



THE KITE NEWSLETTER



A Happy Christmas to all our members!
and a thank you to all the newsletter contributors during the year

Winter 2019



This remarkable photograph was taken by Brett Marchel at the successful breaking of the world record for the number of quad line kites flying simultaneously. The record was organised by US kite flier and NKG friend John Barresi. Taking part in the festival were Mark Jones and Jeremy Wharton who travelled to the west coast specially for the record attempt. More photographs from the festival can be seen on Facebook - 2019 WSIKF Quad Mega Fly World Record.

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Chairman's Note – December 2019

This, the Winter Newsletter will be my last as your Chairman. It seems a long time ago when I was approached at a very cold New Brighton fly-in and asked if I would consider taking the role. The six years since then have sped past and in those years there have been many changes. Festivals such as at Harwood House, Western Lakes at Haverigg (Millom), Silloth and Beacon are now just distant memories. Replacing them of course we now have the likes of Bridlington, Middleton Park and Rossendale. All part of the changing face of our kite flying.



One festival that surely deserves some good weather next year has got to be St. Annes!

This picture is from sunny 2015.

One of the changes that has taken place is the decline in activity at Otterspool. Our first glimpse there was just before we joined the NKG and was of a field full of kites. Lots of helpful flyers there, only too keen to show us around. Unfortunately with folk passing on and moving elsewhere there are now very few NKG flyers turning up there. So it doesn't seem sensible to continue holding the annual One Sky One World and Light Up the Sky events there. We also used to hold our Xmas meal at the Pub or Cafe there too. If the members want these events to continue then perhaps it is time to think of other venues where there might be more support. Any ideas, then please bring them to the AGM.

Flying my Rev into the sunset at Otterspool on a cold December Wednesday back in 2012.

As part of my role I took on various responsibilities including the stewardship of the NKG Rainbow Delta Kites. I would like to pass these on if anyone would be prepared to look after them. This would include making sure that they were available at the various festivals where they appear. After repairing them all after their early outings, they need very little upkeep now, just the odd bits of grass trimming from the tails but being able to do the odd sewing repair would be handy.



In conclusion I would like to thank all those who have helped and supported me through my Chairmanship. You have all been brilliant. I'm not going to be going very far so I hope to still see you all on kite fields into the future.

Len Royles

The Life of a Kite Trader

A History of GoKites - Tony and Marie Dane

The first full season - 2002

Over the winter we had replaced our gazebo for a market stall with a table, shelves and a big rectangular tarpaulin sheet with lots of big metal clips to fasten it all up and keep out the rain etc. This was much more professional than the Wilkinsons gazebo we had been using and it would stand up to the weather much better.

We had also ordered some polo shirts and sweatshirts from a friend of ours all embroidered with our logo and names as we intended to stand out from other kite traders as no others wore any form of uniform. We received a great price as we were only paying for the embroidery as our supplier had an embarrassing stock of these in maroon, so we had two or three of each, so we would look different in this new year.

We started off in 2002 contacting the various kite festival organisers to see if we could trade at their kite festival and just about everyone we spoke to was very understanding but advised us that they had an adequate number of kite traders to suit their event. We were disappointed with this but could understand. Obviously in perfect weather conditions a festival may have been able to support say two kite traders, and the two kite traders could do extremely well. In average weather conditions they could struggle to make a profit, but in poor weather they could actually lose money. Obviously with a third kite trader added, all three may do well in perfect conditions, but it would be possible for all three to lose money in poorer weather conditions.



Tony and Marie

One cold night!

It was obvious to us that we needed to find other types of events to try to sell our wares. We had found that a Game Fair was being held at Selby over the Easter weekend and booked in there for our first show of the year. We travelled down the A1M on Good Friday with our stocked van pulling the caravan behind and as we were getting close to the site, Marie put her head in her hands and announced that the caravan bedding was still in our house being aired off prior to use!! We knew that there was nothing we could do until the Saturday, so we would need to survive the Friday night without pillows and blankets etc. We positioned our caravan and put the heating on, got water etc and had a cuppa and a bite to eat, and then went off to the beer tent.

It was empty so we selected a table by a gas heater and thought we would wait it out for an hour before turning in for what was likely to be a cold night. A couple came in with their daughter and son and joined us by the fire, and we got chatting and they sold bedding. We got excited only to find that the bedding was packed in their van, but could not be accessed until their van was emptied into their stall, and the stall could not come out of the van until Saturday morning. We spent a few hours with our new friends and made arrangements to collect a quilt the following morning. We retired to our caravan and wasted no time in getting onto the bed and we stole our dog's blanket in an effort to keep warm. This was all we had apart from our caravan heater. In the morning Marie suggested that it was OK during the night and we had no need to go unnecessarily spending money on a quilt when we had a perfectly good one back home. I reminded her that she was having issues with hot flushes and I was suffering with a mild case of frostbite and I was not prepared to go another night like that.

We had survived the night and to demonstrate how cold it was we had the son of the bedding stall come to our caravan looking for a kettle of water as all of the standpipes on the field were frozen and the caravan water roller supply piped was frozen too. Luckily, we had a few bottles of water in the caravan so we managed to get a cuppa. The weekend went off OK, we sold mainly flags and various windsocks as well as display poles with only the odd kite. We covered the costs but nothing more, so we made notes to look for a better position on the field for the next year.

