

Issue Number 36

November 2009

Dear Members,

Before I get into details of this month's content, I just wanted to recognise the significance of the 36<sup>th</sup> issue of our magazine. This represents three years of writing by all our contributors and if you'd have said to me when we started, that in three years time the magazine would be still received by a growing membership I would have laughed. Reality is that Cloudhopping is getting more and more popular across the globe and is now seen as a slice of ballooning that pilots want to be involved in. Greater numbers participate at the organised events these days. Sunday morning, for example, at this year's OMM saw 24 hopppers airborne at the same time.



*Mass take off at the OMM -Sunday morning by Sandy Mitchell*

## **Contents**

In this 36th edition I have for your reading the following choice subjects;

- 1, **Ed Speak**- OMM views and an apology!
- 2, **Essential Extra's** -none this month.
- 3, **The Features Section**-featuring the following submissions:
  - Various views on the OMM by Steve Roake, Darwin Peltan, John Tyrrell and Martin Freeston.
  - My three favourites by Ernie Hartt
  - Steve Griffin has a survey on Powerlines
4. **Updates for the Newsletter/Website/Forum talk**
  - 10,000ft in a hopper-Jonathan Trappe's update
5. **Homebuilt Section** -
6. **Gallery Pages**- Another mixed choice of hoppers, selected by your editor
- 7, **Manufacturer News / Events / Updates**
- 8, **For Sale /Wanted Section**
  - G-BSDV Colt 31A Envelope is up for grabs.
  - Mark 2 T&C Sky chariot bottom end for sale.
- 9, **Last and not least.**

**1, Ed Speak by Steve Roake** - Personal views on the OMM and an Apology!

Prior to the One Man Meet this year, I was quite critical of the choice of venue with high tariff rates at the hotel the event was centred around, but it was a great venue and the proof of the success of the event is in the turnout of attendees and in this respect I apologise to Phil Dunnington as it proved a great choice. My one reservation is that, the venue is the focal point of the

event and as such, it was a shame that we collectively couldn't get into one hotel and really socialise but good efforts to integrate happened on Friday night. We were spoilt in the ability to mingle at Hus Bos and previously particularly at LLansfarrant Court Hotel in Monmouthshire, but I would suggest for future OMM venues , an affordable venue with which "all" can stay and eat together with the ability to talk ballooning is quite an important feature of the event and should be attempted. Even with some non attendees, we managed 25 hoppers on the original list of attendees and over the weekend some more pilots sans balloons appeared and even shared some flying. Phil Dunnington has suggested that he is open to suggestions for a venue for 2010 but it must afford some shelter and be in a venue perhaps in a region of the UK not recently visited. Your input can help achieve another successful yearly event so please give it some thought. I was going to include a Barolo report in this month's newsletter but nothing was received so as no-one who attended can be bothered to talk about it, neither can I.

Steve Roake

## **2, Essential Extra's-**

## **3, The Features Section**

This is the time of year when we get a couple of hopper gatherings .Whilst I will always share my views on the event I attend , this year more than ever I've tried to gather alternative views from those who attended to bolster and further the appreciation of those who attended.

## **The Annual One Man Meet-Steve Roake**

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With loads of enthusiasm I headed to the OMM this year, with my newer hopper, looking forward to further exploring the experiences of flying a new envelope as opposed to one that is nearly 20 years young. I love my old Colt, but whenever you have something new, each time you fly it you realise how lucky you are to have the a fresh balloon at your disposal that flies forever using so little fuel.

### Friday

The OMM was scheduled to start at the Glencott Hotel in Wookey near Wells Somerset with an afternoon briefing (for those intending to fly).



