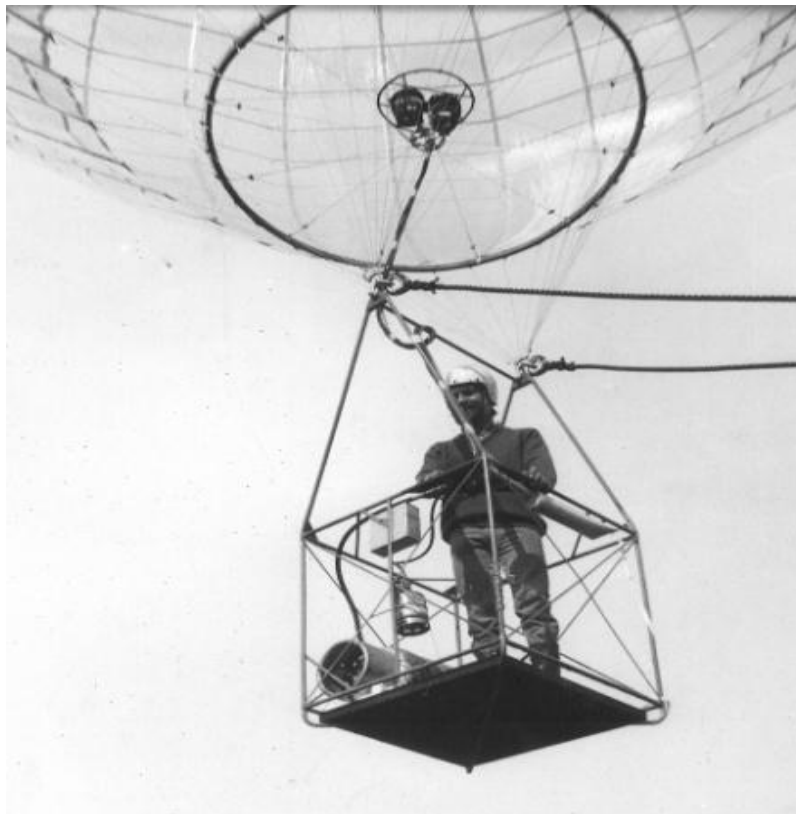


The Australian Ballooning Federation Inc presents their nominee for the 2008 Gedge Trophy

The Gedge Trophy was presented to the ABF by Len Gedge, a long time balloonist, Life Member of the ABF and supporter of ballooning in Australia. It is awarded to a member who has made a considerable contribution to the ABF over a long period.

How does one define a long period? How does one make a considerable contribution?



It could be argued that since Phil Kavanagh taped together his polyester-film balloon, *Little Bear*, in 1968 he has contributed more to Australian ballooning than anyone else.



Over the last forty years, yes that is forty years, Phil has become an icon of Australian ballooning.

Every Australian balloonist is familiar with Phil Kavanagh, whether for his piloting skills, his presence at ballooning events or his balloons and the vast majority of balloons in Australia are still Kavanagh balloons.

Phil is equally well known overseas for his participation in international ballooning events, his invention and patenting of the "Smart Vent" used in many balloons worldwide.

To list Phil's achievements and contributions to ballooning would require a very long presentation. We all know Phil, we know his achievements, we all have our own "Phil" stories, we acknowledge the time he has given to our sport so a very fast, fast forward of the last forty years would maybe show:

- Little Bear, in 1968, was then followed by Phil's first fabric balloon the much loved *Ulinga*.
- The seventies saw the set up of Kavanagh Balloons. Incorporated in 1979 they are still the only Australian balloon manufacturer.
- In 1987 Phil was awarded the William Dean Award in recognition of excellence in contributing to the sport of ballooning.
- A champion of non-competitive ballooning through the 70's and 80's, Phil then converted to competition and was Australian champion in 1990
- He headed the Australian contingent to the Worlds in St Jean sur Richelieu, Canada in 1991 and has since competed in many Australian and international events.
- Worked as a co-pilot and cameraman on the first Himalayan balloon flights.
- In 1994 Phil was the winner of the Mitsubishi Mildura key grab – an Australian first!
- Also in 1994 invented the "Smart Vent"
- Together with Brian Smith, Phil flew 3,000km across Australia in a Roziere balloon setting then Australian and World records.

Phil has always been known for his willingness to share his ballooning knowledge with others whether as a participant at The Lake, running a maintenance course or as we all do just sitting chatting with a drink after flying.

Oh, and by the way, Phil and his lovely wife, Wendy have made another unique contribution to Australian ballooning – their son, Sean Kavanagh, 2003 Australian Champion, and we hope a future World Champion.

I would ask all those present at the 2008 Australian Ballooning Federation AGM to endorse Phil Kavanagh as this year's recipient of the Gedge Trophy.

Report prepared and presented to the meeting by

Sue Robinson

for and on behalf of the ABF Committee.