



Issue Number 26

June /July/August 2008

Dear hopper fans,

The original idea for June's Newsletter was to have a glowing review of XLTA 4 from Amherst with lots of varied and differing views from the 47 visitors to the event. Despite my best efforts to get things stirred up and start the flood of input from those who graced the event, I am disappointed to have to say without the efforts of Graham Bell, there would not have been a "Summer Edition" Newsletter and the total lack of support in promoting this popular event from those who attended doesn't do Dan and his helpers justice. Sure there were a few people who responded to my prompting by justifying the lack of responses as being just too busy, but as June slipped into July and on to August this argument didn't wash as the response levels remained Zero.

In the intervening time, we have had some activity in the UK at festivals which generally have been washed out. Bristol was the exception to the rule and therefore some hopper activity ensued and with some news on the forthcoming OMM in October it seemed sensible to do another newsletter.

The situation remains that without your reports, projects views and news; we simply won't have a newsletter so please support it, as I actually like telling you all what is occurring in our world.

With page one more or less complete; let's get on with what we have for your reading pleasures.



Typical action at XLTA 4-By Graham Bell.

Contents

In this 26th issue I have for your reading the following selection of subjects:

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1, Ed Speak by Steve Roake - XLTA (What it means to your Editor).

Earlier this year, Graham Bell who frequently travels to America for balloon rallies phoned me to discuss a plan he had to travel to the XLTA Amherst event. Graham, who has been a friend for some time now and over the years, has amassed over 700 hours in various balloons, shares a passion for ultralight flying. He has probably as many hours in hoppers and Duo chariots as anyone out there, but was getting worn down of the traditional Albuquerque style experiences having had his balloon fairly destroyed at the most recent event whilst inflating by a fellow attendee. Graham stated that he felt he needed to discover the enthusiasm again for grass roots ballooning and offered myself an opportunity to travel with him to XLTA to see what the event was all about. From Graham's perspective, he already knows a lot of the members from his American rallies and has the bonus of dedicated kit based in Colorado with a vehicle.



Guaranteed at XLTA -Various types of kit to suit all preferences.

Unfortunately from my stance, 2008 would preclude an American visit due to pressing needs to change both family cars (including my retrieve vehicle), and a decision taken earlier to attend the Warsteiner Balloon festival in Germany in September that would be my main event of the year. Scope for another trip wasn't possible, and so the conversation turned into a nice banter of ribbing by Graham on what I would miss, and from me on what fact finding mission Graham could conduct with a view to attending the XLTA 5 in 2009 jointly. I was totally surprised by Graham's description of events upon his return with obvious joy clearly evident that he had found the lost enthusiasm again and was already planning his itinerary for 2009.

I have always wondered how good the American One Man meet would be, having enjoyed every outing in the UK both at Solo meets and OMM's both as a flyer and crew. For now, all I would say is that I admire the efforts that people take in getting to the events (as described by Graham in his review), and Yes I am going in 2009 and if anyone fancies coming on a trip, get in touch! I only wished that we enjoyed the freedoms that the Americans have to build their own craft and would love to do something similar over here should we ever get the opportunity. Either way, I am counting the months already in anticipation.

2, The Features Section-

XLTA4 - by Graham Bell

In early February I decided to look into the possibility of attending the XLTA rally in Amherst, MA, in the middle of May. After a chat with Dave Tanzer and organizer Dan Nachbar, I was going, with or without my hopper. It fitted my schedule, but the problem was how to get there. As I would be in Colorado beforehand, flights were no problem and I would continue home to England after the rally, but shipping the balloon was.

After a fair bit of checking, I found a company, Forward Air, who would truck the hopper, without a tank, between Denver and Hartford airports, for about \$135 plus fuel surcharge. Drop off on Monday and the balloon would be ready for collection on Thursday morning. This fitted in well as I was due to arrive in Hartford on the Thursday afternoon. I would drop it off again on Monday, (they are not open over the weekend) before flying home to England.

The cost outbound was \$171, but the return was \$232. This I didn't understand as it was basically the same load, but minus some English beer which Mark Schilling and Rick Jones amongst others, graciously helped me drink, to lighten the load back to Denver

Arriving at Hartford on Thursday, I collected my rental car, the hopper and was on my way in less than 90 minutes from getting off the plane, amazing!!! The only down side was that there was a tear in my envelope bag, probably from a corner of a pallet, luckily the envelope itself was undamaged.

