



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 46

January 2011

Happy New Year Folks

Ed-Speak - Welcome to 2011, and it's about time we had a new look to our newsletter. Hopefully with some feedback from you I am going to change the style of the newsletter to reflect an image that is in keeping with modern times.

I may not get it right but if you don't embrace change you stagnate and die. If you need an example just look at the way ballooning is being run down.



Graham Houston Christmas flying in G-CEJL UmH-31

Therefore I am taking the step of introducing a fresh new look that hopefully translates into an impetus that should carry the newsletter forward and encourage more of you to give me input. This is after all your newsletter and the subjects that we cover are geared by the feedback (or lack of) that you directly feed me.

2010 wasn't the best of years with the recession in full force but our sector of the marketplace held its own and new hoppers were joined by the lightweight Techno 50 that has splashed into vogue. The trend to go lightweight with Balloon kit seems to be gaining pace and it is a segment of the marketplace that all the manufacturers cannot afford to ignore. Ultramagic Balloons Ltd seem to have the majority share of this emerging sector and others will do well to recognise the interest and react accordingly. Let us hope we continue to power out of this recession with increased confidence.

Happy New year to you all **Steve Roake**

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Essential Extra's – Affordable Helium

Before you fly it is important to check what the prevailing winds are doing at your launch site. In most cases one pilot will release a pieball with which we can gauge the wind speed and direction to see if they tally with the forecast and more importantly give our trusty crews a "heads up" on where we will fly to. Many people complain to me about lumbering around with large helium tanks just for this purpose and yet there is a cost effective option out there for you, perhaps you just don't know it yet.



The answer lies in your local brewery shop where for around £20-00 you can purchase a helium kit as used in brewing beer. Branded the "Midget Widget", It comes with a nozzle that is detachable and the cylinders are cheap to replace with mine working out at about £5 each. My tip for you is when purchasing the kit get a replacement cylinder at the same time so that when one runs out you go onto the spare and replace at your convenience and yet never run out. Best of all the handy size is exactly right for hopping and storage. The Midget Widget is most definitely an "essential extra"!



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The Features Section

This month I have a theme running through the features section on Indoor Or internal ballooning .This was inspired by a chance article i picked up on the web by David Tanzer who explains his first ever hopping experience.

My very first cloudhopper experience was in Hangar One at NAS Moffett. In the early 80's, Brent Stockwell and Christine Kalakuka used to organize tethered rides inside Hangar One as part of the annual Moffett air show. Hangar One is 1,133 feet long, 308 feet wide, and 198 feet tall. Clouds form inside and it can rain. One year, perhaps it was 1982 or 1983, a fellow was there with an early T&C hopper. It may have even been one of the original small ones with a polyester envelope--perhaps 14K FT3. He asked me if I wanted to try it out, and of course I said yes! He quickly inflated it and I got strapped in and ascended maybe 50' up into the hangar. Once I figured out the proper rhythm of the balloon, I looked down and gasped at the feeling of floating over a sea of people packed inside the hangar. Once I got calmed down, I really began to enjoy it, and this fellow spent the next 45 minutes walking up and down the length of the hangar with me on a tether. That's when I decided that I needed a cloudhopper. Unfortunately, it took me about 20 years to actually get one of my own.

Cardington February 15th 1997

In the vast building that was a former airship hanger , ballooning folks arrived and donned their hard hats and entered to witness a never to be seen again event. 93 balloons were simultaneously inflated to set a world record. The highlight for hopper fans and early arrivals, was to see somebody flying a hopper down the length of the building. Having asked those who were there who was the intrepid flyer? Nobody seems to know, and the hoppers present were numerous.



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Mike Webb's Indoor Stunt

Probably the hopper shunt of stunts belongs to Mike Webb who used to be the sales director at Lindstrand Balloons and always up for some headline grabbing. The LBL demonstrator G-CBZJ was a 25,000 hopper (now with John Hilditch), and whilst staying at the Hilton Hotel in Dubai in March 2003 and with suitable banners attached, Mike decided to do a tether in the foyer of the Hotel.



