

THE KITEFLIER

35th Anniversary Year 1979 - 2014

www.thekitesociety.org.uk



Issue 138 JANUARY 2014 £2.50

**Newsletter of the Kite Society of
Great Britain**

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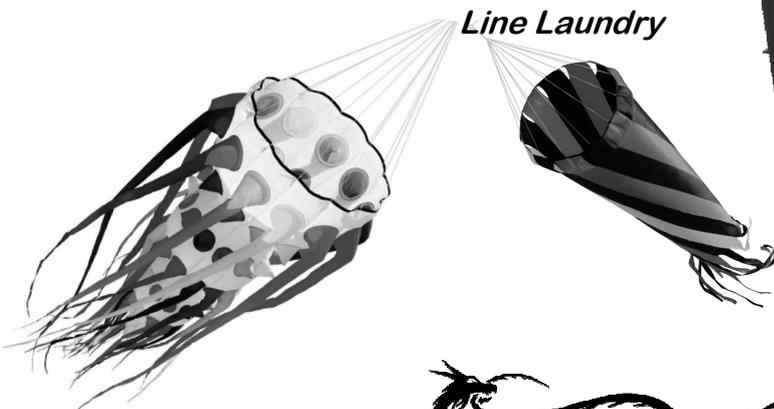


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Sweet Emotion*



Line Laundry



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For
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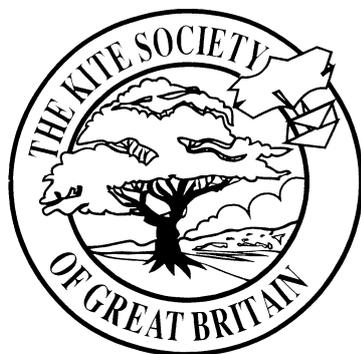
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Editorial

Dear Reader

As you may notice from the cover this is the 35th year of the Kite Society and the Kiteflier. In the last issue we asked for contributions to a commemorative photo book to celebrate—well the response was dire to say the least with just Barry Pitman offering to support this endeavour. If we do not get any more responses we will drop the idea completely.

What do people want?

Despite rumours to the contrary and the rather harsh statements made by some **Portsmouth is on (23rd, 24th & 25th August 2014)** and for the foreseeable future and we have not simply walked away due to a reduction in budget. We think, and we hope you also think the same, that Portsmouth is an event worth supporting and that the kiting community will continue to support it as it has in the past.

Front Cover

One of Kelvin Woods' butterflies soars into the blue.

Photo: Tara Bloom

There was some sad and shocking news in December when we heard that Kelvin Woods had died suddenly. There were many tributes on Facebook and some additional ones in the pages of this issue. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him—and the sky will be a little emptier. He was a keen supporter of Portsmouth and we therefore intend to establish an annual trophy in his name at the event. The butterflies will also be flying—and a plan to make your own in on the back cover—bring it along to Portsmouth.

Happy New Year to all of you and good flying for 2014.

Jon and Gill

For Sale: Santa Claus windsock/inflatable, 5 metres long, factory new in storage bag. Fly with a "lifter" kite. £200 inclusive of postage.

Contact 07796196594 or email misty.morning@tiscali.co.uk

Membership Type	Fee
Individual	£12.00
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Over 60 - Individual or Family	£11.00
Overseas - Europe and Surface Mail	£20.00
Overseas - Airmail	£25.00
Electronic Subscription (Individual or Family)	£5.00

Whilst every effort is taken to get the details correct The Kite Society cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions that occur. Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editors or The Kite Society.

Kites with a Tale to Tell—Hugh Blowers

With the long winter nights now upon us, an ancient tale of dark times, myth and legend with a kite connection, unlikely as that may seem. The story comes from a 12th century history of the Kings of Britain and revolves round Llud, who ruled some 100 years BC. Llud was one of the four sons of Belinus and succeeded to the throne of Britain on his father's death. Some time into his reign, Britain was devastated by three plagues. The first was the invasion of the Coranieid who could hear everything that was said in the land, which they used to their advantage. Conversely, they could not be defeated, as any plots would be overheard. The second was a hideous shriek with no apparent source heard once a year all over the land, which struck fear into the population and turned peoples minds. The third was the mysterious disappearance every night of food from the royal household, which vanished without trace, no matter how stringent the surveillance.

Although Llud was a great ruler and is commemorated in our capital London with the areas named after him such as Ludgate, he was powerless against the plagues so consulted his brother Llefeleys, who had married the daughter of the King of France, becoming ruler on the death of his father-in-law. Llefeleys was streetwise, especially in the magical arts and after working out a system of speaking tubes so he could talk to Llud without being heard, quickly came up with a poison that would kill the Coranieid without harming the population.

The vanishing food that was causing such hardship was soon sorted as well. The guards that had been posted were having a spell cast upon them by a giant and falling asleep, so unaware of the food being stolen. Llefeleys told Llud that he would have to guard the stores one night and stay awake whatever happened. By dunking his head in iced water, Llud stayed awake long enough to see the giant, who he set about with his sword until the giant begged for mercy.

The shrieking noise was somewhat more of a problem, as it transpired that it was the result of two dragons fighting endlessly, the red native dragon and the white invader. The native dragon continued to resist all attacks, but on the eve of May Day each year his screams of pain and fury drove strong men to distraction. Llefeleys plan for the dragons was somewhat more long-winded and devious. Llud had to gather all his scholars who would map Britain to find the exact geographic centre (somewhere near Meriden apparently). There a pit was to be dug and filled with

mead. The dragons would fight to exhaustion and then fall into the pit, which they would then proceed to drink dry (what a way to go). In their stupor they would be bound and placed in a stone chest and buried under a mountain in Snowdonia.

Peace reigned over the land and Llud was considered to be a great guy, although most of it was down to Llefeleys, although he had made one major miscalculation that would manifest itself, but not for another 5 or so centuries. The dragons remained buried without causing any problems until King Vortigern decided to build a castle on the very mountain where they were interred. Each morning all the work of the previous day was wrecked and he did not have a clue why. After several weeks of this, he was told by the wise men (not the ones following the star) that the answer would be provided 'by a boy with no father'. Eventually such a boy was found and the English translation of his name is Merlin. Now Vortigern had got the wrong end of the stick and thought he had to sacrifice the boy, but quick talking Merlin pointed out that he was there to explain the reason why the castle kept falling down. It was due to our two friends the dragons still fighting after all this time, and the only way to stop them knocking his castle down was to excavate the mountain and let them out, which he did. Now free, the red dragon finally vanquishes the white dragon and becomes the symbol of Vortigern's people and Wales.

Now those of you who have got this far will be wondering what the dickens this has to do with kites? In one of our many conversations with Steve Brockett at Dieppe, he told us that he had



Idris and Cadfael

Kites with a Tale to Tell—Hugh Blowers

been commissioned many years ago to build a series of kites to illustrate this legend. The prototype of the dragon we saw at an early Basingstoke, also looking spectacular in a night fly at Dieppe around 1994. This was one amazing piece of kitemaking and through a great deal of cajoling Lynn persuaded Steve to build a replica for my 50th birthday, which many of you will have seen and was named Idris after the dragon in Ivor The Engine (that dates it). In 2012 Steve brought the original to Dieppe, which flew alongside Idris, which is when he described the blue and red dragons he had built along with Merlin, although he had forgotten what that looked like and there were no images of it.

These three kites have not been seen for many years as far as we can ascertain, but were they still in existence, and if so where and in what condition? Steve kindly gave me the name of the person who had commissioned them so I thought I would do a bit of digging and see if I could trace them. After a trawl of directories I found a number that looked a possibility, and unbelievably the very person I was in search of answered. He could not help at that stage, but 'leave it with him'. Bearing in mind we are talking over 20 years ago that these kites were built, I was not holding out much hope. It was therefore something of a surprise when Keith contacted me to say that he had located the white dragon in a lock up storage unit, but unfortunately it was severely water damaged.

Can you imagine a cotton kite that has been stored in the wet? Every single eyelet had rusted away leaving an ingrained rust stain in the material. There was mould and stains everywhere and it was well worn, but not from flying as it had been used in displays and parades. Needless to say, an awful lot of work went into killing the



Llud

mould and removing rust before renovation could start, but those who saw the dragon at Portsmouth and Bristol will agree that it doesn't look too bad. The first flight was in private and a bit of an adventure as nothing was set and it was a session of trial and quite a lot of error.

Nothing more was heard for a while until out of the blue came another email saying that the other two kites had been tracked down and recovered. Now Steve had said that one dragon was blue, and the other red. The blue one was similar to Idris and the prototype, but with blue shading and we assumed that the red one would be similar. What we had not bargained for was that it



Llefeleys

was completely red and must have cost a fortune in dye. Even more remarkable was that it had never been flown or even completely rigged so was like new, apart from perished rubbers, fittings and shock cord, and a couple of small holes through rough handling at some time. It all went together like a dream and we got all the bridle settings spot on so the trial flight was a joy and it looked absolutely phenomenal against a blue sky.

Merlin was something of a voyage as Steve had only flown it once and it had never been flown since. We did not have any clues as to how it was sparred or bridled either. This was another of Steve's kites that went across the lounge and into the hall, and when laid out was very similar to a George Peters Kat Man, so we could use photos of one of those as a guide. Instead of water damage, this time it was chocolate of all things, which we managed to remove and fruit juice that is proving impossible to get rid of. The skin has had something of a hard life and looks like it was involved in a fight of its own, but after figuring where the sticks went (we still have some over that seem to have no home) and at-

Kites with a Tale to Tell—Hugh Blowers

taching the bridles that were in the bottom of the bag, it too flew well and looks quite spectacular.

As my dragon was already called Idris, and the original, now owned by Karl and Sara Longbottom, had been named Cadfael some time previously, Keith suggested that names from the legend would be appropriate, and preserve the Welsh connection. As Llud and Llefeleys also had two brothers it was agreed that the white dragon would be Llud and the red one Llefeleys to go with Idris and Cadfael. Merlin will keep his Anglicised name, although in Welsh he is Myrddin Emrys.

Our thanks go to Steve for setting us on this trail, Keith for making it all happen and Karl for putting us in contact with a courier who would be prepared to transport warring dragons.



Events List

April 2014		
6	Rodborough Common Kite Day 2014, Rodborough common (Stroud, Gloucestershire)	rodboroughkiteday.weebly.com/
12-21	Berck International Kite Festival, Berck-Sur-Mer, France	
24 - 4/05	Cervia International Kite Festival, Italy	info@artevento.com
26-27	North Hants Kiter's Jolly Up 14, Cliddesden, Basingstoke	Roy 07778 352825, Colin 07770 338419
May 2014		
3-5	Blyth Kite Festival Weekend with NEKF @ Meggies Burn Field, Links Road, South Beach, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 3PH	www.nekf.org
3-5	Weymouth Kite Festival, Weymouth Dorset (TBC)	Michael McManus 01305319469
10-11	Ostende International Kite Festival, Ostend, Belgium	www.kites-oostende.be/nl/home/
10-11	Western Lake District KiteFest 2014 in assoc. with the NKG, Millom Rugby Union Club, Wilson Park, Haverigg, Cumbria	kiterdave@btinternet.com
24-26	Margam Kite Festival, Margam County Park, Margam, Port Talbot South Wales SA13 2TJ	margampark@npt.gov.uk
June 2014		
7-8	Basingstoke Kite Festival, Down Grange Sports Complex, Pack Lane, Basingstoke	Alan Cosgrove (Main festival Organiser) 01256 421800, Roy Broadley (Kites Up) 01256 812487
14-15	Teston Kite Event, Teston Bridge Country Park, Maidstone, Kent (Provisional)	Malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com
21-22	2nd Annual Model Show here at Sumners Ponds Fishery & Campsite, Barns Green, West Sussex	Kimberley Pratt events@sumnersponds.co.uk
29	Herne Bay Kite Festival, Memorial Park King Street Herne Bay, Kent	Malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com
July 2014		
5-6	NEKF Kite Festival @ Souter Lighthouse, Coast Rd, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR6 7NH	www.nekf.org
12-13	Barmouth Beach Kite Festival, opposite the lifeboat station Barmouth, North Wales	Waine Hucker, barrikiteflyers.com
12-13	Eastbourne Extreme, East Sussex	jayne.howard@eastbourne.gov.uk
19-20	Leominster & Hereford Kite Festival, National Trust Berrington Hall	Karl Longbottom, School House, Dorstone, Herefordshire, HR3 6AN
August 2014		
2-3	North Hants Kiter's Jolly Up 15, Cliddesden, Basingstoke	Roy 07778 352825, Colin 07770 338419
9-10	Teston Big Kite Weekend, Teston Bridge Country Park, Maidstone	Malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com
9-10	Shropshire Kite Festival, Lacon Childe School, Love Lane, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire DY14 8PE	kites@skybums.com
23-25	Portsmouth International Kite Festival, Southsea Common	The Kite Society

Bits & Pieces

The World Kite and Windsurfing Guide

After four years of hard work, "The World Kite and Windsurfing Guide" is now available. This book is the first comprehensive spot guide to planet Earth's finest kite and windsurfing regions. Introducing almost 100 regions in nine continental chapters, it features over 1,200 of the world's best spots.

Fully illustrated with 700 breath-taking photos and detailed maps of every region, there's in-depth analysis of wind, wave and weather conditions throughout the year to highlight the best times to visit.

The Guide also offers real-world travel information with essential tips on what to expect in each region and handy hints for a successful trip. Last but not least there are contact details for local shops, shapers, schools and kit hire as well as accommodation, restaurants, rental cars and other insider knowledge.

The efforts behind this 320-page work were enormous, all information was collated first-hand from hundreds of experienced locals. Added to which over 50 pro riders, world champions and windsports legends contributed their knowledge and experience.

And finally the archives of the world's hundred leading photographers had to be scoured - out of 20,000 action and scenic shots, the best 700 pictures were selected for the book.

Available through Amazon—ISBN: 978-3937323220

From the Bradford Telegraph and Argus

Warden raises concerns over kite fighting on Baildon Moor.

The ancient Asian sport of kite fighting, where razor-sharp strings are used to cut competitors adrift, is taking place high on Baildon Moor.

And environment warden Mark Scrimshaw has raised safety concerns to town councillors. He came across about 10 men and a boy taking part in the sport last Thursday.

"I went onto the top of Baildon Moor to the highest car park, above the reservoirs," said Mr Scrimshaw. "What I then watched for some time was fascinating and exciting. Kites are flown to several hundred feet and the aim is to

attack an opponent's kite by cutting its string with your own kite's string, resulting in it fluttering to the ground."

Mr Scrimshaw spoke to the men, and was told the losing kites would be abandoned.

"I was a little concerned that they may be a danger to livestock, as are many of the sky lanterns on the market which have wires that may be ingested by animals," he said. "However, I was able to examine one of the kites and they appeared to be entirely bio-degradable, being made of thin tissue paper, thin strips of wood and string."

But Mr Scrimshaw was worried about the kite strings, which are thin, strong and coated with powdered glass. "One of the competitors was bleeding from several cuts on his hands," he said.

Having researched kite fighting, Mr Scrimshaw found that occasionally deaths caused by the string are reportedly due to the string cutting the throats of people, particularly children. He recommended to Baildon Town Council it should not be something to be encouraged, with cyclists, horseriders, walkers and golfers all present on the moor.

But Baildon town councillor Ian Lyons (Lib Dem) is a fan of adventurous pursuits and said the matter needed investigation.

"Skydiving, rock climbing, lots of things are dangerous in some way or another and I think this would probably be a good thing, but it would need rules and regulations around an established club," he said.

