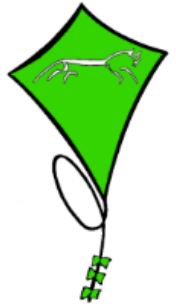


# COWPAT HILL



*Journal of the White Horse Kite Flyers  
Autumn 2023 October - December*

## **GOODBYE**

*Yes this is it; after my second stint as magazine editor, and this time also publisher, I am finally giving up. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported me with articles but I now find it increasingly difficult to come up with any new ideas.*

*My first contribution was in October 1990, Vol.1; No.9 and I don't think I have missed one since. Back then Cowpat Hill was a monthly newsletter published by Richard Everett. In 1992 Dave Jones took on the post and was followed in 2001 by Tracy Willis. She continued to 2009 when I took over for my first stint until 2014, then Andy Rummig took over for a couple of years before handing back to me.*

## **WHO WILL BE NEXT ????**

*All previous issues can be found at :-  
<http://www.whkf.org.uk/magnew.html>*

[www.whkf.org.uk](http://www.whkf.org.uk)

# Diary Dates

## October 2023

8<sup>th</sup> *Barbury Castle club fly-in and OSOW*

## November 2023

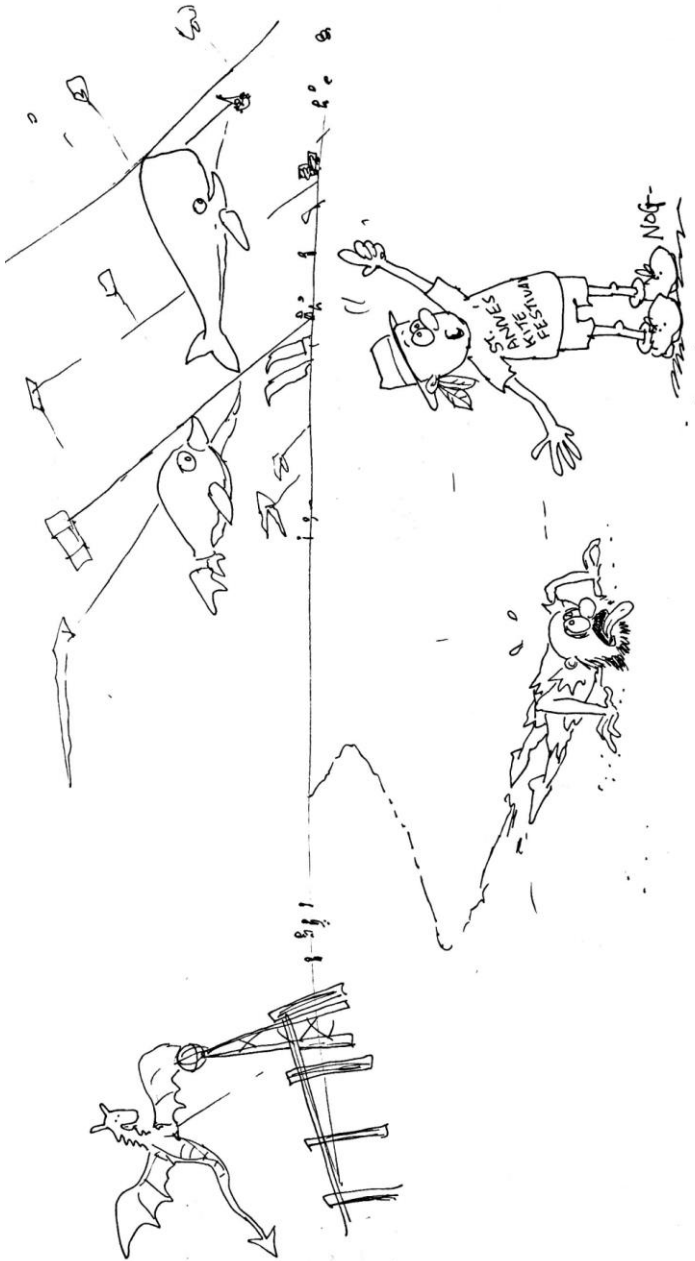
12<sup>th</sup> *Barbury Castle club fly-in*

19<sup>th</sup> *WHKF AGM*

## December 2023

10<sup>th</sup> *Barbury Castle club fly-in*

Dead line for next issue ???



