

KITE BUILDING IN SCHOOLS

In the Spring of this year I was approached by Mr Brian Haywood, head teacher at Dovedale school in Liverpool and asked if I would arrange for a group of people to go along to the School and instruct a class of 9/10 year old pupils on how to build and fly kites.

Appreciating that this might be difficult to attempt on my own, due to the likely number of pupils I would be dealing with, I enlisted the help of a small number of NKGers who often fly at Otterspool. At that time, a date had not been set for the lesson to take place and so there was sufficient opportunity to carry out some research into what design of kite might best suit the challenge.

As the pupils were so young, the requirement of sewing fabric material of any sort was out of the question. Plastic sheeting, joined by adhesive tape was something that youngsters of this age might be able to cope with, also it was cheap and readily available. Utilising these materials made the choice of kite design to be adopted led me to choose the ubiquitous Sled, but which one.

Studying the kite design books soon showed what a wealth of different designs are available, some with circular holes in the sail, some triangular, some with no holes but sporting tails, some looped and some single strand, some with longerons, some with tapering sleeves along the top of the sail, in order to lend some rigidity. Fortunately, Dave Green had made a study of sled kites in his earlier days as a flyer and he was able to give advice on the choice to be made, no holes but with a looped tail and using garden canes for longerons. The next step was to build a prototype, fly it and if successful, refine the construction to suit classroom requirements.

Materials were gathered, plastic garden rubbish bags and green coloured garden support sticks from the local garden centre. One member of the team had a roll of plastic ribbon blue and silver in colour, (it looked like some sort of electronic tape and was given to him many years ago by Tony Slater). This was ideal for looped tails, thanks Tony. Other members found rolls of Duct tape/Carpet tape, call it what you will. This proved to be much more substantial than the normal Selotape as is used for office documents. Flying line, wound on to suitable handles, was ordered from Tony at Go Kites and a date was set for bringing everything together, Wednesday 10th May.

The fact that the pupils were still at lunch when the team first arrived gave us the opportunity to distribute the required materials onto the classroom tables, without the hindrance of inquisitive hands. The prototype kite was hung on the classroom wall to act as a visual aid to the construction and also several different styles of kites were also put on display in order to act as an incentive to the potential kite constructors.

Having come to the end of the lunch break, the pupils began to file into the classroom, all wide eyed and excited, and take their places, four pupils to each work table. After a brief address, explaining what we, and they, were about to do, work started by marking out from the templates previously distributed. School scissors had thoughtfully been provided by the school staff. You probably remember the type from your own school days. They were about four inches long, with rounded ends, made of some type of dull metal and would not cut through warm butter. A child would never be injured by using them, neither are they ever likely to cut straight lines from sheet plastic. Fortunately, a few pairs of decent scissors had been given to him many years ago by Tony Slater). This was brought by the team members and, with close supervision the youngsters were able to make progress in cutting along the lines previously marked.

Appreciating the difficulties youngsters would have in cutting and handling adhesive tapes, most of the tapes had been pre-cut to size and brought to the classroom attached to unwanted CD's. In this way, it was easier for the youngsters to peel off the tape as and when required. Work carried on at a remarkable rate, the youngsters were quite bright, ready to listen to instructions and were prepared to learn from the other members of their respective tables. Although there were not sufficient instructors available to have an

adult at each of the six tables being used, we managed to move around, giving help and instruction as it was needed.

Mid session and there was a break for play-time. The instructors were invited to the staff room to partake of some liquid refreshments (i.e). tea or coffee. When work resumed, It was time to affix the bridle lines to the kites and start to decorate with felt tip pens of various colours. As this workshop was taking place in Liverpool and Liverpool football team were shortly to compete in the F.A. cup final a few days later, much of the decoration depicted aspect of football, what the final score would be, who was most likely to score it and all had no doubt which team was going to bring home the cup.