As with most wacky Webb ideas, it was probably thought up over a few drinks and to say it was a snug fit is an understatement as you can see by the above jpeg (all photos from Mike Webb with thanks). With plenty of willing helpers to hold the ropes in order to achieve the three point tether it was relatively easy to get the dramatic effect shots via a camera placed on a higher floor level. However, what you probably aren't aware of (any neither were they) was that nobody had turned off the hotel's fire alarm which left them with a slight problem once the hopper



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was tethered, since they couldn't vent the balloon for fear of setting it off!



As you can clearly see, Mike gave a spirited go to the exercise achieving a reasonable height in the stunt. Eventually the balloon naturally cooled and it was possible to slowly vent the internal air as it cooled. For sheer panache and spontaneity, I rate this as the best indoor hopper stunt (unless you know differently). Many thanks to Mike for finding me these photos and for his insight into the stunt, and also to John Hilditch for confirming the dates and venue.

It's probably a stunt that won't ever be repeated and must therefore be given the credit it deserves.



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The Icicle Balloon Meet 2011 by Steve Roake

The Icicle balloon meet is into its 39th year and whilst the weather may have precluded flying on Saturday and the fields looked saturated, the Trade show continued as usual at the very pleasant venue of the Ramada Elcot place Hotel near Newbury.



Elcot place showing the lawn where Mike Scholes inflated his Ax1

Whilst the entrance of the Hotel looks like a typical country house hotel, a nice hall for the exhibitors is placed on a lower level and is big enough to accommodate all the exhibitors in one room. Manufacturers present this year included newcomers Schroeder balloons, who joined Kubicek Cameron and Ultramagic Balloons Ltd. Of these only the latter two cater for our sector of the Marketplace.

The Sentiments in the venue were of a subdued concern following a tragic accident in the ballooning community on new year's day in the UK, where two individuals lost their lives going to 20,000feet in a Cameron O-120, and clearly lessons need to be learnt from the event and we all felt the sad loss and were keen to establish and understand what happened and why. A sad loss of Life



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Significantly Absent were Lindstrand Balloons Ltd (AGAIN).
Onto things relating to us.



In Conversation with friend and sales expert Colin Wolstenholme, he confirmed a change of direction within Cameron Balloons Ltd. There has been approved a budget for Research and Development and that is good news for our sector of the marketplace. Whilst reticent to confirm details, he did agree that the much talked about Gimballled Hopper is an item that will receive the attention it needs to bring it to the marketplace, which seems to be very little. There is an unseen prototype bottom end in existence which just needs making production ready. Prototype concept to production item takes a detailed Review of all the facets to ensure each part is consistent in both quality and finish. Coupled to the bottom end is perceived to be a new design of Concept style envelope in the normal sizes. When asked would the item be out for the Solo Meet in May, Colin wouldn't be drawn on times but said that date was unlikely as the event is supported by Ultramagic. I have asked for an early test flight to be able to report back to you and will advise when this is likely to happen. My personal guess is an unveiling at the Bristol Fiesta in August. Cameron balloons are very busy with current delivery times into July already which is a great thing to see after their quiet period recently.



At the Ultramagic Balloon Limited stand were both Tim and Hilary Revel and Paul Dickenson. This year's stand emphasis was concentrated most definitely on our sector of the market, with both a Techno bottom end on display and a Solo Bottom end that whilst 18months old (and belonging to Peter Lawman), hadn't been used in anger and so looked as good as it did when leaving the factory. I hereby apologise for the acting in the video of how to construct a Techno collapsable basket, both actors were willing and yet



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remained untrained. I am assured that a shorter version of the 8min video will appear shortly and will be linked on our New Facebook Page (Cloudhoppers – more on this later). After last month, I have deliberately left out a photo of the techno basket, but sales are still flooding in with over 12 bottom ends sold.



