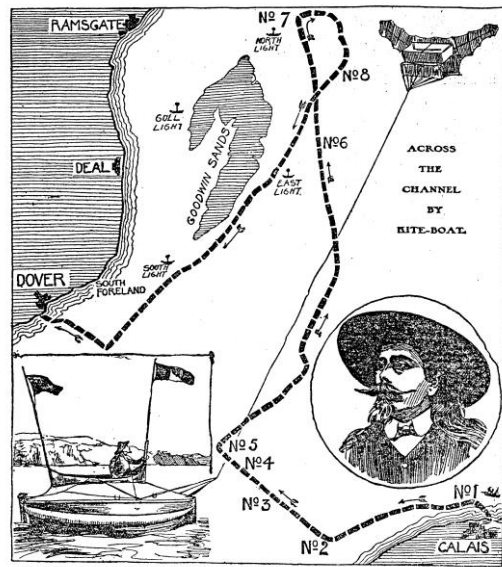
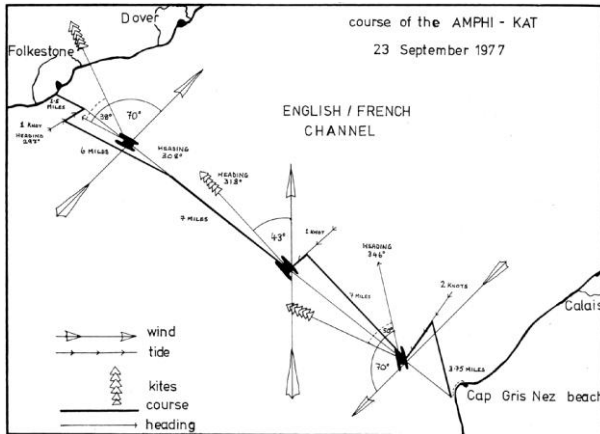


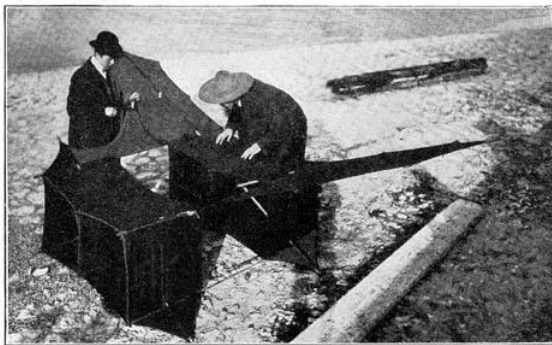
Ship Kites.....Paul Chapman

A new AKF member turned up at the November Club Night. I won't cause him embarrassment by naming him directly although, by strange coincidence, we share the first name. This Paul knows a lot about boaty things and, since this space in the frysheets needed filling, it seems appropriate to introduce Paul Bateau to ship kites. Yes, I said SHIP!



At an early stage in my kiting career I heard of Keith Stewart who had built a set of dirigible inflatable delta kites and, when not bugging 7 up, sailed across the English Channel on the 23rd September 1977 in his 10 ft Amphi-Cat catamaran towed by a stack of six very large delta kites. Of course he was not the first to have done this little trick but you can find a full account in the December 1977 *European Kiteflyer*. Much later I met up with Keith, but this time to look at his stealthy inflatable helicopter. Back to the Channel Crossing – it was our hero Samuel Cowdry (aka Cody) who made what must have been the first kite flight across the Channel overnight on the 6th/7th of November 1903. He used a black winged box kite, called Old Faithful, and a collapsible Berthon boat for his trip from Calais to Dover. The Berthon boat survived. Sotheby's sold it for £11500 at their Cody Archive sale in 1996. Louis Bleriot did a copycat flight in 1909 which proved that 'England is no longer an Island' and so probably started WW1.

Showing the course taken by Mr. Cody's boat during his thirteen hours' journey. The following incidents are depicted on the map by figures: (1) First boat sent back; (2) wind freshened so that between distances (2) and (4) a speed of from six to eight miles per hour was attained; (5) and (6) drifted toward the Goodwin; (7) kite pulled down for lack of wind; and (8) launched again from boat.



