

MIKE NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
MIDLANDS KITE FLIERS
OF GREAT BRITAIN

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL 2021





INFORMATION

CLUB FLY-INS

We hold club fly-ins each month (winter included) at various sites. These are informal events and are a great way of meeting other MKF members.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Your membership card may help you obtain discounts for purchases from kite retailers in the UK, and gain you entry to events and festivals free, or at a reduced cost.

Please keep them safe.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

All fully paid up members are covered by Public Liability Insurance to fly kites safely for '*pleasure*' anywhere in the world with the exception of the United States of America and Canada. If you injure anyone whilst flying your kite the injured party may be able to claim on the club insurance for up to **£5,000,000**. The club has 'Member-to-Member Liability Insurance'.

A claim may be refused if the flier was found to be flying a kite dangerously - e.g. using unsuitable line, in unsuitable weather; flying over people, animals, buildings or vehicles. This insurance does not cover you for damage to, or loss or theft of members' kite/s.

BUGGIES, BOARDS & KITESURFING

Unfortunately, we are not able to cover these activities within the clubs insurance policy.

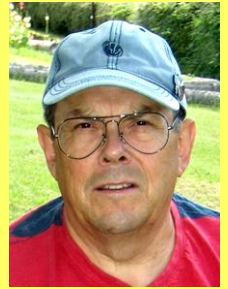
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*I am sorry but I don't do 'Facebook',
If you want me either email or phone I'll always get back to you.*

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41	25 th September 2022	Mid October 2022

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kite-man



—FOR THE KITE-MAN TO STEAL THEIR PRECIOUS GOLDEN EAGLE FROM UNDER THEIR VERY NOSES!



AS THE FLYING FELON SWOOPS AT BATMAN, ROBIN WHIPS OUT HIS BAT-ROPE, AND...

HA! HA!
NO ONE STOPS ME -- NOT EVEN BATMAN!

GOT HIM!
NOW I'LL HAUL DOWN THAT HUMAN KITE!



NOT... AS WELL AS ONE MIGHT HAVE HOPED.

THE YOUNG HEROES HAVE FLOODED THE HARBOR AND HAVE MADE A GROUND LANDING.

THE TROOPS ARE RESPONDING TO COUNTER THEM.



KITE MAN!

Saturday.





How Batman's villain, Kite Man, went from a joke to a tragic figure

The Ballad of Kite Man

By Susana Polo@NerdGerhl Oct 19, 2017, 1:00pm

"Why," "Why," I asked carefully, "Kite Man?"

Tom King looked me straight in the eyes, grinned, and went: "Hell yeah!"

I won't tell you all of what he said next, yet. That would be saying the punchline before telling the joke; revealing the answer before asking the riddle.

Tom King's ongoing run on *Batman* is best known for its big movements. In 17 months, he's written what he purports to be just the first third of a story about Batman discovering whether he can ever move past the trauma of his parents' death, the very narrative core of his character for the better part of a century. Batman has partnered with the Suicide Squad, overthrown the might of Bane, met his living father from another dimension and proposed marriage to Catwoman.

This is not about those big stories.

"The history of taking old ideas seriously, that's what comics is about," King said, while answering my question. "This character that everyone's laughing at is actually a character that everyone's crying at."

Over the past 17 months, Tom King has taken Kite Man from a poster child for the silliness of mid-century superhero comics to something much, much more. And he did all of it without letting on that he was setting up for a punchline — and that that punchline would reverberate back through his *Batman* run.

Tom King took the joke of Kite Man and made him into a riddle.

Kite Man's first appearance in King's *Batman* lasts all of two pages. He smashes through the window of a building. He steals a woman's pearls, shouting "Kite Man!"

He leaps out another window and glides away.

"Kite Man. Hell yeah."

He is immediately captured, plucked out of thin air by Gotham Girl, a very powerful superheroine that Batman has taken under his leathery wing. This set the tone for a series of recurring appearances: a running (or perhaps gliding) gag, in which Kite Man would appear in a montage of equally feeble Batman villains getting their comeuppance.

One such moment is now enshrined in an Eisner Award-winning story, "Good Dog," which ran in the 2016 *Batman* annual, in a montage of Batman puzzling over Gotham crimes while, unseen and unappreciated, Alfred attempts to gentle an abused dog. At the center of a beautiful story about how anyone can come back from trauma, is this Kite Man gag:



"Kite Man." Tom King, David Finch/DC Comics

I made a joke about it when I wrote up the story's Eisner nomination. "There's so much more to the quick tale than you might guess ... Can people really change? Can trauma truly be healed? What the heck is even Kite Man's deal?"

Kite Man appeared in issue #6 and #9. Then #14. Then #23. He wasn't a consistent joke —

but it sure seemed like he was Tom King's favorite punching bag.

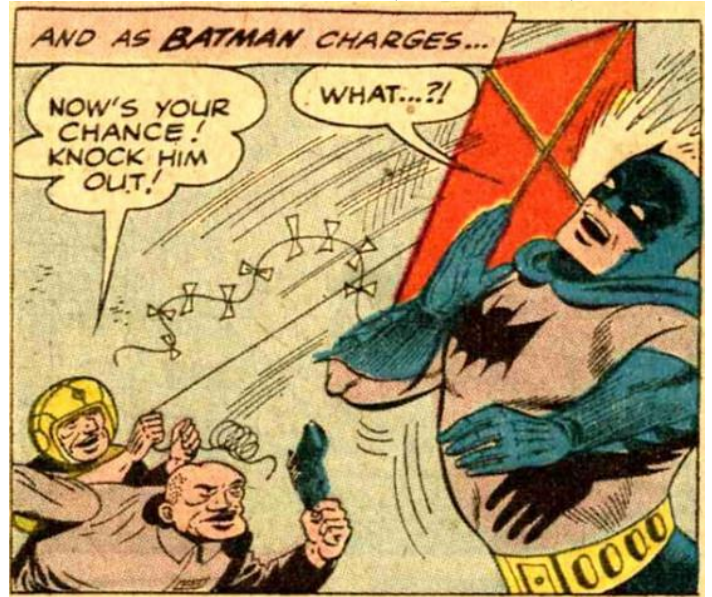
'Good Dog' is one of the best Batman stories of 2016

And at the time, King admits, Kite Man was. "Ivan Reis drew an extra panel in a comic book I was writing, and I had ... just added Kite Man 'cause I just needed someone for Batman to punch, or for Gotham Girl to punch," King told me at San Diego Comic-Con. "He had added an extra panel; 'Tom, just add some dialogue to this' ... so I just put 'Hell yeah.' Just out of nothing? I liked him just saying his own name, 'Kite Man.' He steals stuff; 'Kite Man, hell yeah.'" King's Kite Man began as a borrowed trick from

Frank Miller and Brian Michael Bendis' runs on *Daredevil*, which use Stilt-Man and the Owl — absurd silver-age villains who've long lost any gravitas they might have once had — as recurring gags. But then he started to think about the character a bit more. Particularly, he latched on to how Kite Man's secret identity is a reference to another titanic comics character, one whose legacy looms as large, and maybe larger, than Batman's.

Yes, Kite Man's given name is, canonically, Charlie Brown.

Catwoman and Clayface, Superman's teenage love interest, Lana Lang, and Batman comics' characteristic use of huge replicas of everyday objects (like pennies).



"WHAT?!" Bill Finger, Dick Sprang/DC Comics
He also created Kite Man.

1960's *Batman* #133, written by Bill Finger and drawn by Dick Sprang, featured a villain who used kites to perform high-flying heists. This was, honestly, not overly strange by the standards of the time. It would be nearly 20 years before he'd be seen again, but Len Wein picked up the character again for *Batman* #315 in 1979.

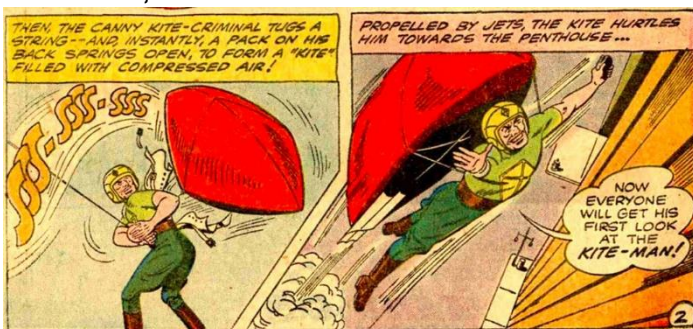
Both Finger and Wein played Kite Man completely straight, and without much explanation — he was a villain and a thief who used kites and gliders to commit crimes. The bread and butter of Batman had always been outlandishly themed and gimmicked bad guys.

