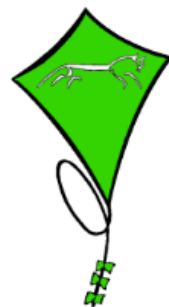


# COWPAT HILL



Journal of the White Horse Kite Flyers  
Issue Summer 2017 July – September

*80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Neil Harvey  
Co-founder of White Horse Kite Flyers*



*Congratulations and thanks from all The Club members for  
all the years of enjoyment this Club has given us.*

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

# Diary Dates

## JULY 2017

8/9<sup>th</sup> Barmouth. (NOTE correction from earlier issue)

8/9<sup>th</sup> Brighton

9<sup>th</sup> Barbury Castle club fly-in

15/16<sup>th</sup> Berrington Hall

## August 2017

5/6<sup>th</sup> Jolly Up 21

12/13<sup>th</sup> Portsmouth

13<sup>th</sup> Barbury Castle club fly-in

## September 2017

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

## October 2017

8<sup>th</sup> Barbury Castle club fly-in (OSOW)

## November 2017

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

AGM

## December 2017

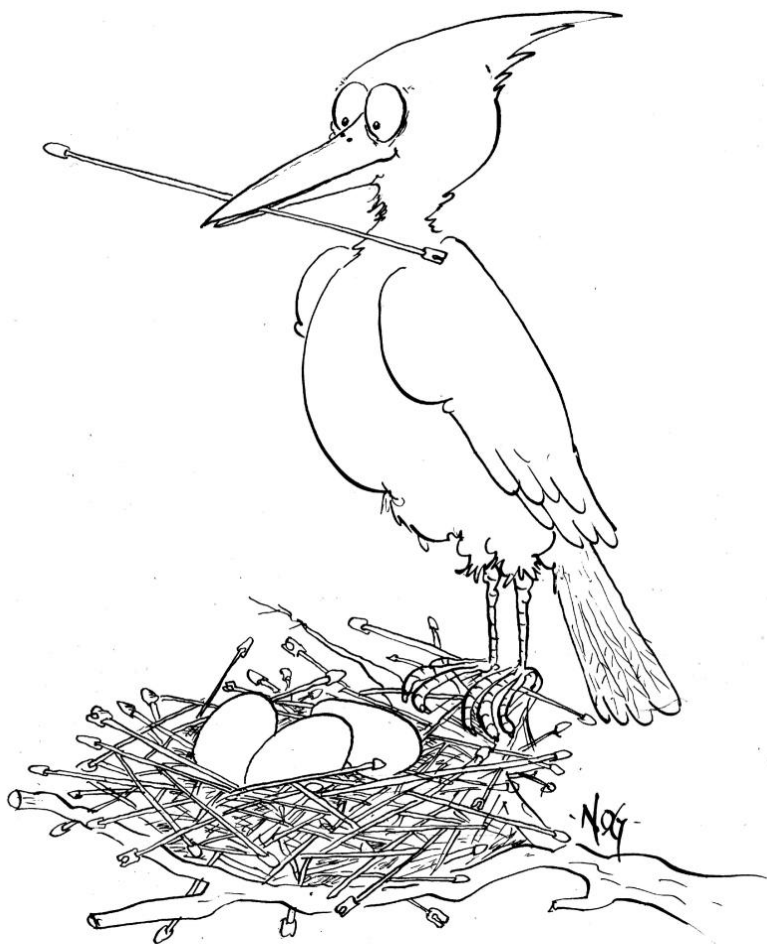
10<sup>th</sup> Barbury Castle club fly-in

27<sup>th</sup> Christmas Pudding Fly Barbury Castle (to be confirmed)

Dead line for next issue 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2017
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# THE CRESTED SPAR-LARK

*Frustratus robinsonii*



This recent addition to the British avifauna is causing concern among the kite flying fraternity due to its habit of pinching small kite spars which it uses to construct its nest.

CARTOON EXPLAINED.



