

# THE KITEFLIER

[www.thekitesociety.org.uk](http://www.thekitesociety.org.uk)



**Issue 143      April 2015      £2.50**  
**Newsletter of the Kite Society of  
Great Britain**

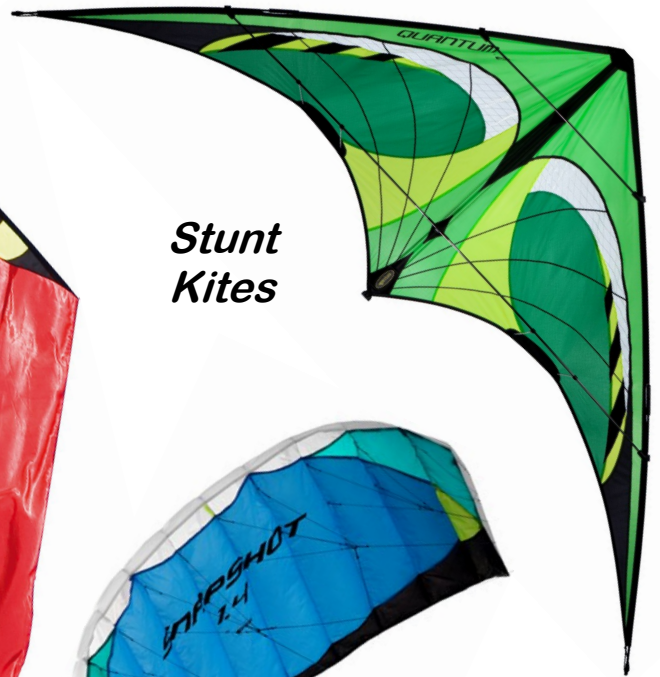


# KITEWORLD

All The Fun Of The Air !



*Inflatable  
Kites*



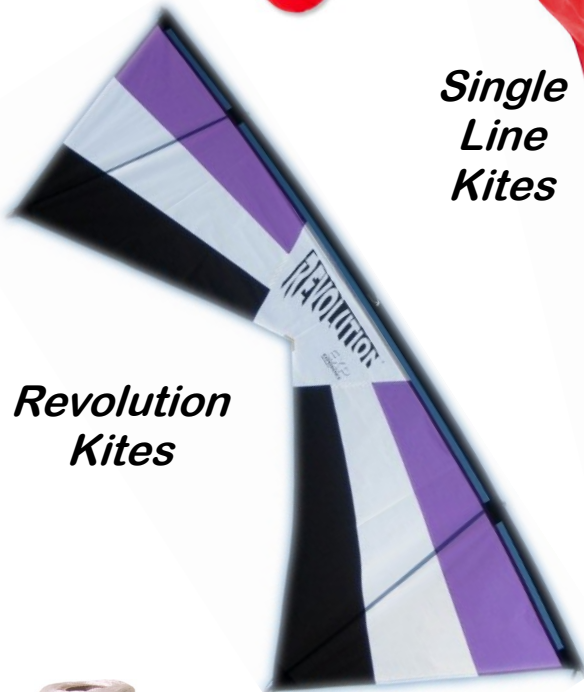
*Stunt  
Kites*



*Single  
Line  
Kites*



*Power Kites*



*Revolution  
Kites*



*Kites For  
All Ages*



*Kite  
Accessories*



*Windssocks*

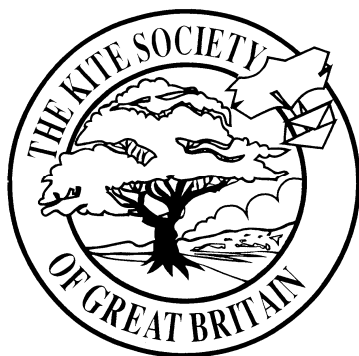


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**Front Cover**  
**The evening skyline at the Dubai International Kite Festival.**  
**Photo: Gill Bloom**

Dear Reader

Welcome to a new kite flying season—let us hope for good winds and fine weather for all of the events this year (at home and abroad).

Going to press we heard about the sad unexpected death of Ron Despojado—one of the leading exponents of quad line flying and sports kites. He was well respected across the whole kite community and will be missed. Some of you may remember him attending Portsmouth many years ago!

This issue is a few pages short of our target 40 pages. The reasons are many—including the lack of Aerodyne from the Brighton Kite Fliers—but also because we do not receive content from you—the reader! It is not hard to do—and we do accept hand written, sent through the post! It does not have to be electronic or emailed!!

We would like to thank all of the members who have elected to receive the electronic magazine. Not only do they receive it faster, but they

also have the opportunity to save a small piece of the planet by only printing what they want to read (or not at all).

We look forward to seeing you on the kite field—but especially Portsmouth—remember the dates have changed this year to 15th & 16th August. Not the August Bank holiday!

Gill and Jon

<b>Membership Type</b>	<b>Fee</b>
<b>Electronic Subscription (Individual or Family)</b>	£5.00
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## Kite Happening—Nieuwpoort—Almost! Bob Cruickshanks

A few years back there used to be a kite festival on the beach at **Nieuwpoort** in **Belgium** and held on the first weekend after the New Year, which was the end of the local's holiday period. Michel was the host with support from the town, which usually offered one night's (Saturday) B&B in the Sandeshoved (known by many as the Sand Shovel) Hotel and a 'meet the mayor' buffet luncheon. Additional nights could be had at a reduced rate plus there was an evening meal with an aperitif "salad bar" followed by moules & frites or steak & frites and a desert to finish. The evening meal was extra but well worth it just for the entertainment and frivolities that normally ensued. Fliers attended from the UK and all the surrounding borders i.e., Germany, Luxemburg, Holland and France etc. to amass circa 150 fliers/attendees.



Because I occasionally migrate to India for the winter – and the string pullin' – I last went in 2011 if my memory recalls but I've slept a lot since then. I recall the Saturday being very windy and damp but regular doses of hot chocolate or gluhwein kept the spirits high, likely the latter ☺ The Sunday was a glorious blue sky with a gentle breeze – tip top.

Roll the calendar forward and things have changed. For the last 3-4 years the town has not offered any support kite festival. Not one to be beaten, and spurred on by the support of many fliers, Michel agreed to continue organising a kite flying weekend.

January 2015 (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>) with no India travels I once again teamed up with **Alan Holden**, a fellow **AKF** member to travel to **Belgium**. As always, travel arrangements to/from Nieuwpoort were down to the individuals so sharing makes the trip more attractive. However, as in the last couple of years there was no free luncheon or B&B just the usual good beer and friendly



faces. That said, the Sandeshoved was still offering reduced i.e., half price, accommodation including breakfast. Conscious of people's expenditure Michel had reduced the flying to one day, Sunday, although people were at liberty to fly on the Saturday if they some wished.

Still struggling to get up the crack of dawn (ha ha) Alan and I departed Ilchester in Somerset early on Saturday and travelling via the A303 in pouring rain. The rain started to abate as we hit the M25 enroute the tunnel at Folkestone. Apart from the rain the journey was uneventful and the nice lady offered an earlier shuttle, result. Arriving around 1pm and having found a parking slot; that's another imposed penalty for anyone travelling to Nieuwpoort, no free parking, we made our way to the Sandeshoved and dropped our bags. PS, I think we dragged the drizzle from the UK plus someone left the fridge door open; it was 2 degrees lower at 3° C.

Fed and watered we met up with Michel and several other arrivals in the bar. "Beer anyone?" Rude not to when in Belgium. Slowly others arrived and much handshaking/hugs and kisses ensued oh, and more beer, just my kinda meeting ☺☺ Michel had arranged for us to all meet for an evening meal in an Italian restaurant. Reasonably priced, I think that most agreed that the pizzas, pasta etc. were superb and the chance to relax, meet and chat with new and old friends made for a good weekend.

The Sandeshoved hotel is the only one that fronts onto the beach. Sunday, curtains open the view from our balcony was blue skies and gentle breakers in the sea. Breakfast was an 'all one can eat' buffet. Conscious of too much turkey and stuffing over the festive period I elected to only eat half of 'one'. Time to go fly!!

When I last came flying was, naturally, on the beach in front of the Nieuwpoort promenade.



## Kite Happening—Nieuwpoort—Almost! Bob Cruickshanks

However, given that the town offices/accountants had deserted Michel the flying now, and for the last couple of years, takes place 1Km west of the town at **Groenendijk**. Effectively outside of the Nieuwpoort boundary, the hope being that they may reconsider and resume support.

The locals of Groenendijk get a grand spectacle. With a bar/restaurant close to hand for refreshments and toilets the day could only get better. As we walked on to the beach we were greeted by some old friends from **Club Mistral** who had a pot of **gluhwein**. "Alan, guess we'll pitch our cabana next to our friends" ☺☺☺ A

s with Club Mistral several like **Ivo van Olmen** had travelled on the day to avoid hotels etc. Some of the fliers had new kites etc. made over the last few months to checkout and test making this an ideal opportunity to spy the latest creations.

I put up two new **Brasington** acquisitions from Dieppe (Fr) 2014. A pair of small Geisha looking kites, one Carole's and one mine which I flew together in a train. I call them Wishi and

Washi respectively; namely because Carole says "I wishi wouldn't do that" and I always washi dishes.

The breeze was a steady on shore blow, just enough to keep most things up but not too much to add to the wind chill. Such was the breeze and location of the bar that kites could be left aloft and viewed whilst eating our lunch or

having a drink – Tip Top.

Numbers attending understandably were around 40, but to a man (and woman) would agree that it was a great days flying and well worth the trip.

The wind started to drop around 2:30 - 3:00pm as did the temperature so time to pack up and try one of those infamous Belgian beers.

Alan and I elected to stay until Monday. This enabled us to pick up some 'pop' at the supermarket on the way home and have a leisurely drive home.

I guess that it is not just on the home shores that kite festivals are struggling to retain sponsorship etc. but thankfully with support from fliers we still get to fly our kites and put on a show.

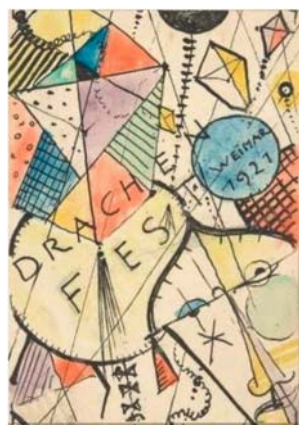
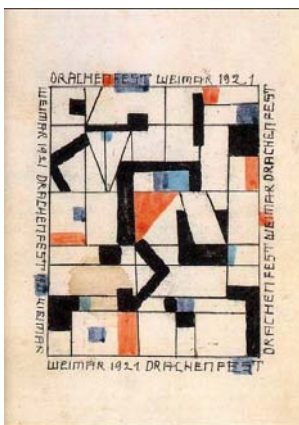


## Tal Streeter, Art and Kites—George Webster and John Dobson

The late Tal Streeter was one of an early group of kite artists who emerged in the West from the late 1960's onwards. His recent death set us thinking not only about his unique contribution but also about what we mean by 'kite artist'.

For a long time, Western kite makers had been primarily interested in efficiency of design, quality of construction and aerodynamic characteristics, with decoration being considered important, but not quite as important as the more technical aspects. It was an engineering view of a kite.

The earliest Western kite festival based on the concept of the kite as art that we have discovered was an annual event at the Bauhaus (then located in Weimar) in the early 1920's, when it held a kite festival in October each year. The kites were apparently makeshift but decorated in a childlike (*not* childish!) version of the Bauhaus style. According to the later recollections of Felix Klee (son of Paul, who was then teaching at the Bauhaus) who would have been 13 in 1921, "after making the kites, we went to one of the nearby hills, where we flew the abstract constructions in the autumn wind, to the astonishment of the local populace". There are photographs of the kite procession and of the kites on the ground of the hill, but we can find no picture of them actually being flown.



But it was Tal Streeter's influential book *The Art of the Japanese Kite* (1974) that brought to the attention of the kite flying community the Japanese concept of the kite as a work of art, not of engineering, though we know that there was an exhibition of Japanese paper kites in Stuttgart in 1914. So beginning in the 1980's, a number of Western artists began to be interested in the idea that the sky, or more generally space, could be a place for artistic endeavour. The ear-

liest reference we can trace is the set of Conferences on Culture in Space arranged by the MIT Centre for Advanced Visual Studies (1981-6), which resulted in the *Sky Artist Manifesto* being signed by over one hundred sky artists in 1986. Two sentences extracted from the *Sky Art Manifesto* (reprinted in Tal Streeter's book *The Philosopher's Kite* (2002)) will give the idea:

"From the ancient past, artists have formed images and dreams, fired the imagination, built structures of aspiration to give the world wings to fly, and the vision to see new societies in the sky. We use their cumulative light.

