



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 117

September 2019

Hello again Solo flyers.

August came and went and with it some of the biggest events of the year ballooning wise. Some were decidedly more successful than others and I've created an overview on those that mattered. Metz and Bristol to name but two. I also have a report on the annual Streatley Nightglow. This edition is nothing if not packed with information too. We discuss Longevity verses Lightness when you come to purchase a new envelope, and an idea I floated this month on the Facebook site which is a "video topic" for a change.

We discuss what you'd want in a blank sheet new design for a hopper, which is a process now taking place by Leandro at Flydoo Balloons. He seems particularly keen to see the weight reduced and predicts a 31,000 cubic foot balloon could come in at a sub 25kg weight.

I detail my immediate plans for hopping now that the Cameron Demonstrator G-CJWY has been returned to Bristol and where I may go going forward.

Details for the Annual One-Man Meet are also within this edition as it is only a short time until we all meet up for the biggest solo event of the year.

We also discuss what other areas the manufacturers can possibly look into with regard to future hopper designs.

I'd say that's a pretty big amount of content for an average month so why don't we get into the details.

Here is what we have for you in this edition.

- Metz in a nutshell.
- Bristol Balloon Fiesta in surmised form.
- Longevity verses Lightness
- Streatley Nightglow
- Recent second-hand purchases.

Views on the newsletter to the email address below

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1, Ed Speak- Progression

Once again, it's time for a change and the catalyst for this was the conclusion of my current Cameron deal. As part of that G-CJWY was returned to the factory on a very soggy Friday during Bristol Fiesta weekend. This left me with a temporary void with a bottom end and no Envelope, however I have for a few years been a sleeping partner in G-BYNW the Cameron H-34. This well used example is now 100% in my ownership and will do as an interim solution until I decide where my next envelope is coming from. First outing will probably be at the OMM if I can get the C of A done in time.

The great thing about well used equipment is you don't have to be so precious about it and it will suffice until I have firmed up my options this winter. The Cameron situation is ongoing but we need to decide collectively the terms of that relationship moving forward. I couldn't imagine going to the OMM without something to fly and no doubt it will be another great weekend. Do not confuse my decision making with any specific trend as I'm also directly in conversation with Leandro at Flydoo balloons in France exploring possibilities for a hopper sized envelope and am keen to see his interpretation of what is possible and in particular what weight of envelope he can achieve. Would I also consider going forward with buying second hand stock? I have considered what is currently available but am looking to the long-term with my next purchase and so favour something I can put my mark upon. This has come at a unique timing point for me as I have a whole raft of changes occurring in my life. Firstly, I am finishing the payment of my home, secondly have decided to sell my bigger balloon as it simply wasn't getting used enough to warrant the valuation just sitting on my drive. Then I'm in process of a career change which hopefully will conclude in the next few months. I also have a path mapped out for my future vehicle needs which could entail the purchase of two new cars replacing the current steed. Naturally like most things I do I am actively test driving to see what fulfils the requirements best going forward and perhaps my future choices will surprise some of you, but more on that when it happens.

Like anything let's just take it one small step at a time and see where we end up. Steve Roake

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2, Essential Extras – nothing this month

3, The Features Section. –

The Bi-Annual festival of Metz



PH-HOP by Kevin Boon

Every two years there is a mass exodus to the Lorraine region of France for the GEMAB festival of Metz and whilst the past few years in my case saw a diminishing return in regards to the number of flights achieved year on year, however 2019 may have been a

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blip or perhaps maybe they lucked in because if you were brave you could have achieved 17 flights in the ten days. This is a refreshing change and from what I understand (not being there myself), a good smattering of hoppers indulged in the flying activities even though compared to some years the participant numbers were down. There was even a duo chariot all the way from Israel to spice up the entertainment.



G-MOUZ Cameron O-31 by Kevin Boon.

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Luckily for us a number of avid photographers took loads of really great shots and my thanks in particular goes to Kevin Boon and Bernie Williams who literally sent me everything they took.

Speaking to a hopper pilot who just flew his one-man craft at Metz, he said the weather was typical with initially late drop outs and weather that was probably marginal. But later on, flights varied from those that went nowhere fast to those flights that remind you why you fly and with such big fields there is no reason why you couldn't fly long.

However, flying towards the south east from Chambley airbase is a flight that is testing with Forrest over a long period of the flight and for those crazy brits who had the audacity to go offsite and enjoy a flight into the airfield, the reprimand at briefing sounded all too familiar.

However, love it or hate it, 2019 will go down in history as one of the more spectacular of recent years.

Longevity versus Lightness

From time to time I try various things to improve the content of the site and challenge the format of the newsletter. This I did in August posting a video on Facebook, putting forward the sides of the argument regarding the perennial thoughts about lightness of fabric verses the projected longevity of the product. When ordering a new balloon there is a temptation, particularly in the current climate to try and go super lightweight without thinking about the bigger picture. Having discussed the merits of various grades of fabrics with various people it showed that 28 gsm seems to be the preferred choice with Cameron Balloons who state that this grade of fabric should see around 250 hours of usage. They explored lower levels but found that the sheer strength of cloth gives out quicker and in some cases the cloth fails a grab test shortly after 100 hours of use.

