

Geoff Green

Geoff was responsible for introducing ballooning to Northam in the 1970's, having decided that this was the ideal location on the ideal continent, to commence his record attempts.

Geoff started the Hong Kong Balloon & Airship Club in 1974/ Most club members were flying as crew with Cathay Pacific Airways and living in Hong Kong; and without bothering to ask for funds from the airline, Geoff ordered a balloon himself from Don Cameron in Bristol with the colours and logo of Cathay Pacific. When the balloon arrived in Hong Kong, the Director General of HK CAD decreed that no balloon would ever fly over the skies of Hong Kong. When the chief went on his annual leave, Geoff convinced his deputy to fly with him on the first free flight over Hong Kong, on Montgolfier Day 21 November 1975. Soon after, Geoff took the balloon to Japan, and was the first to fly over Mt Fuji and its treacherous air currents, with another balloon flown by Sabu Ichiyoshi.

Flying in the New Territories in Hong Kong was quite demanding, and the ultimate challenge was to amass 5 balloons for a flight over Hong Kong on Montgolfier Day 1977. As the balloons were readied for take-off near the village of Sai Kung, Geoff introduced the now-seasoned Director General of HK CAD to each waiting pilot, who gave each a bottle of French Champagne, with the time-honoured saying "If you land softly, you won't break it!" In his usual selfless way, Geoff let the club pilots have the honour of this occasion, while he and Ron Taaffe stayed on the ground, organising.

In amongst the fun times ballooning at international events (working for an airline helped), Geoff also broke and set many ballooning records, mainly from Northam. His ultimate prize was breaking the Absolute World Distance record in 1980, a distance of 674.5kms, flying from Northam to Zanthus, east of Kalgoorlie, with Northam local Adrian Clements. Geoff received many prestigious awards for Outstanding Contributions to Aviation. Most of these awards were presented to him by Prince Charles, in England.

Geoff Green was born in Kendall, in the UK Lakes District. As a young man he joined the RAF 208 Squadron, flying Meteors; and was stationed in the Middle East for 2.5 years. He later became an instructor on Chipmunks and Harvards. He joined Cathay Pacific in Hong Kong in 1965. Apart from ballooning, another interest was acquiring vintage aircraft and over time he bought a Tiger Moth, Hornet Moth and a BA Eagle. Each one was impeccably overhauled and each received many awards for Best Restoration.

From the humble beginnings of the Hong Kong Balloon & Airship Club the club's journey continues, as this year sees the 8th Cathay Pacific balloon and Nigel Black as President continues with Geoff's dream started so many years ago.