

*** PRESS RELEASE ***

Icon Films and University of Bristol Engineering Department Build The UK's First Successful Lead Balloon, for BBC's One Show

(Bristol – 12th May 2015) Bristol based independent TV production company, Icon Films, teams up with Engineering Design Students from University of Bristol to design and construct the UK's First Lead Balloon, for The One Show.

Following their successful challenge in 2014 building a functional chocolate teapot, Icon Films and Marty Jopson enlist the expertise of University of Bristol's Engineering Design Students to dispel the idiom and prove it is possible to fly a Lead Balloon.

Lead is dense and considered the heaviest stable metal. To reduce the weight of the balloon the team sourced specialist lead foil measuring 16 thousandths of a millimeter thick (0.00016) but still 6 times heavier than regular foil.

The first construction, a 4 metre lead zeppelin design with an internal wooden frame, failed as it was adding too much weight to the structure. 6 weeks later the team returned to the National Composites Centre in Bristol, with a new approach; to construct an origami inspired balloon measuring 1.6 metres cubed, by layering sheets of the lead foil on top of each other precisely in the right order. The balloon was initially filled with air to start the unfolding process. Air was then replaced by Helium to complete the inflation as the balloon twisted out 90 degrees into the cube shape. As it did the moment of truth arrived and the seemingly improbable turned into reality - the balloon ascended reaching its tethered height of 5 metres.

"The One Show is always challenging us to pull off the seemingly impossible. We proved that you can pour tea from a chocolate tea pot but this was a far great challenge. However thanks to physics, a little bit of origami and a lot of hard work from University of Bristol's Engineering Design students, we can now all celebrate the success by saying it's gone up like a lead balloon" said Owen Gay, Executive Producer, Icon Films.

"Once in a while a revolutionary balloon comes along that changes everything and we firmly believe our design will supersede old-fashioned and uninspiring latex for a generation of children's parties. For our next project, we intend to produce a viable balloon from granite blocks" said Tom Bewley on behalf of the Engineering Design students' team, University of Bristol.

'Total Idiom – Going down like a Lead Balloon' airs on The One Show, BBC One, Friday 15th May at 7pm

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For more information on Icon Films and 'Total Idiom – Going Down Like a Lead Balloon' please contact Belinda Biggam +44 (0) 203 176 6688/ Belinda.Biggam@iconfilms.co.uk

Notes to editors

25 years old this year, Icon Films has produced over 300 hours of factual programming for the UK and international markets. Icon Films brings together funders and works with broadcasters including the BBC, Channel 4, Five, ITV, National Geographic, Discovery Networks, Arte and PBS. Its work is internationally distributed by ITV Studios Global Entertainment, BBC Worldwide, Zodiak Rights, FremantleMedia International and TCB Media Rights. Icon Films has a reputation for originality, excellence and entertainment across the breadth of factual genres including science, history,

exploration and natural history. Icon Films' series for Animal Planet US, River Monsters, presented by angling explorer Jeremy Wade, is the best performing series in the network's history and is now in its seventh series. Other recent productions include Africa's Fishing Leopards (BBC), Spawn of Jaws 2 The Birth (Discovery Channel), Survive The Tribe (National Geographic Channels), Africa's Giant Killers (BBC). Icon Films is run by a senior management team that includes Creative Director Harry Marshall, Managing Director Laura Marshall, Director of Production Andie Clare and Commercial Director Lucy Middelboe.