



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 64

May / June 2013

Hello once again.

Welcome one and all to the 64<sup>th</sup> Cloudhopper Newsletter which I hope you all enjoy. It seems to be increasingly hard to fill the column inches these days and so many thanks to David Westlake and Shane Robinson for supporting this month's edition with their inputs, but (without nagging too much), without your interest and articles I have nothing to write so please try whenever you can to support what is basically your magazine. Hopefully see some of you in Metz.

## **Geoff Davis –RIP**

Before I carry on I have to pass on news of the untimely death of a dear friend of the hopping community Geoff Davis. During the latter days of May, I was fortunate to be invited to a ballooning event in Ireland near Boyle and whilst out there had word that at another event just down the road from us, Geoff had been retrieving for his lovely wife Coral and fell ill and unfortunately succumbed to his illness. Now for anyone who had the fortune to know these lovely people, Geoff and Carol were both passionate fans of cloudhopping and frequently flew their Sky 25 setting some unique records. Geoff was not only a damned fine person, who was good company at the best of times, he was also a great help to everyone around him and Carol's rock. This is a tragic loss to the ballooning community, to the small close knit flying world of Ireland, and to his friends and family.

All I can say is on behalf of everyone here, we pass on our condolences to Carol and her family and it is my privilege to have called him my personal friend.

Steve Roake, June 2013

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## **1, Ed-Speak – Flying at last and a long awaited “Product Test”**

Recently I was fortunate to be invited to a gathering in Ireland hosted By Malcolm White and Pauline Baker (both hopper and duo fans), based in the town of Boyle in County Roscommon. Whilst over there , not only did I get some flying in, had a great time, ate nice food , drank nice beers and met some really nice people, but I got to witness the passion that is still out there for solo and duo flying . Two individuals reinforced my beliefs with their passion for this form of flying in Shane Robinson and Daniel Sjokvisk , with both passionately talking and pursuing the dream of ownership in different ways. Shane had concluded a deal to purchase a Bonnano solo bottom end from Pauline, who had suggested he came to the event to collect it and fly her Cameron Concept 60 with the duo bottom end and take the hopper home as hand luggage, whilst Daniel had expressed a keen interest to buy a solo craft himself which he shortly did after the event buying a Cameron 42 chariot from our own Erik Jan Dooneward. These people's company is infectious, and time spent in their company just enthuses one to the grace and splendor of our form of flying. Many thanks for my invitation to go to this event and to all the participants for making my time in Ireland such fun (you all know who you are).

Following on from that and whilst in conversation with my close friend Alison Hougham, I have finally achieved a six month dream of product testing the Ultramagic Techno 50 system. Alison was an early convert to the Ultramagic system utilising the renowned Paulo Bonnano Power Plus burner system. She became the first customer for the product after the prototype was manufactured, and has always promised access to her kit for a flight test whilst for one reason or another (on my part), never happened. This mobile lightweight concept has been a huge success, to the point where Ultramagic balloons Ltd are now making a bigger brother, the Techno 70 which would coincidently suit a duo system. Mobile lighter weight ballooning seems for a lot of people, to be the way forward with a lot of people downsizing to these balloons. For a fuller understanding, please read my flight test report later in this publication. Many thanks to Alison for the opportunity to fly her lovely balloon.

**Steve Roake**



## 2, Essential Extra's / Tech Talk- cheap Radio's

In the UK recently there was the demise of an established rides operator and the subsequent auction highlighted amongst many things that a certain brand of radio was utilised extensively. Now thanks to some additional information by Mark Stelling, it transpires that these radios of choice are widely available via Ebay at a very reasonable price.



This model is called the FDC FD-160A and come from Hong Kong for approximately £25 plus postage (around £40 all in). They work in the 136-174 fm range and if they are good enough for commercial operators then they must surely be good enough for us. I for one will be buying a pair; hence I feel they are an essential extra.



### **3. The Features Section**

#### **Ultramagic's Techno S- 50 Flight Test – by Steve Roake**

In austere times the word "Downsizing" seems to be associated with reducing and consolidation and generally something of a lesser value. Not everything smaller is worse as I recently found when Alison Hougham invited me to take up a long standing arrangement to test fly her Ultramagic Techno S-50.

Launched in 2010 this remarkable system has experienced tremendous success and proved very popular with pilots who want a two person system that is easy to transport and handle. As Alison said, "we are finding it harder to get commitment from crew for festivals as people manage their funds, so a system that fits neatly into a dedicated 4x4 seems a sound logical answer".

In the Packhouse Balloon team case, the vehicle of choice, following a recommendation turned out to be a Mitsubishi Delicia which shares most of the running gear from a Shogun and can be configured to take four people and the full kit when packed away efficiently. With Alison's kit the basket can remain fully rigged (saving some 15 minutes of assembly on the launch site); just needing the tanks installed and the burner frame mounted on its Nylon poles.

When drawn out of the vehicle, the bottom end is assembled quickly with installation in this case of three Worthington tanks offering 120 litres of fuel nicely held in a natty harness which looks like a locking mechanism from a rucksack. If space is a premium clearly two V30's offer the same fuel range with less space used. In Alison's Kit, the choice of Power plant is the very nicely finished Bonnano designed Power plus burner, but I'm told you can have Ultramagics mark 21 instead. This is fed by independent fuel supplies with twin piezo and colour coding on both the supply hoses and the squeeze action throttles, with approximately 2 hours 30 endurance in this configuration.