"QUICK, FIRST AID!! ANOTHER ONE'S TRIED TO  
WALK OUT FOR A PADDLE!!"



### **Walney Kite Festival. The hero of our story, Mike Liversedge.**

Our story begins several months ago. Every day Mike gets in his car, travels 5 minutes, arrives at the beach, has a walk, maybe flies a kite or two and goes for a coffee, at the Roundhouse . (Oh, how many kite flyers wish they lived within 5 minutes of the beach, he is so lucky, and I am oh so jealous). On one eventful day the manager of the Roundhouse suggests to Mike that a kite festival would be a nice thing to organise. Mike reaction was of course to panic and exit stage left. He's retired and does not need any stress in his life. The manager didn't take Mikes exit as a hint that a kite festival was not a great idea, and she kept pushing the idea. Mike realising that he was getting cornered and was not likely to get away without doing something, quickly suggested that the Manager should contact the local council and get them involved. Mike politely said he would offer advice but that was all. Somehow the Council were happy to be involved and a plan was made, insurance sorted etc. Mike realised at this point that he was going to have to actually help on the day, a thought that didn't really make him happy. So he made a phone call to me, it went something like this. Hi Charlie, waffle waffle waffle for about 5 minutes, then oh by the way there's a kite festival at the Roundhouse, ....if you are not doing anything that weekend..... maybe you could come up.....visit your sister and oh, possible spend a few hours at the festival as well..... I need some help.

The idea behind the festival was for young kids to come along, buy a kite, and fly in the arena, Mike and I were there to fly some larger kites to fill up the sky and draw some attention to the event. Not exactly your usual kite festival, but an interesting idea, a kids only kite festival. (the reason for a kids only kite festival becomes clearer later on).

## The Venue

Walney is an island, with several really good beaches. On one end is the largest seagull colony in Europe, not a good place to fly because the seagulls are highly trained in the art of dive bombing anyone that gets close to the colony. The Walney seagulls make the Alfred Hitchcock film *The Birds* look like a calm afternoon stroll in the park. I am sure the seagulls are trained by the SAS. You only visit the colony once, I did it when I was about 14 and still vividly remember it. At the other end of the Island there is a range of sand hills and a large open beach and probably the best area for kite flying, unfortunately BAE Systems have an airport right in the middle of this beach which does rather rule out any kite flying activity.

Our location for the festival was The Roundhouse which is conveniently situated just outside of the restricted area for the airport, this makes it the best place to fly, and so here is the story of the weekend.

## Friday 18th August

Helen and I set off on the 260 mile drive to my home town of Barrow in Furness for the first Walney Kite Festival. Barrow is on the end of a long peninsula, far away from anything, and although it should be a cheap place to visit, hotel accommodation is at a premium. (Shipyard contractors, book most of the rooms in town, and there are lots of rooms that are permanently booked out for a year at a time). We had to force ourselves to stay in the 4 star Abbey House Hotel. The luxury we had to put up with, the quality food, the acres of gardens, excellent staff. We felt compelled to make the most of it, on the upside, food and drink are so ridiculously cheap compared with living in the south, even in a 4 star hotel, its cheap, we indulged.

Saturday 19th August - Great start to the day

06:24– Fire alarm went off - 06:26 Fire alarm cancelled - 07:00 Rain, Breakfast however was excellent.

09:00 we set off to meet Mike at the Roundhouse.



Below is the scene that met us. Waves, 25 Mile an hour winds, clear skies.

