

Sad, mad or dedicated?

At the time of writing we have just abandoned practice for this weekend. Blustery is the closest word I can think of to describe the conditions when we arrived at our site on Salisbury Plain 15 miles from where we live. 'Blustery' doesn't come close really - 20mph to zero and back up to 30mph in the space of one and half seconds is something they don't have a word for - not one that the editor would allow! Non kite fliers, and even some people that do fly, just do not know what some of us go through just to see if a few turns in the new ballet will fit to the music - dedicated - or just mad? Non kite flyers would probably say "sad" - but they don't understand do they? When we put a ballet together it's important to us that we make it to the end - especially when lots of people are watching, of course. And the end is as important as all of the rest of the ballet. The final landing usually starts about three quarters through the music. When flying with tails it is hard to choreograph anything exactly because so many factors come in to play - speed, wind strength, positioning in the air and movement and positioning on the ground are all much more exaggerated. At a certain point we will have begun the final few moves that bring us to what we hope will be a simultaneous, controlled landing on the very last beat of the music. Take a close look at the end of our Conte Partiro ballet. We do the same moves whether there are two or three of us flying. This year we hope to have enough of us knowing the routine to be able to fly it as a four person team at least a couple of times in public. Listen closely and you will hear me counting the timing near the end - each time I hope that I have got it right because the discipline within the team is such that they must and will, turn to my call no matter what - and that can be scary! Why do we fly sometimes with two and sometimes with three? Because we do it for fun

and, we do it for the challenge - who the extra member is depends on who turns up on the day. We figure that as long as the two of us know what we are doing we can manage to help the extra member along if they need it. That's why, eventually we ended out getting soaked today, as well as cold and breaking a kite and that's why we feel a little bit annoyed when someone asks can you cut down your arena time by five minutes today - the Mayor wants to make a speech! We go out most every weekend (can't say that Marilyn is always as keen as me but she is still there) and sometimes when the wind is strong and the temperature is minus two with a chill factor of minus fourteen (probably hard to imagine at the time of year you will be reading this). It's not always bad though - believe it or not it was quite warm the day we flew in the snow - now that **was** a day to remember!