We spent our time looking for suitable shows, in the hope of taking some money to help pay bills, but also in the hope of generating a surplus. We had realised that we had a unique business, which was the ideal mix. Our Card and Gift shops were busy from October through to April so we would need more staff available then but when summer came around, it was time to shed some staff as there are no busy periods during the summer for greetings cards etc. The summer kite business made it almost perfect as Marie and I could step away from the shops to enable us to go off to festivals around the UK. We often left on a Thursday to travel and set up our caravan and then put up the stall on a Friday and stock it in readiness for the weekend. We would travel home late on a Sunday evening or on a Monday morning, depending on our location in the country. Monday and Tuesdays would be spent placing orders for our kite stall to get deliveries in in time to leave for another location on the Thursday. We also needed to place orders for cards and gifts for the four shops and go to a couple of warehouses to get stock and then distribute them around the shops before we hit the road again on Thursday. This mix meant that during the relatively quiet time during the summer in the shops we had no need to lay staff off. This also meant that staff, once trained stayed with us for years. This provided better service to the customers and less staff training for us.

A call from the NEKF

Out of the blue we received a call from the secretary of the North East Kite Fliers who invited us to trade at a Kite Festival at Stockton and we naturally jumped at the opportunity. We shared the event with Dave Salmon who had his kite stall but was also flying with his team Sky Symphony. We found it a little odd but he would simply leave his stall unattended and mention to us he was off to fly and could we keep an eye on his stall, which of course we would. We had a reasonable event and made a profit. We were still learning and it was educational to learn more of kites from a number of the fliers, and also helpful when they ask for specific items for us to stock. We had really enjoyed the event as we met a number of fliers that we had first met at Sunderland the previous year as well as a small event held at Blakelaw School in Newcastle. Roll on the next kite festival!

Phil Womack and the Flying Circus

We booked a number of shows which consisted of a mix of steam rallies, county shows, and truck shows mainly in the North East and southern Scotland and then we were contacted by Phil Womack of a Kite Group called Flying Circus in the North West and he was the organiser of the St Annes Kite Festival. He invited us to join a few other kite traders there and of course we agreed. We would also be going back to the Sunderland Kite Festival again later that year.

We had worked almost every weekend since Easter at a variety of shows and these differed tremendously. The steam rallies tended to be a weekend of various activities and a bar open all day and then at night there was often a live band or comedian on to entertain, whereas the county shows just closed to the public and everything closed down for the night. We enjoyed the social side of the steam rallies and walking around at night looking at the old traction engines all lit up and the smell of the coal smoke burning in the boilers. It was a lovely atmosphere.

We had learned that different stock was required for the different shows. Naturally at a kite festival we would mainly sell children's kites but we also needed to have larger kites of a more mature design to suit older public as well as the more advanced dual line kites. We also tried to look out for some of the more special designs to keep in more especially for the kite fliers. At steam rallies, truck shows and county fairs it was mainly windsocks, flags and display poles which were sold with only the odd kite.

At St Annes On The Sea

Excitement was building as we were about to depart for St Annes and we had been advised to take a shovel as we had been warned that we needed to move some sand from the area where our stall was to be erected. We arrived on the Friday morning to find that the car park sloped down towards the beach and there was a wall at the division of car park and beach. The wall was about 700mm high and there was around 300mm of sand up against the wall and this tapered to nothing in 1200mm. There was certainly a few tons of sand to move before we could start to erect the stall. This took a couple of hours before we could even start to get the stall out of the van. We eventually got the stall up and then Highwaymen Kites arrived and Dick Turpin, OK, yes you have made the link with the names, suggested that we needed to do some more digging. All of the kite traders had experienced floods in their stalls in past years due to the slope of the car park. The wall between the beach and the car park had drainage points but these were all blocked with sand, and a channel needed to be dug out to the rear to allow any water to run away. So once again the digging began!

Later with aching muscles we were putting our stock into the stall ready for what was hopefully to be a busy weekend. We were sharing the event with Highwaymen Kites from Leicestershire and a more local trader called Jake who had a kite shop in Newburgh. We had a good event considering there were three traders and we were getting the hang of dealing with the public at kite events and as we were gaining knowledge all of the time we were able to help people with their problems, even if it was to direct them to a particular flier on the kiting circuit.

As each kite festival passed, we were making new acquaintances and these acquaintances were becoming friends and we were also learning more and more about kiting. We were enjoying the new life we were leading, being out and about rather than stuck in a shop, we could see that this life would continue.

Sunderland

We now only had ten days to get prepared for Sunderland International Kite Festival and we were more prepared than last year. We were ordering much more stock and pricing it in readiness and also had some limited editions ordered from an American kite company called Go Fly a Kite via their British agents, Spirit of Air, based in Newport, Gwent. We were buying more expensive dual line kites too, so all we needed was good weather and of course some interested customers. We arrived on Thursday to get the stall set up, then on Friday our stock went in and we created the best display we could. A good number of kite fliers were arriving on the Friday and many of these were wandering around the kite stalls to see what new items we had. We had a very busy first day having to restock on the Saturday evening before going to the kite auction in the big marquee. We had an even busier Sunday and had done very well. We had sold out of the special limited-edition products that we had bought in. We had only bought them in ones as our supplier limited our purchases, but they had all gone to kite fliers desiring something special. The event proved that we were right if following this idea of taking the kites to the public at events like this. We were loving the new life we had and also loved meeting our new friends at the kite festivals.

We repeated the Cumbrian Steam Gathering as well as the Great Dorset Steam Fair with much better results than last year which was largely due to us having more knowledge of stock and customer needs. We had also tried a few new shows. We had visited the Peterborough County Show and this was immediately followed by Lincoln County Show. This meant being away from our shops for over a week to take in both shows straight after each other. We found that a number of other traders were doing exactly the same and we found ourselves being pitched close by some of them. The shows were not really suitable for us, as we struggled to cover our costs, but we enjoyed them nevertheless. The two shows back to back did make us realise that our uniforms we wore may not be exactly ideal as we only had maroon tops so it may be thought that we were wearing the same clothes on the two shows, without them being washed. Food for thought.

