

Allie's Cloudhopper gives her bird's-eye views over city

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A SOLO balloonist has captured a series of unique aerial photographs of Bristol. Dr Allie Dunnington, from Clifton, snapped pictures of the city's landmarks – and her hiking boots – on her mobile phone from her solo Cloudhopper craft, which has a harness instead of a basket.

The 49-year-old set off from Ashton Court at 7.30pm on Saturday for a one-hour flight, which took her over the ss Great Britain and St Mary Redcliffe Church, before landing in a field several miles outside the city.

She said: "It was a lovely flight, although the wind speed was quite fast, at 12 knots.

"I landed in a place called Talbot Farm, and the farmer, who was called Mike, was lovely and very kind.

"We always give people a bottle of wine or whisky to say thank you when we land."

Allie, who also flies larger hot air balloons, gained her Cloudhopper licence ten years ago.

So far she has flown in 73 counties and aims to beat her husband's record of 111.

"The Cloudhopper is essentially a one man – or one woman – hot air balloon without the basket," she said.

"It has a single gas canister which runs on propane, a balloon, a seat and a harness – you use the same principles of hot air balloon flight.

"You generally need to work in pairs – one person on the flight and one retriever who comes to pick you up once you land."

Allie and her husband alternate who gets to fly and who retrieves.

The pair use GPS technology, mobile phones and a iPad to keep in touch during the flights.

The fearless flyer has reached 3,000 feet in her solo machine, but has to



● Dr Allie Dunnington on her Cloudhopper and her airborne views over the city



stay lower in Bristol due to the airport.

Allie said: "I just love the thrill and the freedom.

"Obviously the higher you go, the more exposed you feel, but I have always been adventurous, so I love it.

"You get people waving and shouting, and it is exciting because you never land in the same place twice.

"I am very interested in photography and you get to see some incredible sights.

"It gives you a different perspective of Bristol and the world."



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