

Waikato Whispers



Waikato Hot Air Balloon Club: www.waikatoballoonclub.co.nz

CLUB NIGHT

Combined with Club Day

CLUB DAY May 10th

Flying if fine? Will depend on Covid-19

NEWS IN BRIEF

Club Day: Flying if fine. Details will be posted up on facebook. Likely meeting time 6:15am. BBQ breakfast after flying out at Dave and Linda's followed by pilot training.

JUNIOR BALLOONISTS

Next meeting Sunday 24th May. Will depend on Covid-19 and what social contact is permitted. Will send out an email closer to the day with details of what we are doing.

PILOT TRAINING

Minimum age to join this group is 16.

Sunday 10th May subject to the situation regarding Covid-19. Further details will be emailed out to all who have registered their interest. You should have all completed the exercise I sent out regarding the VNC Chart. If we are still in "lockdown" I will put together another study sheet for you.



WHERE IS "ME" IN TEAM

together everyone
TEAM
achieves more

This is so true in our recreational sport of hot air ballooning.

There are stories of some intrepid young pilots who have been known to set up a balloon, strap on a push bike and go flying. Land, pack up then cycle back to the chase vehicle so as to retrieve the balloon.

Not so for the majority of us who are dependent on a cohesive team focused on enjoying ballooning whether they be a pilot or just happy to be crew. Social togetherness, the challenge of being at the landing site in case a drop-line landing is required, being with everyone at the after flying breakfast and all the other opportunities that arise through ballooning. Many club members have established long standing friendships with overseas balloonists.

I have appended an article from a BFA Magazine from 2016 entitled "ZEN and the art of crewing". The underlying message here is to stay focused.

DOPE SMUGGLING - IMPORTANT !

Balloon Expedition Co, N.Z

About 8 years ago we were doing a lot of moving about between New Zealand, Australia and Fiji with our balloon Daryl had noticed that one of the Philips screws on the contents gauge was a bit different but thought no more. The balloon in question was also flown by two other guys here in NZ (they are clear in all this) One day after flying one of them came to Daryl and said he had had a problem with one of the tanks

He had done a pre flight and all the tanks were full (he checked by lifting (weight) and bleed valve) but when he went to use this specific tank he intermittently could not get any fuel through. Continued the flight on the other 3 tanks, landed, checked again and the tank worked.OK

No one thought any more about it (well they did ,but could not find anything wrong) several other flights were done with this tank in the same balloon and occasionally it would do the same thing

Daryl used the tank in a late morning flight in Hamilton after tethering for some time. He was overhead electric train lines and he knew he had a full tank but again had problems with fuel flow. It came through but at very low pressure and it was a warm autumn morning - He again checked it with other "experts" there at the time. No one could find anything wrong with the valves that should cause a problem

I was crew chief for one of the pilots when we were doing a tether it was coming to the end of the promo and we had been tethering on a large park for about 4 hours. At the top of a 50ft tether pilot goes to use this tank having said to me coming up to the last tank when this is through we rip out. OK say I. Next thing its all on and again the tank doesn't work. Thank goodness only free fall from by now 30ft but still a positive landing.

We transferred the contents of the tank and it had been FULL - we had dissembled the valve prior to this and could not find anything wrong. With the tank empty we removed the fuel gauge and looked at the valves - again, and looked inside the tank -nothing seemed amiss. When we went to refit the fuel gauge it would not go fully into place something seemed to be stopping it Still could see nothing The tank was sitting in the workshop and we all went to have a coffee and ponder the problem when said lad came in and said Daddy something is in the tank !!! Daryl put the torch on a string dropped it into the tank and yep there was something glistening in the dark!!!

A large piece of heavy duty black plastic folded to measure approx 3" x 6" which when unfolded measured 3' x 4' . We contacted the local police who came out and saw us and the tank and took the details of where we had been. We worked it back to one of our Australian trips.

We were advised some time later that they knew that tanks were possibly going to be used and that this had been a dry run to see if the tanks got through Shortly after that there was a huge drug bust with the smugglers using DIVE tanks. A lot of people from here go up to the Islands and especially to Thailand and Bali diving. New Zealand is part of what is known as the Golden Triangle with heroin from the East and now the smugglers are bringing in cocaine from South America repackaging here and Australia and attempting to get it into the States and Europe. Sorry this is a long story but from a SAFETY point of view needed to be told.