Inflation of the artworked envelope is simple with single karabiners linking the steel lines to the burner frame, and a well appointed parachute for the size of envelope.



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The inflation complete, checks finished, a gentle squeeze of the twin action blast valve resulted in positive rate of climb whilst remaining amazingly quiet in operation.

Whilst I weigh 100kilos and Alison considerably less, you felt the balloon float instantly and you could tell that you can really lean on it to get you into tight landing spots. Compared to my Ultramagic H-35 hopper, the mouth of the envelope is positively huge which came as a nice surprise and should lead to little chance to scorch during inflation and subsequent flight. The power available from the burner is comfortably capable for this set up and very frugal with a mere 50 litres per hour or less very achievable depending how sympathetically you fly. During my one hour experience I never felt uneasy moving around the basket and I never at 6ft 2 inches, felt exposed to the elements.

The balloon descends in a predictable manner and arresting the descent from various heights was straight forward and fuss free. The balloon feels like a slightly bigger hopper and so within a short period of time I was at ease with its characteristics. During my flight we experienced winds in the 5-8 knot range and the response to wind direction changes were comfortable as expected.

Approach to landing was hopper like (due to the pilot) in its characteristics with an initial descent, followed by an easy float over the tree line into the chosen field, positive use of the parachute gave a quick response and both Alison and Howard Andrews (who was our crew for the evening and also regularly flies the kit), have confirmed my thoughts that you can really lean on the kit to plant it into your chosen field when necessary comfortably, with effortless arresting of the descent.





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G-CGPH The Packhouse Ultramagic Techno S-50



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Trying to stay objective in my assessment, clearly the appeal of such a system is evident and sales figures back up its popularity. G-CGPH is the first UK registered example and with 30 plus hours in the book, shows no signs of wear and tear with the white of the envelope still prominently clean and tidy. If I had one small observation, it appeared that the gimball on the burner frame is very neutral in one plane with a lovely action but slightly tight in the opposite direction which may be to the owners request or tightened so during the annual check. (I personally would have preferred it slightly looser).

Having spent the best part of six months preparing for the flight, I have to say I can see the appeal and it didn't disappoint in the slightest way. I think within a short period of time, spirited approaches could be quickly mastered and Howard has used the kit in competition winning several tasks.

Proof of the faith in the product has lead Ultramagic to offer a slightly bigger version in the Techno 70 with bigger fold up basket and envelope and similar interest from the buying public.

Whilst not necessary in my flight, packing for a carry out would be easy to achieve and two people can easily lift the basket removing tanks making the lifting easier. In practise, better landing choices should lead to less need to carry the kit but rest assured it wouldn't be a drama.

Should you find yourself in a diminishing crew situation, or with a view of compact travelling without the trailer whilst remaining the ability to fly as usual, a test flight in one of these remarkable craft is a must so you can see what all the fuss is about.

With many thanks to Alison for the loan of the Kit and letting me fly it unhindered, my experience of the Ultramagic S-50 Techno system was both pleasurable and rewarding and certainly opens up options for the future.

Steve Roake



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## **Shane Robinson on buying a hopper / Ireland and flying a Duo**

After a long winter of very little flying, I decided to revisit the idea of owning another Cloudhopper. I'm just tired of missing beautiful flying days because I don't have paying passengers or even willing "freebie" recipients who can't change their plans without two weeks' notice. So, I decided I'll just fly by myself!

In the mid-nineties, I had one of the early Thunder and Colt versions and it never quite lived up to my expectations. Back then, I had visions of being able to land on a rooftop and bound across like a heavy-footed squirrel. But the balance was off too much and it was so back-heavy that for every step I took forward, I'd be pulled backwards three. The plastic seat was fine but the harness was definitely not made for anyone of the male gender. It was downright painful and after even a brief flight, I felt like I'd attempted to play soccer (football, for those of you on the right side of the pond) goalie using only my "my boys" to stop the incoming kicks.

On several occasions over the interim years, I've flown updated versions by both Cameron and Lindstrand. While they were definitely improved designs, there were still minor things that needed to be refined. Plus, they were rarely available on the used market and a bit too pricey when new.

My friend Alan Lawson has built a nice little hopper of his own design and several years ago he and I attended the XLTA Meet in Amherst, Massachusetts. We shared the flying opportunities and each flew a couple of times while the other chided. It seemed to fit Alan fine but for some reason, the front edge of the seat would cause my legs to fall asleep about 45 minutes into a flight. One morning I landed in a large field with the intention of hopping over a barbed wire fence into the adjacent, smaller field next to the road for deflation. As I attempted to put my foot up against a post in my "hop" over, I realized my legs had no intention of cooperating, and I inelegantly ran my legs right into the fence. A word to the wise, just because your legs are "asleep", doesn't mean that doing something so stupid won't hurt!

In September, I learned of a new entry to the solo ballooning market. When I heard that Paolo Bonanno of Mondovi, Italy had





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designed his own version of the Cloudhopper, I instantly paid attention. After years of designing and building burners for the major manufacturers, works of art in their own right,

he had now taken on one man balloons. And even better, he was building both a single and a duo version! I knew anything Bonanno built deserved attention. Even his quick release was a work of art and functioned much better than any other I'd used. In fact, it is now the only style of restraint I really trust.

The Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta brought my first opportunity to inspect a Bonanno Hopper in person and it happened to be the Duo Hopper version. To say I was impressed would be an understatement and I decided I'd have to have a Bonanno. But the main reason I'd gone to Fiesta was to conclude the deal on my purchase of a new special shape balloon, the 3 Wise Monkeys, and my balloon buying fund was tapped out! So the next few months brought only daydreams of hopper flying and every day of perfect weather just further reinforced it was the toy that could make my life complete. Actually, my fiancée, Lisa, makes my life complete. A Bonanno Hopper would just be the icing on the cake! Now, if only I could convince her it would somehow make her life complete, too.

In March, Lisa and I were to travel to Malaysia for the Putrajaya International Balloon Fiesta. About a week before we left, I received a Facebook Messenger text from Pauline Baker in Ireland offering me her Bonanno Hopper at a very fair price. She told me Paolo had special ordered green Cordura fabric especially for her and I replied that as I'm red-headed (or at least, I used to be before so much grey took over) and of Irish descent, that would be appropriate for me, as well. I'd actually seen quite a few photos of it on the Internet and Facebook so I knew exactly what it looked like. I asked her to check on shipping costs while I was in Malaysia and we'd discuss more details when I returned.

When we returned home, Pauline sent me a message with some shipping quotes but also a more intriguing option. She invited us to an event she and Malcolm White were putting on in Boyle, Ireland in late May, offering us lodging and a balloon to fly. She suggested I could bring the hopper home as additional luggage. How could I turn that?



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offer down? I'd already been made aware of the Boyle event by the illustrious editor of this newsletter, Steve Roake, and he'd even offered to buy me a pint of Guinness if I'd attend. Now to convince Lisa we "needed" to go to Ireland.

We arrived in Dublin on Wednesday, May 22, and spent the next couple of days touring the country and staying in a couple of wonderful castles. We really enjoyed ourselves but the goal for me was ballooning in Ireland and fortunately we arrived in Boyle on Friday afternoon to reasonable weather. Besides Pauline, Malcolm, and Steve, we were joined by Paul Dopson and Heaven Crawley from Wales. Daniel Sjökvist, from Sweden, would arrive later that night and fly with us Saturday morning. Our launch site was the beautiful Lough Key forest Park just outside of Boyle. Malcolm and Steve were to fly Joelly, the special shape bee, Paul and Heaven flew Malcolm and Pauline's 120, and Lisa and I got to fly Pauline's baby, her Cameron Concept 60 over their Cameron Duo Airchair.





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Shane and Lisa in G-BVDY –photo by Heaven Crawley

It was the first time Lisa had been around a balloon that didn't have a wicker basket and as we began assembly, she asked quite a few questions, most with the unspoken undertone of "are we crazy?" She's flown with me all over the world and is actually pretty brave so once we were airborne, she quickly became comfortable. I particularly enjoyed the flight because it was the first time we'd ever flown that it was only the two of us. Malcolm and Steve had taken off first and had a short flight followed by, as they later recounted, a very long pack up. Paul and Heaven launched next and we followed on their heels. It was a beautiful flight and as there seemed to be many landing options, we settled in to enjoy the experience. Ireland really is the Emerald Isle and the lush, green countryside was sprinkled with many lakes (or Loughs, as they were known locally-- rhymes with clocks.) We noticed that any field which contained cows always seemed to contain exactly six cows. This was to become a running joke between Heaven, Paul, Lisa, and I the rest of the weekend. Paul and Heaven landed 45 minutes to an hour into the flight and I began to consider my options, as well. Once I began to fly lower and more closely inspect the choices for landing, I realized how many fields had standing water or were very muddy. But we had another hour of daylight and plenty of fuel (we were flying with two 15 gallon Cameron stainless tanks) so I wasn't overly concerned. Plus, after we contacted the chase crew on the radio, they let us know they were far behind and needed some time to get to us. Fine with me! I love to fly and was in no rush to end things. We continued flying, not overly concerned about landing, but I was still taking note of the opportunities. There were many open areas to land but most didn't look too attractive because of very muddy conditions and obvious water. Additionally, I noticed how many power lines there were in the middle of nowhere and the few reasonably dry places were obstructed by them. I decided I'd land when a good place presented itself, regardless of where the crew was, and we'd sort out them finding us later. The trick with landing hopppers and duos is the necessity to land backwards if there's much wind speed and it looked as if we'd have speeds of about 10-12 miles per hour.

I made several approaches but never any serious attempts because all were either too wet or contained wires. I was sitting on the right side and, as we were utilizing turning vents, I found my preferred method was to come in sideways so I still had



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good visibility. If I decided it was a suitable spot, I could



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complete the turn and land backwards. If not, I still could see where I was headed and continue on. As the sun sets lower in the sky and the fuel gauges read closer to zero, it's amazing how your perspective changes and more spots begin to look acceptable. We flew low over one last lake (or Lough, at this point I really couldn't care less what it was called);

made our side-on approach, and I decided this was the best option. We greased in a nice 12 mile an hour landing and completed a 2 hour flight that was a great start to our weekend.

