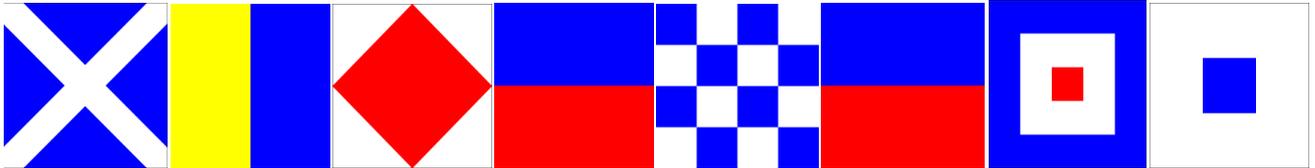


MKF@NEWS

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE
MIDLANDS KITE FLIERS OF GREAT BRITAIN



JANUARY 2017



Hi Bill

I have just taken this sad news from the facebook pages of Peter Powell Kites.

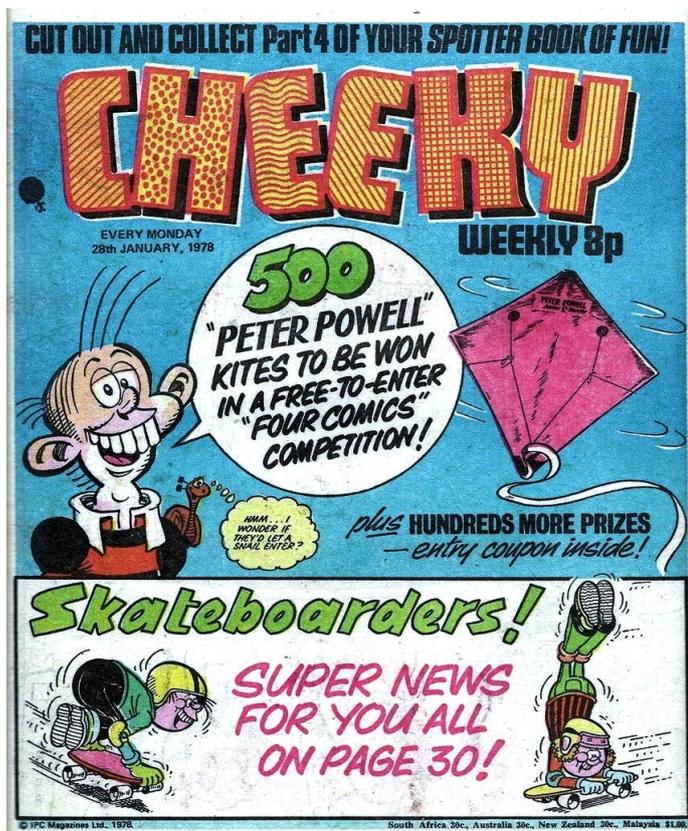
"We are terribly sad to have to announce the passing of Peter Powell on 3rd January 2016, after a stroke and a short stay in hospital. The Powell Family would like to thank the doctors and nurses that cared for Peter.

The shop will be closed for a few days as a mark of respect for Peter, and to allow the family time to grieve in private.

RIP Peter Powell, you will be sorely missed by so many and we thank you for everything you gave us."

Hope you could put a few notes together for the next mkfnews.

Andrew Crabtree
MKF Member



Peter Powell stunt kite pioneer of the 1970s dies



Kite designer Peter Powell said the fun of kite flying is "the freedom on the hills - you can steer it and just land it"

Kite-maker Peter Powell, who developed a steerable kite with dual lines in 1972, has died, his family has said.

Mr Powell, 83, from Cheltenham, won the silver and gold diploma for his kite at the Exhibition of New Inventions and Techniques in Geneva in 1975. In 1976, the Peter Powell kite was elected toy of the year by the British Association of Toy Retailers.

In a statement, his family said he died on 3 January "after a stroke and a short stay in hospital".



Peter Powell's five factories made 75,000 kites a week to keep up with demand in the 1970s. In the 1970s millions of Peter Powell kites were sold and flying steerable kites became a worldwide craze.

Mr Powell's son Mark said he was very happy producing about 300 kites a week until he appeared on the BBC television programme Nationwide.

"It went from 300 a week to 25,000, and we opened two factories but that wasn't enough so we opened three more making 75,000 kites a week - it was massive," said Mark Powell.

Film stars including James Stuart and Henry Fonda owned one of the kites.

Local BBC News report.



Wreath sent by British Kite Flying Association



Peter Powell Kite displayed with great pride at Pete's Awake....

