

During the week 8th-16th January the Hanneshof Hotel hosted balloon a week in Filzmoos. Attending the event were 22 balloon crews visiting from Austria, Netherlands, England, Germany, Slovakia, Sweden and Russia.

Balloon pilots enjoy flying in the Austrian Alps as it provides a challenging area to fly coupled with spectacular views of the mountain ranges which accompanies each flight.

There are two types of balloon flight in the Alps, one is flying along the bottom of a valley, and the other is to fly out of one valley into another.

The valley flight is where the pilot fly's along the bottom of the valley. For example a balloon would fly from the Filzmoos launch site over the town and then land. Although this type of flight looks easy, the pilot has to be very aware of the wind conditions created by the valley to avoid becoming stuck over trees or buildings where landing is very difficult. Often there are many air currents which can see a balloon zigzag down a valley, and sometime fly backwards to the launch site. This is often seen when the weather conditions are not so good in valleys elsewhere.

The second type of flight is where the balloon is flown out of a valley and lands one or two valleys down wind. The flights out of the valley can often reach heights over 10,000ft for which oxygen is usually carried. This flying offers some spectacular views of the mountains and surrounding valleys. Because of the views this flying is often preferred by pilots. Once above the mountain tops the balloons are carried on faster mountain winds which usually range from 25-40knots [30-70kph].

From Sunday to Tuesday a number of balloons could be seen to fly out of the valley in the direction of the Dachstein and Gosau. Unfortunately the weather deteriorated stopping any more flying for the week.

One of the teams attending during this week was the Lukas Gläser Team, based in Schwäbisch Hall, Germany. The team consisted of three pilots from England, a pilot from Japan and the main Lukas Gläser pilot from Germany.

As well a flying the Lukas Gläser balloon the team have been displaying the giant Action Man balloon. The Hanneshof Hotel is proudly responsible for the Action Man balloon being displayed for its first visit to Austria.

The balloon envelope weights 360kg and is about 30 meters high and 40 meters long. Because of its size the balloon takes a large crew of people to move around and keep under control.

At the start of the week the Action Man Balloon was inflated at the bottom of the ski slope in the centre of Filzmoos for people of the town to see. The location made it difficult to safely tether the balloon but the town kindly lent a Piste Basher to be used as a tie down point. The balloon was displayed for about an hour and made a spectacular site.

The Action Man balloon was also tethered on Wednesday for Kids day, where up to 500 children from local schools came to see the balloons on the launch field. The winds were a little strong for such a big balloon which made it very difficult to handle, but all the children went home happy with a nice memory.

Friday evening saw a fashion show and Balloon Glow. A number of the balloon teams fired their burners over the catwalk to provide a spectacular effect to the fashion show.

Following the Hanneshof week there is a second week of ballooning organised by the Filzmoos Tourist Board where up to 40 balloons are expected to attend.

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# Hanneshof Hotel in Filzmoos