FITTING UP THE KITE AT THE STARTING-POINT IN CALAIS HARBOUR.



FLYING THE KITE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT.

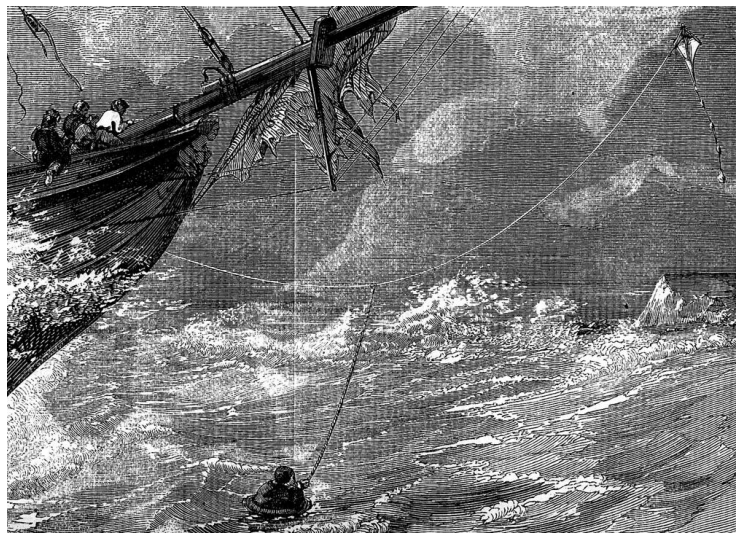
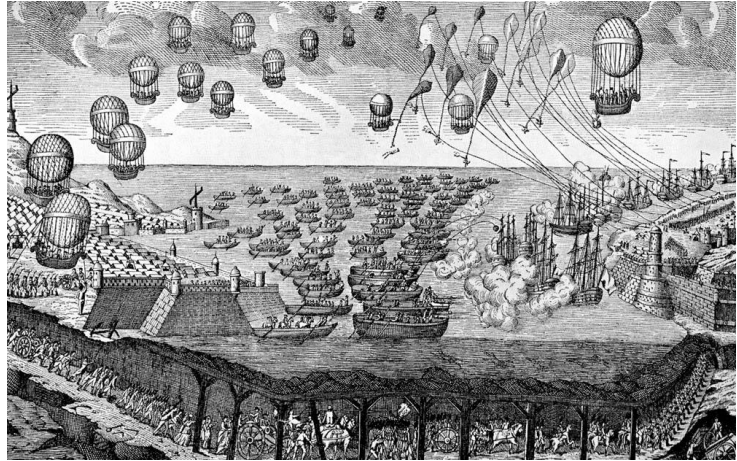
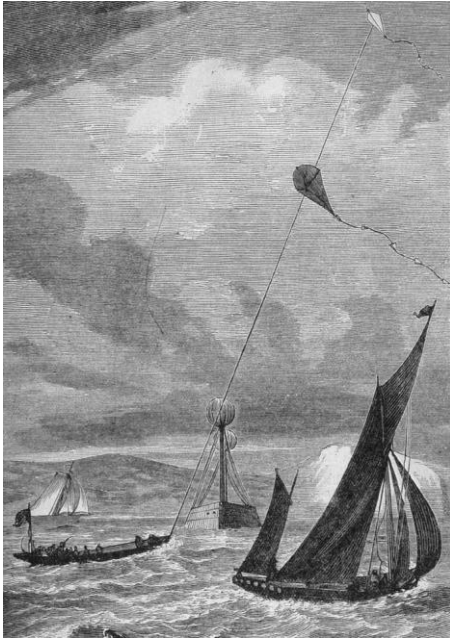


MR. CODY, WEARING HIS OILSKIN DRESS, IN THE KITE-BOAT.
The kite is not visible behind the front mast.



PREPARATIONS FOR THE START: MR. CODY IN HIS BOAT WITH THE KITE ROLLED UP AND LAID ALONG THE GUNWALE.