It took writer Tony Isabella and another half-decade of time (a half-decade closer into American comics' post-modern dive into the anti-hero and self-referentiality) to give Kite Man his secret identity, and to deliberately make him comedic. Isabella brought the character in for a single issue of his run on *Hawkman* in 1986.

"I had been writing some pretty grim stuff for the characters," Isabella told me via email. "I decided issue #4 would be a treat for myself. ... I always loved Kite-Man. He was one of those goofy obsessed Batman villains, so lame I figured I would have a better than 50-50 chance of beating him myself. He was just the right touch of light villainy I needed for my lighter-than-usual issue."

Not only did Isabella give Kite Man a civilian name for the first time, he left the character in a

KITE MAN, WHO HE IS AND HOW HE CAME TO BE



Yes, father ... I will become a kite. Bill Finger, Chris Russell, Dick Sprang/DC Comics

You might not be as familiar with the name of Bill Finger as you are with Bob Kane, who took full credit and compensation for the creation of

Batman for decades. Kane only publicly admitted Finger's contributions to Batman years after the latter's death in 1974. Finger had died penniless and alone, his body lying undiscovered in his apartment for several days.

Bill Finger laid fundamental building blocks of the DC Universe. He named Bruce Wayne and Gotham City and contributed major conceptual cornerstones to the Joker and Robin. He invented Batman's cape and cowl, his Batmobile and Batcave, and his noir detective nature. He created the villains of

most ignominious defeat — crashing into a tree while he exclaimed “Rats!”

“Charlie Brown was a natural choice,” Isabella said, “as was adding a kite-eating tree to the issue. It’s one of my proudest moments in comics.”

“WHAT THE HECK EVEN IS KITE MAN’S DEAL?”

“The thing about Kite Man,” King said at San Diego, and then changed the tack of his sentence.

“Condiment King,” he continued. “That was created as a joke. Someone’s like ‘Ahaha, that’d be funny; if Batman fought someone named Condiment King.’ Dude, someone took Kite Man very seriously to create him. Bill Finger created Kite Man! He’s like ‘I’ve created three things in my life, Batman, Robin, Kite Man! Nailed it!’”

That contrast, between an inherently silly character intended seriously; between a simple, obscure supervillain and one of the most famous tragicomic characters in newspaper strips ever, tickled King.

“If you take those old ideas seriously, if you take the genius those people put in — that Bill Finger put into this character — and be like ‘Wow, there’s real pathos in the idea of a kite flying into a tree.’ And if there’s real pathos, then I’m going to exploit it.”

Enter “The War of Jokes and Riddles,” King’s story of how Batman became entangled in a supervillain gang war between the Joker, who finds he can’t find anything funny anymore, and the Riddler, who wants revenge on the Joker for shooting him in the gut.

In *Batman #27*, it’d been four issues since we’d seen hide or hair of Kite Man.

King’s *Batman* comic had never mentioned his true name.

I explain this because you’re reading a post about Kite Man. You’re going to see this coming a mile away — in practice, King pulled off a masterful twist.

“The War of Jokes and Riddles” is all about Batman self-flagellating with an exhaustive tally of the lives he was unable to save in the Joker and Riddler’s war — he has made sure that he knows their families, their histories and how they met their grisly, random fates. And *Batman #27* is about one of those small victims — a former Joker henchman with some education in aerodynamics who once worked on the design for the Jokermobile.

It begins with Batman walking into a bar (already the set up for a joke), grabbing that henchman and demanding that he set up a meeting with the Joker, so that Batman can capture him and end the war. From there, this hapless Gotham native, who goes by the name Chuck Brown, is pulled three ways between Batman, the Joker and the Riddler, all of whom think they’re using him to get one over on his opponent.

There is one quiet moment among all these scenes of Brown’s family getting threatened if he doesn’t agree to triple-cross three of the most dangerous men in Gotham City. A moment where he flies a kite with his son, Charlie, and admonishes him for using a curse word. For saying, “Hell yeah.”

The meeting doesn’t go well.





“Good grief.” *Tom King, Clay Mann/DC Comics*
 His family gets put in protective services, but it’s too late. Riddler knew, even before the meeting, that Brown would double-cross him, and he poisoned his son with a chemical on his kite string. Brown does the only thing that makes sense in Gotham City, the thing that *only* makes sense in Gotham City.

He uses his degree in aerodynamics engineering to make himself a kite-based supervillain, and goes to fight for Joker’s side of the gang war. The final page of the issue gives the reader its title, “The Ballad of Kite Man, Part 1.” Batman’s failure to save an innocent life has created yet another tragic and dangerous foe, and another set of names for his guilt list.



Oh no. Oh no.

Tom King, David Finch/DC Comics

It’s sad. A father watching his son die. It’s also *hilarious*. A poisoned kite string? Kite Man, hell yeah? Chuck Brown? Batman walks into a bar? “Good grief?”

Suddenly, Kite Man is more than a joke. He’s a character, he has pathos. He’s a minnow among sharks, as the tide turns against the Joker and his allies, as Batman and the Riddler’s forces take them down, one by one.

He’s a joke, and you root for him. You want *something* to go right for him.

You want Tom King to just *let him kick the football for once in his sad little life*. He doesn’t. While King makes Kite Man the emotional heart of “The War of Jokes and Riddles,” he (without

spoiling the exact events) also makes him the lynchpin of the Riddler’s ultimate plot. Kite Man is the punchline on an elaborate joke the Riddler is telling the Joker, in an effort to solve Gotham’s biggest riddle.



“Because you’re a joke. Because you’re weak, cowardly, because you’re ...” “Kite Man.”

Tom King, Clay Mann/DC Comics

It turns out, in the end, that the Riddler *made* Kite Man. He made him to be a joke. And Tom King took a joke character and made him something that it takes a two-thousand word article to fully explain.

“This wasn’t called the Joker and Riddler War, it was called the War of Jokes and Riddles,” he told me at New York Comic Con, in the week after the arc’s final issue and the reveal of the Riddler’s plan. “The idea of Kite Man was he combined both of those, in some ways. He’s an utter joke. You say Kite Man, people laugh. He’s the joke of a hero. But he’s also this little riddle because there’s no understanding him. ‘Who is Kite Man?’ is the riddle.

“It started out as just a joke, but it turned into a riddle, it solved something ... Because what Riddler does at the end — he’s like ‘I solved the riddle by making a joke.’”

KITE MAN, HELL YEAH



From “The Ballad of Kite Man, Part 2.”

Tom King, Clay Mann/DC Comics

“Not interested. They’re just a boring character,” is a line you can find in comment after comment and forum post after post when people gather to discuss long-running

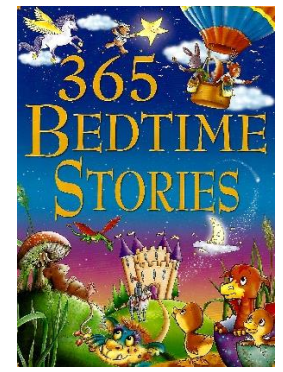
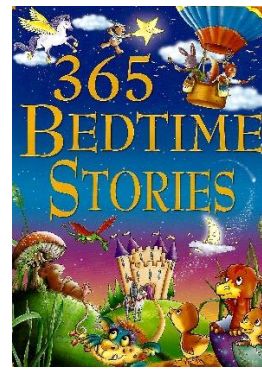
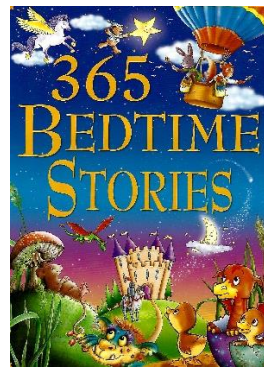
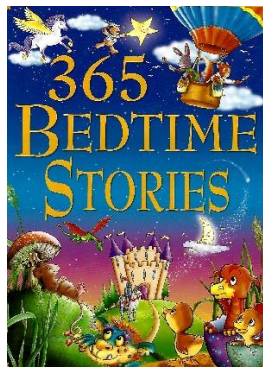
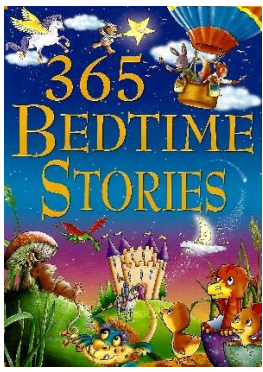
superhero settings. If Tom King's Kite Man says anything, it's that there's no such thing.