## Skychat

Firstly I must thank you all for my “80th” Birthday Presents. I was not expecting any more than a humorous card at the most, it was a great shock when Dave & Janet called around. We all know “Nog” is a great cartoonist but this time I think he has excelled himself with his portrayal of me. That was a brilliant present on its own but to receive the hologram glass block of it as well, that was really the icing on the cake. Thank you all again very, very much.

Just to make things a-little more difficult for myself I managed to remove part of my thumb on a circular saw (it was tungsten tipped) so it was a good clean cut. Now nearly a month later it has healed well and I am learning to use the thumb without its nail. Again I have to thank those members that rallied round so that Minchinhampton Kite Day could go on. I could not drive so Pete Dawson stepped in to tow the trailer at the very last minute as it was late Friday afternoon that I had the meat slicer going and did not make contact with Pete until Saturday morning. I had arranged a gang for the workshop beforehand but more came forward on the day to help. I was ordered to do nothing but sit down and shut up, now you all know that is impossible for me to do, so they did allow me to make the teas and coffees. This did not go to plan as it was so hot that cold drinks were the order of the afternoon. Thank goodness we were not as busy as last year, it was a nice steady pace all day for the workshop, the winds could have been a bit kinder and blown a bit more, but when it drop off it was great to see “The Green Tadpoles” flying when the rest had fallen out of the sky, including the ones that the Powell Bros. had made earlier in the month up on The Common. As a member said to a customer “The Original is Best”.

Please remember The West Oxford Show on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July where we are doing a display in the main arena each morning and flying the rest of the day in our own arena. No passes are required just say you are WHKF. Please, please remember we may be on a very limited height clearance, we do not want a repeat of last year’s incident but we want you to have fun. That is what it is all about.

Once again thank you all for rallying together for the honour of The Club so here’s wishing for clean winds and tight lines and “Thumbs up”.

Neil

## MKF Kiteflyers Rendezvous

Last August at the “Jolly up” I was given a leaflet by Bill Souten that told of a “Kite Flyers Rendezvous” to be held on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of April at Broad Haven and on May the 1<sup>st</sup> at Hilton Court. Several members of WHKF had regaled me with tales of a perfect beach for flying and a good public turnout for the Monday event. Based on their recommendations and pictures of Arthur and Ann supping G&Ts on the balcony of the Anchor Guest House I decided to book a balconied room for myself and June at said Guest House.

With the car loaded with Kites and “supplies” June and I headed up the A34 and then down the M4 till it ended and then kept going west. The Journey was simple no “Dora the explorer” required and on arrival we were presented with the perfect holiday view of a wide sandy beach. After travelling some 240miles we arrived within 2 minutes of Arthur and Ann and within the hour after consuming welcoming cups of tea and Welsh cakes Arthur and I found ourselves, surprise surprise, stood on the beach less than a metre apart taking advantage of the onshore breeze with Arthur flying a 7 Sqm. Trilobite and me flying a Robert Brasington Delta. The Kites were just nailed in the sky. Friday saw us sightseeing in St David’s, this being our first visit to Pembrokeshire, the late afternoon saw more kite flying and the arrival of Doug Jones and Brian Smith. The evening after a couple of G&Ts on the balcony consisted of the ladies consuming fresh Lobster Salads. Saturday dawned to less than perfect winds but MKF and WHKF banners were fixed to the promenade railings and along with fellow WHKF members Doug Jones and Brian Smith, Arthur and I with MKF members succeeded in putting Kites in the air. Sunday was wet and windy but in true Kiteflyers’ tradition after several valiant attempts and considerable perseverance from Paul and Helen Morgan most adjourned to the local hostelry where Brian for the first time in his life managed to watch three complete football matches in succession!

Monday saw the contingent moving to Hilton Court where all concerned manage to put on a good display of kites for the general public, helping and encouraging new flyers to get their purchases in the air.

I cannot finish this without mentioning Helen and Ian our hosts at the Anchor Guest House, their hospitality was faultless and Ian’s cooked to order breakfasts couldn’t fail to set anybody up for the day.

My thanks to Bill and all concerned for organising a very enjoyable event, four days away kite flying every day! We have already booked for next year and would thoroughly recommend the event to all looking for an unstructured weekend of flying.

