



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

Hello People and Happy New Year

Welcome to the January edition of the award winning Cloudhopper's Newsletter which now celebrates 15 years of existence.

Fresh from over indulgence at Christmas we are back and armed with news and information from the world of ultralight flying.

With it being January, it has to be the Icicle Refrozen Balloon meet and for once the weather whilst fairly grey was in fact intensely flyable for a change. All that happened at the event will be discussed and dissected on its merits.

It is also the time of year when some traipse to the Alps and all those lovely picture-perfect photos are taken.

On January 6th 2004 the Cloudboppers entity started with a simple yahoo groups message service, so we today celebrate 15 continuous years of the group, website and newsletter and one wonders where it could all be in another 15 years' time.

It is also the time of year when you start planning your flying season and where you might go. For me its time to freshen things up a bit and change the status quo. Some of these ideas will be obvious and will be discussed and some will be announced as and when they happen.

- The 2019 Icicle Refrozen Balloon Meet
- Ongoing repairs to my hopper
- Wish I'd been there
- BBC Hopper story
- New Balloons
- Second hand balloons update
- Interesting photos.
- Bonnano XP Freedom

Please send to me your items for inclusion in future editions of the newsletter to the email address below.

Steve Roake- Editor: Steve.roake33@gmail.com

Contents

Ed Speak -

15years young.

Essential Extra's

Stay or go?

The Features

Section -

Icicle refrozen 2019.

Wish I had been there.

. Kim Wooge Magee

Homebuilding.

Interesting Photos

G-BUJS

New Balloons

None

Second Hand Balloons

G-BVZX Cam H-34

Gallery Pages

Kaiserwinkl

Hopping.

VH-IXU

Manufacturer News/ Events

Bonnano XP

Freedom.

Cheltenham

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

1, Ed Speak- Cloudboppers is 15!

Funny how time flies when you're having fun. That for me is what this is all about, if it wasn't I simply wouldn't spend the time to write this stuff. Fifteen years seems to have flown by (forgive the pun), and we are still growing both in membership numbers and in the things that we are trying to achieve.

Start of another year and all that comes with it. If there are things that you feel we could achieve together in 2019 with hoppers, I'd like to hear it because fresh initiatives keep everyone enthused. For sure, I have ambitions and grand ideas but it takes a lot of will power and determination to get past the post. Take the world record flight for example. Some of you will think you just turned up and flew in Metz but from the initial idea to fruition on that particular project it took around 20 months. For some ideas we need to look quite a way ahead so feel free to run ideas past me. With this in mind, if anyone has contacts who work at Cardington Airship hangers, please get in touch directly. This is my number one ambition for hoppers – an indoor hopper meet, not only unique for your logbook but guaranteed to happy if permissions were granted.

I went to the Icicle Meet as I always do, but with one overriding reason this time. I had to pick up the hopper after some repairs at Cameron Balloons. Now usually I get no urges to fly because my inner sensibility tells me that if I were to fly where would I go to dry the thing out after should it get wet. However, with the number of hoppers present at this year's icicle by the end of the event it was nagging me that if I had taken gas with me I could have enjoyed the opportunity. Anyway, I'm far too sensible to listen to my inner self but do feel I should use the hopper more frequently over the winter season.

Adding to the frustrations are those lovely alpine photos that start trickling in via Facebook during the first two months of the year. The idea of hopping at Filzmoos, or Mauterndorf, Tannheim or Chateau D'oex appeals immensely and the idea of a dedicated winter hopper meet also floats my boat big time – it's just finding a venue that would be perfect for all. Again, if you know the place – I want to hear.

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

2, Essential Extras – Time to give up this section?

I do sometimes wonder if this section is a relic from the past that needs to be retired and put out to grass. Then very occasionally there is something that comes up that makes me think, what a great idea, surely others need to hear about it and that's why it persists. However, I will go with the flow, over to you guys and girls, tell me the outcome. Should it stay or should it go?

3, The Features Section. –

Icicle Refrozen Meet 2019

The annual pilgrimage to Newbury in January took place over the first weekend of the year. The Icicle Refrozen Meet is into its fourth year and for once the weather gods were smiling on them. Not exactly sunny , more grey and drab but the important parts were right, Light winds and a decent enough cloudbase to be flyable.

