



Midlands
AIR FESTIVAL



Friday 2nd – Sunday 4th June 2023
Ragley Hall, Alcester, Warwickshire. B49 5NJ



Briefing Notes

Our Ballooning Partners



Altitude Insurance (www.altitudeinsuranceltd.com)

Laura and her team provide a large number of products and services including hot air balloon hull and liability insurance. Laura will once again return with some goodies for our teams, plus dinner for our glow pilots, more on that later!



Avanti Gas (www.avanitgas.com)

Steve and his team will return to the event to provide us with gas once again with their impressive 16 point refuelling to ensure that queues are kept to a minimum. Avanti Gas supply both homes and businesses with LPG across the country.



Cameron Balloons (www.cameronballoons.co.uk)

Leading the world in the manufacture of lighter-than-air aircraft and fabric structures. This year sees the introduction of the brand new Cameron Tethering Arena! We also thank Cameron's for their continued support and pilot goodies!



The Outdoor Pig Company

(www.theoutdoorpigcompany.co.uk)

A brand new caterer for the balloonists marquee, living on the Ragley Estate, sourcing local ingredients, it doesn't get better than that! Check out the new Flying High Café!



Westons Cider (www.westons-cider.co.uk)

Now in the safe hands of Helen Thomas, Westons Cider began in 1878 with her great-grandfather, Henry Weston. Based in Herefordshire, producing premium cider, Westons are once again kindly providing this year's organic landowners gift.

Stay Up To Date

All pilots have been added to the WhatsApp group. This group will not be able to be used for chit chat, but as usual, any queries on the day, drop James a message or give him a call.

We also have our webpage www.midlandsairfestival.com/pilotinfo which will also be kept up to date throughout the event. This also includes a copy of the briefing notes, as well as a link to the electronic landing form, so please make sure you bookmark it for easy reference.

Schedule

Thursday (Sunrise: 04:53, Sunset 21:17)			
15:30		Balloonist Area Opens	Balloonists Area
16:00	21:00	Pilot Registration	Marquee
17:00	22:30	Balloonist Café Open	Marquee
17:30	22:30	Balloonist Bar Open	Marquee

Friday (Sunrise: 04:53, Sunset 21:18)			
05:00		Airfield Opens for Mass Ascent	Airfield
05:15	06:00	Pilot Registration	Marquee
05:30	06:00	Flight Briefing	Marquee
06:00	09:15	Mass Ascent & Tethering	Airfield
07:00	10:00	Debrief	Marquee/Online
07:30	10:30	Breakfast	Marquee
10:30	22:30	Balloonist Café Open	Marquee
11:00	23:00	Balloonist Bar Open	Marquee
12:00	13:50	Tethering	Airfield (Area B)
13:50	18:40	Airfield Closed for all Balloonists	Airfield
14:20	18:40	Air Display	Airfield
15:30	17:30	Pilot Registration	Marquee
16:00	17:30	Refuelling	Lakeside
17:15	17:30	Nightfire Briefing (Night Glow Teams Only)	Marquee

Friday (Sunrise: 04:53, Sunset 21:18)

18:00	18:30	Flight Briefing	Marquee
18:40	20:45	Night Glow Set Up & Mass Ascent	Airfield
19:30	23:00	Debrief	Marquee/Online
19:30	21:00	Night Glow Teams Dinner	Airfield Marquee
20:00	23:00	Refuelling	Lakeside
20:45	21:50	Airfield Closed	Airfield
21:30	21:45	Pyrotechnic Aircraft Displays	Airfield
21:50	22:15	Night Glow	Airfield
22:20	22:30	Firework Finale	Airfield
23:00		Airfield Closes	Airfield

Saturday (Sunrise: 04:52, Sunset 21:19)