In all a total of 24 kites were made during the afternoon and at the end of the session two of the instructors were asked to make a tour of the tables and to pick out the best kite from a artistic point of view. One kite was marginally better than the rest and this had been decorated by a pretty girl, named Sophie . Dave had commented how this youngster had taken her time with each aspect of the kite making. Accuracy and neatness had been shown in her work throughout the afternoon and she was rewarded by the presentation of a professionally made kite, kindly donated by the instructors. A second instructor was asked to judge the best technically constructed kite. This again happened to be the kite built and decorated by the same youngster. As she had already been awarded a prize, a further prize was awarded to the youngster who had been judged to have constructed the second best kite.

Time now to wrap up the kites and to mark them on the outside of the wraps with the youngsters names. We don t want any arguments when we come to fly them. It was decided that I would take care of the finished kites until such time as a date, convenient to all, could be arranged for a mass fly-in at Otterspool.

A date was set for the proposed mass fly-in but unfortunately the weather was not suitable due to very high winds and there had to be a hurried postponement. This was then rearranged for Friday 14th July. The day itself was beautiful, with the sun shining and a decent wind of about 8mph. The 24 children arrived at Otterspool by mini-bus, with form teacher Mrs Bagley and Head teacher Mr Haywood, the children excited and desperate to get their kites up in the sky. The lines were attached to the kites by the NKG members, who included Dave ,Mike, Colin, Jack, Mary, Ken, Olive and myself.

Before flying the kites the children were asked in which direction the kites should be launched and they all remembered that the wind needed to be behind them and they were all able to point in which direction the wind was blowing. After some minor adjustments to one or two of the kites, all 24 were launched and flown successfully, to the delight of the children.

We organised an altitude sprint with Dave, Colin and Mike demonstrating how this should be done. For this demonstration the children were divided into three groups and each group cheered on their respective champion.

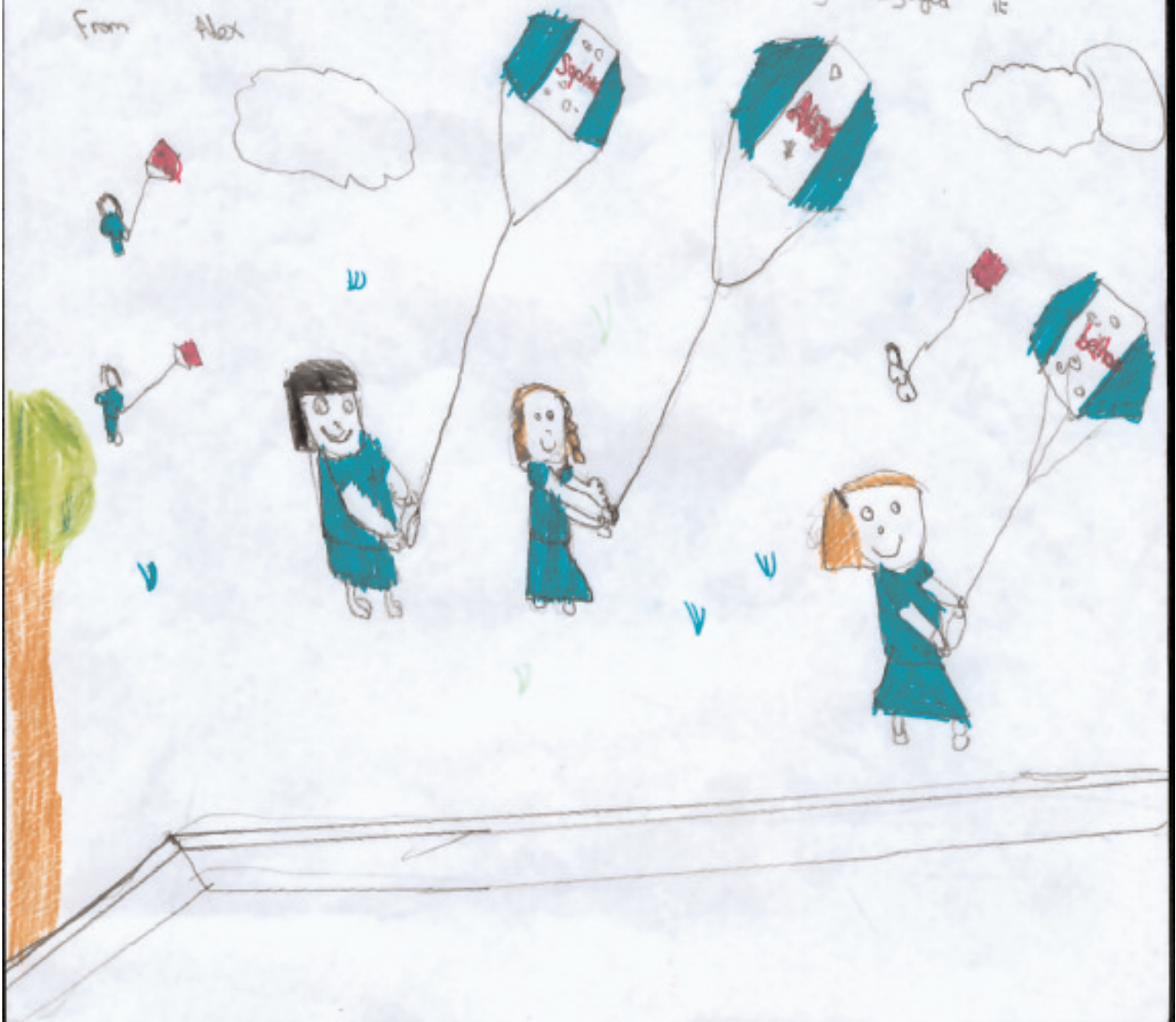
They were then divided into two groups for the altitude sprint and a professionally made kite was awarded to the winner of each group. When the flying was over the children were treated to a demonstration of Dave's three kites one man routine and then a team fly by Flying Colours. The following day we received a bunch of letters from the children thanking us for showing them how to make and fly kites, and for Dave's demonstration, which they all loved. The whole event was enjoyed by the NKG team, the school staff and of course by the youngsters themselves. So successful was the day that I can well imagine that this could become an annual event.