Travelling to the venue at Donnington Grove Hotel the air was cold enough but no frost and a static high centred over the UK meant light winds and pretty much flyable conditions guaranteed so long as the two tenths cloudbase was high enough. Saturday morning saw most of the usual suspects out on parade with the exception of one vital ingredient. The Bacon Butty van man was absent, demoralising a large group of hungry spectators who had to seek sustenance elsewhere.

Preliminaries out of the way JC gave us the met forecast and it was go to fly. Some 57 craft would take to the skies in a weather situation that generally improved as the morning progressed – so no need to rush.

I wasn't scheduled to fly as my inner conscience told me should I get the freshly repaired hopper wet , where would I go to dry it out in good time? Answer was nowhere , so I didn't take a tank with me thus ruling out a decision change. Probably a wise move, but by the end of the weekend I was asking myself if it was the right choice. Regular hopper exponents were to be seen such as Andy Booth and Mike Woodcock .

The general direction from the launch site was over Newbury

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

Race course , past Greenham Common airbase, (both non landing areas), and onwards towards Kingsclere and Basingstoke. Local Hopper exponent Ron Griffin was out in G-CKAI his homebuilt craft and Martyn Turner also tethered G-DNGR Colt 31A with his modified seat unit. Later on in the day Richard Penny took to the skies in G-CKJT Um 42 that he had been lent for the weekend by Josh Taylor. The other three hoppers out for an airing were G-MOUZ, G-CINN and G-BSON which got tethered.

The evening event was a dinner with the guest speaker bring Peter Kubicek but as I didn't attend it I cant comment on the presentation. I ventured out with John Hilditch and Niall Rowan into Newbury where we were sociable over an all you could eat Chinese restaurant offering.

Due to my current work practises an early night was required and so I returned to my abode around tenpm ready for the following morning and a fresh day. Low and behold miracles had worked over night , another Bacon Butty van had arrived and deep joy was had by all who partook of his fine offerings (lets hope he gets next years gig). The foremat was the same as Saturday but with better organised Car parking (thanks Jack Reddall). The briefest of briefings also gave simular direction as on the Saturday with very similar wind speeds but definatively flyable. I had a small task to perform for Greg Winker purchasing some Aerostats from Peter Bish (who actually flew), and again some hoppers emerged with practically all the previous days participants joined by G-CKBJ and G-CIET. Richard Penny definitely had got the bug and was keen to reuse the orange UM H-42 whilst he had the chance.

So pretty much that was the Icicle 2019 , nothing of any note in the trade show with us in mind which is kind of predictable , except Camerons were touting their three horse power fan which is a great step forward on the older version . Trouble with all fans is they are so much money when new. Always good to catch up with everyone so shortly after xmas but the season doesn't really explode until spring kicks in unless you are fortunate to be heading off to the Alpine meets where most people fly longer distances in balloons typically over a 120 size. Still lets see what hopper

photos emerge from peoples trips. Many thanks to all who organised the Icicle Refrozen meet 2019, in particular the "Bacon Butty man".

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

Ongoing Repairs to my Hopper

As some of you will know I fly a completely Cameron Kit with a super lightweight O-31 and a folding Millenium bottom end (believed inspired for Glenn Everett). However two recent things have happened to the kit which I picked up at the Icicle Balloon Meet having been repaired and im happy to share with you all.

At the Last Longleat Balloon Festival we flew Saturday morning towards the North East over a hill called Cley Hill. This proved to have tremendous curl over which showed no signs approaching the feature on the map. Approaching the feature there was no deviation around the hill and as I rose above it there was no indication of the magnitude of the force that would push me down on the lee side. The resultant forces made me impact fairly hard simply because I couldn't arrest the push and so hit the deck fairly hard not knowing the impact broke the wood in my seat unit into two pieces.

Having said that, having dealt with what I was given I was just delighted to then perfect a better landing and walk away unscathed from the experience. It was only at the OMM two weeks later that I discovered I had burnt two A panels and so they have been replaced.

