

Andrew Holly Ballooning Achievements

Andrew grew up in Totterdown, Bristol which is directly downwind of the Ashton Court estate where ballooning developed in the late 1970's and early 80's. He went to Merrywood School, Bristol and then on to College in Bath to study Music, Psychology and Law. By the age of 21 Andrew had been the youngest person to record jingles for the BBC, won a national poetry competition, composed and performed music at the theatre Royal, Bath and a play he had written had been broadcast on BBC Radio 4. He continued to work in the music industry and by 1995 had worked with some very famous names, devised and edited a hi-tech music magazine and also co-founded a chain of successful hi-tech music shops.

Fascinated by the low flying huge balloons that had woken him at 6am on sunny summer mornings during childhood, he began crewing for a local balloon ride company in 1996 after quitting the music industry. He learnt to fly in 1997 and acquired his first sponsorship deal which brought about a very well known local balloon 'Pink Thing' which advertised a local computer firm and this allowed him to gain the experience necessary to gain a commercial licence. Further ballooning related achievements are listed below chronologically.

- Gained a full commercial licence in 1998.
- Started Exclusive Ballooning in 1999 and Go-Ballooning.co.uk in 2000. Go-Ballooning.co.uk quickly became the leading UK passenger ride business covering the majority of the UK.
- Exclusive Ballooning quickly emerged as a major player in the field of aerial marketing and today is the UK's leading aerial marketing company operating balloons over five continents.
- 2000 - won various accolades including the Bristol Evening Post young businessman of the year award and also the Shell Livewire / Brave enterprise award for young business start-ups.
- As a competition pilot, Andrew won the UK counties challenge championship ten years in a row from 1998 - 2007, winning over 200 trophies alongside. He retired in 2007 unbeaten in the competition as he had won it at his first attempt.
- 2003 won the long distance competition, Bristol Balloon Fiesta
- 2004 won silver in his first International event in Feodosyia, Ukraine.
- 2004 set a ratified and still unbeaten British record for duration in a one man balloon called a cloud hopper flying for 4 hours 21 minutes almost doubling the previous record of 2 hours 16 minutes.
- 2005 won a gold medal for the UK at the African Ballooning championships, South Africa
- 2005 won gold at the Italian ballooning championships
- 2005 Team Sloggi finished 15th in the Honda World Grand Prix series spread across the USA, Luxembourg and Japan.
- 2005 won the prize grab flight at the World Balloon trophy by flying from 5km and placing a Honda baseball cap into a two foot wide swan shape pedaloe on a lake in Echternach, Luxembourg
- 2006 finished in the silver medal position of the Honda World Grand Prix series spread across USA, Europe and Japan.
- In 2006 coordinated the ballooning side of a one hour special for Richard Branson's Rebel Billionaire programme.





Left: Andrew (centre) with David Levin, Director (left) and Mathijs de Bruijn, Deputy Director (right) at the pre World Air Games, Mondovi, Italy 2008

Below: Andrew in one of the world famous Sloggi balloons



- 2006, flew one of two balloons to 23,000 feet for the ITV Guinness World records TV show where the company stunt man walked between the balloons blindfolded on a 3" beam.
- 2006 appeared on Chris Evan's drivetime BBC Radio 2 show talking about competition ballooning.
- In 2006, organized a very successful ballooning competition which was based in Dursley, Gloucestershire
- In 2006, tethered one of the Sloggi balloons at the foot of the worlds tallest building in Taipei, Taiwan, as well as the San Marino Grand Prix and the Tour de France.
- Since 2004 has been flying the unique Sloggi balloons. Designed for his competition flying, they also have unique artwork making them the most popular balloons in the World. It was Andrew's creative vision which convinced Sloggi / Triumph to use balloons in this way and to date the project has netted well over £6m in UK media value alone
- 2006 finished 5th in the World Balloon Trophy, beaten only by world champions and the current world number one.
- 2006 won a silver medal for one of the flights at the Albuquerque balloon fiesta (900 pilots) and finished highest British pilot
- In 2006 won the FAI Category one MOL Cup, Debrecen, Hungary.
- 2007 finished 2nd in 40 strong competition in Mondovi, Italy
- 2007 Won the Adria cup held in Zagreb
- 2007 Finished 2nd at the Croatian Championships
- 2007 Tethered outside of the Atomium, Brussels, the first balloon ever to do so
- 2007 Made International news with a Paraglider stunt from a balloon at 10,000 feet for the BBC.
- 2007 Finished 2nd at the Bristol Balloon Fiesta prize grab just 2cm behind the winner and Sloggi B team missing out on the £5,000 prize
- 2007 Finished 9th in the World Balloon Trophy, the highest placed British Team
- Won the 2007 Olen competition, Belgium
- October 2007 Finished 33rd overall out of 950 balloons at the Albuquerque balloon fiesta, NM, USA also winning a silver medal for one of the flights and finishing highest International Pilot.
- 2008 won the Mondovi championships, Italy
- May 2008 Andrew is awarded the Freedom of the City of London for services to ballooning, not least having helped to raise over £3m for charity using hot air balloons as fund raising tools.
- June 2008 Organized and directed the largest UK competition at Sudeley Castle where 54 balloons flew making it also the second largest balloon event of the calendar - all in the events' first year.
- July 2008 Tethered outside of the Colosseum, Rome with the BBC present to capture the moment.
- 2008 won bronze at the pre-World Air Games, Italy
- 2008 Runner-up long distance trophy, Bristol Balloon fiesta
- August 2008 Runner-up UK National Championships together with qualification to represent the UK at the 2009 European Championships.
- August 2008 Runner-up Pre-European Championships, Loire Valley, France