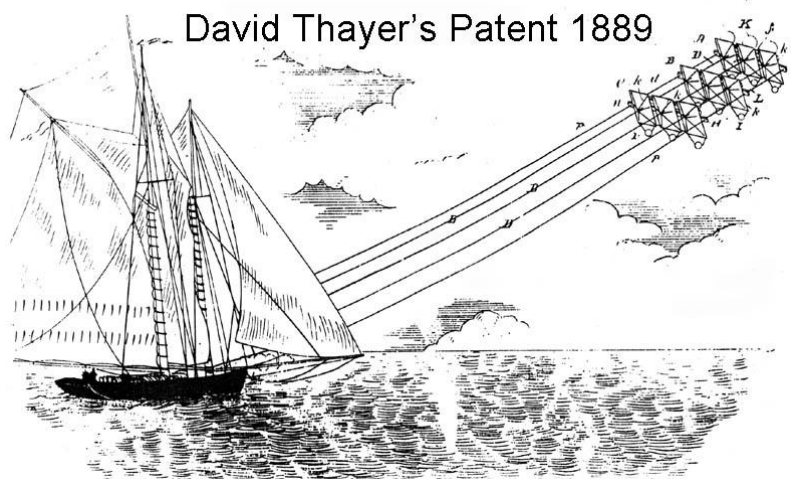
ACROSS THE CHANNEL BY KITE-BOAT: MR. S. F. CODY'S SUCCESSFUL VOYAGE FROM CALAIS TO DOVER, NOVEMBER 6 AND 7.
PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS AGENCY.



But back to Bristol and “Our Father of Kite Bugging”. Good old George Pocock was also into kite sailing. The Pocock books (there are two of them, but this illustration came from the Boys Own Annual) talk about Pocock and his family taking a kite-propelled jaunt into the Bristol Channel where they navigated themselves around Long and Short Holm. Their ‘buoyant sailed’ clipper took part in races against more conventional yachts and, at least on one occasion they sailed up the waters past Portsmouth and then around the Isle of Wight – which would be a nice thing to recreate for a Portsmouth Kite Festival?

What inspired George Pocock? I can think of two possibilities; or perhaps none? Firstly there is the myth that a young Benjamin Franklin tied a kite to his toe one hot summer’s day and amused himself by being towed across a lake. Then there is the more believable contemporary print of the 1802 French plans to consummate the ‘England is no longer an Island’ concept. Maybe George Pocock had plans for combining his child’s thrashing machine with his kite-propelled ship to give those Frenchies a spanking.

Keith Stewart’s pioneering (in the modern sense) work led to high-speed kite sailing (remember the Jacob’s Ladder Flexifoil stack?) and ultimately to Peter Lynn and modern kite-surfing. Keith Stewart also inspired the ship propulsion people. One early concept was the use of dirigible kites to drag icebergs from the southern oceans to the Gulf States in order to provide fresh water, or perhaps large ice cubes. Kite trials are still ongoing although now the idea is to use kites as auxiliary propulsion for tankers and container ships.

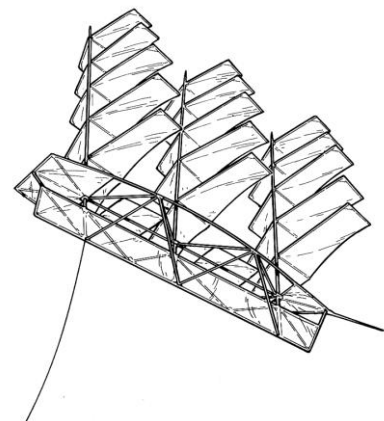
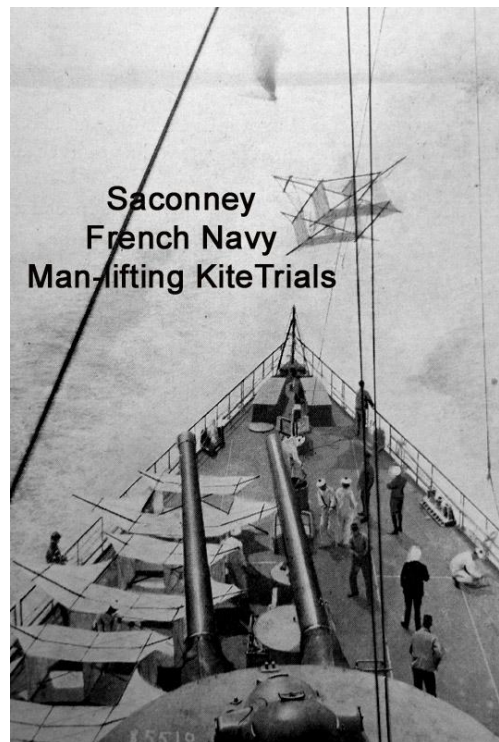


