



GWAA022a
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CHOCKS AWAY FOR BRAVE BEARS

If you go down to the woods today, you're sure of a big surprise as teddy bears across the land aren't preparing for a picnic, but a dare-devil parachute jump instead.

The teddy bear parachute jump will take place at the world renowned Bristol International Kite Festival, held at Ashton Court Estate on 3rd and 4th September 2011, and will help to raise vital funds for local charity, the Great Western Air Ambulance.

As the Kite Festival's chosen charity for the second year running, Great Western Air Ambulance Charity raised over £2,000 last year thanks to kind donations and sponsorship from the brave bears, and this year the charity hopes to welcome even more entrants to the event.

Penny Weir, fundraiser for the Great Western Air Ambulance Charity, states: "The Kite Festival at Ashton Court is a fantastic weekend for all the family and attracts over 30,000 people. We had approximately 150 parachuting bears take part last year and the event was a real crowd pleaser among the spectators. We're launching our campaign now as we're hoping to attract further bears to take part in this fun fundraising event."

Each of the bears will be fitted with a unique parachute and hoisted up high using specially adapted kites, then through an ingenious release mechanism, the bears will float gently to the ground. Each courageous bear will receive a certificate noting their bravery and the organisers are proud to announce they haven't lost a bear yet.

In addition to the parachute jump, the Kite Festival, which is now in its 25th year, will include a wide variety of activities and colourful professional displays. There will also be a number of spectacular kite-fighting battles, synchronized routines flown to music as well as children's kite-making workshops and a fun-filled craft marquee.

Sponsorship raised by the bears and their owners will directly support the Great Western Air Ambulance Charity, which operates across Bristol, Gloucester, South Gloucester, North Somerset and Wiltshire. It is funded entirely through voluntary donations and needs to raise in excess of £1 million a year to keep flying.

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Notes to Editors:

The Great Western Air Ambulance Charity is the official charity partner for this year's Bristol International Kite Festival in Ashton Court over the weekend of 3rd and 4th September. For more information visit www.kite-festival.org.uk

The work of the charity will feature in the main arena against the backdrop of giant spinning wheels to reflect the spinning rotors of the emergency helicopter. Visitors will be also able to see the specially-equipped helicopter, meet the crew and appeal staff and find out about fundraising.

For more information regarding the bear parachute, please contact info@greatwesternairambulance.org.uk or call the Appeals Office, open Monday to Friday 8.30am-11.40am. Daily Tel: 0303 4444 999/ 01454 262 806 / 01454 262 808.

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<..\Photography\Pics\Teddy Bear Parachute 2011\Teddy Bear Parachute Jump 2011.jpg>

Caption: GWAAC doctor Kieron Rooney prepares the teddies for their jump