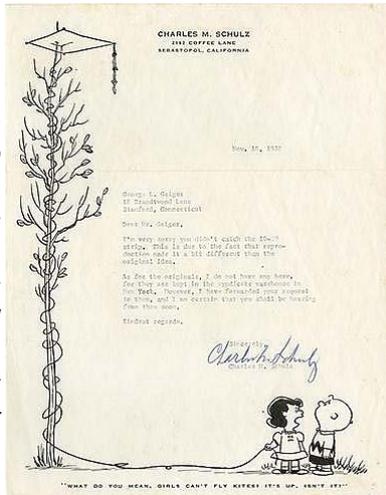
Danny Jackson, Bradford Council's countryside and rights of way manager, said: "Kite fighting is unusual around here, but obviously it is potentially hazardous to other users of the moor and we would urge people not to do this on public land."

Auction News

From an Animation Auction held recently. **VINTAGE PERSONAL CHARLES SCHULZ TYPED LETTER SIGNED.** Vintage typed letter hand signed ("*Charles M Schultz*") note on 8.5 x 11 in. Charles M. Schulz personal illustrated stationery. Dated Nov. 18, 1958, from Sebastopol,

Bits & Pieces

California. Shultz writes to "George L. Geiger", in part: "I'm very sorry you didn't catch the 10-29 strip. This is due to the fact that reproduction made it a bit different than the original idea. As for the originals, I do not have any here, for they are kept in the syndicate warehouse in New York....Kindest regards." Signed in blue pen, "Sincerely, Charles M. Shultz." The stationery is decorated with the image of "Charlie Brown" and "Lucy" regarding her kite stuck in a tall tree, with the caption below, "What do you mean girls can't fly kites? It's up, isn't it?" With original folds and minor toning. In fine condition.



Estimates \$300–500

From the Los Angeles Times.
Alexander Graham Bell auction halted; Smithsonian disputes 'gift'



Alexander Graham Bell in 1903, holding a tetrahedron, the shape on which he hoped to base a kite-like flying machine.

An historic archive documenting Alexander Graham Bell's attempt in the early 1900s to build a kite-like aircraft that would allow humans to fly was pulled back from an auctioneer's gavel in Westlake Village on Wednesday.

The Smithsonian Institution and National Geographic Society joined Bell's heirs in challenging the archive's sale. They raised questions about whether the telephone inventor's family had voluntarily transferred the archive to a Smithsonian curator in the mid-1950s for his personal use.

Profiles in History, a Calabasas auction house specializing in historical documents and Hollywood memorabilia, had estimated in the online auction catalog that the 217 pages of laboratory notes and more than 950 unpublished photographs documenting Bell's manned-flight experiments would fetch as much as \$150,000 in the auction at the Hyatt Westlake Plaza hotel.

Nancy Seltzer, spokeswoman for Profiles in History President Joseph Maddalena, said, "The item is being pulled because Joe Maddalena will not sell something if there is any controversy. That doesn't mean the Smithsonian is right."

The auction catalog says that around 1955, Paul Edward Garber, the first head of what's now the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, "acquired the archive for his personal use from the family of Alexander Graham Bell." The catalog says that "in 1991 Garber gifted the archive to the current owner," who consigned it to Profiles in History for Wednesday's auction.

A letter sent Tuesday to Maddalena by Judith Leonard, the Smithsonian's general counsel; Terrence B. Adamson, executive vice president of the National Geographic Society; and Bell's great-grandson Edwin S. Grosvenor asked that the sale be delayed to allow further investigation into how Bell's research archive had come into Garber's possession.

Bell's heirs always intended his papers to be available to the public for research and study, the letter said. Much of his archival material was loaned until 1976 to the National Geographic Society, which kept it in a special "Bell Room" at its Washington, D.C., headquarters. The family gave that collection to the Library of Congress, where it now resides.

The letter says it would have been out of character for family members to have made an exception for Garber, because they, like Bell himself until his death in 1922, "have been meticulous about preserving the papers and historical

Bits & Pieces

record pertaining to [his] work and life."

Instead, the family, Smithsonian and National Geographic Society believe that "Garber was loaned the items in his official capacity as head curator of the National Air Museum, precursor to what is now the National Air and Space Museum. We surmise that these items made their way into Paul Garber's home (he was known for taking work materials home with him) where they were commingled with his personal papers instead of being returned to their proper owners and custodians." Garber died in 1992.

Grosvenor, who is president of the American Heritage Society and editor in chief of American Heritage Magazine, contacted The Times less than three hours before the auction of his great-grandfather's archive was scheduled to begin.

He said in an email that Profiles in History "was ignoring" the request he'd made Tuesday along with the Smithsonian and National Geographic.

After The Times sought comment from Profiles in History minutes before the 11 a.m. auction, its spokeswoman said Bell's research archive was being held back from sale because of the questions being raised.

Skystreme



Skystreme is an effective visual personal location marker that stays airborne in a wide variety of weather conditions. It is the world's first radar reflective location marker for outdoor pursuits, an emergency survival tool.

Skystreme has been issued to the Royal Navy and has a NATO stock number. Celebrity users endorse it. During Richard Branson's attempt to circumnavigate the globe each pilot's land sur-

vival kit contained a Skystreme and beacon.

Inflated by mouth it has a self-sealing valve and can fly in wind speeds from 4 mph to Force 10 in rain or snow. It comes in a pocket-sized pouch weighing only 43 grams and has three emergency uses.

Inflatable rescue kite: Skystreme is usually used as a personal location marker as it flies just like a kite even in extreme weather conditions. Its mirror bright surface reflects sunlight so well that it can be seen at a distance of greater than 2 kilometres with the naked eye. At night it reflects light shone from any angle. An aeroplane has detected Skystreme from a distance of 17 kilometres by using radar.

Inflatable body warmer: Keeping warm is essential for survival in cold conditions. People in trouble can use Skystreme as a thermal vest by tucking it inside their clothing. It works by reflecting back the body's own heat.

Inflatable air splint: Broken or sprained limbs need to be kept immobile until medical help arrives. Injured people can use Skystreme as a first aid air splint to protect damaged limbs.

Skystreme can lift off unaided. It is shaped like a wedge. The inflatable tubes provide the stiffness of the edges of the wedge shape. Until these tubes are inflated by blowing up, the Skystreme is completely flat. Air flows into the wide open end and forms a 'ram air pocket' inside the wedge shape until it leaves the Skystreme through a slot at the narrow end. The high pressure inside the wedge causes the Skystreme to lift off unaided. The tether brings the Skystreme into the wind. Skystreme is part kite and part wing. This combination gives extra stability and lift.

It is to be distributed in the UK by Simpson Lawrence of Glasgow who supply most marine chandlers and outdoor activity shops. It costs £24.99. Available from Amazon.

Six kiteboarders complete first ever Atlantic kite crossing

The HTC Atlantic Kite Challenge has successfully been completed. Six kiteboarders have sailed more than 7800 kilometres in the first ever non-stop kiteboard crossing of the Atlantic Ocean.

Filippo van Hellenberg Hubar, Camilla Ringvold,

Max Blom, Eric Pequeno, Dennis Gijbsers and Ike Frans set sail from the Canary Islands on the 20th November, and arrived at Turks and Caicos, in the Caribbean, on the 17th December.

The kiteboarders have ridden through schools of leaping flying fish, left trails in bioluminescent algae at night, sailed next to whales, passed sharks, and faced storms, lightning, and becalmed conditions where no progress could be made.

The six kiteboarders were accompanied by a catamaran, a Lagoon 500 called the Double-A, with five crew members including the Dutch sailing professional Erik van Vuuren as team captain.

Every kiter took two two-hour shifts per day – one in the daytime and one at night – so one member of the team was always out on the ocean going the distance.

Bell Exhibition

Kitemuseum.com (Canada) is pleased and honoured to announce that they have signed a renewed three year Memorandum of Understanding with Alexander Graham Bell's Parks Canada Museum in Baddeck, Cape Breton.

The first MOU saw the sponsoring of a kite exhibit of kites Bell would have seen on his 1910-11 trip around the world, as well as the first international Kites to Flight Symposiums in Burlington and Baddeck.

This second MOU will cover, amongst other things, a Kites to Flight III (North America) in 2014; and Kites to Flight IV (International) in 2015.

Details will be announced early this year. Our number one goal is to do whatever we can to contribute to a sustainable Bell Museum and Baddeck community in the face of increased challenges. Bell in Baddeck represents one of the world's only great kite history reserves, and we have a duty to ensure its future.

Article Catalogue

The Royal Aeronautical Society has the National Aerospace Library catalogue on-line (www.aerosociety.com) which—should you enter kite into the search box—gives some 200 plus entries.

World Kite Museum to Open in South Korea Mid-2014

A new World Kite Museum is being constructed on Jeju Island, Korea. This impressive "Wind Theme Park" will feature a Garden of Wind and large exhibit halls, hotels and restaurants. The Museum complex is scheduled to open in May 2014. One Sky One World will be donating kites to their opening. For more information, visit www.windkite.co.kr/new/main.html



Touch of Fame

(From Drachen Foundation Discourse no. 15).

Her grandfather (Henri Matisse) and stepfather (Marcel Duchamp) were two of the most famous artists of the 20th century, so Jackie Matisse needed to find her own art niche, which she did – kites. A tall redhead. Jackie was raised in New York City and is more American than French, although she now lives in a spacious compound near Paris, complete with lots of highly valuable art – paintings by her grandfather, ready mades by Duchamp, and an assortment of other choice work by famous friends of the two. Duchamp's chess gear, including table and timing clock, are on view. Although divorced, when traveling she sticks with her married name to avoid the complications of fame. Matisse makes and flies kites striking for their long tails. She is also very experimental, having flown underwater. Some of her small kites grace bottles of water, where they sway with gentle motion. She has even achieved convincing computer mockups. She has taken kite art into the computer age.

Artist Jackie Matisse demonstrates her concept of kite tails flown underwater with paper suspended in glass bottles.



Event News

Basingstoke Kite Festival, 7th & 8th June

At Down Grange Sports Complex, Pack Lane, Basingstoke. From 10am to 5 pm (both days)

Come along and help us to celebrate our 22nd Festival and join in the fun!

Guests from Home and Abroad will be joining in, and as well as things going on in the display arena, there will be the usual array of activities, along with various Kite & Food traders.

A raffle is held over the weekend with lots of donated kite related prizes, donations gratefully received! There will be a theme of WILD-LIFE for those who'd like to fly theme related kites.

On Saturday evening we will have our usual Social Get Together in the marquee, and all are welcome (There is a small fee if you would like to join in with the Buffet, please let us know-in the Raffle area- on the Saturday in the morning)

Camping is available on the Friday and Saturday evenings for £10.00 (payable on the weekend) and there are Showers and Toilet facilities on site.

Come along and join in, and we look forward to seeing you there!!!

Contact: Alan Cosgrove (Main festival Organiser) 01256 421800 or Roy Broadley (Kites Up 01256 812487

Herne Bay Kite Festival, 29th June

Herne Bay Kite Festival, Memorial Park King Street Herne Bay, Kent. From 11am to 5 pm

This is a joint venture with the Herne Bay Projects Group in regard to a one day event in the town.

The Herne Bay team are looking at this being a long term project, developing into a two day festival with additional funding being provided.

There will be access to the flying area and parking for cars, but all attendees will need a

pass. There will be no camping allowed on the park overnight, but there are local campsites.

Due to the limitations of the park although a good size, it will not be appropriate to fly large inflatables.

With the decline in kiting events due to sponsorship issues it is important to support any initiative to commence a new event

Contact Malcolm Ford, Kent Kite Flyers mob 07840086770
e-mail malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com

Eastbourne Extreme, 12th & 13th July

Don't forget Eastbourne Extreme on Saturday 12- Sunday 13 July 2014. We have a super grass park just off the seafront where kites can play and stay throughout the event weekend. Big Screen will be added to the event for FIFA World Cup Final.

Any kite clubs, individuals welcome.

Jayne Howard, Sponsorship Co-Ordinator, Eastbourne Borough Council, Tourism and Leisure, 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex. BN21 4TW Telephone +44 (0)1323 415442 Mobile: 07939580547 Fax +44 (0)1323 417462.

Email: jayne.howard@eastbourne.gov.uk
www.visiteastbourne.com/events

Teston Big Kite Festival 9/10th August

Just a short message to state that this is definitely going ahead; camping will be a donation of £10 per pitch of up to 4 persons. Let us hope that the weather is as good as last year.

As for the June event a provisional date has been set for June 14/15th, but as yet there has not been any finalisation of sponsorship for the event; a final decision will be made by the end of March. If there is no event as such, there is a possibility as last year that some flyers will meet up at Teston for an informal fly.

Contact Malcolm Ford, Kent Kite Flyers, mob. 07840086770
e-mail malcolmf@kentkiteflyers.com

Rethinking Kite Festivals—John Dobson

These last few years, I have become a bit concerned by the way kite festivals in the UK have been changing, becoming less participatory and more of a spectacle. Big show kites flown by professionals who can handle them taking more and more space in the sky are the thing. Small domestic kites which can be flown by anybody are not. I am not saying there should be no place for the former; I am saying that there should also be more place for the latter.

In order to do something about reversing this trend, I took a different approach to a kite festival I put on at Prudhoe (in Northumberland) this year which was sponsored by the Town Council, to whom I offer my thanks. To some extent this different approach was forced by the limited budget, and to an equal extent by the fact that both the town council and I wished to see a good measure of public participation. The usual local government cuts meant that there was next to no money, or desire, or even space for many large show kites. So I decided on an equal mix of two things: professional kite displays by expert fliers who could make kites do things, and providing an opportunity for people to fly their own kites and have some fun. Just a few largish show kites for a bit of a backdrop, but space for them was limited. So I decided on two public events each repeated twice a day: an altitude sprint and a children's artistic kite competition; and a fun fly at the end of each day.

The first problem was how to equip the public with kites. In order to make the competition fair, I brokered an agreement between GoKites (the local kite trader) and the Town Council whereby the council would charge him £100 for the pitch and he would in return sell the council 25 Chinese Deltas at £4 each. So the council was able to lend 25 kites to "members of the public" for each sprint. Incidentally I hate the term "members of the public" so often used at these events, since it immediately makes an artificial and undesirable distinction between the "professional" kitefliers and the "amateur" and anonymous others. Kiteflying should be capable of celebrating both diversity and equality without the need for creating an "us" and "them" distinction. People need to be engaged and it doesn't really matter that some forms of engagement needs a bit more skill and experience than others.

This was a great success, and even the commentator enjoyed it. I mention this because the commentator was George Webster, whose views on Chinese Deltas are probably well known to readers of *The Kiteflier*. With his continuous help, many people learnt both the first and most basic rule of kite flying ("Do not let go of the string") and the second ("If you want your kite to fly higher in the sky, let some more line out"). George was really in his element, and his encouraging and always practical exhortations to people generally and to specific individuals added greatly to the atmosphere of cheerful chaos. Another feature of the public sprint I insisted on was that experienced fliers would not fly in the competition, which would

have been unfair, but instead would get out in to the public arena and actively help the less experienced and skilful competitors. This too worked well in breaking down the barriers which so often exist at kite festivals between professional and novice. The competition was not really relevant, it was just a useful vehicle for getting people who had never flown a kite before to get the feel of flying one. What was amusing and interesting was the number of children who were nominally flying a kite but whose actual kite handler was a parent.

