

Letters to the Editor

A Mysterious Cody 'Save All'

Dear Drachen,

Wow! Contact at last! These computers have been giving me grief since 1965. I blame your Defense Department. Anyway, here's the e-mail I've been trying to send:

Hidden deep in the catalogue at Sotheby's sale of the Cody family's treasures was Lot 164 which was described as three small kites and a larger one. After buying this offering, I discovered the small kites were three (of the original four) devices Cody mounted at right angles to his War Kite's sails and inside the rear boxes. Presumably this was to counter the kite's habit of suddenly diving out of the sky if the wind blew too hard. The larger kite turned out to be the front box of a kite and was unlike any other; it was in a very distressed condition. The silk had become brittle over the years and had crumbled into extremely small pieces. Luckily, the kite had had a hemp line sewn around the sail edges to keep the leading and trailing edges in shape and to hold the bridle, spars, etc., and this gave some clue to its shape.

After carefully getting the bundle of string and split canes into some sort of order to be measured and photographed, I was sweeping up the pieces of silk on the floor and decided to clean the sacking in which the kite was wrapped. To my surprise, I realized that I was holding what could only be an original 'Save All'.

The 'Save All' was fixed behind the British Army's man-lifting kites and was nothing more than a rectangular drogue. Made of hessian, or jute sacking, it measured 23 by 46 inches. Around the four edges of the sacking was a hem about 1 inch deep and inside the hem was a drawcord of about a half-inch circumference. The drawcord had neat back splices in each end and was coming out of the hem in the center of one of the larger sides. At each corner of the sacking a small hole had been punched where the two hems met and this was for the cord holding it to the rear of the kite's four longerons. A 'Save All' is shown in an excellent Royal Navy photograph of the November 1908 Portsmouth anti-submarine trials.

Checking the stores list (Army Form G1033) issued to

Petty Officer Bobbett when he took the equipment to Portsmouth, I was surprised to discover in the HMS Excellent files that the "Save All" was not listed. As there was a dispute between the Army and Navy over just what was issued and returned after the final anti-submarine (or magnesium flare) trials in 1908, the files are extremely large and contain a great deal of detail (varying from rough notes on scraps of paper to formal letters between the Admiralty and the War Office). Perhaps Cody took the 'Save All' to Portsmouth from his own equipment and it after all was nothing to do with the Army's kites.

David Hughes
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Hello, My Favorite Kite Journal!

Dear Drachen,

I must thank you so much for the nice writing (Journal No. 4) you did about my miserable life! Mainly, it's just a wonderful present you made to my dad, who is on his way to leave us, being in hospital at the end of his life. He did not know me as much as he could, for the last 20 years, and reading your article is just something he needed to leave in peace, and in some way, to be proud of his son. Thank you for that.

Beside, he's almost more English than French, and sometimes, he speaks to me in English, just like if he was still in Nigeria! The Drachen Journal in English was just perfect for him to read.

Nicolas Chorier
Montpellier, France

Update on U.S. Kite Patents

Dear Drachen,

Just to keep the record up to date:

A total of nine patents for kites and accessories were issued by the U.S. Patent Office during 1999. This compares with 10 issuances the previous year, but is still about half the average number of kite patents each year during the

past 25 years.

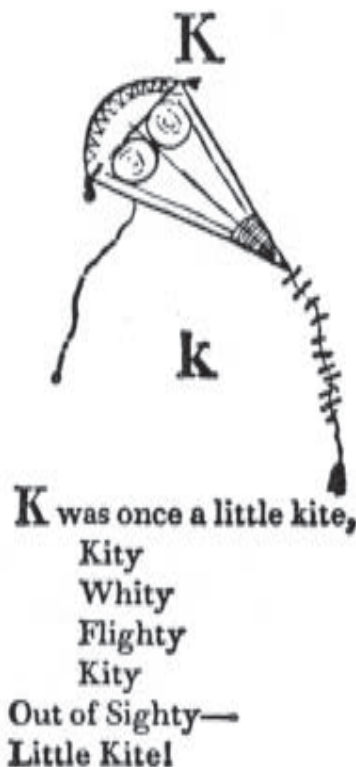
The 1999 patents include two rotary-type kites, two kites designed primarily for appearance, two kites with variable towing points, and one to permit easy folding.

I must correct the number of the patent in the Eddy piece ("He Put Diamonds in the Sky," Spring 2000 issue of this journal). It should be 646,375—not 6,446,375. Currently issued patents are in the 6,100,000s, so 6,446,375 has a long wait.

As to my age, I came in with the San Francisco earthquake, the eruption of Vesuvius, the Chilean earthquake, and just before a big stock market crash. In other words, 1906, September 30th to be exact. This adds up to 94. Can this be possible?

Up and away,
Ed Grauel
Rochester, New York

About Bell Tetras



Hi Ali Fujino,

That's a true observation by Leonard Opdycke (letter to editor, journal No. 4), putting a motor on one of Mr. Bell's tetras would still be a long way from a human bird. I don't have the numbers correct, but engineers point out that there are seven or eight things required for flight, absolutely critical: and the Wrights had perfected and incorporated five of them as basic elements in their aircraft, only two or three (requiring a bit more tuning?) to be added in the ensuing years after their first historic flight. But, wouldn't it have been something to have seen tetras flying around in the sky, and, thinking how long it took the automobile to cast off the appearance of a horseless carriage, tetra jets in that deep red fabric Alex favored for his tetras flying overhead [paraphrasing Mr. Ford, "Give them anything they want if it's deep red."].

Tal Streeter
Verbank, New York

Letter of Thanks

Dear Drachen Foundation,

The students and parents of Sacajawea Elementary School thank you so much for participating in our science and math fair. As you could probably tell from all the kites that went swirling through our gym, halls and cafeteria, your exhibit was a really big hit with the kids. I know my boys have done some experimenting with how the kite flies without a tail, and when the slight fold is increased. Thank you for taking the time and effort to help each eager child who came to your exhibit. Thank you for your preparation in setting up and organizing materials. The fair really got our kids excited about math and science, and illustrated for them how these fields of study are part of real life!

Rebecca Keith
Seattle, Washington

Praise for Drachen and Ed Graul

Dear Drachen Foundation,

Another excellent edition of the Drachen Journal. Great pieces by Ed Graul—the man's curiosity and perseverance continue to delight and amaze me. Keep it up Drachen—for all of us.

John Freeman
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