*The Venue- Glencott Hotel Wookey near Wells-jpeg Steve Roake*

My Journey to the venue was (by some peoples experiences) reasonable, with the arrival after just over 100miles coinciding with Phil Dunnington's briefing, whereas, my crew Les Hancock endured hours of delays as the M5 motorway was closed for hours following a bad crash .(He eventually arrived from York after 7 hours arriving after 11pm). Amongst folks present at the initial meeting was Roland Escher who was over from Dakar, Senegal for work and managed to combine both events. Of those assembled, only "Team Chadwick" twitched at the thought of flying, but this quickly passed once the weather was delivered and the realisation that flying would be plentiful on other slots. With flying cancelled for the afternoon, the focus centred on the evening meal and social gathering at the Wookey Hole Inn. With folks arriving all the time, having a centralised eating place seemed a good idea, and it was nice to see some faces from local hopper exponents who whilst not part of the event for the weekend , had taken time out to come and be sociable. Amongst those appearing were Clive Bailey and Peter Dalby, and the local Rides operator Nigel Appleton who graciously had allowed us use of his launch fields for the weekend and refuelling facilities. Approximately 35 folks sat down to dinner and a social beer on that night.

## **Saturday**

Returning to the Venue for the Saturday Morning Briefing, the wind appeared slightly strong. The direction was a good track at 040 with a surface wind of only 4knots, but a gradient of 18 seemed a bit quick for most. Some however are made of stronger stuff, and the first out of the launch field was Steve Lacey in G-LELE his Lindstrand 31A, shortly followed by Steve Burden in LBL35A G-HOPA. Most pilots who were still earthbound, were undecided whether or not the wind were as strong as predicted,

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as they watched the four pilots leave the launch site .The other two who set forth were Ian Chadwick (who said he had 22knots on the radio), and Mike Evans who had G-BPUB a Cameron Viva 31 which hadn't seen the light of day for about ten years until C of A'd for the event. Whilst the cricket pitch launch site adjacent to the hotel was high on the Mendips, both Steve Lacey and Steve Burden had stand up landings in about 3 knots in the lower valley of Glastonbury after fast flights but with a small inversion upon landing.



*Steve Burden flies towards Glastonbury- jpeg by Charlotte Fraser*

Some intrepid flyers went towards an alternate launch site closer to Glastonbury but upon seeing the two Steve's whizzing by decided to stay on Terra Firma. This in itself wasn't a major problem for most pilots as the forecast suggested better weather for the afternoon lift.

By the afternoon briefing, substantially more pilots had arrived and with Phil's words of wisdom we all set about preparing to fly. The Met forecast showed a surface wind of 5-6knots but decreasing, with Gradient winds of 020/030 at 8-10knots. Whether or not the site location played a part, the wind was variable as the crews set up ready to fly and it appeared that Steve Burden was caught out by a wicked curl over gust on takeoff forcing him down ripping out just before the trees at the far end of the launch field, fortunately without damage to the envelope. As others launched, being close to Steve's position I had the luxury of seeing his incident so left the field "very positively" at about 4-20pm. When airborne the track was off the Mendip hills towards the plain and on to Glastonbury. However, the flight was brisk and even down on the plain the wind was 8knots with not much reduction nearer the surface, even practising approaches. Approaching the two Tors at Glastonbury, the wind actually increased; passing overhead the right hand one I spotted a park and potential landing site. Ripping out overhead, thinking I'd get reduced wind in the leeward side I overcompensated and when looking up was shocked to see a nicely spinakering envelope as I sank at 600ft a min. Knowing I had to reduce my rate of descent I put two short puffs in and the shape resumed to its regular appearance. This was followed by a longer burn and the reassuring jolt as the descent stopped. Sensing I was near to the edge of the retrieve maps and having missed my target "park" I landed shortly afterwards, at a spirited 9 knots (so very early into the chosen field and a short drag). (Having thought I'd handled the situation adequately, it was annoying to find two panels had small burn holes on inflating on Sunday morning, on an envelope with only 9hours total time). It happens I know, but as they were my first ever holes I was mortified. The upside of landing in the Glastonbury area with our accommodation close by (and not needing fuel), was it meant we

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could go out to dinner earlier than expected. Tid Dudman had been tapped up for local knowledge of a good eating house, and armed with the information or where they had eaten at lunch time, my team of Roland, Les and Myself headed out to The Strode Arms in Cranmore for a most enjoyable experience. Whilst the journey was around 30 minutes to the venue, the food was well worth it. Funny thing was that the sky was clear of cloud cover ...morning frost coming!

### **Sunday Morning**

Morning breaks and its practically flat calm, and frosty! How many times have we hankered just flitting around instead of charging off .I heard some dissenting voices about how boring the flight was but I have wanted more of these style of mass fly-ins around the launch sites, and rarely had chance to do so. The forecast stated a different direction of 210 to 300 degrees with a gradient of 5-6knots, but to be fair I didn't see more than 3knots which was coming off the Mendips and layers where there was nothing at all.