The second major item of public participation was the children's artistic kite competition. I was fortunate and grateful that Alan Poxon and Becky White accepted my invitation to be in attendance to run a workshop where they taught children how to make and decorate a simple sled. So I arranged that at a particular time, a prize would be awarded to whoever was flying the most beautiful decorated such kite in the opinion of a suitably chosen impartial judge (a handy councillor). This competition too was well received. The prize was a complete refund of the £2 that Alan and Becky charged for their workshop.

We also had a free for all fly-in at then end of the day where you could fly anything, even a Chinese Delta on loan. The was great fun for all of except possibly those of us (they know who they are and I thank them all) who spent a long long time sorting out the resulting tangles afterwards, though it has to be said that even that caused a lot of shared experience bonding to take place. Most of the deltas survived to tell the tale, but next year we shall get a lot more lines and handles and just cut and discard the lines at the end of each session.

I was very grateful to Kelvin Woods, whose recent death is a great loss to kiteflying and to us, all, for his generous offer of letting people fly his butterflies. Fortunately the wind was just right so we had 20 or so butterflies out being flown by older children and adults who had never handled a kite before (except possibly a Chinese delta). We had some display fliers as well to show how bigger single line and multi-line kites could be flown and some bear dropping, thus showing that even teddies can participate in kite flying. I would like to thank all those who flew their kites and especially those who helped by not flying kites but helping those who –possibly for the first time– did try to fly a kite.

Following a suggestion recently made to me by Bill Souten, I have plans for next time for an adult kite making workshop based on buying bulk charity tea towels and turning them into della Portas using very little more than string and sealing wax and some pieces of cheap dowel.

In summary, I think that in these days of reduced budgets and discontinued big events, this is one way in which kite festivals can be reinvented. Small is beautiful. Reclaim kiteflying for the people, say I.

: `i H' ? Jh'g'cZJYbUa ž: i fH Yf'YI fUWg ! 'DU `7\ Uda Ub'UbX'I `J'K U `

1 General

Our initial understanding was that there were two distinct types of traditional kites to be found in Vietnam. These were the flute kites, predominantly made by the village farming communities, and then there were kites similar to those from China. The Chinese style kites are sometimes referred to as the kites from Hue and have old links to the rulers and higher classes. While our main interest is in the flute kites, we have expanded our interest a little to include all of the kites made by the village communities, although by doing so we accept that some of these are not necessarily flown with flutes. We have not actively pursued the Chinese influenced Hue kites but, subsequent to our visit, it occurs to us that a useful comparison could be made between these kites and their Chinese forebears.

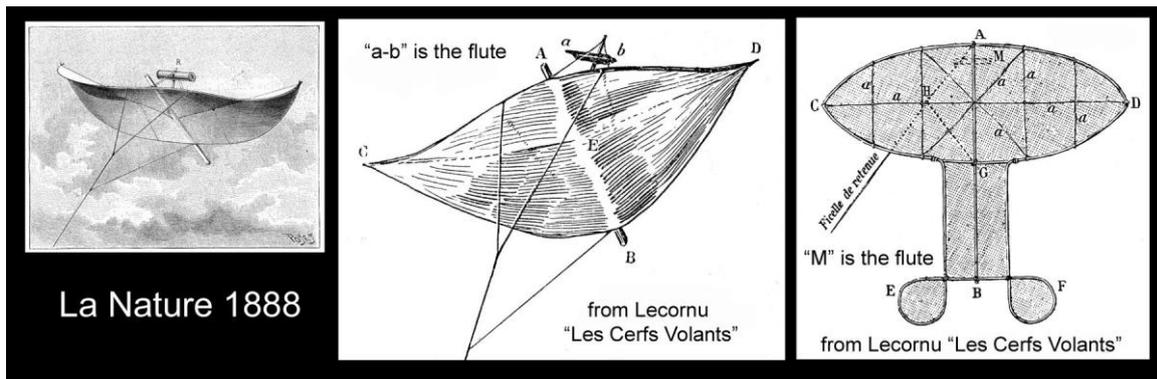


Figure 55 Early illustrations of "Annamite" musical kites from the region of Tonkin

Illustrations of Vietnamese kites are difficult to find and may often be inaccurate. There are no books that deal with them and very few articles other than the old articles in La Nature which were largely repeated in Lecornu's "Les Cerfs Volants". The modern Western literature, where it exists, is generally a repeat of these century-old articles. Some of the more modern histories, particularly in the case of Hart and Pelham⁴⁸, contain notable errors. In respect of the Vietnamese literature the situation is a little different. Old books have disappeared completely and only two good modern references could be found. One of these is the catalogue and DVD for the exhibition "Art Contemporarain et cerfs-volants traditionels du Vietnam" and the other is an anonymous Internet .pdf article "Vietnamese People's Kite Game"⁴⁹. The latter is most likely a reprint of the article "Customs of Vietnam" written in 1943 by Ngô Quý Sơn and is probably the most informative paper, illustrated with simple line drawings, that describes the diversity of Vietnamese kites.

It seemed remarkable to us that these excellent high flying and generally stable kites, along with other similar tailless kites that can be found in Asia, have been developed over the centuries by peasant farmers with no formal education. They feature what we refer to as a modern cambered wing profile as well as stabilising dihedral⁵⁰. These features, together with the well-defined wing covering, results in very limited movement of the centre of pressure. Thus equilibrium⁵¹ is maintained in flight. This is all the more remarkable because of the relatively high aspect ratio⁵² of the wings.

⁴⁸ Clive Hart. "Kites an Historical Survey". 1967. London. pp 30, fig 4, where the illustration of the flute kite is incorrectly referred to as a "Chinese kite with hummer attached". Pelham "Kites" 1976, London. pp.10, 11 has two illustrations and also makes the same error. These are two generally well respected kite references that, in this case, have been badly researched.

⁴⁹ The article carries the note "According to Ngô Quý Sơn – Customs of Vietnam – "Indochina" magazine issue No. 142 dated May 20, 1943 – Page 13 to 36" Mr Ngô Quý Sơn published in the Indochina Institute for the Studies of Man.

⁵⁰ Both qualities are as old as the birds but were essentially unrecognised by Western kite and aeronautical experts until the 1890s.

⁵¹ The flute kites may sway, and sometimes circle, but that is a deliberate feature that results in a varying flute sound. The motion is stable in the dynamic sense because the kite remains flying and does not crash. We saw several poorly made, or poorly bridled kites that were unstable and failed to achieve a steady equilibrium and which invariably crashed.

⁵² Aspect Ratio is the ratio of the wing span to the wing chord. For non-rectangular wings it is easier to express this as b^2/S where b =wingspan and S =wing area. It is generally found that the higher aspect ratio kites fly higher, but they are more prone to lateral instabilities. The flying angle is directly related to the ratio of lift:drag (L/D); it was called lift:draft by the aeronautical pioneers. The

2 Tools for kite making

The main tool used is the bamboo knife. These come in many sizes. The main splitting tool is a long broad bladed knife. Finer bamboo cutting, trimming and scraping may also be done with this knife although smaller ones are also used. All of these knives are locally made and could easily be found in the tools district of Hang Ma in the Old Quarter of Hanoi.



Figure 56 Vietnamese bamboo knives. The large knife is the principal kite bamboo knife

It appears that some kite makers use paper or cardboard patterns as these were seen by Uli at Mr Nguyễn Gia Độ's house in Bá Dương Nội. We were told that kite making knowledge is traditionally passed down to the younger generations through making demonstrations and experience.

Types of Kites

On the 22nd April, just before we left Hanoi, we had a long discussion with Mr Quan Hang Cao. By then we had seen a number of different Vietnamese Flute kites and asked for clarification. Mr Quan Hang Cao said that while all Vietnamese kites were based on the typical leaf shape, there were three main groups of Vietnamese Flute kites:

Group 1

These are the basic leaf kites.

Type 1.1 The lemon leaf kite.

This is commonly made and is typical of the kites at An Binh (Village 2) as well as at Bá Dương Nội. This is the traditional Vietnamese kite and is suited to relatively low winds.

Two kites were seen at An Binh. These are referred to as kite 1.1A, kite 1.1B and were made by Mr Chung who is considered an expert kite maker. Kites 1.1A and 1.1B were similar in construction and comprised a single paper covered wing. Kite 1.1A was complete and kite 1.1B was under construction. These kites were smaller than the 2 metre kites of Bá Dương Nội and had a wingspan of about 1.5 metres. They were made to be flown with a triple stack of flutes. Mr Chung showed us how the assembly of three



Figure 57 Mr Chung with his "lemon" leaf kite

Lift:Drag ratio is a measure of the flying efficiency for all sorts of flying machines. Kites typically have an L/D of 4 whereas a modern airliner will fly at an L/D of 20 and high aspect ratio competition sailplanes achieve L/D values of up to 60.

flutes were fitted to Kite 1A.

The first step in making the kites is to make the kite spine. This is a stiff bamboo flat split stick with the inner side facing the upper surface of the wing. The spine extended forward of the front spar by 10cm and aft of the rear spar by about 25 cm. The extensions acted to protect the flute at the nose and to provide a launching handle at the rear. The spine stick contains the slot to support the flute stick but this hole is cut out when the kite is completed.

The front and rear spars are roughly square in cross-section and are carefully tapered towards the outer tips in order that the central section that carries the flutes remains relatively stiff, while the tips are rather more flexible. The flexibility of the wing therefore depends on the size of the cross section and the degree of tapering; we saw some kites at Bá Dương Nội where the spars were clearly too weak and this resulted in excessive bending, especially during the launch climb. The spars are lashed at right angles to the spine, i.e. parallel to one another. We saw that the spars are lashed at an angle to the spine such that the skin side faces forwards and downwards. The front and rear spars are then bound together at the tips in the form a cross. The flexibility of the spars and the resulting curvature results in an upwards dihedral. The amount of dihedral bending depends on the angle that the spar tips cross: the higher the angle, the greater the dihedral. The angle is generally between 60 and 90°. Mr Quan Hang Cao told us that a more stable kite can be made when the front spar is slightly shorter than the rear spar. A line is strung from one tip, around the spine and then to the other tip. This line supports the wing skin and also acts to maintain the dihedral tensioning.

The wings were covered in lateral and longitudinal bracing strings to produce a loose netting which supports the paper wing skin and takes the wing loads. This netting minimises the chance of the paper tearing, especially when the kite crashes or is wet. The most common point where the skin is likely to tear is along the rear wing spar. The netting is most closely pitched around the inner wing as this is required to take the main lifting load and to remain stiff. The outboard wings are designed to be flexible. Kite 1.1A had a X netting inboard while Kite 1.1B had a rectangular netting.

The final stage, other than bridling and mounting the flutes, is applying the paper covering. The covering comprised two layers of paper, one on each side of the netting. The paper is a lightweight grey/brown Mulberry paper⁵³. The paper was prepared by coating it with a purple persimmon (kaki) fruit "juice". The persimmon fruit is rich in tannic acids that act as a colouring agent and make the paper stiff, tear resistant, leatherlike and waterproof, and acts as a repellent to insects. The pectin acts as a gluing



Figure 58 Mr Chung's "lemon" leaf kite frame



Figure 59 Applying the skin

⁵³ Mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) paper. This is made from the inner part of the bark of mulberry trees. The bark is steamed away from the tree trunk. The brown outer part is removed and the remaining *white inner part* is washed in cold water and freed from any residual brown bark pieces in order that the paper should be as white as possible. It is then boiled with potash to separate the fibres and becomes a pulp. Then it is heated for specified (but not known) time. Finally the fibres are removed and screened to become the paper sheet.

agent. Repairs to damaged kite skins can be made using this “juice” and paper patches. The juice is made from small, inedible wild fruits, crushed whole, including the calyx and seeds. The juice has to undergo some sort of fermentation process over a period of several months and is then “ripened” for three months in order to get the desired properties before use. In Vietnam the process also involves iron tools being put into the juice for some time and probably accounts for the black tannic acid staining of the tools that we bought in Hanoi. When ready for use, the juice is diluted with water and painted on paper or cloth where it also acts as an insect and moisture repellent⁵⁴. It was not clear whether dipping the tools in the juice was a tool finishing process to stop the tools from rusting or whether it is to improve the performance and colour of the juice; or both.

The paper “juice” is the same as that used for making paper fans; these are also made in An Binh. The juice was poured on a flat aluminium plate and the paper was pulled through the juice, thus being semi-soaked, and afterwards carefully attached to the netting; one sheet of paper from upper side and the other from below. The sheets of paper were first carefully soaked in the juice by means of a brush. In the case of Kite 1.1B the sheet was first attached at the front spar and the spine. This is a time consuming process as the paper can easily tear when wet. We were shown how the upper and lower skins were applied. The juice acts a natural dope as it provides a gluing and a tautening action. It is also used when repairs have to be made to the kite skins. It is likely that several coats of “juice” are applied in order to achieve the final finish.



Figure 60 Attaching the flute assembly

In the case of Kite 1.1A the finished paper skin had the appearance of thin animal skin; it was slightly shiny and flexible. The kite group logo was made on the front face using plastic stencil lettering.

Kite 1.1A was equipped with a stack of three kite flutes. The mounting stick attached to a slot in the kite spine. The attachment stick itself was rectangular in section; running to the start of the flute stack. Then the stick was cut back, again to a rectangular section which then tapered to the tip. The flute stack was slotted onto the attachment stick and string loops ran from the large lower flute to the outboard bridle attachments on the front spar. Lines also run from the aft spar to the top of the flute attachment stick and then down to the front central spine/spar crossing.

⁵⁴ The fruit “juice” is made from a species of wild astringent persimmon (*kaki*) *cây (=tree) Chi Thị or cây hồng*” fruit (*diospyros kaki spp.*). *shizi* (柿子 in Chinese).

Wild Persimmons are considered the best for this purpose. Persimmon juice dye was used on a daily basis in former times. It was frequently used on paper to make it water proof, insect proof, to strengthen it and to dye it. The juice was also used to treat fishing nets as well as used for staining patterns on furniture and fabrics. The persimmon juice is also used in Japan and China for treating paper used for fans and lanterns. Uli also notes that the Date-plum (*Diospyros lotus*) is native to southwest Asia and southeast Europe. It was known to the ancient Greeks as “the fruit of the gods”, or often referred to as “nature’s candy” i.e. *Diospyros* (lit. “the wheat of Zeus”), hence the scientific name of the genus. Its English name probably derives from Persian *Khormaloo* *خرمالو* literally “Date-Plum”, referring to the taste of this fruit which is reminiscent of both plums and dates. This species is one candidate for the lotus mentioned in the *Odyssey*: it was so delicious that those who ate it forgot about returning home and wanted to stay and eat lotus with the lotus-eaters.[

About three kg of fruit gives 1kg of juice.

Processing can be seen in this example:
<http://elephantbooty.blogspot.com/2009/09/juicing-persimmons-for-kakishibui.html>
 There is also a Vietnamese article on kaki article at:
http://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%E1%BB%93ng_%28qu%E1%BA%A3%29

The following also discusses the black colour of the tools sourced in Vietnam:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_gall_ink
<http://store.hiromipaper.com/kakishibupersimmonjuice.aspx>
 and
<http://www.hiromipaper.com/newsletter/LoriGoodman.htm>

Type 1.2 The mango leaf kite.

This is a higher aspect ratio version of the lemon leaf kite. The kite skin is tighter and it is more difficult to make, but when made well it will fly in higher winds. The sound of the *sao* flute on this kite is stronger when the winds are stronger. We did not see any kites of this sort; or if we did, the differences between this and the common lemon leaf kite were not made clear. We did, however, see a mango leaf wing on one of the type 2C kites at the Mason des Arts.

