

Waikato Whispers



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

CLUB NIGHT

CLUB DAY February 9th Flying if fine.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Club Day: Flying if fine. Details will be posted up on facebook. Likely meeting time 6am.

Staying Close

When you are crewing do you monitor how long the balloon has been flying. Or do you solely consider only where the balloon is and which street or road you need to find.

Do you know how long the balloon you are crewing for can fly with the fuel loading onboard. This will vary depending on the temperature of the day and the number of passengers in the basket.

As a crew member, do you think it important to know or is that only important for the pilot.

For a fixed total weight - will the balloon fly for longer at 15°C or at 5°C.

For a fixed temperature - will the balloon fly for longer with a total weight of 550kg or at a weight of 475kg.

Now – as we vary both the weight and temperature AND age (porosity) of the balloon what might be the maximum flight duration for the day you are crewing.

Climate change is impacting our sport of ballooning and recently we have experienced some really light variable winds. Grassed areas on these days can be cooler than the surrounding buildings and carpark areas which heat up more quickly giving rise to localised thermals, The Waikato River will often have a wind shift drift down the river. Gullies exhibit very similar patterns.

So when do you start thinking about when the balloon SHOULD be on the ground rather than marooned in the airspace limping towards a potential landing site.

In the past 5 months Club pilots have experienced these conditions and in these situations it is critical that the crew are as close to the balloon as they can be. Opportunities for a drop line landing may pass in the blink of an eye and crew need to be on the spot AHEAD of the balloon.

A couple of weekends ago one balloon crew had quite a chase as their balloon was slowly sucked along the edge of a gully towards a potential landing site. A very successful drop line landing made the day.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sG84LsSrmKA>

AGM

Yes - it is AGM time again. Nomination forms need to be with Wendy by 16th February please so that proxy votes can then be sent out to those unable to attend the AGM.

Nomination forms are attached.

RIVERLODGE BALLOON MEET

The Riverlodge Balloon Meet has been and gone for 2020. Very hot and the mornings each day were foggy. Saturday and Sunday mornings the fog rolled in really thick from around 5:30 and sat around until close to 9am. Once the fog lifted the temperature rose very quickly reaching 34°C on Sunday.

Sunday morning we retired to the Twin Creeks hot pools and had a most relaxing soak.

A fun time had by all who attended with members coming from Auckland, Levin, New Plymouth and Wellington.

Fishing was not quite as successful as in previous years but we did have trout for tea one evening.

JUNIOR BALLOONISTS

Time to get back together and do some ballooning. Will let you know as will depend on the arrival of a new grandson in Wellington.

PILOT TRAINING

Time to get back together and do some ballooning – flying whilst the weather is fine. We will be changing our training to a Sunday as this suits better and allows flexibility of what we do in respect of flying or class work. It enables flying also for those in town and free on the Saturday so potentially we will have two days available for flying.

Training day combined with Club Day for those who are in town. Nothing formal organised.

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	Veronica Guadarrama		vero.guadarrama@gmail.com
Whispers	Dave Norris	021 351 957	nenya@sirron.nz

Balloonists return to Waikato

Phil Treweek caught the action

The on-off saga of the Hamilton Balloon Fiesta came to a happy conclusion in late March with balloons again appearing over the city. The original Balloon Fiesta was cancelled in February following a breakdown over funding issues between organiser Graham Hannah and the Hamilton City Council. Agfa, the prime sponsor of the Fiesta, then opted to support a new event in the Wairarapa. Despite many comments that it couldn't be done, balloonists in conjunction with the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and the Waikato District Council organised a replacement event - the 1999 Hamilton Balloon Rally.

Ten balloons attended between the 17th and the 22nd, (a similar number to the Wairarapa event held at the same time), with the balloonists achieving their target of four public displays. These included flights from schools, a target competition, and nightglows in Hamilton and Huntly. A number of other morning flights were also made. Overseas attendees included Brian Boland (Vancouver), Matt Anderson (Alaska), and 'Balloon Life' editor Tom Hamilton (Seattle). Along with the displays, the pilots and crews were involved in social events and seminars.

Christchurch pilot Chris Rudge acted as Balloon Meister. He commented that the rally was 'the most relaxed' event he had attended'. He said the simplicity and flexibility of the arrangements made the rally 'fun for the pilots' and 'fun for the public'. Pilots were stunned by the community support. The Huntly event was described as 'the largest community turnout in 20 years'. The Chamber of Commerce provided petrol vouchers, and other assistance. The



Star of the event was the Hasbro UK owned 'Action Man' balloon. Piloted by Richard Turnball, the character balloon or 'shape' was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. With a capacity of almost 250,000 cubic feet, this is the largest shape in the world. Action Man who has a 33m chest, a 20m inside leg, and size 210 boots was an overwhelming success with Waikato children!



Above: No rain here. Balloons begin to rise at Innes Common on the first morning of the rally.

Left: Balloon Meister Chris Rudge throws the marker at a target on Innes Common as he passes overhead with co-owner of ZK-FBK Michael Oakley and passenger.

City Council provided some accommodation and sponsored the fuel costs. A number of other organisations and individuals also assisted, and Chris says the balloonists are seeking a way to publicly acknowledge this.

Although the future of the event is not clear, the balloonists were very positive about returning. At a meeting with Hamilton's Mayor suggestions were put forward for holding the National Ballooning Championships in the Waikato. Organisers are reviewing this year's rally, and an announcement will be forthcoming.

Aviation News will feature a report on the Agfa/Wairarapa Balloon Festival in a future issue.

Tell others you saw it in *Aviation News*



The WAIKATO HOT AIR BALLOON CLUB Inc.

I.....

Nominate:-.....

For the Position of:-.....on the 2020 committee

Seconded By:-.....

I agree to be nominated for the above position.

Signed.....

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