This is the magic of never ending, serialized comics, as King effused at San Diego Comic-Con, an event dominated by movie studios but still the annual house that comics built. "The history of taking old ideas seriously."

A jewel thief with a cold gun can become a grieving husband moved to crime. A serial killer can become an elaborate prankster — and then a serial killer again. A bumbling servant can become an essential father figure and narratively necessary foil throughout every adaptation in mainstream media.

And a character earnestly created by a tragic figure of comics history and made a joke by time — can be seamlessly converted into a tragicomic figure by way of the exact characteristics that make him laughable.





Kite Flying

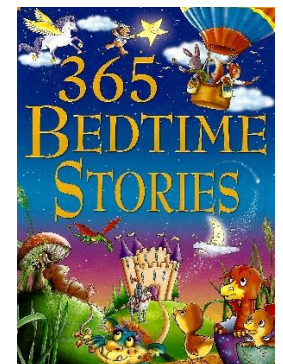
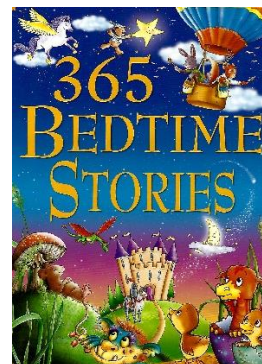
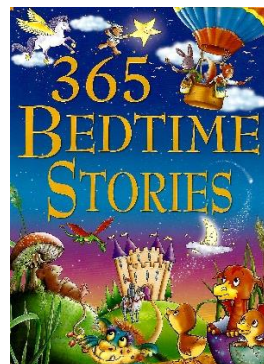
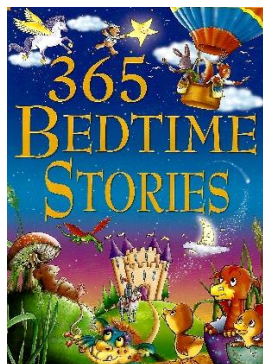
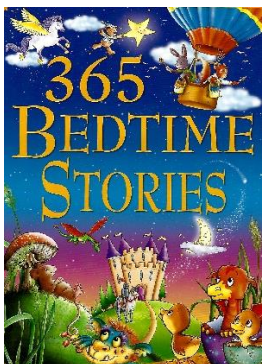
Dad bounded into the kitchen, clearly looking very happy. “What’s up, Joe?” he asked his son, who was staring grumpily into his cereal bowl.

“The wind!” It had kept Joe awake all night and he was tired.

“Isn’t it great?” said Dad as he ran out of the room. Joe was confused. Dad quickly returned and, with a grin, he dumped what looked like a pile of rubbish on the table. “Let’s make a kite!” he grinned.

Joe was very excited. He’d never had a kite before!

Using string and sticks, tape and paper, they cut and stuck, wrapped and tied until finally it was ready. They were soon outside flying their kite, which swooped and soared in the sky. Joe hoped it would be windy again the next day, too!



MIDLANDS KITE FLIERS CLUB KITE FLY-IN COFTON PARK

SUNDAY 2nd JANUARY 2022

LOWHILL LANE, LONGBRIDGE, BIRMINGHAM, B31 2BQ.



MIDLANDS KITE FLIERS OF GREAT BRITAIN

c/o 52 Shepherd's Court, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire, WR9 9DF.

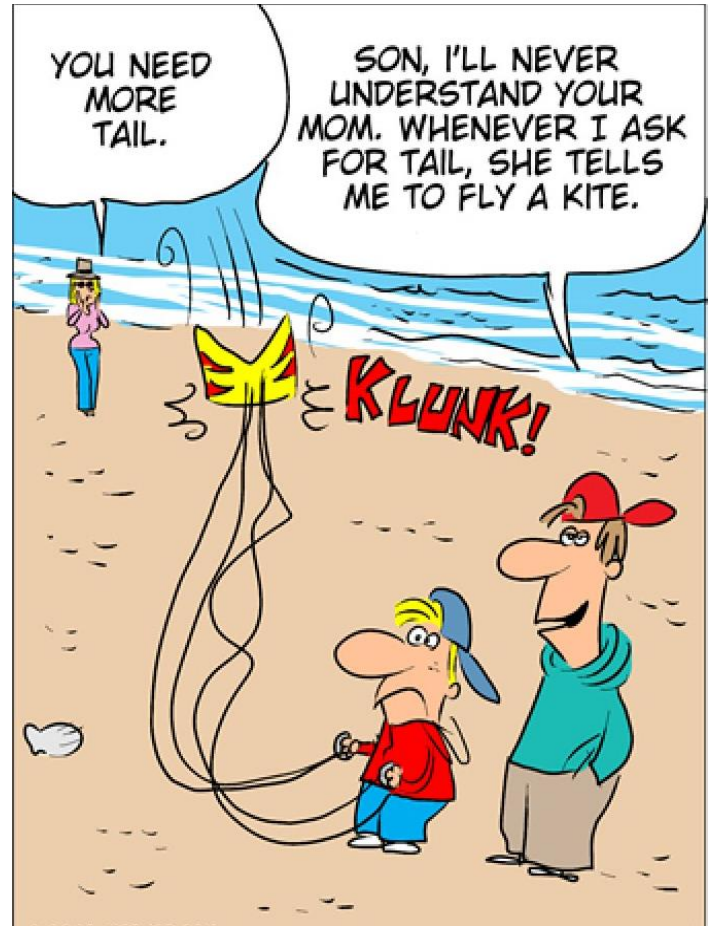
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In the event of poor weather conditions the fly-in will be cancelled.
It is always advisable to check that the event is happening before travelling any distance
All our 'fly-ins' are Civil Aviation Authority and Site Owner approved.



"STRONG WIND TODAY?"



"HEY, YOU TWO LOVEBIRDS...LET'S GET BACK IN FORMATION!!"



With thanks to Dan Thompson and Jens Kricke Mai

Evolution of a Kite That Will Lift a Man

Editor's note: For balance in its historical and contemporary coverage, this publication runs occasional first person accounts of old, important experiments with kites. Herewith is an elegantly written article from the April 1899 issue of McClure's magazine by a 39-year-old serving Scots Guards officer in England, brother of the founder of the Boy Scout movement.

By Captain B.F.S. Baden-Powell

It is very remarkable how people pass by good inventions and good ideas and won't take to them. Kites, for instance, have been known for hundreds of years. Everyone knows of them the world over, yet till a few years ago no one thought of putting them to any use. When I say no one, I do not mean that exactly, for Franklin and others, of course, used kites for meteorological experiments; Pocock drew a little carriage along with them, and several others suggested their use for life-saving at sea. But it has been only during the last three or four years that inventors have taken up this long neglected contrivance, and now we hear of remarkable kite experiments in many different countries. It is, however, of my own particular improvements that I write.

My first object was to get an idea of the capabilities of a kite for lifting weights. Naturally the lift depends on the strength of the wind; and I soon found that the wind varies so greatly in strength, that it is very difficult to get accurate working figures. One day I had a kite of some 20 feet up, and found that I could put stone after stone into the little bag hanging beneath, up to a total weight of six pounds, and not overweight the kite. I felt quite triumphant. On this basis, three-tenths pound per square foot, a kite of 500 square feet should lift a man. Thus encouraged, I worked all the harder. But I soon found that the kite is an awkward customer to deal with when you get on the wrong side of him. He can be very bad tempered, and often refuses to do what he is told. I had to devise new methods of construction in order to keep portable so huge an apparatus as I required. First, the tail required consideration (for I had been brought up to believe that a kite must have a long

appendage of string with bits of paper tied along it at intervals). This tail was the bother of my life. The papers got wet and tore off. I substituted bits of stick. Then I thought it was not heavy enough, and added weights. Next, I imagined it did not have enough resistance to the wind, and I put on canvas cones. And, then, oh dear! The bother when that tail became entangled. Well, one day it was blowing very hard, and the kite would not fly steadily. I added more and more to the tail, till finally I put a great bush on the end of it. The kite went up, then dived over, and then circled round and round, the bush alternately sweeping the ground and the sky, until it nearly swept me off the face of the earth. At last I got the kite down, and sorrowfully took the whole tail off, determined to add still more length and weight. But a sudden gust came, and took the kite right out of my hands. Up it went, indecently tailless, and flitted about like a bat, though on the whole much steadier than it had been with the ponderous string of brushwood hanging from it. From that day I have rarely put a tail on a kite.

