



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 63

March / April 2013

Well Hello flyers and welcome to the Latest Newsletter.

Firstly thank you everyone who commented on the last Newsletter and specifically the lovely comments on the article I wrote on Polyester and Nylon. The feedback proves how interested people still are on advances in fabric technologies and also sends out the right signals to the manufacturers who we all know read this publication. The trouble with a good issue is that you have to back it up with another one and quite frankly, March was as barren as any month was likely to get, hence the reason despite little content that this is actually a double issue.



Airborne after six months of no flying- jpeg by Andy Doggett

After a sabbatical of six months, I managed to get a flight in the hopper and what a great pleasure it was to be back in the air again. Whilst the flight was only 45 minutes in duration, there were plenty of elements to make it interesting. Variation in wind direction from 280 degrees through to 020 and speeds from 3.5 to 10 knots at different heights gave plenty of scope for picking a target

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and trying to get there. Sometimes we take for granted the simple pleasure of flying and with UK weather pants for such a long time it was sheer bliss to get a flight in the logbook and reacquaint myself with the reason we are all so besotted with this type of flying. Happy days !

1, Ed-Speak – Changes to the magazine format.

I'm pleased to announce a new feature that will cover all the content that is generated on Facebook. This medium is the fastest growing segment of our communication techniques and now David Westlake is prepared to summarise the monthly activity for those of you who don't visit the internet frequently. For me the joy of this is that you the reader get a different view that isn't my perspective. Unfortunately despite my best efforts, the two sections that need your support, namely my interesting hop and my three favourites and why remain empty this month. If you don't support the magazine it will be smaller in content and ultimately die because without your input I won't sustain this on my own and don't intend to. I hope I have made that point clear.

Steve Roake

2, Essential Extra's / Tech Talk- Seasonal maintenance

Now you may be asking yourself, what has seasonal maintenance got to do with Essential Extra's? Quite simply this, If you fail to maintain your inflation fan then come the day you choose to fly, you may be let down and grounded , so my advice is take the bull by the horns and do it today, before you crack into the flying season. There are only a few simple chores to carry out to ensure your fan doesn't let you down. For simplicity I have listed them below.

- Change the oil and if it has one the filter too.
- The spark plug needs occasionally changing, if you haven't done it in a while; treat yourself to a new one.
- Check the blade. Clean the prop itself and check the tightness of the bolts attaching it to the central spindle.
- Check the fan guard, especially around the welds. The key area



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For safety here are the bolts that secure the blade to the spindle. Make sure they aren't loose.

- Check the guard isn't loose, if it feels sloppy, use some cable ties to ensure that the whole thing does what it is supposed to be and that is safe.

Simple words, good advice, but please people do not neglect your fan as if you look after it; it will always work for you.

3. The Features Section

Following on from a previous article involving sales literature for a classic hopper, I received this submission for you all to enjoy from Greg Winker With thanks.





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The following is as written in the sales brochure, word for word.

The Colt Clodhopper

The Clodhopper saw its first light in May 1979 having gone through several design stages on our drawing boards until the concept was finally frozen. This was the first serious attempt to build a one man harness balloon anywhere in the world. On the balloon side we used our well-proven envelope and burner technology while on the harness side we borrowed heavily from parachute practice. Immediately after its first flight, we knew a new ballooning concept was born and we spent the next six months testing and perfecting the design before we went public with our Clodhopper in the autumn of 1979. It was immediately covered by press all over the world and featured on British T.V. The clodhopper also came to play the lead role in a major motion picture film "Green Ice" where Ryan O'Neill and two accomplices used three Clodhoppers to rob a roof top vault in Columbia. We have sold Clodhoppers all over the world from South Africa to Sweden, from Mexico to Saudi Arabia. It is a registered aircraft carrying a full certificate of Airworthiness and must be the most compact fully certified aircraft ever offered to the public.

The Clodhopper Envelope

The Clodhopper is normally supplied with a 17,000 cubic foot envelope, but a 14,000 or 21,000 can be supplied on special order. All envelopes are of smooth gore construction and have 2mm stainless flying wires and an all Kevlar cord rigging system. Deflation is with a parachute type valve operated on a direct action 6mm Kevlar cord. The envelope is hooked up to the base unit with 4 rapid connector links and this is achieved in seconds. The envelope bag is shaped like an oversized golf bag to make for easy carrying and storage.

