



PRESS RELEASE
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21 May 2000: The story of Lindsay Muir's Hot Air Balloon World Record

Lausanne, Switzerland, 18 May 2015 – The FAI is pleased to continue its series of world record celebrations with an exceptional woman in ballooning sports: British Lindsay Muir. She established [a female category duration world record for balloons in class AX-10 \(Hot-air balloons: 4.000 to 6.000 m³\) for a flight of 19h 07min 55sec on 21 May 2000 with the balloon "Lindstrand LBL-210 A" \(G-FVBF\)](#). As a competition and commercial hot air balloon pilot, Lindsay has been flying since 21 November 1983, which was also the 200th anniversary of the first manned hot air balloon flight, and has been competing since 1988.

FAI Ballooning Commission President, Jean-Claude Weber said about Lindsay: *"Lindsay is not only an accomplished competitor and record setting pilot, she is also a very enthusiastic and respected ballooning administrator representing her home balloonists as their delegate in the FAI Ballooning Commission. Her record is a brilliant performance which has not been broken for 15 years now."*

We asked Lindsay about her thoughts when looking back at the adventure: *"It was great fun setting the record and it has left me with a lot of very good memories and a desire to have another go. I had hoped to be able to fly for 24 hours and not just to break the previous duration record."*

The planning and the attempt

Lindsay said that the intensive preparation started a year before it actually took place and she kindly provided us with an extract of her diary right before the attempt: *"A long distance flight looked unlikely, but having waited three years now and the weather outlook for the next week showing nothing better than this would be my last chance this year, before the thermic activity of summer. I decided to go anyway. At this point I started working on getting things ready (an expert on crisis management). So at lunchtime Friday I had no crew, no observer, no retrieve vehicle and had yet to sort out the balloon; later that evening everything came together."*

The flight started in Paddock Wood, Kent (United Kingdom) and was planned to cross the Channel to France. It was scheduled to fly right through the night, but the announced bad weather caused a night landing near Lisbourg in France. Before it got dark, Lindsay recalculated her fuel reserves and estimated that there was sufficient to make it through the night. She was informed by the Bristol Weather Centre that the winds the following morning would be 210°/10 knots increasing to 20 knots and there was no mention of rain. At 9.00pm it was dark and she continued to drift slowly towards the South and open country. As the night went on, the wind slowly veered to the Southwest and then ominously to the West. Lindsay tried to get as low as safety allowed in order to slow down. Rather alarmingly, the first fuel tank to be used after dark resulted in an increase in fuel consumption by 30% - 50%. So, she radioed her retrieve crew to tell them she had enough fuel to last to about 2.30am. The wind continued to increase and Lindsay slowly brought the balloon down lower to a level that no one would consider safe when flying in the dark. She eventually had to resign to land in the dark, especially as the crew reported that it was finally raining.

“As I was flying solo I could not sleep at all. With a hot air balloon you have to operate the burner at least once a minute just to keep the balloon flying level. I spent the whole time in the dark listening to the audible variometer. Every time the ‘sink alarm’ went on I put the burner on. I survived the night by listening to the alarm, talking to friends on the phone and worrying about my alarming fuel state.” Lindsay could not see the ground at all and continued to descend slowly until she touched the top of a tree then bounced into the ground before finally stopping. *“I was even happier when my crew arrived a few moments later and we were able to pack the balloon away before it poured with rain”,* she said.

A British Ballooning Family

What makes Lindsay a perfect representative for ballooning is the fact that her whole family and private life is involved in this particular sport. For the last 25 years, she has been working as a commercial balloon pilot, flying passengers in balloons since 1989. Her husband, Graham Hallett, is the chief technical officer for the governing body of ballooning in the UK, the British Balloon and Airship Club. Furthermore, her 21 year old daughter Chloe became the youngest hot air balloon pilot in Britain after gaining her license on her 17th birthday.

“I am very proud of my daughter. She has crewed for me many times when I have been competition flying and last year she took part in her first National Hot Air Balloon Championship. I am hoping that she will be able to join me in my next record attempt. She will also be taking part in the FAI Women’s European Hot Air Balloon Championship this year. I will miss her being my crew chief, but it is fantastic that she will have the opportunity to compete at such a young age. I think we will be the first mother and daughter pilots to compete against each other. To fly for 24 hours in a standard hot air balloon is very difficult, but I will have another go and this time I will succeed.”

Additionally, we would also like to congratulate Lindsay on her recent election to the position of FAI CIA Commission Vice-President at the annual meeting held at the end of March in Lausanne.

Lindsay is an extraordinary female role model in air sports and an excellent ambassador who has managed to combine flying with family life, work and hobbies. Her last statement is an indication that we should soon see a new adventure for Lindsay and her family.

- [Download the pictures of the record in high definition](#)

About the FAI

The [Fédération Aéronautique Internationale \(FAI\), the World Air Sports Federation](#), is the world governing body for air sports and for certifying world aviation and space records. The FAI was founded in 1905 and is a non-governmental and non-profit-making organisation recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

FAI activities include Balloons and Airships, Power Flying, Gliding, Helicopter flight, Parachuting, Aeromodelling, Aerobatics, Hang Gliding, Microlight and Paramotor flying, Amateur Building of aircraft, Manpowered flying, Paragliding and all other Aeronautic and Astronautic sporting activities.

For more details, please contact the FAI – Fédération Aéronautique Internationale

Faustine Carrera
Communication Manager
Maison du Sport International
Av. de Rhodanie 54
1007 Lausanne
0041 21 345 10 70
communication@fai.org

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