05:00		Airfield Opens	Airfield
05:15	06:00	Pilot Registration	Marquee
05:45	06:00	Flight Briefing	Marquee
06:00	08:00	Mass Ascent	Airfield
06:00	11:30	Tethering	Airfield (Area B)
07:00	10:00	Debrief	Marquee/Online
07:30	10:30	Breakfast	Marquee
08:00	14:00	Refuelling	Lakeside
10:30	19:30	Balloonist Café Open	Marquee
11:00	23:00	Balloonist Bar Open	Marquee
11:15	11:45	Model Aircraft Pyro Display	Airfield
11:45	18:30	Airfield Closed to all Balloonists	Airfield

Saturday (Sunrise: 04:52, Sunset 21:19)

12:00	15:00	Air Display	Airfield
16:00	18:30	Air Display	Airfield
18:00	18:30	Flight Briefing	Marquee
18:30	20:30	Mass Ascent	Airfield
19:30	23:00	Balloonist Evening Meal	Marquee
19:30	23:00	Debrief	Marquee/Online
20:00	23:00	Refuelling	Lakeside
22:00		Airfield Closes	Airfield
22.20	22.45	Happy 5 th Birthday Midlands Air Festival!	Lakeside

Sunday (Sunrise: 04:51, Sunset 21:20)

05:00		Airfield Opens	Airfield
05:45	06:00	Flight Briefing	Marquee
06:00	08:00	Mass Ascent	Airfield
06:00	11:30	Tethering	Airfield (Area B)
07:00	10:00	Debrief	Marquee/Online
07:30	10:30	Breakfast	Marquee
08:00	14:00	Refuelling	Lakeside
10:30	14:00	Balloonist Café Open	Marquee
11:00	22:00	Balloonist Bar Open	Marquee
12:00	12:30	Model Aircraft Pyro Display	Airfield
12:00	14:00	Balloonist Café Open	Marquee
12:15	18:20	Airfield Closes to all Balloonists	Airfield
12:30	15:10	Air Display	Airfield
16:10	18:20	Air Display	Airside

Sunday (Sunrise: 04:51, Sunset 21:20)

17:00	17:30	Flight Briefing	Marquee
18:30	20:30	Mass Ascent	Airfield
19:30	23:00	Debrief	Marquee/Online
20:00	23:00	Refuelling	Lakeside
22:00		Airfield Closes	Airfield

Balloonists Access

The dedicated gate for balloonists is Gate B (lifters.truffles.vitamins/SP 06982 54327), which is on the south side of the estate.

Please note that this entrance is beside a tenant's house, and therefore please ensure respect is shown, especially when arriving early in the morning, or late at night.

Parking & Camping

Parking is available directly outside the Balloonist's Marquee with overflow in the camping field.

Camping will be located in the adjacent field. Toilets will be in the built block with additional toilets also provided. Water & Showers will be located near the entrance on the fence line. Electric hook up is not provided and lighting towers/generators must not be used for the facility.

Pilot Registration

Upon arrival, please visit the Balloonist's Marquee to obtain your entry pack from Teresa or Sally.

Briefings

All pilots wishing to fly, tether or glow must attend briefings **which are restricted to P1's only due to limited capacity** and will be conducted inside the Balloonist's Marquee.

As you enter, please take a met sheet and briefing attendance slip. Once briefing has concluded, please deposit your filled in (bring a pen!) attendance slip in the box indicated as you pick up your landowner gift. Please do not

“sign-in” for others. Briefings will be kept as concise as is consistent with safety and housekeeping requirements.

We are pleased to also welcome new pilots to the event and where necessary a subsequent briefing will follow the main briefing for low-houred pilots depending on flying conditions.

Pilots who arrive late may contact Colin Butter for an individual briefing.

Laying Out

On Friday evening, balloons must not lay out beyond 75m from the audience line for safety reasons – there are a lot of explosives laid out beyond here for the Nightfire finale! The 75m line will be denoted by red and white domed markers.

For all other mass ascents, there are no restrictions, however please do position yourself closer to the audience where possible.

Vehicles will be allowed on the field as per the timings above and must never be abandoned. For the complete avoidance of doubt, any vehicle left on the field during times when it is “Closed for all Balloonists” will be moved by the organisers. By entering the event you agree to waive any damage caused in this process.