Our first full season of events was at a close and it had been successful, and we had learnt a lot. Loads of lessons learned, tons of new friends and fantastic new experiences and there seemed to be no end to this, can this really be this much fun, and if so for how long? Only time would tell.

There was something we did know; we were tired, very tired as our last day off work was New Years Day. We had not had a single day off since. Alright we had had some days when we were setting up and we were not working an eight-hour day, but other days could be 10 to 18 hours long. Each day whilst away at events we needed to keep in touch with our shops and sort out any problems by telephone etc. So, over the summer season we had been planning a holiday, but we couldn't book one, not until our season ended to see what finance we had available.

When you have a business involving the sale of stock you must rely on so many factors; have you chosen stock that your customers actually want, is the weather going to affect your sales, have you sufficient stock or not as well as many more. The results of this could give you a sum of money on a given date, or a whole lot of unsold stock which can't be turned into money until the next season. It's always a big gamble, not on horses or dogs or the like but in a big financial way and with very real big risks. We needed sufficient finances available to firstly buy our stock for our four shops for the Christmas, and as we were mainly a greetings card and gift business then you may imagine that the expenditure would be significant. We also needed monies put away to top up our kite stock for next season ready for our first kite festival of 2003. As there were no more festivals in 2002, any kite sales would be very poor until the next season other than the odd customer who travelled to one of our shops.

After the finances were in place for these commitments, we still had some monies available so off we went to the Dominican Republic for a holiday. We had been there several times before and chose to return to the same place as were guaranteed to find everything we wanted in ideal surroundings being totally spoilt and where we could totally relax. So, we went there for a fantastic three week holiday to help make up for nine months of solid work, and preparation for a busy lead up to Christmas with our shops.

Time to think, and plan for whatever may come next!

Watch for our next instalment.....

Bridlington Kite Festival 16th 17th May 2020



Stuff for sale from Alan Poxon

Since very early on in my kiteflying, I've made a lot of my own equipment, some because it wasn't widely available back then, and some because I couldn't afford it. Even though things have come a long way in the intervening years, some of my creations have stood the test and are still in use, and have carried through to my current 'Kitemaker' status. Earlier this year I hawked some of my wares to a few events, and it was all received (and purchased) rather well.

Stake In The Grass

Back in the day, and we're literally talking last century, Graham and I started making the Stake In The Grass ground stake, purely because we needed them ourselves. They were very popular, and I'm sure many of you have an original rainbow-scabbarded golf ball on a stick. It varied very slightly over the years, changing from 5.5mm stainless steel to 6mm for greater strength, and a few were made with extra length, and a few shorter to fit in a bag. There are still a few of the last production runs available if you don't have one.



S.I.T.G. 26cm 5.5mm Stainless £ 6.50

S.I.T.G. 27cm 6 mm Stainless £ 7.50

S.I.T.G. 32cm 6 mm Stainless £ 8.70

S.I.T.G. 19cm 6 mm Stainless £ 6.00

Sport Kite flying Straps

I fly two-line kites quite a bit, and I have quite a collection of kites, and a lot of line-sets too, for different winds and different spaces. Sometimes it's a chore to swap straps from one line to another. There are never enough spare handles (straps these days), so I've made a selection for different conditions.



Close up



2-Finger straps £5.00

Hand straps £4.50

Wrist straps £5.00

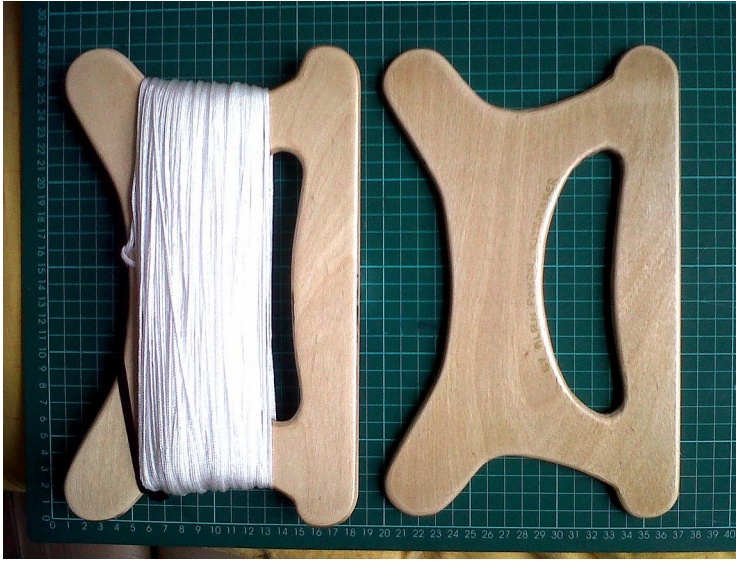
**Lime green fluffy
£5.00**

Fancy straps

**(2 layers of braid,
colour coded) £6.50**

Wide straps £6.50

The green ones in the picture are LIME green and made of a cotton fabric instead of nylon, and feel very nice in the hand. The yellow straps have been bound with a reflective tape; handy if you're night flying (or just late packing up). The right-hand straps in the centre picture have colour-coded braid overlaid with tapestry braid. Straps can be made up to order, and include triangular (military-grade) links or knotted-cord links.



