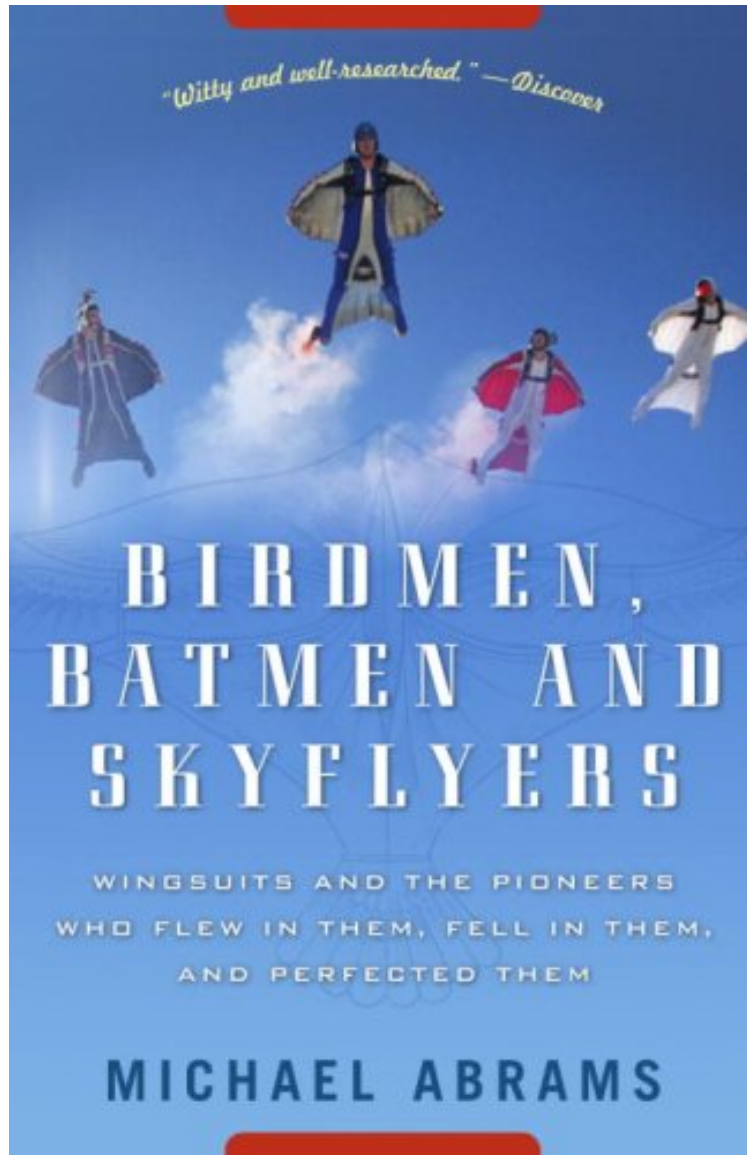


(Mobile ebook) Birdmen, Batmen, and Skyflyers: Wingsuits and the Pioneers Who Flew in Them, Fell in Them, and Perfected Them

Birdmen, Batmen, and Skyflyers: Wingsuits and the Pioneers Who Flew in Them, Fell in Them, and Perfected Them

Michael Abrams

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Michael Abrams : **Birdmen, Batmen, and Skyflyers: Wingsuits and the Pioneers Who Flew in Them, Fell in Them, and Perfected Them** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Birdmen, Batmen, and Skyflyers: Wingsuits and the Pioneers Who Flew in Them, Fell in Them, and Perfected Them:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great read, but needs some fact-checking
By James D. Crabtree
The author has produced a book that's fascinating to read and which covers a special aspect of skydiving, i.e. the old "Birdmen" phenomena. I really enjoyed some of the stories told here. Unfortunately I think that much of the information included in this book must be based on personal experiences of those birdmen via interviews and self-serving biographies. For instance Valentin, the French jumper, described himself as joining the French Army and becoming a paratrooper in Algeria. Then came the war and the fall of Metropolitan France. He joined some of his buddies and they took a boat to England to enlist in the Free French. They were then dropped in Brittany in 1939 "with jeeps" where they attempted to fight the Germans. But wait... France fell in 1940. Plus, no jeeps could have been dropped into Europe during WWII... the technique for such heavy drops was not perfected until after the war. Vehicles and heavy equipment were sent in via gliders. It's a little thing but it detracts from the whole.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Skyflier in the Family
By C. A. Sohn
We were interested in this book after we discovered we were distantly related to the Batwing Jumper. Not disappointed, the research is quite thorough and the facts accurate, and we learned a few more details about our wild and crazy ancestor. The other tales are also as enjoyable. Quite an interesting read, but we still found ourselves asking, "Why?"
0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. OK
By D. Peden
Not very well written but interesting if you're into skydiving or like reading about these kind of things. Not recommended otherwise.

