

BOC supplied helium for trans-Atlantic balloon challenge success

Guildford, UK, September 29, 2003 - British explorer, David Hempleman-Adams today (September 29) becomes the first person to cross the Atlantic in a balloon equipped with a wicker basket - with BOC supplying the helium for the balloon.

The AM-08 Roziere balloon, which was launched from New Brunswick, Canada, on Friday, September 26, consists of an open wicker basket and an envelope filled with 70,000 standard cubic feet of high purity gaseous helium provided by BOC.

Hempleman-Adams, 46, from Wiltshire, set the record by crossing the south-west tip of Ireland at 0830 BST on Monday (September 29). The polar explorer, who has been in the air for three days, is now looking for a somewhere to land.

Claus Nussgruber, senior product manager helium, BOC, said: "The helium supply for this attempt was unique in several respects. Since the launch date depended on prevailing weather patterns it could have occurred at any time over a six week period between August 21 and October 1. Secondly, once a launch date was identified, it was necessary to supply the helium to Sussex in New Brunswick, Canada, in less than 48 hours."

According to Nussgruber, "BOC was well positioned to meet these requirements by relying on its unmatched helium supply infrastructure, extensive tube trailer fleet and local sales and technical support."

The delivery of the helium was achieved by carefully staging a high-pressure jumbo tube trailer, originating from BOC's helium transfill in Middlesex, New Jersey, with a local, BOC-approved carrier in New Brunswick. This carrier was then able to deliver the helium to the launch site at very short notice, giving Hempleman-Adams' team more time to concentrate on the other critical pre-launch activities.

"Failure to deliver the helium within the constraints described would have forced Hempleman-Adams to abandon the launch, with the next attempt only being possible in spring 2004 at the earliest," added Nussgruber.

BOC is the world's leading producer and distributor of helium with 30 percent of the global market share. It supplies helium to diverse markets including magnetic resonance imaging, optical fibre production, welding and semiconductor manufacturing.

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