That was one great result. I went on improving details, but made no important step until March 1893, when, after trying a great many unsatisfactory arrangements for steering the kite out of the wind course, I hit upon the plan of having two flying lines, one on each side of the center. In this way, I found, I could not only steer my kite to a remarkable extent on either side of the wind course; but in a gusty, variable wind, I could, by fastening the two lines at a distance apart, keep the kite floating perfectly steady. I then returned to weight-lifting. After many trials, I was one day delighted to get a kite of about 100 square feet to lift a weight of 56 pounds clear of the ground. I now made the kites bigger and bigger until, in May 1894, I had

Baden-Powell

a huge contrivance of bamboo and canvas, 36 feet high, with an area of about 500 square feet. To get a sailmaker to piece together the lightest canvas for the cover was easy enough, but how to make the frame was the difficulty. To calculate the strain would be the way to begin, but what wind was I to allow for? If I made provision for a gale, my apparatus would weigh so much that no light breeze could lift it. So I began the other way. I got some light bamboos, lashed them together, and stretched the canvas on the framework. It rose majestically, quietly doubled up and collapsed, and sank to the ground a wreck. So I made a stronger framework, and sent the kite up by two cords, with a basket suspended between them.

The result was satisfactory as far as it went, but that wasn't far. I smashed dollars and dollars worth of bamboo. Again and again, when I thought I had made a really good piece of apparatus, some little detail would go wrong; the kite would rise up in the wind, turn sideways, and come plump down against the ground, smashing every bone in its body. To me it was heart-rending to see, but to mere spectators it proved most entertaining. They roared with laughter.

However we progressed; and so satisfactory did our work at last become that one day—it was June 27, 1894—we decided on putting it to the crucial test. The question, not so much with me, for I was very confident, but with assistants and lookers, was, "Will it lift a man?" The weather was not favorable. The wind came and went: a strong puff, and then a lull. As he seemed so light, I was kind enough to allow my youngest and lightest brother officer to take the seat of honor in the basket, and see if he could be lifted. The kite was meanwhile flying perhaps 50 feet overhead.

Suddenly the wind freshened. There was a creak of the basket, and up it went, man and all, while we retained hold of the cords to prevent his being carried too high. My machine had really lifted a man. I then got into the basket. It lifted me, too!

Again we persevered, and gradually the kite improved and grew more tractable. I now found that numerous difficulties arose from having so big an apparatus,

not the least being that it proved much too powerful in a strong wind. So I returned to smaller kites, and fixed several together, their number depending on the wind force.

I had come to the conclusion that the best shape, considering lightness, convenience of folding up, power to lift, and ease of making was one in which the frame consisted of three poles of equal length, one placed upright and called the "backbone," the other two put across the "backbone" at right angles, at a distance from either end of it equal to about one-sixth of its length. The shape was thus nearly hexagonal. This form, for want of a better name, I christened "Levitor." The most convenient size was that in which poles not more than 12 feet long were used. This made the area of the kite about 120 square feet.

From just lifting a man, I got to lifting him easily. Once a kite takes hold a man, it may lift him to any height. If it was capable of lifting a man during the puffs 10 or 12 feet (in the intervals letting him down with a bump), why not 300 or 400 feet? But what about that bump? At first I took care that no one should ascend to a greater height than he could safely fall, however much the kite might want to take him higher. I tried to arrange that the lowest kite should act as a parachute in the event of the wind dropping or the rope breaking. This I tested while a good fat sandbag was the occupant of the car. All I can say is that I am glad it was a sandbag and not a man. I thenceforward adopted a regular parachute, but the objection to this was that it wouldn't open until it had fallen about 50 feet; so if my man chanced to be up no more than that height, and an accident occurred, the parachute was not of much use, and even such a detail as a drop of 50 feet I didn't care to leave unprovided for. I next arranged a framework to the parachute to keep it permanently distended.

Things were now going so well I decided on a public exhibition, and I took the apparatus down to Ipswich to show to the savants of the British Association. There were many delays at starting. I had no experienced assistants. But when we got to the business, the five kites did their work well. With the parachute spread above my head and balloon-like car to stand

in, I went up to the end of the tether, 100 feet. Numerous trips to this height were also made by others.

Anybody can understand a kite's lifting in a strong wind, but to be really useful it ought to lift also in a calm. You may say that the whole principle of a kite depends upon wind; but does not the smallest schoolboy know otherwise? If he wants his kite to go up, what does he do? Why, he runs with it. So I got about 20 men, one very calm day, and set them to run, but the difficulty was that the men got out of breath and couldn't go for more than a few seconds—though in this time a man was actually lifted off the ground. Then I tied the rope to the back of a cab, and set that going, but the old horse was too lazy to get up speed. Next I fixed a kite directly to a horse. This did very well for one kite, but one was not enough to lift a man; so one day we arranged a number of kites in tandem, laid them on the ground, fixed the car in place, and laid out a rope about 1,000 feet long, and attached it to the horse. In order to get the desired space, this rope was carried over an oak fence.

When all was ready, the signal was given, and off went the horse. Just as the kites were going to lift, I noticed something wrong with them. I shouted to stop the horse, but the groom did not hear. I ran forward to set the kite right if possible, but I only pulled it over so it turned turtle and scraped along the ground. The other kites followed. I yelled out to stop the horse, but he became frightened and went tearing across the field, the car dragging and bumping along, and the kites continually catching in the ground and breaking. Soon the car came to the fence. There was a crash and a bang, some yards of fencing were hurled to the ground, and the horse, thus suddenly checked, turned a somersault and threw his rider like an arrow from a bow.

Another day I very nearly experienced a new sensation. There was a set of kites flying low. A long light line was suspended from the cable, and the greater part of this lay entangled on the ground. I was busy trying to get it disentangled when, for some reason, up went the kites, and down I fell on my back. I had

been dragged along thus for some yards, and was just about to be lifted a few hundred feet by my ankle, when a bystander rushed out and cut the cord.



A Baden-Powell man-lifting system.

five minutes. I now require no manual labor to haul down, as the kites can be lowered by a gentle pull on the "regulating line," which determines the angle they present to the wind. If the apparatus catches in a tree and gets torn, it makes but little difference, and the injury is easily remedied. If it were a balloon to which the mishap befell, the gas would be lost, three wagon loads more would be required to refill it, and it would need very careful patching before it could be used again. The same advantage would be held by the kite if a hostile bullet had penetrated either apparatus. And then, finally, the kite would involve, originally, probably not the 20th part of the cost of the balloon; perhaps not a 100th part.



FUN
IN
THE ICE
AND
SNOW



FUN
IN
THE ICE
AND
SNOW

Discover Yuzawa's Traditional Japanese Kites

By Cyrielle Ugnon-Coussioz November 30, 2019

Have you ever flown a kite before? While in Western countries, kites are considered a child's toy, in Japan, they are enjoyed by people of all ages. Aside from being a hobby that enables one to enjoy the outdoors, kites are an **integral part of traditional Japanese art**.

There are hundreds of styles and types of kites, and each region has its own shape. Decorated with the most beautiful colours, the most original shapes and drawings most often represent historical Japanese **characters from Kabuki theater**; they have a religious and symbolic meaning.

Japanese kites are among the **most spectacular in the world**, both for their aesthetic value and for the tradition they perpetuate, not to mention the pleasure they bring.

During my stay in Yuzawa, Akita Prefecture, I had the opportunity to discover the secrets of the creation of these masterpieces, in Shunpu-Kan (春風館), the workshop of Mr. Ono – the president the Yuzawa Kites Association. More than an initiation, it was **an encounter with a true artist** who perpetuates an ancestral art, unfortunately now in decline in Japan.



A history of Japanese kites

It is said that kites, or “tako”, were first introduced to Japan during the Nara period (710-794 AD) by Chinese Buddhist missionaries. Originally used in religious ceremonies and celebrations, the Japanese have largely assimilated Chinese culture, but have also **developed their own varieties of kites and their use.**

It was during the Edo period (1603 – 1868), when Japan closed its trade with foreign countries, that most of the Japanese kites we know today flourished. The rectangular shape of the Chinese kite has given way to many new shapes: cranes, dragons, fish, etc. These new representations symbolized longevity, prosperity and strength. Kites were then used as **talismans to avert evil spirits.**



In 1655, the Tokugawa Shogunate banned the flying of kites following several accidents and falls from the rooftops. For a time, it was only allowed on New Year's Eve and **it became a tradition to celebrate the new year.** Nowadays, it is **still common to offer a kite for many occasions,** such as on Children's day on May 5th. You will see many kites flying during the many festivals that are held all over the country.