Dave Thompson

# Broad Haven

This event has for several years been run by Midland Kite Flyers on the first bank holiday in May. Due to tide times it is not suitable every year as at high tide there is NO beach.

In 2015 and 2017 WHKF provided a major part of the displays and so it was suggested that the event be run with dual organisers. The committee have agreed to this and your contact point for information in WHKF is Arthur Dibble.

Full details of this event can now be found on our Club web site at :-  
<http://www.whkf.org.uk/BHKR.html>

There is also information about some of the accommodation available and some of the places to eat. Free camping is available at Hilton Gardens and this can be found in the programme. Broad Haven is only a small place so accommodation is limited and it is advisable to book early. Those listed are not the only ones and there are some apartments where you can negotiate a late deal.

For those not wishing to fly kites the Pembrokeshire Coastal path passes along the beach and there are many places of local interest including Pembroke Castle to the south and St David's Cathedral to the north, both within a few miles.

With high tide at about 10.30AM in 2018 there is plenty of time for a leisurely breakfast and then follow the tide out for a full day of flying on this fabulous beach. Get a lunch, beer or coffee at the local cafes just a few steps away.

Night flying from the prom has caused interest from the locals at the last couple of events as they can be seen from the roads at both ends of the bay.

In 2018 we are hoping to put on more of a display with banners etc. fitted to the railings along the front. So if you come please try to bring some.

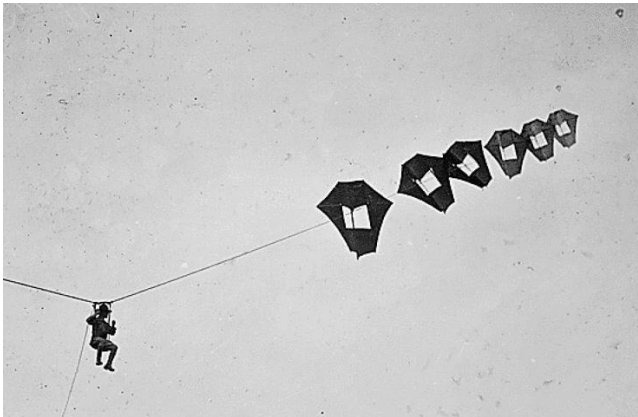
Hope to see you there;  
Arthur

# How a Wild West Showman Brought Man-Lifting Kites to the British Army

In the early 20th century, military daredevils soared high.

*By Andy Wright (29 March 2017)*

On a clear day, somewhere between 1914 and 1918 (the exact year has been lost to time) a crowd of American military men assembled in a field strewn with wildflowers. They were dressed in the official garb of the time: brimmed hats and pants that ballooned around the thighs and were tucked into high boots. They had come to fly a kite—but not just any kite. The apparatus they had was a chain of large kites, and strapped to the final kite was a man, sitting on a wildly precarious looking seat like a children’s swing, chomping on a cigarette and holding an unwieldy box camera on his lap. His companions, gripping the rope tightly, let each kite into the air until, finally, they allowed the man to go aloft as well. He sailed hundreds of feet above their heads, a tiny dot in the air.



This might sound like a stunt performed for entertainment, a one-off for daredevils. But in fact, around 1900, so-called “man-lifting kites” were gaining in popularity throughout the U.S. and Europe and had especially piqued the interest of militaries, who thought they’d make dandy surveillance tools.

Far from just a novelty for kids, kites were already being put to lots of practical uses, including by scientists studying the atmosphere. Such was the mania for kites, British inventor George Pocock patented a kite-powered buggy dubbed the “Charvolant” in 1826. (One CalTech researcher even successfully backed up a hypothesis that Egyptians had used kites to build the pyramids by erecting an obelisk with one in 2001.)



