

# 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