Peter Trevor Powell (c. 1932 – 3 January 2016) was a kite maker who developed a steerable kite in 1972, using dual lines. Very early on, Powell's kites had spars made of ramin (Gonystylus) which were later replaced with aluminium tubing and, later still, by glass fibre spars. Originally they all came with black plastic sails, though later blue, red and yellow sails became available. The kites came with a long, hollow polyethylene tail that was inflated by the wind. The tail added stability as well as looking good when performing stunts. He was born in Gloucester.

300 kites a week were produced until a feature on the BBC News and current affairs television programme Nationwide, production then increased to 25,000 a week. Two factories were opened, followed by a further three with production reaching 75,000 a week.

Powell won the silver diploma for his kite at the Exhibition of New Inventions and Techniques in Geneva in 1975. In 1976, the Peter Powell kite was elected toy of the year by the British Association of Toy Retailers. Millions of kites were sold and flying steerable kites became a craze in the mid-70's in the UK. The popularity of all types of multiple-line kite flying today can be attributed directly to Powell's development of a modern dual-line kite.

Powell often took his kites around the country and sold them from the back of his car. In 1974 (approx) he was selling them on Paignton sea front. He advertised by simply flying the kites. Powell launched a MKIII version of the kite with his sons Mark and Paul and on 14 June 2014 their first Kite store opened at the Cheltenham Shopping Centre.

On 3 January 2016, he died at the age of 83 after a stroke at his home in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

We have recently published several pieces about Peter and his kites.

Checkout those old issues. Ed.

Peter Powell, kite maker

Kite-maker who created the steerable stunt-kite in the 1970s



Peter Powell, centre, with his sons

Peter Powell, who has died aged 83, developed the first two-line steerable kite, selling millions worldwide and sparking a stunt-kite flying craze.

His interest began in the 1960s when he was trying to help a young cousin fly his new kite – a traditional diamond-shaped kite with a string tail. “The wind was wrong either too low or too high and he was so disappointed,” Powell recalled. “From that moment forward I became obsessed with creating a kite that would fly in any wind”.

Two years after he began experimenting with different designs he patented his first kite – a six-footer – with which he went for a world record of highest-flying kite: “The lines snapped and I lost the kites.”

After that he decided to go bigger and made 30ft kites and sat a 70-year old woman on a swing seat suspended from seven of the kites as they rose from the ground. The stunt was filmed by the BBC and his doughty guinea pig earned a Charlie Chester award for providing public amusement.

One day Powell was flying one of his 6ft kites and noticed a list to one side which he tried to correct by attaching a separate line to the other side. It caused the kite to loop, so for fun he attached a third line and found he could loop the kite to right or left. Then, one night, he thought about removing the centre line and just tethering the kite with two lines on either side:

“To my greatest relief the kite controls behaved intuitively... The lines did not lock together and the kite [carved] arcs in the sky.”

After two more years of hard work, in 1972 he launched the 4ft steerable stunt kite on to the market. The kites came with a long, hollow polyethylene tail that was inflated by the wind, making them stable and adding to the visual effect as they performed stunts.

To begin with Powell sold his kites from the back of his car, then began to advertise them by flying the kites over the sea front at Paignton. A breakthrough came in 1975 when his kites were featured on the BBC’s Nationwide programme. As orders skyrocketed, Powell opened new factories to produce 75,000 kites a week.

“It quickly swept across the whole world,” he recalled. “Before then, only children had flown kites, but after that everyone had them.”

In 1975 he won a silver diploma at the Exhibition of New Inventions and Techniques in Geneva. The following year his kite was chosen as toy of the year by the British Association of Toy Retailers. By the late-1990s, however, profits had started to dwindle and – believing his kites had had their day – he set fire to more than half a ton of equipment. In the meantime, however, his sons, Mark and Paul, had started to develop their own, revamped, take on his classic model, and in 2014 Powell and his sons launched an online shop with a new retail outlet in Cheltenham.

“Having a kite is freedom,” said Powell. “You’re up on the hilltops in the open air. There is no better feeling.”

Peter Trevor Powell was born in Gloucester on June 29 1932 and educated locally. After National Service in the RAF as a mechanic working on Gloster Meteors, he had a variety of jobs, before founding a company which specialised in painting white lines on roads. It was during this time that he started to experiment with kite designs.

Powell’s wife Christine predeceased him. He is survived by his two sons and four daughters.

Peter Powell, born June 29 1932, died January 3 2016

Obituary from The Daily Telegraph
Monday 8th February 2016