Peter lawman's as New Solo bottom End

Whilst awaiting the transfer of funding , Paul Dickenson also confirmed 99% That his own personal solo bottom end has a new owner and will be replaced by a Techno collapsible basket.

Another remarkable recent Ultramagic achievement was the recent flight by Pierrick Duviosin who is a member of our forum who in recent days took an UM 56 Balloon equipped with



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EcoMagic fabric two up across the Alps from Chateau D'oex for a 175mile flight. That in itself was quite amazing but what blew my mind was the fuel consumption rate of 10kilos per hour. Truly remarkable.

A small (6) number of balloons flew on Sunday morning but most decided not to bother as the upper winds were fairly fast.

Mike Scholes

Mike Scholes also had an UM balloon at the Elcot place Hotel for the event. Mike was a commercial operator until he had a rare condition that left him partially sighted. Not being a man to sit back on his laurels, Mike who has set some amazing records already, decided to throw himself into walking to the North Pole for charity. This he succeeded in doing last year, but whilst there he was planning to fly an Ax1 Balloon that was donated by Ultramagic for the very trip. Since it wasn't possible to fly last time, Mike being undeterred is going again.



Mike Scholes 9000ft hopper photographed By Julie Sollory



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Unfortunately for your editor , the inflation on the croquet lawn at the Elcot place Hotel took place around 1pm on the Sunday afternoon , so i missed it.



Julie Sollory took this great shot of the rig, burners, fuel tank and harness.

Whilst it was good to see the balloon and rig inflated, some damage took place and repairs are planned before he goes trekking. I have a great fascination for all things miniature and can only imagine flying in such an ultralight craft. Here's hoping John Hilditch can persuade Mike to bring the Ax1 to the Solo Meet in May for an inflation and inspection.

Steve Roake



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Three Favourite Jpegs and why-by Roland Escher

In this seventeenth selection of my favourites and why, Roland Escher selects his three favourite photographs with reasons why he loves them.



Ten Hoppers at Hoppermania; Albuquerque, New Mexico; October 2003.

Prolific cluster balloonist and avid Cloudhopper pilot with over 700 hours, John Ninomiya, had the idea of organizing a gathering of Cloudhoppers at Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta in 2003. He persuaded organizer Pat Brake to let participants register their Cloudhoppers as secondary balloons, and she agreed to position all Cloudhopper pilots in the same row of the launch field. Thus, Hoppermania was born.

On the 8th day of Fiesta, Saturday, 11 October 2003, the Hoppermania mass Cloudhopper launch became reality. The Zebras sent off all the big basket-balloons first, until only the Cloudhoppers were left.



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And then it happened: the largest number of hoppers ever to fly together in North America. 10 Cloudhoppers, incl. one Sky Chariot, from all over the United States lifted off at the same time. The picture of all these dangling legs flying in the Albuquerque sky will stay with me forever.

For more pictures of Hoppermania 2003 and John Ninomiya's helium cluster flights, see <http://www.cloudhopper.org/> and <http://www.clusterballoon.org/> , respectively.



Ran-out-of-Pink and "Wanda" at the 1st-ever XLTA; Amherst, Massachusetts; May 2005.

For over a decade, notorious balloon builder and pioneer of the collapsible basket, Brian Boland, hosted an annual fly-in for experimental and home-built balloons and airships at his grass airstrip in Post Mills, Vermont. However, after the 2001 event, Brian decided to call it quits. This left a gaping void in the American experimental ballooning community, as there was no other



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balloon meet dedicated exclusively to homebuilt balloons. In 2005, the builder of an innovative semi-rigid hot air airship, Dan Nachbar, stepped up to the plate and organized a successor experimental event, the 1st Experimental Lighter-than-Air Meet, aka XLTA, at his community home in Amherst, Massachusetts, just two hours South of Brian's airstrip.