Daryl and Dia McKee

SUNRISE TABLES

SUNRISE AND SUNSET TIMES

July 2019 – June 2020

		Auckland		Bluff		Dunedin		East Cape		Gisborne		Lyttelton	
		Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set
Apr	6	6:39	18:07	7:12	18:26	7:03	18:18	6:24	17:52	6:27	17:53	6:52	18:11
	16	6:47	17:54	7:25	18:07	7:15	17:59	6:33	17:38	6:36	17:39	7:03	17:54
	26	6:56	17:41	7:38	17:50	7:28	17:43	6:42	17:25	6:46	17:25	7:15	17:38
May	6	7:05	17:30	7:51	17:35	7:41	17:28	6:51	17:13	6:55	17:14	7:27	17:24
	16	7:13	17:21	8:04	17:22	7:53	17:16	7:00	17:04	7:04	17:04	7:37	17:13
	26	7:21	17:15	8:15	17:12	8:04	17:06	7:08	16:58	7:12	16:57	7:47	17:05
Jun	5	7:27	17:11	8:24	17:06	8:12	17:01	7:14	16:54	7:19	16:53	7:55	17:00
	15	7:32	17:11	8:30	17:04	8:18	16:59	7:19	16:53	7:24	16:53	8:01	16:58
	25	7:34	17:13	8:32	17:06	8:21	17:01	7:22	16:55	7:27	16:55	8:04	17:00
Jul	5	7:34	17:17	8:31	17:12	8:20	17:06	7:21	17:00	7:26	16:59	8:03	17:05

TRUE BEARING OF THE SUN AT SUNRISE AND SUNSET

This table gives the true bearing of the rising and setting Sun every tenth day at 10° intervals of latitude from 0° to 60° South. Simple interpolation will give values for other dates and latitudes. Bearings are given to the nearest degree and apply to the time when the Sun's upper limb appears to be coincident with a level, unobstructed horizon.

OBSERVER'S LATITUDE (SOUTH)

	0°		10°		20°		30°		40°		50°		60°	
	Bearing°		Bearing°		Bearing°		Bearing°		Bearing°		Bearing°		Bearing°	
	Rise	Set												
May 7	73	287	73	287	72	288	71	289	69	291	64	296	57	304
May 17	71	289	71	290	70	290	68	292	65	295	60	300	51	310
May 27	69	291	69	292	68	292	66	294	63	298	57	303	46	315
Jun 6	67	293	67	293	66	294	64	296	61	299	54	306	42	318
Jun 16	67	293	66	294	65	295	63	297	60	300	53	307	40	320
Jun 26	67	293	66	294	65	295	63	297	60	300	53	307	40	320
Jul 6	67	293	67	293	66	294	64	296	61	299	54	306	42	318

Latitude for Hamilton is: 37.7870° S, 175.2793° E

By extrapolation we can see that the sun rises at nominally 69.5° true which equates to approximately 44° mag

President	Mark Brown	021 912 679	waikatohotairballoonclub@gmail.com
Chief Pilot	Liam McGirr & Mark Brown		
Secretary	Wendy Peel	027 205 8885	waikatohotairballoonclub@gmail.com
Treasurer	Dave Norris		nenya@siron.nz
Whispers	Dave Norris	021 351 957	nenya@siron.nz

BALLOONING HISTORY

Popular 1988 hot air balloon challenge from Perth to Sydney might be making a comeback

ABC North and West SA

By [Shannon Corvo](#)

Posted 21 Feb 2020, 2:26pm



PHOTO: [The 1988 Bicentennial Balloon Challenge involved roughly 900 participants.](#) (Supplied: Ruth Wilson)

In 1988, the Bicentennial Balloon Challenge saw 78 balloons travel from Perth to Sydney to celebrate 200 years since the landing of the first British settlers.

Key points:

- The 1988 trans-Australia Bicentennial Balloon Challenge may make a comeback next year
- It saw 78 balloons travel from Perth to Sydney in 16 days
- Advances in technology may make next year's proposed event safer

Fifty-two of these balloons were shipped from overseas countries such as the United Kingdom and America.

Hundreds of participants travelled for 16 days, stopping at regional locations on their way across Australia, including at Kalgoorlie, Kimba, Barossa Valley, Mildura and Broken Hill.

Bicentennial Balloon Challenge director, Ruth Wilson, is planning a similar event for 2021.

"I'm working on doing a gas balloon race across Australia next year," Ms Wilson said.

"At this stage, it would be from Perth across to Sydney because the upper winds blow from the west most of the time.

"I just need to find a hydrogen sponsor or some more funding to get it off the ground, but I'm working on it."

The event is still in the planning stages, but Ms Wilson said there will be stopovers in regional towns: it just has not yet been decided where.

"You have all the crew chasing the balloon — they have to sleep because the balloon would fly for three or four days non-stop, to see which one could fly the furthest to win the race," she said.

"But then we would create stopovers and communication with the locals."



PHOTO: [Director Ruth Wilson \(middle\)](#) congratulating a team that won the [Barossa Valley leg of the balloon challenge](#). (Supplied: Ruth Wilson)

One of a kind challenge

To win the 1988 Bicentennial Balloon Challenge, the pilots in their air balloons had to try and throw a marker onto a target at each location.

