



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 76

April 2015

Greetings and welcome to your Cludhoppers Newsletter.

April arrives and the whole ballooning world awakes, and what a shock it was. Who would have thought that we would witness the closure of Lindstrand Hot Air Balloons Ltd.

April also saw the first event of the season with the Easter All Fools event held at Great Missenden which was successful with some decent flying taking place.

There is also a good splattering of new balloons in our sector of the market with first inflations of no less than three of the new Cameron O-31's on the same day.



Photo with thanks to Phil Dunnington

As well as the new Cameron's (seen above), Crystal Stout has taken delivery of the Dreamwell Balloon in the USA. This system utilises the very nice Paulo Bonnano Duo bottom end. Not only does this balloon system give the opportunity for disabled people to go fly,

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it also is classified as a special shape due to the appendages on the envelope .Then blow me down with a feather , just as the depression about Lindstrand balloons closure settles in, news appears on the grapevine that Per Lindstrand himself has decided it's time he produced more hot air balloons and the world suddenly appears a better place again. I guess time will tell – watch this space.

1, Ed-Speak – Counting the days

By the time you all read this stuff we will have entered May. Yes the Newsletter is a touch late, but it something is worth having then its okay to wait. And on the subject of waiting, I can't wait for the 14th, which just happens to be the day I jet off to the Brian Boland Experimental meet in Vermont. I got nicely warmed up by attending the All fools Easter meet at Great Missenden and flew my first flight of the year, but also witnessed some hopper activity whilst there. Also happening in May is the 2nd Annual Little and Large Meet which for 2015 resides at Pidley in Cambridgeshire. A good turnout is guaranteed for this event and hopefully we will get some decent flying in over the slots available.

Steve Roake

2, Essential Extra's / Tech Talk- Instrument pods. - Nothing this month!

3, The Features Section

Lindstrand Balloons Ltd – A Personal Appreciation by Steve Roake

Back in 1978 Per Lindstrand, a Swedish pilot and aeronautical engineer started a hot air balloon company in Oswestry Shropshire with his name. Utilising his experiences gained at Thunder and Colt Balloons, Per knew exactly what he wanted in the design and manufacture of these bespoke aircraft. Generally received as technically leading edge and with sophisticated production techniques and cutting edge testing facilities, The finish and fit of these craft were on par with anything on the marketplace and whilst comparably the Lindstrand craft were perceived as "Volvo's ", (i.e. trusty, dependable, solid if a little



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heavy), the company went from strength to strength building popular products which challenged the established brands of the time.



Beautiful detailing coupled with lovely branding and an attention to detail drew me to the product, coupled with first rate hospitality at practically every event staged across the UK, and as an engineer, the terrific finish on the modular Double Jetstream burners sold me on the idea that I had to have one. Stylish bags also ensured that Lindstrand Kit stayed in good condition when you weren't using it and as the saying goes , "If the little things are taken care of – then you don't have to worry about the larger ones", which proved to be very true. Even the finish on a lowly carabineer got the Lindstrand treatment. Lindstrand also made beautiful cases for all the popular flying kit at the time and the quality remains unsurpassed.

Pioneering and setting records was part of the process for Per, achieving a string of notable firsts eventually drawing the attention of Richard Branson the Virgin Empire



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entrepreneur. Richard had big plans with Per being both the technical expert and the number one pilot and seeing the limitations in the expertise Per used a chunk of the Virgin money to invest in state of the art Instrom testing equipment and after a mishap whilst testing around the world attempt balloon found himself contractually obliged to replace the damaged craft with another one at his expense. Needing collateral to keep the company funded, Per sold a stake in the company to venture capitalist Rory McCarthy.

In the Mid 90's this two thirds stake in Lindstrands was sold to Don Cameron and as an individual, Don allowed Lindstrands to operate separately to his own company Cameron Balloons Ltd. This meant separate management, continuation of independent design and development, and so long as it turned a profit, Don remained Loyal to the brand.

Amongst the many products, One of the finest Cloudhopper designs typified the Lindstrand approach to ballooning .This Mark two models really was the standard by which other types were judged and this is reflected in their ongoing popularity in the used marketplace. Hoppers by Lindstrand are generally sold before they hit the market and the bottom ends are rocking horse pooh rare in used condition. Those lucky owners who have them tend to hang on to them and I count myself lucky enough to be one of them. They set the standard with the luggage that you carry them around in.

