

OCTOSLED

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"Oooh look Dave is out flying his corsets again." a strange comment from Tony Slater to his wife one Saturday afternoon.

The "Corsets " were, in fact, two quadra sleds or multiple sleds flown linked, side by side. A sight which should have been seen at the Shrewsbury Kite festival in June, but unfortunately, prevented, due to an untimely gust lifting the kite base over apex during preparation and causing a jumbo line tangle among its TEN bridle lines.

The quadra sled (half of the octosled) is basically very simple, just four fairly small sleds like the one shown here, made of polythene bin bags, (mine was alternate black and red with a square, alright trapezoid) vent, which flew fine as a one off, still stable as a twin, and trouble free as a quad.

Joining was achieved using double sided tape all round one "ear" of one sled, to attach it to the next. Be careful, and think about what you are doing.

Sticky tape attaches the 1/8" dowel to the rear of the joined panel, not all the way down, but at the top, bottom, side of the vent and once more half way up.

Eyelets are fixed into all five "ears" and then starts the fun, fixing the bridle lines.

Cut five lengths of line about ten feet long, and attach each one to an "ear". (Suggest a bowline is best for this one, it does not work loose so easily.) Tie the extreme left line to a small split ring or key ring, using the 'round turn and two half hitches', and then the extreme right line, making sure both lines are the same length.

Now pin the quad sled to a board or beam, keeping it flat and fully extended. Keeping tension on the two lines already fixed, pick up one of the other three lines and attach it to the ring, preferably in its correct order. Repeat until all five lines are fastened with reasonably equal tension on all lines.

A piece of thick dowel or broom handle passed through the ring acts as an excellent centre to wind the bridle lines onto, and a couple of saw cuts on the ends keep rubber bands safely in the position when all the lines are fully wound on.

Even with this discipline. unaccountable twists still magically take place. To prevent the sleds beating in and out like an old accordion, slip a three foot length of 18 gauge piano wire through the eyelet holes with a rubber 'stopper' each side of the end "ears". The rubber 'stopper' is simply a 1/4" square of old car inner tube with a hole boded through the centre with a slim, sharp spike. Pushed onto the piano wire, the friction is sufficient to stop the "ears" leaving the piano wire.

When preparing to fly your quad, use great care and adequate weights to hold the quads down with "ears" upwards, and allow unrolling the bridles, attaching the line and getting out enough line for the launch. (Don't forget a pin to anchor the reel end.) When all is ready, carefully remove the weights, control the set of sleds by holding out flat to the breeze, and when a slight surge comes, launch gently. Usually it climbs straight up keeping a horizontal altitude and adopts a good steep line angle. "Dirty" gusts have been known to make it do a slow loop, but it has very few vices and is certainly an eye catching novelty.

Now for the octosled bit. This is simply two quadra sleds clipped together side by side. Ordinary dress press studs are used for this.

Decide which ends are to be joined and place the two matching ends together. With a leather punch cut a 1/8" or 3/32 diameter hole through both thickness near the top and bottom of the "ear" and near the eyelet hole.

Put the mating parts of the press stud through the hole and snap them together. Put a patch of sticky tape over the back of both parts. Repeat for the two studs. The two quads can now be snapped apart whenever required, for transporting or flying separately.

The piano wires need to be joined as well to avoid a difficult packing problem. A short length of close fitting brass tube is soldered to the end of one piano wire and the two halves held together with a 'lock slip' tag on each half, and a rubber band pulling the two halves together.

Naturally, great care must be taken when dealing with ten bridles on two rings, or else a lot of patience is needed to sort out the tangle. This is where the split ring is invaluable, all lines can be slipped off the ring, untangled and slipped back on the ring again, held between the two halves of the split. Both bridle sets must, of course, be identical to be able to fly in the same single line. As an exercise in the control of temper and single mindedness in times of great vexation, this cannot be beaten ... go to it!!