One of these pilots was now 72-year-old Graeme Scaife, who was one of the last participants to be registered for the event.



PHOTO: [Director Ruth Wilson](#) said [78 balloons were involved in the challenge, including 52 from overseas](#). (Supplied: Ruth Wilson)

He used to run a photo lab in England, but one day he spotted two hot air balloons flying over his house in West Sussex and decided it was his calling.

Mr Scaife's sponsored balloon was sent from the UK to Sydney, where it was then driven to the challenge start point at Perth.

What followed was 16 days of tiring work, partying and mingling with the locals at each stopover.

"You go out and fly in the morning and then you can go and sleep during the day and then you go out again at about four o'clock in the afternoon and try and fly," Mr Scaife said.

"When you finish flying in the afternoon, you tend to all go down to the nearest pub and there's loads and loads of people."

Mischief along the way

It was when the group of about 900 participants made it from Mildura to Broken Hill that some unusual and dangerous incidents happened.

"We all went to a bar at Silverton and I always remember they had a horse in the bar and a parrot that drank out of a beer can," Mr Scaife said.

But that wasn't all.

"They decided to put a gold nugget up on a post in the air and the balloon had to fly in and if you grabbed it, you got a \$20,000 gold nugget," he said.

"These American guys flew straight into the top of a house with an air conditioning unit on it and knocked the air conditioning unit off.

["The balloon caught alight and then of course he went shooting up into the air and broke three ribs."](#)

Despite some injuries and broken bones, Ms Wilson said all 78 balloons made it to Sydney, and David Levin from Boulder Colorado in America won the overall challenge.



PHOTO: [Overall winner of the balloon challenge, David Levin, speaking with the youngest competing pilot, Mark Wilson, from Sydney.](#) (Supplied: Ruth Wilson)

Advances in technology

Ms Wilson said next year's proposed event would be easier to organise than the one in 1988 because of technology.

"[Back then] I wrote long letters letting different contacts in the different countries know this event was on," she said.

["You can imagine letters coming in and out of from overseas and a few faxes darting back and forth.](#)

"It [next year's event] would gain more exposure just because of the nature of life these days through social media and television."

She said today's technology will also improve the safety of the event.

"In some of the weather conditions there were a couple of injuries," Ms Wilson said.

"We didn't have access to the meteorology and the weather information that is now so readily available."



ZEN

and the art of crewing

by John Trione



A few years ago I did a talk at a safety seminar on “Gut-Level Thinking & The Balloon Pilot.” It was an area of interest of mine to look at the intuitive ways that pilots operate their craft and handle emergencies. Based upon that research and other changes in my life, I began a very passionate and focused look at mind science and the balloon flight. It was also about that time that I started studying meditation, mindfulness and Buddhism.

Many pilots and crews organize their flight operations around a certain set of routines and practices. On my own balloon team, The Easy Wind Balloon Team, we have sequences of steps that are taken, usually in the same order and manner, as the flights that have preceded it. Many of us have been working together for the better part of a decade or more, so there is a rhythm and pattern that the crew gets into on every flight from the pre-flight prep to the post-flight pack-up and review.

Until recently, I’ve never considered the process of operating a hot air balloon a Zen-like process. However, when you’ve really examined the organic process, it is very Zen-like. And when the entire crew adopts this attitude toward flight operations, safety is improved and efficiencies are realized.



This is especially important to commercial operations and those of us who are flying day in and day out.

“All great things are only a number of small things that have carefully been collected together.”
~ Anonymous

Ballooning is an extremely complicated process. It is, simply stated, a large collection of small activities and process that have come together to produce an incredible outcome. I've gathered a list of 10 Zen Attitudes toward repetition and routine that will help every crew person be more in the game and focused during flight operations:



Do one thing at a time.

Focus. It is the key to minimizing safety issues and building efficiencies into the flight operation. Crew should know their assignment and be focused completely on that specific assignment. Study after study show that the human mind's ability to multi-task and maintain a high level of competence is suspect. Crew should remind each other to stay focused on a specific task until completion. Then move onto the next task.



Do it slowly and deliberately.

So many times, we get into a hurry during flight operations, especially during launch. Breathe. Stop and breathe. We almost always have more time than we allow, even during those rush inflations when our flight window is closing. In almost every case, slow and deliberate beats fast and thoughtless. You will end up saving time in the long run. Look at it as an investment. Spend the time now, so you aren't correcting errors later.



Do it completely.

Focusing on the task at hand is so important when on the launch field. We've all been there during the launch process and observed a well-meaning pilot or crew chief shout an order to a crew member already engaged in one task and want this new task taken care of now. Sometimes that sense of urgency causes us to lose track of the task at hand and a process can be left uncompleted. Finish what you start, then move on to the next task. Don't be afraid to speak up, to make sure you finish before you move on.