I stayed in a hotel in Greenfield, about a 20 minute drive from the centre of action. Most participants stayed on site, camping, in trailers or sleeping in the clubhouse. For a modest fee, Dan provided excellent meals all weekend. This had the advantage of keeping everyone together, making it much easier to mix. Also arranged were several interesting short seminars and video sessions covering a variety of subjects. Altogether I believe 22 balloons checked in, a fairly equal mix of hoppers and experimental balloons. Several of the hoppers were home builds.

Mid morning Friday I drove to down to Amherst, and met Curtis Pack and Bret Shirley who had just arrived from an overnight drive from West Virginia, a 16 hour drive. They had taken 2 hour stints of driving, whilst the other slept. They planned to sleep, one in the trailer and the other in the car over the weekend, and this was typical of the enthusiasm for the event.

They even had sufficient energy to take me on a drive around the area to give me a feel for the flying area, and where not to go. Most of the no-go areas were obvious, solid trees as far as the eye could see. I was very thankful for this tour.

By the time we returned Mark Schilling and David Tanzer had arrived and I was able to introduce myself, as Mark had kindly offered to loan me a tank. I

also met up with Dan Nachbar who had spent the morning working on his new airship which unfortunately was not going to be ready for the event. If I had known I could have gone joined in, although the extra couple of hours sleep was to come in useful.

The forecast for the evening and following day was poor; rain then wind, Sunday looked the best for getting a flight in. By 5pm it was raining so we spent the evening hanger flying, socializing and enjoying the pizza supper.

Where was still light rain first thing Saturday morning, it was due to stop soon after sunrise, but with the surface wind due to pick up to about 10mph when the rain stopped, and a 3000ft wind of 25-30mph, nobody decided to fly.



Graham Bell tries Noah Forden's Sled for Size after the Rain had finished.

As forecast, the rain stopped, but initially there was no wind, so Curtis Pack decided to tether his tank rider. This led about 6 other balloons to tether including Jim Rodrigue with Dork (it has a cut down Balloon Works basket, Noah Forden with his Sled, Alan Lawson with his home built hopper seat and Jon Radowski with his Trash Bin basket.

For those interested there is a video on Auntie Monkey <http://hotairballoon.ning.com/video/video/show?id=699743%3AVideo%3A39913> on how he made it.

Both Curtis and Noah invited me to try their balloons, which I gratefully accepted. Both were very different to anything I had flown before, although used to flying hoppers I think high wind landings in both would take a lot of getting used to.



Graham Bell tries “Tank Riding”

After a short sleep in the afternoon, I returned for the pilot briefing, which with the wind still blowing was followed by a seminar with Rick Jones, Mark Schilling, and Noah Foden amongst others on the merits of English beer, some samples of which I had brought with me. Surprisingly there were none to take home.

There were a couple of moments of excitement during the evening, whilst refuelling the balloons that tethered during the morning; there was a fire from a leaking bulk tank gauge. It was quickly extinguished before the Fire Department arrived. Later on the wind dropped and Mike Lavoie decided to tether Fugly, after a short time the wind suddenly gusted to 15kts which led to a very rapid and interesting deflation.

Sunday morning dawned calm, but with a 3000ft wind forecast at 25-30mph, and it was decided to go to fly from Northampton airport (7B2). When the piballs were launched they indicated a track to a very heavily forested area, then the indecision set in, with the group splitting into two and heading for different launch sites.

I eventually found one of them, but decided not to fly as it was already 1 1/2hrs after sunrise, I was not alone, out ten balloons at our launch site, only 4 flew. I ended up helping David Tanzer launch his hopper, Holy Cow.



David Tanzer –ready to go in Holy Cow!

By this time the wind had picked up a little and was a bit gusty, but nothing too awkward. David had a landing he described as sporting!!! I also noted 4 balloons from the other launch site airborne including Keith Sproul with his Tetrahedron and Jon Radowski in "Nailed". Mark Schilling did the Landowner PR bit by showing the landowners children how to operate a cloudhopper's burner, even if they were too small to sit in the chair and reach the burner!



Maybe they could be the next generation of Hopper pilots.