The Wright Brothers were wimps. Or so you might think after reading this account of their unsung but even more daring rivalsthe men and women who strapped wings to their backs and took to the sky. If only for a few seconds. People have been dying to fly, quite literally, since the dawn of history. They've made wings of feather and bone, leather and wood, canvas and taffeta, and thrown themselves off the highest places they could find. Theirs is the worlds first and still most dangerous extreme sport, and its full history has never been told. Birdmen, Batmen, and Skyflyers is a thrilling, hilarious, and often touching chronicle of these obsessive inventors and eccentric daredevils. It traces the story of winged flight from its doomed early pioneers to their glorious high-tech descendants, who've at last conquered gravity (sometimes, anyway). Michael Abrams gives us a brilliant birds-eye view of what its like to fly with wings. And then, inevitably, to fall. In the Immortal Words of Great Birdmen... Someday I think that everyone will have wings and be able to soar from the housetops. But there must be a lot more experimenting before that can happen. Clem Sohn, the worlds first batman, who plummeted to his death at the Paris Air Show in 1937 The trouble was that he went only halfway up the radio tower. If he had gone clear to the top it would have been different. Amadeo Catao Lopes in 1946, explaining the broken legs of the man who tried his wings One day, a jump will be the last. The jump of death. But that idea does not hold me back. Rudolf Richard Boehlen, who died of jump-related injuries in 1953 It turned out that almost everyone from the thirties and forties had died. That just made me want to do it more. Garth Taggart, stunt jumper for The Gypsy Moths, filmed in 1968 You have to be the first one. The second one is the first loser. Felix Baumgartner, who in 2003 became the first birdman to cross the English Channel From the Hardcover edition.

From Publishers Weekly
When Abrams talks about humans flying, he is referring more to Icarus than to airplanes. From ancient myths through China "sometime in the sixth century A.D." to present-day skydivers, Abrams chronicles the men and their various models of wings that have taken to the air in hope of flying like a bird. The tales of flight range from the silly and mysterious to the inspiring and unbelievable. Abrams's brief biographies are deep enough to convey how serious these birdmen take the notion of flight, but lighthearted enough to capture the carefree way most of these sky flyers face possible death. For instance, Abrams isn't afraid to paraphrase Shakespeare in describing one would-be flyer who also happened to be an English king thus: "the wind did not crack its cheeks quite enough to keep the sovereign aloft'twas his neck that cracked instead." Abrams's witty touch is a saving grace considering that many of these daredevils' stories follow a similar arc: as Abrams notes, an exceptionally high percentage of successful and would-be birdmen are, for some unexplained reason, either orphans or from the state of Michigan. Bw photos. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist
An entertaining sidebar to the history of aviation is the story of attempts to fly, glide, or at least fall slowly with the aid of strap-on lifting surfaces--a tale that begins in ancient China and continued in the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci. The resultant contraptions often resembled bird or bat wings, and a good many of them can be mistaken for the Caped Crusader's distinctive gear. The foes of these experimental contrivances were not, however, criminals a la Gotham City but the laws of aerodynamics, which dictated that these designs just could not produce enough lift for the performance desired of them. The chatty tone of Abrams' sketches of important figures in his chronicle may strike some as in poor taste, considering the number of the subjects who came to fatal ends. The rigid-wing glider, mated to controllable surfaces and the internal-combustion engine, finally opened the skies. Yet once the fixed-wing aircraft was ready, thanks to these experimenters, so was the parachute. Roland Green
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Birds are not obligated to show up at an airport one hour prior to flight, nor must they fasten seatbelts for takeoff and landing. Is it any wonder that, 102 years after the Wright Brothers brought us the first

practical plane, our urge to soar like falcons is still alive and well? While few people indulge that fantasy except in dreams, Michael Abrams has discovered that the present-day heirs to Daedalus and Icarus, far from suicidal, are as diligent and methodical in their pioneering work as were Wilbur and Orville. After some 3,000 years of failure, he writes with the solid reporting and polished storytelling of a veteran journalist, we are living in a veritable renaissance of personal flight. For most of those 3,000 years, would-be fliers generally met their fate in costumes of feathers. In scientifically minded ancient Greece, however, criminals were sometimes tied to live birds and experimentally pushed off cliffs. Even Leonardo da Vinci supposedly tried to fly using a protean glider and might have succeeded: Once you have tasted flight, he wrote, you will walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been and there you long to return. Michigan native Clem Sohn was the first to make that round-trip on a regular basis, dropping from a plane at air shows beginning in the early 30s, and although he was dead in less than a decade his cloth wing-suit, fashioned on his mother's sewing machine, inspired the garb now used by hundreds of recreational birdmen worldwide. Gradual refinement of equipment and technique has made personal flight more commonplace, and less deadly than ever before. Still, commercial airlines need not worry: Soaring is good sport, but no amount of arm waving will get a birdman aloft in the first place. JONATHAN KEATS, *ForbesLife* A joyous, quirky, witty, totally inspiring book about falling through the air and dying. Abrams has captured the lunatic passion of these birdmen with so much insight and intelligence and infectious enthusiasm that risking your neck to fly through a cloud with your arms outstretched no longer seems unreasonable. Mary Roach, author of *Stiff* and *Spook* From the Hardcover edition.