Another connection between kites and boaty things is the use of kites as survival aids. Not surprisingly our George Pocock comes up as an early proponent. My guess is that he used the cliffs at Sea Walls next to the Bristol Downs for his experiments, and where he would have demonstrated 'saving' his stranded sailor from the murky waters of the Avon up the 200 ft cliff face. There were lots of rescue kite concepts in the 1800s, many of them patented. I rather like David Thayer's schemes. The book, *Seamanship*, by Sir George Nares (famous for the open-ended cone drogue) details his rescue kite which was "approved by the *Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society*".

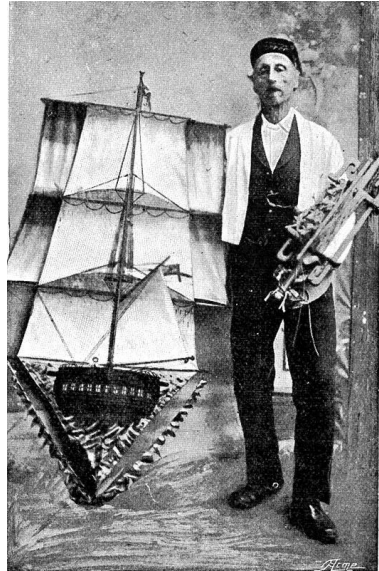


Much later kites were provided for aircrew that had to ditch or were shot down during WW2. The kites, mostly yellow box kites, came with a Gibson Girl transmitter which gave the crews something to do before dying from hypothermia. Not all of the kites were yellow. I recently came across a couple of white self-erecting Conyne rocket kites. These were designed by Commander Wheelwright who used a rocket flare to get them to flying height before springing open. Navies used kites for many purposes. Man-lifting Cody (Royal Navy) and Saconney kites (French Navy) were used for observation. Kites were also used for lifting wireless aerials and Royal Navy trials were made using Cody Compound kites. I found an example of a WW1 Brookkite at the Science Museum Store at Wroughton several years ago; it carries the stamp of the Royal Naval Air Service and would have been used for lifting wireless aerials from the deck of a ship. This kite is still, as far as I know, known to the Science Museum as a Cody Kite, despite me

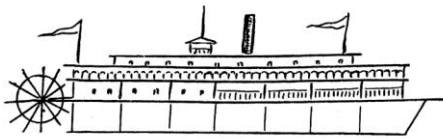
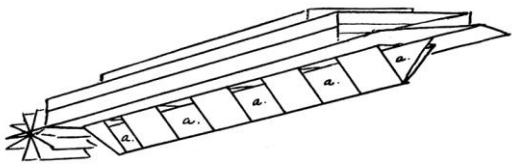
showing them an original Brookkite drawing! Brookkite made many naval kites, including a very compact wireless kite that was specified to be erected inside the conning tower of a submarine!



And of course there are a lot of ship-shaped kites. I have one from a workshop by Andreas Agren – more famous for his Viking Ship kites, but this one is more of a Mary Rose. The

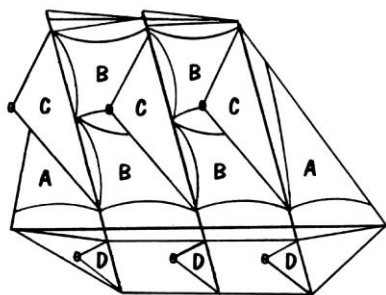


Balinese are famous for their little masted sailing ship kites, although the best I have seen was the one made at Dieppe several years ago. It was similar to, but much larger than the Squadron Kites 5ft long Ghost Clipper of the 1980s. And there are a great many yacht kites, based on the Roller Kite principle. As far as I know there is only one book dedicated to ship kites – *Hansen Dako* (Ship Kites) by Morio Yajima and is a rather sad gap in my little kite library (if you have one and want to donate it.....) The book was advertised in *Kitelines* with a comment “*fascinating and challenging!*” I found the old sailing ship kite photo in *Pearson’s Magazine* for 1898.



