



20 July 2010

Bristol International Balloon Fiesta celebrates 50 years of modern ballooning

This year's Astra Bristol International Balloon Fiesta will celebrate the 50th anniversary of modern ballooning*.

In 1960, the first modern hot air balloon was developed by Ed Yost in the United States, in the same decade Don Cameron built the very first modern hot air balloon in Western Europe, the 'Bristol Belle,' before setting up Cameron Balloons, which is now the world's largest balloon manufacturer.

To pay tribute to this landmark anniversary the 'Bristol Belle' will be tethered and displayed at this year's Fiesta and Don Cameron will be the flight director for the six mass ascents, when 150 hot air balloons will take to the skies over Bristol.

Modern hot air balloons carry an onboard heat source, propane gas, which enables air to be re-heated inside the balloon during flights. Previously, air for the balloon had been heated by a ground fire prior to take off and was often a hazardous business.

The curtain-raiser for the event will take place on Monday 9 August in the city centre of Bristol. To honour the decade that witnessed the birth of modern ballooning the balloon teams taking part will be dressed from top to tail in their best 1960's outfits.

The event promises a fantastic schedule of entertainment for the whole family. The mass ascents provide an unforgettable spectacle as they take to the sky each morning and evening from Friday to Sunday.

The famous Night Glows, when the balloons tether in the main arena and light up in sequence to music like giant light bulbs will take place before spectacular firework

displays on Thursday and Saturday. The HSBC Thursday Night Glow will take a Best of British theme, celebrating BAC 100 and the Saturday Milka Night Glow will have a party theme featuring pop chart classics.

On Sunday the hugely popular Red Arrows will return to the Fiesta in association with Mail Handling International, making heads turn to the skies with their aerial displays.

New to the event this year is a 'Fiesta Activity Zone' which will feature giant transparent balls that allow you to walk on water, an assault course, climbing walls and archery where visitors can try out their skills and burn off excess energy.

Arena and air displays, over 250 trade stands, Mickey Mouse, local and international food stalls, a funfair and variety of other entertainment complete the fun-packed festival.

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For more information please contact the Fiesta Press Team at Spirit Public Relations on 0117 944 1415 or e-mail balloonfiesta@spiritpublicrelations.co.uk

Note to Editors

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BAC 100

BAC takes its name from the Bristol Aeroplane Company, which was founded on 19 February 1910. The company's legacy has been passed onto a series of aviation companies including Bristol Siddeley, the British Aircraft Corporation, British Aerospace, Rolls-Royce, BAE Systems and Airbus. This year BAC is celebrating 100 years of aviation in the West of England, an industry that continues to be a major employer within the region.