They say the demise is due to the strength of the euro verses the pound and the lack of global need for the product. Personally I think the writing was on the wall when Kelvin Oakley wasn't replaced by a decent sales representative.

So the fateful day arrived, seventeen people lost their jobs and the end of a beautiful company happened. Like the warmth of the colour of the factory, no longer would we all feel the warmth of this remarkable company where the people, like the product brought a smile to your face. The marketplace has lost a serious choice and ballooning is a worse place for the Lindstrand demise.



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Photo the day after –by Mike Webb

Suddenly as a post script to the above , on the 29th April Per Lindstrand who had moved on to create Lindstrand Technologies Limited a company that builds air and water structures, Tethered flyers and Airships announces that with the talent pool that is in Oswestry, he is going to re enter the Hot Air Balloon business. So with baited breathe, we await further developments.

Bart Geeraerts First Hop in his new Balloon Story

For many years it was a dream to have a cloud-hopper. Yet it has taken a long time before this dream became reality. In 2004 it seemed the dream would come true. Philippe De Cock then had a Cameron H-20 registered in England as G-BRCJ. Tired of my nagging, my parents decided to buy this balloon. Because of the Cameron Balloons publicity on it, and having no English commercial licence, we decided to register the balloon in Belgium. The new



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registration OO-BXV was placed on the balloon and the necessary paper work was done. A few days before the test we got the message that the balloon could not be registered in Belgium because there was no type-certificate for it. After some discussions with the authorities they stuck to their decision that registration in Belgium was impossible.



So off with my dream. Later we bought our Funny Bunny and used the registration OO-BXV for it. The hopper went to Cameron Balloons in Bristol. Sometime later Cameron still created a type certificate for the H-20, but that was too late for us unfortunately.

Now we are many years later. Meanwhile I made two flights with a duo airchair and one with a Lindstrand demo hopper. Because we stopped our commercial activities there is more time to go back for fun ballooning. And there's more fun with a hopper. Last year at balloons4sale I saw a beautiful hopper for sale in Serbia. After several emails I decided to buy it, but every time I was about to leave to go fetch it something came in between. Some said this was a sign I would better not buy this balloon



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My family didn't like the idea me driving all the way to Serbia either and came up with the proposal to increase the budget so that we could buy a new hopper. We contacted our Cameron dealer Koen Audenaert and soon we had a quotation with a few options including a Z-42 stock balloon and a new O-31 with the new super lightweight fabric.



Soon the choice was made for the new one and obviously this had to be in our house colours yellow / black. The visual followed quickly and the order was put. For the Nomex we asked to use a yellow colour corresponding as closely as possible to the standard yellow and Cameron still had the special yellow Nomex



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which was created for our previous balloon.

During the construction of the balloon we received regular updates from England so we could follow the stages of the production. Early April we got the message that the balloon was ready and they were waiting for good weather to do test inflation. Several days later, on April 9, the day had come. Along with 2 other hoppers test inflation was done in Bristol.



The first pictures were sent to us and we were happy with the result. Because we were planning to participate with our new balloon in the meeting in Waregem we tried everything to get the balloon in Belgium as quickly as possible. On April 19 we went to Koen Audenaert to pick up the balloon. Unfortunately, there were too much thermals that day so we couldn't do a hot inflation. We chose to take a big 60l bottle so we could make long flights, but with all that



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equipment in our car there was no room left for additional crew. We decided to buy a small trailer, and it took just one look at a 2nd hand site to find what we were looking for. After 2 days of refurbishing it was painted in our house colour also.



On Wednesday we received the paperwork from England and on Thursday the weather was beautiful so we could go for our maiden voyage. We chose a launchfield in our own village where the balloon meeting is held every 2 years. The prediction was a 4kts wind so ideal for a first flight. The hopper unit was set up, the balloon pulled out and then we noticed how light the fabric really is, it almost looks like paper. The crown rope is as thin as a shoelace. Nice to see that there is a small rope from the parachute to the crown ring so you can easily pull the parachute out to fix it without going into the balloon. (Ed note- I suggested that to Cameron Balloons). The new small fan did a good job and the balloon was quickly filled so we could start with the hot inflation. After three short bursts of the burner the balloon