Saturday brought us a beautiful morning and winds had reversed so our path would be to the north and across Lough Key. During the informal briefing at the park, Pauline offered me the 31,000 cubic foot balloon with the Smart logo to fly solo over the Bonanno Hopper but I chose to fly the Duo Airchair again with Lisa. I was enjoying the "date balloon" setup and there would be many solo flights once the Bonanno returned to the U.S. with us. Malcolm and Steve again flew Joelly, the little bee, and Paul and Heaven were in the 120. Daniel Sjökvist had arrived from Sweden and he and his friend, Linnea, flew the special shape bunch of bananas.

We launched first, followed by Joelly, the 120, and the bananas, and flew right up the middle of Lough Key. Daniel later told us as he and Linnea flew over the tall observation tower on the edge of the lake, Linnea comment "Oh, we must come back and climb that later!" Daniel's puzzled reply was "Why, for the view?"

It was a spectacular flight and I'd loved to have gone two hours again but sensed the winds becoming more erratic and once we'd cleared the Lough, I began looking for a place to land. Malcolm and Steve were close on our heels while Paul and Daniel had both climbed into a faster, more north-westerly wind. There wasn't a great distance before we would head out over the next Lough, Lough Arrow, and I decided on a nicely mowed, but fairly tight area behind a large house. Malcolm and Steve landed right behind us in the adjacent field. Access to our field was good and we

were out fairly fast but we soon realized we'd have a bit more work in getting in to Joelly. They were several fields back in from the road and it looked like it might be a carry out situation. Then Malcolm showed us how prepared he was and unloaded the proper equipment for the job, a small platform on tracks, fitted with a Honda engine.

We put the basket on the platform and the envelope and





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everything else into the basket and Malcolm just powered his way out to the truck. Nifty!

The remainder of the weekend brought fairly lousy weather and that was it for flying but we made the most of the situation. Saturday afternoon, despite rain, we cold-inflated an old Thunder and Colt 77 for the large crowd and allowed them to go inside. They really enjoyed that and we probably had in excess of 300 kids enter, in groups of about 20 or so. Malcolm then stood it up for ten or fifteen minutes. I so badly wanted to make a quick hop across the lake and I was hoping someone would challenge me to it but wisely, no one did. We missed what was probably a decent flight opportunity Sunday morning due to an ominous forecast and Sunday afternoon the winds were definitely not kind to us. We did get some baskets out and visit with the crowd, while Daniel and Steve donned costumes, a monkey and Sonic the Hedgehog, respectively. I'm not exactly sure why they did this but I'm reasonably certain your dear editor often dresses up in strange attire! (Not true –Ed!)

It was a great trip and the two flights were spectacular-- a two hour distance trek Friday night and a scenic 45 minute flight Saturday morning across Lough Key. I'd love to have flown another time or even two but everyone felt given the unpredictable weather Ireland offers, we were pretty lucky to get the two flights in that we did. Lisa enjoyed her first flights without the confines of a basket and I loved the chance to fly twice with just the two of us in such a beautiful country.

We returned to the airport in Dublin with the Bonanno hopper in two padded cases. The frame folds nicely into a case measuring about 39 1/2 X 18 X 8 inches and weighing just less than 47 pounds (about 21.2 kg.) The burner fits into a case measuring about 18 X 8 X 8 inches and weighing about 36 pounds (16.4 kg.) The excess baggage charges (we already had one piece of luggage each) were \$60US each or \$120US total. This will definitely not be the last overseas trip this wonderful little Bonanno Hopper makes!

Shane Robinson



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## **4, My interesting first Hops-** by nobody

Again an empty section, despite no end of requests ....so it's left empty!

So that's the format, what happened on your first ever hop or interesting flight and how it felt compared to your expectations? Submissions to me please at [steve.roake@ntlworld.com](mailto:steve.roake@ntlworld.com)

## **Three Favourite Jpegs and why –Currently Empty!**

Contributions for future editions of my three favourites and why to [steve.roake@ntlworld.com](mailto:steve.roake@ntlworld.com) please. Do it today folks and share those memories.

## **4. Updates to the Website / Newsletter/ Topics of Interest**

### **Facebook Roundup May / June**

The excellent Easy Balloons site was the source of another cautionary tale, shared to the page by Jane Dunkley.

This time it was written by Barry Conway, "All alone and nowhere to go (Tribulations of Cloudhopper flying)" illustrates yet again when the unexpected happens. This is true of all flying, especially ballooning.....things can be going great, but you can quickly find yourself up the creek without a paddle.

With this tale is a reminder about the vulnerabilities of being a solo pilot - no protection, a hard landing; and head injury miles from help. Naturally, this has sparked input about the necessity of at least *carrying* a helmet to be prepared for such eventualities. Read it here.

[www.easyballoons.co.uk/2013/04/29/all-alone-and-nowhere-to-go-tribulations-of-cloudhopper-flying/](http://www.easyballoons.co.uk/2013/04/29/all-alone-and-nowhere-to-go-tribulations-of-cloudhopper-flying/)



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Another regular contributor is Rick Kauffman in the U.S. He is no stranger to wearing a helmet on his frequent hopper flights over varied and spectacular terrain. The bonus for us is that mounted on his helmet he has a GoPro HD video camera and he has posted a series of excellent YouTube videos, here are the links.