"Our reach into space constitutes an infinite extension of human life, imagination and creativity."

This manifesto, when taken together with the Japanese tradition of the art kite, suggests that there are two main groups of sky artists. Of course there is a spectrum between them. We will just give what we consider the opposite ends of the spectrum, recognising that there is a wide range of possible positions between them. Firstly, there are those who see kites as a means of providing an artistic experience when the kite flies. It is the utilisation of the sky as a canvas or medium of presentation of the artist's statement or vision, expressed in the form of a kite or other sky-inhabiting object. To put his point of view a bit dogmatically (manifesto style) with specific reference to kite art, a sky art that is a work of art when it is not flying is not a sky art. Three early artists in this field (Curt Asker, Jackie Matisse and Tal Streeter) collaborated in making a wonderful book, *Art That Flies* (1991), in which this point of view is clearly expressed. From it we learn that Curt Asker tried to draw on the sky using the kite like a watercolour stain on white/blue paper; that Jackie Matisse sees her sky and underwater kites as the same thing expressed in different media; and that Tal Streeter considered his five mile long *Red Line* kite as an extension of his tall *Endless Column* sculpture, which was a rectangular steel tube painted red carrying the eye up its zigzag length seventy feet into the sky and beyond.

Later, they produced in collaboration with Istvan Bodóczy, Michel Gressier, Falko Hasse and José Maria Yturralde the *Art Volant Kite Manifesto* (1995):



## Tal Streeter, Art and Kites—George Webster and John Dobson

The primary, simple kite is a vehicle, which speaks of joining of the spirit and the physical. Kites, then, are tools, mediums of expression in space, meditations on space; structures and surfaces, colors and forms interacting...visual, aural, tactile.

The kite's flying line connects the human hand and mind with the elements. Kites offer artists unparalleled opportunities for play, to explore, to experiment, manipulating scale and distance, making an immense space visible, unlocking the imagination. We seven artists continue our work in this medium and encourage the development and support of Art Volant.



The second group of sky artists are those who use a kite as the vehicle for putting their painting into the sky rather than hanging it in a gallery. Claudio Capelli is a famous example. His famous kite festival at Cervia in addition to the usual events does also display kites as an art exhibition in the traditional sense. There are of course many artists following this idea. To name but a few: George Peters is a professional artist whose kites feature superb high craftsmanship. Steve Brockett (brilliantly brought to the skies by Hugh and Lynn Blowers) is a unique artist who uses his skill to produce novel kite designs as well as painted surfaces to express his vision. Robert Trepannier is another artist with a unique point of view, as are Michael Goddard and Joel Thézé. A very good book on the subject is the French *Cerfs Volants: L'Art en Ciel* by E. and M. Domage (1996).



In 1994 Charlie Charlton set up the Artistic Kite Association. One of its aims was the promotion of artistic kites by exhibiting them on the ground rather than in the air. In its short life the group claimed 80 members and exhibited at some festivals but ran into two problems: judging the relative importance of craftsmanship and artistic design, and judging kites which might not fly in the particular wind at the time but "should be able to fly, conditions permitting". The latter was (mis)quoted as "didn't have to fly", leading to much mirth. Of course we didn't know then that the most expensive *wau bulan* kites are non-fliers; indeed they use frames selected out from others at construction just because they are poor fliers. And the *bariletes gigantes* of Guatemala are not flown either. Some fliers saw putting together a static exhibition of kites provided by their makers as a way of getting something for nothing. Comments in *The Kiteflier* were quite vicious and Charlie gave up the whole thing in 1996.

There have been several examples of the 'Air Gallery' approach where a variety of artists paint the skins of a standard format kite. The best known example in England is the European Air Gallery now maintained and occasionally flown by the North East Kite Fliers, which was developed from the Dutch Air Gallery. The most ambitious example in terms of resourcing and quality of artists involved is the Art Kite Project — never shown in the UK but well documented in *Pictures for the Sky* edited by P. Eubel (1992). Eubel invited over one hundred artists worldwide to produce painting on washi paper in the form of one of seven Japanese kite types (though they could also try their own designs). The skins were then made up by Japanese experts and flown and shown at exhibitions

## Tal Streeter, Art and Kites—George Webster and John Dobson

around the world. One kite using the art of Rauschenberg was valued at one million dollars when exhibited in Australia.

We don't know anyone who actually saw it but the book shows some of the best kites we have ever seen. Some of the illustrations show surreal contrasts of modern art against Japanese castles. The kite makers were not necessarily just building the platform; in some cases they had to adapt their traditional construction to fit the artist. It is amusing to note that the organisers wrote that one of the novel aspects of the format which attracted some artists was the element of danger (wind, paper and bamboo).

There are two questions in considering who is a kite artist and what is an artistic kite. Firstly, can there be more than one example of a particular artistic kite? For us, the answer is clearly yes. There has long been a tradition of artists making a number of distinct copies of their paintings, often with noticeable changes; and the concept of a limited print run is widely used — though a longer run will decrease monetary worth of a particular instance. Secondly, what is the artistic worth of a kite whose skin reproduces an image which was originally a painting or a photo. We don't know. But the status of a brilliantly faithful, or adapted, reproduction of a Japanese design into appliqué ripstop must be high — we're thinking of Jan Gutterink, Ruud Kugel and Baz Vreeswijk. The same is true of a good literary translation of a writing. And also we have Gill Bloom's unrivalled long series of birds and flowers.



There is also a third identifiable type of kite artist. Kitemakers such as Cot-t e n c e a u , Uguen and Bodóczy all produce kites with a common theme of frailty and modest size. Many of their kites are desired as decorations even

though all are designed to fly. Some of these artists emphasise the use of natural materials.

Back to Tal who started off these thoughts. He was a sculptor whose work was exhibited in prestigious galleries in the USA and Korea — probably the most famous artist who used his talent in the world of kites, though his most famous work of the 1960's, *Endless Column* which we mentioned earlier, was a seventy foot high zigzag of painted steel. Nothing could be physically further from a kite but Tal's intention was that your eye would be drawn faster and faster to the top and then jump off into the sky. What appealed to him were simple shapes that you viewed against an ever-changing sky.



Tal lived in Japan during 1971/2. There he learnt to make kites from the local materials of paper and bamboo — but in the simple style we associate with Japanese domestic design rather than the hectic colourful designs of traditional Japanese kites. He was so involved that he amused the Japanese who invented the phrase *tako kichi* or 'Kite Crazy' to describe him.

He made kites on his return from Japan, most famously by designing the *Five Mile Red Line* made by Doug Hagaman which was a 350 sq.ft. parafoil with a very long tail. We think it was flown around 1989. (Does anyone know its current whereabouts?) For Tal it was about simple shapes and a presence in the sky. Later he made kites referring back to the *Endless Column*.



## Tal Streeter, Art and Kites—George Webster and John Dobson

Uniquely among kite makers, however, his greatest contribution to our art was his writings. He was, in our view, the finest writer as a stylist in addition to what he had to say. His *Art of the Japanese Kite* (1974) opened Western eyes to the qualities of Japanese kites – published before Pelham (1976). As it happened, he wrote at the low point for traditional Japanese kite making as in response to the outcome of the war, Japan was moving away from its native ethnic culture and adopting the culture of the victors – just as it had done before after losing a war to China in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Fortunately, Japanese kite makers did start to flourish again using a wide range of traditional styles.

Apart from his collaboration with Askers and Matisse previously mentioned, Tal wrote two further books. *A Kite Journey through India* (1996) was again beautifully written with lovely personal touches but it has been superseded by later writers and by the great changes in Indian kite making. *The Philosopher's Kite* (2002) is really an incomplete collection of his thoughts and travels – his response to requests for the book that others wanted him to write. Look at it for the photos of his sculptures and the material on the origin of kites. It also has a useful, but now dated bibliography.

Then there were some books that Tal didn't write. You will find reference to 'The Sky Begins at our Feet' and 'In Search of Gentle Beauty: Great Kites of the Western World'.

Tal came to Sunderland Kite Festival and fell in love with Teesdale. He would have liked his collection of oriental art kites to be located here as he couldn't stand what he called 'Bush's America'. This idea was briefly investigated but proved infeasible for a number of reasons.

Tal was always fundamentally a sculptor. He was attracted to 'the idea of a piece of string hanging down, a scrap of paper and sticks at one end and a hand at the other' ... 'these modest materials began to tell me something about sculpture in steel'. The connection between hand and sky was important to him and I would guess *The Five Mile Line* was his only kite which flew from an anchor.

Kites as Art? He once wrote 'Kites are unique and can't be categorized, like bamboo which is neither tree nor grass but just bamboo'.

Tal was a man of great taste – except for bacon.

George: This is the local butcher's best cut bacon. How do you like it?

Tal: Well done please.

G. (five minutes after frying his own): OK?

T.: A bit crisper please.

G. (looking at a very dry wrinkled bit): OK?

T.: nearly OK – just another minute.

He applies the American test. Press rasher on plate. Press with flat of knife. If it all crumbles then it is done.

For a copiously illustrated version of this article, see John Dobson's website [www.johndobson.info/John's%20Kite%20Site/pdf%20files/Tal%20Streeter.pdf](http://www.johndobson.info/John's%20Kite%20Site/pdf%20files/Tal%20Streeter.pdf) or go to [www.johndobson.info](http://www.johndobson.info) and follow the links to my articles.

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Visits by appointment only!

## Event News

### Flying Lunch

10th May

**Yaverland Meadow, Sandown, Isle of Wight**

This is a community / family day bringing everyone together to picnic and fly kites, we have a Facebook site Flying Lunch, no website yet.

We are trying to make this an annual event and hope it will grow as we don't have a kite festival here and really want the local community to enjoy kites as much as us!

Contact [sharon-george@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sharon-george@hotmail.co.uk) and telephone 07739 999848 or landline 01983 856168



At the Imperial Recreation Ground, Exmouth, from 11:00 – 17:00 (16:30 Saturday). Come and celebrate the return of a great festival and help the Rotary Club of Exmouth & District, the organisers, raise some money for charity.

Check the website for more information [www.exmouthrotaryclub.co.uk/kite-festival](http://www.exmouthrotaryclub.co.uk/kite-festival).

Camping is available, see reservation form for details, but unlike previous years campers will have to use the Rugby Ground adjacent rather than the freshly seeded area of the Recreation Ground. The cost, £9 per night, goes directly to the Rugby Club; showers, toilets and the water are available but no electric. Anyone wishing to camp is required to complete a Camping Reservation form, which is available from the website or Malcolm at [kites@exmouthrotaryclub.co.uk](mailto:kites@exmouthrotaryclub.co.uk).

Cars may be allowed access to drop off kites etc. but movement will be restricted to before and after the festival times.

There will also be two summer concerts held on the Friday (Wurzels) and Saturday (Joey the Lips) nights. Ticket information/booking is available from the website

[www.exmouthrotaryclub.co.uk/kite-festival](http://www.exmouthrotaryclub.co.uk/kite-festival)

For information contact:

Malcolm on 078 9999 3772

Or [kites@exmouthrotaryclub.co.uk](mailto:kites@exmouthrotaryclub.co.uk)

### Herne Bay Kite Day

28<sup>th</sup> June

**Memorial Park, Kings Road Herne Bay, Kent**

Following on from the successful inaugural event last year, a second event has been arranged. Unfortunately due to the limited size of the flying site large inflatables are unable to be flown. Discussions are being held with the local community group behind these kite days as to a more suitable site which would also accommodate camping, with a view to extending the event to two days.

There will be a small programme of flying events in the demonstration area, involving all the kite flyers attending. Flying Fish demonstration team will be in attendance.

Parking will be allowed alongside the flying area (Dependant on weather and ground conditions).

Entry to kiteflyers on production of car pass provided by Kent Kite Flyers.