Whilst flying at the same site during the school summer holidays, we were thrilled to see two of the kites being flown on a far corner of the field. Two of the pupils had brought along their parents to witness the kites flying. Who knows? Perhaps budding NKG'ers in a few years time.

Gwen Williams.

Dear
Athen and friends

I had an outstanding time making and flying my kite.
My kite went really high and soared very well. I enjoyed
the race even though I didn't win. I brought the display
was extremely skilled and thrilling, I am going to fly my
kite again at airport. When Dave flew 3 kites at once I
was amazed at how he did it. I really enjoyed it
From Alex



Dear Gwen and friends,

thank you for helping to make and fly my kite. When we went down to Otterspool, I thoughtly enjoyed my self. I thought when Dave flew them kites it was amazing.

I'm going to fly my kite in the summer holidays I'm so exited I think kites are beautiful I like it when the kites soared in the breeze.

When we went to Otterspool it was wonderful. The kites were flying so high.



Dear Gwen and friends

Thank you for helping us make kites it was terrific making them. But flying them was brilliant and fun.

It was fantastic when Dave was flying three kites at once, making them go in the same direction at once. And it was good having a competition until my kite got tangled up. I can't wait to go and fly my kite with my mum and dad.

From Richard Lea



Dear Gwen and friends,
On Friday it was great.
At the end especially it was
the best where Dave was
flying 3 kites at the same time,
and when Dave, Mike, Jack and
Cdin were flying it in a sort of Jet
pattern. I will be flying my kite because I
really enjoyed that.

Thank you

Jared




Dear Owen and friends

I thoroughly enjoyed it. The kits flew
Brilliantly Dave was excellent with those three
kits. I will definitely fly my kits again with you
- my kite flew perfectly and I like the lesson where
we made our kits I enjoyed it very much I hope
I see you again at others pool.