*Joined for the weekend -Chris Dobson departs on Sunday morning with Darwin Peltan in the "Demo" Hopper-jpeg by Roland Ersher.*

The unluckiest pilot of all was Tim Dudman who whilst inflating had the barrel of his blast valve fell out grounding him. The other lucky 24 of us all flew quite closely over the cascading hills towards Westbury sub Mendip. With glorious sunshine, the sight of all those craft together was awesome and I couldn't wait to join them. Once clear of the launch site, there was a draw wind coming off the hills that seemed the only way to get anywhere fast, if three knots is fast. Staying low and contour flying seemed the best and most rewarding flying technique. Flying towards Easton and having done about a mile I found a great field to land in with friendly folks who were very keen for me to stay. Waiting for the retrieve to arrive, it dawned on me that I was actually on the edge of an S/A and so decided whilst in foreign lands to fly on and be assured of not adding to local land relation problems.



*Sunday and a Busy Frosty launchfield-jpeg Charlotte Fraser*

The folks on the field suggested that the farmer was actually fine however prudence is always utmost when in somebody else's patch. Thanking the people for their help I flew on a mere three further fields where I joined other teams who had permission from a very friendly farmer and was clear of the s/a.

What remained was a quick check out from our accommodation and a lunchtime rendezvous at the Queen Vic pub in Priddy for the awards of the prize giving.

### **Lunchtime**

Getting to the site of the pub was interesting. It was an exciting drive up some narrow lanes onto the top of the Mendips where the pub of choice was situated. Grabbing a quick beer we all crowded into the small back room for the results from Phil. First award was to the most intrepid pilot (i.e. the first to launch into the air on day 1), Steve Lacey.

The second award, including the wellington boots went to the grounds man at the launch site for accommodating all our needs graciously.

Third award and arguably the most prestigious is the Wooden Tit. This was presented to Mike Evans for bringing to the event a hopper fresh from ten year storage, rolled out given a check over and certified and subsequently flown. He also received the cloudhoppers.org award for not having the smelliest balloon on the launch field (which was considered), but for arriving at a hopper event without a fan!

Finally your editor as awarded the Pietro Contigiacomo award for services to promoting cloudhopping. Very big thanks to Phil and Allie Dunnington for their efforts at this year's event.

### **One Man Meet - Wookey Hole Wells by Darwin Peltan**

Chris, Nick and I headed down from Oxford late on Friday evening finally making it to our B&B in Wells at 10.30PM. On arriving we found that the supposedly large and accommodating driveway was in fact pretty small and guarded by a very tight entrance only a couple of inches wider than the trailer.

Having cleaned the wall with the trailer and placated the landlady We settled in for a short sleep before briefing.

The next morning we noticed the strong breeze as we left the B&B and made our way to the Glencott Hotel, site of briefings and cricket pitch which doubled as the launch field. The hotel was a small manor house which had been filled with an eclectic collection of antiques from around the world especially South East Asia. It was still very windy after briefing and only 5 balloons flew, with Ian Chadwick's report of having most of the wind knocked out of his balloon by severe wind shear at 1000' put off those still thinking about it on the field. Conditions for Saturday evening were much better but the first 45 mins after

briefing were still quite gusty. Chris inflated and took off early and had a fantastic 1.5 hr flight. I waited a little while until the surface breeze settled down and then took off for my first ever hopper flight.

What an amazing way to fly - now I know what everyone has been raving about! After flying for about half an hour I found a nice grass field next to a road with the retrieve not far away which was too good to turn down. We packed away, met the very friendly landowner and went to find Chris some way further on.

On Sunday morning the conditions were excellent and around 24 balloons flew. There was a reasonable amount of steerage but most balloons tracked along the valley. The locals seemed to be enjoying the spectacle of all these strange people dangling from their balloons, especially the children. After an hour I landed and was greeted by another friendly landowner who was very intrigued by the hopper. After picking up Chris we stopped at the prize giving before heading back to Oxfordshire. Big thanks To Phil and Ali Dunnington for organising a fantastic meet.