Group 2

These are kites with circular tails

Type 2a. This is typical of the kites from Song Vân (Village 1). The wing spars were conventionally made, although seemingly lightweight. The spine was a light square section split bamboo stick that ran from the front wing spar (there was no noticeable overhang) and terminated about a wing chord aft of the rear spar. The tail structure comprises finely cut split bamboo longerons starting at the nose of the kite and widening laterally slightly at the rear spar, then forming loops that join at the central stick; The tail has a flexible split bamboo cross spar that acts as a spreader rather than resisting dihedral bending. The tails are flexible and fold upwards in flight so behave partly as fins and partly as horizontal stabilisers. In the case of the Song Vân Type 2a kite, the kite was very lightly made and meandered about the sky. This meandering motion would cause the sound of the flute to fluctuate.



Figure 61 Song Vân Type 2a kite

Several Type 2a kites were seen at Song Vân (Village 1) on Friday 15th April. One was hanging in house inside doorway while another was flown by Mr Ngô Văn Bội's son and yet another similar one was seen flown by another household. They were all Type 2a kites and all kites were flown with a single flute.

The kite was about 2 metres in wingspan and comprised a large traditional lemon leaf wing together with twin tails. The complete kite was very flexible with the tails rising to act also as fins in flight. The structure was split bamboos; mostly light weight and flexible. The wing covering was what seemed like lightweight sateen of silver grey colour. The fabric was translucent. This lightweight fabric was supported by loose string netting on the upper surface to take the wind loads and to minimise the sail distortion. A string joined the wing-tip – central spine – wing-tip.

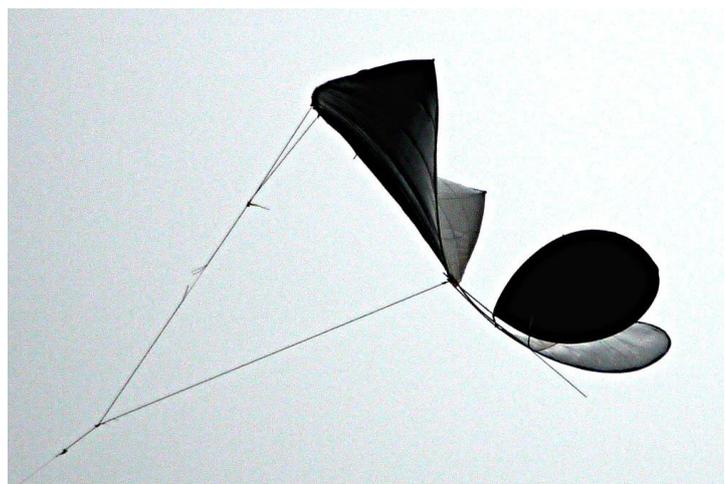


Figure 62 Song Vân Type 2a kite in flight

The tails were stretched over two bamboo outlining sticks that were lashed together where they joined

at the tail leading edge and were also tied to the spine. Another bamboo was used as a spreader.

The spine stick contains a hole at one third chord from the front spar which is used to locate the flute support stick. The flute is fitted to this stick and is adjusted so that it locates above the one fifth chord point. Supporting side bridles are attached to the outer ends of the flute and run to the outside front flying bridle lines.

The flying bridle used was a three leg system where the front bridles were connected to a rear line that was tied at the end of the spine stick. The flying bridle (*lèo*) is quite long and will act to assist lateral stability. The bridling therefore comprises two pieces of cord. The front part of the bridle is a relatively short cord attached to the front spar a little way on either side of the spine. In the case of the kite that we saw, this was approximately in line with the caps of the large red flute. When attached, and the middle of the line is pulled aft, the centre reaches to about the middle of the wing chord. A much longer cord is attached to the centre of this leading bridle which is then tied to the rear wing spar/spine junction. The length of this cord appears to be about two wingspans. The cord used is invariably larger diameter than the flying line. The bridling can be adjusted by altering the lateral position of the forward bridling junction and, of course, the flying tether point. The tether point is located about one third back from the wing leading edge.



Figure 63 Type 2a kite in the paddy fields at Song Vân village



Figure 64 Type 2a kite climbing



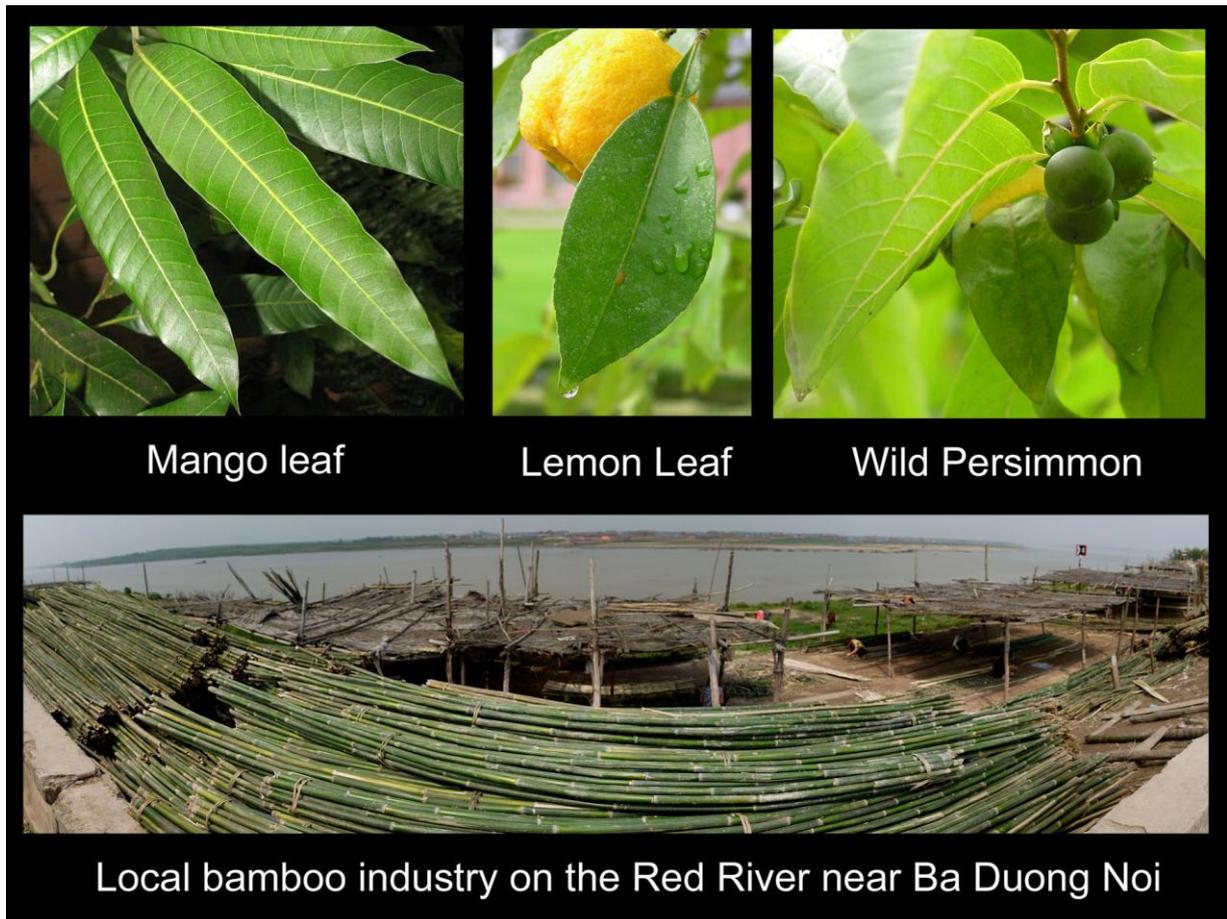
Figure 65 Type 2a kite; swaying and being pulled up

Type 2b. This kite is similar to the Group 2a kite but the longerons that form the tail structure are further apart. These kites were seen at the *Maison des Arts* gallery.

Type 2c. This kite is similar to the Group 2b kite except that there is a “skirt” between the tail longerons. This type of kite was described in La Nature and can be found in Lecornu’s “Les Cerfs Volants” of 1902/10. Mr Quan Hang Cao told us that this is called the “Prince Kite”, but it is also known as the “Penis Kite” since the shape of the kite looks like a man’s penis and a woman’s vagina!! Another name is the “Testicle Kite”. Kite of this type were seen at the *Maison des Arts* gallery. Some of them had “lemon leaf” style wings and one had a more parallel centre section, i.e. a “mango leaf” type wing. We later found that kites of this type are to be found at the Kiến Thụy district of Hải Phòng where the kites are flown with multiple flute assemblies (see Figure 72).



Figure 66 Type 2c mango leaf kite at the *Maison des Arts*



Mango leaf

Lemon Leaf

Wild Persimmon

Local bamboo industry on the Red River near Ba Duong Noi

Figure 67 Leaves, Bamboo and Wild Persimmon

Group 3 Winged creatures.

Type 3a. This kite is the “Fairy” or “Angel” kite that was seen in Bá Dương Nội at Mr Nguyễn Hữu Kiêm’s house. The main wings are approximately figure of eight shaped. The body has a rounded head and a delta shaped tail. The bamboo construction is quite complex as can be seen in the detail photograph that shows the head/body.



Figure 68 Mr Nguyễn Hữu Kiêm’s Fairy kite



Figure 69 Detail of the Fairy kite

It was only after returning from Vietnam that the Fairy kite was identified in an illustration from an article titled “Chinese Kites” in *Scientific American* for March 1888. It is clearly the right hand kite in the illustration, which has its origins in an earlier article by Gaston Tissandier in *La Nature*. The description is as follows “...gives us the aspect of a bird kite, the frame of which is represented in the right of the figure. The thin paper attached to the wings moves under the direction of the wind and simulates the flapping of the wings. This kite is sometimes three feet in length.” Mr Nguyễn Hữu Kiêm’s Fairy kite is similar to the right hand kite, but does not have the birds head or the fluttering paper wing embellishments that could be attached to the wing central ridge..

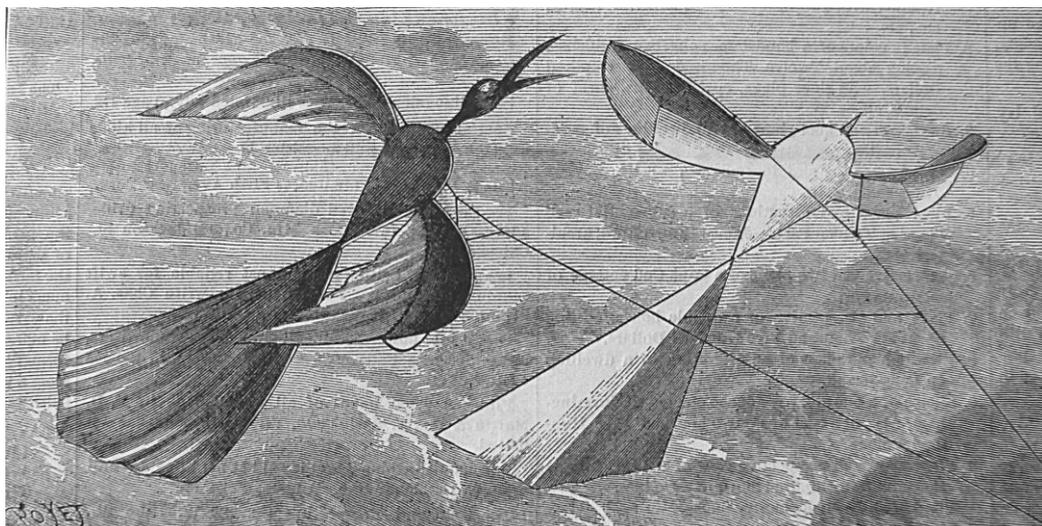


Figure 70 “Bird kite and frame used in making it”. *Scientific American*, March 24th 1888

Type 3b. This is the “Bee” kite and is similar to the “Angel” kite except that it has additional rear wings and that the tails are spread further apart. Internet Youtube videos exist that shows a Bee kite in flight. This one had a single medium sized flute.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuqrYQoz9nY&NR=1> Thái Bình - Sáo Đền (Phim tài liệu 4/4)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnjl2t73gaw> Thái Bình - Sáo Đền (Phim tài liệu 2/4)

These films were made by nguyenthanhtuan81.

Type 3c. This refers to another “Bee” kite but this time it has the usual figure eight wings, a rounded head and an extended oblate rear body. This kite is typically made from bamboo and silk and is made in Kinh Môn Province. We did not see any of these.



Figure 71 Bee and other unusual kites

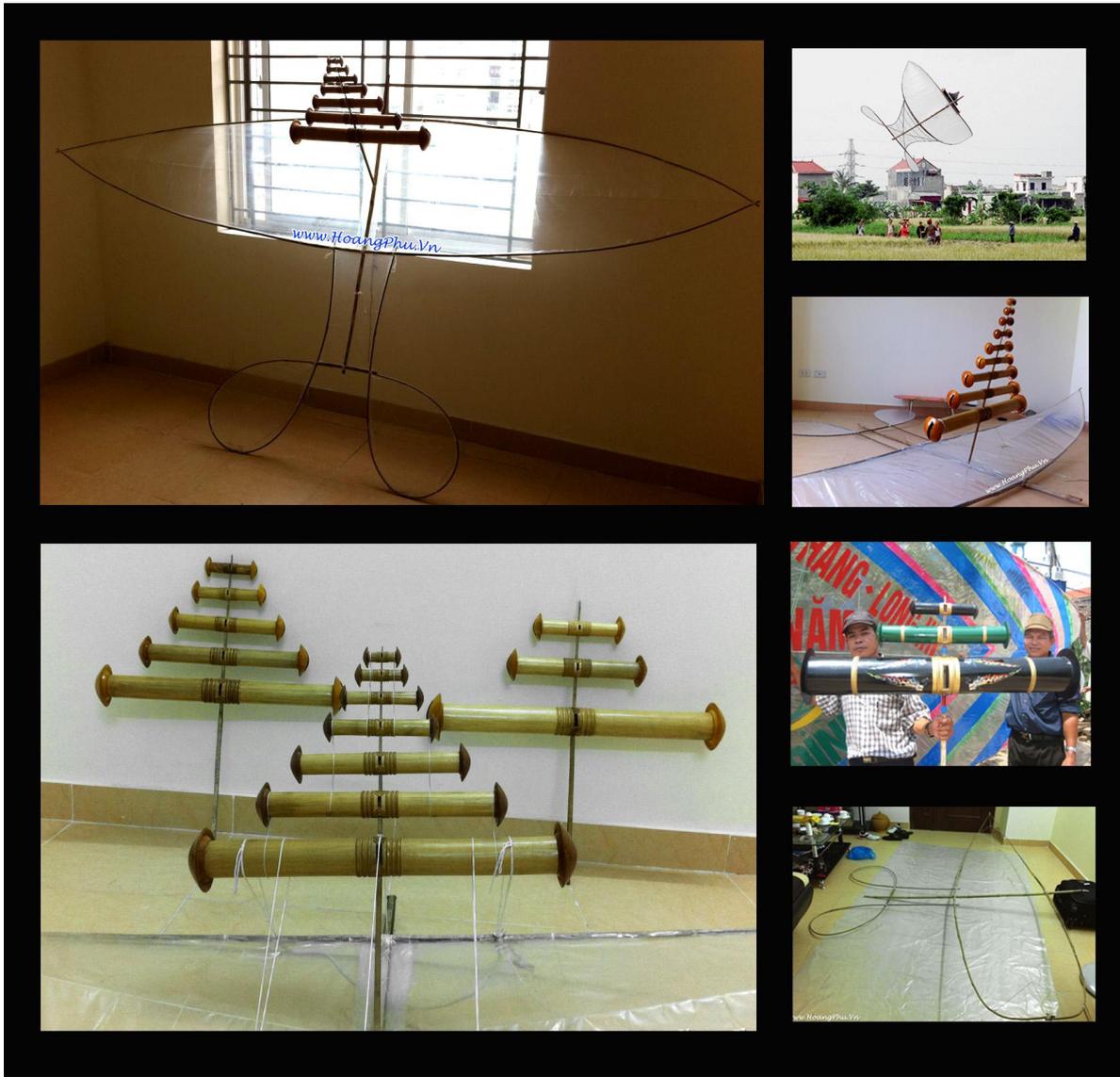
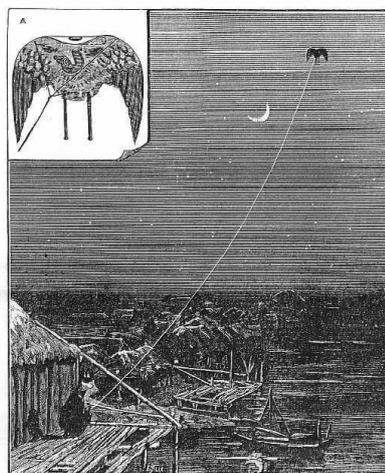


Figure 72 Flutes and flute kites from the Hải Phòng area. Note that 3, 5, 7 and 9 flute assemblies are made. Note also the high aspect ratio of the three flute assembly which indicates that this is a low wind flute. Credit www.HoangPhu.vn

Other kites:

There is a version of the Lemon kite where the central stick extends rearwards and carries a circular section tail...the flat facing upwards towards the wing. This is a modified version of Group 2. This kite is from Thái Bình Province.

