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Jonathan Trappe before lift-off in Caribou, Maine: "I'm just as afraid of dying as anyone but I go forward in the spirit of adventure, doing something nobody has achieved before, and to live an interesting life"

Up and across the Atlantic (if his luck doesn't fizzle out first)

Colourful adventure brings to mind a film fantasy, but the weather threatens real danger, writes **Rhys Blakely**

An unconventional aviator took off from the United States yesterday, hoping to cross the Atlantic suspended beneath 370 helium-filled balloons.

Jonathan Trappe, 39, left Caribou, Maine, looking rather like something from the Pixar film *Up*.

The IT worker plans to become the first person to make the 2,500-mile journey to Europe by "cluster ballooning", a feat he expects to take between three to five days.

Where he will land is not clear. He is at the mercy of the winds, which could carry him anywhere from Norway to North Africa — or, quite possibly, into the rolling sea.

He has waited for three months for promising conditions and said that he hoped to ride transatlantic weather systems "like a conveyor belt".

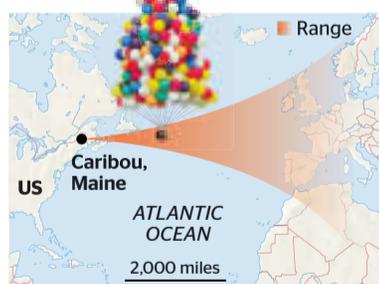
But he will be mindful of how cluster ballooning has a history of tragedies.

"Weather is absolutely the most dangerous factor," Mr Trappe said before setting off.

In 1992 Yoshikazu Suzuki, a Japanese piano tuner, made it 500 miles from the coast of Japan before disappearing. In 2008, Adelir Antonio de Carli, a Brazilian priest on a fundraising jaunt, died after floating out over the Atlantic.

Among the earliest exponents to garner headlines was Larry Walters, an American with no ballooning experience, who rose three miles up in 1982 when he tied 45 weather balloons to a chair.

He thought he would hover just a few metres from the ground and then did not have the nerve to pop the balloons with the airgun that he had taken



PAUL CYR / BARCROFT MEDIA

The colourful cluster of helium balloons is reminiscent of the Pixar film *Up*

along for that purpose. When asked why he had done it, he explained: "A man can't just sit around."

In May 2010, Mr Trappe became the first person to cross the English Channel by cluster balloon, and the Alps in September 2011.

To date, however, his longest time aloft has been a mere 14 hours, and the Atlantic crossing is more than ten times as long as any he has attempted before.

On previous flights, he has sat in an office chair beneath a plume of balloons. This time he will be carried in a small yellow lifeboat.

"If I touch down on water then the attempt will be over as it will be impossible to take off again, but the boat will keep me alive," he said.

"I'm just as afraid of dying as anyone

but I go forward in the spirit of adventure, doing something nobody has achieved before, and to live an interesting life."

His exploits recollect the Oscar-winning film *Up*, in which an elderly widower ties hundreds of balloons to his house, transforming it into an ad hoc airship.

Mr Trappe's progress is being monitored by GPS and supporters can keep up to date with his movements in real time by logging on to the website upacrosstheatlantic.com.



House search 20 years after schoolgirl killing

Detectives investigating the murder of a schoolgirl 20 years ago have searched a house near Dartford, Kent (Fiona Hamilton writes). Claire Tiltman, a 16-year-old pupil at Dartford Grammar School, was stabbed in an alleyway in Greenhithe in January 1993 in a frenzied attack.

Kent Police confirmed that they they had searched the house in Stone yesterday in connection with the case.

Claire's parents are now dead but her former schoolfriends have continued to campaign for justice.

In 2010, a handwritten cardboard sign left among flowers above a plaque where she was stabbed claimed to name the killer. A man was traced by police and co-operated with officers but he was later ruled out of inquiries.

War memorial dispute

A town council is facing the threat of criminal prosecution after erecting a war memorial next to the ruins of a 9th-century abbey.

English Heritage is demanding that the memorial, carved from Portland stone, is dismantled and moved from the vicinity of Shaftesbury Abbey, in Dorset.

Although Shaftesbury Town Council owns the land the memorial was erected on, the abbey itself is a scheduled ancient monument and it is an offence to interfere with it.

Head's Facebook gaffe

A head teacher has apologised over what she thought was a private Facebook post about a meeting with a parent. Ruth Swales, of Holmgate Primary School in Clay Cross, Derbyshire, wrote after discussing a pupil with his mother, Rachel Piper, and grandmother: "If you're tough enough to threaten to beat me up, you're tough enough to do it without your mum." Ms Piper said they "looked like the comments of a teenager, not an intelligent woman in a place of authority".

Watercress E.coli scare

Sainsbury's has recalled all of its bagged watercress salads after an outbreak of *E.coli* that has left 15 people ill. The Food Standards Authority described the recall as a precautionary measure.

The products affected include Sainsbury's bagged watercress and other salads containing watercress. The supermarket announced that it was testing all affected lines, but that it had found no trace of the bacteria to date. Customers would be offered a refund.

Dunkin' Donuts aims to run rings around Krispy Kreme in UK

Dominic Walsh

It is a prospect that will delight and appal in equal measure. Dunkin' Donuts opened a new front in its battle with Krispy Kreme yesterday when it announced plans to open up to 150 stores across Britain over the next five years.

The arrival of America's doughnut war on British soil may be enough to give health campaigners a heart attack, but lovers of rings of dough glazed in sugar, chocolate or other artery-clogging substances will be licking their lips in anticipation.

Dunkin' Donuts, famously beloved

of US police officers, will be hoping it is second time lucky after its last attempt to crack the UK market in the mid-90s ended in failure, despite being owned then by Allied Domecq, the British pubs group. This time around, Dunkin' Brands, its US-listed owner, is tackling the UK market in tandem with local franchise holders. It has announced two deals with partners

Rivals: Victoria Beckham is a fan of Krispy Kreme



who have committed to open 50 stores in Greater London within the first five years and is in talks in other parts of the country for a further 100.

It is probably no coincidence that the latest move by Dunkin' Brands has come under a British chief executive. In a previous guise, Nigel Travis established Papa

Mine's a Bow Tie

- Dunkin' Donuts is one of the world's biggest coffee brands, selling about 1.7 billion cups of coffee each year
- The first Dunkin' Donuts store was opened in Quincy,

Massachusetts, by William Rosenberg. The first franchise followed five years later.

- The brand offers its doughnuts in 52 flavours, including the intriguingly named Bow Tie

John's pizza delivery across Britain. But just as that had to battle against a well-established competitor, in the shape of Domino's, so Dunkin' finds itself up against Krispy Kreme, which has developed a chain of 52 stores here since 2003, together with 500 cabinets in motorway service stations and supermarkets.

But it may not be such a head-to-head battle. Last year, 60 per cent of Dunkin' store revenues came from coffee and other drinks. Internally, its main enemy is seen as Starbucks.

In June Paul Carbone, Dunkin' Brands' chief financial officer, told investors: "We are a beverage company."