Contact: - Malcolm Ford, e-mail: - [malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com](mailto:malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com) or mobile 07840086770

### Ron Dell Memorial Teston Kite Festival August 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

**Teston Bridge Country Park Teston Lane, Teston nr Maidstone Kent**

As in previous years this a two day event where kiteflyers meet up socially to fly kites, and interact with the public. Camping will be allowed from the Friday until the following Monday, with a minimum donation of £10 per unit of up to 4 persons. This is carrying on the tradition set for many years by Ron and Pat Dell of Kiteability.

Malcolm Ford, e-mail: - [malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com](mailto:malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com) or mobile 07840086770

### Bristol International Kite Festival 22nd & 23rd August



## Event News

### Durdham Downs, Bristol

Well in case you don't know it's all change this year. The good news is that we have had the go ahead from Bristol City Council to move the festival from our usual spot, on the plateau in Ashton Court, to Durdham Downs which is a wonderful green space on the North East fringe of Bristol. We have also moved the date to the weekend before the Bank Holiday i.e. 22 & 23 August, which means as usual we will be following Portsmouth.

Given that we have a completely new site we are still in discussions with the Council about exactly how we use the space, where car parking will be, what needs to be fenced in etc, and the various restrictions and regulations regarding the use of the Downs. All challenging stuff as we are starting with a blank sheet of paper!

We are also currently discussing a line up of flyers from home and abroad and would like to bring some new ideas into the arena programme.

Other than that the actually key elements of the festival are likely to be very similar and there will be the usual onsite party/meal on the Saturday evening. Regarding flyers parking – we will have a designated area near to the flying site but **don't** send any SAEs at the moment as we may do all parking through an online booking system on our new website. Watch this space.

At present there is no facility to camp on the Downs – it is one of the Council's very strict rules - so if you want to camp you need to make other arrangements. We will make some local enquiries and put some options on the website.

Other changes given our new location, and as Redwood Lodge is no more, we have opted to use University accommodation at Durdham Hall - which is literally walking distance from the Downs and more affordable than the city centre hotels. The rooms are £35 per night and are all single en-suite. The hall has a spacious bar/common room and free parking. We have made a provisional booking of around 50 rooms but if you are interested in booking please get in touch so that we can allocate enough rooms and sort out requirements/payment etc.

We are also looking to hold a social gathering at the lovely University Botanic Gardens on the Friday evening, following the media call. The venue is literally 5 minutes walk from both the Downs and Durdham Hall.

Some changes on the organisational front. Firstly the festival has now been set up as a Community Interest Company and secondly the website is being completely revamped so that it is more fit for purpose especially regarding social media.

We should have a lot more festival information to share with you in the coming weeks/months so keep visiting [www.kite-festival.org.uk](http://www.kite-festival.org.uk) or our facebook page [bristolinternationalkitefestival](https://www.facebook.com/bristolinternationalkitefestival).

If however you have any urgent queries you can call Avril on 0117 977 2002 or email [kites@abc-pr.co.uk](mailto:kites@abc-pr.co.uk)

Thanks Avril and the team

### Kites over Bewl

**5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> September 2015 Kites over Bewl, Location Bewl Water nr Lamberhurst Kent TN3 8JH**

A new event a new location taking place in the wonderful setting of Bewl Water reservoir. This was originally advertised for 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> May, but has been moved at the request of the estate manager. This is a two day event, and planning is on going at the moment, but we anticipate incorporating a mela with local groups showcasing cultural foods and crafts.

The kite flying will take place at the rear of grounds with a magnificent view over the surrounding area and out over the reservoir.

Camping will be allowed from Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September to Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015, with free entry on production of car/camping pass which will be provided via Kent Kite Flyers. Please note that there will be separate passes for camping and day passes for other vehicles. Hope you will support this new event which may lead on to being able to use more of the estate in the future.

Contact; Malcolm Ford, e-mail: - [malcolm@kentkiteflyers.com](mailto:malcolm@kentkiteflyers.com) or mobile 07840086770

## Portsmouth

### Portsmouth International Kite Festival

Portsmouth City Council continues to support the kite festival. This year the festival will take place Saturday 15th & 16th August, just a two day event as the normal Bank Holiday weekend has been reserved by the Victorious Music Festival and they want the whole of Southsea Common. There is no reason why people cannot fly on the Monday but this would be unofficial.

The theme for this year's event is "Myth and Fantasy", so hopefully lots of fantastical kites!

**Free parking** is available for KSGB members on request from us IN ADVANCE. No passes will be available at the site. Send SAE or email us with your name and car registration number. Please note that each pass will be specific to you and NOT transferable. Your name and registration number will be printed on the pass. Also note that if you do not supply the registration number you will not get a pass.

You will be able to unload your vehicle on the main festival site but once unloaded, you **MUST** move your car to the car park. The car park location will be shown on the car pass as we are unsure which end of the site entry will be made from. The entrance will be manned enabling access. At least this is what we have been told so far. Watch the web site for any changes to details of access.

Finally a CAR pass does not equal a CAMPING pass—a separate pass is required for CAMPING.

**Camping** is not officially permitted on site by the council. This year the festival is again being run in conjunction with Seafront Services but unfortunately, they are being pressured by local residents and councillors to reduce the number of campers once again and as such we are unlikely to have camping passes available beyond specifically invited kite fliers.

Please understand both their and our positions on this. It is an unfortunate fact that the participation of the campers is not, over the past few years, what it could have been and when local councillors walk past and make comments like "all I saw was people sitting around all day, talking and generally hanging around in the campsite and from my point of view, not flying kites".

Once we finalise the guest list there may be

some passes available to other kitefliers. The process and rules are:

Camping is only open to Kite Society members or affiliated club members.

A ballot will be used to allocate any spare passes. Therefore anyone who wishes to enter the ballot **MUST** request a pass from us together with the vehicle registration number.

All requests for camping must be with us by **31st May**. We will notify both successful and unsuccessful people by the **8th June**.

It is important to note that this concession is only between **Friday 14th August 10am until Monday 17th August noon**. You will be moved if you arrive earlier or stay later. Please do not abuse this concession.

Send postal requests to P O Box 2274, Gt Hor- kesley, Colchester CO6 4AY or email to [portsmouth@thekitesociety.org.uk](mailto:portsmouth@thekitesociety.org.uk).

If you are one of the keen ones and already sent your request—please send it again with the additional details requested above.

Note requests for camping will NOT be acknowledged—we have better things to do! - unless you ask for a read request via your email system.

The nearest alternative camp site is Southsea Leisure Park, Melville Rd, Southsea PO4 9TB

For details of local accommodation please contact the Portsmouth Tourist Centre on 023 9283 6722, [www.visitportsmouth.co.uk](http://www.visitportsmouth.co.uk).

The University Halls of Residence, where the invited kitefliers stay, can be booked online at [onlinestore.port.ac.uk](http://onlinestore.port.ac.uk). Look under the "Conferences & Events" > "Conferences & Lettings" > "Conferences" headings. It is called PCC Kite Flyers Accommodation. We have been told the rates are the same as we pay. You can also book for the period Wednesday 12th to Tuesday 18th. (Note you have to register to use the site). Or call 023 9284 4884.

Look at [www.portsmouthkitefestival.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthkitefestival.org.uk) for up to date information.



## Bits & Pieces

### 4 Lines 2 Freedom

My name is Kevin and I have started a Facebook group for U.K. quad line sport kite flyers called "4 lines 2 freedom ". As a social group I am hoping to expand and spread the word to gain more members. It is all for non profit and just a social meeting place for U.K. flyers.

Look on Facebook for more.

### Drachen Foundation Collections Moves to Korea

From the Drachen Foundation.

2015 brings us to an exciting milestone in the Foundation's history. After uploading our collection onto the Drachen Foundation website, we have tried, for the last three years, to quietly sell our collections. Our goal was to raise money to maintain the website for the next 20+ years and the physical ownership of artifacts in our collection would be of secondary importance. During the "marketing" of our collection, our primary desire was that it would not be sold piecemeal to dozens of locations. We logically tried to market our contemporary kites, our traditional (mainly Asian) kites, and our collection of Cody materials. Many of you know that we enlisted Bonhams in New York City to auction the Cody materials, but this effort came to naught as the minimum bid for the sale was not reached.

Enter a new friend, introduced to me by Peter Lynn of New Zealand. Mr. Cho, who represents Wind Park, Inc, an organization that plans to build a state of the art kite museum on Korea's Jeju Island. After several months of talks, Mr. Cho and Mr. Park, who proposed the idea of a kite museum in the first place, agreed to purchase all three parts of the Drachen Foundation collection. We are thrilled at this turn of events as it keeps our collections intact for many years to come; it fills a need for the Wind Park organization and allows them to now work to "fill out" their kite collection; and it sets up a partnership between the two organizations that will continue to educate the public and kite fans worldwide.

Our Foundation website will continue to be a first-rate resource for educators, researchers, and kite-fans because of the funding from this sale. Our Board of Directors will continue to oversee the Foundation's progress in to the future. Additionally we will be able to bring our

readers updates on the progress of the Jeju Island kite museum and will be able to share their collections, programs, and festivals. My thanks go to Peter Lynn for introducing me to Mr. Cho, to Mr. Cho for seeing the potential of our collections to his project, and to Ali Fujino, who has accomplished much of the groundwork to make this sale and shipment a reality. There will be several more days of work in our Tieton warehouse to safely pack the collection for shipment to Korea, which will probably happen this summer. Mr. Park promised that his museum building would be complete by the end of 2015! Very exciting, indeed!

I hope you will feel free to call me, email me, or shoot me a personal message on Facebook if you have any questions or if you just want to talk about the state of the Drachen Foundation.

Scott R. Skinner, President, The Drachen Foundation.

### Extracts from [www.mcclatchydc.com](http://www.mcclatchydc.com)

As China's kite makers age, lofty tradition goes to ground

WEIFANG, China — Zhang Xiaodong's workshop is strewn with all manner of flying contraptions. There are dragons, eagles, butterflies and ingenious mechanical kites, including one that features a frog seeking to devour a praying mantis. Zhang, 65, is one of China's most revered kite makers, and as he showed off some of his life's work, he ticked off the benefits of lofting wind-blown art into the sky.

"Flying a kite provides good exercise; it uses your neck and shoulder muscles. It enhances friendships among people," he said. "Flying a kite also elevates your mood. You can write your worries on the kite, and when it soars high in the air, you can cut the string and your worries will fly away."

Chinese kite makers have much to worry about these days. As China modernizes, a new generation is playing video games instead of attaching painted silk to bamboo frames. The artisans that remain are rapidly aging. Nearly all of them are men in a nation of almost 1.4 billion people. While China takes great pride in its kites — an invention that led to the science of aerodynamics — the future of this traditional craft is far from certain. That's true even in Weifang, a city southeast of Beijing that proclaims itself China's

## Bits & Pieces

kite capital.

Han Fuling has been making traditional kites in Weifang for nearly all of his 82 years. He can recall the special feeling when, at age 7, he built his first kite and saw it waft into the air. Yet these days, Han is doubtful that any of his four children will carry on his handiwork.

"Not only does my son not make kites, he gives me a hard time for continuing to make them. He says I am old and I should rest now," Han said. "But kites are my passion. How can I not make kites?"

The slow demise of kite making is part of a larger cultural saga in China. In Weifang kites have been part of the city's DNA for centuries. Numerous books credit Lu Ban, an inventor from Weifang, for popularizing the construction of kites in the fourth century B.C. Today, Weifang is home to an annual international kite festival, an 86,000-square-foot kite museum and more than 100 factories that mass-produce kites, partly for export to other countries.

Wang Yongxun, 42, is arguably the city's most successful kite entrepreneur. He owns a business, the Weifang Tiancheng Feiyuan Kite Import and Export Co., that employs 130 workers. Wang said his employees hand-painted and manufactured more than 500,000 kites a year, 60 percent of which were exported.

Wang, a former student of Zhang Xiaodong, is sometimes criticized for having helped commercial enterprises mass-produce kites, giving young people few reasons to take up the art. But Wang argues that his kites are made in the spirit of the old masters, helping to keep their work alive.

"We make traditional kites by hand, and we do it slowly," he said while escorting a reporter around his showroom. "We offer people kites at prices they can afford."

China's kite masters have weathered hard times before. During the Cultural Revolution, traditional kites were labeled one of the "four olds," and artists were threatened with internment at re-education camps if they didn't change with the times.

