles. This is of course a New World Record - the furthest distance that anyone in the world has flown from Thornhill - congratulations Geoff.

With my new Tenax harness, I intend to shatter this record soon and make it to at least the North side of Perth. I'll make sure the tug is fully fuelled up beforehand, though - it may be a long tow!

Famous Thornhill Landmarks

First there was Bob's Bush. This is the bush (easily spotted by the commemorative plaque next to it) where Bob managed to land, despite having a 1200m x 800m airfield to aim for.

Now there is Ken's Fence. After flying a reasonable distance from the Airfield, also on that epic day of 25/4/04, Ken decided to try to make it back, confident of the superior glide of his Avian Cheetah with carbon winglets. So he jammed on the VB, tucked everything in and went for it. Unfortunately he must have left something hanging out, because he oh-so-nearly made it, but didn't. Instead he managed to hit the barbed wire fence at the airfield boundary, making a very impressive mess of his jeans, some minor damage to his glider including a bent upright and some scratches to his leg. Fortunately nothing too serious though.

As if that wasn't enough, I've recently added Allan's Pig Pen to the list of Landmarks. In an amazing demonstration of spot landing technique, I managed to land inside the tiny pig pen at the back of the hangar. Luckily, the pigs were on holiday at the time. The fact that it is surrounded by a fence and trees would have made this a truly impressive feat. However, due to the wind strength and the fact that I was back on my not-so-hotship Amour 159, I descended into the pig pen almost vertically. It was therefore less of a demonstration of spot landing technique and more of another demonstration of how-to-misjudge a landing into a 1200m x 800m airfield.

Any contributions for commemorative plaques for Ken's Fence and Allan's Pig Pen will be gratefully received!

Woody Valley Tenax Harness Review

Just after I ordered my new Tenax harness from Steve Elkins, he phoned me back to ask me if I wanted the current model, or the new version that Woody Valley had just introduced. "What's the difference?" I asked. "The current model costs £766, and the new one costs £921. Other than that I don't really know", Steve replied. I decided to stick with the "cheap" one.

Four or five weeks later, my new made-to-measure harness arrived in colours to match my too-big-for-me Laminar which I've now sold. The total cost was £805, including courier delivery and a couple of extra buckles on the front which Steve recommended just to make sure I didn't fall out of it by accident. I'm all for safety so I didn't argue. Anyway I've had a few flights on it now, and indeed I haven't fallen out of it, so here are my impressions so far.

First of all, why did I decide to buy a Tenax harness?

- 1) I wanted a harness with a side-mounted chute, so I could hang lower and get more control.
- 2) My Solar Wings Edge harness is old and was bought second hand. I wanted a flash new one to pose in.
- 3) My hero Manfred Ruhmer has one.

What do I like about it?

- 1) It is very comfy and has lots of room for warm winter clothing or a bit of ballast. You can even store things in the plastic cone at your feet.
- 2) It is very streamlined and efficient, but still has lots of useful pockets
- 3) The angle of dangle is very simple but effective. The hang point simply moves up and down a taught rope as you move your weight around, so you can adjust your angle easily without taking your hands off the bar.

What do I not like about it?

- 1) It's not cheap, but they're keeping both the expensive and the extortionate versions in production
- 2) It really needs a user manual.
- 3) One of the four parachute pocket flaps has been partially sewn into the harness by mistake, so while it's still perfectly useable, the chute has a tendency to peek out slightly and it'll have to go back to Steve to get sorted.

Anything else?

At 6.2kg without chute, it's fairly heavy but in strong conditions that might not be a bad thing.

For more information (but not that much more), check out the Woody Valley website on www.woodyvalley.com

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