Balloons may take off when ready to do so after the briefing. Should there be a need to close the launch field, this will be done by a pyrotechnic.

Tie-offs and quick releases must be used when inflating and launching.

Take-Off

Every pilot must use a launch master to ensure that they are clear to climb. You may use one of our yellow-jacketed officials or your own crew for this.

We may choose to impose a time when the launch field is closed for further take-offs, this will be communicated at briefing and via the What's App group.

Listening Watch

All pilots should be equipped with an airband radio and maintain a listening watch on 122.480MHz. It follows that it is a condition of attending the event that you have an 8.33kHz spaced airband radio.

Airspace

Pilots are reminded of their obligations regarding airspace. Birmingham CTA at 2000ft is only 5km to the NE and inadvertent transgressions into airspace would be embarrassing and expensive, likely ending with your licence being shredded and the future of the event compromised. We have numerous landing possibilities in this direction and we will brief on these should the winds be in a direction with limited distance.

Debrief

Electronic landing forms are available by visiting www.midlandsairfestival.com/landingform. what3words may be used as an alternative to OS grid reference and map number. We appreciate electronic debriefing won't be for all and therefore our usual paper forms will also be available in the Balloonist's Marquee.

Pilots must debrief in a timely manner by either means. If it is paper based, please hand the completed forms into Teresa in the Balloonist's Marquee. Teresa will also be monitoring electronic landing forms submitted to ensure everyone has debriefed before the next flight.

Landowner Relations

We want you to come back to a nice "clean map" next year. It is obligatory that every pilot carries an up to date marked up map and/or electronic mapping device. Martyn will brief which fields are available for landing within the estate.

Please ensure you are familiar with the BBAC Code of Conduct. Extensive work has been carried out with local farmers and NFU representatives prior to this event.

Any landowner issues must be discussed with the regional LRO (Martyn Jeynes) and progressed appropriately.

The event will have a marked-up map on display, however pilots wishing to purchase individual maps will require 150, 151 & 139. Note that marked up paper maps are available again, with adequate notice. See www.ballooningsmaps.co.uk.

A landowner gift will also be supplied for each flyable slot with replacements given upon receipt of your completed briefing slip at each flight briefing.

Refuelling

Fuel will be available as per the times above.

Pilots must arrive with full tanks.

Tanks must be removed from baskets for refuelling, even where long vent lines are fitted. If this will cause you any hardship you are invited to discuss your requirement with the Flight Director. For the complete avoidance of doubt, there will be no in-basket, in-trailer or in-van refuelling without the express individual permission of the Flight Director.

Upon arrival at refuelling, the operator will ask for the pilot's name and how many tanks are to be refuelled before indicating which hose(s) to refuel from. There will also be a drop off and pick up facility available if this is preferred. Please ensure you have debriefed prior to refuelling and please do not abuse this facility. Anyone found doing so will be required to leave the event immediately and need not apply in the future!

Refuelling will be located in a cordoned off area on the edge of the Balloonist's parking area. Please follow the direction of the operator at all times.

Tethering

Opportunities for tethering or balloon inspections are available during the course of the morning, please see above for timings.

Tethering is to be conducted in Area B on the eastern end of the crowd line. The Cameron Arena has pilots allocated to it and they have been informed separately.

All tethers, with no exceptions, must be conducted with a three point system. Please ensure that tether lines are kept tight by adjusting vehicles appropriately.

Tethering on quick releases is not permitted.

Non-Flying Balloons

Any balloons that do not have valid certification and are being inflated for display purposes, must not leave the ground. This means very short tether lines and plenty of ballast.

Balloons must also have public liability insurance. Balloons without insurance must not be displayed.

Commercial Requirements

If you have any particular needs, please come and talk with the Flight Director and we will try our best to accommodate you.

Documents

We will be conducting random checks of documentation throughout the weekend and would ask that you have this readily available to make the process as painless as possible.