Yuzawa kites, a 300-year-old tradition

While the tradition of Japanese kites tends to be lost nowadays, Yuzawa kites continue a tradition that dates back as far as the Genroku era (1688 – 1704).

The Shunpu-Kan workshop exhibits a multitude of kites, including those of the “Managu” type, which are made in Yuzawa and which are characterized by the large eyes of the characters depicted – “Managu” means “eyes” in the local dialect. Deep black or brightly coloured, the kites are covered with illustrations portraying samurai and kabuki characters. These are **real masterpieces, entirely made by Mr. Ono and other kite enthusiasts of past generations.**





Mr. Ono offers initiation workshops to create your own kite and take it home as a souvenir. More than a workshop, it is an opportunity to **enter a unique artistic universe**. At the door, Mr. Ono, with a cigarette in his mouth and a deep caring look, welcomes you and guides you into his studio. From the entrance on the ground floor, one is **greeted by the faces of Japanese historical figures**.



The workshop is perched at the top of a narrow staircase that leads to a large room in which the ceilings are also covered with kites.

The art of creating a Japanese kite

A traditional kite consists of a lightweight bamboo frame, on which handmade paper painted in bright colours with natural pigments is hung, and the outlines of which are painted with *sumi* (black ink). The illustrations are challenging; some kites are very large in size and many require considerable drawing skills but also handling skills to enable them to fly.



During the workshop, we were able to participate in each step of the creation of a kite, under the supervision of Mr. Ono. First, we draw the contours in ink following the pattern that appears by transparency. To do this, three different brushes are used, depending on the thickness of the lines and the desired effect. Maintaining the brush and how to move it is an art in itself, and Mr. Ono was kind enough to do it with me to get started.





The bamboo frame is then created, and the drawing is attached to the frame.





Finally, the strings are inserted to launch the kite and guide it when it flies.



Each step requires meticulousness and concentration, but Mr. Ono is a good teacher and will know how to guide you!

When the workshop was over, I was delighted to be able to take my own creation home. For those who do not have room in their luggage to travel with the kite, it is possible to send it to the address you want from the local *konbinis* (Family Mart, 7-Eleven, etc.).



A wonderful experience of Yuzawa culture

In my opinion, participating in a workshop with Mr. Ono is an opportunity not to be missed to **discover this ancestral art in a fun and friendly way**, whatever your age. A cultural activity that will perfectly complete your stay in Yuzawa.

I was particularly touched by Mr. Ono's generosity and sense of detail, who organizes these workshops to visitors above all out of **passion and of taste for transmission**: the workshop lasts 3 hours and costs only **700 yen per person!**

Access and practical information

It is necessary to book in advance by contacting by email the Geopark Promotion Group, Tourism and Geopark Division, Yuzawa City

Hall: geopark@city.yuzawa.lg.jp (website: <http://www.yuzawageopark.com/en>). The workshop costs 700 yen per person, only cash payment.

Mr. Ono's house is a 15-minute walk from Yuzawa JR station, accessible in about 4 hours from Tokyo and 1h40 from Akita.

You can find more information about the Yuzawa region on the website of the Yuzawa Tourism Office as well as the Akita Prefecture Tourism Office (in English).

For my part, I was able to discover the region while admiring the autumn leaves in the Oyasukyo gorges, and staying in a luxurious ryokan, in the heart of breathtaking landscapes.

EUROPEAN AIR GALLERY

The European Air Gallery is a unique collection of Edo Kites painted by European artists. The collection is now owned by North East Kite Fliers, a kite club based in the North East of England. The collection was a gift to the club in March 1998 from Sunderland City Council, who wanted these unique kites to stay in the North East and continue to be exhibited or flown at Sunderland's own International Kite Festival held at Washington, Tyne and Wear, UK, at the beginning of July each year.

The European Air gallery was an innovation promoted by Sunderland City Council early in 1994 when the first phase of the project was launched. The inspiration for the project came from the Hague Air Gallery in Holland where some years ago Gerard van der Loo in collaboration with Els Lubbers initiated a wonderful air gallery of Edo style kites painted by many well known Dutch artists. This original Hague Air Gallery gained an international reputation and was an inspiration to many kite makers and artists alike across the world.

Sunderland City Council with its team of enthusiastic workers from the Department of Education and Community Services found sponsorship for this project and this culminated in the production of 22 of these unique works of art. Gerard van der Loo gave guidance to the team and made the kite sails and frames at his kite shop, Vlieger Op in Holland. The project achieved its full potential during The Year of the Visual Arts in 1996. Sunderland City Council staff took the kites to many European venues to display and fly with the help of locally trained volunteers. In the UK, the kites have been displayed at a number of venues including Newcastle and Stanstead airports and in the Civic Centre and Central Library in Sunderland. Each year they have been flown at The Sunderland International Kite Festival.

In 1997 Sunderland City Council felt that the Kite Collection had achieved all the objectives set for the project and therefore the council offered the collection to North East Kite Fliers, the present owners of the Kites.

North East Kite Fliers accepted the gift and will endeavour to continue to promote the collection and Sunderland's role in the origination of the collection and the wonderful work done by the original team. The club will display or fly the kite whenever possible, in particular at Sunderland's International Kite Festival.

Basic technical information about the kites:

The kites are based on the Japanese Edo Kite with the sails made in rip-stop nylon.

The frames are made from detachable fibre glass and carbon fibre spars.

The kites are rectangular standing 2.4 metres tall and 1.4 metres wide.

The kites have 17 bridle/flying lines about 30 metres long, arranged in two groups, each terminating in a padded wrist strap, the top group ends in a red strap and when pulled causes the kite to climb, the other strap is yellow and is the handle for descent. The bridle lines all pass through a plastic grid to keep them separated and running free. The ascent and descent of the kites can be controlled using the two handles but very little control can be exerted on any lateral flight. This system of two handle control was devised by the Vlieger Op team in Holland.

The sails have been painted with a special Dupont paint Teflon, the brand name of the paint is Lucite Household Paint manufactured in Germany. It is imported into this country and is available in a limited range of colours but not in small tins. It is a water-based paint and in Holland the Dutch suppliers will mix almost any colour. Whilst it is an expensive paint probably around £12 to £15 a litre, a little goes a long way.

More details are available from the North East Kite Fliers Secretary: *Peter Heayns*