In Beijing during that time, a kite artist named Fei Baoling went through similar trials. Now 86,

Fei recalls stripping the painted silk off his kites so that "all that was left was the bones." But at the end of the Cultural Revolution, traditional folk art came back into favour, and Fei worked to ensure that kites were included in the Second National Arts and Crafts Exhibition, held in Beijing in 1972.



China is home to many schools of kite making, with concentrations of artists in Weifang, Tianjin, Nantong and other cities. In Beijing kite circles, Fei is widely known as the elder statesman, a specialist in intricately painted swallow kites, inspired by an 18th-century novelist and kite master, Cao Xueqin.

In 1981, Fei became so absorbed in kites that he quit his banking job to devote himself to the craft. A friend had given him a tattered and incomplete kite book penned by Cao Xueqin that had nearly disappeared from circulation after the Cultural Revolution. With his friend's help, Fei threw himself into reconstructing the book. Its publication enhanced his reputation among serious kite makers and collectors, both in China and overseas.

For the last several years, Fei's eyesight has been failing, but that hasn't stopped him from taking on protégés. One of them is Sun He, a 36-year-old auto mechanic. Sun began studying with Fei in 2003 with a goal, he said, of producing swallow kites with the same precision and designs as his master.

Sun's living room has the faint scent of bamboo and paint. Its walls are filled with mementos of old China: kites, photographs, paintings and huzi – twisted gourds that have deep symbol-



## Bits & Pieces

ism in Chinese mythology. When Sun encounters a young person interested in Chinese culture, he "seizes on those moments," he said. But they don't occur often.

"That is the problem we face. People don't have the sentimental attachment to traditional kites," he said. "They rarely fly them. They buy the triangles (plastic commercial kites) and fly them at the bridges."

In 2006, a Chinese language student named Peter Boekelheide traveled around China, conducting a survey of contemporary kite making for the Drachen Foundation. He came to the conclusion that traditional kite makers in China are dwindling.

"Kite making is turning into something that people do as a hobby, if they do it at all," Boekelheide said "I don't think I talked to a single artisan who was optimistic about the future."

Yet there are some kite artists who hold out hope. In Weifang, Zhang Xiaodong spends his spare time teaching kite making to children and teens, including local students with disabilities. In Beijing, Fei Baoling was once discouraged about the future, but now he's convinced there are "persistent people" who'll follow in his footsteps.

"As long as there are people who care about kindness, beauty and being genuine," he said, "there will be people who make kites."

### Worlds Longest Kite (maybe)

#### Part 1

Kite making masters from Weifang, Shandong Province, have produced a 5,000-meter-long, dragon-shaped kite, now officially the world's longest kite, beating the previous world record from 2008.

The kite is composed of 2,500 smaller kites, and the string alone weighs 500 kilograms. It took 3 months to complete the kite project, thanks to the efforts of 20 experienced kite makers from Weifang, a city widely known as "the world capital of kites". However, only 800-meters of the kite was flown successfully last Sunday, due to weather conditions.

#### Part 2

A kite enthusiast ensured that this year's

Chongqing International Kite Festival got off to a flying start yesterday by breaking the world record for the world's longest kite with his 6000m long dragon themed masterpiece.

According to Chinanews, the 6,000-meter-long "Chinese Dream" kite was flown by two professional flyers from Weifang in Shandong province, which apparently also hosts a pretty mean kite festival. It was confirmed to have broken the Guinness World Record set only a few weeks ago by a 5000-meter-long kite.



#### Part 3 (From Daily Mail Online)

#### Let's (not) go fly the world's longest kite:

Bid to launch kite measuring an incredible 6km in length is scuppered - because it would be danger to passing planes. Only half was allowed to fly after concerns from air traffic control. Appalling weather conditions meant visibility at kite flying festival in Chongqing was down to 50 metres at times

They had overlooked the fact that their kite was so big, it posed a danger to passing aircraft.

However, Chinese aviation authorities ruled that the dragon-themed kite - which is made from 2,000 separate pieces and weighs a whopping 200 kilograms - could not be flown, and the team were forced to fly only half of it.

The weather at the kite flying festival in Chongqing undoubtedly played a part, with a heavy mist reducing visibility not only for pilots but for spectators who had turned up to witness the annual event.

## Bits & Pieces

### Kite Accident in Vietnam

The death of a little boy in a kite flying accident late last week has sparked grave safety concerns among local kite flyers and authorities, who feel urged to tighten control over the activity.



Yan Minh Dat, 5, dropped to his death from a height of around 20 meters after his legs were entangled in a huge kite's strings and he was heaved up with it on the afternoon of March 15.

The tragic accident happened in Dong Dieu in Ho Chi Minh City's outlying district of Hoc Mon, as members of a local group called Saigon Kite Club were flying the huge kite on a pilot basis in preparation for a kite festival to be held in Vung Tau, a seaside city about 100km away.

Both representatives of competent agencies and insiders admit that there are loopholes regarding safety issues and administration of kite flying, which has boomed in large cities in recent years. Witnesses and experts who were interviewed by *Tuoi Tre* (Youth) newspaper reporters all agree that kite flying, which is a seemingly innocuous pastime, has potential hazards, even deadly ones. As *Tuoi Tre* reporters observed on a typical day, almost ten kites of various sizes were entangled in electricity wires above *National Highway 22* and Ba Trieu Street in Hoc Mon District.

Thinh, a local who often frequents the areas where people gather to fly kites and watch the activity, said it is not a rare sight to see kites with strings snapped. Kites often collide with one another and drop onto passers-by, he added. Locals and visitors defy signs banning the sale of kites and kite flying along District 2's Tran Van Khe Street. Residents in the neigh-

bourhood said they once witnessed a passer-by being rushed to the hospital after a snapped kite string wound around that person's neck.

Do Van Luu, chair of the Saigon Kite Club, confirmed that small kites' strings can cut and wound a passer-by if the strings drop onto them. People, particularly kids, tend to stand on sidewalks or even in traffic lanes to manoeuvre their kites, which places themselves and others in peril. Mindless fliers even pursue their hobby under high-voltage electricity wires.

Huynh Cong Binh, general director of Tieng Song Co., and vice head of the 2014 Ho Chi Minh City Art Kite Flying Festival, noted that kite-associated risks are mounting as more huge kites, which span dozens and even hundreds of square meters, have been used in recent years. Such craft can carry loads of dozens of kilograms with them into the air. New-generation kites also feature engines and are remotely controlled. The oversized kites pose serious accident risks and criminals can also make use of them for destructive purposes, Binh stressed.

Luu, head of the Saigon Kite Club, admitted that his club of around 20 members has operated and performed for several years but has yet to register with any agency. The members just choose large, windy areas with few buildings or electricity poles as their practice venues.

Phan Nguyen Nhu Khue, director of the Ho Chi Minh City Department of Culture and Sports, acknowledged that the majority of kite clubs in Ho Chi Minh City operate spontaneously and are spurred mostly by their members' common passion for the sport.

"After making an inventory of local kite clubs, the department will tighten its control and make sure that the clubs adopt safety procedures to avoid such tragic consequences," he noted.

Tran Thi Thu Huong, an official in Hoc Mon District, said local authorities will hang signs banning kite flying in certain areas to ensure public safety in the coming time.

Meanwhile, Phan Dinh Trung, deputy chair of the An Khanh Ward People's Committee in District 2, said his staff members have confiscated kites from peddlers and even slapped fines on

them.

"We will suggest that construction site owners erect fences to stop people from flying kites in certain areas. Residents should also provide tips -off about those flying large kites in their neighborhoods," he stressed.

Binh, the vice head of the 2014 Ho Chi Minh City Art Kite Flying Festival, underlined that during kite flying festivals, any kids without accompanying adults are supposed to be taken to the organizers to ensure their safety.

### Kiteright.org

KiteRight is the UK's first charity dedicated to using kite sports in all its formats to help, support, educate and develop people of all ages with physical, mental health or learning challenges.

The charity, which is based in Dorset, aims to increase access and participation in kite sports for these individuals, increasing their self worth, self esteem, community access and participation.

The word *can't* is not used in our vocabulary as we believe everyone, no matter how severe their disabilities or challenge can participate in one way or another. We also reinvest in those who want to be involved in the KiteRight process, by helping them to become instructors, or other positions within the charity all the way up to board level.

We also work with academic institutions, such as Bournemouth University, by engaging with students and academics.

We are about working with EVERYONE, supporting the use of kite sports to make a real, measurable and meaningful difference to people's lives, wellbeing and futures.

So be part of something special. Prove the cynics wrong and show that a community, national and international, can push for social change, acceptance and support for the many who would not normally be able to access the sport and make a difference to their lives.

See [kiteright.org](http://kiteright.org) for more details of their work. They are also on Facebook.



### Ai Weiwei's Amazing Chinese Dragon Flies Through the Air at Alcatraz

We missed this one last year but thought it would still be of interest.

Ai Weiwei's *With Wind* installation greets visitors with a colourful explosion of paper forms that take flight within the former prison.

The dragon is a symbol of power and freedom, however its paper construction is delicate. Its constrained position creates tension between the mythical and the real; the concept of freedom and the cold, hard walls that contain it. The vibrant dragon is joined by smaller kites representing flowers and birds – symbols of freedom and life that reflect the gardens outside and the site's role as a flourishing avian habitat.

Ai Weiwei has a history of working with skilled Chinese craftsmen to create his large-scale artworks. Kite making is a dying craft in China, so Ai Weiwei supported the industry by working with artisans who handmade the kites using silk, paper, and bamboo. The artist teamed up with the FOR-SITE Foundation to install the installation in the New Industries building on Alcatraz.

The building housed "privileged" prisoners who were offered the opportunity to work as a reward for good behaviour. Work offered an escape from boredom and isolation, and it could earn prisoners a shorter sentence – hence the building's connection with freedom and personal expression.



## Dubai International Kite Festival



We were very lucky to be invited to the First (depending on your point of view) International Kite Festival in January 2015. Despite some teething problems—mainly logistical—the magic of the site made up for all of these. The traditional hospitality was in evidence and everyone who attended enjoyed the event.

Located on Jumeirah Public Beach the site overlooked the Persian Gulf and we were gifted with amazing seas, skies and sunsets. The wind was almost perfect too. Kite fliers paradise!



The sand bags. Great for the small kites—but they were also for the big inflatables. Lots of innovative ideas to anchor these big kites.



Parade of the countries. There were 21 countries present including the Brits—although Scotland was a separate country—so this should have been England.



Even the Snow-man was enjoying the heat. Great kite by Gadis Widiyati from Singapore.



As usual I made a kite specifically for the event—the Iconic Burj Al Arab. I managed to get both the kite and the hotel in shot.



## Dubai International Kite Festival

Not an ideal location for flying kites.

At the appropriate time the countdown started and then mayhem as 2000 children tried to fly kites in a sheltered area, on tarmac, full of fences with kites that were a little dodgy!



Arabian Oryx in the correct region of the world.

As part of the kite festival there was an attempt to set a Guinness World Record for the Most Number of Kites Flown at the Same Time in Multiple Locations. This involved the kite fliers being bussed to various schools in Dubai to assist with the flying of the kites. Imagine our surprise when we arrived at our designated location to be shown this:



Fortunately there was a supply of Rainbow Del-tas—which flew pretty well considering the conditions.



George would have been pleased!



David Gomberg and Jim Martin—International Kite Liaison. A good job. Looking forward to 2016

## Bits & Pieces—Part 2



### From Caribbean Life

Kite flying tradition fizzles in Guyana

Monday, April 6 was yet another beautiful sunny day for Guyanese to celebrate Easter Monday with the centuries-old tradition of kite flying. Thousands turned out and watched as their "Singing Engine," "Star Point," "Pointer

Tips," "Bird Kite" or "Heart Kite," soared against the wind over the popular Sea Wall area.

This year, however, most of the nationals packed the National Park, and sports grounds, instead, due to high tide, and what was seen as beach erosion that kept kite flyers from populating the stretch of the brown sandy beach from where they usually hoist their kites. The ocean wind keeps the colourful flyers up high for a picturesque view.

The nationals, never the less, had an enjoyable time. The smell of multicultural foods permeated the atmosphere, as music blared, and many who travelled from across the globe to be a part of this nostalgic custom, mixed and mingled to catch-up on old times. The celebrants were seen embracing each other and shaking hands, during the truly enjoyable day that they have commemorated as a part of their culture, and the holy season of Easter.