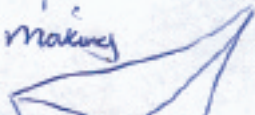
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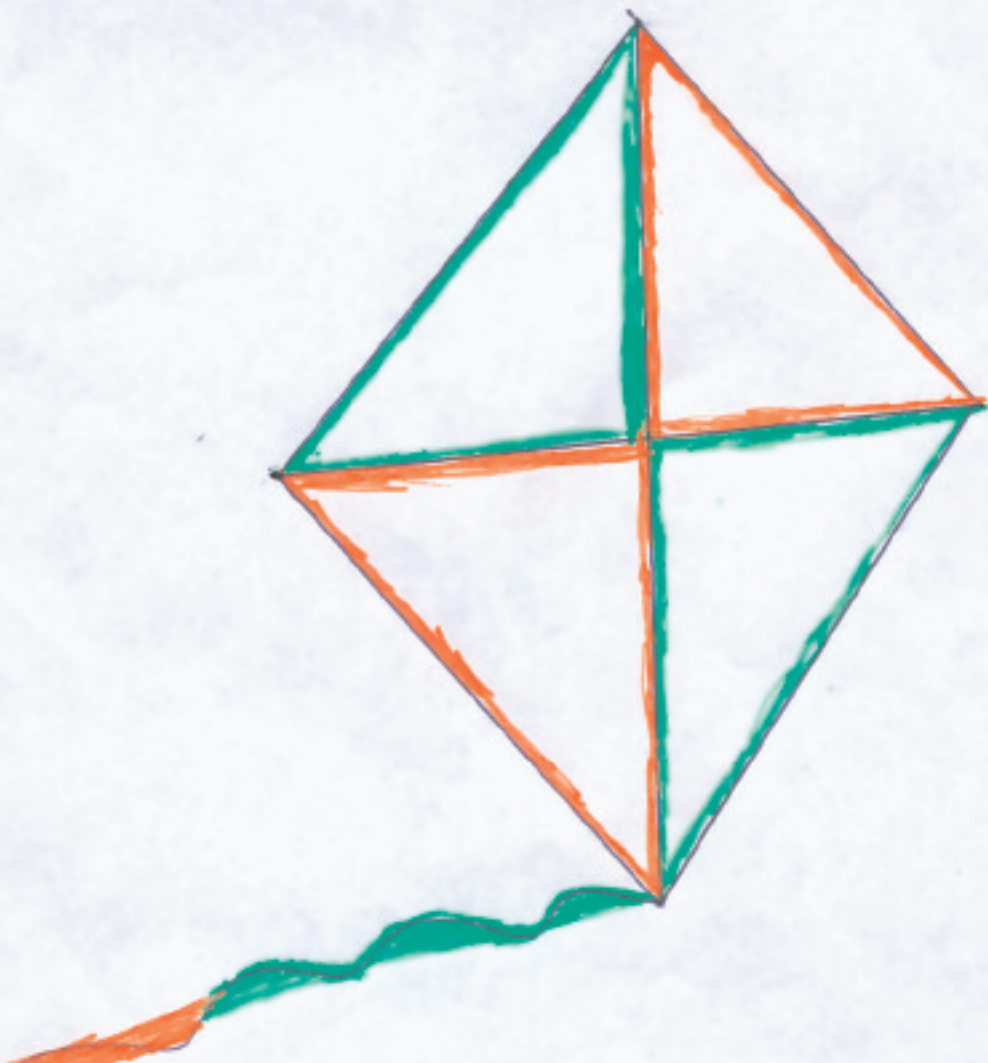
Dear Gwen and friends
Thank you for taking us to
Ottuspool and making kites with us.

We had a wonderful time and it was
amazing when Dave was flying ³ kites at
the same time and ~~when~~ ^{when} Dave, Collin, Jack
and Mike were flying the four kites together, when
we were flying our kites they went really high.
and I will fly my kite again in Ottuspool
Next time I go Thank you again for
taking us to Ottuspool and, ~~Spending~~
Spending all that money and making
the kites with us.