ANGEL



CHAIRS



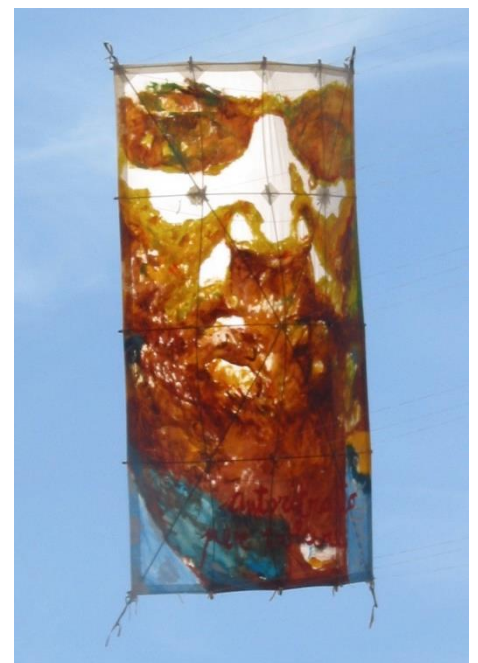
ANGEL BLOSSOMING



CITY IN THE SKY



ARTIFICE



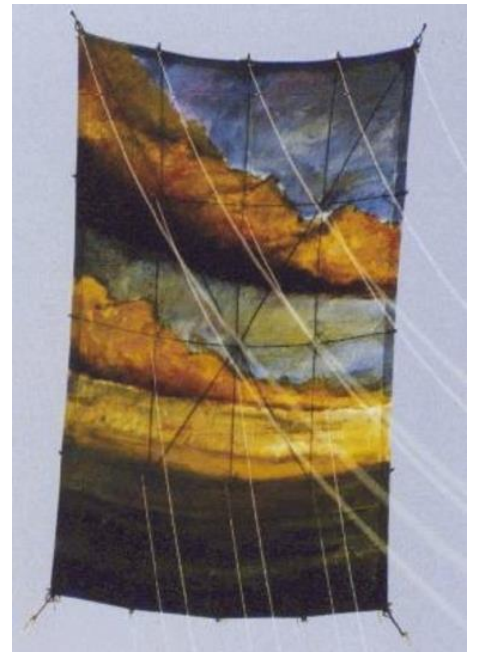
CLAUDIO TRIMMED



FALLING RAIN



MEOW MEOW



PASSING OVER US



FLOATING FORMS



MOTHER AND DAUGHTER



PEACOCK



LEDA



PINK TAP



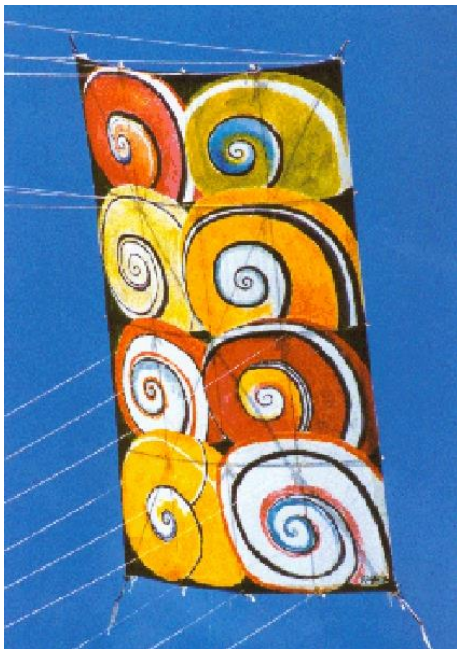
RIVE UNTITLED



TWO DEVILS



YELLOW THING WITH FEET



SNAILS IN THE SUNSET



WILD IS THE WIND



ZEPHYR

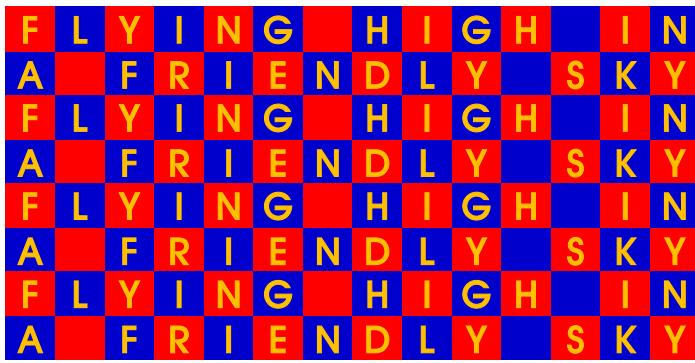


STAINED GLASS WINDOW



WINGED HORSE





Warnings issued over French kites

By James Jeune Jersey News Published: Jul 20, 2021

EMERGENCY services scrambled to intercept 'three giant whales and an octopus' over the weekend after north-easterly winds blew them in from the French coast.

Flying High (In the Friendly Sky)

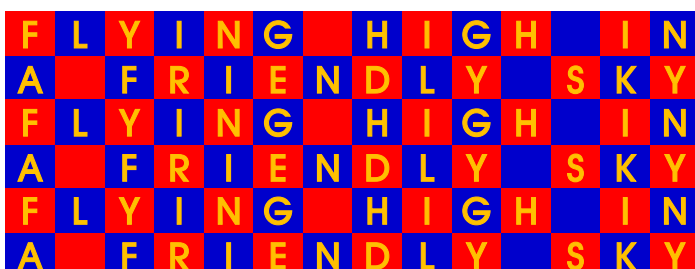
Marvin Gaye 1971

Flying high in the friendly sky
Flying high without ever leaving the ground, no
Rest of the folks are tired and weary
Oh Lord, and have laid their bodies down
I go to the place where danger awaits me
And it's bound to forsake me
So stupid minded
I can't help it, so stupid minded
But I go crazy when I can't find it
In the morning, I'll be alright, my friend
But soon the night will bring the pains
The pain, awful pain

Flying high in the friendly sky
Without ever leaving the ground
And I ain't seen nothing but trouble baby
Nobody really understands, no, no
And I go to the place where the good feeling
awaits me
Self destruction's in my hand
Oh Lord, so stupid minded
Oh and, I go crazy when I can't find it
Well I know I'm hooked my friends
To the boy who makes slaves out of men
And oh, believe me

[Outro]

Flying high in a friendly sky
Flying high in a friendly sky



Two of the kites spotted on Saturday. Picture: Juliet Pearmain.

The visitors to the Island's coasts – originally thought to be two 20-metre whales, a ten-metre octopus and a 30-metre whale – were in fact kites that had broken free from a festival on a beach in Carteret.

Islanders reported seeing the flying objects touching down in the sea north-east of Jersey on Saturday afternoon.

The Fire and Rescue Service launched their inshore lifeboat and successfully caught two of the kites, which were drifting in Bonne Nuit Bay, near Cheval Roc.

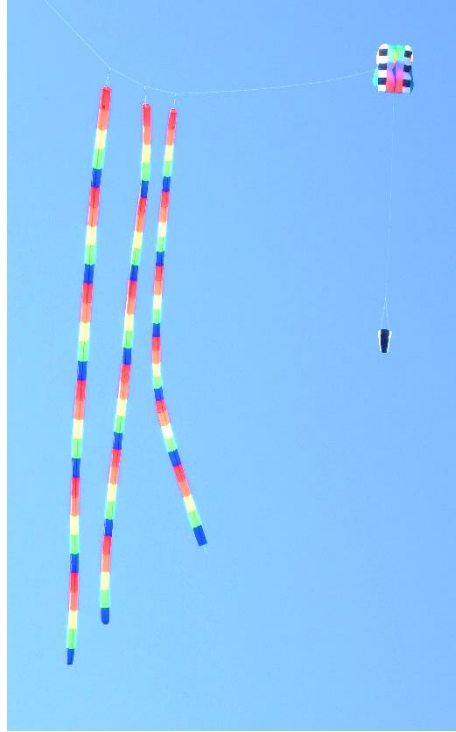
They were brought back to shore before being returned to their owners in Carteret.

Navigational warnings have been issued for the two kites still at sea, one of which is floating off the north coast. The other was last seen ditched by the Ecréhous reef.

A spokesperson for Ports of Jersey said that the objects presented a possible shipping hazard because of the cables attached to them.

The spokesperson said: 'From a coastguard perspective, this could actually have been a serious issue which is why the navigational warnings have been issued.'

Kite Festival Grŵyl y Barcud

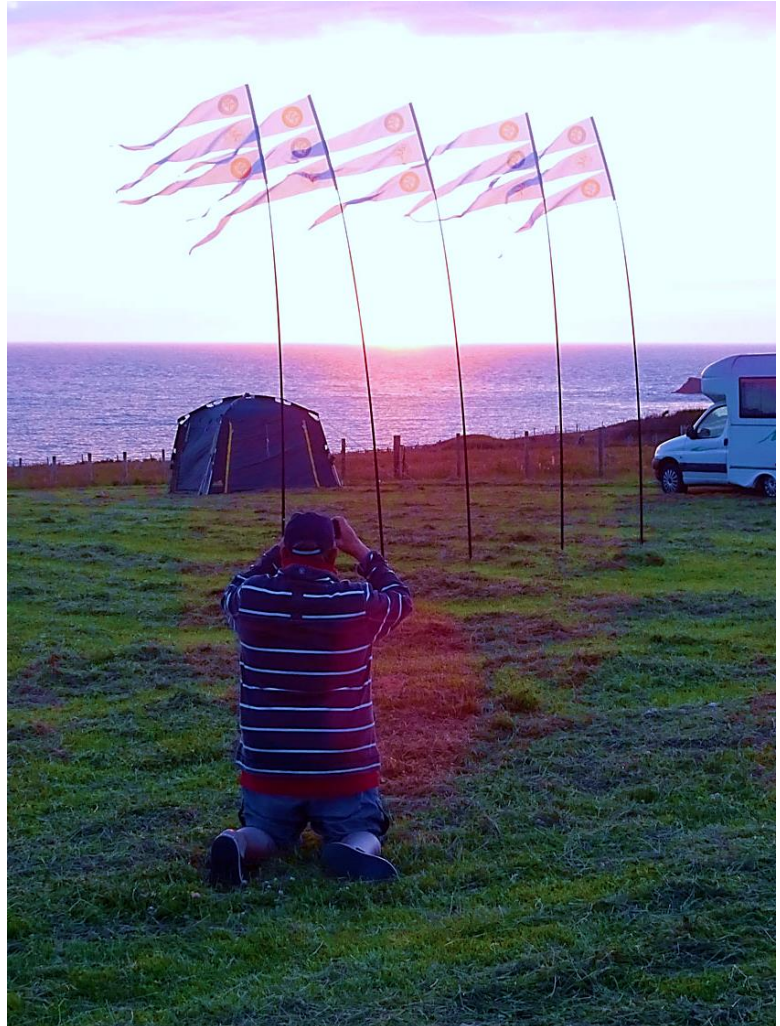


Kite Festival
Grŵyl y Barcud





Kite Festival
Grŵyl y Barcod





By ROY L CLOUGH JR.