But according to Mariarha Causway, poet and manager of the Theatre Guild Playhouse in Georgetown, the tradition of kite flying is being lost on today's youth due to the many distractions that consume their daily life. Things such as modern technology is taking the place of family tradition, said Causway, an Afro-Guyanese who traces part of her ancestry to the indigenous Amerindian culture.

As a practicing catholic, Causeway said she celebrates the life of Christ and the fact that he died and was resurrected, and draws parallels between Easter Monday and kite flying, saying Easter Monday is much more significant than flying a colourful kite.

"The kites celebrate the rising of Christ and him being a part of us, and being present in our lives," she added.

Many Guyanese traditions, such as Que Que, (a ceremony before a wedding) she said is being lost because Guyana is now a country of young people who would prefer to skip kite flying and being in the sunshine, and instead go to a cool creek, to play with their electronic toys.

"This is why my six-year old daughter, Jada is here with me today," she said, adding, "I am encouraging her, like I did her two older brothers, to carry on the tradition of kite flying. We must remind our children about the way we grew-up. We don't need all of this 'stuff' from the West, we must instil in them the significance of tradition," said Causway.

"The skyline used to be decorated with colourful kites. I am disappointed we are no longer seeing the type of kite flying we were accustomed to growing up. Our sports, our arts, everything is going Westward, we are losing the meaning of family, and the value of a name," she said

"We have to find a way to bring back family, bring back fun, and bring back tradition," said Causway.

### Australian Post

Recently issued a first day cover depicting a Heart shaped kite. Each stamp depicts the kite floating in a panorama of blue sky and fluffy white clouds. Other stamps in the issue depict sky writing, a balloon and cloud.



### Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute.

On a recent research trip the log book details some experiments utilising kites. The Kite Assist Institute (KAI) team launched several kites



**Bits & Pieces—Part 2**

today and explained some of their unique design features.

One noticeable difference is the frame itself. Instead of using fiberglass or carbon fibre for the frame structure, KAI kites have air-filled tubes that form the frame. To launch the kite, the operator simply pumps up the kite frame with air using a standard pump or gas cartridge.

This lightweight design makes the kite highly portable and usable in a wide range of conditions where assembling a more standard kite would not be possible. This kite is also specially shaped for stability. The bottom strut is more curved than the top to help keep the kite oriented. It doesn't need a trailing tail—a plus in close working environments where the tail could get easily become entangled.

Basically a Rokkaku with air filled struts!

**Weifang Kite Maker Video**

A documentary that first appeared on the French Arte channel this is an excellent video of the kites and kite makers of Weifang. Well worth the 40+ minutes of watching. Can be found at:

[www.dailymotion.com/video/x19fxis\\_weifang-ou-la-magie-des-cerfs-volants-chinois\\_creation](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x19fxis_weifang-ou-la-magie-des-cerfs-volants-chinois_creation)

Also available on Youtube. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICUA7SFmdC4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICUA7SFmdC4)

**Indoor Kite Flying.**

Book spotted on Amazon. Indoor Kite Flying: A guide to the sport of flying ultra-lightweight kites indoors.

This book explains the kites and techniques for launching, flying, and performing with kites indoors with zero wind. Many people have found indoor kite flying can be a performance art, a great alternative to flying kite outdoors during bad weather, and an opportunity to fly kites in the winter. Often accompanied by music, indoor kite flying has become a standard feature of many kite festivals. The flying is fun and no matter what the weather is like outdoors, you can guarantee that the weather indoors will be perfect!

Price £5.77 or £1.99 for a Kindle version.

**Quad Line Vietnamese Flute Kite**

It's not often that a new kite comes along that is at once familiar and at the same time new and exciting. That is just what has happened with the new quad kite developed by Cao Quan from Vietnam. A seamless blend of modern and traditional kite making skills.

Kites have been made in Vietnam for centuries. One popular form is the single line leaf style kite which is the base for the new quad kite. Instead of being made with traditional materials, the new Vietnamese flute kite is a full on modern sport kite using SkyShark spars and Icarex sail material but with one addition – the flute.

The kite came with a working bridle but being who we are it had to be improved! A lot of refining over a few months on the bridle, some experiments with spar stiffness and research



## Bits & Pieces—Part 2

into the perfect size handles and the end result is something special. So, why do we love this kite so much?

When you first pick up the kite you feel comfortable. The same inputs that you would use for other four line kites give an instant response. Of course, being symmetrical means that this kite reverses as well as it flies forward, but it also side slides like a dream. Faster even than the forward flight, the side slide flight is quietly addictive and opens up a whole new style of flying, just pay attention to which way is up.

Where this kite really comes into it's own though is the 3D trick repertoire. Unlike other flat quad kites, the flute kite yo-yos like a dream. Single and even double rotations are easily achieved and it is a trick that never seems to grow old. Again, thanks to it's symmetrical design the kite is just as keen to roll up towards the trailing edge as it is the leading edge and in any orientation.

The real party piece of this kite though is the sound. Attached to the back of the kite are two traditional bamboo flutes, each tuned to give a perfect sound, one is sounded when in forward flight, the other in reverse. The simple pleasure of flying up and down to get the flutes to play is a delight, learning how to play the flutes is something that will keep you flying for hours.

So far most of our testing has been flying solo – rather self indulgent but very satisfying. We did have an opportunity to fly in team at the end of last year and the initial findings were promising. The usual team figures are there and a whole range of new ones we have yet to discover. It is going to be a whole lot of fun.

### Greek Carnival and Clean Monday Traditions

Amongst the traditions for Clean Monday ("Kathara Deftera"), the first day of the Greek Orthodox Lent.

The common term for this day, "Clean Monday," refers to the leaving behind of sinful attitudes and non-fasting foods. Clean Monday, also known as koulouma, is a public holiday in Greece and Cyprus, celebrated with outdoor excursions, the consumption of shellfish and other

fasting foods, a special kind of azyme bread, baked only on that day, named "lagana," and the widespread custom of flying kites.

The meaning behind the kite custom remains unclear to this day. Some claim it has Asian origins and was passed on to the west over the centuries. People would write wishes on their kites and fly them as high as possible so that the gods could answer them. Others suggest that ancient Greek mathematician Archytas of Tarentum (440-360 BC) was the first to design and use a kite in his aerodynamics experiments, and there is evidence from pottery dating back to the classical period showing a young woman holding a kite.

### Making it Rain With Dynamite on a Kite

There are many things that us humans can control. Traditionally weather has not been one of them. But this didn't stop Grape Nut inventor C.W. Post from attempting to do so.

Before his cereal-manufacturing gig took off (and after a debilitating mental breakdown) Post moved to Texas with hopes of creating an intentional utopian community. When this idea failed, he got a foot into the cereal biz. He also began thinking about rain.

Post remembered hearing tales of the torrential downpours that followed heavy battle during the Napoleonic Wars. And he heard word from old Civil War soldiers that rain often succeeded heavy cannon fire. So, with this explosives = rain equation in mind, he set to work, hoping that one day, human-induced rain might replace traditional systems of irrigation.

But Post's plan didn't work quite as well as he had hoped. In his first rain experiment, conducted in 1910, Post adhered two pounds of dynamite to a kite. He flew the kite into the air, ignited it, and was surprised to find that the skies didn't immediately open up above him. But this didn't stop him from continuing to test out his hypothesis in a five year, \$50,000 endeavor that he termed his "rain battles."

According to Post, seven out of his 13 attempts to make it rain were a success. In the most intense of these attempts, he blasted 24,000 pounds of dynamite into the air and onlookers reported that a refreshing sprinkle did, in fact, follow.

**Bits & Pieces—Part 2****American Kitefliers Association**

The AKA has announced a new AKA digital magazine titled "Kites and Kitters". This new publication is being published in addition to the print version of "Kiting", and is FREE to download and share regardless of membership in the AKA.

The first edition of "Kites and Kitters" features in-depth coverage of the Dieppe International Kite Festival that was held in September 2014 along with the writings of several AKA members, who share their perspectives of the event. You will also find a number of very interesting and soulful interviews from kite fliers, artists, builders and historians who were kind enough to share their stories. These interviews include stories from Robert Brasington, Michel Gressier, Kathy Goodwind, kite historians Paul Chapman and George Webster, along with many others.

This new digital "Kites and Kitters" magazine offers many benefits for readers: Expanded content— We are not limited by the number of physical printed pages; Portability— Take it anywhere, on your phone, laptop, tablet, as well as your desktop computer; Easily shared— Instantly, with anyone via email, text, Facebook or any other social platform.

Go to [kite.org](http://kite.org) to find out more.

**World Kite Museum plans unveiling of new theatre**

Long Beach Peninsula-based World Kite Museum is announcing major changes and upgrades, plus the first of its 2015 workshops.

The museum's facility upgrades include addition of the WKM Theatre, an audio visual media room that will better accommodate field trips and tour groups. In addition, there are updated and refreshed exhibits, including a new and complete collection of WSIKF annual posters, as well as technology and crucial facility maintenance and upgrades.

**Kite Controller gives wings to kayak and canoe enthusiasts**

You can be passionate about wind in many ways. A company is testing and launching Kite Controller, a redesigned reel-bar with a lighter frame.

Remember the good old kite reels? Pacific Sky

Power has developed the retro bar so that kayak or canoe enthusiasts can sail with a kite.

The Kite Controller should be used with one-to-three square meters, two-line traction kites. The reel system may also be suitable for self-rescue towing.

Users should hold the kite, so it fills with wind and then start reeling out. Once the kite is fully deployed, you can steer with the control bar. When it's time to head in, reel-in and paddle to shore.

The Kite Controller weighs three pounds (1.3 kilograms) and is made of aluminum, UV resistant plastics, structural laminates, and stainless-steel hardware.

Kayak Kite Controllers are available at [www.pacificskypower.com](http://www.pacificskypower.com)

**600 pledge not to fly kite all their lives**

Around 600 persons, mostly youngsters, from different parts of the city converged at Soni Falia in the Walled City on Thursday evening and took oath not to fly kites for their entire lifetime to protect the innocent lives of birds being killed and injured during the Uttarayan festival.

The oath ceremony was organized by city-based NGO Jinagana Seva Trust at Soni Falia to encourage the youngsters in the city not to fly kites during the Uttarayan festival and help in rescuing the injured birds found from the streets and on the roads.

**Salvation Army Kite Building Programme**

Clients of the Salvation Army Harbour Light programme have been putting their hand to kite-building as they continue to work on self-improvement, with the results helping to raise funds as well as give the clients an opportunity to give back to the community.

The programme's kite building effort, which has been active since 2000, sees kites sell for \$25 and round kites sell for \$35, with many of the kites very well designed, and showcasing the clients' skills. Besides the kites to be sold, the programme's clients also build kites for themselves, with plans to head to Chaplain Bay on Good Friday in order to fly them.

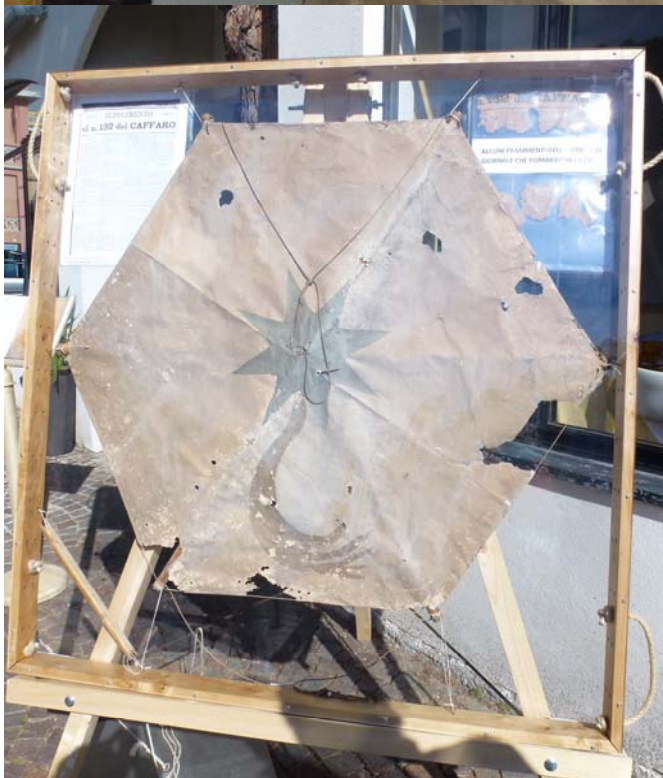


## Italian Historic Kite

Spotted at the Spotorno Kite Festival, Italy. Not quite as old as the find by Peter Lynn but still pretty remarkable.