After much prodding, Brian Boland himself showed up for the event. On the first day, Brian was the only one to launch in very windy conditions, and blasted off into the sky like a rocket. The second day, which saw over a dozen homebuilt balloons take to the skies, Brian brought out "Wanda" the flying wish, so named after the Monty Python movie "A Fish called Wanda." I was there with my Colt Cloudhopper bottom end and Phil MacNutt-built Ran-out-of Pink envelope. It was an great pleasure to fly alongside Brian Boland and one of his most fanciful creations!

If any Cloudhopper pilots are interested in attending the next edition, the 7th Annual Amherst Experimental Balloon, Hopper, Chariot, and Airship Rally (aka XLTA - Amherst) will take place 10-12 June 2011. For more information, see <http://www.xlta.org/>.





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Three Hoppers on Christmas Eve Morning; Charlottesville, Virginia; December 2006.

In the middle of Christmas preparations with the family, I got a surprise e-mail from fellow Cloudhopper pilots Rick Jones and Eva Tashjian-Brown. Rick was visiting his brother for the holidays in Charlottesville, Virginia, where Eva lives as well. Would I want to make the 2-hour drive from Washington, DC, for a three-hopper holiday flight? Eva and her husband kindly offered me their guest bedroom, so I could drive down in the evening for an early morning flight on Christmas Eve, 24 December 2006. I promptly loaded Ran-out-of-Pink in my Subaru wagon, left my extended family behind, and headed South.

The three hoppers had a fantastic flight in light winds over the snow-covered Virginia countryside. After a common pancake breakfast at a local joint, I headed back North, and still got back to Washington in time for Christmas Eve dinner! If you look at the picture closely, the license plate on my Subaru Forester reads "BALLOON."

Many thanks Roland for your great choices, now people all it takes is pictures and most importantly some text explaining why you like the shots –what could be simpler.

Contributions for future editions of my three favourites and why to steve.roake@ntlworld.com please. Do it today folks and share those memories.

4. Updates to the Website / Newsletter/ Topics of Interest

As you can see we have a new look to the newsletter, and subject to people liking it, now i'm going to refocus my efforts to get the website back up to scratch and where i believe it should be. I have a blueprint and structure for it, it just now needs the architecture written so that i can update the pages periodically. This will once finished be a vast improvement on the staid 70's look of the current version. More information as and when I have it.

5. Homebuilt section



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Sent in by Greg Winker, here is a photo of the maiden flight of "Booty Call" March 5, 2010. Another fine looking Winker project which made it into the air , she looks great against this winter scene. (jpeg from Greg Winker).

In next month's Three favourites and Why, there could be a double contribution, with Martin Freeston threatening to send in words to Accompany his three favourite shots and your editor picks his three Favourite Chateau D'oex hopper jpegs , so watch this space.



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Gallery Pages - This section is the Editor's choice of new jpegs, visuals and older balloons of interest or alterations.



F-HITI new Cameron Z-31(c/n11497) , first new hopper of the year, seen flying in Chateau D'oex photographed by Martin Freeston



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Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

Paulo Bonnano

We got wind recently from Tony Jay that Paulo Bonnano has been working on a new hopper burner. Little is known at this stage about the new power plant, however in conversation with Malcolm White recently, he eluded to Paulo reworking the Pauline Baker burners for her record breaking flights with the operation running at higher pressure. Malcolm is due to visit Paulo in March to oversee the new higher performance burner and has agreed to find out more about the new Paulo burner whilst he is there. My understanding at this stage is that rather than have a cattle Burner, the new set up from Paulo features a two stage main burner. Rather than predict what the set up maybe like, let's wait and see What Malcolm can find out from this outstanding Engineer. Paulo is a truly gifted engineer who makes the product first and then manufactures the tooling after to spec the prototype to production standards.