“You could lift instruments to test the air, you could really have a lot of power in these,” says Scott Skinner, a kite designer, founder of the Drachen Foundation, a non-profit devoted to kite advocacy and history, and author of several books on kites. “You could lift cameras. The next logical thing became, why not use the kite as a lifting mechanism for a military observer?” Although there were several versions, a basic design entailed a long string of large kites hitched together in a chain, with a final kite fitted with a seat for its passenger, often a basket. Men on the ground would typically let out rope via winch, and both the ground team and the passenger helped steer the kite. Once airborne, the passenger could use a radio phone or signalling device to relay information about the enemy’s position, and even take bird’s-eye photographs. In 1894, early man-lifting-kite experimenter Captain Baden Baden-Powell (brother of Boy Scouts founder Robert Baden-Powell) sent a man aloft in one at a British army training centre. Later that year, in November, Australian Lawrence Hargrave took off from a beach attached to a string of box kites.



But perhaps one of the most colourful and well-remembered proponents of man-lifting kites was Samuel Franklin Cody.

“He truly was a self-promoter and a carnival barker,” says Skinner. “Really on the border of being a shady character.”

Cody was born Samuel Franklin Cowdery in Davenport, Iowa in 1867. As a young man, he acquired the skills necessary to join a traveling circus as a Wild West showman. He entertained U.S. crowds lassoing, shooting and riding horses. He adopted the name of much more famous showman, Buffalo Bill

Cody, and dressed the part. He sported flowing long hair, an audacious moustache that pointed up at the ends, fringed jackets, big hats, and vests. Eventually, he split with the circus and crossed the Atlantic to Britain, where he began touring with his own show, a Wild West play called “The Klondyke Nugget” based on his (potentially false) claims that he had mined the Yukon. The play was a hit and included equine stunts so explosive that they prompted at least one person to lodge a complaint with the local newspaper. “The marvellous feat of the horse falling through a bridge at distance of 13 feet, is so accomplished—although intended to appear dangerous to the public—as to be perfectly harmless,” harrumphed the show’s general manager in an response to the same paper.

“While touring Great Britain he became enamoured with kites,” says Skinner. Kite enthusiasm in Europe was flourishing; serious hobbyists and scientists alike read kiting magazines and gathered at annual fetes. Cody built and flew them, and finally decided to throw his effort into designing a man-lifting kite that could be turned into dollar signs and prestige.

By 1901, Cody had patented a version of a man-lifting kite, and according to biographer Garry Jenkins, was flexing his entrepreneurial muscles. “By then he has already written to the war office, offering them first option on ‘SF Cody’s Aroplaine [sic] or War-Kite: A boy’s toy turned into an instrument of war,’” he wrote in *Colonel Cody and the Flying Cathedral*. The military was interested in kites; they had a strong advantage over the balloons they used for surveillance, which had to be inflated, were cumbersome in strong wind, and easier for snipers to spot.

“They were really very, very sophisticated,” says Skinner. “And as we build replicas today we find these were really amazing kites built to fly in high winds—very sturdy, very strong and reliable. They had to be very quick to erect, break down and easy to carry from one point to the next.” Nonetheless, the British Armed Forces didn’t bite on Cody’s early advances. Undaunted, he persisted in his experiments: He sent a man a startling 14,000 feet into the air (a height bested only by a previous flight conducted by the Blue Hills Observatory in Massachusetts that vaulted a man 15,000 feet in the air), he participated in scientific kiting contests, and in 1903 he sailed a kite-powered boat across the Strait of Dover. Finally, the military extended a contract to Cody in 1905 and appointed him Chief Instructor in Kiting.

It is difficult, according to Skinner, to pin down how frequently such kites were used on the battlefield. Cody’s kites, although used by the army and navy in Britain until the beginning of the First World War, were not deployed

operationally. Such kites seemed to be most popular with the French military, says Skinner. And of course, their obsolescence loomed as flying technology French military, says Skinner. And of course, their obsolescence loomed as flying technology advanced. Cody collaborated with the army on developing flying machines, and on October 16, 1908, became the first person to pilot a powered airplane in Great Britain. Such recognition probably meant a lot to Cody, who remarked bitterly to the *London Standard* in 1909 that, “I have been subjected to a great deal of ridicule and derision—laughed at, scoffed at, and been generally made a butt. Now it’s my turn.”