Wooden Winders

Some of you may have one of my wooden winders. When I first started kiteflying, I made some plywood winders for single kite-line, and over the years these got replaced by plastic 'halo' winders and the like. It struck me more recently however, that the plastic reels had broken, and my original wooden winders were still going strong.

Single line winders, 28cm long £10.00

Line Holders (bags)

The truth is I have so many line sets I started losing track of them, so I started using special line-holders, with pockets for each line-set. Fill all the pockets, even if you don't have lines just put an empty winder in them, and at the end of the day, if there's an empty pocket, you've left lines on the field. Simple.

Choice of material, size & number of pockets, close with a rucksack clasp, from £10.00



There are lots of other things I have for sale, some of which are on my website at:

www.kitemaker.co.uk

or you can copy this link to go straight to it <https://alanpoxon.webs.com/productpage.htm> I will try to publish some more useful bits in future editions. In the meantime, if you need something you cannot find, need a repair, or fancy a fly up in the Yorkshire Dales, give me a call.

Alan Poxon
alan@kitemaker.co.uk
07989 441476

My New Kite

By Martin Eaton

I always wanted a Peter Powell because when I was younger, perhaps 5, 6 or 7 I wanted one but my Dad couldn't afford it so on the anniversary of his death last year I bought myself one, got proficient with it and now I've got five of them. And one for my girlfriend Rachel. I'm going to try and stack them to fly together but will have to work out how to do that properly.



I also got a purple one directly from Paul Powell by emailing him, he rang me back and I told him my story. Two of them are custom made – one says Flying for Frank for me Dad and another flying for Vera for me Mum, both signed by Peter's sons Mark and Paul. They're absolutely great kites and I love them.

NOTICE

Annual General Meeting

St Thomas Church Hall, Glebe Lane,
Moorside OL1 4SJ on Sunday 16 February

Sarah will send out a reminder with full
information nearer the time.

**Every year we have a competition for
the best kite made and flown by a
member during the year and judged by
members voting at the AGM.**

So, if you have made a kite this year bring
it along to the AGM.

Our Chairman Len Royles has indicated
that he will be standing down at the AGM.

Gone with the Wind... Fuerteventura Kite Festival

As a total novice to both kite flying and the Northern Kite Group, I was both surprised and flattered to be invited to contribute an item to the club newsletter by Peter following my return from the Fuerteventura Kite Festival. I think my report could easily end up being more about me as a novice kite flyer than my views on the festival, but here goes!



by Tony Pugh

It was while my wife and I were on our first visit to Corralejo five years ago, happily by chance on the same week as the festival, that I reignited my interest in kites. Like many people of my age, I had flown a variety of small kites over the

years, but our first sight of the Fuerteventura festival in full flow amongst the magnificent Dunes outside Corralejo, was quite amazing. The huge colourful lifters and the wonderful line laundry in all shapes and sizes left quite an impression on me, and led to plans to return the following year to fly a kite of my own, and I have returned with my wife each year to Corralejo since, so we can be a part of the festival.

Last year was the first year I flew my big eight cell paraform with the large Welsh flag on it Skybums made for me. I had found an article on using a cleat to secure the kite and after a couple of hours in the shed had my own lovingly hand crafted version. The winds were quite steady last year and at the Dunes I found a spot and launched the Welsh flag paraform. It reached a good height fairly quickly and I secured the line onto my shiny new cleat as demonstrated, stepped back and admired my efforts. I thought I could quickly pop off to get some drinks, not being too far from the refreshments, and off I went. On my way back minutes later I searched in vain for my kite in the air. Confused I looked much higher, and to my horror it had run out every inch of the line and was hanging on by the reel which had jammed somehow around the cleat! The moral of the story is, smooth and shiny cleats are best avoided and probably best suited to very brief use only.

The following day at the opposite end of the beach I met John Ellerton from the NKG who commented on the Welsh flag kite. John was also very happy to give advice which was particularly useful as he was a kite maker himself and I was also interested in sources of materials for kite making. It is amazing how quickly someone who knows what he is talking about can answer virtually all of your questions. The internet is good, but advice from an experienced maker/flyer is so much better. Thank you John, that conversation really helped. I thought I was fairly well prepared this year, having searched the internet and Youtube for tips and advice, and very much looking forward again to flying the paraform, but the weather had other ideas this year...and I was about to find out how much more preparation I still needed to do!



El Cotillo - day one



Line laundry at El Cotillo



Corralejo day one – overcast with high winds

The first day at El Cotillo was the first time I had visited that beach during the festival, and I quickly realised just how strong the wind was there. Also being an offshore wind on the west coast presented other considerations to someone of my experience.

When I arrived I had a brew in the little café overlooking the beach to take in the scene, and then had a walk around to take a few pictures and chat to a couple of more experienced kites who were happy to offer help and advice, but I have to say this is not always the case. There were quite a few kites up already, but numbers were down on previous years. Space is also a bit limited at El Cotillo and I found myself a spot close to the water, a bit too close to the water as it turned out! The paraform launched very quickly and I had to correct a violent dive to the right but managed to keep it in the air briefly.. before another sudden pull saw my lovely Welsh flag hit the edge of the water! Everything was seriously tangled and now also soaked in sea water and sand! Schoolboy error! It amazed me just how much sand even a medium sized kite can hold when it gets soaked like that, and our balcony at the hotel must have had half of El Cotillo's beach on it when my kite dried out!