Dear Gwen and friend thank you for
making our kite and flying with us
I had a nice day out at Otterspool
It was a lot of fun flying our kite
and I would like to do it again. And the
little show that that you put on for us
was a lot of fun also & when Dave flew
the 3 kites and the kite race was a lot of
fun Thank you

from Liam
Parry



to Gwen and team,

I have written to you to thank you for giving up your time on Friday to come and fly our kites with us.

It was Spectacular. I loved flying my kite down by the river.

Dave was quite skilled when he flew three kites at once. It was the formation I loved best. It was fascinating how they soared around but also stayed in line. I will definitely fly my kite in the summer holidays.
from Matthew



Dear Gwen and friends.

I Liked it very much it was very exciting. I Liked it when Dave flew three Rites in one go. I really enjoyed. I want to visit again.

from
SIBRAIL



Dear

Gwen and friends

Thanke you for helping me build my Kite and
Thank you for letting us come to otterpool park
to fly our kites. It was fantack when colin, Dave,
Jack, mike, where flying those four kites Thank
you for Spending thant that money.



Dear

Glen and Friends.

On Friday I really really enjoyed the afternoon.
It was brilliant you have lots and lots of
Skill when you fly your kites. I hope with
a lot of practice I can be as
good as you.

Thank you for helping me make and fly
my kite. I thoroughly enjoyed my afternoon
flying and making my kite.

I liked the other kites
the boss. competitions and when
they soared through the
sky.

your sincerely

Joanne

Dear Gwen and friends

I thank you all very much for taking us to fly our kites they were brilliant. They flew extremely high thank you all very much for spending your Friday afternoon with us. On Sunday I flew my kites at Otter's pool. It was very exciting.



from

Robbie.



Dear Gwen and friends

I thoroughly enjoyed making my kite and flying it last Friday in Otterspool, I think it was fantastic and I hope I see you all sometime again. I just want to say a big thankyou to all of you. I think it was amazing how Dave did four kites at one time, And how much skill all of you had. I Hope I see you's again bye bye for know.

x Lots of Love x
x from x
x Lineikeh Johnson x



Dear Gwen and the team

I had an enjoyable time flying my Kite.

I loved the display at the end. Thank you for the kite that was awarded to me.

The day was terrific I enjoyed it very much.

Thank you for the day!

yours
Sincerely
Suleyman



Dear G men and friends,

Thank our extraordinary time with you. Thank you for the Kites
it was fun flying them and it was good making one to. Dave
with the ~~the~~ three kites was just out standing. the way he did
it, the formation flying the kites was just so well done.
You must have practiced a lot with them. A real thanks for
the time you spent with us

From michael



Dear Gwen and friends

I really enjoyed the afternoon. It was
amazing when Dave flew 3 kites by
himself. Thank you for the kite. It was
very very exciting when they did the rap
with the kites. I saw Jack
flying a kite it was black orange and yellow.
I flew the kite that I won it
was very exciting.



Dear Gwen and friends

Okepool

Race



thankyou for that wonderful afternoon, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I thought that Dave was good when he flew those three kites at the same time. And it was fascinating when you all flew the kites and the way that you landed them so gently so thankyou for a thrilling afternoon

