

Cloudhopper News

Issue No. 172

November 2025

Welcome to your Latest Newsletter.

November, typically a month in which not a lot happens. We even got our first dose of snow in the UK, so winter looks like it is piling in at a rate of knots. So, what do we do to keep ourselves interested in what could be perceived as "Down Time"?

For me, I try and pursue something that has been on my "radar" for a while and in this Edition, you will see I have researched a remarkable trail of four brand new unregistered hoppers which were used for a one-off tether at the Ajax Football club stadium opening. Whilst the story isn't complete, the gist of it is, and the four individual envelopes subsequent fate has been explored. Many thanks to Kevin Boon and Sandy Mitchell for helping out with photographs and to others for their input who get credited later.

I'd like to start another topic this month which is called **My First flight**. This is a recognition of your first ever free flight in a Cloudhopper. If like me you came into hopping with some knowledge, it is designed to tell newcomers exactly how the first effort went. It is designed to give the view of your expectations prior the flight, the actual flight itself, and what if anything you learned from the experience that you could pass on to others. I'll start with my experience which could have very easily ended up with me and a broken foot. More on this later but I'd love your submissions please.

When it comes to manufacturers who actively support Cloudhopping, one name stands out ahead of others. Cameron Balloons supports hopping like no other. Whilst the OMM wasn't flyable they still rocked up to mingle and show willing, and I'm delighted to say another "O" series hopper has departed Bristol to its new home. Coupled to the Stock item they have for sale (c/n 12759 which is an O-31), their continued success in the market is a credit to their unwavering choice of support in a market where they still see value.

I don't want to go on like an old record, but less than 1% of you guys have supported me, even though I've written this for over 20 years for free. Thanks to those who have, but I would encourage you to support the site and my efforts. www.buymeacoffee.com/cloudhoppers is where you have a chance to donate towards the running costs of the site. Thanks in advance and please don't go ballistic, I wouldn't expect anyone to donate more than £12 a year or theoretically a pound an edition. As I said this is voluntary but financial assistance would lead to more options for the growth of the brand. Therefore, I would ask you to feel generous if you can afford to be and support me, and for those who will, many thanks in advance.



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So here is what we have for you in edition number 171 of the Newsletter:

- Ed Speak – November – not much to talk about
- The interesting tale of the opening of the Ajax stadium.
- My first Flight -by Steve Roake.
- New balloons – G-CNCZ.
- Second hand balloons.
- Manufacturer News- The Icicle Refrozen 2026

Articles for inclusion are always welcome Anything for future inclusion to the usual email address please: steve.roake33@gmail.com many thanks in advance. Now please enjoy this edition of the world's only Hopper periodical brought to you with pleasure and kindness with all the most up to date information on our unique form of flying and longing for your support. I'm not after your wealth, just a small indication that all of my collective efforts over the years are still appreciated and that you enjoy the regular insights .

1,Ed Speak- November- Not much to talk about!

November has arrived in all of its glory! Driving rain, despicable winds , icy cold and even Snow in some parts of the UK . All in all, a thoroughly depressing time of year to a hopper exponent. It was nice to see some people celebrating Montgolfier day out and about in their hoppers, but generally through the wet ground and inclement weather it's been a grounded month for me. I did look at one stage within the last month at potentially doing some local flying but poor preparation on my part tying up with a potential launch site and the predicted track taking me over a built-up area with nowhere to land (and a subsequent 180 in the wind direction- amazingly) lead to no fun on the day. Learn the lesson Steve!

The Icicle refrozen Balloon meet isn't that far away and I commend them for the topic of hoppers, but for me (as an old git), nothing that they have shown as attending so far has enthused me as its all old museum stuff seen regularly over previous years. Hopefully someone will bring out an old gem that has remained stored for years. However, we do have a Newsletter for you and I hope you all enjoy the read . Many thanks to all those who have contributed behind the scenes trying to get me Photos and information .

