

# Wheelchair Accessible Balloon Basket

Wheelchair user Andrew set to fly the channel in record-breaking hot air balloon flight  
Seventy five hot air balloons, from across the UK and Europe, are currently on standby to fly across the English Channel to France from Lydden Hill Race Circuit in Kent. The aim is to raise funds for four major UK charities while entering the record books.

As soon as the Met Office gives the all-clear for take-off, balloons of all shapes and colours will soar above the English Channel, marking the largest ever group of balloons to attempt the crossing. Leading aviation business Lindstrand Hot Air Balloons will be flying four of the balloons.

One of the Lindstrand balloons making the crossing will be carrying a panoramic basket, specifically designed for wheelchair access, a significant development in allowing those with limited mobility to enjoy ballooning. Flying in the balloon, with Pilot Steve Kinsey, will be wheelchair user Andrew Jeffrey.

Andrew is a BBC Online Producer and has flown in balloons several times since his accident in 1979 when, while working off-shore oil drilling in Angola, West Africa, he fell 40ft and snapped his back at waist level. His first foray into the sky was in France with his wife while filming a holiday programme that was it, he was hooked. He has flown in gliders, micro-lights, fixed wing planes and even jumped out of them, but ballooning is his love.

He first met Pilot Steve Kinsey when he was reporting for BBC Five Live and broadcasted a report from a balloon with Steve in the Scottish Borders narrowly avoiding a splash-n-dash in a loch we hope that they avoid doing that in the channel this time!

These days out of the office, Andrew is involved with the major UK flying charity Aerobility and is about to embark on managing a new project for them ... ballooning. Details will be announced via their website soon.

The event is not only set to enter the record books but will also raise money and awareness for the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, the Halow Project, Marie Curie and the Royal National Lifeboat Institute.

Event organiser, Ian Sharpe, said: We have got balloons from all over the country and some from abroad taking part. This year is the 50th anniversary of the first modern hot air balloon flight and I can't think of a better way to celebrate it.

An additional space in the wheelchair accessible Lindstrand Balloon is being auctioned off to the public. To bid for this, the flight of a lifetime, and to find out more about the event, check the Airborne Balloons website online at [www.airborneballoons.co.uk/cross\\_channel.php](http://www.airborneballoons.co.uk/cross_channel.php)

For further details of the chosen charities please check their websites at, [www.halowproject.org.uk](http://www.halowproject.org.uk), [www.rafbf.org](http://www.rafbf.org), [www.mariecurie.org.uk](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk), [www.rnli.org.uk](http://www.rnli.org.uk), <http://www.aerobility.com/>

Launch Date: Balloons are on 24hr standby until 31st October 2010. Subject to weather conditions this may be extended into November.

Launch field: Lydden Hill race circuit, Canterbury, Kent

Balloon teams from across the UK, Southern Ireland, Scotland, France, Italy and Germany are taking part.

For more information about the wheelchair accessible basket and Lindstrand Hot Air Balloons, or to arrange launch field interviews with Pilot Steve Kinsey and passenger Andrew Jeffrey please

contact Caroline Sanger-Davies on 07854 835171 [caroline@aero-media.co.uk](mailto:caroline@aero-media.co.uk)

Lindstrand Hot Air Balloons Ltd is based in Oswestry, Shropshire. The Lindstrand team has been building lighter-than-air craft on the same site for over 25 years and has its designs certified in 48 countries. Over that time the company has produced over 1000 hot air balloons, the largest certified hot air balloon, the largest ever manned super-pressure balloon, and the largest ever thermal airship. <http://www.lindstrand.co.uk>