Tissandier described a musical bird kite in *La Nature* in 1890⁵⁵. The kite was based on the wading birds that frequent the paddy fields and the kite is illustrated with a bamboo tube flute, although in this case the flute is described as having a single central mouth⁵⁶. These single mouthed flutes are known to have existed and, in some ways, are similar to the inner flutes of the “Friendship Flute” by Mr Nguyễn Hữu Kiêm. It is also interesting that Mr ĐỘ at Bá Dương Nội had long-necked bird kites with hanging legs in his house, although these were not investigated further to see if there were other similarities to the kites from Tissandier.



Le cerf-volant à musique au Tonking.

Figure 73 Illustration from “*La Nature*” by Tissandier



Figure 74 Mr ĐỘ's bird kites

Ngô Quý Sơn, in his 1944 paper “*Activités de la société enfantine annamite du Tonkin*” makes reference to the following types of kites:

Kites with no tail

- Dieu Vang – the traditional “simple” leaf kite equipped with three flutes. “It may be made up to 3 metres wingspan and 1 metre wide. Such a kite can be lifted and flown very high, only thanks to the strength of very strong young men”.
- Dieu Canh Coc – the moor hen’s wing kite. This is not dissimilar to the “fairy” kite seen at Mr Nguyễn Hữu Kiêm’s house. It “is made of two series of bamboo rods that intersect at the middle. The horizontal series has the shape of an 8. The vertical one consists of an oval at its superior part, and a square at its base.”
- Dieu Con Ca – the fish kite. This is a flat kite comprising two fish side by side and has a tail. It is a “Chinese” kite referred to as a “kite in the shape of a plank”. “One glues paper on both fish and ornaments them with drawings so as to give the toy the shape of two interlocked fish”.

⁵⁵ roughly translated as “.....Today, we will describe the kite, which is one of the preferred games of the young Vietnamese and which, while differing notably from ours by its form, still presents itself as a new attraction, that to be a musician.This one appears as a flying bird with spread wings and hanging legs, such as a snipe or an egret, birds of the family of the waders which abound on the rice plantations and which were certainly used as a model by the Vietnamese when making their toy. The spread wings of the bird offer the wind resistance necessary to maintain the kite in the air; the hanging legs, formed of paper bands cut out and weighted at their end, are used to maintain the bird in a favourable position and fulfil the same goal as the tail of the kite here. It is not only the original shape of this toy which makes the principal attraction, indeed, it is designed to recreate the same sight and sound. A piece of bamboo is placed horizontally above the tilted head of the bird. This is closed at its two ends by its natural nodes and [“*pecé*”] pierced in the middle with an oval longitudinal hole. It is easily understood that this apparatus constitutes a kind of flute and that it reproduces the low notes of this instrument when the air enters the hole and vibrates the air locked up in the tube. It will be also understood that because of dimensions of the bamboo and the central hole, whose diameter is 5 to 6 centimetres, the sound is stronger than that of an ordinary flute.

The Vietnamese really like this form of recreation. The enthusiasts seldom have enough wind during the day and are forced to spend their nights squatting under the beautiful stars, holding the kite string in their hands, and singing one their monotonous chants which the flying flute always accompanies by the same note.

One cannot have an idea of the surprise experienced by the Europeans who, on arrival in Tonkin, and, hearing this for the first time and seeing nothing except the monotonous and continuous sound of this musical kite, especially if two or three of these are flown away from the houses such that the noise mingles with the dreadful love songs from the frog-ox.

While nature has deprived to us of the frog-ox, it is only for us now to recreate the musical kite. Our young people may as well replace Vietnamese bamboo by metal tubes. The sound will improve in clarity; moreover, they will be able to make other sounds by varying the tube dimensions, and, by selectively joining together different tubes, better sounds.”

⁵⁶ N.N. *Le Cerf-Volant A Musique Au Tonking*, in: “*La Nature*”, Fevrier 1890; pp.179-180

- d) Dieu Con Buom – the butterfly kite. This is a soft wing kite similar to the Chinese butterfly kite.
- e) Dieu Con Qua – the crow kite. This is a soft wing kite in the shape of a crow that may be similar to the Chinese bird kites. The three leg bridling indicates that it is a steady flier rather than a circling kite.
- f) Dieu Chu Thap/Nhat – Character “Thap” kite. “This is the most simple kind of kite, flown by children under ten years old. Its frame consists of two pieces of bamboo tied into a cross. The vertical piece of bamboo is a little longer than the horizontal one”. Two kites are illustrated. One is a simple rectangle with a three leg bridle while the other is a Malay/ Indian “fighting kite”. The fighting kite is not such a simple kite to make or fly.
- g) Dieu Cai Goi – The pillow kite. This is identical to the European box kite in its simplest form and flown from a single bridle point at the front end of the leading box. It is flown in the villages of Nam Dinh.

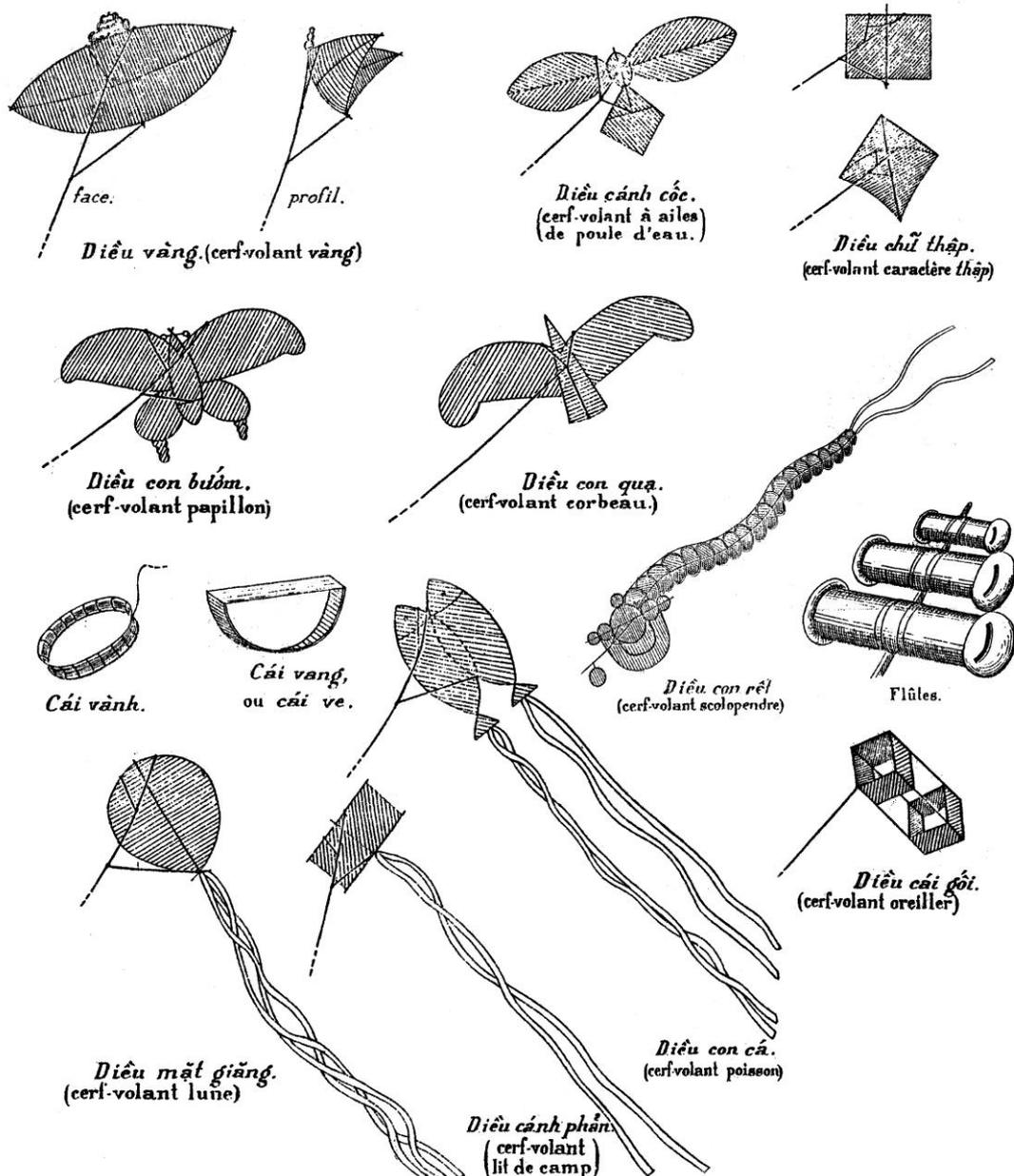


Figure 75 Vietnamese kites, flutes and kite spools (cái vành) according to Ngô Quý Sơn

Tailed kites

- a) Dieu Canh Phan – the plank-bed kite. This is essentially the same kite as the Dieu Chu Thap kite with paper tails.
- b) Dieu Mat Trang – the Moon kite. This has a round outline formed by a bamboo circle. It has a three leg bridle and is flown with a tail. It is not dissimilar to known Chinese kites although there are similarities to some Polynesian fishing kites that can be made from a single leaf.
- c) Dieu Con Rit – the Scolopendrium kite. “This kite is simply gigantic and one finds it flown in the vicinity of Nam Dinh, on the shore of the Vi Hoang river. Some people believe that it’s a Chinese invention, and it’s so called because once lifted in the air it looks like a giant scolopendrium. On a segment of bamboo of one metre long, one attaches five bamboo circles of different dimensions. The biggest circle at the middle of the animal’s nose. Two smaller circles on both sides of the animal’s nose constitute the eyes of the scolopendrium. Two other smallest circles, placed outside of the two eyes, are the ears of the scolopendrium. Under the nose, one attaches a bamboo arc to figure the scolopendrium’s superior lip, and under the eyes, one fixes another bigger arc to represent it’s inferior lip. Behind the scolopendrium’s nose are a series of other circles which the number varies between fifty to sixty of them, on a length that reaches, at times, fifty metres. These circles have the same form with the nose, and are bound together by three strings. To the last circle, one attaches two strips made of paper or light silk, constituting the antennae of the animal’s tail. All rounded surfaces are recovered with thick paper, coated with persimmon glue, or with raw silk. As a special feature, this type of kite differs notably from all other types of kites described above, not only because it’s much bigger and much more complicated, but also because of its handling and making; finally, because of its tail, as, in fact, once flown in the air, this tail, instead of descending, is flying high toward the sky, much higher than its head”.

3 Kite materials

Mr Ngô Quý Sơn tells us that Vietnamese flute kites are generally made from bamboo and paper. They are homemade by the kitefliers and are not the subject of trade. He says that “the bamboo for the kite frame is pre-split and stored in the shadow to become dry”. Before use, the bamboo is often submerged with heavy stones in flowing water for 10-20 days in order to leach out sugar and starch, which is a favourite food for the bamboo damaging insects.

The wing framework and central spine is split bamboo. The flexible tail structure of the Group 2 kites is also bamboo. Split bamboo is used for the fine detail framework on the Group 3 kites.

A suitable bamboo has to be found to make the kite bones. In order to be as light and strong as possible, the bamboo culm has to be old. The ageing makes the bamboo strong. According to other references the bones are made from old bamboo that has been naturally dried in the forest. This bamboo is sometimes difficult to find in the kite makers home village, so the amateurs sometimes have to travel a long way in order to find the right bamboo (Lạng Sơn province). Around 1940, this search could last up to several weeks!

The wing coverings are primarily paper⁵⁷ and either comprise a single skin with strips of paper covering the stringing to make a sandwich, or is made of a covering comprising two layers of paper, one on each side of the netting. The paper was Mulberry or Do paper and was generally lightweight and grey/brown in colour. In some cases the kite paper is painted/smeared with a purple ‘fruit juice’ called *cây* that acts as glue and provides a tough “dope”-like waterproof finish. It results in a very fine and flexible wing covering that could be likened to a thin animal skin.

Some of the modern artistic kites at the *Maison des Arts* gallery were covered in transparent polythene sheeting.

⁵⁷ According to Mr Quan Hang Cao paper is “do”, also see:
http://www.amasixasiagroup.com/shop/index.php?main_page=page_3

The tree “*Rhamnoneuron balansae*” is “giấy do” in Vietnamese and has a lifespan of up to 500 years. According to Mr Ngô Quý Sơn the paper used is “giấy-bán” where giấy is paper in Vietnamese. The kite paper is made of “giấy dâu tằm”, i.e. mulberry paper (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) which is grown in Phú-Thò province located about 40km north of Hanoi (see also our notes on the papermaking villages around Hanoi).

Kites from Song Vân (village 1) were covered with a form of lightweight grey/silver rayon fabric.

Bindings and wing stringing were common cord. Various thicknesses are used according to the need. The bindings were not sealed with glue. The kite bridling (*lèo*; *trans. small line*) is generally cord that is heavier than the main flying line. In some cases a form of tape was used, the reason for using this is not known.

5 Spools, winders and flying lines

At Bá Dương Nội the most common form of flying line was a twisted hemp type line of about 1.5mm diameter wound on a simple flat wooden winder. This line resembled that which would be used for making fishing nets. In some cases a nylon monofilament line is used and others were of twisted silk and synthetic cord. From observation of these winders it seems that several hundreds of metres of line could be used.

Ngô Quý Đức, in an email, provided a description written earlier by Ngô Quý Sơn regarding flying line: "In former times the holding line was made of a special sort of bamboo called "*giang*"⁵⁸. This bamboo is now also widely used for basketry. Today monofilament fishing nylon and twisted silk/synthetic line is most often used as a substitute. Hemp and cotton are used rarely, particularly because of its poor reliability in tropical humidity.