Found in the basement of a Genova Villa. Thanks to the tails, made of newspapers of the time it has been possible date this kite to May 1882.

Complete with line winder!



## Kite Flying—My Lever is not Stiff—Maurice Sawyer

Maurice Sawyer—a long standing member of The Kite Society, recently passed away. The following piece is from The White Horse Kite Fliers—Cowpat.

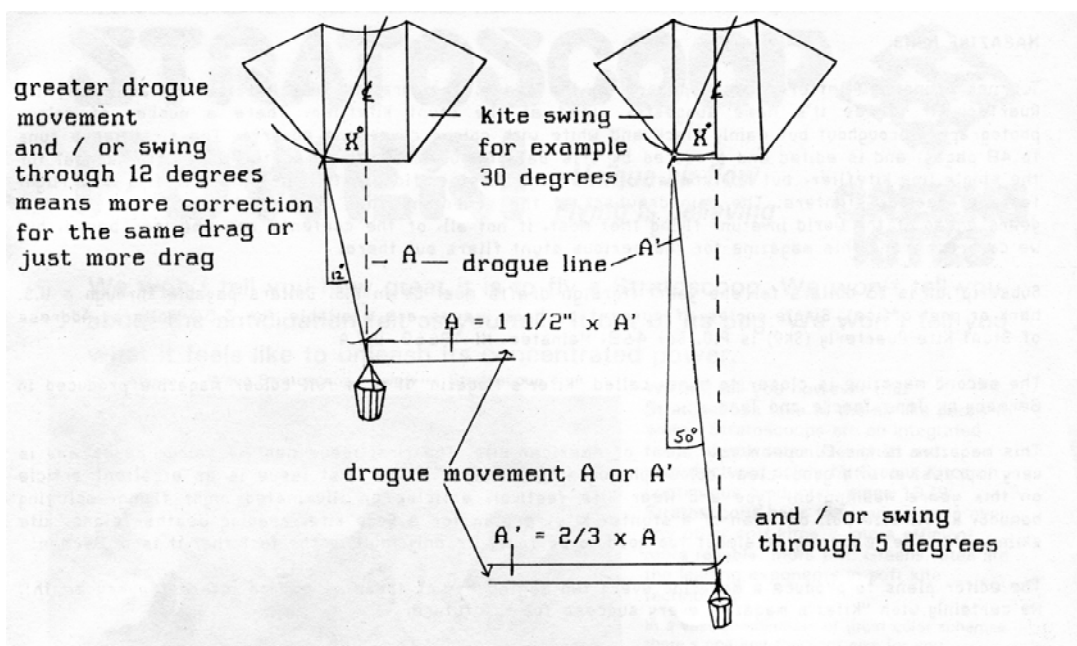
We also lost one of our older member's recently, Maurice Sawyer; Maurice was one of the old school of kite flyers and was always prepared to stop and chat and to pass on his wisdom especially to younger members. Maurice has not been to many kite festivals in recent years due to his and his wife's old age. May we long remember them and all the other departed characters of the kiting fraternity.

First published in October 1998 in The Kiteflier.

I am a kite novice. At Wroughton I met two young men who looked like specialists. They were flying one kite at about 1500 feet and launching a small, beautifully made winged box kite with a drogue. This little kite wanted only to rise to about 15 feet, turn and smash itself into the tarmac runway. Three attempted suicides was all I could bear to watch without making an offer to assist with launch. (The high flyer did not seem to be participating then). But with the line-out long at launch two more crashes followed. Bridle adjustments were tried to no avail. Now it struck me that the drogue was a mighty long way from the kite—as I remember the scene I'd guess it was on a line some 20 feet long. Remember the kite never got to 20 feet before diving back to the tarmac. This was where I made my mistake—I ventured the opinion that shortening

the drogue line might help. These two specialists wasted no time in telling me how a drogue on a long line gave greater leverage. So I deflated and disappeared after two more failed launch attempts. Since then I have thought some more—I should have stood my ground and said "poppycock!".

How can a string be a lever? The only lever in operation here is provided by the spine of the kite with the wind working to rotate it about its fulcrum while the drogue line tries to restrain that rotation. The fulcrum will be, presumably, somewhere between the centre of gravity and the centre of pressure. Since any given amount of rotation will move the normally perpendicular spine in a horizontal direction at the point where the drogue is attached such rotation will draw the drogue 'toward' the kite. A short string to the drogue will result in more movement 'towards' the kite than will a long string and it follows therefore that a short string has a greater and quicker acting in straightening the errant kite. A very short line would work rather too quickly and would give a bumpy ride which is undesirable, so it is agreed that direct attachment of drogue to kite is not good. But a long line is no good! I estimate that a drogue line of about 2 spine lengths would be a good compromise starting point. To maintain the correction effect as the line is lengthened would mean increasing the size of the drogue about 1.5 times the increase of the line length. This would not be desirable unless it has been decided the kite is lacking drag as well as stability.



When the geometry is plotted it is seen that the shorter line results in more movement of the drogue, or, until the drogue moves sideways—following the kite—a greater angle of corrective pull, which is a more effective angle. Thus a long line to the drogue is not as effective as a short one.



## Pothecary Corner—Allan Pothecary

### The last word

I really don't know too much about the mesh tubes we have recently acquired. I kept seeing them in the background of various kite videos and once my heart actually skipped a beat when I found some for sale.

I excitedly rushed through to the checkout only to realise that they had sold out. This happened again on a couple of occasions so I wasn't expecting too much when I found them again recently but, hang on - it went through! - Brilliant! - I am going to own one!

Then it happened, I had ordered and then I found them on another site too, at exactly half the price - and don't we all have stories like that to tell eh?

I had persuaded Marilyn to let me raid the kite kitty so I thought what the heck if I cancel the order, get two and be no worse off and I won't say anything until they get here?

Guess what she said when they arrived - it went something like...

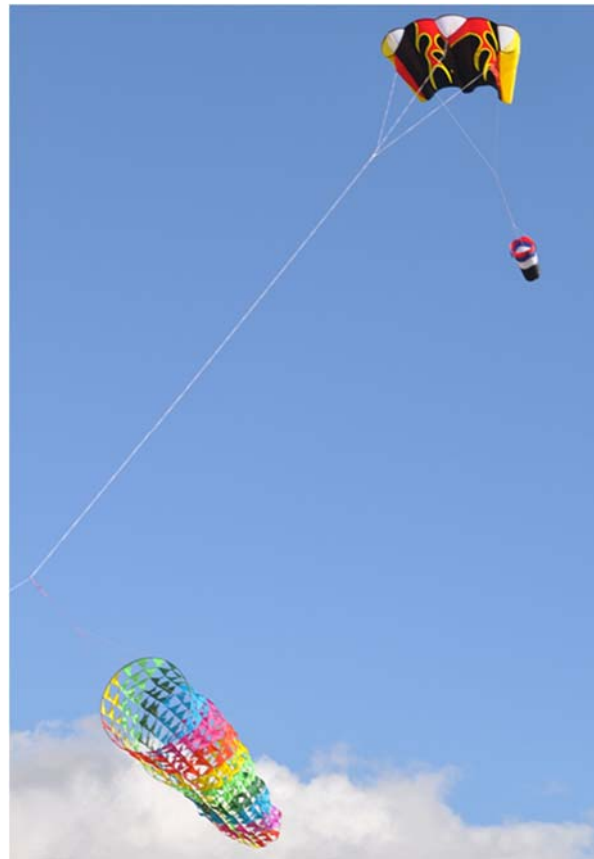
"HOW MUCH???"

"Oh no - Here we go" I thought - but then that was followed by

"Why didn't you buy more at that price then?"

...I always have the last word in our relationship, trouble is - it's usually "Yes Dear!"

### Reflections



The tubes are surprisingly light and, I am told, extremely fragile.

My friend Jim in New Zealand who has a couple himself says to always to have the super glue handy as the best cure; although I have to say, so far so good on the excursions to date in both high and low winds.

With a deft twist of the frame which consists of just two, lightweight hoops, they pack small and flat enough to sit in the top of a suitcase and will definitely be coming on our Spanish gig later this year.

The clear plastic bag each tube comes in definitely is fragile but is worth re-enforcing with aggressive sticky tape to keep them from springing open and simplifying transportation.

I really like the slow way that they revolve and, they way that the light hits them from different angles means, you just can't stop taking photos and videos of them. I am rather pleased with the video Marilyn and I produced for our YouTube channel.



## Pothecary Corner—Allan Pothecary

Google finds it easily if you just enter Close Encounters Kites You Tube, or it's on the front page of our website.

### Lifter

Of course you will need a lifter for the tubes. They are, as I said, very light so nothing too big or heavy is required. I thought that it would be an ideal way to test the Flame, Lifter Sled 30 sent to us via Kiteworld from SkyDog kites.

I actually wanted the rainbow version but beggars can't be choosers and you know what? This one seems to really grab everyone's attention, so what do I know?

I can't believe how little this kite weighs - It folds up into its own bag which doubles up as the drogue.

There are extra light fibre glass rods that help it open up and stay in shape and it drifts away from you as you pay out the line in very light winds so there is no need for long launches with this kite! With the size and weight taken into account this will be a definite for the suitcase - I would only have to sacrifice one T-shirt to stay below the 20kg per case limit!

### Good recovery

Our inland site is not often favoured with steady breezes and so far we have not managed to test this lifter in anything other than gusty, variable direction wind and can report that although it does wander quite a bit in such conditions, so not so good for KAP, we found that it has always recovered before making contact with the ground.



I just missed a great video shot one time when, in an extra bad variance, the kite completely

collapsed inwards on itself and then - thwack! - clicked back open like one of those automatic umbrellas.

At a size of 95ins x 45ins and a starting 5mph I wouldn't say that in lighter winds it would be among the first five out of my bag for lifting but it is comforting to know that it works very reliably in anything over about 10mph and that if there is a sudden increase, it can handle it up to a claimed max of 25mph.

There is a 300ft x 110lb line supplied on a reel although I don't recall getting one with mine or, if I did then where I put it. With that length it is a good job that this kite doesn't come up vertical or the flyer would find himself too easily over the 200ft limit set by the Civil Aviation Authority in this country.

So far the Sled 30 has lifted anything we have put on it - perhaps next time out we will try something really heavy as a full test - I may not write about it here but keep a look out for the video!

### Floats like a bee?

Another of our recent acquisitions was a Bee - except that it looks more like a wasp - so we tend to call it our "WaspBee".

You have heard the expression "If it seems to good to be true then it probably is"? Well this one was almost like that. From the start it seemed like such a good bargain I was surprised when it turned up and the size was exactly as advertised too and I didn't get stung after all! (Sorry about that - I'll just get my coat). But would it fly?

In fact, yes it did! On a very gusty, swirly and cold winter's afternoon we had no problem getting it launched and it certainly buzzed about the sky requiring constant walk forwards at the edge of the window to lessen the line tension to avoid grounding.

We decided that a modification was required so that the air pocket for the wings was held open to maintain the inflation. Marilyn sewed some 3mm fibre glass rod into the hems (I don't do fiddly) and the next time out this definitely helped it even launched itself once or twice when we weren't paying attention but it was still far from stable. Our next plan was to try a

## Pothecary Corner—Allan Pothecary

length of rod across it's back to hold it's shape but we still haven't got to that yet.

### Rare smooth winds

Around the same time (and I don't know why it has taken me so long to accept this) I decided that it was no use keep waiting until we went to the smoother coastal winds when most of our casual flying is done on Salisbury Plain, mostly down wind of trees depending on wind direction and many of the events we are asked to fly and demonstrate at are inland, often in unsuitable kite flying locations anyway.

Going with that thought in mind we thought that we would try the kite to fly from the line of a lifter as laundry.

### It was rigged!

Actually, it was Marilyn's idea and was never going to work so I busied myself with other things whilst she got on with it. Now I don't know to this day if she did this on purpose or it was a complete accident - obviously she says she meant to do it - grrrr!

I would never have set the kite up like this I couldn't have imagined the logic. I know some of you long-time experienced single liners are going to say this is nothing new and probably even have a name for it like an "Active Rigging" or "Reversed anchor" but hey! This is my article and I am enjoying writing it - you can always send in something yourself next time and put me right!

