



Welcome to
MODEL BALLOONS UK



Specialist Body



Model Balloons UK



Our Aim

- To promote this growing sport within the UK
- To provide help and information to new pilots along with pooling the knowledge of the more experienced pilots
- To provide training and examinations for 'Type Rating'
- To promote the safe building & flying of our equipment
- To promote the club to all regardless of age, gender, ability or financial means
- To give all members a voice with a chance to shape our sport
- To remain a collective of pilots who drive the club forward for the love of model hot air ballooning



Model Balloons UK



A Brief History of Model Balloons UK

- 2008 Following a successful indoor meeting at Llangollen
- 2009 MBUK was formed from a group of pilots to provide one voice for our sport
- 2010 Became affiliated to the BMFA to recognise our club and provide insurance and guidance to our members
- 2010 Asked to display in the arrival hall of Bristol International Airport
- 2010 Asked by the Bristol International Balloon Fiesta to display our balloons at Europe's biggest balloon fiesta
- 2011 Invited to display by the BMFA at the NEC flying show
- 2011 Invited to display at the South West Model Show
- 2014 Used as a background for Live BBC Weather and news programs
- 2015 Return of the Llangollen indoor meet with 35 Members attending with over 45 balloons of various shape and sizes
- 2016 Gained 'Specialist Body' Status within the BMFA

- We are now asked to display at various balloon fiesta, teddy bear meets, charity events & local shows around the country



Model Balloons UK



Model Ballooning in the UK

- In the UK we have about 60 balloons compared to around 300 in Europe
- The reason there are not many model balloons around is because it is not a cheap sport at the moment as each balloon will cost in the region of £2 -£3K if purchased from a retail supplier
- MBUK are committed to reduce these cost to enable more people become involved with Model Balloons
- MBUK encourage its members to self build a lot of the airframe (Baskets & Envelopes)
- MBUK offer full advice to its members wishing to go down this route
- The MBUK committee are working to find an entry level balloon kit for between £350 - £500 providing you are willing to help in the building of your balloon.
- We think we are about another 6 months away from getting this up and running
- We invite people to try our sport when we attend events
- Our lot of our balloons are used to raise awareness for local and national charities



Model Balloons UK



Membership

- Started with 9 members in 2009
- Currently have 45 members
- This as seen an increase of 20% in 2015
- Our membership is based all over the country
- Looking to have sub groups within the club in local areas
- We are increasing our youth section by currently offering free membership to students
- Low membership fee to encourage new members



Model Balloons UK



A Brief History of Model Ballooning in the UK

- Model ballooning in the UK started in the early 1970's
- Large nylon bags were made and filled with hot air and let them fly free.
- In Europe the sport took off in a bigger way and various companies sprung up to offer to build customers their balloons and also offering gas containers to hold the propane and remote control valves to control the burn rate of the propane.
- A few UK based big balloon pilots built and flew models for fun
- One of these new pilots, Andy Booth was flying teddy bears in his model for charity and was noticed by Ray Preston & Ben Alford who also decided to build model balloons
- After several fun flights at Ashton Court in Bristol they were asked to display their balloons at the Local Balloon Fiesta
- Several people noticed these mini balloons floating around and contacted the organisers who contacted us
- They were soon joined by others who started to build their own balloons
- And the rest is history as they say



The Principle of Hot Air Ballooning

- Ballooning has an easy principle, hot air is lighter than cold air and therefore rises.
- The Montgolfier brothers, who went down in history as the first aviators in 1783, first experimented with models
- Today's hot air balloons are much safer, by use of modern technology but still heat up the cold air in the envelope by the use of a propane gas burner to get the necessary lift.
- The envelope is made of the same material 'Ripstop Nylon' & 'Nomex'.
- The basket is made from either willow or rattan
- The basket contains the gas bottles and the control box. The control box contains all the controls that makes the balloon remote controllable.
- However, controllable in this case just means just up and down. The pilot may influence the rise and decline of his balloon and the altitude in which it flies, but its destination is solely determined by the wind.

- The pilot has to walk after his balloon, at least he wants to have it back!
- Depending on the wind's speed this happens from snail's pace to hares pace across fields.
- That's why we often talk about model ballooning as a sport
- Like its big sister, this also means that you can't launch a balloon every time and everywhere. The wind should be weak or calm and the terrain should also allow you to follow the balloon on foot.
- It is much more interesting to hover closely over fields, streams and trees to train your personal skills in controlling your balloon.
- The 'average' model balloon is six to eight meters tall (20 to 26 feet) and has a volume of 60 to 100 cubic meters (2120 to 3530 cu ft.).
- Flight duration lasts from 30 minutes to 1½ hours



Were we go from here



The committee of Model Balloons UK are committed

- To provide training to new and existing members to promote a safer flying environment
- To have training modules available with examinations
- To have Instructors to examine members flights for 'Type Rating'
- To have local instructor's for training new members
- To have local based equipment safety officers
- To continue to build the club with members from all areas
- To have area based groups to arrange local meetings
- To help produce affordable model ballooning to all
- To assist existing members to continue within the sport with help and advise from all



MODEL BALLOONS UK

The Future of Model Ballooning in the UK