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already stood up. Quickly into the harness and then the big moment was there. Some additional burns, quick release open, and off I was. It took some time to get used to the equipment, so initially I stayed at low altitude. There was also less wind than predicted so I lingered for 20 minutes over the woods and the golf course. It is surprising how light everything is and how easily the balloon responds to the burner. During the second part of the flight I climbed to 700ft and of course I also went low over the fields so that our crew could make the necessary pictures. After a flight of 1 hour and 1 minute I was picked out of the air by the crew on a lawn. So trying to land sideways will be for another time. It was a very successful flight and I cannot wait to go back in the air. The other pilots of our balloon team, Kevin Van Dessel and Guy Geeraerts, will probably soon make their maiden voyage with the hopper. I wonder if they dare... ☺

Bart Geeraerts

The All Fools Easter Balloon Meet- by Steve Roake

The All Fools Balloon Meet is for me where I had that Eureka moment back in the early 80's. I witnessed Chris Dunkley in a hopper in a packed launch field having a great laugh. Now times have changed, people come and people go and yet The Black Horse balloon club All Fools Balloon Meet is one of those things that has stood the test of time and endures. Now over the years they have had as many as over 100 balloons here and lately in previous years we even ran a hopper event called the Solo meet in conjunction with the main event, but whilst ballooning has consolidated the Easter weekend brought about 13 teams to the venue to indulge in some flying and whilst the initial weather forecast wasn't great, they snuck in four flyable slots and it all went very well.

In my case, I had agreed to P1 Geoff Preece in his old venerable Cameron V56 for the time I could spare and it was great to get back into the air again after the winter layoff. However what this newsletter is all about and what we are interested in is the hopper content that turned out. Suffice to say the content was small but very nicely presented none the less, and on Sunday evening we saw two very nice craft grace the sunlit skies. It seemed to be a bit of a who's who of hopper exponents present with notables such as Ted Moore



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, Lennie and Helen Vaughan, Chris Dunkley, Geoff Lescott and many others whose names escape me present in the launch field. Just like a bigger meet Peter Gray was present all weekend to ensure correct data logging took place and event statistics were corroborated.



Geoff Lescott's beautiful Sky 26-16 was the star of the show for me. Still shimmering and looking like the day it was bought, the gold in Particular has stood the test of time and with only 30 odd hours in the logbook is wearing well. With a large crowd in the field partly due to other events happening in the village, there was an air



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of times gone by and it was my privilege to be able to be part of the proceedings. I think next year I may take the hopper lol.

Dream Catcher Balloon Project

After a lot of planning, fund raising and heartache, Crystal Stout recently inflated the brand new Dream Catcher special shaped balloon. Designed from the start to utilise the Paulo Bonnano Duo bottom end adapted for disabled people the balloon features a Butterfly on a standard envelope.



As seen at the recent Balloon confederation of America in Reno, the well sorted program is aimed at special needs, war warriors and other people with disabilities who might not get to experience lighter than air flight.

This beautiful balloon is a great addition and we wish all that are involved in the project the very best success with their ventures.



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4. Favourite Photos – More submissions

This section lives or dies by your support. If you have a favourite shot, whack it on Facebook or send it to me directly for inclusion in a future newsletter.



Not content with completing his first hop with the new balloon, Bart Geeraerts completed a second flight in it on the 2nd May reporting a 16km flight over 1 hour 12 mins using only 31 litres of gas.

Also whilst talking first flights, this very nice submission came onto Facebook from Dave Mc Cutcheon of Airborne Adventures of their recently acquired Hope Technology Ltd sponsored Cameron Z-31 taking off from Broughton Hall Estate in Yorkshire.



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The photo showing G-HTEC was christened Reflective Glory by David.

5. Gallery Pages –

This section is the Editor's choice of new jpegs, visuals and older balloons of interest or alterations. If you know of a new or interesting hopper or Duo that hasn't featured in this section, and then feel free to forward details of it with a suitable photograph to me using my normal email address.

I understand that due to medical reasons Roman Mohr is giving up ballooning. Now to those of you who don't know Roman, he is the owner of one of the prettiest Lindstrand 31A's ever built. G-CDXF was built in 2006 and features a unique scheme and whilst its fate isn't known (it may have already been sold on), it represents a great future investment with only under 40 hours in the logbook.