The Festival moved to the Dunes the next day. A much better location in my humble opinion, a bit more space and nice steady winds, but the reduced number of kites in the air showed that the winds hadn't dropped at all, and the forecast was for the same for the rest of the week! Strong winds and lots of cloud, a bit unusual for this time of year in Fuerteventura, but I suppose being a kite flyer we always want it just perfect don't we? The onshore winds usually found at Corralejo were slightly more forgiving and there was more space for all the flyers to find their preferred locations. I enjoyed a bit of flying time but still felt I was on my limits of experience and equipment, but as always thoroughly enjoyed the festival again and.....as I always told my students, you always learn more from your mistakes than your successes! I will be back again next year. Possibly with some line laundry and a bit more equipment.....



Fuerteventura Kite Festival 5th to 8th November 2020



Some pictures from the End of Season Do



It was Dave Holt's 60th birthday



There was a selection of great food available



The birthday cake that Mark made for Dave



Angie and Mark who organised it all

It was a successful weekend and well done to Angie and Mark who organised it.

It took place in the village of Whittingham near Preston with good transport links to the motorway network. The venue was a social club with good facilities, good bar and camping field.

There was music on the Friday and Saturday nights.

The weather wasn't great and there was no wind, but that didn't dampen spirits.

A good venue for the future.

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The fancy dress theme was Heroes and Villains

Questionnaire Challenge with Alan Poxon

Best flying field: Hmm, tough. Probably a beach in the South-West, like Brean Sands. Brean is cool because you can drive onto the beach, although there are lots of beaches (like Lytham St Annes) where the prevailing South-Westerlies blow inland to save a loose kite blowing out to sea. But I don't particularly enjoy sand, or live by the coast, so I go up to Malham Top, about half a mile south east of the Tarn.



Happiest most memorable moment kite flying: Lots. First time I flew a Flexifoil Stacker (about 1990), hundreds of sled kites launched simultaneously by the kids as part of the Sheffield Children's Festival 199?, spontaneous applause during a routine by Sky Symphony, Shipley Country Park 2001.

If you could choose what would your super power be? Don't all kitefliers want to fly?

What is your guiltiest pleasure? Chocolate. Or red wine. Both, but not together.

Apart from kite flying what else rocks your boat? Just about anything interesting, science, machines, computers, hifi, good food, art.

What was your dream when you were growing up? To be a spaceman.

What is the most important lesson life has taught you? Not to dream about being a spaceman.

What is your earliest memory? Playing at home, probably before I started school, with my Mum.

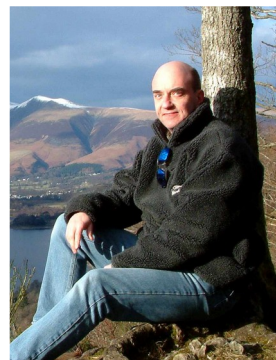
What is the trait you most deplore in yourself? Being lazy.

What is your biggest regret (that you can share!) Not passing all my 'A'-levels

Who would play you in the film of your life? Bruce Willis

Which living person do you most admire, and why? Bruce Willis, for offering to play me in a movie that would almost definitely flop. 😊

What is your kiting ambition in the next 12 months? To get out and fly more (for myself & with Becky).



Bruce



Alan



Memories of Peter Leonard

We first met Peter (Pete the Taxi, as we called him) when we started flying at Otterspool. Peter was a regular there at that time and only missed flying when he had to work. He was normally accompanied by his grandson, George, his little shadow. His sense of humour was apparent from the first time we saw the sticker on his taxi which read "I'm a one line Wally". He did indeed fly single line kites but he was never a Wally, just a funny, generous guy who would help anyone.

One balmy spring day we arrived at Otterspool to find Peter in the process of buying a second hand kite from someone. I think he had agreed a price of £20 for the HQ Rok featuring Tutankhamun, surrounded by hieroglyphics. Now, I am a huge fan of Ancient Egyptian history and was gutted to have narrowly missed the chance to buy the kite and I surely would have offered a higher price. I told Peter that it was a beautiful kite and I looked forward to seeing him fly it on a day with more wind.

A few weeks went by and every time I saw Peter I asked about the Rok. He said he was sewing a few bits that needed repair. More weeks went by, still no sign of King Tut. Apparently the bridling needed attention. By early October I had almost forgotten about the kite, when Peter took me to one side and quietly told me to be sure to attend the Light Up The Sky auction with some cash in my pocket. He had given up trying to make the kite fly, so was donating it to the auction. Peter knew I would have willingly refunded him his £20 but instead the money would go to charity.

On the evening of the auction, Peter as always, opened most of the bids at £1. Even if it was for something he did not want to buy, he would still open at £1. He took home a lot of items that neither he nor anybody else wanted, that cost him £1 each. His lovely family would also come along and join us buying kites, Unidentified Flying Objects, and bags of tangled line and tails. I managed to secure the Egyptian Rok for £12 and was thrilled to bits. These auctions were always fun occasions and Peter's generosity was well known.

(After several more small repairs, adjustments to bridles and many expert opinions sought, it became apparent that King Tut is a little scared of heights. He will rise to the occasion if he is sporting a fluffy tail but otherwise prefers to stay at home with his mummy.)

After a short illness, and aged just 61, Peter passed away on 13th July. We last saw him, with George, at Crosby in October 2018 where we were holding a small private auction of kites. He, of course, opened all the bids at £1. Fond memories. Keep flying Peter. You were a lovely man and will be sadly missed by all who knew you.

Dorothy (& Mike) Rourke



*Put your
kite in the
air, let all
your worries
go up the
line and
drift away
into the sky*



St Annes Kite Festival Rok Challenge

Report by
Becky Poxon

In my defence I'm easily lead astray.....usually by my own brain, so who can say if the water pistols were my idea or if another party may be to blame? I'll admit I bought them, and even went to the trouble of borrowing a 10 year old (many thanks to Megan for her invaluable input) to ensure I obtained quality items.