<http://youtu.be/XQvgE06cxG0>

<http://youtu.be/Zz2g6SNhXtY>

<http://youtu.be/ndxOpaDZ844>

Incidentally, the Taos flight (the bottom link) illustrates how hanging motionless one minute (in a canyon) can rapidly turn into a tense drag landing situation and once again, debate and idea exchange commenced regarding finding the ripline, rotation issues, and flying wire extensions to prevent lines fouling.



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Further to this, your editor Steve Roake started a discussion regarding gimbaled hopper burners and their merits, and the importance of swivels. Another nice video was posted by Jim Werth, shot from the hopper of Sam Canders (homebuilt envelope) and with views of Noah Forden's homebuilt hopper as well. Looks idyllic....

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wheXSrJkpk>

Nice shots were added by David Tanzer and Zach Weindel showing his unusual homebuilt.







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On the subject of unconventional craft, an alternative solo machine was spotted by Toby Brown....only in America!



Back in the UK.....but really in Mexico City, hopper pioneer Robin Batchelor recounted the daring tale of the Green Ice balloon sequence. This great clip was found showing the results (in high quality for once, video found by luck on YouTube).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-B1cPX7xMI>







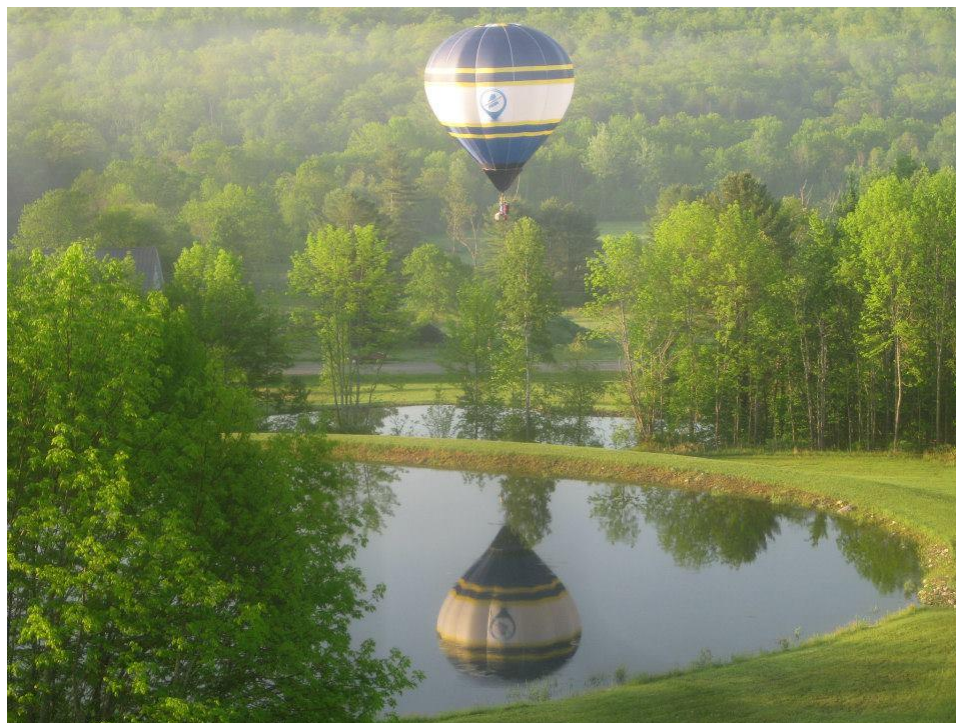
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Robin even dug out a picture of the bespoke stainless bottom ends and a (now very retro looking) Colt envelope holdall. Exciting to see even over 30 years on....these minimal beauties would not look out of place rolling out of any balloon factory to this day. Just think how much they would cost to custom make.

Sam Canders, Noah Forden, Milt Smith and Jim Rogers reported on hopper activity in Maine, this included an amusing picture of Sam following a miscalculated "Splash 'n Dash" in his Bert Padelt built hopper. To quote Sam's comment – "More splash than dash I got it right the first time and I should have called it quits! My chase were watching me on the shore and LAUGHED!!!"



Sam on target.....



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....Mission accomplished.

Just letting you all know that the numbers subscribing to the cloudhoppers pages is still increasing. As of the end of June the number of members is running at 273.

Shane Robinson posted some nice pictures from his visit to Balloons Over Boyle, Ireland, which took place at the end of May. These included Malcolm White's and Pauline Baker's C60 Duo Chariot and Joelly (which is often flown with a duo chariot bottom end)...





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Noah Forden shared more pictures and information on his homebuilt system. All built to be small and lightweight to travel in his homebuilt 2 place RV-7A aircraft.....