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G-CDXF Lindstrand 31A on its initial inflation in 2006.



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6. Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

News in brief

Little (and Large) Solo Meet Update

Lots of interest has been shown in the Little (and Large) Solo Meet 2015, being held over Friday 29th, Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st May 2015 at Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre, Fen Road, Pidley, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 3DF.

19 entries have been received with a total of 23 balloons registered to fly at our event:

Adrian Brown with Cameron H-34 G-BZBT

Alan Turner with Cameron Z-31 G-CINN

Andrew Davidson with Ultramagic H-42 G-CIGA

Andy Booth with Cameron O-31 G-CIJJ

Dan Wilson with LBL 31A G-LELE

Dave Such with Ultramagic H-42 G-OOCH

Gareth Gray with Cameron N-31 G-BGHS

Gary Davies with Thunder AX7-65Z G-FUND / Cameron V-77 G-BSIJ

Gary Madelin with LBL 25A G-CDAD

Ian Chadwick with Colt 56A G-BVCN / Jacobs V35 G-CEWF / Cameron N-42 G-BMWU

Jeff Roberts with Thunder AX7-65 Bolt G-BHHH

John Hilditch with LBL 25A G-CBZJ

John Tyrrell with LBL 31A G-FFFT

Kevin Tanner with LBL 25A G-HOPR

Mike Woodcock with Thunder AX4-31Z G-LORY

Sarah and Nick Bettin with Cameron C-60 G-BXJZ

Steve Roake with Ultramagic H-31B G-UHOP

Tim Ward with Cameron V-20 G-BOYO / Airtour B-31 G-BKVV

Tony Brown with Cameron H-34 G-EROS



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With an entry limit of 25 balloons this year, we still have six available places and there is still time to enter for anyone to enter with their balloon(s) but has not yet done so. **The closing date for ALL entries is 14th May 2015.**

Everyone is welcome but to fly your balloon – Little (or Large) – IT MUST BE FLOWN SOLO and your envelope having a MAXIMUM VOLUME 77,000 cu ft. We will be offering some great prizes for competitions, plus awarding the Derry Moore trophy

We encourage all those who love solo ballooning – whether that is in a Cloudhopper, a Sky Chariot or in a basket – to attend, placing the emphasis on fun flying and socialising.

Entry to the meet includes free camping and caravan pitches with shower and toilet facilities are available within the Lakeside Lodge complex. For those who prefer more luxurious sleeping arrangements, a total of 64 en-suite bedrooms located throughout the Lakeside Lodge complex with 30 twin rooms, 28 rooms with a double and single bed, 4 double rooms and 2 singles (subject to availability at time of booking). To make a reservation for accommodation please call Lakeside Lodge on 01487 740540 or email reception@lakeside-lodge.co.uk

For further information about Little (and Large) Solo Meet 2015 or to receive an entry pack, please contact Dave Such by emailing him at littleandlargemeet@btinternet.com

The 2015 One Man Meet

Having taken over the reins from Phil Dunnington, Wendy Roussell and John Tyrrell have scoured the country to find us a venue to host the 2015 One Man Meet. There are a lot of variables needed to be fulfilled before you can commit to agreeing to hold an event, including in this case going for afternoon Tea with the landowner , one Sir Richard Fitzherbert. Not only was Sir Richard pro our event, he even suggested where in his grounds the event should be held.

So please make notes in your Diary for the weekend **of OCTOBER 2nd-4th** , at the venue **Tissington Hall near Ashbourne in Derbyshire.**



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Wendy adds the following:

The 2015 One Man Meet will be held at Tissington Hall, nr Ashbourne, Derbyshire on the weekend 2nd-4th October. There are plenty of local B&B's, hotels and self catering cottages in the area. Entry fee and gas to be finalised. If you are interested in attending please email Wendy Rousell at onemanmeet@btinternet.com. More information and the entry form will be available shortly.

My advice is let them know you are keen to enter asap and check out the venue on the web for a feel for the place , and yeah , see you there, at what looks like being an International event (more when I know for sure).

And Finally.

With the new flying season kicking off, now is a very good time to send me your stories, photos and anecdotes from the world of cloudbrowsing. So with baited breath I await your submissions. The audience figures for Facebook participation continue to rise with over 620 members now subscribing, but feel free to introduce more fans, owners or prospective owners to our group.

Steve Roake

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.