So anyway, I had no idea there was to be a Rok "challenge" at St Anne's kite festival (THE RETURN VISIT). But Mark arrived with the trophy and a mischievous grin – although to be honest he always has the grin, and as Sherlock so eloquently puts it, the game was afoot.

On the Saturday there appeared to be little interest in the competition, with only 2 initial sign ups, of Roy Payne and Steve Sunderland. Then as the contest loomed closer some of the WAGs signed up their other halves. Ian Duncalf and Mark Jones were dutifully enlisted. Peter Taylor, Pat May, and Mick Burls made up the numbers, and with 7 entrants we were off.

Volunteer judges were Sarah Duncalf, Angela Bennett, Megan, and me Becky Poxon.

A hand launch into immediate combat (on reflection that may have been optimistic) was duly changed to hand launch with 10 second countdown for the following rounds. Now I'm not sure what the public thought, as they were probably watching the kites that didn't seem to be doing much at times, and wondering why the mad woman kept screaming to "engage". But I know better, and I was watching the men on the ground, whilst Alan tried valiantly to get me to return with the microphone.

At first all was above board, and there was gentlemanly conduct from the combatants, then things degenerated.

Over the course of the 4 battles, in no particular order, the following took place; attempted bribery of yours truly with a wagon wheel, (the chocolate biscuit, not an actual wagon wheel, be sensible). Some entrants fell by the wayside, some arrived only for the final event, kites were changed. Pat's (borrowed) kite drifted gently away over towards the boating lake after the line was cut, (Pat declined to enter further competition, although to be fair he was rather busy). Roy suffered friction burns to the ankle after being tangled, somewhat deliberately, by Mark. The judging crew got over exuberant with the water pistols, and there was swift, but fair, retribution when Sarah got a bottle of water upended over her head. There was a judge's disagreement over if a kite had indeed been grounded, but this was swiftly put to rest by Megan, who declared it had not touched the ground. The reigning champion – Mark Jones lost his crown, and we had a new hero of the festival, in Mr Ian Duncalf, winning by a respectable margin, in what I understand was only his second Rok Challenge.

The final positions were ;

1. Ian Duncalf
2. Mick Burls
3. Roy Payne
4. Mark Jones
5. Peter Taylor
5. Peter Hartt
7. Steve Sunderland
8. Pat May



Mick Burls, Roy Payne, Mark Jones & Ian Duncalf

STACK at Pontefract (Aug 31/Sept 1)

A report by
Sarah Kay

“Sports, Team and Competitive Kite-Flying UK” (STACK) met at Pontefract racecourse over the last weekend in August, to hold the northern leg of the UK National Sports Kite Championships. Two days of competition led to results for this round, and also to the overall results from the two legs of championships held in the UK this year (the southern leg was held at Dunstable Downs).

I was inspired by the range of competitors – some were novice competitors (in their first season of competitive kiting); others more established fliers/competitors. At the end of 2 days of challenging winds and weather, the results were duly read out, and it was fantastic to see the camaraderie between all competitors and especially for the youngest competitor, 16 year old Daniel Hoath, who had several well-deserved wins as multi-line individual champion, multi-line pairs champion as “The Flying Squad” (with his father, Stephen Hoath) and as a part of Josh Mitcheson’s team “Fracture”. Daniel also received the STACK junior cup. Great to see the young kite fliers raising the bar and injecting their energy into the future of kite-flying, both competitively and (only a few weeks earlier) helping other fliers by offering a free four-line clinic at St Anne’s. Well done to all who took part.

Competitors past and present have all said to me that competing, or at least learning to fly the various figures, has improved their flying dramatically. A handbook containing illustrations and details of all the figures is available freely online by going to:

<http://worldsportkite.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ISK-Compulsories-Book-v3-2017-03-30final.pdf>

Some people try one new figure each time they practise, so they gradually build up to knowing all the figures. By far the most interesting parts of the competition to watch were the ballets. There were some stunning performances, delivered with energy and precision.

In a short break from the competition, a four-line megateam on Saturday and a two-line megateam on Sunday were open to any fliers to join, and it was great to see NKG’s Sue Storey and Ken Paulls taking part in the two-line megateam with a pair of North Shore Radicals.

Another really useful feature of the weekend was the offer to competitors and other fliers of coaching by STACK members. All in all, the weekend was a great way to watch some high quality performances, be inspired by competitors at different stages of their kite-flying development, and another opportunity to have a fly alongside friends outside the competitive arena.

The competition included sections for individuals, pairs and teams flying dual-line or multi-line kites. The classes consisted of “precision” (including flying 3 figures chosen by the judges on the morning of the competition, as well as a technical precision routine chosen by the competitor) and “ballet” in which competitors show off their technical and choreographic abilities flying to music. The figures were shown to competitors and spectators – on paper they can look fairly simple, but flying them accurately is the real challenge. “Boomerang” was one of them: flying forwards in a horizontal line, then reversing a half circle up to immediately above the start of the half circle, and then reversing out in another horizontal line. The figures have to be a particular size and position relative to the wind window, and the judges assess this closely.



An interview with Julie White

I don't know about you but whenever I'm flying and a member of the public gets into conversation and asks about kite festivals, where they are held and when, I tell them to look at Kite Calendar. It's easy for them to remember, to find online and is clear and comprehensive with all the links they need. It's also THE essential site for ALL keen kite fliers to have handy. The person behind Kite Calendar is Julie White and I caught up with her recently to find out more.