Darwin Peltan

### **OMM 09- John Tyrrell**

As we all know 2009 has been a tough year for business and that's no difference for me in selling position sensors and force transducers. So with the summer ballooning of flying 90's and 105's as a commercial aerial pilot over my thoughts turned to the One Man Meet at Wookey Hole. If only it was that simple?

I had found a great B&B just 3 miles from the launch site, ordered my nearly centred map (if it was truly centred it included some of the Bristol Channel and Bristol Airport approach – neither are good news for hopper flying).

So now back to the proper job that pays the bills, on the Sunday before OMM I left home at 5am and drove to Frankfurt, Germany for four days training, I arrived home at 10pm on Wednesday evening. Early Thursday morning I was back in the car again off to Manchester, Chester and Telford on sales visits, but I still had OMM to look forward to at the weekend.

Friday was spent getting the kit ready, gassing two tanks, loading the car and

then the journey down to Wookey - which took forever! We had intended to be on the launch field for 4pm on Friday but arrived at the B&B at 6.30pm – so failed badly. We were soon off to the nominated pub at Wookey Hole, it was at this point I started to switch off from the previous few days and year; we soon got chatting, eating and drinking.

Saturday morning arrived and we all met up at the briefing, it was still dark, but you could hear the wind in the trees. A few brave souls went for it either from the cricket pitch at Wookey Hole or the reserve site at Glastonbury. I only had two 60L tanks with me and therefore had two possible flights without bothering about refuelling, but what I did know was that the weather was getting better and the next two slots were looking great! So I decided not to fly and beat a quick retreat to the B&B for a hearty breakfast, followed up by some retail therapy for Wendy.

We arrived early on Saturday afternoon as we wanted to catch up some people we had not seen for a few months, this completed the thoughts turned to flying. The wind had dropped but not as much as the forecast had predicted, but it was still good to go.



*John Tyrrell flying the FT Hopper at the OMM- Jpeg by Sandy Mitchell*

Wendy and I have been flying the FT hopper for 5 years now and have developed our own inflation routine and that means being in the air in less



than 15 minutes is normal. I was soon off drifting towards Glastonbury. This was the first time I had flown in the area and I was excited about what I might find? Very soon I was over the Somerset wet lands – nature reserve, peat bogs, a hippy encampment with minibuses, caravans and tents, a farm with a heavy rock band practicing (they were so loud I climbed to turn the noise down) and then field after field of animals. The FT hopper only has 42 hours on it now, so still fly's really well, but after 60 minutes you start looking seriously for a landing site. I had just crossed over the top of Wendy in the retrieve, climbed for some farm buildings and then noticed a grass field with the gate open to the road; it was exactly what I was looking for. Descent set up, navigation kit stowed away and prepare for landing, it was at this point I noticed that the altimeter said 0 feet, looking down I could still see another 10 feet or more to the ground. So my brain started working overtime, how could this be? At this point the safety part of my brain kicked in and it said – “land the hopper first and then work it out stupid, otherwise it's going to hurt!” The landing was perfect and I soon had the envelope in the bag, permission from the land owner and the retrieve in the field. Now back to the altimeter, as I stood in the field it was showing -18 feet below sea level, the GPS and map confirmed the same, so for the first time ever I had landed below sea level.





*John Tyrrell leaves Peter Gooch, Neil Roberts, Tim Dudman and John Hilditch-another Sandy Mitchell photograph.*

Now to Sunday morning, the first frost of the year, the wind had dropped and changed direction (still not as forecast). Yet another relaxed inflation and prepared for takeoff, the wind was so light on the surface it was possible for one of those really slow low level climbs that we all enjoy. It was a great flight taking us slowing down the valley edge, all of the one man balloons seemingly flying together but all individually of course. I had a stand up landing; yes it is possible in a hopper! Kept the balloon up and walked it down two fields and over a gate, before deflating next to another hopper. The farmer was great; he had 14 guests coming over for Sunday lunch so the bottles of wine would come in handy. It is at this point I made my big mistake, I thought I knew where I had landed, reported this to Wendy, after 20 minutes I got a phone call to be told I was not where I had told her and in fact she had been on the drive of the correct farm when I had given her the wrong information – So being the good husband and pilot that I am I apologised and paid for a very expensive dinner later.