We found Mike taping off the arena, but no sooner had he put the tape up, it was blown away. It was obviously going to be a rough day. Realising that it was pointless putting the tape up, we retired to the Roundhouse for a coffee. The manager came over, spoke to Mike and said something along the lines of, “it looks like being a good day for kite flying”. I looked at Mike – he looked at me – we both looked at the waves, perhaps I thought to myself, that the manager hadn’t noticed the wind? Neither of us wanted to go outside because we knew we were going to be battered by the wind all day long. But the show must go on, and so outside we went. I asked Mike what the height limit was, had someone applied for CAA clearance? Mike looked at me as though my brains had been removed, put through a grinder, put in a glass bottle and thrown out to sea. “Why would you need height clearance here, there’s a road at the top of the grass bank, houses, and a café, we can’t fly over them, keep you kite away from the road and you will be below the minimum height limit” he said politely.

I stood for a while in silence as I tried to work out how not appear to be a complete fool. “mmm, right, yes, mmm, ok, yeah”. The wind never dropped below 25 mph all day and at times it was over 30 mph. We therefore didn’t risk too many kites. Early on I asked Mike if the tide was

on the way out, in the hope that the wind might drop. Of course it wasn't, it was coming in, and the wind would get stronger. Here we have all of our kites that we managed to fly during the day. This must be the least number of kites ever flown at a festival!!



The Roundhouse in the background, it is now a community café, run by

a charity. Which is why the manager was wanting to run the festival to get the crowds in and raise money, and this is why it was a kids festival. Clever idea. Mike, can be seen here kneeling down and helping the first young person hoping to fly a kite. It was a total failure, half an hour of trying, crash crash crash. Now it has to be said that if you live in Barrow, you know it gets windy, and you do get used to it. So a mere 25 mph wind is not considered anything out of the ordinary, and it won't stop parents bringing out their children and getting them to take part in a kite festival. Amazingly some of these cheap kites flew for over two hours without breaking, I was impressed.





At the end of the day, we had been thoroughly battered by the wind, our kites flew for over 5 hours in high winds, without any damage. We were covered in sea spray, and salt. Only a few people turned up for the festival but they enjoyed the event. Then off to the pub we went, a good day all round. And how did the manager feel the day went, well here was the biggest surprise of the day. From her point of view it was successful. Mike knew that there was a sponsor for the event, but the extent of the sponsorship was larger than he could have known. The kites cost parents £5.00 each, but with each kite came a free hot dog and ice cream, thanks to the sponsor. Most of the parents came bought a kite, kids ate the food and took the kites home, waiting for a calmer day. Perhaps she was right and it was a good day for kite flying.

I dread to think how many parents and kids would come out on a calmer day, kites and food it is quite a good combination. I somehow think that if the weather was calm the place would be overrun. Maybe all kite festivals should offer food and drink when they do kids workshops, but don't ask me to sort that one out. I'm retired and don't want stress in my life.

Charlie Peace



## **First timer at St Annes festival**

09.15 on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September saw June and I set off on a 265mile journey from Southampton to Lytham St Annes for what everyone had told me was the best/biggest Kite festival in the UK. Those voices were not wrong, picture a flat beach where over the course of three days the sea was only just visible on the horizon. The event was organised by “smile factor ten” who it must be said provided a hassle-free friendly environment that enabled some 215 registered flyers from around the world to fly everything from Indian fighters to huge inflatables, from sea creatures to dragons, horses, and everything in between. The beach was divided into arenas labelled, Art Kites, All kites, Big Kites, Dazz’s Kites, Display Arena, and Sand Art Arenas. Craig Harby, Soozi Kay and Peter Hart are the lynch pins for this this event and assisted by volunteers and council employees ensured that all flyers enjoyed an “organised” but informal opportunity to demonstrate to the public our passion for kiteflying. The event started on the Friday afternoon with informal flying in all arenas, the evening provided an opportunity for illuminated flying and a laser light show. Saturday was a whole day of flying in all arenas with program of displays in the display arena including “Art Kites” and two- and four-line sport kites. Saturday evening saw social gatherings both at the flyers hotel and the Cricket Club where those in caravans and motor homes were located. Sunday saw another full day of flying and arena displays. It must be said that the elements were somewhat against us over the week end with light winds and even a short thunder storm on the Sunday, none of this however prevented a comprehensive display of kites to be flown. Sunday afternoon’s highlight had to be the two low level circuits of the entire festival site by the Lancaster of the Battle of Britain Flight. At 2.45 on Sunday and with the festival due to end at 4.00 the wind finally turned up to enable a fitting end to the Festival. Estimates show that some 100,000 people attended over the weekend. Huge thanks have to be expressed to Craig, Soozi and Peter, the sponsors and the Fylde and St Annes councils for their support for the event. Will I return next year? Absolutely! Pictures from the event can be seen on the “St Annes International Kite festival” Facebook page.  
David Thompson. WHKF Chair.