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Back in Europe, Andy Davey posted some nice pictures of Christian Muth flying their V42 "Purplish" and later included a nice video too (with an original choice of music and proving that he is still good at crewing)  
[www.vimeo.com/68115727](http://www.vimeo.com/68115727)







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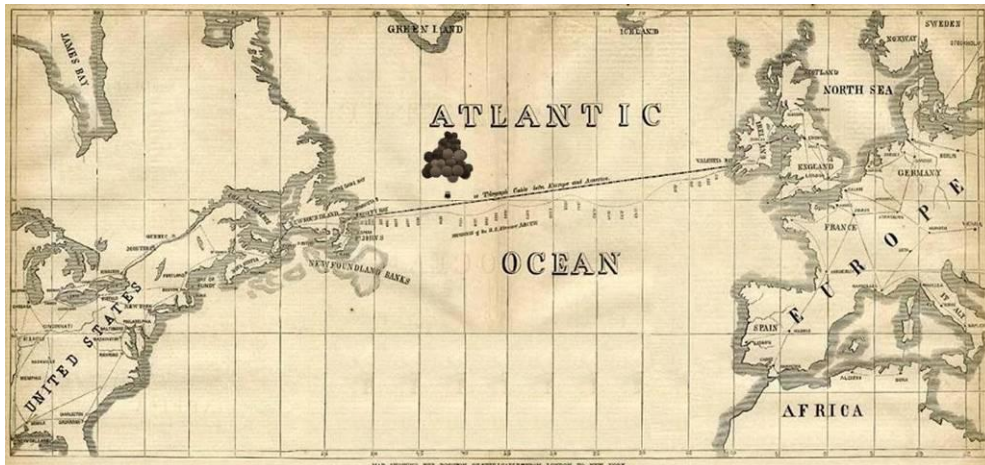
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....and David Bristol with his 24.5k



And talking of Transatlantic.....away from the Cloudhopper's page our American friend Jonathan R. Trappe is preparing for another Cluster adventure. Setting out from Maine, the window to do it is almost open.....he's using a boat under his cluster which hopefully won't need to actually be one.



Once again many thanks to David for that sizable input-Ed.





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## 5. Homebuilt section-



Robert Ggreat posted recently this unusual 31k home built balloon using the very popular trash can bottom end.



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## **Homebuilt 31 – end in sight.....?- By David Westlake**

Will this homebuilt hopper project of mine ever be finished? I believe I first hatched the plan in 2009. Unfortunately, I've not been able to dedicate as much time to this as I would like – work and family have been obstacles as usual but that's life. I've subjected Facebook subscribers with various little updates as I've ploughed my way through the fabric cutting. This has been tougher and more time consuming than the design work and template making. The monotony of the cutting stage has finished now, but was not without problems.

As for fabric, the majority of the rolls I have used have been seconds. Some of this fabric has been terrible, with flaws in the weave, bits cut out, and short lengths on the roll (with some of those lengths crudely stitched together – still no good, so I don't know why they do it that way). However, the majority has been of good quality and no bad stuff is going into the envelope. All has passed grab testing to maintenance manual standard. Post cutting, I've got hardly any fabric left over. Fortunately, due to the highly efficient design using the full width (varies between rolls but not less than 60 inches), and flipping the templates so the cut edges fit closely together, there's been negligible waste of good fabric – no more than a bag of half inch ribbons.

The Nomex for the mouth is coming from a 77 skirt (unused) – that in itself has been time consuming as to maximise the panel size I've had to unstitch all the seams. It's amazing how strongly it was put together, twin needle stitching with two passes (don't even ask about the tapes on it, some have 4 passes plus twin zig zag). A skirt is not a component designed to be taken apart. Obviously not designed to take a load, but



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I guess the factory seamstress works to the same standard whatever is being produced on the balloon. I just hope my sewing is as good.

## Independence is a — Cloudhopper!

Cloudhoppers were designed for the independent of mind and the free of spirit. You can take a Cloudhopper anywhere, portability and a ten minute inflation time gives you the chance to go where other balloonists only dream of inflating.

Until you have experienced it, you will never know the exhilaration of solo flight. Here is the freedom that you have always wanted built into a balloon. With the Cloudhopper 'walking on air' is no longer a figure of speech! You don't need seven league boots to stride across hills and treetops, just one of these amazing balloons that responds to your every impulse.

## The Responsive Balloon

The Cloudhopper's compact size gives it a responsiveness only found in solo balloons. Once you have mastered the technique of controlling this small craft with its quick reactions and fast climb and descent rates, you will find that it is an absolute joy to fly. The harness can swivel round a full 360° allowing the pilot to change the direction he is facing at will. Like everything else about the Cloudhopper, deflation is also very much faster than a conventional balloon. You do not know what manoeuvrability in a balloon means until you have flown one of these compact craft.

Small enough to pack down and fit inside any car, the Cloudhopper is the most portable of all balloons. It has a duration of an hour, so that a hard seat has been incorporated into the harness for comfort during extended flight. A fuel warning buzzer indicates when 30% of the fuel remains to ensure that a safe landing can be made.

## The Crowd Pleaser

This is the showman's balloon par excellence. Visually exciting, it will always live up to expectation even on days where bigger balloons cannot inflate. Cloudhoppers have the manoeuvrability to entertain crowds, and are often flown at Balloon meets for just this purpose. Their pilots can hand out promotional leaflets and entertain the crowd long after all other balloons are a speck in the distance.



## Convert to a Cloudhopper

When we sell you a Cloudhopper we also give instruction through the medium of tethered flight here, at our factory, in Oswestry.