We enjoyed a great weekend - the flying, the location and the company of like minded one man balloonists. Was it the OMM I was hoping for after a hard year? – Yes it was and what a great way to end the 2009 flying season. I must also add our thanks to Phil Dunnington for all his hard work in organising the event.

John Tyrrell

**And finally Martin Freeston's version.**

I am crap at wordy stuff, so all I can really say about the OMM was it was bloody brilliant!

Seeing all you folks have such fun on the flights has defiantly made me think that I should have brought a hopper instead of Sandy's new car, but don't tell her that 😊

Anyway as I remember it: We arrived in Wells on Friday night and the met looked good for the weekend. The flight on Saturday morning looked a bit quick to me, but some did get airborne. Saturday evening proved to be flyable as well and I think more flew than in the morning. Sunday was even better, as it was nice and cold. Was just a pity that I did not have a movie camera to capture the balloon as it hit the trees, I can't remember the name of

the pilot (sure you will add it) but I was mightily impressed that he realised he would not make it over the trees and just ripped out and the envelope very gently touched the trees.



*Mike Evans playing in G-BPUB his Viva 31-jpeg Sandy Mitchell.*

From all the fun that I saw going on, I really will have to save up and get myself a hopper. If only I did not have to pay for Sandy's new car....

Sandy and I took far too many pics (as usual) so please do take a look at some of them on [www.modelballoon.co.uk](http://www.modelballoon.co.uk) and let me know if you want to use any for the hopper newsletter. If so I will get Sandy to send you the originals.

Not much I know, but the best I can do I'm afraid  
Martin

### **My Favourite Jpegs and why-**

In this seventh selection of my favourites and why,

Earnie Hartt has agreed to come up with his favourites and Why.



My pictures somewhat echo those of David Tanzer from a couple of issues back, but while the balloons in the pictures are not all my balloons, I am flying the balloon in each picture. All three pictures were taken by my wife, Jenny Wolf. The first picture is of John Ninomiya's second Hopper, Fascination, over Prosser Reservoir, near Truckee, California. The picture was taken in June, 2000, just after I did a splash & dash in the lake. My ripples aren't visible, though, as a couple of fisherman motored by right after I left the water, one shouting "He's walking on water!" It was a wonderful flight, and this picture always rekindles those memories.



The second picture was taken in Gallup, New Mexico, in December 2001. This was the first year I got to fly my own Hopper, The Bomber, at the Red Rocks Balloon Rally, and depicts one of the things that I enjoy most about flying a Hopper - contour flying rock formations. I also like the contrast of the blue balloon against the background of red sandstone. Gallup is one of my favourite places to fly a Cloudhopper, and I can't wait to fly Twist & Shout there!



The third picture is also of The Bomber. This photo was taken in June 2004, shortly after I purchased my Cameron Millennium bottom end, which is clearly visible in the shot. Jenny got a great shot as I flew over. It's one of my overall favourite close-up balloon pictures.

Enjoy. Ernie Hartt

*So now who else would like to make their unique choices of hopper Or duo chariot favourites? Selections to me as ever please, care of [steve.roake@ntlworld.com](mailto:steve.roake@ntlworld.com).*

### **Steve Griffin's Powerline Survey.**

I am a long time member of the cloud-hoppers group and in the process of putting together a **free** Powerline Safety e-book for balloon pilots and crew. I have a couple of surveys running on the web at the moment as part of my information gathering for the handbook which I would like as many people (globally) as possible to complete.

### **Powerline Safety Surveys**



All balloon pilots and crew worldwide are invited to take part in a power line safety survey. This survey is being conducted as part of the information gathering process for a new power line safety e-book for balloon pilots and crew. There are 2 surveys running, a [pilot survey](#) and a [crew survey](#). It does not matter whether or not respondents have been involved in a power line incident as the questions are looking to establish what are the normal behaviours of the ballooning community. For those pilots and crew that have some 'experience' with powerlines there are a few additional questions to ascertain the nature and circumstances surrounding the 'experience'?

The surveys can be completed anonymously if respondents prefer.

The surveys are not about naming or blaming anyone. The survey results will not include any names or individual responses.