The smooth gore envelope is ideal for graphics should you opt for a sponsored balloon. The general small size of the whole Clodhopper unit opens up a whole new sphere of balloon advertising since it can be flown inside courtyards and shopping centres and similarly confined spaces.

While the 17,000 cu. Ft. envelope will cater for most flying



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conditions with a pilot in excess of 210lb or flying at high altitude we recommend the 21,000 cu. Ft. envelope option. The 14,000 cu. Ft. envelope is only recommended for very light pilots or for record attempts.

The back pack

The cloudhopper back pack can be broken down into three units:

- 1, Burner/ swivel and support structure.
- 2, Harness and shoulder brackets
- 3, Fuel tank.

The burner unit was specifically developed for the Cloudhopper since the demand on a small balloon burner is different from its larger brothers. It must have a very sharp pencil-like frame to ease inflation and avoid burn damage around the mouth. It must also have very good and fast combustion so as to not overheat the envelope crown. A short afterburn is essential since upward visibility is limited. Needless to say weight is a very critical factor. We managed to compress these qualities in what must be the highest power to weight ratio in any balloon burner.

The swivel unit consists of a hard aluminum load ring running on three sealed ball bearings. This way friction is at the minimum and the slightest force will reposition the pilot. The load from the swivel ring is transferred through a two inch steel tube to the fuel tank collar. Three ½ inch screws hold the overhead structure to the collar.

The pilots harness was perhaps the single most time consuming item to perfect. A harness must be perfectly designed to be comfortable and endless hours were spent developing a harness that was both comfortable and easy to use. All parts are stressed to a minimum load of 2000 lb and most have a 5000 lb proof load. The harness webbing itself has a breaking strength of 6000 lb. The harness must also provide restraint for the emergency parachute and provide a quick release facility for on the ground emergencies. Instant release is provided by the two capewell locks, one on each shoulder strap.

The shoulder bracket provides space for the electronic igniter and the fuel level warning system. The pilot light can be instantly lit



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by operating the ignition button on the right hand shoulder bracket. The spark generator is of the piezoelectric type and requires no batteries and no maintenance.

The fuel tank sends a signal at a preset level to a buzzer inside the left hand shoulder bracket. The unit uses a 9 volt dry battery for power and is deactivated with an exterior toggle switch.

All alone and nowhere to go (Tribulations of Cloudhopper flying) by Barry Conway

Copied from the excellent Easy Balloons website, here their webmaster Barry Conway discusses an interesting incident whilst hopping.

I wrote this a while ago, after one of my early and more educational hopper flights. I had some other pretty educational flights, which I'm sure others will be glad to remind me of. Excuse the writing style - these were pretty much written as 'verbatim notes', my own briefing recorded just a short while after the flight, and not long after visiting the local climbing shop to buy a 'Joe Brown' climbing helmet. You'll understand, as you read on, just why I did that. Oh, and I originally intended to share it with some people who might not have known what a 'cloudhopper' was, so pardon me stating the occasional obvious thing.

Here's how it went:

Sunday looked promising. I stuck my head out of the hotel window and the air was still. A cup of coffee and a banana for breakfast, and off to a 6:30 briefing. Forecast was much as for the previous day: 17-20kts @ 2000', but locally l&v in the valley. Some mist & precipitation forecast for later in the morning. Observation by MK 1 Eyeball showed it to be eminently flyable in our patch of the valley, so all out onto the field.

You all know what a cloudhopper is like? They vary in spec &



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appearance a little, but all are essentially a tank, with a (small) seat attached somehow, and the burner right above your head. There aren't too many web resources around at the moment, but some illustrations & info on the www.cameronballoons.co.uk site, ditto www.thunderandcolt.co.uk, www.lindstrand.co.uk, and some interesting articles on John Ninomiya's site (<http://home.earthlink.net/~ninomiya/>), and at <http://www.hotairship.com/soloball/solomod.html>.

Inflation (for our rig) consists of laying the tank+burner+seat assembly on the deck, envelope (a 42) attached to a ring assembly that fits just below, and rotates around the (single) burner. A good cold pack is essential, because the mouth is pretty small, and there is no gimbal on the burner ... well, there is: the 'gimbal' consists of pilot lifting and pointing whole bottom end whilst burning! Even a slight breeze can make this entertaining.