## Windy Pommey

One of the things when one gets to a certain age is the ability to recall things. Yep, walking up the garden path to get something from the shed and realising when one gets there the mind goes blank, is one of us oldie's failings but trying to write a tale after two months have lapsed is certainly pushing one's limits. So, please forgive me if this dit contains a few gaps or white lies, I'm sure the editor is pleased just to get some words on the page.

This year was the 31<sup>st</sup> and must be the longest running festival in the UK so all credit to Portsmouth City Council for their continued support and of course the many kite fliers that attend, particularly those self funded. The theme this year was East meets West and there were several new guests attending, many from Europe. One of the Eastern fliers, Cao Quan from Vietnam, brought his collection of zodiac designed flute kites previously seen at this year's Bedford IKF. However, due to the windy conditions, particularly on the Sunday, displaying them in the air was limited.

Another Eastern participant and making her second appearance, albeit this year paying for their pleasure of attending Portsmouth IKF, was Bhavna and Shailesh Mehta from India. Bhavna's kites are predominantly hand painted designs depicting traditional Indian cultures. Painted on nylon due to the limited availability of ripstop the designs are very detailed with vibrant colours. Having received a kite as a gift in 2012 when I attended the Ahmedabad festival it always surprises me how resilient the paintwork is. On Saturday, with blustery winds, she was able to display several of her kites but, as with Cao's flute kites, Sunday was a frustrating day so many of her kites could only be seen on the ground.

One of the other sights that is always an eye catcher is the collection of Jorgen Moller Hansen, which is now in the hands of Felix Mottram and Jacob Twyford. The collection has undergone a great deal of refurbishment to maintain the kites in flying condition and a tip top credit to the guys for making them visible to the masses.

Portsmouth IKF would not be able to start without the traditional altitude sprint, such is the interest from the fliers irrespective of the

wind conditions. Saturday, windy but not extreme, was given a time limit of 1 minute's flying/release time. Being south of Watford Gap Portsmouth IKF has historically used 'Southern' rules ie, highest after settling time. My Take-Two, a recent development by Karl Longbottom attained the required height, albeit the kite having been assembled in a rush immediately began to nosedive when pressured by the wind. However, the judges deemed that at the call 'stop' the flying cow Delta flown by Roy Payne was declared the winner, based on it being the highest when 'stop' was called, which is deemed as 'Northern' rules. Note to sprint fliers, Rule #1 in the altitude sprint book, never argue with the judges ;-(

Sunday's sprint, with my Take-Two assembled and duly checked for wrapped bridles and more importantly confirmation of 'Southern' rule, the release time was 30 seconds,,, really! Yep, the kites rose quicker than Dawn on a sunny day and pride once was restored. Yours truly was declared the winner; need to get a bigger trophy cabinet me thinks. Seriously, win or lose it's fun and sets the scene for the Portsmouth festival so many thanks to all who participate, the judges who are un-bribeable and the public who stand in awe at this opening spectacle. One of the tasks that I don't envy is that of the commentator/s. It is an art and skill that keeps the public engaged, gives credit to kite makers, designers and more importantly the fliers who entertain the crowds and many a kite flier. So, hat's off to Alan Poxon for his verbal linkage throughout the whole two days.

Another festival backbone is that of the multi-line fliers. Whether the wind is high, low or virtually non-existent the two and four fliers/teams can always be relied upon to put on a display, which is a credit to their dedication and many hours of practice. There were several new teams attending this year which helped to spread the workload and made for some variation in the flying displays.

