



Scottish Airsports Club

Latest News

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Forthcoming Events

Verbier Summits 8th -15 July

Yours truly is all booked up for what should be a great week's hanggliding in the Swiss Alps at Verbier. A luxury Alpine villa, launch sites between 1600 and 2800 metres, breakfast and dinner and all retrieves included - what more could you want? Plus you can rent a glider, so there's no need for any hassle taking your own on the plane. If anyone wants to join me, let me know. More info at www.verbier-summits.com.

Footlaunch Nationals 10 - 13 Jun 2006, Woodbridge, Suffolk

For more information, have a look at: <http://www.flymicro.com/comps/comp.cfm?comp=116>. There are separate classes for paramotors and powered hang gliders, and at the time of writing there were 10 paramotor entries and no powered hang glider entries. So let's get a few entries in and bring the Nationals trophy back to Thornhill!

The Booster has Landed!

Sunday 2nd April wasn't a very good day, with heavy showers forecast, typical of what we've been suffering this Spring so far. However four hardy hang glider types were at the airfield all the same: Willie Russell to fly the Booster power unit I'd sold him, Tim Richley to test fly it, and Jon Gardiner and myself to help out. Since Willie's glider hasn't had the keel chopped off yet, it was going to be flown with Tim's Discovery wing.

Tim is an experienced Doodle-bug flyer, but wasn't familiar with the prone Booster unit, so I was able to offer some advice from my experience of flying it. (apart from sell it at a knock-down price and buy a Doodlebug instead) Tim was soon ready to go for it, and I was giving him lots of encouragement having first claimed ownership of his Bug 2 unit in the event of a nasty accident.

The rain clouds had held off, and a nice breeze was blowing straight down the runway. Tim squeezed the hand-throttle and did a text-book take off. After a few attempts to get his feet tucked into the stirrup, he settled down into a steady climb. I'd already recommended that trying to raise the wheels on the Booster wasn't a good idea unless he was feeling really comfortable and had a lot of height - it's a really tricky process.

After a minute or two, Tim was nicely positioned above the downwind end of the runway when the engine decided to stop suddenly. The landing was uneventful, and no problem could be found with the engine. It was therefore started up again, and Tim did another excellent take-off, flying slightly further this time. We were listening keenly to the tone of the engine in case it decided to pack in again, but it was nice and steady for the full-power climb. Then all of a sudden the engine made a high-pitched scream as it seriously over-revved. Tim quickly shut it down and came in for another uneventful landing.

By this time I was thinking "Thank God I got rid of that piece of junk"! I might even have been feeling a bit guilty at selling it to a friend had the selling price not been much less than a tenth of the original purchase price. In fact all that had happened was that the chain that drives the prop had jumped off the sprocket because it was too slack. 10 minutes

back at the hangar with the toolkit and Willie's mechanical expertise had it sorted, and brave Tim was ready for a third test flight. This time there was no engine failure and Tim returned safe and sound after a short flight, pronouncing it a nice machine to fly.

Willie then proceeded to fly the Booster on Tim's Discovery and had two brief but successful flights, although the rain had come on for his second flight so it was just a low-level pass down the runway. I won't mention that both landings ended up with Willie face-down in the Thornhill mud (no damage done). Willie seemed happy with his new machine, although his wife would probably have been less happy with the amount of washing he returned with. His only complaint was the operation of the hand throttle, which I have to admit I never really got on with either. However, being an engineering wizard and not being constrained by CAA regulations, BMAA inspectors or a permit to fly, Willie has already created the Mk3 hand throttle which looks much more satisfactory.

Hopefully we'll hear some tales of epic flights from Willie and his Booster this season.



Tim prepares to test fly the Booster

More Wave over Thornhill

Here's a photo of Allan Huntly flying his Scandal in a nice little wave bar over Thornhill recently:



OK it's not, it's some lucky b*stard hang glider pilot flying the Morning Glory in Australia. Spectacular, rare, and awesomely powerful, the Morning Glory of the Gulf of Carpentaria in Northern Australia is a magnet for growing numbers of soaring pilots and scientists. Unique in all the world and shrouded in mystery, the Morning Glory arrives regularly each spring. Morning Glory waves sometimes exceed 1000 km in length and 10,000 feet in height. A possible destination for a future Thornhill hang gliding expedition? Who knows!

For more info on the Morning Glory wave, have a look at: <http://www.dropbears.com/brough/>

Moon Walking

No this isn't about walking on the moon! For all the members of the Thornhill FLPA squadron, the following from Ben Ashman, the inventor of the Doodlebug, on how to take off in light winds may prove useful.

Moon walking can be done at speeds in excess of 24 mph, not because of high horse power but, because of support. The wing is lifting and will support a large proportion of your weight as it gets nearer to the minimum sustainable speed for the payload that it is being asked to lift, stall speed (VS) is a little ambiguous as at speeds below VS the wing is not stalled so long as the critical angle of attack is not exceeded and yes, the wing will be lifting a proportion of payload and this allows you to achieve a partially supported run, moon walking.

What has to be learned during nil wind launches is to relax and not to try to force the wing into the air, maintain the angle of attack, lean forwards into the run and as the harness straps become tighter (you have to feel this as it represents the increasing lift from the wing) lengthen your stride. Keep looking forwards and sooner than you think you will be pulled from the ground.

Warning: Never try to raise the nose to lift you off the ground, yes it may increase lift but it also increases drag and whilst you are behind the 'drag curve' (any speed approximately below min sink) you will slow rapidly requiring further increase in the angle of attack to now offset the decrease in lift because of the decrease of airspeed and hey presto we are at the stall before you know it and down comes the nose and one wing and MUMMY! (Been there - Ed)

Light wind take offs are a skill, as with all skills they need practicing. Fearing them means failure, respecting them means success.

Hang Gliding trips to Slovenia

For some reason I seem to be on the circulation list of the XTC paragliding newsletter. However the following from the latest newsletter caught my eye just in time before I deleted it:

HANG GLIDING

We will be putting together a few hang-gliding trips to the south of Slovenia from October through to April (winter end of the year). If you'd like further details please get in touch. The South of Slovenia offers fantastic hang-gliding opportunities and it is not unusual for the HGs to outnumber the PGs on most days. Just like the good old days....

More info from:

<http://www.xtc-paragliding.com/>

Correction from last month

Last month's newsletter had an article titled: "The Season has Started!". This was obviously incorrect given the weather we've had recently, and I'd like to apologise for any inconvenience or false hopes it might have caused.

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