Graham Philpot

It is with a heavy heart that I have to inform you of the death of Graham Philpot who whilst probably unknown to some of you was a good friend of cloudhoppers.org. Graham was instrumental in assisting me with the concept and execution of the Solo Meet. Graham a true stalwart of the Black Horse Balloon Club based at Great Missenden was one of those men who constantly gave back to ballooning, and whilst he wasn't a hopper pilot himself, his unerring enthusiasm for the event meant that it would happen and in typical style Graham threw himself into the logistics, planning and execution so that it ran seamlessly. Whilst getting into ballooning at a later age than some, Graham also got involved with training up and coming pilots and not only BHBC but we at Cloudhoppers.org have lost a valued friend. Our collective condolences go to his wife Sheila and the family.



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Erik Jan Doornewaard has recently got his Colt 31A into the air for the first time since he purchased it from Switzerland . Now registered PH-EJD (very apt registration), the initial first flight as such took place at a festival in Inzell. Luckily for us a very nice video accompanies the five minute flight. So to watch the video, please use the link below.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhyJXo0uapl>

Bob Kupps

Bob Kupps has been busy flying his hopper alongside the resident duo in Thailand , but recently has been joined by G-EZER the ex Derek Maltby Cameron H-34. There has been a great series of photos loaded in the picture section on the yahoo site , but Bob has also got into an area that is seriously lacking in our sportVideos. His first tries in HD quality have some great camera angles whilst he flies and can be seen below .

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmQ0c_yLUqw

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4Twok8cz8>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrwIKY0mF7Q>



HS-HOP Cameron V-31 by Bob Kupps



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The above is a typical example of his photographs which are awesome.

LY-BUP Colt 25A

The pace of the second hand market never fails to amaze me. During December Sandy Mitchell alerted me to the impending sale of the above Colt 25A kit. Therefore I put an advert on our list since i'm always being approached by people looking for hoppers.

Within 24hours Keith Sproul informed me that he had purchased the chariot bottom end from the seller. Within another two weeks the owner had agreed and secured a new bottom end for the craft and now has a complete kit once again.

Just goes to show, if you see something you think is a bargain, it probably is, so don't delay, buy your bargain today.



As mentioned last month , Ultramagic Balloons Limited have secured land for the building of their American factory in Mexico to assist in fulfilling their North and South American requirements as the market demands. There is more information available on their new website for that sector, see below.

www.ultramagicamerica.com



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For Sale / Wanted section

Ultramagic H-42/05



Ultramagic H-42 (Year of Manufacture: 1996), believed to be c/n 05. Zero hours flown only 2 or 3 inflations. Possibility for attaching banners to envelope.

Price: € 5.500,- ex VAT. Contact: Pieter **Kooistra** joure, The Netherlands

Phone: +31 - (0) 513 - 417503 E-mail: kooistapieter@yahoo.co.uk

Sounds like a bargain to me - Ed!

Jack Klein selling G-BVUI

Lindstrand 25A. 1994. G-BVUI. 96 hrs. Lindstrand colours (no words) in red, yellow & blue. New EASA C of A on delivery. £1700 Zebedee Balloon Service - 01488 681527, 1700 British Pounds= (+ -) depending on exchange rate: \$2700.00 Photo of balloon is the first one on the Zebedee list under envelopes. web page:

<http://www.zebedeelist.co.uk/list/list.php?section=envelope>

I also have the matching Lindstrand hopper bottom end that I might be willing to part with. If anyone is interested, E-mail me at advanced@gci.net, or call me in Alaska at 907 242-5860



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And Finally.



Pauline Baker sent in her favourite winter shot , totally stunning it was taken in Dobbiaco about two years ago.

Membership is currently a healthy 428 members and numbers are generally still rising. All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your editor. Please forward them to steve.roake@ntlworld.com and feedback good, bad or indifferent is always welcome. Views aired by contributors may not be those of the Editor

Safe and happy hopping! Steve Roake.

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