Pudding, oops I meant soft kites, are again a BIG magnetic draw for the crowds and always something for the ankle-biters to get excited about. I am not sure if it was one of the 'get the public' involved activities at Portsmouth in previous years but voting for the People's Choice kite is an easy winner, so to speak, with slips of paper in a box.

Over the last few years, either due to budgets or the nervousness over winds etc, the lack of marquees particularly for the kite flier's get-together on the Saturday evening has been a big festival loser in my opinion. It was where fliers were able to meet and greet old and new friends, share a beer or nosh together and made the festival more of a gathering for everyone. Not everyone is accommodated or knows where Rees Hall is and even if those outsiders did attend for the food or auction space is a premium.

One of the major losers, again in my opinion, is that of the auction. I accept that it is mentioned in the Kiteflier but without the attendance of the club/local fliers, who would certainly be interested in bidding for overseas or 'named' maker's kites, the auctioneer/festival is always going to struggle to get a good price for many of the auction lots. Many makers will only ever fly their own kites so intimidating them into buying someone else's creation is not going to work.

All in all, given the winds and the occasional shower, the weekend was a success. Primarily due to it being one of the few remaining festivals in the south and the opportunity to meet overseas fliers. Will I be back next year, absolutely; given the backing of the local council, the organisers and the support of the kite fliers.

Bob C.

## WHY KITES DON'T FLY

Is it any wonder that we spend so much time sorting out children's kites and that they don't like the hobby because their kites won't fly. The examples shown on children's TV is one of the problems. One of the "benefits" of grand children is that you can watch day time telly.

Recently watching "Little Charley Bear" the first statement was that you can't fly kites indoors. This was followed by him trying to fly a Diamond with the spars on the wrong side and then because it got really windy he tried a stunt delta with a 4 point bridle to fly it on a single line and proceeded to do infinities with it. It carries on into adult television with programs like "Last of the Summer Wine" having the spars on the wrong side and still doing man lifting.

There are endless examples on cards etc. such as the one that has provoked this article. The best father's day card I have ever had, had the line coming from the bottom of a diamond kite. I HAD to correct this. It was exacerbated when we stopped at a motorway services and there was a large mural with the same mistake. Unfortunately I could not correct that one.



## Sky-Chat

Here we go again after another Fun-Fly. The weather was kind to us for setting up after such a wet day on Wednesday, fine for putting up the main marquee and again on Friday for erecting the most important tent, "The Kitchen". Mind soon after we had rain. Saturday came with the Sun shining most of the time but the wind was testing the skills of the flyers. I think everybody that wanted to fly did manage some flying and the rest of the time was spent eating and chatting. Now we come to the hard working kitchen staff, who were working non-stop to feed us all again. Yet again they managed to keep us well fed over the two days and we must thank them very, very much for that. What would we do without them? On Saturday I did try to test Keith Boxall's skills of extracting my kite out of the trees when my own skills in trying to keep a kite in the air when the wind had other ideas. The trouble was the wind left the field then for the day and the old fashion roach and hook came out to save the day. It would have been great to see a successful Arial recovery. Many thanks to all those that helped.

Now we are just under two months away from the AGM again and it will be an important one for "The Club". We are all getting older and we cannot do what we would like to do for the benefit of "The Club". This means that we need some of the younger members to step up and help us older "Relics" out. In this I mean that committee needs that new blood and ideas to take "The Club" into the future. I get very frustrated that I cannot do what I could do even what I could do five years ago and I know that a few of the committee are in the same position due to their health issues. So please come forward if you can. We need some help even if it is only in a small way. We are in a new venue for "The AGM" to which we must thank Kevin for through his good offices. So I hope to see as many of you as possible at "The AGM" so that we can go forward into doing more Kite things now hopefully we have seen the back of the COVID restrictions and we can again enjoy our hobby of "Kite Flying". All the best and good health to you all.

Neil.

Whilst we are on the subject of the Fun Fly, did anyone borrow one of kitchen knives on the Saturday night? We got a new set of 5 for this year's event and they were all there when the kitchen was closed on Saturday evening. However when preparation for the Sunday brunch was started the smallest one was missing. Please can you check your kit and see if there is a kitchen knife that doesn't belong there. We would love to solve this mystery.