However the main reason it had gone back to Cameron Balloons was because with the hinge mechanism, there is a pin you locate to make the thing stiff whilst you pull your tank straps tight which is supposed to support the weight of the top end. Mine had excessive play in it even with the pin in place and the weight of the burner exasperated the issue. This had occurred from the very first time I put the thing together and there was indications on the receptacle side of the hinge of wear in the fitting. Coupled to this I had bent three pins in a year which seemed excessive to me. Credit to Craig Moore who took responsibility for the issue and worked tirelessly to find an adequate solution which they think they have. I guess only time will tell if it is sorted, but I will be keen to fly it again very soon and find out . The nature of hoppers is a kin to

Experimental so there will always be the odd malady to get over, for me, the important thing is the approach the manufacturer takes to sorting out your problems and I cannot fault Camerons for their efforts. As always, any further developments , you will all hear .

As witnessed at the Icicle, its not uncommon to find little quirky

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

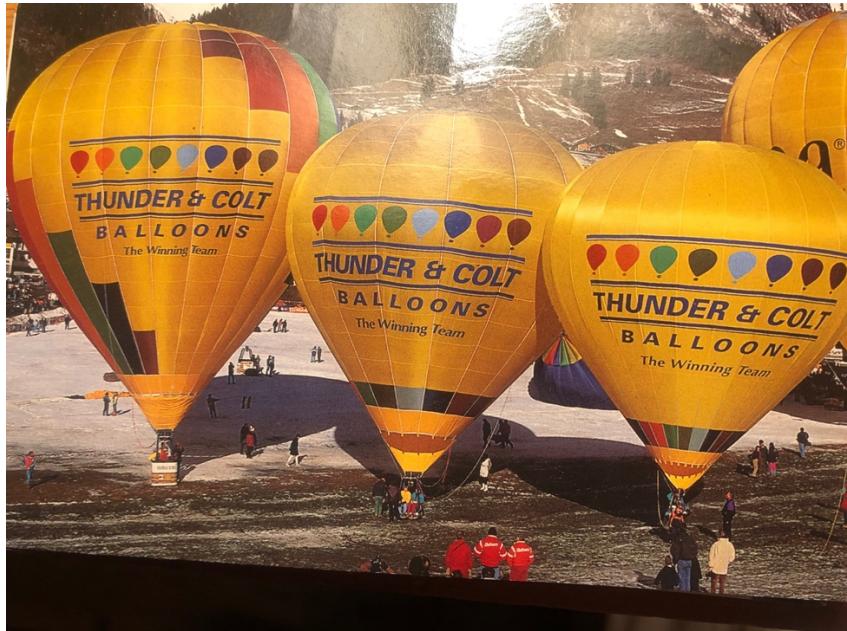
"15 years Young"

January 2019

adjustments to suit owners, Martyn Turner told me that he had experienced some instances where his fuel tank had dislodged itself from the tang at the bottom of the seat during flight which can be disconcerting I guess. His solution was to get Camerons to put another set of high level D rings on his frame for another tank strap to stop the movement.

New Column – Wish I had been there!

In this section I am happy to write about events where you wished in hindsight you had been present at the event and since it's the right season for this one I thought Id start it off with my very own . This dates back to 1994 and Chateau D'oex Balloon festival and actually revolves around photos which sum up me one of the finest photographs (in my opinion) ever taken at an event. It also ties into the my favourite demo colour schemes and that is Thunder and Colt (the yellow and rainbow colours). Now some delving has been had to understand the occasion and I must say thanks to all those who helped uncover the story that goes with the photos in particular Crispin Williams who was there at the time.



Thunder and Colt Demo fleet at Chateau D'oex 94.

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

Talking to Graham Bann and Graham Duke, I established the event took place over 27-30th January 1994 and these three craft formed the perfect picture(IMO). What we have is on the right hand side T&C 21A G-BVGV , next to it G-BUSU T&C 42A flown by Emma Williams with Crispins secretary Judith Keeling onboard, and finally G-BUOU which I believe was a T&C 90A.

According to Crispin , " we did things in style back in those days . Of course the market was much bigger , and I suspect so was the marketing budgets ". He also thinks the other two pilots were probably Chris Kirby and Ray Bailey



G-BUSU and G-BVGV at play at Chateau D'oex in 1994.

