

SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD!

Balloon rider soars to 12,000ft on garden chair



What a view!
Remi Ouvrard
takes a selfie
two miles
above Earth



Thumbs up: With his pink chair

IN what looks like a cut-price space mission, a daredevil dressed as an astronaut has smashed the altitude record for standing on top of a hot-air balloon.

Frenchman Remi Ouvrard, 28, stood on the balloon without a parachute at 11,932ft – a height of more than two and a quarter miles – over Châtelleraut, western France.

It broke his previous record of nearly 4,000ft set in 2019.

Before it took off, he climbed on the partly inflated balloon – piloted by his father, Jean-Daniel Ouvrard –

Mail Foreign Service

and strapped himself to a pink garden chair secured to the top. At its zenith it reached 13,175ft. But Ouvrard, who wasn't standing at that point, said he wasn't cold during the two-hour flight thanks to the warm balloon, adding: 'I was boiling!'

He dedicated the stunt – performed for a telethon – to French astronaut Thomas Pesquet, who spent six months on the International Space Station, and Philippe Croizon, the first quadruple amputee to swim the Channel.



Up, up and away: Record-breaker Remi, circled

By **Eleanor Harding**
and **Poppy Atkinson Gibson**

THE Dean of Oxford's Christ Church college has compared himself to Holocaust victims over a sexual harassment allegation.

The Very Reverend Martyn Percy said his treatment had helped him understand what it was like to be one of Hitler's 'political prisoners'.

The dean added that it had been like being 'forced to wear a red triangle' – as opponents of the Nazis had to before they were sent to concentration camps.

His comments were made in an essay uploaded to his personal website.

It follows a reported accusation from a woman that he stroked her hair in the cathedral and told her: 'I couldn't take my eyes off you this morning.'

He strongly denies the allegation made in October last year and Thames Valley Police took no action after an investigation, but he was suspended from duties and is still subject to an internal college inquiry. His friends say it is a political move, following numerous other attempts to oust him.

He was previously investigated in March last year by the Church of England over alleged failures to report safeguarding cases, but was later cleared. And Christ Church college also lost an internal tribunal

against him two years ago. In the essay, Rev Percy, 59, wrote: 'My experience of the last three years has given me a tiny taste of what it may have been like to be forced to wear the red triangle that the Nazis made political prisoners wear on the streets, and later in the camps...'

'The threat is [to] make you wear the red triangle visibly.'

'But if the persecutors can make you invisible first, and send you to one of their camps, there is no need for them to own or even admit to their stigmatisation.'

Rev Percy, who is also dean of Oxford's cathedral, later said the essay was 'unfinished' and did not properly convey his true views. But

last night the Diocese of Oxford said the 'unacceptable' analogy was a 'misappropriation of the Holocaust' while the college's student body said it was 'offensive to Jews'.

The essay was taken down after being unearthed by campus newspaper The Oxford Student.

His document had added: 'I am not comparing myself to a victim of Auschwitz here – please don't get me wrong. I am, rather, the victim of sustained, vicious, localised non-violent hatred, with elements in the community turning on me and those

who support me.' In a statement released last night, Rev Percy wrote: 'I reflected in passing that my personal experience of injustice – both being with others who had suffered, and some of my own experience – gave me a tiny (stress, tiny) insight into some of this. Clearly, that is not misappropriation.'

It is, rather, empathy. But I apologise for any offence caused if that intention was not plain, or if it has been misrepresented by others.'

It comes after the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby was forced to apologise earlier this month for claiming world leaders who fail to act on climate change could be worse than those who ignored the Nazis.

Oxford dean: I'm like a Holocaust victim

Sex probe 'made me feel like one of Hitler's prisoners'

JAN MOIR IS AWAY



Criticised: Martyn Percy