

Wyre Forest Balloon Trip

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On the 7th of November 2010, I was fortunate enough to be invited on board a hot air balloon! Susan Jones, who is contracted to carry out filming for the Grow With Wyre project, organised it to gain an insight into the forest from a very different angle! We were on standby for number of weekends as the weather had to be just right to fly. Finally Chris Mansell, project Officer for GWW, Susan and I took off from Moffats School in Kinlet for a fly over. The forecast was for a light northerly wind which should have taken us over the heart of the forest. As usual, once

we were airborne, things changed! What breeze there was took us very slowly east, towards the northern edge of the forest and Trimpley reservoir. Great as it would have been to see this from the air, we really wanted to see as much of the forest as possible. Fortunately we had a world champion balloonist and a computer on board! We spent some time travelling up and down to find different air streams and finally managed to drift on a south east heading, over Button Bridge, Earnwood Copse, Longdon Wood, Lodge Hill Farm, Town Coppice



Balloon over Birchen Park

Phil Rudlin



Hawkbatch and Trimpley looking north

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Wyre Forest Study Group

and finally Hitterhill Coppice, before landing in a field on Tanners Hill. At this stage it was almost dark and due to the lack of wind we struggled to find a clear place to land – far too many trees in the forest! Fortunately the ground crew, who had followed our progress, were able to dismantle the balloon quickly before it became too dark to see.

As you can see from the photos, the colours were quite impressive. Unfortunately the week before this trip we

had quite high winds which blew off most of the beech leaves. Intact beech would have made it even more spectacular. On the positive side, during the week after the trip, more winds blew off the remaining oak leaves as well! The plan is to repeat this trip in the spring to catch the vibrant new growth of the year. I would love to see the forest again at this time of year. However the list of volunteers who are eager to go up is growing and I fear I am now at the back of the queue!