from Bethan
Lem class 5&6



Dear Gwen and team

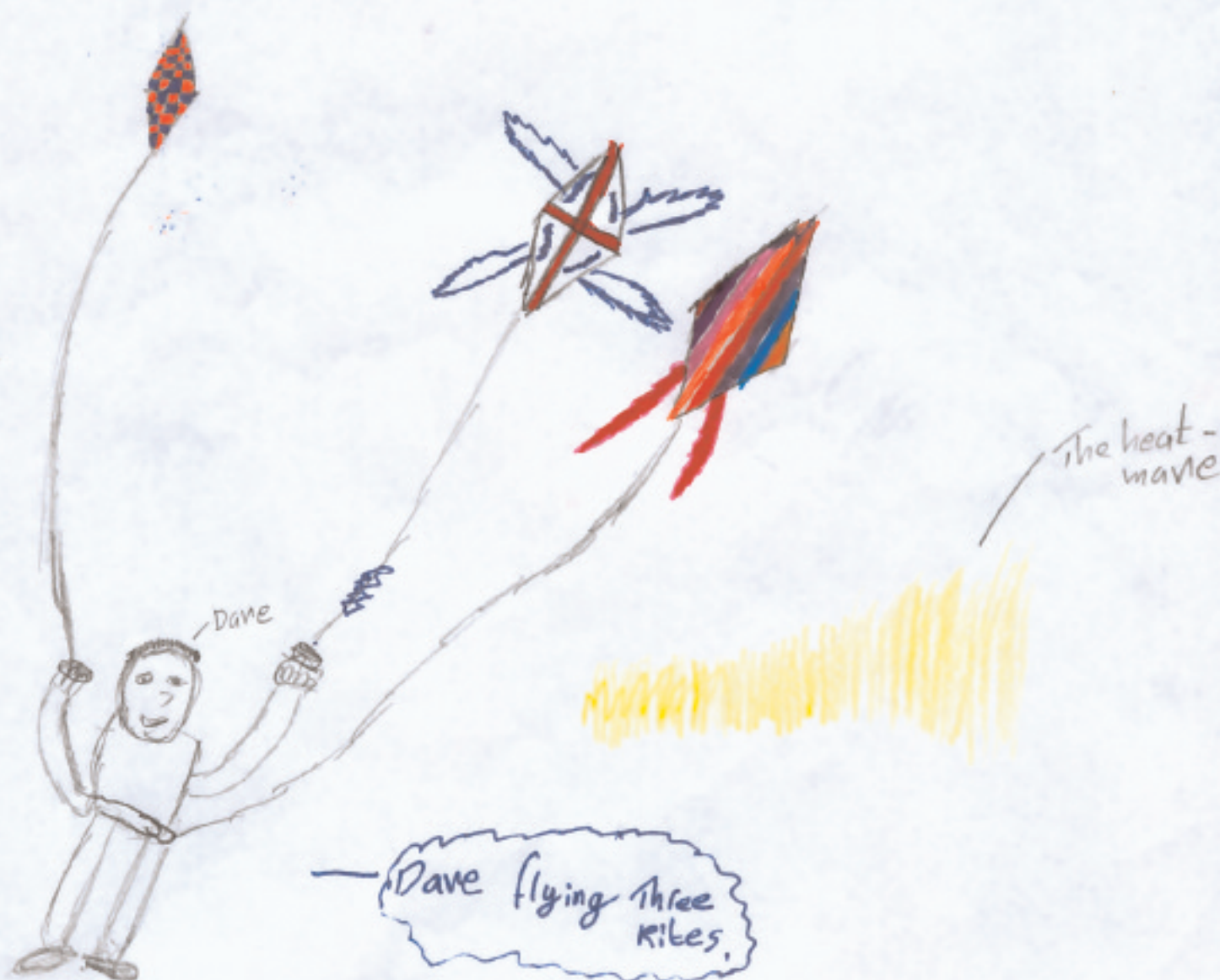
I enjoyed the kite flying I especially enjoyed
Dave with the ³ four kites. I enjoyed the contests and
when everyone was doing the contests and when
everyone was doing the four kites. Thank ~~you~~ ^{you} for
helping us make the kites, it was fantastic and
it was boss man Dave was doing all the tricks
and skills



Dear Gwen and friends

I really enjoyed flying the kites I thought it was fascinating how Dave could fly three kites at once and these four people could fly four ~~kites~~ kites the same way all the time. I had a fantastic time it was more than brilliant, I loved making the kites with you you had brilliant skills with the kites ~~and~~ and you are all very good at making them as well. Thank you for everything I really enjoyed myself.

From Elijah



Dear :

Gwen and friends

Thank for helping us to made the kites it was lovely and great!
And I had a wonderful time flying my kite and I have now a new skill of flying kite, I enjoyed the Friday afternoon, it was so kind of you to spend your time with us making kites and teaching us how to fly and I had a brilliant time to spend with you on Friday the afternoon!

from

Sophie