## Cloudhopper

A type envelope  
Mk III back-pack system and harness  
Single burner with toggle valve  
Liquid fire and wind proof pilot light  
Aluminium cylinder with low level warning and padded jacket  
Carrying bags  
Flight Manual and Balloon Log Book.



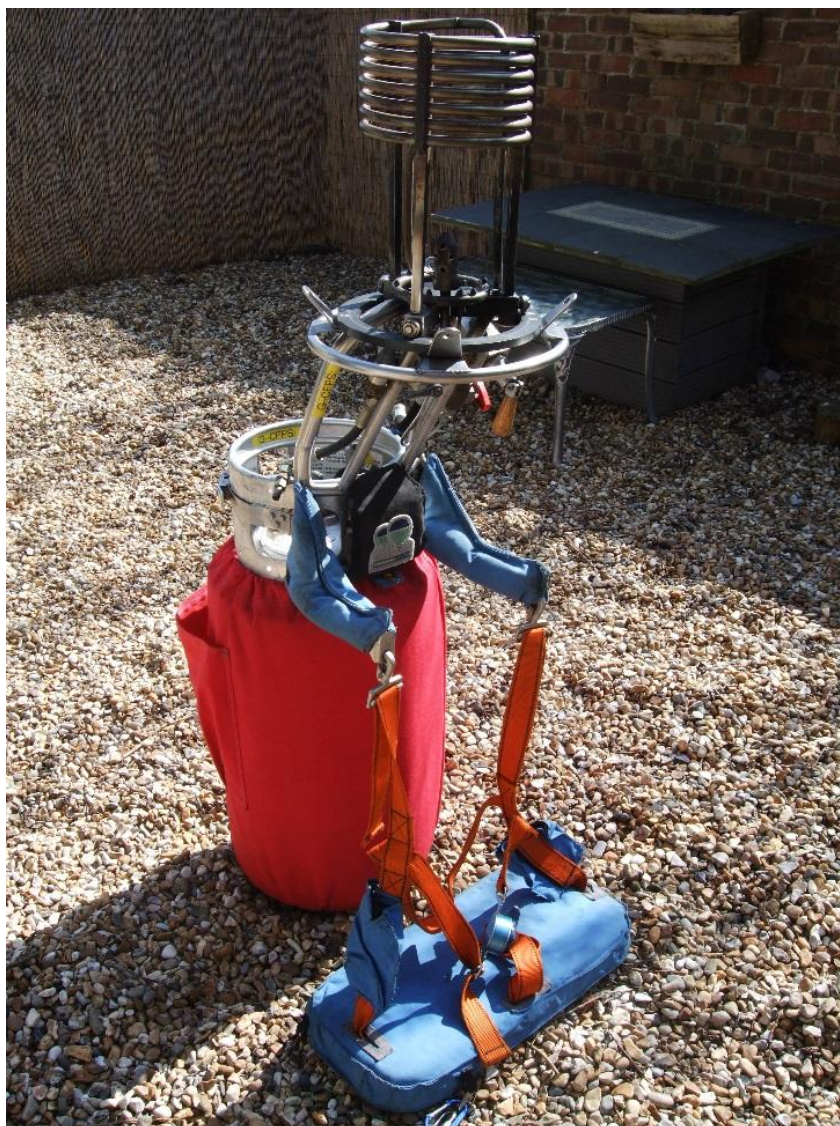


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Thankfully I've made things a bit easier for myself when it comes to the bottom end I will be using – apparently a Thunder and Colt Mk 3 Cloudhopper base unit (at least that's what the T&C brochure said at the time....thanks Tim Ward).





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I'm more than happy with this Cloudhopper base unit, and the rotation means I won't be messing around with turning vents now.

Before this came along I was about to make my project even more difficult.

I had bought plans for a Boland basket (direct from Brian who mailed it to me from Post Mills, Vermont). I had acquired some old Cameron Mk3 burners and frames in various states of repair, planning to cobble together a usable single in a small frame with this gondola. The Boland bottom end idea was one of many.....some quite wildly Heath Robinson and unconventional. Bottom line, risky and untested. In the end Chris Dunkley suggested politely (by email) that I should knock the Cameron Mk III ideas on the head, so there we are. Kicked into touch. Glad some people still know what they are talking about.

Those basket plans are held back for future use, Brian Boland is clearly a lightweight ballooning genius and his "secrets" really are worth paying for – they've taken him many years of fettling and fine tuning. With the plans came a bit more info on his range, including a small picture of him taking off in his "Banana Suit" which appears to be an all in one flying suit with a harness sewn inside. He is an inventor of all sorts, and one of a kind.

<http://youtu.be/PVrCHKTmwXg>

Optimistically, I have taken the plunge and registered the yet to be completed envelope. I sent off the application and the CAA processed it really quickly, proudly proclaiming that it took them one day to do so. You could pay them a premium price for the same service – so I probably caught them on a quiet day. We all know they needn't have rushed my application.

The below image is of the regulation sized lettering being drawn out....G-CHYC.