The results will be freely available in the e-book and on the web at <https://www.brisbanehotairballooning.com.au/faqs/safety-research.html> , links to the surveys can also be found on this page.

Survey respondents who provide their email address will be notified when the survey results and e-book are published. Email addresses will not be used for any other purpose.

Steve Griffin

### **3. Updates to the website / Newsletter/ Forum Topics**

The Forum has been quite busy of late with one topic of general interest taking the attention. Jonathan Trappe's flight to 10,000 feet certainly got some attention out there in internet land.

What was even more remarkable was the follow up flights went firstly to 11,000 feet, shortly followed by another flight higher to 14,000 feet. This is both deeply impressive and barking mad at the same time. One wonders where it will all end.

### **4. Homebuilt section**

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After the lovely envelope we witnessed last month, this section has reverted to its normal slumber. With nothing new to report therefore this section is empty this month.

## **5, Gallery Pages.**

This section is the Editor's choice of new jpegs, visuals and older balloons of interest or alterations. First shot is of G-BSAK flying with its new owner in France.



*Seen during the first flight with new owner Malcolm Mitchell, G-BSAK is now called "Thin Lizzy" and lives now in France.jpeg thanks to Malcolm Mitchell.*

Following the recent Sky hopper article, Chris Dobson sent an up to date jpeg of the O/S hopper.



*Clearly she looks better than she is.-jpeg Chris Dobson*

## **6, Manufacturer News / Events / Updates**

The next featured event is the Annual Icicle Balloon meet which will take place over the weekend of the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Normally there is a hopper contingency who attend but I guess as with all previous years, this event will be weather dependent. For those wishing to register their interest in attending, further information is available at [www.icicle.org.uk](http://www.icicle.org.uk). This year's event is

the 38<sup>th</sup> running of this annual gathering and will feature the trade show at the Elcot Place Hotel as usual.

### **7, For Sale /Wanted section**

With the news that Gavin Chadwick has successfully sold to Malcolm Mitchell G-BSAK, the offerings on sale currently are down to either my older trusty envelope or David Bakers Chariot Bottom end. However, for someone considering entering the sport, combining the two would be a cost effective way of being up and running on a budget. Anyone with a Xmas bonus eating a hole in their pocket, start contacting us now!

### **G-BSDV Colt 31A for Sale priced to sell £1500 for cash!**

Your editor is selling his Colt 31A Envelope, registered on 19th April 1990, she has done 76 hours 15 mins (last flown 21<sup>st</sup> March 09) and cold inflated in July. Lapsed Cof A with EASA agreement to be renewed. She is now surplus to requirements as I can't fly two at once.



*Ready for a new owner -who will buy G-BSDV Colt 31A?*

Turning vents are currently disconnected but lines will be supplied and can be reused. In the current climate, a price reduction to £1500 for a cash sale seems fair.

The price includes the original Colt bag and stylish Lindstrand 31A replacement bag. Great entry to Hopping Balloon with loads of life left in her, she needs new Loving owner!

Contact Steve Roake on 07721-358758 or 01276-516125 after 7pm weekdays or Email [steve.roake@ntlworld.com](mailto:steve.roake@ntlworld.com)

### **Thunder and Colt SkyChariot Mk 2 Bottom end for sale**

Just a small reminder that the ex BT Chariot bottom end is still for sale by Dave Baker. This represents a very good way to get into hopping when you consider that the price includes the integral fuel tank and therefore is a complete bottom end ready to fly. It dates from 1993 and has done approx 200hours.



The bottom end comes with an integral H-30 Tank which has a Rego fitting. It all looks in great condition-Ed!



The Bottom end utilises the Colt Mark 2 Single burner which has a Liquid Pilot light. Naturally this sale is as a complete kit and Dave isn't going to split it up. The price is a very reasonable £1850 complete. Contact Dave Baker on mobile number 07860-937103 or 01635-866682. Email via [dave.2.baker@bt.com](mailto:dave.2.baker@bt.com)



### **And Finally.**

Membership is currently a healthy 393 members and despite a small dip, numbers are generally still rising. We are getting closer to the magic 400 mark, only seven short now. All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your editor. Please forward them to [steve.roake@ntlworld.com](mailto: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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