His contract with the military would end that year, but he continued to build and fly early airplanes. It was during one of these flights in 1913 that Cody met his demise. His craft broke up in the air, and both he and his passenger, a famous cricket player, were killed. A friend recalled Cody for an obituary in the *London Standard*, writing bluntly even in Cody’s death about his complicated relationship with the military. “The authorities countenanced him if they did not encourage him, but even they, I fancy, did not regard him very seriously,” wrote his acquaintance. “But Cody had genius, and to genius he added craftsmanship, a good deal of practical business ability, and an unconquerable determination to go through with what he took in hand.”

But the authorities clearly had some respect for the kite master—upon his death Cody received a full military funeral and burial in a military cemetery, even though his formal relationship with the armed forces had come to an end. Today, says Skinner, it is important to marvel at the feats Cody and his ilk accomplished with the tools of the day. “I think the thing we forget as modern kite fliers is that they were using materials that they were all very much used to—cotton, linen, bamboo,” he says. Today’s kite fliers have the advantage of working with rip stop nylon, carbon fibre and fiberglass.

Far from being a thing of the past, kite enthusiasm is thriving. Some builders have even undertaken the task of building modern man-lifting kites. Skinner described watching such a feat in Denmark in the early 1990s, when a group successfully lofted a man on high from a beach. Skinner himself is headed to a dry lakebed near Las Vegas in April to “kite buggy”—the sport of being propelled swiftly across the land in a small cart powered by a kite. “I would love to fly in a kite system, just because I’ve been doing this for 40 years,” he says. “But on the other hand, my sense come to me and says, mmmmmmm, maybe not!”

From Atlas Obscura.

## Robinson's Ramble

Where does the time go, one minute it's the shortest day next we are soon having the longest, (I'm writing this in the first week of June) it must be because I am getting older, talking of age it was Neil Harvey's 80th birthday in April; for those of you, new to the club, Neil started the club back in the early eighties along with Ron Gunter, (deceased). Neil has been a stalwart of the Club ever since, and still is. Not only does he do a lot for our club, he is also an active member of a Rare Breed Chicken Club, he also likes to exhibit old static engines at country shows, along with his Son in Law and Grandson. Not bad for someone who has had both his hips replaced, one of them twice because it kept popping out!

The Committee decided to make a significant presentation to him for the fantastic service he has given to the club. I came up with the idea of getting Dave Cross to do one of his fantastic cartoons, encompassing Neil's hobbies. Dave didn't disappoint, he has pictured Neil on an old tractor with a Parafoil being flown from the towing hitch, with some on looking chickens. This was so good we have had it laser copied into a block of glass. Janet and I made a surprise visit to his house on his birthday to present it to him, then had to tell him that I wanted it back so that I could take it to Barbury to show the members his gift. This was because Neil wasn't able to be there, unfortunately it was one of those days when not too many members were there. Neil has made the suggestion that we do another presentation at the Fun Fly, so that lots more members will get to see it. I must say the cartoon by Dave Cross is excellent and the laser company made a great job of it.

Talking of the Fun Fly, plans are well underway, we are having a company erect a Marquee this year to save us the job of putting all of the Club's tents up and down, however, we will have to put one of them up because the marquee company will not allow cooking in their tent, so volunteers will be appreciated; as I'm talking about the Fun-Fly we part fund it by the auction, so donations will be greatly appreciated. Kevin will be running the field kitchen as per normal and we will have the normal "honesty bar".

Just got back from Barbury, which was very pleasant, however it was a bit blustery. It was a great day for sitting and having a chat, especially with Neil, who had recently had an accident with a circular saw, a serious accident actually, he has cut the top off of his left-hand thumb! In typical Neil style he was quite blasé about it, one of his concerns was will he still be able to tie a knot efficiently.

David Robinson

## Bad things happen in threes.

Or so they say and that is starting to worry me.

Back in April Martin Croxton's ladder slipped from under him and he ended up with a badly twisted ankle and about 6 broken ribs. Sadly this prevented him from getting to Broad Haven. Good job the weather was poor otherwise we would have had to fill our own sand bags! We are pleased to hear he is making a good recovery and was able to attend the Basingstoke festival.