Regards to all Steve



2, Feature Section

The Story of Four Hoppers and the opening of the Ajax Football Stadium

I want to take you back, way back into time, back to 1996. That's right, 29 years ago and nearly three decades. In the UK Peter Andre(Flava) was just about to knock off the Spice Girls (wannabe) who had sat at number one in the charts for some seven weeks. In Holland on the 14th August there was a grand opening of the Brand-new Ajax Football Club stadium which would be a grand affair with some broadcast content. Basking in their glory of winning the champions league trophy in the 94/95 season, Ajax wanted the naming of the "Johan Cruijff Arena" to be a worthy event, and so preparations started early on how to make the most of this 55,885-seat platform. Now please bear with me because some of what follows may not be factually correct and is assumed, but they got an idea to involve four Cloudhoppers and the name associated with the deal was a Dutchman by the name of Hans Zoek. Hans contacted Ultramagic with a plan, probably in late 1995, which was processed through the German dealer believed to be Peter Housmann. What was commissioned was the purchase of four relatively new models to Ultramagic in four H-42'. Each balloon had the primary colours of the team and the capacity to be bannered. These would sport the liveries of some of the principle sponsors of Ajax. I guess the associated costs were shared amongst those prestigious clients who received good TV airtime for their participation in the stunt.

As a major part of the naming /opening ceremony all four Non-registered balloons would be inflated over small baskets as part of the grand ceremony. The impact of four pristine red and white envelopes in the arena cannot be understated. Such companies as Coca-Cola, Grolsch, Phillips and PTT Telecom would be exposed on national television in all their glory. Other companies also featured on the balloons such as Ballast Needam and Staatsloterij.

Once this event was completed they were then stored by Mr Zoek without further use until his sad demise and the family needed to get rid of them. Now this was sometime after the great tether and whilst in the process of arranging their sale, Pieter Kooistra was asked to assist in moving them on. In the period between tethering and the sale, logbooks went missing and so the sale wasn't as straight forward as you would imagine. The four associated Balloons were envelope only sales of c/n's 42/3- 42/6 inclusive.

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Seen here on their test inflations in Iguilada Spain

Sadly, I can't tell you which envelope had which advertising upon it but by the time of the future sales all banners had been removed.



As you can see the effect was pretty spectacular

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When Pieter Kooistra got involved with the sales , two envelopes went to Germany and two came to the UK.

Subsequent History of the Hoppers

Um H-42 - 42/3

This balloon made its way onto the UK register in 2007 when it was registered G-OOCH which was very apt as the owner was Peter Gooch. Peter kept the balloon using it lightly for a period of nearly six years starting on the 6th September 2007. This was subsequently sold to David Such in July of 2013. As the second owner David used the envelope for some 25 months selling on to its third UK owner Linda Crossland-Clarke. Linda kept the envelope 26 months before selling it to Kate Holzer with only 34 hours total time accrued. Kate who lived abroad then exported the envelope to Switzerland where it still resides as HB-QVQ. This was seen as recently as 2018 at Chateau D'oex sporting other bannering. Many Thanks to Sandy Mitchell for the Photo. Considered still active.



HB-QVQ UM H-42/3 credit Sandy Mitchell at Chateau D'oex 2018

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UM H-42- 42/4

This envelope was one of the two taken to Germany. Registered D-OOUM it has consequentially been seen at places like Metz . It has been married to both a hopper bottom end and on occasions a small basket. Seen photographed on various Metz outings by Kevin Boon(many thanks) , in 2009 it was with a basket , by 2013 it was under a hopper bottom end and then in 2019 it was back under a basket. Considered still active.



Splendid photos of D-OOUM at Metz credit Kevin Boon.

UM H-42- 42/5

This particular envelope has probably the best history of the four with Pieter Kooistra confirming before it sold to the UK, it went back to Ultramagic Spain to be checked over and re issued with a logbook before coming to the UK for its first owner Andrew Davidson. Registered on the 7th March 2014, (some 7 years

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after the other UK example) Andrew flew it regularly until 19th July 2018 when it became the property of Ian Chadwick who still utilises the craft currently. Whilst it may have had a recent "event" the balloon has been repaired and is still airworthy.



Ian Chadwick's G-CIGA UM H-42/5.