### Just passing through

In case the photo is not clear, the anchor for the WaspBee is set about a third of the way along the lifter line. The line goes from the anchor to the kite, passing through a carabina which is left free to ride up and down the lifter kite line. I know I keep on about our videos on the Close Encounters You Tube channel but you can see much better how it works on there.

It was amazing to see both the lifter and the WasBee interacting to keep the latter steady and, importantly, continuously aloft. I have to add that we have not had the opportunity to try this since but are pretty confident and very pleased with our discovery - even if it is a "reversed, active anchor, rigging, thingy thing" that has been around for years - or perhaps you would try it and let me know how you get on so

that I can report in the next edition of the success/failures?



### Gigs

By the time you read this I will be of pensionable age, retired yes - but a full time kite flyer and working, at long last, on the new web-site where I hope to be having some new features where everyone can contribute and there will a complete update of the list of my articles.

This year we seem to be gigging about all over the country in fact even internationally if you include Wales. We will be advertising on behalf of the events where we will be still doing our multiline demonstrations as well as the displays of static single line kites.

Friends Aditya and Ian regularly join us with their amazing displays of Brassington spinners, Bill Final and friends often come along to help too when we are around the Buckinghamshire area and Pete Dawson all the way down in Paignton - this then is an open invitation to anyone to come along to our events and help out - bring you own kites if you like - I always apply for a reasonable height allowance or we always have loads of kites with us that we would like help with.

Some of the events are country shows and may not make [www.thekitecalendar.co.uk](http://www.thekitecalendar.co.uk) and you might need to contact us first to get me to arrange a free pass.

We will also be in Southern Spain for three weeks at the beginning of September and we have already had two people book up for coaching.

Hope to see many of you around during this kiting year starting with the April Jolly Up at Basingstoke - please come and say hello.

Allan and Marilyn Pothecary  
[www.closeencounterskites.co.uk](http://www.closeencounterskites.co.uk)

*This article first appeared in Drachen Foundation's "Discourse" Issue 18 and reproduced with permission.*



On September 23rd, 2014, four Australian kite enthusiasts flew a kite to a claimed 16,038 feet above the launch point at an airfield on a 50,000-acre sheep farm called Cable Downs, in Western NSW, Australia. This was the venue for all our record attempts over the last ten years. It is a site remote from our homes in Sydney, 750 kilometres (466 miles) to the east of this dry and dusty place.

We have made this annual trek to Cable Downs in seven of the last ten years. There have been a number of other people involved, but the current team has been together for the last five attempts.

Mike Richards is well known in the eastern suburbs of Sydney as the kite man and runs a diverse business selling, building, and repairing kites. He is a jack of all trades but it's his expert kite building and flying skills that have had an enormous benefit to our high flying aspirations. The kites were conceived and designed by me, but Michael took my sketches and added his own ideas to make these kites powerful, stable, robust, and very impressive fliers.

Mike Jenkins is a neighbour of Mike Richards. I met him at the Bondi Festival of the Winds in 2005. I felt an immediate rapport with him. He is a down-to-earth, intelligent

## World Altitude Record—Bob Moore

man with great kite designing, building, and flying skills. He has won numerous awards with his kites at Festival of the Winds. He is a competition sailor, and it is this experience that makes him an excellent choice for a high altitude kite flying team. His "no bull" approach also keeps me focused and grounded.

Roger Martin is a talented kite builder and flier who also lives close to Mike Richard's kite shop. He is an experienced photographer, which has great benefit to our campaign for the world altitude record. He frequently accompanies Mike Richards to help with large kite displays at festivals around Australia and South East Asia. His maturity, experience, and good sense of humour are a great asset to our team.

It's not just the buzz of big kite flying that is the attraction to our record attempts; it's the camaraderie and mateship that attracts me to drive 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) roundtrip to this remote place. We have fun in our one-star hotel, the wool shed, a rough ironclad out-building, the habitat of tough shearers who clip the wool off thousands of sheep in an annual ritual. The place has a liberal coating of lanolin from the tons of wool shorn from the sheep's backs over the last 50 or so years. A mild odor of sheep dung permeates the air, but we get use to it. We eat surprisingly well with Mike Jenkins' culinary skills appreciated. In the evenings we drink beer and wine, talk rubbish, and watch some movies projected onto a big screen made of Tyvec. We play cards and laugh a lot. Then we sleep well and dream of perfect winds and floating like an eagle thousands of feet above the airstrip.

We are a cohesive, happy, and effective team. This is an important factor in our record breaking flight this year and all our high flights over the last ten years. We enjoy being together and we enjoy the challenge of high altitude kite flying.



## World Altitude Record—Bob Moore

For all of our flights since 2005, we have used one kite design and size (apart from one flight in 2005 with a 170 square foot DT Delta). Our 120 square foot DT deltas have been an effective high flying tool. They have proved robust, resilient, and capable fliers. We were confident of these kites breaking the altitude record, but, as with any kite, the right wind conditions are essential. There are other designs that are potential candidates, but we couldn't trial them all. The DT delta is very strong, easy to transport, and on field assembly is a two minute task. I would have liked to use a Hargraves box kite, but the ripstop and fiberglass tube versions I built were difficult to construct and tune for high altitude flight.

We noticed that the 120 square foot DT Delta had reached its upper wind limit at about 30 knots and was becoming a less efficient flier for every knot above 20. The maximum line tension generated was 130 pounds, and by then the kite's drag was dominating the lift. We discussed how we might increase the wind range of the kite, thereby improving the kite's lift. A simple but effective way may be to fit a second spreader. I had experimented with a double spreader on a larger version of these



kites in 2005, but came to no conclusion if it would be effective on the 120 square foot kite. We kept the idea in the back of

our minds.

On Monday, September 22nd, 2014, we made our first altitude record attempt since late September 2012. I arrived late on Saturday, September 21st, a day before my teammates who arrived late on Sunday. I had done most of the preliminary set up, but on Monday the 22nd it took another two hours to ready the kite, line, and other paraphernalia that make up our base station and recording equipment. Setting up the flight must be meticulous. One error can see the kite drifting off, never to be seen again, or the GPS telemetry not recording the flight.

The ground wind was ideal, with a steady 10-12 knot wind blowing straight down the airstrip from east northeast. We launched the kite on 300 meters of line at about 10am. It climbed steadily to 6,000 feet. Then there were several periods of altitude loss and see-sawing of the kite with winch reversal, trying to work the kite up higher.

The Doug La Rock tension gauge (pictured above) is an essential tool for deciding when and how quickly to winch line out. In conjunction with the GPS telemetry information displayed on the computer screen, this means we don't need to see the kite to picture what it is doing. Without these things we would be blind.

The computer observer calls out the altitude and informs whether the kite is rising or falling so the winch operator reels line in, lets line out, or pauses the winch. The line payout controller is influenced by line tension as well. The greater the wind, the higher the line tension and the faster the line release. There is a surprising degree of control over the kite's movement, although it can only be away, toward, and up and down, not side to side, as this is controlled by wind direction at the kite.

The kite stalled when it reached about

## World Altitude Record—Bob Moore



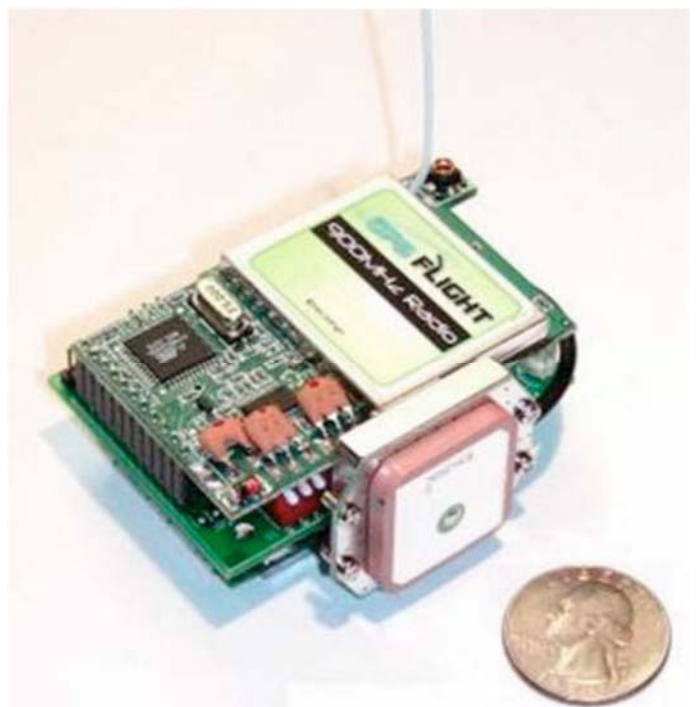
12,500 feet, and we spent another hour working the winch to make little progress, with the maximum at 12,778 feet above our launch point – a decent altitude in anyone's language, but well short of our target of 15,000 feet. We ran out of time to work the kite any higher, as we are limited by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority agreement to have the kite landed before last light. We landed the kite around 6pm with about an hour of light left. We packed up and headed back to the wool shed. While winching the line in, we analysed the flight and came to the conclusion that there may have been enough wind to reach 15,000 feet if the kite had had more lift.

We had discussed fitting a double spreader in 2012 and now was the time to try it. Mike Richards and Mike Jenkins busied themselves at first light the next morning fabricating and fitting the second spreader. We carry spares of everything, so it was no problem to make up and fit another 15mm fiberglass spreader and the rubber sleeves which attach them to the wing spars. For those not familiar with deltas, the spreader is the horizontal spar at the rear of the kite that holds the wings open. With one spreader, the wings folded inward at high wind speeds in excess of 20 knots. It is necessary for a delta to have flexible spars, but if they are too stiff the kite will be nervous, unstable, and even

crash-prone.

On day two, we got an earlier start, as we already had the equipment set up from the day before. The kite was launched by about 9am. I had contacted Air Services earlier to open the zone for us and close it to air traffic. The generator – the lifeline to all our electronics, winch, and coffee machine – had its fuel checked and topped up. (It needs to run for up to 12 hours each day. We have no backup generator, so it just has chug away in the background.)

The GPSFlight telemetry unit with its alkaline battery pack was inserted into its pouch at the back of the kite. (It had provided enough charge to keep the data transmitting for 54 hours in midwinter testing in my backyard at home in Baulkham Hills.) The Holux data logger was on board as our GPS data backup. The Holux GPS data logger's batteries last 12 hours, but this is at the very limit of our daylight window. The laptop was on with the GPS Dash software indicating valid satellite locks from the on board GPS receiver, and the tell tale flashing light on the radio telemetry receiver was blinking like a heart-beat monitor. If it stops, the flight is vir-



## World Altitude Record—Bob Moore



tually dead, as without it we are flying blind. A file is opened on the telemetry software to record the data. This is a small but vital step. Without the telemetry log, we have only half the evidence that form the primary source of positional and altitude data. The telemetry software is set to ground level, so that the GPS sends data via the radio signal for decoding and displays altitude above our launch point. There are ten other pieces of information that are transmitted, including the core data set that forms the NMEA standard for GPS receivers.

The laptop computer started on the small table outside Mike's truck, but later was transferred to the front seat to improve the view of the screen which was being obscured by glare. Roger sat in the passenger seat of the truck with the computer on his lap.

The two Mikes walked the kite out with the winch in reverse, paying out line. They carry a walkie-talkie to time the release with the

winch controller. No line reversal was needed, as the wind was strong enough to power the kite rapidly to 500 feet. The ground wind was a couple of knots stronger than the day before. The winch was locked with the big disk brake, a new addition to the winch system. It worked great with fingertip control of line out. With a double spreader and a 12-15 knot wind, the kite pulled like a bull in spring, rising at a high angle and taking line at a rapid rate.

There were about 3/8ths of cumulous cloud cover at an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 feet. There was patchy high cloud at about 14,000 feet, but that was coming and going as the day progressed. We were over the lower cloud in about 40 minutes. From then on, the kite was either obscured by cloud or too high to locate easily with binoculars and a powerful telescope. The kite was past 10,000 feet within 1 hour, 15 minutes. This compares to 8-10 ten hours for other flights to this altitude. The line tension was stable and rising from 40 pounds to 80 pounds.