It was then back to Dan's for breakfast, and on the road ASAP for many people as there were long drives ahead for many. I wasn't flying back to England until Monday so I fitted in a visit to the excellent New England Air Museum (www.neam.org) at Hartford/Springfield airport. It has a small exhibit on ballooning which includes an 1870 gas balloon basket.

Despite not getting to fly I had a great time, and have already marked in the weekend of 30 May-1 June for next year. How about the Editor coming next year as well, to crew for me with my Duo Chariot. I may even let him fly it!!!!!! (Please note Copious Teasing by Mr Bell-Ed!).

Many thanks must go to Dan Nachbar for all his hard work in putting the event together, those who worked in the kitchen, whilst we were having fun, to provide some great food, and everyone who helped make it such a laid back, fun event. See you next year.

Graham Bell.

Many thanks to Dan Nachbar for the badge from XLTA 4 and the jibe that in order to get the fifth one I would have to turn up in the flesh ...I'm working on it-Ed!

A bit of History at Bristol Fiesta- G-HEXE Colt 17A

During the Saturday morning slot at Bristol Balloon Fiesta, Phil Dunningtons wife Allie decided to inflate her Colt 17A cloudhopper. This low- houred envelope is not only rare having completed less than 10 hours total time, but it was being inflated using a mid eighties bottom end that has been stored for years and was still gleaming from lack of use. The history on the bottom end via Phil himself was that the bottom end had been stored and semi forgotten and he had acquired it from Lee Hooper in the as new condition.

The trouble with the older fashion units is that not many folks remember how to assemble the harness section, but with list member Jonathan Dyer on hand with his extensive parachuting experience, he showed the assembled crowd and Allie how to assemble the "Capewell" harness and master the intricate fasteners.



The "As new "Bottom end emerges at Bristol Fiesta, watched by a fascinated Peter Bish-jpeg by Steve Roake



Last minute Adjustments to the "Capewell's" by Jonathan Dyer clearly amuses Allie Dunnington-jpeg Steve Roake.

Devised to help parachutists after the 2nd world war, Capewell's are a tricky item to locate but are easy to release and whilst the investigation into their operating practise ensued, Allie amused the ever increasing crowd with her view that the harness would damage Men's "Undercarriages" should they need to use the harness for any length of time! When the "Master Class" was completed she then inflated the craft and tethered for about 20mins.



G-HEXE Colt 17A seen in all her glory -jpeg Steve Roake.

Kent Couch Sets Cluster Balloon Distance Record.

Kent Couch went for a cluster balloon flight during July with a difference. Having flown ever increasing distances, the 48 year old flew from Bend in Oregon in his garden chair bottom end 230 miles suspended below 150 helium filled Party balloons.

Having previously completed 193 miles in this configuration in 2006, Kent carried a ball bearing Gun and a blowpipe to ensure he didn't rise too high with only Cherry Kool Aid for ballast. Stating that he was inspired by Larry Williams the Lawn Chair balloonist, Kent revealed to the media that if he had the time, money and people, he would repeat the feat every weekend because things just look different from up there! The feat caught the imagination of the world press receiving TV airtime in the UK amongst European countries. As far as we know, this is a distance record, unless of course -You know differently. For more on this story and video see the link below.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7491853.stm>

3, Updates to the website / Newsletter/ Forum Topics

There has been some discussion on the forum to the advertisement section of the website which is massively out of date. For all those who had adverts listed, our sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused for the constant enquiries to your equipment which hasn't been deleted yet. As an interim solution, my webmaster friend Les is going to remove the hyperlink to ensure that it will not be possible for any more people to see this data. We are still working on the website which is slowly evolving into something we can put out as satisfactory but as Les is still

learning the software and is recently ensconced in a new job, it is taking longer than either of us expected. We also want to acknowledge the offers of help towards updating the site which may be taken up in the future.

Please also be aware that for newer members, it may be impossible to post to the forum from September 5th through to the 14th. This is due to your editor taking a break with a holiday to the Warsteiner Balloon Festival in Germany and therefore unable to moderate all the newer messages that currently get filtered to ensure they are appropriate to our subject matter. Should anyone be willing to Co-moderate the list, please make me aware of your potential to assist in this simple and easy task?

4, Homebuilt section

Normally I have no input month on month for this section but for this month we have two new envelopes recently constructed and rather than just put them in the Gallery Section, I felt by highlighting the triumphs of completion it may spur more of you on to contributing in the future.

