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Local fan of the Fiesta reveals balloon replicas

As Bristol International Balloon Fiesta celebrates 40 years of hot air balloon manufacturing in the city, organisers have met a local man who makes his own balloons at home.

Ron Cormack, 64, who now lives in Worle has attended the Fiesta every year since it started and has turned his passion for the event into a hobby – creating model replicas of hot air balloons out of matchsticks.

Ron is the first to admit that not all of his attempts have been successful, and that replicating Van Gogh's head was 'pretty tricky' but he has still managed to create over 60 of the matchstick replicas.

The hobby started 13 years ago, when his eldest grandchild had begged for a hot air balloon of his own after visiting the Fiesta. Josh, now 16, may have grown out of Granddad's models but his love of the balloon replicas has passed on to Georgia, 12, Fallon, 8 and Harvey, 5.

Attending the event with family in tow, Ron's grandchildren take it in turns to select which hot air balloon he tries his hand at next.

The grandchildren have six models each in their bedrooms, hanging as mobiles, while the rest are safely housed in the spare room at Mr Cormack's for when they come to visit.

Ron said: "My wife, Jean and I lived in Ashton for 25 years before moving to Worle four years ago.

"The hot air balloons leaving Ashton Court gave us a spectacle that we could enjoy from the garden or from the park at the weekends. I fell in love with ballooning and making the models has become a full-time hobby, especially in the winter. I use pictures from the papers and event programmes as well as the websites for inspiration before mapping out how the next model will be made."

This year the Bristol International Balloon Fiesta takes place on the 11-14th August. Celebrating a 'Made in Bristol' theme, the event will feature a live demonstration of a balloon being built by Cameron Balloons, a local bandstand in association with Zero Degrees and a local food court.

For more information please visit the Fiesta website, www.bristolballoonfiesta.co.uk

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