The rate of climb slowed a little between 10,000 and 12,000 feet, but all the time we were releasing line under brake control, as the kite was providing sufficient line torque to overcome winch inertia and friction. We didn't have to push line out with the winch motor at all. It was a steady climb past the Synergy record altitude of 14,609 feet and only paused at 15,500 feet.

We had run out of line with only about 200 meters left on the reel and 12,620 meters up in the sky. We waited for an hour, in which time the kite gradually rose to a maximum of 16,038 feet above the launch point, and the tension gauge was hovering between 110 and 120 pounds. It was porpoising for half an hour when we decided that 16,000 feet was high enough. We may have been able to go higher with more line, but we were happy with what



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we had achieved. An hour before the kite breached the record altitude, we sent the farmer's son up to fetch his parents to witness our record achievement. They were as excited as us because they have hosted our record attempts for ten years. They rode the ups and downs with us, although I never managed to convert them to the kiting religion. They understood what we were doing and never had to ask why. It was also their last day as custodians of Cable Downs. They were moving to another farm 800 kilometres (497 miles) to the south.



We all jumped for joy, but despite the excitement of breaking the record, the implications had yet to sink in, which would take weeks. It was clear that adding a second spreader was the main contributing factor to our outstanding altitude with a relatively small kite. We cannot discount the contribution of slightly stronger winds, but these winds also meant higher line drag.

The line angle was at about 15 degrees and the kite angle about 24 degrees. Adding more line may have increased the altitude by 1,000 feet, but I suspected I would run out of time or the effort of adding another reel of line would not result in any height gain. 16,038 feet is a fine effort. Jesse Gersensen was the first to know of our record when he phoned our on-field phone from the Czech Republic. He is a high altitude enthusiast with a strong presence on the Kite Builders forum. He spread

the news via this forum.

After nearly four hours of winching the line in, the kite landed around 5pm. After the retrieval was started and about a hour in, the GPS telemetry stopped transmitting. Later I saw that the transmitter aerial had worked its way loose, probably from the wing vibration from the flapping trailing edge. The trailing edge was tattered from the flogging of winds between 20 and 40 knots over eight hours. Fortunately, the telemetry data was recorded for 2/3 of the flight, with the maximum altitude included.

The Holux data logger recorded the whole flight. The GPSFlight and Holux data will be sent a long with other supporting information to the Australian Kiteflying Society and Guinness World Records. The GPS devices will be certified by qualified surveyors or engineers. We have been working to get to this altitude for ten years.

My computer modelling and calculations supported my belief that this kite could do it. We had to have the right wind and the thinnest, strongest line. It seems like a simple task to build a big kite and, with a truckload of line, fly it very, very high. It has proved to be a devilishly elusive goal. I have focused on improving the equipment and methods each time we make an attempt, and it is this persistent, patient approach that has rewarded us in the end. If it had been easy and we had reached the record on day one in 2005, I think I would have been disappointed, and being so easy, many others would have upped the ante.

I have a number of sponsors, but most of the expense has been borne by me and Mike Richards. Because it is an amateur activity, it had to be managed within a limited budget and most things are home-made. We have, however, approached the altitude record attempts in a responsible and professional style, particularly working with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

## World Altitude Record—Bob Moore

Apart from Mike Richards, my most significant sponsor has been DSM Dyneema in Holland who, in conjunction with Cousin-Trestec in France, supplied over 33,000 meters of line. That would be equivalent to \$15,000 of line retail. I don't think my budget could have supported such an expenditure. I cannot ignore the smaller sponsors such as Lewis Pulleys and Universal Instruments.

I estimate the total cost of the kite record attempts to be in the order of \$80,000, but from our perspective it has been worth every cent. To fund this hobby requires the support of my wife and the partners of the other team members. My wife is not a kite fan, but she takes photos at kite festivals and tolerates my long stints in the workshop and on the Kite Builders forum. She does get jealous of my high flying treks to Cable Downs sometimes but has a grudging admiration for our efforts, persistence, and the science that goes into our project. She sees the money going into our record attempts and, being a business-minded woman, wonders "What is the point? Do you want to be famous? Do you make any money?" I just grin and shrug my shoulders and say, "I like it."

We packed things into the trailer, but as we planned to do some on board photography the following day, we didn't pack too securely.

We debriefed over a few wines that evening, and I examined the GPS logs. Both confirmed that the kite had reached over 16,000 feet above ground level. In addition to the GPS data, we have 15-minute hand written logs of line out, line angle, altitude, and horizontal distance to the kite.

The acceptance of a particular altitude for the record will depend on GPS certification. The two systems varied by 15 feet for maximum altitude during the record flight. This is only a 0.08% variation. I expect

the maximum error for either GPS unit to be in the order of 0.2% or 32 feet at the maximum height. If the error predictions are correct, then the record will still be over 16,000 feet above the ground. Generally, consumer-grade GPS units with DGPS augmentation are accurate to within 1 meter for position and 2 meters for altitude with more than 8 satellites in view. At the flying site, there were 11-13 satellites in view.

However, we must go through due process to get recognition for our altitude, and that takes time and thorough presentation of our observations and data.

Some interesting stats on the flight:

The GPS devices collected over 72,000 lines of data, and on each line was ten pieces of information including altitude above sea level, altitude above ground level, horizontal distance, horizontal speed, time, number of satellites acquired, positional error, battery, and a couple of others. That's 720,000 pieces of separate information. For Richard Synergy's flight of 2000, there were three pieces of information about altitude, ground height, and the maximum height shown by two hiking watches. Technology has come a long way in 14 years, but GPS devices were available then. Without GPS, I would use Barometric altimeters and a different method of ensuring accurate height data was attained.

12,600 meters of line had been loaded onto the storage reel. 12,620 meters was measured out by the payout gauge. 200 meters remained on the reel. So only 12,400 meters was used. Where did the other 220 meters come from? 1.7% line stretch.

The line is between 0.7 and 0.8 mm thick.

Total line weight was about 7 kg.

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The kite reached 10,000 feet in about 1 hour, 15 minutes. Total flying time was just under 8 hours.

The kite was over 7 miles away from the launch point at maximum altitude.

The maximum speed of the kite was 26mph. The total weight of the kite was 3,560 grams.

The minimum air temperature was an estimated -12 degrees Celsius at 16,000 feet, from Bureau of Meteorology forecasts.

The kite becomes increasingly difficult to view with the naked eye after 6,000 feet. By 10,000 feet, it is even hard to locate with binoculars, unless you know exactly where to look.

The kite colours are somewhat arbitrary and depend on what stock of ripstop Mike Richards has in his shop.

We have two assembled kites and have two replacement skins with spare spars. We also have a carbon spar set for light wind conditions.

For measuring line angle, I use a slope gauge with spirit levels embedded.

The line payout meter is a distance wheel calibrated to measure line payout to 99.99% accuracy. The line payout calibration is done with a digital cycle meter which is also used to measure line speed.

Jesse Gersensen estimated that if the winds on the lower half of the height profile weren't so strong the kite would have exceeded 19,000 feet.

The following day, Wednesday, September 24th, the wind had intensified and storms were forecast around midday. We never contemplated upping the record, but we wanted to capture some onboard video and other images to add to our collection.

Mike had put together a short video and stills to upload to YouTube on return to Sydney.

I would like to thank Mike Richards, Mike Jenkins, and Roger Martin for their support, skills, and work in preparing for our record attempts. I also thank Jesse Gersensen for taking the time to look up the wind predictions for our zone and for being a strong advocate for high altitude flight.

Doug La Rock made the tension gauge for us and it is an invaluable tool. All the guys and girls on Kite Builders, including Cliff Quinn, Ron Bohart, TBH in Philly, Alden-miller, Pumpkin, Jeepster, Kite Guy, Turn 11, Sadsack, Quincy, Old Goat, MotoTrev, my AKS members, Linda Saunders, AKA area 13 rep, and a host of others.

My email has been swamped with congratulatory messages and requests for friendship on Facebook from the worldwide kiting community. I have had more people following my attempts than I realized. The verification process is underway, and I believe the evidence is so overwhelming that I can confidently claim a new world record altitude of at least 16,000 feet.

It's back to reality, work, gardening, chores, and the daily grind of life in a big city. I know if I get stressed out I can go down to the park and fly a kite or I can sit in my workshop watching videos of the world record attempts.

Next we may attempt the absolute (kite train) record but I'd like to get the single line verification out of the way before I think seriously about another record campaign. I would be setting a target at about 40,000 feet, but this is a whole new, bigger ball game and would need sponsorship.

I hope I have established our credentials with our methods and open disclosure over the past ten years.



## Events List

	<b>April</b>	
18-26	Berck International Kite Festival, Berck Sur Mer, France	
25-26	Jolly Up 16, Cliddesden, Basingstoke.	roy@kitesup.co.uk
24 - 3rd May	Cervia International Kite Festival, Cervia, Italy	info@artevento.com
	<b>May</b>	
2-3	Broad Haven Kite Fliers 'Rendezvous', Beach flying at Broad Haven Pembrokeshire	bill.souten@mkf.org.uk
4	Broad Haven Kite Fliers 'Rendezvous', Flying at Hilton Court Gardens, Roch Pembrokeshire	bill.souten@mkf.org.uk
10	Flying Lunch, Yaverland Meadow (Yaverland car park) Sandown , Isle of Wight PO36 8QB 11- 4pm.	sharon-george@hotmail.co.uk
22-25	Margam Park Kite Festival, Margam Country Park, Margam, Port Talbot, South Wales	Margampark@npt.gov.uk
24	National Trust Kite Festival, Minchinhampton Common 10 - 4pm.	tess.hirst@nationaltrust.org.uk
29-31	Exmouth Kite Festival, The Imperial Recreation Ground, Exmouth, Devon EX8 1DG	kites@exmouthrotaryclub.co.uk
	<b>June</b>	
6 - 7	Mawddach Paddle Regatta and Kite Fly, on the beach opposite the life boat station, Barmouth, North Wales	Waine Hucker waine@barrikiteflyers.com
6-7	Basingstoke Kite Festival, Down Grange Sports Complex, Pack Lane, Basingstoke	roy@kitesup.co.uk
13-14	Teston Bridge Kite Festival, Teston Country Park, Kent ( Provisional) CANCELLED	Malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com
20-21	Sumners Pond Model Show, Horsham	events@sumnersponds.co.uk
20-21	Shropshire Kite Festival, Lacon Childe School, Love Lane, Cleobury Mortimer DY14 8PE	kites@skybums.com
21	Streatham Common Kite Day, Streatham Common, London SW16 3DW	kiteday2014@gmail.com
28	Herne Bay Kite Festival, Memorial Park, Kings Road, Herne Bay Kent	Malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com
	<b>July</b>	
4-5	Prudhoe Kite Festival, Highfield Park, Prudhoe, near Newcastle, Northumberland NE42 6EY	john@johndobson.info
11-12	Brighton Kite Festival, Stanmer Park, Brighton, East Sussex	<a href="http://www.brightonkiteflyers.co.uk">www.brightonkiteflyers.co.uk</a>
11-12	Annual Barmouth Beach Kite Festival, on the beach opposite the lifeboat station North Wales	Waine Hucker waine@barrikiteflyers.com
18-19	Leominster and Hereford Kite Festival, The National Trust, Berrington Hall, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0DW	bill.souten@mkf.org.uk
25-26	St. Annes Kite festival, on the beach, Lytham st Annes, near Blackpool, Lancashire	patmay8@hotmail.com
25-26	Dunstable Downs Kite Festival, Whipsnade Road, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 2GY	Joe@projectzip.co.uk
	<b>August</b>	
1-2	Jolly Up 17, Cliddesden, Basingstoke.	roy@kitesup.co.uk
2	Royston Rotary Charity Kite Festival, Therfield Heath, Royston, Herts SG8 5BG	www.roystonkitefestival.com
8-9	Teston Bridge Kite Festival, Teston Country Park, Kent	Malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com
15 - 16	Portsmouth International Kite Festival, Southsea Common, Portsmouth	Ports-mouth@thekitesociety.org.uk
22-23	Bristol International Kite Festival, Durdham Downs, Bristol.	info@abc-pr.co.uk
	<b>September</b>	
5-6	Kites over Bewl, Location Bewl Water no Lamberhurst Kent TN3 8JH	malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com
	<b>November</b>	
15	Indoor Kite Event, St Joseph's Catholic School, Swindon	Karl@Longbottom.org.uk