



FÉDÉRATION AÉRONAUTIQUE
INTERNATIONALE
Ballooning Commission

Hall of Fame

Andre Richard (Dick) Wirth
Inducted 1995



ANDRE RICHARD (DICK) WIRTH
UK

Inducted 1995

Sport balloonist / Balloon Manufacturer
1 July 1949, Windsor – 12 Oct. 1982 Albuquerque, NM

Dick Wirth participated in many ballooning events worldwide. Wirth was co-founder of Thunder Balloons. After founding the company he did much to further the sport both in terms of equipment standards and in contest flying. He was a decorated pilot. He represented the UK in world championships and was 1976 winner of the British National Hot Air Championships. Wirth received the Montgolfier Award in 1982.

Image courtesy British Balloon and Airship Club

Photo and plaque published with permission of the Anderson/Abruzzo International Balloon Museum in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

1 July 1949-3 October 1982

Dick Wirth trained as an architect at Edinburgh University. Whilst there he joined the University Ballooning Club, and on 17 November 1971 had his first flight in a balloon. In no time he had become an enthusiast, and had his first solo flight on 25 July 1972. While still at University he formed The Hot Air Balloon Company.

In late 1972, along with his friend Tom Donnelly he formed Thunder Balloons. Thunder Balloons first balloon, 'Jumpin Jack' – a patriotic union jack design, first flew in January 1973. Whilst Dick was a director, Thunder Balloons introduced many innovations including, the Parachute Rip, Turning Vents and the Liquid Fire (Cow) Burner.

From 1971 Dick was a member of The British Balloon and Airship Club (BBAC). In 1976, he was a founder of the BBAC Competitions Club, and a member of the BBAC Main committee from 1977.

Dick, the showman and balloon salesman, enjoyed competition flying. Since the inauguration of 'The British Nationals' in 1975, he competed in most of these annual competitions, and in 1976 won the event. Dick also represented the UK at the World Hot Air Balloon Championships in 1975, 1977, and 1981. His highest place being 5th at the Championships, held at Albuquerque in 1975.

Dick's main aim in life was to build the best balloons in the world and, as a consequence, please a lot of people. In 1982 Dick was posthumously awarded an FAI Montgolfier Diploma 'For major contributions to the sport of ballooning', following being tragically killed in a ballooning accident at The Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, in October of that year. He had flown over 850 hours in balloons.

His memory is kept alive by two awards.

The Dick Wirth Medal, 'for contributions to safety or other major achievements in ballooning'. The Medal is awarded by the Wirth family, a total of 5 medals have been struck.

The Dick Wirth Trophy, an annual award, administered by the BBAC.