So there you have it, I've always had an affinity towards Buttercup yellow balloons, and with the rainbow schemes I just love them. That was my submission to this column , if you have one that you

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

wished you had been to send it in to me preferably with a photo or two and lets remind people what it was like , such as in this case 25 years ago.

The BBC Cloudhopper Story

Recently a link was posted to the Facebook site about a challenge for a BBC presenter to learn to fly a balloon on the anniversary of their 60th. Nothing wrong with that I hear you say, indeed so. The presenter was a young woman by the name of Lindsay Russell who would be potentially fast tracked through her license in Mondovi Italy and then would try a challenge in a Cloudhopper . Suffice to say the clip listed below looks a nice piece of editorial content focussing on Lindsay achieving her license. However this wasn't the original remit and in fact she wasn't great as you will see in the footage , not even wearing gloves when burning.

I wish I could tell you what the original goal for the challenge was, but its more than my life is worth to divulge and ask yourself is it the norm for a brand new pilot to then fly a hopper? Clearly not . Suffice to say a spin on events has taken place and this is the now edited highlights.

https://youtu.be/JX_PCqLoHEM

whether or not she ever flies again will have to be seen, I expect not. The real story will eventually emerge in time.

Kim Wooge Magee sets new records

On the 17th January at Fargo North Dakota, Kim Wooge Magee went for a hopper flight in N100LB her Lindstrand 14A. During her flight she has unofficially broken three world records (subject to FAI ratification). The flight lasted two hours and 5mins and during the flight kim flew to an altitude of over 10,000 feet and so she is claiming the Ax2 category records for womens altitude and distance and also the womens Ax3 record for distance. For anyone interested, the craft is a 1995 Mylar fabric 14,000 cubic feet hopper which was married to a standard LBL mark 2 bottom end with a V40 tank. The history on the craft is that it was built for an American pilot with a view to setting records but remained unused and so went into storage. Kim acquired the craft around a year ago and it has very little use on it. You will also see below in the photos that it still carries its old UK registration G-BWBB.

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019



N100LB preparing to fly .Photo with thanks Kim Wooge Magee

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019



One Quirk of the flight is that the Tripsi Mylar fabric is impervious and so during the flight steam builds up inside and so vents out of the mouth of the balloon as you can see above. The previous record for distance was 30miles , Kim exceeded 60miles during her flight.
Congratulations to Kim and the team.

4,Homebuilding Section-

Another month of not much onnthe home building front in our size range. Andy Marshall it appears has finished his hopper envelope and once a suitable bottom end is sourced he will be flying G-CKVE the 31 homebuilt. On a separate front, Tim wilkinson it appears has plans to produce a bottom end similar to the one in the photo below, having seen this one in action at the Brian Bolland Meet in Vermont back in May.

Im not too sure how effective the propulsion element is , but it

Clearly works so we await the version Tim creates. I like the idea of the sledge but for me it requires a more robust burner

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

system. Id like to see it in the flesh with a dedicated airship envelope over it. As and when I have more information on this project ill bring it to your attention.



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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

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Fact 2
The Cameron Hopper Base Unit is a fun way to fly while having reliability, ease-of-use and comfort at its core.

Fact 3
Hoppers operate at a fraction of the running cost of a conventional hot air balloon.

Fact 4
Superb for those who want a striking visual impact for marketing campaigns and promotions.

Fact 5
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Small but significant benefits make a world of difference to your flying experience.

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A padded head-rest, enhanced cushioning, adjustable seat, and an adjustable light-weight, foot-rest ensures pilot comfort.

Stainless-steel hinges, on all Base Units, make transportation and storage even more convenient; the whole back-frame system folds and packs neatly, even if you prefer to leave the harness attached.

The larger "rear-view" mirrors with an independent rapid-cut-off fuel system allow the Pilot to control the Hopper effectively and safely.

There is even a pocket, a perfect space for a coat or tasty snacks!

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

5 Interesting Photos

With an overall theme of the Alps this month, I have two more interesting photos which are snow biased.