An Internet Youtube video made by nguyenthanhtuan81 and titled "Thái Bình - Sáo Đền (Phim tài liệu 2/4)" shows bamboo line being prepared. It also the Bee kite in flight.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnjl2t73gaw>

Mr Ngô Quý Sơn estimates that it takes about 10 days to make a good kite frame, make a length of traditional line and to apply the kite skin persimmon fruit/kaki sap ("*cây*") treatment.

Although no longer made, Mr Ngô Quý Sơn tells us that the traditional "holding line" bamboo is made by carefully splitting bamboo lengthwise along its grain until splits the size of chopsticks are obtained. These are made even and smooth and the splits are combined with "*giang*" bamboo fibres. The "line" is then put in a big copper vessel, water is added and the mixture is then heated, possibly with slacked lime or potash ("Chinese medicine"), for a whole day. When the mass has cooled down, the resulting line is rolled on a "*cái vành*", a bamboo-spool of about 50cm diameter.

The accompanying photograph⁵⁹ by Robert Whitehurst shows Mr. Nguyễn Hữu Kiên with such a spool, although this one is empty. It looks similar to, and may be the same as the one carried by Mr Phạm Van Mai in Figure 30.



Figure 76 Kite line and winders at Bá Dương Nội



Figure 77 Mr. Nguyễn Hữu Kiên with the bamboo spool

⁵⁸ Latin name *dendrocalamus patellaris*, see Hô Pham-hoang, 1993, *An Illustrated Flora of Vietnam*, Edition III, N° 2, Smilacaceae, Cyperaceae, Orchidaceae & Poaceae, Montreal.

⁵⁹ <http://www.windmusik.com/pictures/caireel.jpg>

6 Launching

Flying a Vietnamese flute kite is invariably a team process because a long launch is necessary. This is partly because high aspect ratio kites are notoriously unstable on short lines, and because a rapid launch is necessary to create a strong stabilising dihedral during the climb. Once airborne, the kiteflyer is able to manage the meandering motion of the kite by adjusting line tension through letting out or reeling in line.

The kite team generally comprises the kiteflyer and the reel handler who holds the kite reel, one or two launch assistants who steady the kite and several line keepers who make sure that the flying line does not snag on other lines, people, trees, buffalo etc. The line keepers also act as relays for launching instructions.

About 100 metres of line are laid out for the long launch. On the instruction to launch the launch assistant will toss the kite firmly upwards into the wind while the kiteflyer rapidly pulls in line. If successful the kite will rise steadily to the point where the flier will feel it safe to let out line and raise the kite higher to its operating height of at least 100 metres where the wind would be stronger and steadier.

Not all launches are successful. Sometimes the kite will swoop to one side. If it does this a competent flier will let out a little line, slow the swoop, right the kite and pull the line in to maintain the climb. On some occasions the kite would climb to a moderate height but there would not be enough wind and the kite might tip sideways or start to tumble. It proved almost impossible to correct a tumbling kite and these invariably crashed. Other problems occurred during tangles when lines crossed.

7 Flying characteristics

The Vietnamese flute kite requires at least a moderate wind to fly successfully and particularly to allow the flutes to sound strongly. The minimum wind speed to make the flutes sound well is about 20 kph (5.5 m/s) for the low-wind Song Vân kite flutes; the kite itself needs an estimated wind speed of 15 kph (4 m/s) to fly, but at this speed the flutes will not make any sound. The launch is the most difficult part of the flight since the winds are slower at low level and there are the problems of tangles and maintaining line tension. Once properly airborne, the kites fly at a high angle and tend to meander around the sky. This meandering motion leads to the soulful sounds from the flutes as the sound varies in intensity as the flute angle to the wind changes. The sound of the flutes seems to be strongest during the launch, even in low winds, when the kite is rising rapidly and when the relative wind speed is at its highest.

We saw that some kites exhibiting excessive dihedral when climbing during the launch. This was because the wing spar bamboo sticks were too weak. When this happened the flute suspension strings became loose and the flute lost alignment to the wind. This movement could affect the kite's equilibrium. The better kites would have their wing bamboos cut so that they would be quite stiff inboard and would become more flexible towards the wing tips. In this case the stiffer inner wing structure is less likely to distort and relax the flute rigging lines.

We only saw Type 2a kites flying at Village 1. These kites have the circular tails. These tail surfaces are very flexible and were seen to be continuously moving in flight. At low speeds they would be flat and rise as the speed increased. Their function seemed to be to increase lateral stability at higher wind speeds⁶⁰.



Figure 78 Not all kites flew well. This one crashed into the village pond

⁶⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5vOaYnEACI>

8 The bird kite with a single mouth flute - an anomaly.

After returning from Vietnam, Paul found an original copy of the article "*Le Cerf-Volant A Musique Au Tonking*" that included the steel engraving. Whereas we had initially thought that the "flute" was somehow suspended by a wire, it became quite clear that we were mistaken. What we had thought was the flute was, in fact, the central open mouth of a very large flute. We are not sure if such flutes exist in Vietnam today, although these single tone Aeolian flutes do appear in Kalimantan in Indonesia where they are flown in pairs, i.e. attached separately on the inner wing, on large bird kites. In 1886 Albert Challan de Belval wrote in his "*Au Tonkin*"⁶¹; "Bamboos are frequently found placed deliberately around the villages. Quite broad holes are cut into these bamboos which turn them into real organ pipes which resonate sadly under the action of the wind. These sounds act to dispel any bad spirits which might threaten the village. These same bamboos, when they are fixed to kites, sometimes fill the air with shrill sounds that reminds us of our steam engines.....". It may be that these open-mouthed bamboo "organs" are the same as the flute in the engraving.

The inner flutes of the Friendship Flute made by Mr Nguyễn Hữu Kiêm are very similar to the Kalimantan flute but we know that he was influenced by previous sight of the Kalimantan flute on Uli's website "Windmusik". The steel engraving is clearly diagrammatic and does not show how this single mouthed flute is mounted on the kite. While we can speculate on possibilities, this aspect remains a dilemma for further investigation.



The large single mouth flute from "*Le Cerf-Volant A Musique Au Tonking*" and the single mouth flute from Kalimantan

Figure 79 The bird kite with a single mouth flute

It was only after we had returned from Vietnam that contact was made with a group that fly the kites with very large single mouthed flutes. These are flown in Indonesia in the region of Kalimantan⁶². Individual flutes are made but they are mounted in pairs. In one case, see Figure 80, two pairs of flutes are mounted on one kite. The binding on the flutes gives a reference that enables them to be strapped to "rails" located at the leading edge of the kite wings. It is speculated that the single mouthed Vietnamese flute would have been mounted in a similar manner.

⁶¹ « ...Fréquemment, autour des villages, sont disposés des bambous, percés d'orifices plus ou moins larges, constituant ainsi de véritables tuyaux d'orgue qui vibrent tristement sous l'action du vent. C'est ainsi que l'on éloigne les mauvais esprits qui menacent le village. Ces mêmes bambous, fixés à des cerfs-volants, remplissent parfois l'air de sons aigus qui rappellent nos machines à vapeur. ... »

See also <http://www.windmusik.com/html/bamborgl.htm>

⁶² These are the Badandang giant kites flown in the Tapin district of Kalimantan, Indonesia, possibly in the village of Bitahan Lokpaikat.

Wind-Spiration or a Long Story ;-)- Bob Cruickshanks

Many years ago I promised myself that I would attend the Cervia kite festival organised by Claudio and Caterina Capelli. As the years and birthdays ticked by we set a marker of our 60th birthday, which was also going to be the intended retirement year for Carole and me. That said, we threw in the towel a year earlier but that's another story! The plan was to take our camper but firstly, on enroute, we called into Bercke sur Mer (BsM) for their annual kite festival and one that never fails to amaze both in content/attendees and weather.

Having mentioned BsM I suppose I should also declare that whilst there my kites were not the only thing to fly or be lofted – so to speak. Anyone that has been to BsM will not have missed the line of **Saconney** (not Cody) kites assembled on the beach generally by the wind garden displays. Please note there is a difference between Cody and Saconney kites and any French flier (cerfvoliste/cervoliste) or certainly members of the Club Cervoliste Trains Volants will not appreciate you referring to their kites as a **Cody**.

Anyway where was I, oh yes, the other thing to fly; well having attended several French festivals I have met and befriended many string-fellows. Trading in 3D laser etched Cody crystal also helped, somewhat!

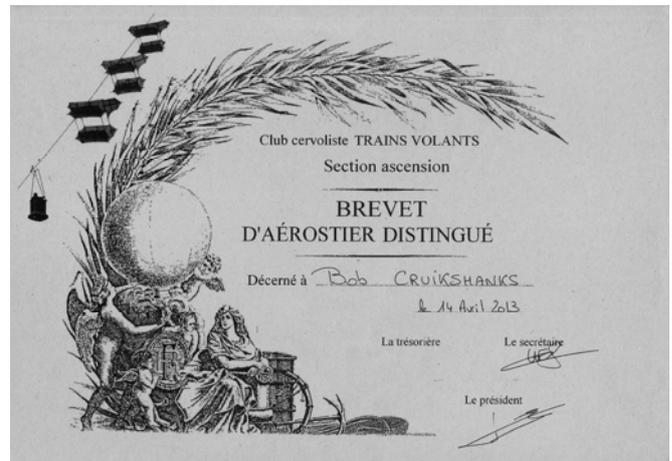
The **Saconney** kites belong to Club Cervoliste Trains Volants who each year at BsM wait for the wind to present an opportunity to display their train of **Saconney** kites and, very occasionally when the wind allows a demonstration of man-lifting – sorry ladies – person-lifting. The first weekend, Sunday 14th April 2013 to be precise, provided ideal conditions at BsM and I have to say that it was the first time that I have seen the train flying so steady and for such a long period of time. Whilst taking pictures and speaking with the **Saconney** guys I was



asked by Mme Claes (Sylvia?) if I would like to be 'lofted'. Not one to do anything out of the ordinary, honest, I leapt at the chance; what could go wrong!

So there I was, strapped into the harness, double linked (karabiners) to an attachment on the flying line. Having adjusted my 'dress' (suit-makers speak), not that it

made much difference to my high-pitched voice when 'lofted', the signal was given to Daniel Guignet, the driving force behind Club Cervoliste Trains Volants, on the winch to start letting out the line. The way that you are raised/lowered is not via a pulley system but by winding out/in the whole train. I started to walk (as much as the harness allowed) until my toes left contact with mother earth and after a few minutes I was aloft. "Do you want to go higher" I was asked, "Crack on" I heard myself saying. I have to say that I wish I had taken my camera up instead of giving it to Malcolm Goodman because the view across the beach and festival site was fantastic – KAP snappers eat your heart out! It felt like I was quite high but no doubt it was only about 50 foot or so. After several poses for my fans and the paparazzi I was brought back to terra-firma. Later in the day Sylvia and Daniel presented me with a certificate to mark the occasion; I believe from conversation that I was the first flier/person from the UK (stupid enough some would say) to be man-lifted. That said, there was a queue of 'stupid' people wanting to be next!!



Excitement over for another BsM kite festival we hit the road for Italy or Cervia to be precise. Three days and a few stops and sights enroute we found ourselves in Cervia at Camping Adriatico, a good camp site within walking distance of the beach and festival. Aside from lofting you again with many words and stories of how good the festival was I will get to the gist of this diatribe.

Whilst at the Cervia I met **Ton Vinken**, a kite-flier from the Netherlands who I have know for some years, and was amazed at 2 of his ground displays. One was 1,000 plus mini windsocks that he had made that each stood about 12" (inches) off the ground and each day **Ton** re-arranged into different configurations. Yes, I took some pictures, which I down-loaded onto my laptop throughout my travels but owing to my laptop having a dickey

Wind-Spiration or a Long Story ;-)- Bob Cruickshanks

-fit towards the end of our 5-week round trip I lost the lot – not a happy string-fella.



Another display that **Ton** had was several clumps of grass, plastic swaying grass to be specific. Speaking with **Ton** I was instructed in the construction of the holders and before leaving Cervia I was given a couple of holders to use as a template, which given the failure of the photographing records was a saving grace. **Ton** is a great person/creator of ideas and is always happy for people to copy and/or modify his creations. Talking with **Ton** is an inspiration to many and no doubt I am not the first to be motivated by him.

Duly inspired I decided to re-create some plastic grass of my own. Whilst at the Oostende kite festival Carole found a cheap 99 cent (Euro) store selling packs of extra long straws, which coupled with a roll of galvanised garden wire, albeit not quite the gauge used by **Ton**, some off-cuts of wood, suitable kebab sticks, nylon washers and rubber tubing I started construction. After making ten I did wonder why I had been so inspired but thought of the motivation talk from **Ton**. A week later with 130 completed I decided on a test outing at the August Jolly Up. Comments were favourable but given the number used by **Ton** I need at least double the number. Driven by the words "I've started so I'll finish" I set about making another 180 holders. However, sourcing more straws was another story but suffice to say it was either circa £5 for packs of 40 in the UK or over the channel for 99 cent packs of 50. Luckily **Jan van Leeuwen** was coming to Portsmouth IKF and he found some packs the day before he left Holland, close call phew!

For info, the holders are just galvanised wire cut and bent to shape. The upright supports are kebab sticks, which are inserted into pieces of wood that act as a counter-balance for the extra long (70cm) plastic drinking straws.

Courtesy of Gill & Jon Bloom, Portsmouth IKF organisers, I had a small corner of one of the arenas in which to set up the first formal UK display. An hour or so later plus some straw placing assistance from my female straw groupies (names withheld to protect me), the display was completed much to the relief of my back. Comments were very favourable and judging from the many pictures being snapped it hopefully appealed to people. Given some of the questions "what is it", "what is it supposed to do", "does it fly" and "what does it have to do with kites" some obviously struggled to grasp the display for what it is/was. One lady said "she couldn't work out what it was but found it very relaxing watching it", there you go I replied.

Repeated at Bristol IKF, thank you Avril Baker, comments were similar but again the interest was worth the boring manufacture and back-aching laying out.

I call it **Wind-Spiration** because it is wind powered/affected and inspired by **Ton Vinken**, although **Ton** says that he only provided the motivation. Either way you can call it whatever inspires you.

One thing for sure and in answer to one regular question from string-pullers near and far; No, it does not mean that I have given up kite flying as demonstrated in the Sunday Altitude Sprint at Portsmouth IKF 2013 where I duly triumphant – ever the gracious winner 😊😊

One plea if I may, if anyone was at Berck sur Mer in 2013 and has any pictures of yours truly being hung out to dry under the **Saconney** train I would appreciate a copy – thank you in advance.



Stephen Robinson and the Facet Kite—George Webster & John Dobson

In August 2013 J.D. received an email from Stephen Robinson (S.R.) who, having read our history of kites on our website (www.johndobson.info), asked whether his name could be “pulled out of obscurity” as the inventor of the Facet kite. If we take the key feature of his Facet kite to be the exoskeletal structure, *i.e.* the shape is given by the rods around the perimeter under compression and fabric points under tension, then this was indeed a breakthrough which led to a range of complex cellular kites developed since the 1980’s.

Clearly by his own account in a letter to us, S.R. was fundamentally influenced by the architect/designer Buckminster Fuller’s concept of *tensegrity* (short for ‘tensional integrity’). This is defined in Wikipedia as “a structural principle based on the use of isolated components in compression inside a net of continuous tension, in such a way that the compressed members (*exoskeletal rods in the case of kites*) do not touch each other and the tensioned members (*fabric in the case of kites*) delineate the system spatially”. To our knowledge one of the earliest examples was the Wellington bomber of World War 2 and a more recent example is the domes at the Eden Project. Perhaps the simplest way of explaining tensegrity in kite design is that while a spar is needed to withstand compression, it is more efficient to use the fabric itself



Illustration 1: Synergy 333

to take the stretching forces. The spars do not touch each other, but are suspended in a continuous network of integrated tension lines. A good example is shown in Illustration 1, which shows the Synergy 333 (a three line kite).