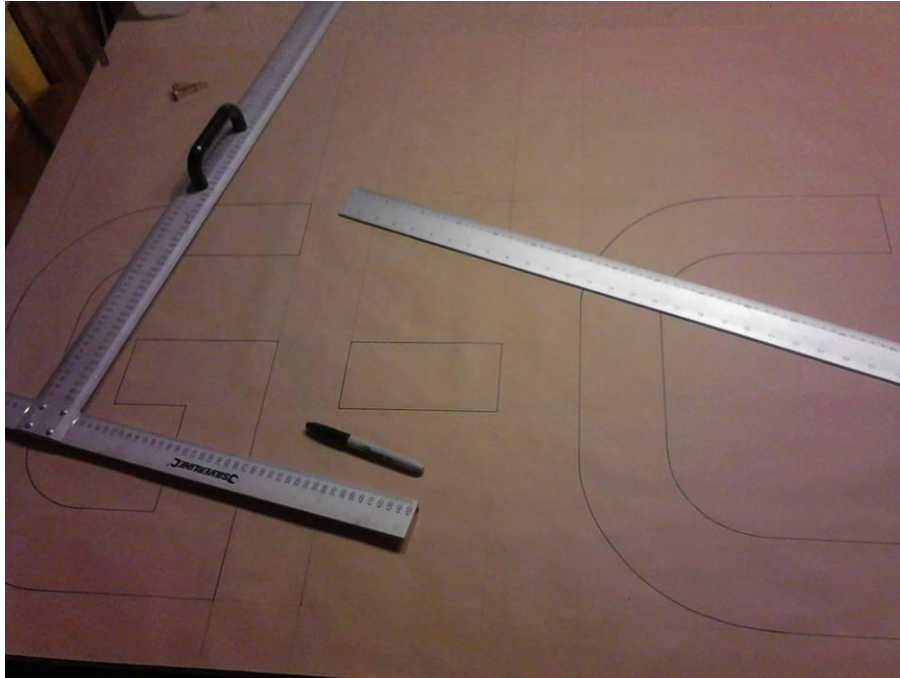




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The envelope is registered as an "Altair AX4 – 31/12 c/n 007"....the name "Altair" short for "Alternative Air". That's my pet name for this project....it's an alternative to the EASA hassles. Construction number "007" as including large model balloons this is the 7<sup>th</sup> envelope built (all of the previous 6 destroyed bar one).

The next stage is to re organise my workspace. The cutting table will be dismantled to create the open space required to sew the panels together. This in itself is going to mean several hours of work not directly being put into the project, but it all counts. There is no other way to do it – my other half won't tolerate me taking over the dining room.

Anyway, my "Man Lab" bolt hole keeps me (and her) sane.....everybody should have one. I just wish it was bigger, that's all.

David Westlake



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## 6. 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, then feel free to forward details of it with a suitable photograph to me using my normal email address.



Adam barrow reported from Australia that Barb Smith has taken her VH-BOX for its maiden flight (guess what it's a homebuilt). Barb uses an Ultramagic bottom end.



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## Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

### Cameron Balloon News

Well unfortunately the promised photos and literature about the new Cameron Balloons hopper bottom end hasn't arrived so I can't tell you anymore about it until the lovely people in Bristol send me the information. When I do get it, you will hear first.

### XLTA news from Mick Murphy

"XLTA9 the 9th Annual New England Experimental "Balloon, Hopper, Chariot, and Airship Rally" Sept 6-8, 2013, in Bethlehem, CT at Whelan Farms Airport.

All builders, owners, and fans of experimental and ultra-light LTA aircraft are invited. This is a small private non-profit event: no paid rides, no public audience, no muss, and no fuss.

Just experimental LTA and the people who love to build and fly them (as well as friends and families, of course.) This event provides both an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences amongst builders and a chance to fly together informally.

In addition to flying, we will have hands on presentations, a few movies and some fun things and a few surprises!

If anyone is interested in volunteering to help with the event or crewing for out of town pilots please call or e-mail me so I can add you to the list and keep you updated with the e-mail updates for the event!

Thanks

Mick

On-line registration at -

<http://www.xlta.org/regform2012.php>



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## Adverts / For Sale / Wanted section

### G-BVUI is for sale



complete kit.

Lindstrand 25A. 1994. G-BVUI. 96 hrs. Lindstrand colours (no words) in red, yellow & blue. New EASA C of A on delivery. £1700 Zebedee Balloon

Service - 01488 681527, 1700 British Pounds= (+ - ) depending on Exchange rate: \$2700.00  
Photo of balloon is the first one on the Zebedee list under envelopes. web page:

<http://www.zebedeelist.co.uk/list/list.php?section=envelope>

I also have the matching Lindstrand hopper bottom end that I might be willing to part with. If anyone is interested, E-mail me at [advanced@gci.net](mailto:advanced@gci.net), or call me in Alaska at 907 242-5860 Jack advises that £3750 buys the



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The Klein FAN  
Smaller is Better!



Tiny but surprisingly  
powerful inflation fans!  
9 kg empty, 10.5 kg full  
(fuel + oil)

2.5 hp Honda engine  
One fan easily inflates  
balloons up to 2000m<sup>3</sup>  
Two fans will blow your  
socks off!

Contact Advanced, Inc.

[advanced@gci.net](mailto:advanced@gci.net)

Tel. +1 907 346-3495

[www.kleinfan.com](http://www.kleinfan.com)

Visit us on Facebook!





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## **And Finally.**

Membership is currently a healthy 446 members and numbers are generally rising. 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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