More recently our honoured leader has taken the top off his thumb with a circular saw. We are not entirely sure why he did this but we are given to understand it was something to do with tent pegs. Perhaps we will get some further information in Sky Chat. So please excuse any magazines that may not be quite square or stapled in the middle. It was reported that he was not his usual active self at Minchinhampton but fortunately others stepped up and helped out in the workshop. Kevin is no longer just the chef, but now also a fully trained tadpole maker.



This means we are two down and leaves us with one to go. Please be careful everyone. We are getting by with these members out of action for a while but anything more serious could be very detrimental to our efficient operation as a club.

We were saddened on 12<sup>th</sup> June to hear of the death of Les Reed who was known to many of us and he regularly attended our workshops. Our condolences go to his family.

On a happier note Pete Dawson has just got an extra bedroom. We wish Jenny happiness in her married life.

Arthur

Here to wet your appetites and persuade you to come to Lechlade is the:-

## **WHKF Fun Fly 2017 Menu**

### **Saturday**

#### **Breakfast –**

Bacon Butties – Rashers of crispy fried bacon served in a floury roll with either ketchup or brown sauce.

Bacon & Egg Butties – Rashers of crispy bacon, topped with a fried egg in a floury roll with either ketchup or brown sauce.

Vegetarian Breakfast Bap – Fresh spinach and cherry tomatoes sauté with olive oil topped with scrambled egg in a floury roll with either ketchup, brown or sweet chilli sauce.

#### **Lunch –**

##### **Burgers – Plain**

- Fried onions
- Cheese
- Cheese & Bacon

WHKF Burger – A large floury bap lightly toasted until golden topped with a griddle cooked burger, sauté field mushroom, fried onions and melted cheese all covered in a light and creamy peppercorn sauce, messy but oh so good.

##### **Bratwurst – Plain**

- Fried onions
- Sauerkraut

Served in a lightly toasted finger roll with spicy homemade mustard dressing.

Vegetarian Stir fry – A selection of fresh vegetables including Mange Tout, Baby plum Tomatoes, Spinach, Carrot & Courgette spaghetti, Leeks and French beans stir fried in olive oil and sweet chilli sauce with rice noodles.

## **Dinner –**

Pulled Pork – Chunks of Belly and Pork Shoulder dry rubbed in a blend of smoked Paprika, herbs and spices, charred on the BBQ until crisp then slow braised in West Country Cider and Stock until pull apart tender, served with Pan fried crispy Potatoes and Collared Greens.

Baked Aubergine & Courgette – Aubergine and Courgette stuffed with a light mixture of Rice, Red Onion, Mushrooms and sun dried Tomatoes slow baked in a light white wine and cream sauce topped with Panko breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese.

Baked Apple & Custard – Local Apples cored and stuffed with a mixture of dried fruits, Butter, Sugar and cinnamon slow baked and served with lashings of warm Custard.

## **Sunday –**

### **Breakfast –**

Bacon Butties – Rashers of crispy fried bacon in a floury roll with either ketchup or brown sauce.

Bacon & Egg Butties – Rashers of crispy bacon, topped with a fried egg in a floury roll with either ketchup or brown sauce.

Vegetarian Breakfast Roll – Fresh Spinach and Cherry Tomatoes sauté in olive oil, topped with scrambled egg in a floury roll with your choice of either ketchup, brown or sweet chilli sauce.

### **Lunch –**

#### **Chicken Wraps –**

Breast of chicken dry rubbed with a blend of Salt, Pepper, Smoked Paprika and herbs, BBQ until golden and tender, served in a flour Tortilla with shredded Lettuce, Red Onions, Tomato and a lightly spiced dressing, served with warm Tortilla chips and topped with a gooey Cheese topping.

## 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 into 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 aerals.

**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.*

WHITE HORSE KITE FLYERS meet at Barbury Castle country Park on the second Sunday of each month.

Your local contacts are: -

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Arthur Dibble +44(0)1635 865976

This issue edited by Arthur Dibble, with contributions from; Dave Cross;

Dave Thompson; Dave Robinson; Neil Harvey;

Subscriptions 12 months from December 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 £16 (including 4 issues of Cowpat Hill and kiteflying insurance at events). £5 for each additional family member. Personal Liability Insurance £11 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.