S.R. was unaware of the Rogallo corner kite of 1958 (Illustration 2), and Rogallo in turn did not know of the late 19th century Flaix kite (which can have any number of blades — Illustration 3 shows an 8-bladed Flaix, though the original had 4), nor of the Wise Fin Keel kite (Illustration 4) or the Cruciform kite (Illustration 5). Although the Flaix and the Wise kites had the single cell ‘feathers of a dart’ shape it was only the Rogallo which used the exoskeleton principle. (All this is spelled out in Chapter 4 of *Kites on a Line* which may be found on our website.) It is clear from his correspondence with us that he ‘invented’ the exoskeletal kite himself (rediscovering the method used by Rogallo) and it was his single celled Facet, rather than Rogallo’s two cells, which influenced subsequent kite designers.

We have set out what is new to us below, though Maurizio Angeletti wrote an article in *Drachen Magazin* in 1993 which had a contribution from S.R. and which traces a line from Hargrave via Lecornu to the Facet kite. We understand that Rolf Maserski and his son are in the process of translating the article so that it can be republished in English.

S.R. was a student of architecture at Liverpool University in 1976 when he read a Sunday Times review of Pelham’s classic book and bought a copy. Inspired by designs in Pelham, he made several types of cellular kite including Bell’s boxes which used triangles (as being very strong) but linked together very sparingly (as in tetrahedrals). Another immediate influence on Stephen was the kites of Lecornu, the Bookcase or Ladder kite (Illustration 6) and the Gauffre or Waffle design (his own Waffle kite is shown in Illustration 7). His breakthrough was to realise that he needed only one front-to-back spar in the middle of the Waffle design and that a perimeter of single spars (the exoskeleton) could support a complicated star structure. His first attempts were based on a triangular structure (Illustration 8).

S.R. knew and liked the Professor Waldof box kite (Illustration 9) with its triangular wings braced at their tips to keep what was basically a

Stephen Robinson and the Facet Kite—George Webster & John Dobson



Illustration 2:
Rogallo Corner
Kite

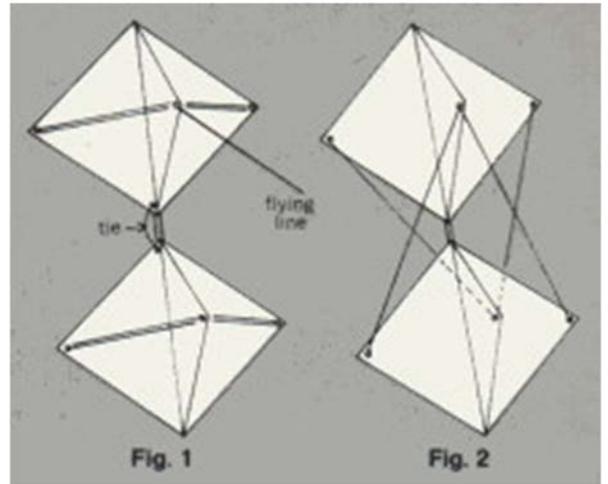


Illustration 3: Flaix Kite

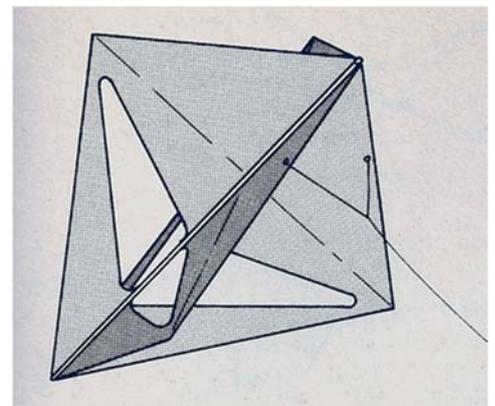


Illustration 5: Cruciform Kite

Illustration
6: Lecornu
Bookcase
Kite

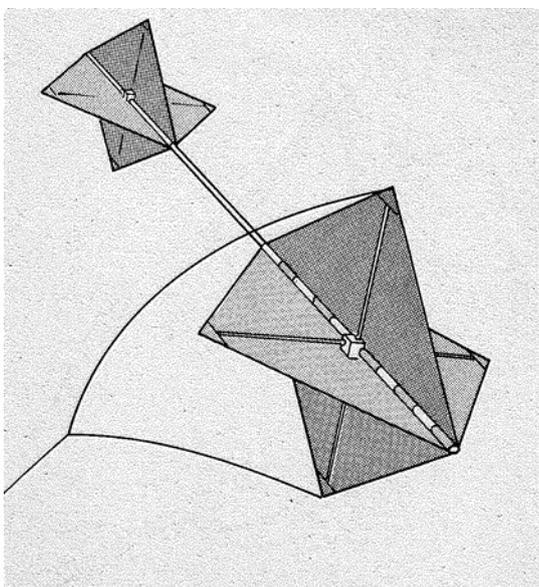
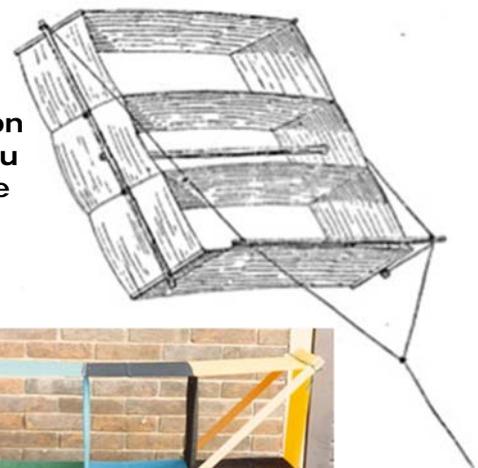


Illustration 4: Wise Fin Keel Kite



Illustration 7: Stephen Robinson's Lecornu
Waffle kite

Stephen Robinson and the Facet Kite—George Webster & John Dobson

hexagonal box kite in shape, but felt that the mix of spars and bracing was ‘fussy’ and it shared the problem of many other box kite designs of requiring spars to pass through holes in the sails. Similarly he rejected his own earlier version because it was getting too complicated and lacked what he called ‘purity’. He then realised that basing it on squares (after Lecornu) had the advantages of minimum framing to maximum sail area ratio, and could be made from square pieces of material with no fussy triangular bits, thus reducing wastage and achieving total purity. Illustration 10 is his own explanation of the design transition from the original (triangular) concept to the final (square) concept.

He also found that the Lecornu tended to be unstable in flight, which he thought was due to the ratio between span width and cell depth being too high so the kite needed to be deeper. Imagine pushing out the middle of a Lecornu in both directions along an axis perpendicular and central to the square grid and you nearly have a Facet kite. The three sizes of square give the deeper centre section which he felt would improve the Lecornu’s stability. Thus the tensioned triangular wings of the Waldof kite and the deeper cells of the Lecornu kite and the tensegrity structure of the whole thing combined to give the Facet Kite. He produced the first Facet in 1978, and named it “Facet” because it reminded him of a rhombus with faceted sides. He was encouraged by John Spendlove to send plans to *Kitelines* (Winter 1979/80). (Older readers will remember J.S. as a prolific source of small framed, often indoor, kites in the 1970’s). The original kite is shown after some recent repairs to the sellotape. It also used dowel, curtain rings, plastic tube, electrical tape and drafting film (Illustration 11). And Stephen’s groundbreaking innovation was finished with a coat of gold spray paint. (Illustration 12).

Acknowledgement. We are very grateful to Stephen for his initial contact and contribution and help with this article and providing Illustrations 7, 8, 10 11 and 12. We hope in return we have done something to pull his name out of obscurity.



Illustration 8: an early version of what became the Facet kite



Illustration 9: Professor Waldof box kite



Illustration 11: construction details



Illustration 12: Stephen Robinson and the original Facet kite

Stephen Robinson and the Facet Kite—George Webster & John Dobson

The Facet Kite is basically a 'tensegrity' structure with the rods in compression and the material in tension

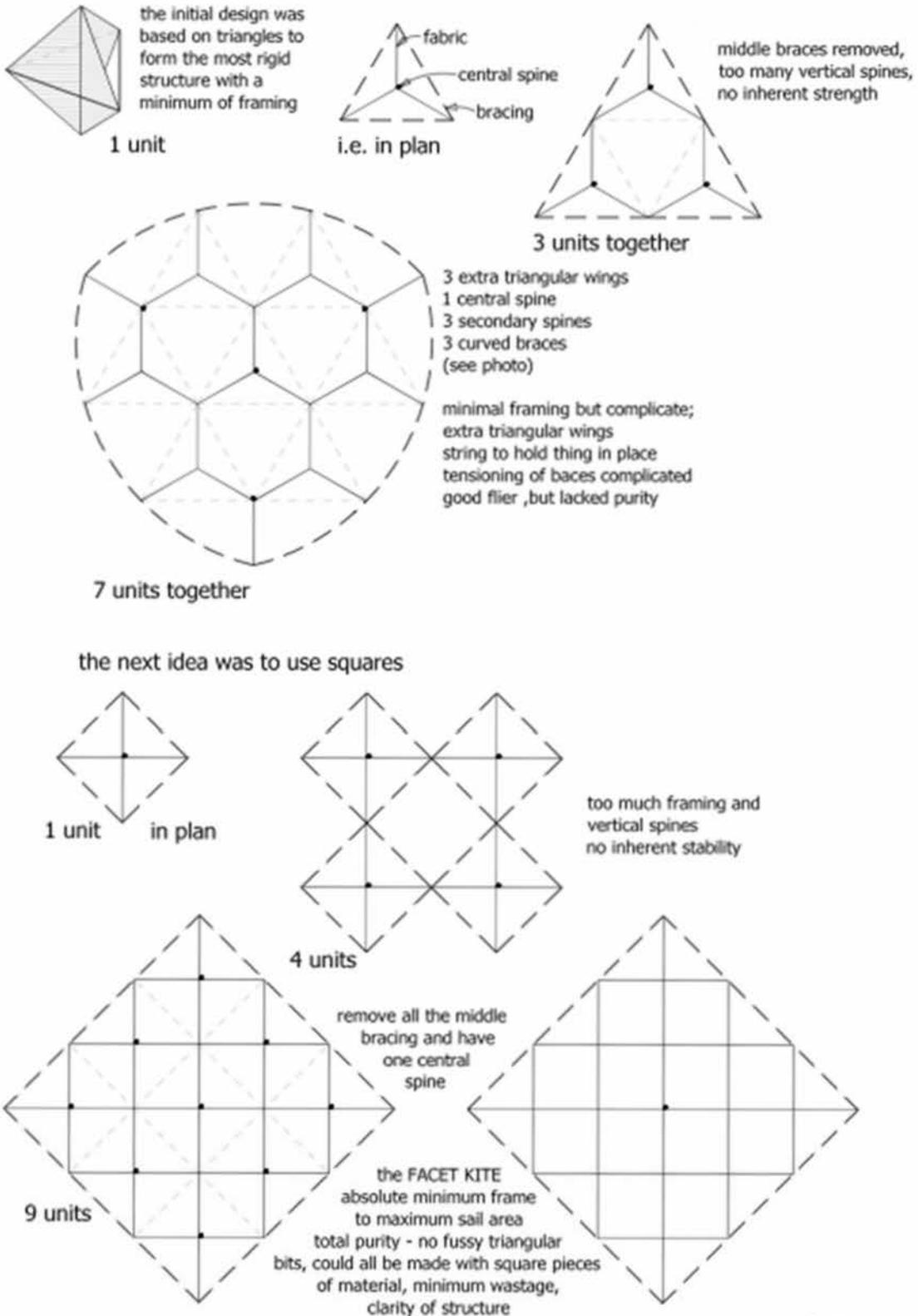


Illustration 10: FACET Kite

Stephen Robinson

Kelvin Woods 1965-2013



The kiting community has lost one of its most colourful members. When Kelvin attended a kite festival, he was present in many different ways. Through his kites, especially his unique butterfly and Edo kites. They always added both colour and craftsmanship. And through himself, always smiling, always joking, always ready for mischief, and always recognisable from far away (hat, t-shirt, goggles). There was simply no way you could not like the man, he was one of those people that made friends in an instant.



The first time I actually flew with him was at Basingstoke. He had come off his infamous inflatable couch to get his Edo kites ready for the next arena event. As Debbie Harry was soaring into the air, he turned to me, and asked me if I minded taking over Debbie so he could sort out the next Edo. Kelvin, you gotta be kidding ... would I mind having Debbie Harry on a leash???? Since that day, I've flown several of his butterflies as well at various festivals. Kelvin may be physically gone, but he will live on in his kites and the memories of those who saw his kite or flew with him.



The day after I heard the sad news, I flew my Aerobe in his memory. Why this kite? Because flying this cheerful kite always puts a big smile on my face, and I couldn't think of a better tribute to the man. Also, do I see his goggles on the

kite? Normally, the Aerobe is a pretty stable kite, but for some reason, it kept tipping over and veering to the left.

Kelvin still making mischief???

Lex Kraaijeveld

I did two butterfly workshops with Kelvin, he was a great instructor, kitemaker and flier, but most of all, such a friendly man. I also enjoyed flying with him and his butterflies in the arena at festivals. I will miss him, certainly a large space in the sky, and will have great memories each time I fly one of the butterflies I made with him.

Roy Martin

RIP my friend, Kelvin Woods. To one of the nicest people I have ever met anywhere in the world. Your smile lit up any room you ever entered. I was lucky enough to become your buddy in Niagara falls in 2008. You were always available to discuss anything about making kites. It was always about the joy of sharing ideas with others. I also enjoyed our chats about family life. You adored your family to no end. I will miss you my dear friend.

Carlos Simoes, Canada

Papillons

(in memoriam Kelvin Woods)

How we used to make the butterflies dance!

Not kites but angels
And us the links connecting
Energy of earth and Kelvin's music

To the freedom of the skies.

Come take a kite and let it fly
Like a butterfly into the sky
No one cares if you're boy or girl
Or even a grown-up; give it a twirl.
*Let the line out, make it fly
Higher and higher into the sky.*

Everyone's doing it, no one cares
If your kite tangles up with theirs
Meet each other, make new friends
Move the tangle towards the ends.
*Let the line out, make it fly
Higher and higher into the sky.*

Kite comes to earth, then put it back
Into the sky with the rest of the pack
Jerk the line and make it skip
Keep with the rhythm, don't let it slip.
Let the

And then the music stopped

In Japan they write a name on a kite
Then release it for the air
To take the spirit who knows where?

It's a way of forgetting. But we shall remember
When the butterflies gather together
In the sky
He'll be there with them
Dancing

The show goes on.

John Dobson

Kelvin Woods 1965-2013

Kelvin Woods: a personal appreciation, John Dobson

The thing that I remember most about Kelvin is his generosity of spirit. There will be many who will remember him as a most wonderful kitemaker, but to his friends the kites were simply an expression of something deeper in the man. There was about them a sense of confidence in his skill and willingness to take on a challenge to it; but this was also matched by his willingness to use his skill to help others. My kite flying companion Kate remembers how he showed her how to fly two butterflies simultaneously, one in each hand; and I remember him showing me how he managed to make what was at the time the most challenging kite he had yet made — the Enigma. This box kite stems from seven seconds of video on the Fanø '93 video. On the video, the kite is truly an enigma because, being totally black, it is difficult to define its form or design. After much rewinding and numerous freeze frames, Phil Womack worked out the design and gave Kelvin permission to make it. As far as I know, he only ever made two. Since this kite is probably not well known, here is a picture of the one he made for me.