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UM H-42- 42/6

This envelope is the second one that found its way to Germany. Registered D-OBRA, there is some real mystery to its history after the Tether in Holland . The Balloon had been seldom seen in action and has subsequently been placed as withdrawn from use with its registration reallocated subsequently. Despite the best efforts of people like Tony Jay (thanks), Little is known about this one and why it was withdrawn from use. We all love intrigue but surely someone, somewhere, knows more. If that is you, please get in touch with the news. Many thanks to Ian Chadwick for his input to this topic.

First Flights- By Steve Roake

When I say first flights, I really mean when you can recall your first ever proper experience in a Cloudhopper and whilst this wasn't my first ever outing in a hopper, I hadn't learnt much by this stage and nearly came a cropper due to my naivety. My first ever outing in a Colt 31 (G-IMAN) happened in January 2005 in Mauterndorf Austria with another near-death experience. This has been documented before but revolved around the balloon which had been lent to me, and being told it was refuelled, wasn't . I nearly came to grief over high power lines and luckily landed in deep snow having curled around a snow laden tree which assisted in me walking away. Since that day I have ingrained in me Never to trust what anyone says about fuel status and do my own pre-flight checks.

The flight didn't bother me too much as I had identified the failure and taken on board what to do to ensure it never happened again. Months later I found myself at Cameron Balloons Bristol, where I was purchasing a Lovely orange Colt 31 from Chris Monk(G-BSDV) and getting those with greater knowledge than me to give it the once over. (Colin Wolstenholme and Andy Booth graciously gave up their time to inspect the craft in Cameron's third floor loft space). The most important information I came away with was that the balloon had turning vents. I held on to it until my brand new Lindstrand Mk 2 Hopper bottom end had been built and delivered and because of the turning vents, I had agreed to fix the burner in place negating the ability to swivel the bottom end but having the componentry to be able to go so whenever I wished in the future.

This I followed up with a 45min tether at my kids' school annual fete and a 45 min free flight from Cheriton Hampshire and an overall 65 hours of P1 experience. What could possibly go wrong?



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My next outing was to be at the Savernake Forrest meet on 24th September with three friends who also had hoppers. It was the Harvest Moon event run by Rob Cross, a back to basics, no frills balloon meet and the weather was splendid. Setting up the 31 next to three other hoppers got my juices flowing. To one side of me was Neil Ivison with his lovely relatively new Lindstrand 25A G-RIME, whilst flanking me on the other side were Kevin Tanner in G-HOPR (also an LBL25A) and John Hilditch in G-CBZJ his ex-demo Lindstrand 25A. We decided to take off together, so inflated at our own rate and then waited until the last one was ready to go. It must have made a good sight as four craft ascended in unison for what for me would only be a 45min flight. I remember the windspeed whilst airborne was around 8 knots and laughed out loud when John got stuck in some trees whilst playing around low level.

About 20 mins into my flight I thought I ought to practise my landing as I hadn't really any experience of doing this phase of the flight. Being the idiot, I was, I saw a field and initiated a descent towards a prospective landing spot. What I hadn't contemplated was the orientation of my craft or how slowly and inefficient the turning vents were with such small lift capacity. Heading directly into said field I had no time to turn the craft and upon touchdown my foot proceeded to get trapped under the seat nearly busting my ankle. The only thing that saved me (on the day), was the fact that I thought the flight was too short and I had in mind to fly on and so adding lift took the pressure off what would have been a catastrophic outcome. Flying on with a foot that was severely protesting made me realise what a fool I had been. My next attempt (my full stop landing) saw me by a road with my crew (Jack Reddall) in attendance with the car so prior to my approach I set up the balloon at 45 degrees to my track and then descended. Fortunately, I got it right and landed fine but swearing to Jack about my state of pain.

So, what did I learn from the experience?