Julie, how long have you been running Kite Calendar and how did it all come about?

Thanks, Peter, for your kind words saying that the calendar is clear and comprehensive – that is exactly what I wanted to achieve. I cannot believe that I have been compiling kitecalendar.co.uk for nineteen years! It all started when I was the Secretary of The Midlands Kite Fliers (MKF). I was putting together an events calendar for the members and when I became their Website Manager it seemed a good idea to share that calendar with other fliers. I do love sharing information.

How much of your time does it take up and how do you get the information?

Most of the info I get is sent to me from event organisers and fellow kitefliers. Facebook is a great place to find out what is happening too. I can spend between 30 – 90 minutes a week.

Do you look at the stats to see how many hits the website gets? Are there peak times when interest is highest?

I do look at the analytics occasionally. They tell me loads of stuff such as day, time, how long people stay on the site, what browser they are using and what country they are in. The trend seems to be that Wednesdays are the day to start the search for somewhere to go to fly a kite at the weekend with the most traffic on a Friday evening and Saturday morning.

Have you always been good with computers and the internet or have you just picked it up? What's your background there?

I love the fact that you say 'good with computers' Basically I am a Secretary/typist at heart who was in the right place at the right time when computing and then the internet was in its infancy. Husband Jim is the computer whizz so I have learned a lot from him. I remember using our ZX Spectrum (we still have it), an Amstrad Computer, bulletin boards and then Personal Computing and Social Media - it has been a great learning journey.

Will kitecalendar.co.uk continue as it is or have you got plans for the future?

I have tried to revamp it many times to give it a more modern feel – but I have not yet mastered how to do it properly. The main thing is that it is easy to use and read. Maybe one day I will astound everyone with a flashy site that dazzles!

What events do you want to see listed on kitecalendar.co.uk?

I would love to list every UK kite event, large or small, Festival or fly-in. Wherever kites are being flown I think that everyone should get the chance to get a kite in the air and talk to other fliers.



Julie's Favourites

Tell us about your own kite flying. What is your favourite?

Flying site

The local playing field that is just four minutes walk away from our house is great: the size of four football pitches and open enough to catch a decent wind. Away from home places such as Baidon Moor or a Norfolk Beach makes for a great day.

Festival

Dieppe International Kite Festival is amazing. The town is taken over by kitefliers from all over the World and the kites are just mind-blowing. The festivities start from the minute you get there and the hospitality and camaraderie with fellow fliers is wonderful.

Kite

To be honest I love all kites but dual or quad line sport kites are the ones I mostly fly. Flying my Sky Dancer from the late, lovely David Davies always puts me in a smile on my face. The Peter Powell is always in the car along with a couple of Tim Benson kites. Jim is mainly into trick flying but we do fly together as a pair, for fun, now and again. We do have some single line kites too, mainly Rokkakus or Roller kites, altitude sprint kites such as the Desperato and all sorts of fighter kites, and there is always room for some kids' sled kites too.

What are your kiting ambitions in the future?

To keep on meeting up with kite friends old and new. That has been my best bit of being a part of the kiting community – the friendship and camaraderie, the willingness to help out and, of course, the after hours social times together. Also to be able to fill the car with kites and have the right ones to fly for the wind conditions.

May there be wind on your back,
a smile on your face,
and a kite in the sky.



Photo credit Tony Kidd

Doing our bit

by Dorothy Rourke



My interest in kites began on Barmouth beach in 2012 when a man, wearing a colourful waistcoat and a few dozen badges on his hat (John Southerton, I later found out), thrust a large wooden reel into my hands saying “here, hold this”. I looked up along the line to see an enormous pair of legs swimming through the air currents. I was thrilled to be flying such a large kite and bought the first of my many kites later that day.

We have been regular Barmouth visitors for over 40 years, so the Barmouth Kite Festival is now our favourite kite event. The winds at this year’s festival ranged from good to light. The juvenile sand dunes were having an effect on the wind too and the turbulence plus occasional drop in wind strength caused a good few tangled lines.



On one of my treks across the beach to assist with crossed lines I noticed a clump of orange plastic rope in the sand, probably marine litter, and decided to take it back to my base so it wouldn’t end up back in the sea. On my next outing, I spotted a beer can and sandwich wrapper and picked them up too. I realised that every time I needed to launch or recover a kite, I was empty handed for the walk back to base and resolved to pick up litter every time. As you can imagine I collected quite a bit of rubbish without going out of my way. Now before you start thinking what a scruffy beach Barmouth must be, I need to point out that the majority of beach goers would not dream of polluting the seaside by dropping litter but there are inconsiderate, irresponsible individuals in every part of the country. The tide does not often come in as far as the prom so the sand is very dry and soft. This means that litter gets covered and uncovered by the sand blowing or being walked upon. When the tide does come in all the way it often brings shipping detritus which seems to be on the increase. There was a council litter picker beavering away when we arrived each morning, but he soon moved to a different area of beach when he saw that he was likely to become entangled in the lines as we launched our kites. Anyway, by the end of the weekend, I had collected quite a bit of waste and even had a few other kites picking up stuff too. I’m sure this kind of thing happens quite a bit at kite events. I remember seeing Gwen at Otterspool collecting rubbish a few years ago. My friend Rob carries a small shovel to remove dog mess and Dave Green has even brought a bag of soil from home to fill a rabbit hole in the field at Crosby.

