

WHKF WORKSHOP SHOCK

Image if you will, Boxing day evening relaxing on the sofa watching an episode of Friends (one of Ria's Christmas presents, Friends Mad). Phone rings, who's that? Ria does not want to answer it, Friends more interesting." Ria it's bound to be for you". Ria answers phone "dad it's for you". nearly fall off sofa "FOR ME?" Ria hands me the phone with that, you're so sad dad, expression.

"Hello" Marla wishing me A Happy Christmas. "Hello Marla Happy Christmas". Niceties out of the way Marla asks why I'm not coming to the WHKF's Ralf Maserski workshop in February. Alan and I had talked about the workshop, but decided that our sewing skills (that's a laugh) would not be up to an intense workshop.(sticking is OK but sewing in a workshop!!!! HEELLP)

I explained this to Marla to which she replied "Alan's coming, I've just spoken to him "(what happened to solidarity) now I'm on my own against Marla, what do I do? "I'll have to think about it". Marla replies "I'll ring you tomorrow"

Resigned myself to the fact that I'm going to the workshop, thinking New Year, new challenge, be brave.

On speaking to Alan we both decided that we needed some training ahead of workshop, it's been about 5 years since I used a sewing machine and I would probably require a whole week to make a Ralf Maserski BoxTower 3, not 2 days.

It was decided that we ask Helen Howes of Raindrop Kites for some training in basic sewing machine, and what a great day we had at her workshop. Alan and I had to work hard ,but with Helen's expert tutelage we both went home with kites to be proud of. Thanks Helen, for all your help that day, I know we all had to work very hard.

It's amazing how quickly February 12th came around. 6 am we're off to Swindon, we joked as to whether we would get lost in Swindon again, we did. (3 times over the weekend)

Arriving early at Penhill Primary school, we said our hello's to WHKF's and the other workshop participants, picked our tables and set up our

machines. (as if we knew what we were doing). Ralf Maserski was setting up some sewing machines, time to have a look at Ralf's kites especially the BoxTower 3. Looking at the black edging on this kite I was terrified, (thanks Marla another fine mess you've got me into) I can't put an edge like that on a kite, that takes a lot of experience, which I sadly lack. Eventually Dave Introduces everyone to Ralf and the workshop was under way, we chose our kite colours and picked up our workshop manuals, this



was going to prove to be very useful, well planned with pictures and very simple instructions. Mine was well thumbed by the end of the workshop. Having sorted out our materials the first job was to put the black edging on one of the kite panels. The next step was a revelation, Ralf pointed us to the machines he had been setting up when we arrived and we where introduced to Suisiei, an incredible attachment for double folding 25mm wide rip stop tape. Simply feed your sail panel into the fold of rip stop tape on the Suisiei and sew. Professional edges in minutes.

Needless to say everyone was very excited and I realised even I could make this kite.(I could make it, whether it looked professional we would see) Ralf said that all kite shops in Germany sell the 25mm wide ripstop tape, it comes in colours too.

As I suspected this workshop was a lot of hard work, but with guidance from Ralf , the help from everyone else at the workshop and of course the excellent WHKF lunch, I managed to get my kite to the point where I could finish on Sunday. Maybe if I had referred to my manual and treble checked what I was doing,

I would not have made so many mistakes which required unpicking. But I think everyone agreed, that after the Suisiei, the most important tool was the unpicking tool.

We all met up later at the Blunsdon House Hotel for a drink, a superb carver dinner WELL DONE WHKF's. This was an opportunity to relax and to talk to Ralf. He told us of a German web site that stocks 25mm wide rip-stop in all sorts of colours . http://www.metropolis_drachen.de Sunday morning after a good breakfast, back to School and nearly everyone managed to finish their kites by lunch time, I even managed to fly mine in the play ground. Another excellent WHKF's lunch and the raffle as usual with the WHKF's raffle everyones a winner.

Many hands made light work of the clearing up and after saying our farewells to everyone Alan and I started our journey home. We both agreed that as usual WHKF's had put on another excellent workshop. (I'm still going to sort Marla out when I see her). We are both looking forward to the Robert Brassington workshop in the autumn.

We made such good time on our journey home that Alan suggested we fly our new kites on Epsom Downs, I didn't require much encouragement. We paid for our enthusiasm though, the wind cut right through us, but we saw our brand spanking new BoxTower 3's flying.

What a wonderful time. Thanks to Ralf Maserski for a well planned workshop, WHKF's for the superb organisation and to friends old and new who made this a very memorable weekend, and of course a big Thank You to Marla for stirring me out of my winter slumber.

Keith Boxall