First thing I learned was never approach directly with turning vents. Secondly check the rip line isn't trapped around the burner block prior your approach. Thirdly orientate the balloon prior any descent. Finally, to try and achieve a two-step approach when over trees, i.e. descend to tree top height then continue into the chosen spot early in the length of the field in a secondary motion. Subsequently I removed the turning vents and returned my bottom end to swivel configuration giving me more scope to adjust my orientation and realising that I wanted to retain as much lift capacity as possible just in case the need to fly on

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occurred.

Nothing against turning vented balloons but in small ones they aren't for me. So that was my egg on face fourth outing in a hopper and the score was two for two, two good ones, two near disasters. Live and learn they say, hopefully not in my manner for you guys .

Now anyone else want to recall their first flights ? please send in to the usual email address in word format . Thanks.

3, New Balloons.

News from Cameron Balloons, there is another hopper that has just been delivered. Registered on the 27th November , G-CNCX is a Cameron O-31 (c/n 12808) and is registered to David Head. This joins their stock hopper option which is still available for purchase. This brings the number produced in 2025 up to three.

4, Second Hand Balloons



ZK-TNY Cameron O-31 is for sale

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Confirmed at this year's OMM, Roger Kunnert has sold his immaculate Cameron V42 Hopper Kit. Whilst an incredibly well-kept piece of kit, the price was a bargain. As of now, the details of the new owner are not known. In Austria Bernhard Fellingner has been trying to sell LBL35A OE-RCB. It appears that he is getting a conclusion on the sale which seemed very fair, set at 3000 Euro's for something with 113 hours on it. I'm sad to see Darryn Redshaw has decided to put his Cameron O-31 up for sale, ZK-TNY is based in New Zealand and Darryn wants \$15,500 nz for the complete kit. Having only 39 hours total time in 51 flights on the craft, this 2021 built balloon is hardly run in,

5, Manufacturer / Event News.

The Icicle Refrozen Balloon Meet 2026.

Details are emerging of the content that will appear at this year's Icicle refrozen Balloon Meet. There is a category they are including involving hoppers, but so far nothing exciting has been announced. The items listed so far are all older balloons (sorry historic), including Stuart Skinners G-BEUY Cameron N-31. Now two possible decent craft could (and this is conjecture) be present. G-CNCX has just been registered locally and G-CMYG might show if the weather looks decent, as Gary Madelin is inclined to fly at the event. We will have to wait and see what fronts up on the days.

6, Gallery

This section is your editors' chance to find interesting photographs either from his own collection or from stuff submitted for the newsletter, or alternatively something that featured on the Cloudhoppers Facebook page during the month.

A number of you celebrated Montgolfier day this month with exceptional weather in the UK allowing a number of people to fly their hoppers. Pete Dalby was one who posted a lovely Montgolfier video as he set off in his Cameron O-31 from Ashton Court. On the continent others also took to the skies on this historic milestone. Amongst those partaking were two Dutch hoppers. Peter Van Harten was flying his Cameron O-26 PH-EEN alongside fellow exponent PH-LFO.



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Peter Van Harten in PH-EEN with fellow hopper PH-LFO both Camerons O-26's

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Tony Jay recently was flying his 90-hour old Cameron O-31.

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And Finally

Just another plug about **buymeacoffee.com/Cloudhoppers**. Your support will go a long way to supporting ambitions I have for the site and the Newsletter. If in the past I have assisted you with either a valuation or with finding your new envelope, please remember the value I added to your quest to find your forever gem. Any contribution will be gratefully received and trust me, everything received will go back into the site, so please be generous within limits (no more than £12 for a year), or potentially a pound a copy. So, few of you have contributed so far and yet loads of you state how much you enjoy the read.

Here we are at the end of November 2025 with the number of people subscribing still increasing in recent weeks, we find subscription to the Facebook page reaching over 4601 and still growing monthly. This is a great achievement with sustained growth as we navigate our 21st year of publicity for Cloudhoppers across the worldwide community. All are welcome but, **I would emphasize that content is strictly on hoppers and Duo-chariots and not "general ballooning" and those pesky adverts for constant Tee-Shirts are banned and anyone who "veer's away" from the few rules we have, will be banned and their account will be deleted .**

Please send all submissions for future editions to Steve.roake33@gmail.com

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