In July 2020, I will be assisting “Kiteman” Waine with organising Barmouth Kite Festival. I will be encouraging all kite flyers who are walking back to their base empty handed to consider picking something up and taking it with them. I can collect the accumulated rubbish from each base and dispose of it accordingly. It’s only a small gesture but it’s very satisfying and every little helps.

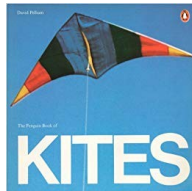
Barmouth Kite Festival 4th and 5th July 2020



NKG Member Profile: Michael Goddard

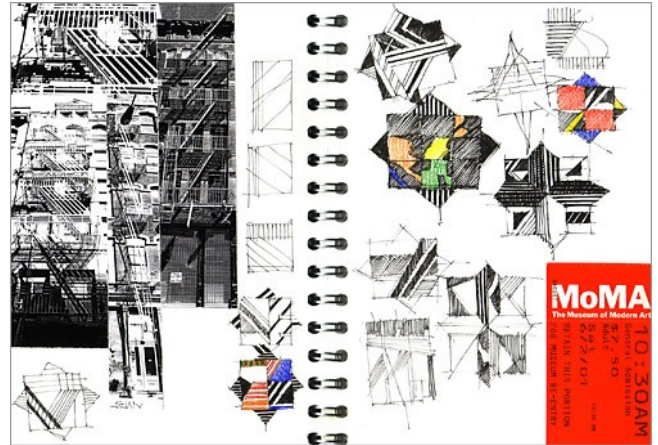
Back in the late 1960's my fascination with the dynamics of visual form was fuelled by a multi-disciplinary art and design education. At that time Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art were still defining the visual shape of the latter part of the 20th Century. When I first entered the world of design it was as an interior designer and then later as a graphic designer and photographer.

The chance discovery of David Pelham's Penguin book of kites in the early 1980's was the catalyst to spending the next 30 years exploring the remarkable world of kites.



The kite is a symbol of freedom, displaying graceful motion as it responds to the forces of lift and gravity. But it wasn't always like that. My first attempts at making kites produced little success. I might as well have tried to fly an elephant! What followed was a steep learning curve. I took notice of other kite designers and fliers at UK kite festivals. I gradually started to gain more success with the combination of shape, colour, balance and aerodynamics.

Many of my earlier kites were inspired by visits to the British Museum in London, where I found stunning collections of African masks, Mexican and Maori artifacts, a whole world of ethnographic design. In the 1970's I had travelled to Afghanistan, Iran, India, Thailand and Malaysia. An experience which profoundly influenced my perception of other cultures.



In 1998 my kite design took on a different direction as I abandoned the ethnographic approach and experimented with surface design which could dramatically influence the perception of the form of a kite. I looked more closely at the work of Josef Albers and the manner in which he achieved fascinating rhythmic articulation in his work, through his highly organised use of colour and form. I looked for boldness and simplicity, visual metaphors and the impact of colour. I found contemporary architecture and the urban environment also contained elements I could use in my design compositions. Since 2011 I have been experimenting with other media including printing and painting.



**You can see more of Michael's work
on his website:
www.idesignkites.com**

What would you do?

From time to time all of us come a cropper and get a kite caught in a tree or even the sea. Most times we recover it, sometimes not. **But how far would you go to retrieve a £500 kite?**

Picture the scene; it's night, you're in a foreign country, the only lights are from adjacent building, you are flying next to a tidal river with a 5mph current when your expensive kite crashes and gets wrapped around a buoy in the middle of the river, about 40m from the bank.

Craig Harby of SmileFactor10 fame, in Abu Dhabi recently was in this position with an ultra-light pilot, so he stripped down and swam out to the middle of the river, but couldn't free the line which was wrapped tight around the buoy with the kite fully submerged. The human risk of course was that if he lost his grip on the buoy and was swept away by the current he would end somewhere in the Arabian Sea. Undeterred he went and borrowed a kayak and from there eventually reached down into the water to disentangle the line. Foolhardy? You may think that. Understandable? Well £500 is a lot of money.



SmileFactor10 in Abu Dhabi

Can you beat that?

We want to hear your kite in tree, pier, sea, river, pylon stories. Please write to the editor at peter_hartt@hotmail.com

Neighbours, everybody needs good neighbours

Five NKG members live on the same conventionally numbered road (i.e. odd numbers on one side, even numbers on the other).

Each member has a different problem with their kite.

From the clues, work out which house each member lives in, which kite they fly, and how they solved their problem.

	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	No. 6	No. 7	Indoor kite	Night kite	Power kite	Quad kite	Stunt kite	Adjusted the bridle	Equalised the lines	Ignored the problem	Repaired a torn sail	Replaced a broken spar
Sarah															
John															
Keith															
Len															
Peter															
Adjusted the bridle															
Equalised the lines															
Ignored the problem															
Repaired a torn sail															
Replaced a broken spar															
Indoor kite															
Night kite															
Power kite															
Quad kite															
Stunt kite															

1. Peter lives next door to the person with the indoor kite, but the person who repaired the torn sail lives on the other side of the road.
2. Len adjusted his bridle. He doesn't fly an indoor kite.
3. The person at no. 6 ignored their problem, and is not Keith.
4. John has a night kite.
5. Sarah lives at no. 3. She doesn't fly a quad line kite.
6. The owner of the power kite lives at no. 4. This kite didn't have a broken spar.

Your answer	Lives at no.	Kite flown	Fixed problem by
Sarah			
John			
Keith			
Len			
Peter			

For help with solving logic puzzles there are many YouTube videos – just enter “how to do logic puzzles” into YouTube's search facility.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNxfZwvaQ-k> Is a good example.