

Waikato Whispers



Waikato Hot Air Balloon Club: www.waikatoballoonclub.co.nz Tel:07 856 0060

CLUB NIGHT Wednesday 7th June details below

CLUB DAY Sunday 11th June Te Aroha.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Club Night: Meeting 7:30pm Bowlevard at the Sky City centre Hamilton.

Club Day:

Te Aroha Sunday 11th June – further details on Club Night and on facebook. We hope to have two balloons tethering at the Stanley St School plus set up the walk-through balloon as a fund raiser for the Club. The school will be running a sausage sizzle. We have also booked the events centre as a backup venue. 7am start!

For our Younger Members: (Ref: Kids Learning Resources by Cameron Balloons)

Traditionally, each time a hot air balloon lands, champagne is shared. It is said that back in 'olden times' farmers believed that hot-air balloons that were landing in their fields may have been dragons descending from the skies! To soothe the farmer's fears, hot-air balloon pilots would share a bottle with the farmers, whose land they had descended on



Junior Balloonists

Next meeting Sunday 21st May. Venue to be confirmed. We will be doing the History of ballooning and you are all to do some research on the history of ballooning and bring it along. We plan to create a montage of ballooning history on a LARGE sheet of paper which we can use as part of the Balloon Discovery Centre. David is collecting up information on the history of ballooning in NZ so will have some extra material that you can use.

Bring along any pens, stencils etc that you think you might want to use. This will be a very practical workshop!

You are also very welcome to come out on Club Day as we will be setting up the walk-through balloon, hopefully tethering a balloon, and setting up a display. This is about show-casing ourselves to the people of Te Aroha.

Ballooning in New Zealand

The first balloonist in New Zealand was an American, Professor Baldwin, who made his first antipodean ascent in Dunedin in early 1889 using coal gas to inflate his oiled-silk balloon. He was soon followed by a number of hot-air balloonists, but it wasn't until June 1894 that Masterton was included on the itinerary of these travelling performers.

Hot-air ballooning in the 1890s was far from the safe pastime it now is. It was more akin to a circus performance, and filling the balloon with the hot air was part of the show.

A 10m long and 60cm deep trench was first dug in line with the prevailing wind, and an old water tank, with both top and bottom removed, placed at the downwind end of the trench. The trench was

then filled with firewood and covered. The balloon was suspended on two high poles and placed over the water tank outlet. The fire was lit, the wind carrying the hot air (including some sparks) along the trench, through the tank and into the balloon, like a crude blast furnace. A man stood inside the mouth of the balloon, armed with water to extinguish any sparks that landed on the balloon. The crowd was then invited to assist by pulling the skin of the balloon outwards, allowing the balloon to inflate.



NOAH JONASSON'S balloon inflated at Day's Bay, Wellington, in November 1897



The Beebe Balloon Company launched this balloon from the Auckland Domain in April 1914 in front of a large crowd. A number of men are supporting the balloon as it is inflated.

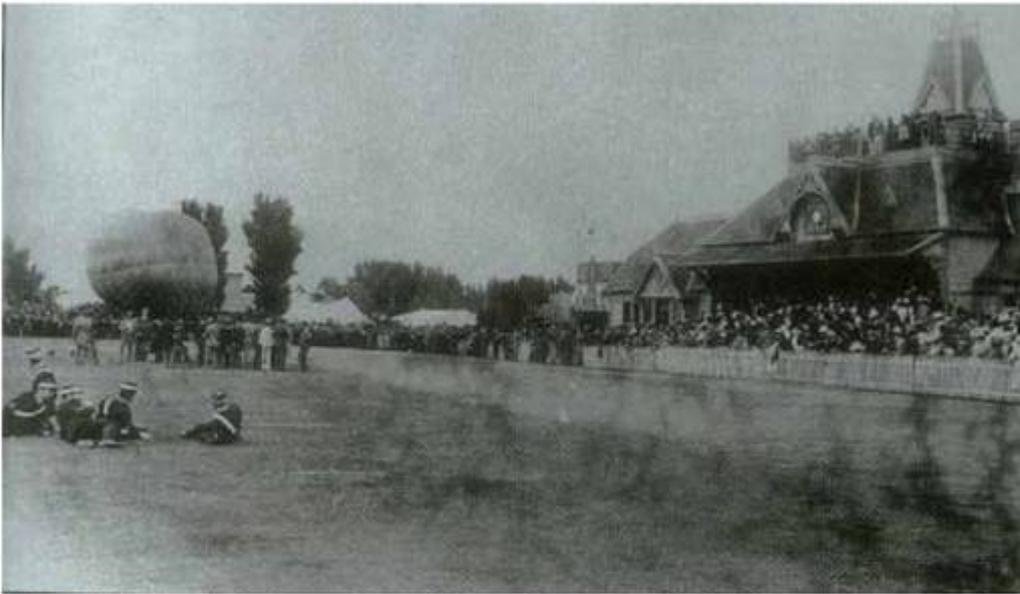


Figure 107. An air balloon taking off from Lancaster Park. The occasion was a demonstration by an adventurer (3 November 1899), Captain Lorraine, who sadly perished when his balloon was blown out to sea. Canterbury Public Library 48 (Pioneer Amateur Sports Club)

Thanks to those giving suggestions on people to contact for more information. We are slowly making contact and starting to build up a comprehensive collection of articles.

“From what I have read to date, most of the early ballooning in NZ was with gas filled balloons. Quite likely the first successful fire balloon (hot air balloon) flight was by Millie Viola in July 1892 in Invercargill. This was followed by Leila Adair who travelled throughout NZ with her “trapeze’ act or parachute jump from a fire balloon. Our JB’s are busy researching a lot of this.”

“What is apparent from my readings is that both gas filled balloons and fire filled balloons were thwart with danger and injuries were common practice.”

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