Do less.

What is your ideal number of crew people on your crew for a flight? I like 3, but I love 4 crew members. Many of my pilot friends tease me about this and I know it's not always practical, but we're talking about ideal right now. With highly-trained crew and a proper staffing level, there is less for each individual to worry about on the flight. This

allows each member of the crew to focus specifically on their area of responsibility and really think about success for that specific step. Fewer errors resulting from greater concentration on the small details.



Put space between things.

The space we put between things is so important. That means taking a breath ... a mental pause ... at each step of the process. It may not be a long pause, but it is a space that allows us to appreciate what has just been completed before moving on to the next step. It also may mean to physically space things out so each piece of equipment has its place. The organization of the trailer, basket and the area around the launch space might be a good example of this idea. Without space between things it is hard to appreciate the thing itself, whether in the physical sense or in the mind.



Develop rituals.

Checklists are the pilots way of organizing rituals. But don't stop there. All crew members should have their own individual check list for the flight operations. Let each of them develop their crew rituals around that list of activities. Gary Thorpe in his book, "Sweeping Changes" says, "When you bring energy and attention to each of your activities, you are no longer engaged in maintenance. You're involved in taking care of things." We want our crew to be actively engaged in the process. The role of safe flight operations extends to all on the crew. We want their energy and attention, rituals enhance that sense of urgent collaboration.



Devote time to sitting.

After the balloon is launched and equipment is stowed, encourage the crew to just sit back and take it in. They've done an amazing thing. Tell them to watch it. Hear it. Feel it. Take in the laughter of the passengers as they ascend into the skies. Resist the urge to post it on social media first. Just be present with the experience and take in the entire scene.



Think about what is necessary.

When flight plans become fluid (ie. the wind has changed direction, the crew has to make a detour or any other intangible that affects our flight) that is the best time to discuss what is "necessary" for the safe flight. Trying to accomplish too much during a flight or retrieve is a recipe for an increase in safety risk and a decrease in outcome efficiency. In other words, trying to do too much leads to longer retrieve times, land owner issues and some times injury or property damage. Stay focused on what is necessary for the goal of that particular flight.

continued on next page



Live simply.

Simplify. Simplify. Simplify. Continue to look over the entire process. Every step, every little part that makes up the whole. If it complicates the process, find a way to make it easier or if possible eliminate the extraneous. By removing some of the pomp and circumstance that goes along with some crews flight operations, we can streamline the process and focus the crew's attention and energy on the most critical components of flight operations. Leave the show for the post-flight celebration.



Smile and serve others.

This may be the most important of all. We love ballooning. My crew and I love taking our balloons out and putting them into the air. But the idea that we are bringing a once-in-a-lifetime "bucket list" experience to a group of people is such a humbling benefit of what we do. It's a gift. The smiles, laughter and joy our guests experience when they leave the ground in a hot air balloon puts the "meaning" into our work. We all want to do meaningful work. I cannot think of a better way to give back than to share our special sport with others. Smile and serve.

We all fly our balloons with more data and information than ever before. The devices we used both crew and pilots are more advanced than ever. By focusing on these 10 Zen Attitudes toward crewing for balloons, we can also advance the mind behind the flight. After all, the devices are only tools. Our mind is much, much more.



ENGINEERED TO BE BOTH RUGGED & BEAUTIFUL

You never know where you will end up on a flight. So, we have designed into **HEAD** Balloons the toughness necessary to keep you in the air instead of in the repair shop. From the skirts to the apex, RUGGEDNESS is engineered into every **HEAD** balloon.



ENVELOPE

Tough, 1.9 oz. Ripstop nylon, with a durable silicone or polyurethane coating. Our fabric weight is slightly heavier than most balloons and is harder to tear. The mouth and scoop/skirt are flame-retardant 6 oz. Nomex® and form a heat-resistant ring to eliminate burns. The envelope is sewn with feld seams, double lock stitching and load webbings from the mouth to the apex.

BASKET

We weave a strong, resilient rattan around a framework of flexible nylon rods. The floor is 3/4" marine plywood. Dense hardwood 2" x 2" skids and thick harness leather protect the floor. Heavy suede trim on the foam-padded railings and uprights conceals a web of stainless steel cable. The basket's flowing curves add strength as well as beauty.



All of this combines with our reliable, powerful and quiet redundant DBII burner system, as standard equipment. Also, you can design your own custom color pattern on the envelope at no extra charge!

HEAD Balloons has designed a rugged, yet beautiful balloon system that can take the rough treatment without showing it.

HEAD Balloons, Inc.

Helen, Georgia 30545 USA
(706)865-3874 voice and fax
1-800-HEAD BALLOONS

visit our web site:

<http://www.headballoons.com>