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بہار میں لکھنؤ میں

۱۸۵۷ء میں لکھنؤ میں

بہار میں لکھنؤ میں

۱۸۵۷ء میں لکھنؤ میں

Handwritten shorthand for "Kite Festival" (کیتہ فیسٹیول)

Handwritten shorthand for "Bus" (بص)

Handwritten shorthand symbols on a blue-lined background.

Kite Festival

On the 14th of this month we went to the 19th Streatham Kite Festival on Streatham Common in South London. We saw it for the first time last year, and we were really looking forward to this year's event. It has a very happy and excited atmosphere of anticipation, with everyone there just to enjoy the displays and fly their own kites. We were very glad that the day started bright and breezy, after some overnight and early morning showers. Sun and warmth are both optional, but the breezes are essential and the weather gave us all these at once. The Common is ideal for kite flying as the back of it slopes gently upwards and I think this must increase the wind that blows in from the downhill direction, and away from the main road at the base. There are large mature trees dotted around the edges and it is up to the flyers to avoid getting their cords too near to these, if they don't wish to lose their kites in the branches.

There was a variety of arena displays where the stunt kites do their dances in the air to music. As the action is all up in the air, everyone seated around and further away can watch the spectacle with a clear view. The kite club members had their larger kites flying at a greater altitude, where the wind is constant and the kite stays almost motionless. Their spools were on gear that allowed them to be spiked securely into the ground. I gave a little tug on one of the very high flying kite cords and it was absolutely solid, which made it very clear how much pull the kite is exerting and how easily it could propel a person or a sand yacht along. No need to hitch your wagon to a star, as a kite will surely do the job. One of the tethered kites had a wind powered bubble machine attached to the lower end, a fun way to indicate the wind direction and strength.

Kite Festival

I saw several new kite characters this time, other than the usual birds, butterflies and basic diamond and triangle shapes. There was a shiny oval hologram kite that was spinning rapidly as it flew, and resembled a blinking light in the air. There was a string of about 25 mini kites, which were released one by one until they were all in the air. Someone had made a sailing ship, with the central sails in the form of a box kite, which did fly but I think it probably needed to be flown quite high to get the best of the stable airflow. I saw several small black bats, which being wider than tall seemed to swoop about quite well in a lifelike manner. Some of the children were running around with swirling kites on the end of a stick, so no string or height needed and the stick can be tied to something in the back garden once they get home.

Last year's giant blue teddy bear was replaced this time by a bright yellow one, as well as an equally large multi-coloured octopus, a grey whale, a large blue whale, a crocodile, a green lobster and a penguin. Best of all was a visit from that special person, Mr Superman himself, in his trademark red and blue costume, with his black quiff hairstyle and streaming red cape. He floated and undulated over the crowds, and when he sank nearer to the ground, a group of four small boys were running up and down next to the rope barrier, trying to catch his feet, which they actually did once or twice. Maybe they were hoping to be lifted aloft, a desire not likely to be realised or allowed.

This scene looked like a good story or film in the making, a huge protective Superman figure hovering over the people, ready to fly off and attack anything that was threatening to harm or hurt us, or cause trouble. He had a good view of everything, and his hands and fingers were waving around, as if impatient to get to grips with a problem and solve it as efficiently and peacefully as he knows how. I am very glad to say that nothing untoward happened, which is just how Superman and the rest of us like it, a congenial and enjoyable day out for hundreds of families and children.

By the afternoon the common was packed with people. At the lower end families were sitting around on picnic blankets eating and drinking. Further up, although the slope was covered in people, there was still plenty of room for everyone to fly their kites without tangling. The food and ice cream stalls were working hard to supply everyone as fast as they could manage. The kite selling tents were crowded with queues trailing behind like a kite tail, with excited children looking forward to choosing one and walking away opening the packets and impatient to get it assembled, with mum or dad's help. It seemed a shame to leave it all, like coming away from the seaside and its holiday atmosphere, but I had a camera full of pictures and videos from every angle, so that I can revisit the event in comfort over the next year. (888 words)