Thanks (Ed)



## **Barmouth Kite Festival (from Dave Cross)**

On the first weekend of July I attended the Barmouth kite festival for the first time since before Covid. I almost chickened out when I saw the weather forecast which was 20mph winds all weekend with showers, but as I'd already packed the car and got up early on Saturday morning I decided to go for it. It's around a four hour drive from home, a lot of it through beautiful scenery. Having been several times before I know the way and have my favourite stops for coffee etc. I drove through some torrential rain in the Welsh mountains, but by the time I arrived in Barmouth it had cleared up into what can only be described as a blustery day. I had time for a walk round before the 'Flyer's Meeting' and bumped into several other flyers along the front.

After some dire warnings about how much it would cost if we landed one of our kites on the nearby railway, we all set off to find a spot on the beach, which isn't difficult as it is a pretty big one. I'd just lugged my trolley to a spot down the beach when a heavy squall broke out, and not having had time to erect the beach shelter I crouched down behind the trolley holding a plastic ground sheet over my head thinking 'what the xxx am I doing here?'

Fortunately it only lasted a minute or two and the rest of the day stayed dry although with very strong winds. Several of us flew inflatables, I managed two hammerheads and the lionfish, several spiky balls bouncing on the ground and 'Old Spot' my pig, who proved very popular with the kids, there being a near constant stream of them having their picture taken next to him. Other sights included Andrew & Sandra's flying frogs and a fine display of clown fish & Freddie's dolphins made by a couple who had come all the way from Finland. Many other kites were flown and despite the challenging conditions it was a fine display.

After a quieter night than expected (there being good shelter on the campsite) Sunday turned out to have even stronger winds. I put up my sled and all three hammerheads but didn't risk the lionfish. Ground bouncers came out again, more photos with the pig, this time there was more sand blowing around, it even began building up in small dunes around the bouncers and beach shelters. At the end of the day we all felt like we'd been sand blasted. Again a great display in spite of the wind and a very enjoyable day, Barmouth is one of my favourite places to fly with the backdrop of Cader Idris and the harbour and always a relaxed atmosphere with plenty of interaction with the public.

Thanks to Waine for organising the festival for many years, I know this was his last one in charge, and also thanks and best wishes to Dorothy for taking it on for next time, I hope to be back next year.



## Vintage Berrington Hall

One of the UK's longest established kite festivals Berrington Hall (NT) has become an annual pilgrimage for many fliers. Given its unique location it attracts many kite gypsies to camp on the field overnight for the weekend plus there are a good number of fliers that book into local B&B accommodation. I am sure for many the attraction of Berrington is the ability to fly at an exclusive and beautiful location. For others it may be the totally relaxed atmosphere of pulling when you want, where you want on the large open flying field, albeit there are a few kite eaters (trees) to avoid. It may also be as simple as just the friendly open flying with the public, which I believe is an encouraging way of getting new blood into our sport either by assisting where necessary or just allowing people to hold your kite/s. Whatever the reason Berrington Hall attracts a sizeable bunch of fliers who are all greeted with a smile and a thank you from Bill; our pleasure Mr Souten....

Under the stewardship of Bill Souten, Chairman of the Midland Kite Fliers (MKF), who has held the reigns at Berrington for many years. Bill is always looking at ways to inject something different each year and this time it was quite an exclusive festival for several attendees. You could say that this year was a vintage year. Seventy years since the Queen's coronation, 1953 was also a vintage year for some of the attending fliers. I won't mention any names for fear of outing some of our older fliers who would prefer to keep their old fart status hidden but each septuagenarian was presented with their own medal. They were also treated to a curry on Saturday evening, courtesy of Captain Billy.