Training

We can arrange instructor flights, written exams and GFTs. Please contact Colin Butter with your requirements.

Currency

Pilots must ensure they meet the currency requirements of whichever licence they will be using. If you are in any doubt about these, or to discuss how to regain lapsed currency, please contact Colin Butter.

Dogs

Dogs, other than assistance dogs, are not permitted anywhere on site.

Nightfire

Friday evening is very technically demanding for James & Trev, therefore please make sure you are very familiar with the below.

A briefing for the night glow teams will take place before the flight briefing to allow for glow teams to position themselves on their spot prior to those flying. Glow positions are denoted by an orange bucket with a number on. Number 1 is the far eastern end and number 20 is the far western end for envelopes. Similarly for baskets, number 21 is the far eastern end and number 30 is the far western end. Baskets are closer to the crowd than envelopes.

We thank those teams who have volunteered to glow, the allocations are:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Adam Bannell | 11. Claire Monk | 21. Damian Busby (2) |
| 2. Damian Busby | 12. Dan Wade | 22. Marie Banks |
| 3. Shiralee Colin | 13. John Viner | 23. Brian Crossland-Mead |
| 4. Glen Everett | 14. Andy Collett | 24. Peter Greaves |
| 5. Justin Phillips | 15. Steve Chatfield | 25. Paul Mackley |
| 6. Thomas Lee | 16. Josh Taylor | 26. Celia Morley |
| 7. Jonathan Harris | 17. Mandy Thompson | 27. Alyssa Pitt |
| 8. Stacey Heard | 18. Brendan O'Rourke | 28. Alex Pollock |
| 9. Ian Martin | 19. Philip Howarth | 29. John Russon |
| 10. Richard Pugh | 20. Liam Whitelock | 30. Matthew Smith |

Reserves for the Night Glow are Gavin Chadwick and Lighter Than Air. As the Nightfire briefing precedes the main briefing, reserves for the Night Glow may be able to fly providing all 30 teams due to take part are available.

With thanks to Altitude Insurance, once teams have set up, teams can proceed to the Pilot's Marquee, located near the parked aircraft for some food and drink while getting a front row view of Nightfire! Teams should return to the front of the commentary box by 21:30.

The nightglow will be orchestrated by Trev via headsets whereby in one ear you will receive the music, and in the other burn instructions.

Balloons taking part in the glows are asked not to fly the same evening.

Fuel will be available after the glow.

For those flying this evening, it is vital that there are no balloons (except glow balloons) on the field after 20:45. There can be no exceptions to this. Our team will be moving around balloons after 20:15 making sure they are packing up if they have not launched to ensure we can meet this deadline. Shortly after this time, the field becomes active for the evening air display to commence.

Food & Drink

This year sees the introduction of a new local caterer, The Outdoor Pig Company, who sources all ingredients from close to the Ragley Estate. So please join us at the Flying High Café which will operate on the times above.

Four vouchers are included within your pilot packs. Any additional meals may be paid for direct with the caterer on the day.

Tea and Coffee will also be available throughout the day free of charge. Where possible, please bring a travel mug or flask to enable us to cut down our usage of single use cups.

Air Display

During the air displays the entire launch area and south of the balloonists parking area must be clear and all Balloonist's must be in the Balloonist's area or crowd side. During this time Gate B will be closed and therefore Gate A should be used.

Site Access

This year our site map is interactive and can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

Due to the air display, there will also be a road closure in force on the public road to the east of Ragley Hall (see interactive map). The closure will be in force from 14:00 to 19:00 Friday and 11:00 to 18:00 Saturday and Sunday.

Contact Numbers

Central Hub	Ballooning Control (Landline)	01789 549593
James McDonald	Director of Ballooning	07704 867686
Colin Butter	Balloon Flight Director	07973 381086
Mark Stelling	Safety Officer	07960 963588
Martyn Jeynes	Landowner Relations Officer	07855 930444
Teresa Witchell	Registration & Debriefing Officer	07757 464470
Airsec	Overnight Security (Landline)	01789 549796