Sent to me by Bill Teasdale and taken in 1994. G-BUJS is a Colt 17A, whose current status is unknown?

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

6, New Allocations This Month / Changes of Ownership

Nothing has come to light in January on either front.

7, Second Hand Balloons

Plenty of good stock still out there on the used market currently. John Tyrrell confirmed at The Icicle Refrozen Meet that G-FFT the LBL31A is still for sale And that he is prepared to sell at around the £2000 mark which represents a price drop. Chris Monk has placed a complete kit up for sale. The Cameron H-34 G-BVZX is a rare example of the type with only 45 hours total time in the logbook. Coupled to a chair which features a motorcycle style twist grip and the ability to accept two tanks, this appears a good entry system for £5250. This 1995 year-built craft has spent much of its time in Italy and France.



G-BVZX Cameron H-34

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

8. Manufacturer / Event News/ Industry News

John Tyrrell and Wendy Rousell were actively promoting a new event at the Icicle Refrozen Meet based at Cheltenham racecourse. The event over this stunning part of the world is open to any balloon but would of course suit hoppers. It is taking place from June 22nd to the 23rd. Further details can be had directly via email at balloontyrell@btinternet.com.

However I am told its free entry and includes free gas , free camping , farmers gifts , breakfast rolls and evening burger and chips. You can't get much more than that for free can you?

New Paulo Bonnano hopper and bottom end Solo and Duo options are now available called the XP Freedom. Available from March 2019, these lovely pieces of kit will be built to order and if you are interested in either solo or duo options email me for prices steve.roake33@gmail.com.

Just to say Cludhoppers Mugs , bungs for your frames and stickers are still available to order .for more information and prices email me directly.



Cludhoppers Stickers are available in two formats, internal (i.e. for the rear window of your car) or external (i.e. for placement on your trailer or any external surface)Price for these is £1-50 each plus P&P or free one of each with each Mug order (£9-00 each plus P&P).

Limited stocks of both items are available currently so don't wait too long before placing your orders.

Newsletter supported by





Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

Advertisement

Cameron "Stock Hoppers" for sale exclusively to Cludhoppers.org. These two beauties are both available with the regular discount using the code CAM01SJR and come in either 26,000 or 31,000 sizes to suit all. Prices start from £7335 excluding VAT and delivery for the O-26.

To purchase the current offerings please contact Cameron Balloons directly on +44(0)117 9637216, quoting the code "CAM01SJR" and ask to speak to either Craig or Simon about the Cameron O Types that are on the Cludhoppers page.



Cameron Super Lightweight O types are currently the best-selling lightweight hopper envelopes available and whilst most purchases require three-month lead times minimum, these are a lot easier to purchase and are available immediately by request.

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

7. Gallery Pages –

Your Editor's choice of new and interesting hoppers and duo's active in the world of ballooning right now.

With winter in mind and my apparent current fixation on Alpine Meets, I was delighted to receive the following photo from Cameron Balloons Ltd of their demo Hopper G-CJ01 at an event id never heard of previously. Taken at the Kaiserwinkl Balloon festival which is south of Munich in the Tyrol region of Austria not far from the famous Kitzbuhel skiing area between Kitzbuhel and Lake Chemisee. According to Sandy Mitchell who visited the event one day, its full of German and Austrian balloonists.



Lovely photo with thanks to Cameron Balloons Ltd.

Newsletter supported by





Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019



VH-IXU Kavanagh C-65

Following my question regarding the status of T&C 42 ex G-BUSU , I was contacted by Kevin Cooper from Australia . The envelope was re-registered VH-JLB but was replaced by the Kavanagh C-65 seen above. However , as clearly can be seen , the bottom end is still active and in good condition. Thanks for the photo and update Kevin.



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019



Another Chateau D'oex Classic Shot, HB-QTC with thanks
To Mattias Butler for the photograph.

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 111

"15 years Young"

January 2019

Facebook membership continues to rise with the current level of 1249 (correct to 28th January), current and still rising. Let's hope this trend continues as the popularity of hopping embraces even more people. All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your Editor. Please forward them to steve.roake33@gmail.com

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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Issue Number 111

January 2019

Newsletter supported by