Another activity that Bill promotes is the annual kite making competition, which has a sizable cash prize donated personally by Bill. This year's challenge was 'Fly Your Bermuda' kite, the object being to design and make a kite that fulfils the brief of a Bermuda kite. There appears to be several shapes that could be defined as a Bermuda but the basic thing that I see is lots of colour. Generally entries for the kite challenge are numerous and judging can take at least two beers worth of time but this year, possibly due to the price of fish, there were only three. Judging was by staff from the National Trust and Mrs C, with guidance from the impartial audience (ho ho), the overall winner was Michael Lowe based on his kite, eventually, achieving most of the requirements and not least because it was very

colourful.

In addition to the kites there was also the regular and tuneful display by Michael with his selection of Aeolian instruments, which is always an attraction to the visiting public. The swirling winds were not only a test for the kite fliers but also for Michael who had to turn some of the instrument on numerous occasions to get a buzz.

The winds also caused several kites be eaten by the trees resulting in some amusing, for the crowd, rescue attempts. Thankfully no trees or kites were harmed in the process and flying was able to be resumed in all cases.

It would not be a kite festival without an auction. Whilst everyone is looking for a bargain these days the assembled fliers contributed £700+, which was to be donated to charity.

There were a few showers over the weekend but judging by the overflow car it did not put off the public from turning out with their picnics. Having spoken to several it also appears to be an annual event at which they bring their ankle-biters for a run-around. With positive comments from the NT staff it would appear that the Berrington Hall festival should appear in the kite calendar for next year and hopefully many more after that.

Two of the septuagenarians



Michael's winning Bermuda



Report by R Cruickshanks.

# WHKF AGM

To be held at  
Basepoint Business Lounge  
Basepoint Business Centre,  
Rivermead Drive  
Westlea  
Swindon  
SN5 7EX

19<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 12.00 for 12.30

- 1). Welcome from the President.
- 2). Apologies
- 3). Minutes of last year's meeting
- 4). Matters Arising
- 5). Chairman's Address
- 6). Reports
  - Hon. Secretary
  - Hon. Treasurer
  - Cowpat Editor
- 7). Election of officers.
- 8). Close of AGM business by Chairman.
- 9). Member's forum. (Chance to have your say)

There will be a bag raffle of **kite related items** with 25% going to Parkinson's , 25% to Macmillan's and the balance to cover costs.

## White Horse Kite Flyers Code of Practice

*Always* fly safely

*Always* be considerate to others using the same area be it noise or physical intrusion into their space.

*Always* fly legally taking in to account all National, Local and CAA restrictions.

*Never* fly at a height of more than 60m above ground level, in the UK unless a CAA clearance is in force. (as at festivals) IF YOU DON'T KNOW.....ASK.

*Never* fly a kite in wet or stormy weather. Always try and keep you line dry.

*Never* fly near power lines, transmission towers or aerials.

*Never* fly near airfields.

*Never* fly a kite with anything metallic in the line.

*Always* when tethering a kite ensure that the ground anchor is suitable (see BKFA report 6 June 06).

*Always* use a brake line when flying large kites.

*Always* wear good quality gloves when flying large powerful kites.

*Always* give priority to domestic animals particularly if they are showing signs of distress.

*Always* clear up after yourself, especially lines, tails and bits of plastic that could trap, choke or injure domestic animals.

*Never* fly near kite-eating trees.

*Note the use of traction kiting at Barbury Castle is forbidden by law.*

*Finally remember.....your kites can get really quite lonely up high in the sky; just occasionally, look up and give them a SMILE. It will make you feel better too.*

WHKF. meet at Barbury Castle country Park on the second Sunday of each month.

This issue edited by Arthur Dibble,

Subscriptions for new members for 12 months from December 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 £16 (including 4 issues of Cowpat Hill and kiteflying insurance at events). £5 for each additional family member. Renewals will be reviewed annually. Personal Liability Insurance £13 per person.

COWPAT HILL is the journal of The White Horse Kite Flyers and whilst every care is taken when compiling it, The Club and its officers cannot accept responsibility for any omissions or errors that may occur. Any information printed are the views of the individual submitting them and not necessarily those of The White Horse Kite Flyers Club, its committee or members. Data provided by you will be stored on a Club data base for the purpose of circulating this magazine and other Club information.