The first new envelope comes from Premysl Sixta who is a fairly recent member to our forum. Premysl comes from Prague and has already used the list to assist in finding a solution for a problem with the centring of the parachute which Don Piccard assisted with the solution utilising elastic cord to ensure the lines now return to the correct position. This folks is exactly what the forum is all about. Finding the wealth of information that is out there by all you successful builders can contribute greatly to the aspirations of all those who are getting into their first projects. Seen below on one of its initial inflations Premysl's hopper looks a credit to its owner, but how long it took to build

The 36,000 cu ft envelope. Premek (as he likes to be known), comments "The envelope is made from a fabric

manufactured by company HsienChi in Taiwan. The fabric looks excellent and was pretty cheap (3.12 USD per linear yard excluding tax and shipping). It has a silicone sealing and weighs about 45 gr/m². The envelope was sewn by company Jojowing in the Czech Republic - they manufacture paragliders and parachutes. All other works excluding sewing was done by me”.



*This new unregistered Envelope is by Premysl Sixta from Prague
.Bottom end still to be determined- jpeg by Premysl Sixta*

The second new envelope this month I believe belongs to Nigel Flynn. The photos were sent in by Lexie and very nice it looks too in all the morning glory .Perhaps someone could tell us how long it took to make and the envelope size.



Nigel Flynn's hard work clearly paid off- Nice new Balloon

5, Gallery Pages.

This section is the Editor's choice of new and older jpegs. Three hoppers have been out in the last two weeks.



Lind strand's Hopper Demo LBL31A G-CEOU seen flying at Llangollen in Wales -jpeg by Bernie Williams 29th August

Bernie then travelled to Chatsworth house Derbyshire where he caught up with G-CEFB Ultramagic H-31(jpeg B. Williams).



and finally Graham Bell went to the August Bank Holiday balloon meet at the Cheriton Beer festival in Hampshire where he caught up with Gary Madelin in LBL25A G-CDAD.



G-CDAD LBL25A - jpeg by Graham Bell

6, Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

One Man Meet -News

News from Phil Dunnington comes with regard to the 2008 One Man Meet with news on not one but two events in consecutive weekends.

ONE MANS' MEET 2008

**10/11/12 October
Husbands Bosworth Airfield
Leicester
GR 649830**

Following the precedent set in 2007 when Colin Wolstenholme stood in as organiser for the 'UK Chapter', we are going back to this friendly site for 2008.

The 'plus' this year is that the 'Italian Chapter' is meeting the following weekend in Barolo, so you don't have to choose which to attend – YOU CAN DO BOTH! (* contact Barrie Birch: barry@balloonpromotion.com)

The Hus Bos event will be based at the gliding clubhouse on the airfield, which boasts a very flexible bar & restaurant as well as the option of cheap bunkhouse accommodation and camping. There is good B&B and pub accommodation in neighbouring villages.

You will need to turn up with full tanks and marked-up 140/141 maps, EU insurance and an EASA CofA (remember your UK CofA expires automatically on 28 Sep 08). Whilst we hope to be able to provide refuelling this is not yet certain.

The event starts around lunchtime on Friday 10 October, with a briefing at 1530 if it looks flyable. Otherwise meet in the clubhouse bar at 1930 onwards or Saturday a.m. briefing at 0730.
For more details or entry contact Phil Dunnington on: phil@gonewiththewind.uk.com or +44(0) 7785 775624

If you want to camp or reserve the bunkhouse accommodation at Husbands Bosworth Gliding Club you should contact:

Roy Spreckley, manager, or his assistant Sarah, on: 01858 880521

It is likely we will be able to refuel from the Club's bulk tank, though this to a certain extent depends on the gas stock in hand at the time, so I advise you to come with a spare tank or two just in case.

More later,
Phil Dunnington

7, For Sale /Wanted section

Nothing this month.

And Finally

Sorry for the delay in this publication, I have been waiting for an XLTA article from Dan Nachbar but have run out of time as my holiday starts tomorrow, so if it arrives we will include it next month. Membership is currently a healthy 372 members and still rising. All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your editor. Please forward them to steve.roake@ntlworld.com and feedback good, bad or indifferent is always welcome. Views aired by contributors may not be those of the Editor

Safe flying Steve Roake.
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