Of course, we all remember Kelvin for his band of butterflies. But at the Prudhoe kite festival last year, I was gratified and delighted, but not altogether surprised, when he spontaneously offered his butterfly collection for public kiteflying rather than just for professional kitefliers as had been his previous practice. It was typical of Kelvin that he was totally supportive of my desire to make kite festivals more of a participant event and less of a spectator one.

Similarly it was also typical of him that on almost the last day I saw him he had just come back from a very early trip into Newcastle with James who took photos of Kelvin flying a kite by Grey's monument (the focal point of the city centre). His idea of flying kites in very public places — he had already flown his kites by the Tyne and Millennium bridges on Newcastle's famous quayside — was part of his belief in kites and kiteflying as being firmly in the public domain. We have lost a public figure. And that is a loss to the public and to us all.



Pothecary Corner

What about Weymouth?

As many will know Weymouth Kite Festival was very successfully run by the editors of this magazine and proprietors of The Kite Society, Gill and Jon Bloom.

To look at the young faces of that time and to think that many of those had been highly active with this passion of ours for many years even then, it is somewhat worrying compared to how many young heads and bodies we see at festivals now.

Marilyn and I celebrate over twenty years in the sport but are still looked upon as newbies by many. We feel that we have worked hard to keep kite flying alive in organising many events including winter leagues, better flying days, even festivals and this year we are working harder than ever to avoid losing one of the first great festivals we ever attended.

Austerity Rules

Budgets were hardened and the Blooms moved on to concentrate on creating the bigger festivals which gave us all the chance to see so many the foreign flyers with their kites and routines we would only otherwise see in photos or grainy, shaky videos.

Weymouth lurched on intending to use the momentum built up over the good work of previous years but in conversation with the council about our own appearance I realised that guidance from a kite flyer was needed and, as no-one else was offering, they got stuck with me.

It was a strange kind of existence, I had no control over budget nor did I know what it was! I had to 'sell in' each one my ideas and relied heavily on those who had come before to come back again and listened intently to the many ideas that flowed implementing those that costs allowed.

We trudged on for a couple of years, introducing a few new faces but sadly some of the old ones fell by the way-side.

Bad News

Then, at the end of the 2012 summer, we got the disastrous news that Weymouth and Portland Borough Council would no longer fund the festival.

Much fuss was made in the press from both kite flyers and residents alike and social media was buzzing (I'm told - I don't do social media or forums like I don't do fiddly!) - the impact of the loss of the festival would have on this town was so obvious, some people's sanity came in to question.

I had 87 emails of support from all over, directly to me and I thanked every one of them but no-one that mattered was going to do anything. After many public calls for ways in which to fund the festival and, seemingly much support, I was invited to a meeting where I was asked, point blank, if I wanted to run the festival myself.

I had already thought about this. All I want to do really is fly kites and encourage others to do likewise. I keep letting myself be pulled in to organising or helping to organise things which, I suppose, is part of keeping it all going but this event is too big for me and I am getting too old! I said that I would help in the same, consultative, way as before but that was all.

Offers of Help

There was quite a bit of discussion around the table about possible ways to run the festival with councillors advising on what was possible and people like Karen and Godfrey Gamble from "Kites for Schools" and who had done such a brilliant job at the 2012 festival with the children's kite workshop, relating on their experiences from festivals they had attended all over the world and Andrew Beattie who had travelled all the way down from Scotland making a fine presentation.

After waiting to see if anyone else was going to take on the event Michael MacManus, a retired local businessman, who chaired the Weymouth Carnival Committee declared that he saw the festival as a way of making money to put back in to the local community and was prepared to take it on.

To be honest, I don't think that Michael fully appreciated the enormity of the task but he is a local man with lots of contacts and, as I write, tells me that he has plans in place to recover the costs and leave enough - not maybe to give away just yet - but to carry over for the following year's event.

This time around I do know more about the budget and the plans put in place and am confident that Michael will carry this off - some things may have to be trimmed but some will be better.

We heard over the Christmas period that the Carnival Committee wanted to keep the two events separate and, in fact, Michael believes this is a positive move.

Moving Forward

I have already been very busy contacting people and am so pleased that big names in the kiting world have said that they want to keep the festival alive and pledged their support such as Felix from The Decorators eight person, four-line team who will be flying straight in from starring at a festival in Cervia, Italy, old favourites and crowd pleasers The Airheads and British Champions Team Flame who wowed the crowds with their spectacular precision team flying. We hear that the big clubs from the South-west WHKF and Avon will be filling the sky, beaches and restaurants as well as former traders who now come just to fly such as Kiteworld (Force Nine) and Roy and Hayley from Kites Up and, speaking of Kite Traders, James Hartley Kites and Windrush Kites will also be there. A full list will be published on our "Festival updates" page soon.

Pothecary Corner

Help Wanted

There are many ways to help but the best way is to bring your kites, a crowd of people and enjoy yourselves; Michael is starting a big raffle soon in Weymouth and big prizes will be welcome - Do you work for a company that can help or are you a kite maker and able to offer a valuable kite?

We appeal to everyone for their support to save this event in this crucial year ahead. Oh yes! - The festival is on 3rd, 4th and 5th May 2014 running along much the same sort of timetable as set up by Jon and Gill all those years ago.

What's Up

News to report from us at the Andover Close Encounters camp at the end of this year is that we have not been flying that much due to so many other things happening all at once - plus finding the right weather of course!



The Weymouth festival has been a big drain on my time but hopefully worth it.

...and then, when we could fly, we have spent a lot of time catching up on making videos.

Now I know that there is a contingent amongst the readers of this magazine

that don't have access to the web but I do urge you that next time you are visiting family or friends with a computer you should ask them to guide you through - not just to our site but to your local clubs web-site and the wealth of kites and kite events you will enjoy discovering.

Why have we been concentrating on so many new videos? Well apart from the fact we enjoy making them (and by the comments we get others like to watch them too) I am trying to find the right software for my Mac so that I can build a new website on it.

(Techie stuff here - sorry) Our You Tube channel (just type Cose Enounters Kite Display Team then choose "You Tube" to find it) is watched by flyers all over the world, as is our web site visited. We know this because we get emails asking questions or telling us off for flying "imitations".

However, some countries such as China cannot link to You Tube. We therefore intend to 'embed' the videos in to our website thus making them more accessible.

Help Needed

We have had some great fun getting out the kites and in some cases have had to employ the help of our friends "The L-katz down at their regular flying site in Stokes Bay near Gosport. We have also added a video of them flying their four man routine - unfortunately Roger Backhouse missing through injury but did help behind the camera.



They use kites very similar to North Shore Radicals as far as I could judge and drew lots of onlookers taking photos attracted by the close flying and the huge noise these kites make - all very impressive!



The Big Stuff

Since I got pulled up for calling it a fifteen metre, I have started referring to our big HQ turbine as "The twelve panel" because I keep forgetting to measure it. I have spoken about the 12 panel and the XXXL before but had not really put the big sled to the test. Winds were fairly steady at 14mph and I still don't have any of the recommended 1600lb line so we had to use my strongest - 1000lb.

I recently made quite a heavy anchor by cutting down a wrecking bar bought from Wickes for about eighteen pounds.

Mind the Road

We walked the line out to make sure that if the kite did come down it wouldn't be in the road.

There are three really heavy, very long, bridle lines coming from the kite but I still managed to leave one twist there making the kite veer very slightly to one side when we hooked up and launched.

Pothecary Corner



I had forgotten to pack our pulley for getting the kite back down so I wasn't about to try and get it down again now.

We then hooked a caribina to the tow point of the turbine, added a line and ran it up the lifter kites line.

The sled didn't complain an inch! It really is a nice kite - just a bit of a pain in strong wind fitting each of the three supporting rods together during assembly - I am sure someone will have a better idea?

Again the video of this day's adventure can be found on our You Tube channel.

Pterodactyl by Longbottom

Well if nothing else I have at least learned to spell it now - one of those useless pieces of information that gives you extra points in quizzes!

Marilyn had been watching groups in the arena flying Karl and Sarah Longbottom's Pterodactyls and decided, surprise, surprise that she might like a pink one. I thought that it might be an extra surprise pressie for the big birthday she had coming up in August so said nothing committal and changed the subject deciding to order one in team colours black and yellow too!

Something Similar

I already had a kite very similar to these kites in the shape of the one with the extremely unmemorable name I think born out of a collusion between Stephen Hoath and the Gonzales brothers. I hadn't really got to grips with this kite but had recently been paying attention to others flying it and how they were managing to get it to fly 540 spins.

I found the pterodactyl to have a lighter feel and was a little slower than Steve's kite and although maybe not spinning quite as fast, gave just that fraction more time to see what the kite was doing before tension was applied or released from the line. In zero wind I was really enjoying myself pulling it back over my head and letting it go away. I found it fairly easy to master in a relatively short amount of time with more difficult stuff to learn up ahead to keep me interested.

Stronger than you'd think!

For such lightness these kites look fragile but I don't believe that to be the case from the treatment mine got whilst learning the clever stuff.

In a light breeze there is an easy adjustment on the top which alters the angle of the wings which allows a nice steady flight. Back in the nice summer we had, I was visiting customers in Bournemouth so Marilyn came along and I knocked off early and changed in to my shorts so that we could spend some old fashioned time just sitting on a chair on the beach in the glorious sunshine.

The first thing that we noticed apart from the fact the beach was full of foreign accented visitors and no sun beds like you find spoiling every beach abroad, was the lack of any sort of a kite in the air. We soon put paid to that firstly with the Pterodactyls and then our twenty seven foot long rainbow octopus.

As is the way a lady soon came over asking where we got the kites - she thought that they were wonderful and would love to have some for her children. "Some?" I thought, "Now that would mean at least three wouldn't it? This lady is thinking maybe about a fiver each - She's in for a shock!". Indeed she was - forgive me if I get this price wrong but I think I told her £40.00 each. "Plus carriage!" She said - No perhaps not then" She exclaimed. "Hmmm - I don't it was the carriage that put her off" I thought!

They're all the same!

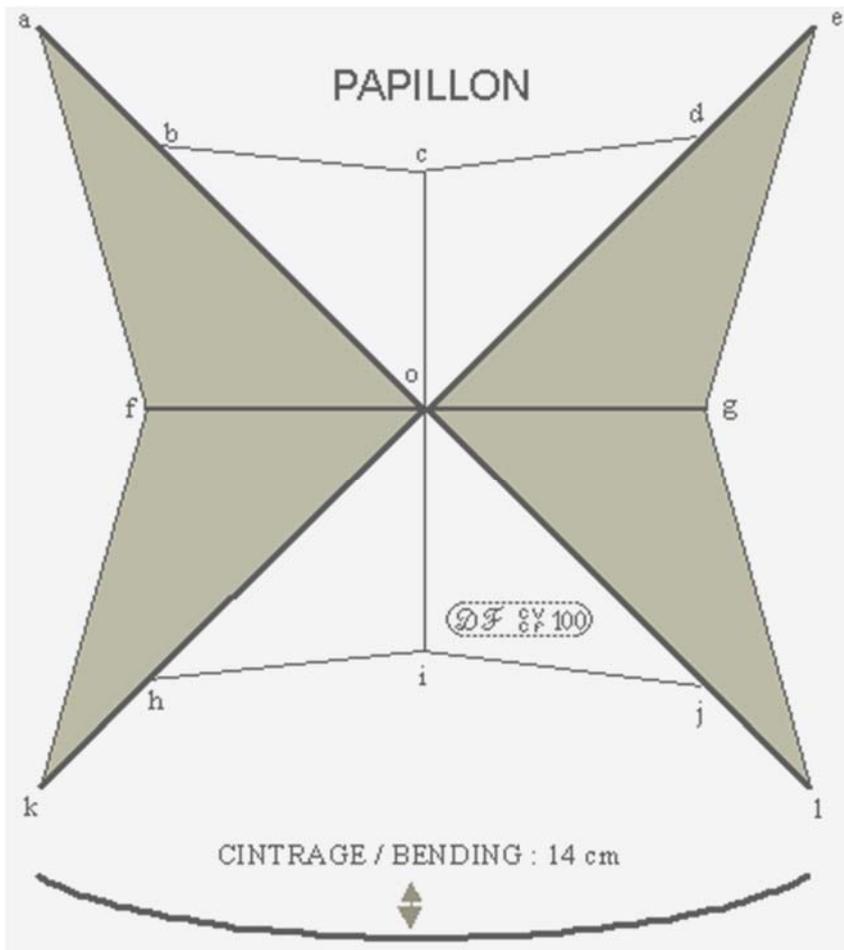
It is that old adage where until you have delved a little in to this hobby that you probably think that all kites are the same.

It was only then I actually looked at the kite to try to explain how it was put together. All those little parts for the spars to clip in to and how to fit the head on so that it stays straight against all the odds and then the accuracy of cutting the sail which in itself is not cheap.

I suppose the Longbottoms have got the knack of turning these little beauties out rather quickly by now. They look simple enough but there is a fair amount of work required - admiration goes out from one who doesn't do fiddly!



Papillon Kite—Didier Ferment



Connection Points and tension lines.

- $b-o = d-o = h-o = j-o = 59\text{cm}$
- $f-o = g-o = 52\text{cm}$
- the angles : $a-o-f = f-o-k = e-o-g = g-o-l = 45^\circ$
- $b-c = c-d = h-i = i-j = 40.5\text{cm}$

Bridles

- at points c and i , the bridles are fixed by a button
- bridle $c-i = 74\text{cm}$
- when the 5 tension lines above are fixed, the lateral bending of the kite is about 14cm
- the 120cm long bridle $c-m-o-i$ slides (at point o) through a fishing ring
- the kite line is fixed at m : $c-m =$ about 46cm
- the pulling of the line pulls more on the rear bridle, therefore the rear part of the kite is more bowed than the front part.

To make the Papillon kite turn, let go the line : it will start to spin. To make it go in the direction you have chosen, pull the line a little to come out of the spin. Your Papillon kite will then go in this direction.

If the kite takes a dive, don't pull on the line ! just let go slightly the line : the kite will take a turn, then pull the line to go back in the sky.

One of Kelvin's lasting legacies is his use of the Butterfly (Papillon) kite as an opportunity for many kite fliers to come together and fly these en-mass. Everyone who took part in these sessions enjoyed flying these kites and we hope that in the future many festivals will include a slot to continue with Kelvin's passion. The original design is by Didier Ferment and this is reproduced with permission.

The Papillon kite can be flown as a quadliner or as a fighting kite (a steerable single line kite). It is a simple design and easy to construct. Never the less, it has been a long and hard journey to get to the final design. The fighting version flies in light wind even almost none: it takes off before the Delta kite, and it can do the 360° revolution.

Construction

- Spars $a-l$ and $e-k$ made of 2m long carbon tube 4mm . Make sure that the 2 spars are exactly the same; otherwise, the kite will fly erratically.
- spar $f-g$ made of 104cm long carbon rod 3mm
- the angle of the sail at corner $a-o-k$ and $e-o-l$ is 90°
- sail sleeves: $a-o = e-o = l-o = k-o = 98\text{cm}$. Make sure the 2 sails are symmetrical
- at tips a, e, l, k : nock and 3mm elastic to stretch the sail

One last tip when you will become a master : give a quick and gentle pull on the line when the kite spins, to increase the turning motion.

