

A Balloon Mission to the Edge of Space



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Flight 1

10 APRIL 2011: KiwiSpace Foundation has successfully launched a helium balloon above the Waikato and recovered its payload of cameras, tracking equipment and breathtaking images from the edge of space.

While the MetService launches meteorological balloons regularly, KiwiSpace believes this is the first balloon launched with the goal of capturing images of New Zealand and space from very high altitudes.

We chose to launch the balloon on Sunday to honour the golden anniversary of human spaceflight and to celebrate the official incorporation of the Foundation. Fifty years ago on April 12, 1961, Russian Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space when he boarded spacecraft Vostok-1 and blasted off at 6:07am UTC (6:07pm NZST). He made a single orbit of the Earth and touched down again safely in the rural USSR 108 minutes later.

The balloon was launched at 8:48am on the morning of Sunday 10th April, climbed to 51,180 feet (15.6km), just beyond the 1950's definition of space, before popping and landing just east of Pirongia, near Hamilton. Recovery teams reached the payload at 11:12am and were delighted to find it intact and still taking pictures.

The part of the mission that left the ground cost around \$3000 - balloons, payload electronics, etc - and was funded by members and sponsors. Many, many more hours were spent by the project team building components, planning and developing weather forecast models and



KiwiSpace Foundation is a new non-profit organisation seeking to make space accessible to New Zealanders.

Get involved, and become a Supporting Member for only **\$30/year**.



Want to get involved?

We hope to do a series of launches involving schools in the future. If you're a teacher, student, sponsor or enthusiast and interested in helping out with future launches, please **get in touch**.

Major Sponsors

contacts. On-ground tracking equipment was provided by the project team and by the amateur radio community.

Flight 1 Parameters

- Maximum recorded altitude: 51,580 feet [AMSL](#)
- Ground distance travelled: 46 km
- Ascent Time: Approx. 1 hour, 7 minutes
- Descent Time: Approx 43 minutes
- Descent speed at ground: 1082 feet/minute

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Latest updates

16 April: Videos online!

Videos are now available, and we've also expanded the project site to make it easier to find things as we add more content.

14 April: Follow us for update

We'll be uploading video footage in the next 1-2 days, showing the sequence from payload assembly through to recovery. "Like" us on Facebook, or follow us on [Twitter](#) if you want to get notified when this is available.

12 April: Celebrating 50 years today!

KiwiSpace today has released the first images from our space balloon launch, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of human spaceflight. More images and video will be released as soon as we can process them.

Mission Coverage

- [YurisNight.net: KiwiSpace celebrates Yuri's Night in NZ](#)
- [SciBlogs 'Just So Science' - How the Kiwi reached the Edge of Space](#)
- TV3 News, 12 April 2011 (Watch @ 11m10s)



Flight 1 Team

Core Project Team

Will Leizerowicz
(Lead)
Alex Heffer
André Pointon

Recovery

Mark Mackay
Phill King, Hamilton
Amateur Radio Club

Support

Civil Aviation Authority
(many people)
MetService (many
many people)
New Zealand Airways
(many people)
National Oceanic and
Atmospheric
Administration (US)

Amy Dreverman,
MetService
Barry Were, LandSAR
Bob McDavitt,
MetService
Damien Poppelwell,
Excellent Software
Dave Finer, Finer
Design
Greg Clark, Bigredbee
Iain Finer, Kiwi2Space
James McGregor,
MetVue
Mark Conner, NSTAR
Neil Arnold,
MetService
Perin Melchior,
Kiteworks
Ray Thorpe,
MetService
Richard Munro, NZ
Aerosports
Ross Browne,
LandSAR
Bobby Russell, Quest
for Stars

Support Comms

ZL1WJQ
ZL1AOX
ZL1KM
ZL1MDS
ZL1VFO
ZL2FX-5
ZL1SY-1
ZL1AMW-12
ZL2FX
ZL1VFO-10