



BRISTOL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF KITES & AIR CREATIONS

Celebrating 25 Years of Flying High

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NEWS RELEASE

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Great Western Air Ambulance 'flying high' with the Bristol International Kite Festival

The Great Western Air Ambulance has been chosen as the new official charity partner for this year's Bristol International Kite Festival which takes place in Ashton Court over the weekend of 4 & 5 September.

To mark the partnership members of local kite group Avon Kite Flyers showcased some of their stunning kites to the Air Ambulance crew and appeal staff alongside the helicopter at the service's Filton base. *(see attached photographs)*

The Great Western Air Ambulance is funded entirely through voluntary donations and needs to raise in excess of £1 million a year to cover the cost of operating seven days a week across Bristol, Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. Every week the Air Ambulance is called out to attend numerous accidents and medical emergencies, bringing rapid and skilled medical attention to those in need. Road traffic accidents and falls are among the most common emergency calls.

The annual Bristol International Kite Festival will feature an action-packed two days of colourful flying displays, spectacular kite-fighting battles, synchronized routines flown to music and amazing special shapes. Complementing this aerial extravaganza will be an array of ground-based inflatables, air sculptures and wind gardens.

Subject to operational requirements, the Great Western Air Ambulance will make a special visit to Ashton Court over the festival weekend. Visitors will be able to look round the specially-equipped helicopter and meet the crew and appeal staff. Visitors can also visit the Air Ambulance stand and enter a competition for the chance to win a selection of prizes or find out about ways of getting involved in fundraising.

Each day the main arena programme will highlight the work of the charity against the backdrop of a stunning display by Italian designer Edoardo Borghetti flying his giant spinning wheels to reflect the spinning rotors of the emergency helicopter.

Kite Festival highlights in 2010 include sea-themed kites such as giant mermaids, swirling octopi, a flying scuba diver, killer whale and a 30 metre long multi-coloured manta ray designed by Peter Lynn, man-lifting kite surf wings, kite-propelled buggies and land boards, aerial combat with traditional Japanese fighting kites and free children's kite-making workshops run by Avon Kite Flyers.

Avril Baker, Kite Festival organiser, said: "The Air Ambulance provides a vital service to this area. There's a great, high flying, link between kites and the aircraft and we hope that, as well as sending our kites skyward, we can help raise the Appeal's profile and that lots of people will join us at the festival and so assist in raising money for this very worthwhile cause."

Penny Weir of Great Western Air Ambulance added: "It's fantastic to have the support of the Kite Festival in our drive to raise funds. It's become such a popular Bristol event and a real crowd puller so it provides the opportunity to reach many local people and tell them more about our work and how they can help. Those attending will be looking skyward for entertainment but any one of us could one day find ourselves in a situation in which it's the Air Ambulance that's flying out of the sky to lend a helping hand."



Local kite flyers and Air Ambulance crew and appeal staff celebrate the new charity partnership between Bristol International Kite Festival and the Great Western Air Ambulance.

(picture Martin Chainey)

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