Driemaster by Jan Pieter Kuil

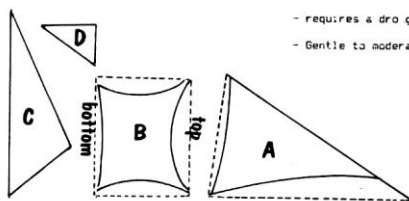
reproduced from *Nederlands Vlieger Gezelshap Magazine*



The Dutch loosely translates as follows:

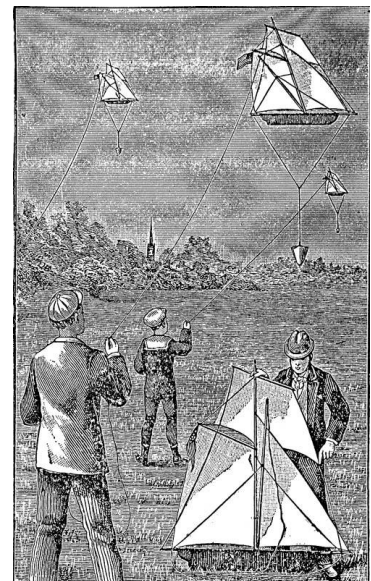
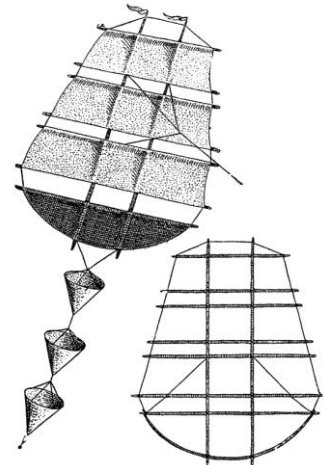
- Because the flags are asymmetrical you may find that the left hand bridle will require shortening.

- A six leg bridle
- requires a dro que
- Gentle to moderate wind.