**Unique gyrocopter-kite design
launches itself without towing,
costs less than \$1 to build**

New
"WHIRLYBIRD"
KITE

WHEN there's not enough room to run with a kite or too much wind to fly model airplanes, it's a perfect time and place to test fly this newly designed rotary-wing kite. All materials you'll need are available at your local hobby shop and in one evening's time you can have your 'copter-kite ready to fly.

First, layout the fuselage, stabilizer, rotors, and vanes (Fig. 3) on balsa stock and cut them out with a sharp hobby knife or razor blade. To shape the rotors and stabilizer, first crack them along scored lines as in Fig. 3A, then fill the crack with cement and prop up the end of the part until the cement dries. Note that the rotors are not identical, but are a pair, having opposite pitch for counter-rotation and are oppositely coned.

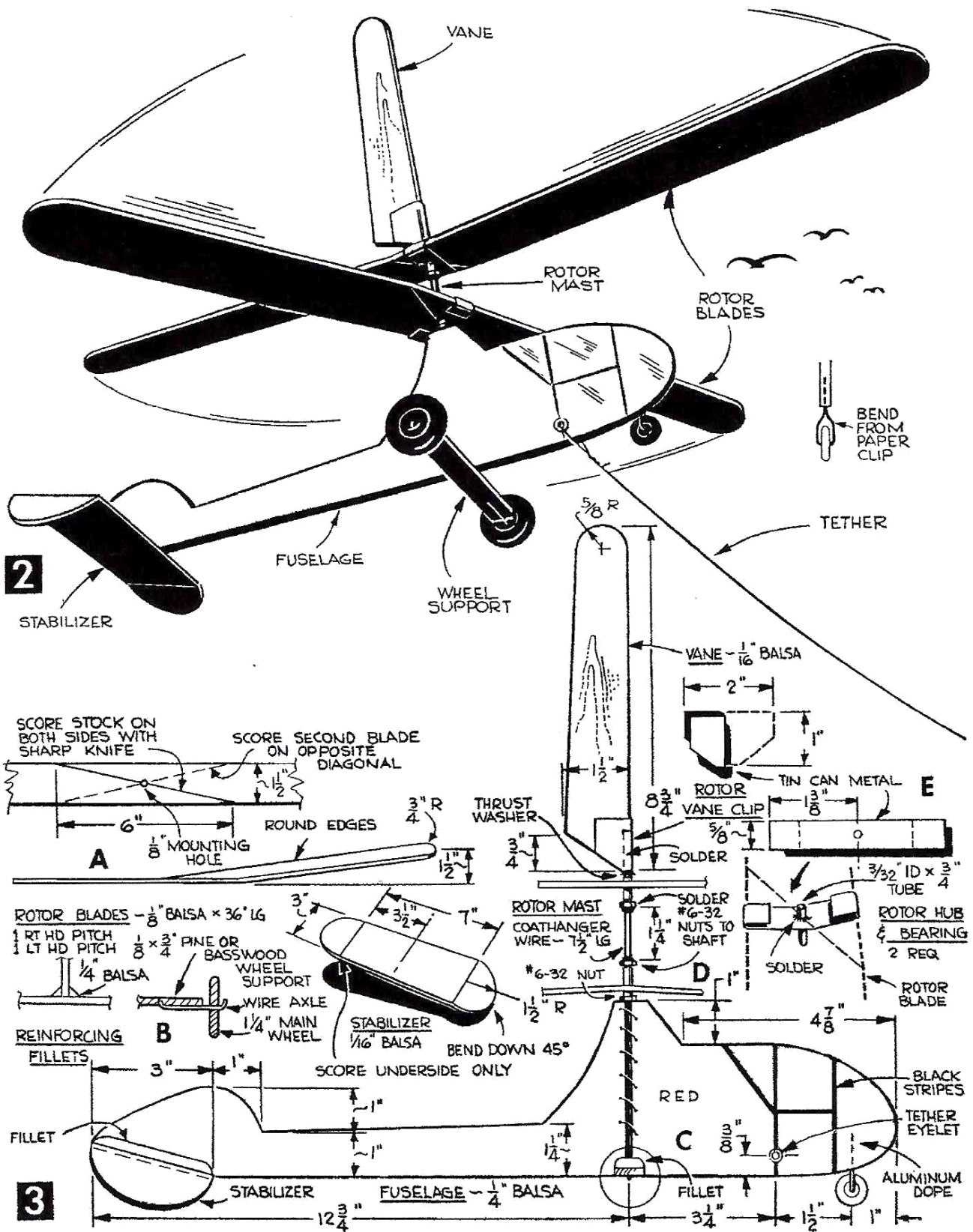
Now cement the stabilizer and landing gear support (Fig. SB) to the fuselage, reinforcing the joints with a fillet cut from the 1/4-in. balsa stock.

Next cut the rotor mast from coat hanger wire and cement this to the right side of the fuselage, 12 3/4 in. from the aft end. Reinforce by sewing it to the balsa with a needle and heavy thread, then coat the threads" with more cement. After installing the eyelet to which the tether attaches, sand the assembly with fine sandpaper and paint as in Fig. 3C, with model airplane dope. Do not apply dope to the rotors or vane.

The rotor bearings and hubs (Fig. 3D) are made of 3/4-in. lengths of tubing soldered to strips of tin can metal. Make two of these, form them over the blades, and cement them to the rotors as in Fig. 3E.