The quest seems to be for ever lighter craft but the trade-off can't be ridiculous even though for most people 100 hours would represent years of flying. Leandro at Flydoo also is seeking the holy grail of lightness in his designs but chooses to do it in a different way. He gets rid of load tapes and hangs the panels off cords that support the weight. However he also chooses to use 28gsm fabric on his products. Where these video discussions go is down to how much you the viewer / reader chooses to get involved. I have a thought for the next version which I think I'll unleash on you in September.

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Bristol Balloon Fiesta -briefly.

Not much really to say about Bristol. The organisers had to think on their feet to avoid a wash out and so added Thursday Morning as a flyout. Without this slot the whole event would have been a blow out and at times it got so wet and muddy the site needed closing down for the public's safety. In the one slot that wasn't, about 50 flew and to my knowledge (not having bothered to attend), I don't believe any hoppers flew.

Every once in a while, you are going to suffer a wet weekend with the weather gods against you, unfortunately for Bristol, 2019 was their year.

Streatley Nightglow

This is a very local affair which has been going for a number of years on the first Monday after Bristol (or next available day if weather precludes). You honestly never know if its going to take place, who is likely to turn up, and more importantly what may be seen. This year was no exception with the weather on the day very changeable. However, it was called on by a very brave Jonathan Harris who either had blind faith or knew more about the forecast than most of us.



Streatley Nightglow in full effect

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The majority of the balloons tethering for the crowds were hoppers with at various stages of the evening five displayed. G-CHIM Um H-31 and G-CFPS were both out of the Geoff Lescott stable. Colin Butter brought along venerable G-WETI and Home built superstar G-CKAI was displayed by its maker Ron Griffin. However, surprise of the night went to Jonathan Harris who had recently acquired a slightly porous Lindstrand 31A in HB-QAB.



HB-QAB Lindstrand 31A

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The only thing missing from this year's event was the local lady who cooks burgers who said she wasn't doing them this year due to being blamed for some form of food poisoning last year. Good news though, is she will return next year after lots of people asked after the food.

5 Interesting Photos



F-PJMH Deramecourt ADM 900 sent in by Simon Whatley
Taken at Thouars Balloon Meet in France.

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G-CGFO fairly rarely seen UM H-42 belonging to Dave Such

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6, New Allocations This Month / Changes of Ownership

7, Second Hand Balloons

This concerns me lol. I have purchased Mark Stelling's share of G-BYNW the Cameron H-34 with immediate effect. This will be my envelope until I decide which way I'm going with regard to the future.

8, Manufacturer / Event News/ Industry News

Annex 1 Meet

The second annual Homebuilders meet is taking place at Sackville Lodge, Riseley, in Bedfordshire over the weekend of 6-8th September. Host Tim Wilkinson expects more of the same as last year which was quite a well-received event. He has actually extended the invitation to all from the Tuesday 4th but I can't see too many staying for the whole duration. Annex 1 is quite popular in the UK and the Sackville team are a hub from which quite a lot of good things emanate. They provide support and mentoring to anyone who wants to build their own envelope. Probably numbers attending will rise for year two based upon the success of the first event.

The 36th Annual One Man Meet

Once again, a small plug for this one. This is the big one where hopping is concerned. The 36th event takes place at a venue in Worcestershire over the weekend of 11-13th October. The Cadmore Lakeside Hotel has been selected by John Tyrrell and Wendy Rousell as the venue of choice and I understand that there is a disused Golf course for us to fly from. The cost for the weekend is a miserly £15 and budget accommodation is available close by for people who don't want to pay the hotel rates. As of 1st September, a known 21 have booked in for the event and weather permitting we will have a great time.

It is a myth that you need to be a hopper pilot with a balloon to be able to attend the event. Anyone with a passion for the craft is welcome whether it is as fact finding mission towards a future purchase, or if you want to see how they are set up (since there is never a manual). I started myself as a trip to one of these and ended up crewing for a team absorbing some information along the way and it really spurred me on

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towards purchasing my first ever hopper. Budget wise these things don't have to cost the earth as you will see this year, I will be flying G-BYNW which is a Cameron H-34 envelope which has a value around £1000. What it is though is a great way to cut your teeth before spending out on a newer envelope so you don't need to feel precious about the way you treat it. Yes, it has done the best part of 90 hours in the air but it's still fit for purpose until my new purchase arrives (whatever I decide to do).

So, come along and see you there!

7. Gallery Pages –

Your Editor's choice of New and unusual balloons.



G-CIJJ the first Cameron O-31 super light.

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G-BJUV Cameron V-20, one of only two. This orphaned balloon is one of only two and is owned by Paul Spellward who supplied the photo via Facebook.

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Facebook membership continues to rise with the current level of 1328 (correct to the 1st September), current and still rising. Let's hope this trend continues as the popularity of hopping embraces even more people. All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your Editor. Please forward them to steve.roake33@gmail.com Feedback good, bad or indifferent is always welcome. Views aired by contributors may not be those of the Editor. Safe and happy hopping! **Steve Roake.**

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