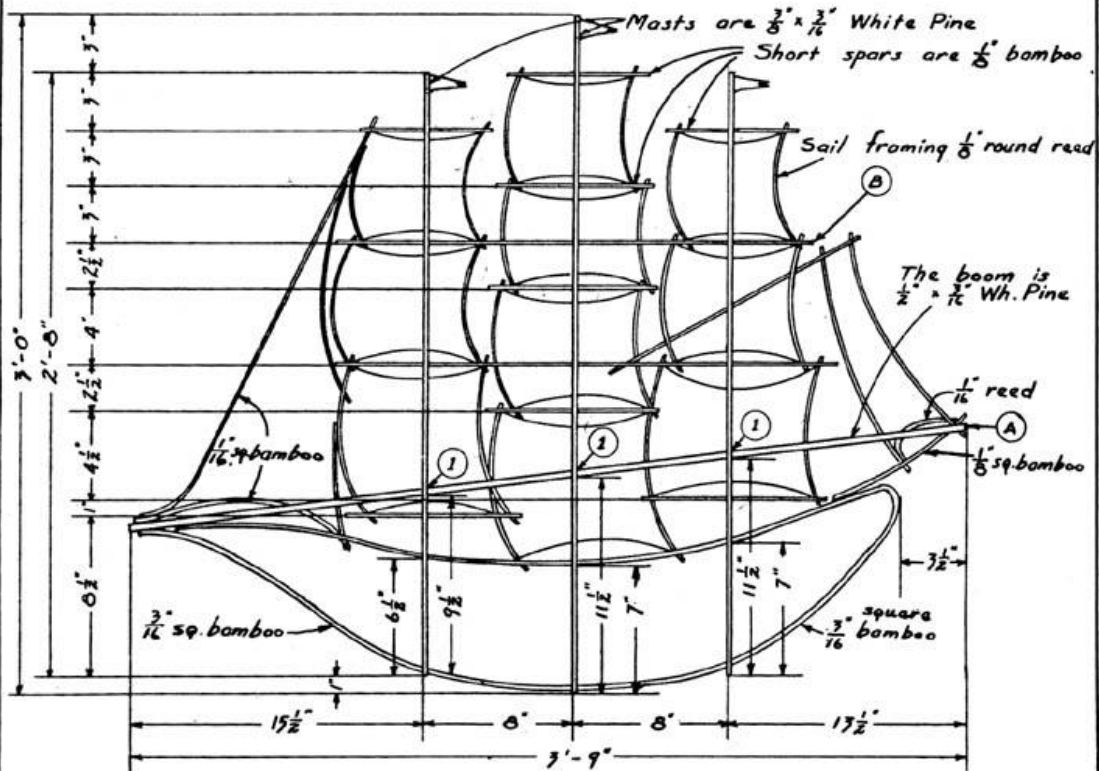
0 10 20 30 40 50cm

The maker was an inmate at the Earlswood Asylum; he also made the “*ingenious rope-winder which, put upon the market, would find a wide popularity – from the able bodied seaman down to the domestic laundress.*” You can find several similar designs dating from the 1912 copies of “*Der gute Kamerad*” in Hans Snoek’s “*...und sie fliegen heute noch.*” Miller’s “*Kitecraft and Kite Tournaments*” (mine is the 1919 edition) has several ship designs too, including this rather nice box-kite paddle steamer. Perhaps a more practical kite for the conventional kiter is Jan Pieter Kuil’s 3-Master that I have taken from the *Kite Society Special* (n.d, but a long time ago). Kuil’s kites were really special and his always flew beautifully.



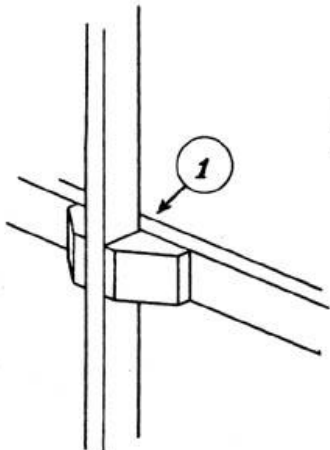
PLANE SURFACE KITE

SAIL BOAT DESIGN

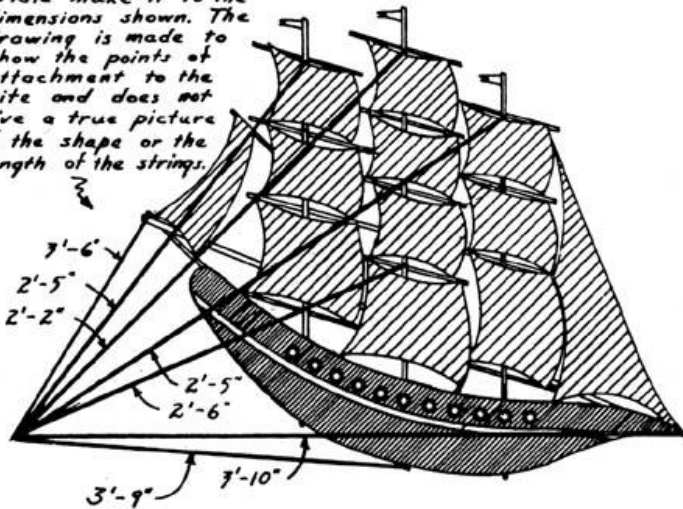


Framing Plan
Kite is bowed 4" out of plane along stick A
and 2" out of plane along stick B

Note:
In adjusting the
bridle make it to the
dimensions shown. The
drawing is made to
show the points of
attachment to the
kite and does not
give a true picture
of the shape or the
length of the strings.



Detail 1
The triangular bracing
blocks are first glued,
then securely lashed to
both sticks in usual manner.



Kite as in flight

8C-6-115

Framing plan
scale in
inches

South Park Commissioners
BESSEMER PARK

PLANE SURFACE KITE
SAIL BOAT DESIGN

"KITES" by Herman Roy, 1934