MATERIALS LIST—WHIRLYBIRD KITE

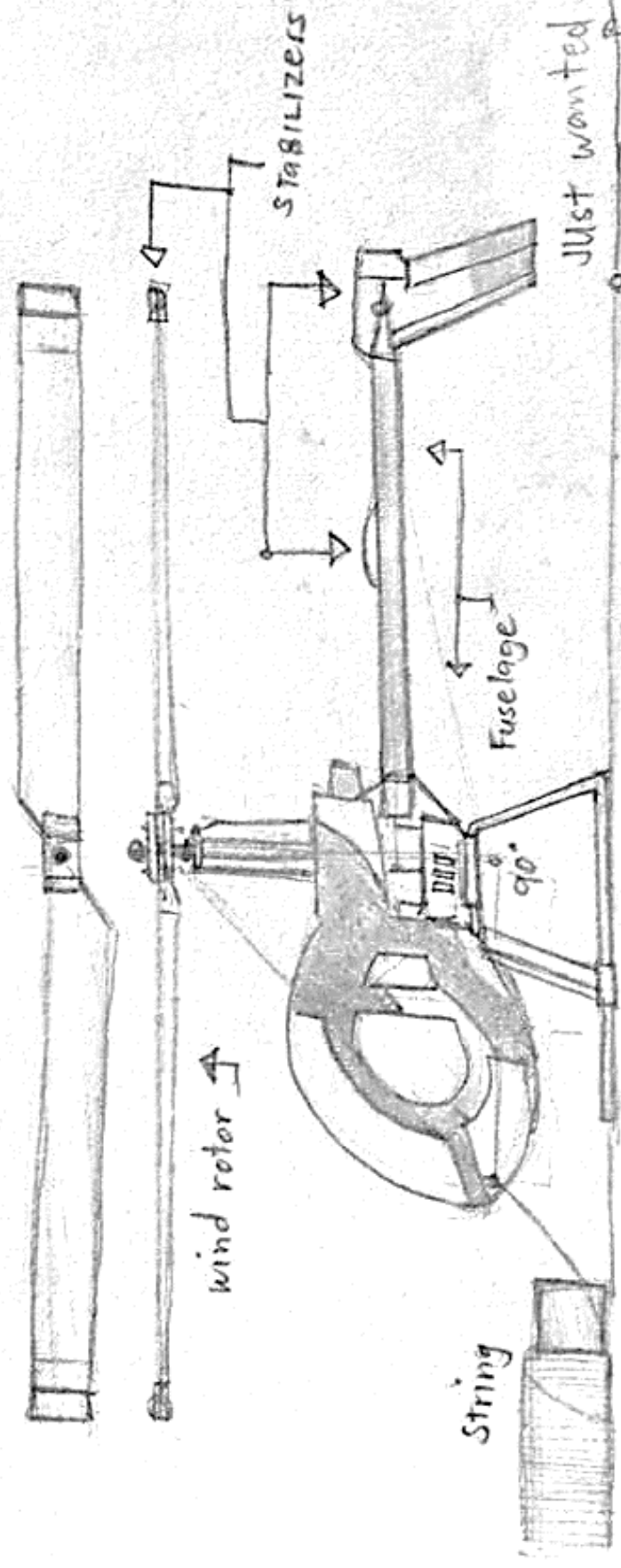
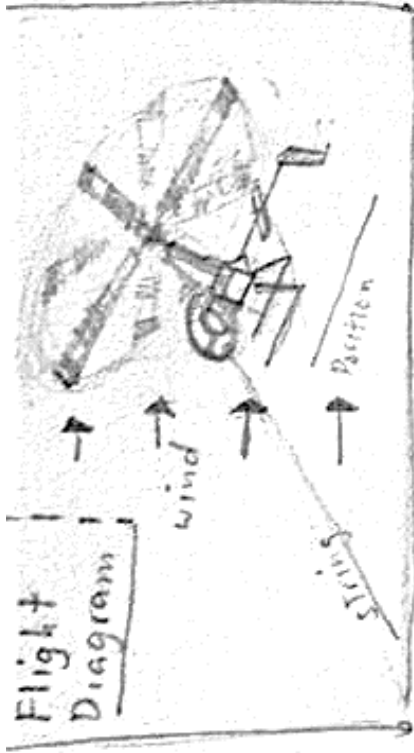
Amt. Req.	Size and Description	Use
1	1/8 x 3 x 36" sheet balsa	rotors
1	1/4 x 3 x 20" sheet balsa	fuselage
1	1/16 x 3 x 20" sheet balsa	vane, stabilizer
1	1/8 x 3/4 x 5" pine or basswood	landing gear support
2	1 1/4" Dia wooden wheels	main wheels
1	3/4" Dia wooden wheel	nose wheel
1	10" x .030 wire	axles
1	9" length coat hanger wire	rotor mast
3	#6-32 brass hex nuts	rotor spacers
1	3/32" id brass washer	thread washer
2	3/32" id x 3/4" brass tube	rotor bearings
1	2 x 4" tin can stock	rotor hubs
2	3/16" id brass eyelets	tether eye
Misc.	model airplane cement, red, black, and silver dope; and kite string	



Install the rotor blades on the mast next and solder hex nuts to the shaft to hold them in position. Slip pieces of brown paper over the shaft between each nut and the bearings to keep solder off of the bearings. Tear out the paper after soldering and lubricate with a drop of household oil.

When you have installed the vane (Fig. 2), and have made sure it is vertical, you are ready to flight test your model. Choose a spot

where you have a steady, moderately strong breeze, then tie the kite-string tether through the eyelet and pay off 30-40 ft. While an assistant holds the end of the line, hold the 'copter-kite at a steep angle into the wind and release it when the rotor blades are turning rapidly and you feel it lift. If it veers to either side, bend the rotor mast just below the vane in the opposite direction to offset the sidewise motion.



Just wanted to try...

HELI-KITE PROJECT
 Jhon L.P.
 Jhon L.P.
 2014

Lighter rotors makes the Helicopter balanced!

MIKE NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
MIDLANDS KITE FLIERS
OF GREAT BRITAIN

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL!





Benjamin Franklin Drawing Electricity from the Sky
is a c. 1816 painting by Benjamin West depicting the American founding father, Benjamin Franklin, conducting his kite experiment in 1752 to ascertain the electrical nature of lightning. The painting is exhibited at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wharton Sinkler in 1958.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND THE KITE EXPERIMENT

We all know the story of Franklin's famous kite-in-a-thunderstorm experiment. But is it the *true* story?



On a June afternoon in 1752, the sky began to darken over the city of Philadelphia. As rain began to fall and lightning threatened, most of the city's citizens surely hurried inside. But not Benjamin Franklin. He decided it was the perfect time to go fly a kite.

Franklin had been waiting for an opportunity like this. He wanted to demonstrate the electrical nature of lightning, and to do so, he needed a thunderstorm.

He had his materials at the ready: a simple kite made with a large silk handkerchief, a hemp string, and a silk string. He also had a house key, a Leyden jar (a device that could store an electrical charge for later use), and a sharp length of wire. His son William assisted him.

Franklin had originally planned to conduct the experiment atop a Philadelphia church spire, according to his contemporary, British scientist Joseph Priestley (who, incidentally, is credited with discovering oxygen), but he changed his

plans when he realized he could achieve the same goal by using a kite.

So Franklin and his son "took the opportunity of the first approaching thunder storm to take a walk into a field," Priestley wrote in his account. "To demonstrate, in the completest manner possible, the sameness of the electric fluid with the matter of lightning, Dr. Franklin, astonishing as it must have appeared, contrived actually to bring lightning from the heavens, by means of an electrical kite, which he raised when a storm of thunder was perceived to be coming on."

Despite a common misconception, Benjamin Franklin did not discover electricity during this experiment—or at all, for that matter. Electrical forces had been recognized for more than a thousand years, and scientists had worked extensively with static electricity. Franklin's experiment demonstrated the connection between lightning and electricity.

The Experiment

To dispel another myth, Franklin's kite was not struck by lightning. If it had been, he probably would have been electrocuted, experts say. Instead, the kite picked up the ambient electrical charge from the storm.

Here's how the experiment worked: Franklin constructed a simple kite and attached a wire to the top of it to act as a lightning rod. To the bottom of the kite he attached a hemp string, and to that he attached a silk string. Why both? The hemp, wetted by the rain, would conduct an electrical charge quickly. The silk string, kept dry as it was held by Franklin in the doorway of a shed, wouldn't.

The last piece of the puzzle was the metal key. Franklin attached it to the hemp string, and with his son's help, got the kite aloft. Then they waited. Just as he was beginning to despair, Priestley wrote, Franklin noticed loose threads of the hemp string standing erect, "just as if they had been suspended on a common conductor."

Franklin moved his finger near the key, and as the negative charges in the metal piece were attracted to the positive charges in his hand, he felt a spark.

“Struck with this promising appearance, he immediately presented his knuckle [sic] to the key, and (let the reader judge of the exquisite pleasure he must have felt at that moment) the discovery was complete. He perceived a very evident electric spark,” Priestley wrote.

Using the Leyden jar, Franklin “collected electric fire very copiously,” Priestley recounted. That “electric fire”—or electricity—could then be discharged at a later time.

Franklin’s own description of the event appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on October 19, 1752. In it he gave instructions for re-creating the experiment, finishing with:

As soon as any of the Thunder Clouds come over the Kite, the pointed Wire will draw the Electric Fire from them, and the Kite, with all the Twine, will be electrified, and the loose Filaments of the Twine will stand out every Way, and be attracted by an approaching Finger. And when the Rain has wet the Kite and Twine, so that it can conduct the Electric Fire freely, you will find it stream out plentifully from the Key on the Approach of your Knuckle. At this Key the Phial may be charg’d; and from Electric Fire thus obtain’d, Spirits may be kindled, and all the other Electric Experiments be perform’d, which are usually done by the Help of a rubbed Glass Globe or Tube; and thereby the Sameness of the Electric Matter with that of Lightning compleatly demonstrated.

Franklin wasn’t the first to demonstrate the electrical nature of lightning. A month earlier it was successfully done by Thomas-François Dalibard in northern France. And a year after Franklin’s kite experiment, Baltic physicist Georg Wilhelm Richmann attempted a similar trial but was killed when he was struck by ball lightning (a rare weather phenomenon).

After his successful demonstration, Franklin continued his work with electricity, going on to perfect his lightning rod invention. In 1753, he received the prestigious Copley Medal from the Royal Society, in recognition of his “curious experiments and observations on electricity.”

By Nancy Gupton. Published June 12, 2017.



Benjamin Franklin Drawing Electricity from the Sky

is a c. 1816 painting by [Benjamin West](#) depicting the American founding father, [Benjamin Franklin](#), conducting his [kite experiment](#) in 1752 to ascertain the electrical nature of lighting. The painting is exhibited at the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#), a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wharton Sinkler in 1958.