As soon as the envelope is up, you have to get some weight in the seat: 4 point harness on ours. This is where you need good crew, because whilst the pilot is tarting around getting in the harness and stowing essential equipment such as strikers, chocolate bars, hip flask, etc. someone needs to be keeping the envelope hot & upright. Actually, some of the guys who have flown the hoppers more than me (not hard!) claim to be able to do the whole lot single-handed.

I'm still perfecting what to take, what to abandon, where to stow stuff, and how to fly. This morning I decided to take a radio with remote mike, but still have not decided on the envelope bag. In the end, it stayed with my brother - on only his second retrieve. First was the previous day. Turns out the radio was a good decision....

Launch was lovely - light as feather, clear the tree tops by inches, calm enough to let you take stock and look around, but with just enough speed to allow you to quickly judge the immediate track. In this case, the track was straight over the (small) nearby town. Not that any of us would fly



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below the legit heights or too near to persons, structures, vehicles or vessels, but seeing as how the town was still asleep some fun might be had ...

Valley flying was excellent: up and across to the far side of the valley (right of the wind), cross the river in the centre of the valley, down and left (back across the river and the town). A bit of a cold sink and a stop over the river. Feet wet? Perhaps not, it is November after all. I got 3 or 4 of these little tacks in, then came to a gentle halt over a sports field. Gentle halt? Think about it... I was pretty much at the end of another valley mouth, joining ours, which in turn joined 3 or 4 more valleys ending at a few miles away. So this "halt" had to be a bit of a wind eddy effect. Still, loads more gas, loads more morning, loads more fields, retrieve was happy and taking photos, no indication of any radical weather change, so I hung around. The "eddy" eventually shifted me toward the centre of the valley - right over the only significant livestock in the area. Lots of horses, post & rail fencing, expensive looking house & vehicles. These clues usually suggest "stay high" so I did, and got the wind that took me back across the valley & the river. Down again once I'd crossed the livestock to get the left back to some good fields and the road where my retrieve still was.

Umm. No left. None at all. I was now climbing up the far side of the valley: over woodland, crossing a canal, over another road with good fields but bad powerlines. Up the hill some more, and picking up speed. OK, I'd like to land now, please, but lots of sheep. Later, I was to regret not landing with the sheep, and trying to talk them out of panicking. Reached the top of that ridge, crossing a visually distinctive church. A quick call to retrieve giving location, and warning that I was off into the next valley. Just had time to hear an acknowledgement, then I was descending into the next valley. No drama, there will surely be landing opportunities here.

Umm. Tight valley, vertical cliff on the far side, wooded this side.

Road, river, and major powerlines. Super. A couple of nice sportsfields near the centre of the valley but NO WAY am I messing with those big powerlines .Shudder!!



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Pretty quickly I'm up this next valley, but no time really to doing anything other than assess the situation and look up-track to see what's next. Straight towards a bit of a dog-leg, with an old quarry site in the corner. And trees. Which I now appear to be approaching very quickly, both in the horizontal & vertical planes. One part of me is watching the thrashing tree-tops and thinking "that looks like turbulence", the other parts (of me) are all concentrating on burning a lot, picking up my feet, grabbing the rip & crown lines, and reflecting on how close the cliff wall is becoming. (What do you call a man with a seagull on is head?) Hi Cliff. Took a quick look at the quarry, but it's definitely NOT suitable for a hasty landing.

In the event, the crown line snagged on the tree tops (or vice versa), which combined with the turbulence to set the envelope into a bit of a wobble. Just perfect. I decided not to look. Good plan. Seconds passed. Slowly. Burnt a lot more and looked up and forward (there was a cliff, remember?) to see houses appearing as I cleared the cliff edge. OK - houses, gardens, roads, fields, landing opportunities. Stay calm. Keep flying. Stay calm. Keep. Flying.

Yahoo! A football field. Oh. Was a football field. Now gone. Hmm, I seem to be moving rather quickly. Oh right. I'm now above the valleys and into the gradient winds. I remember; 17 to 20 kts. I decide to forget. Not much I can do about the speed. Except speed up more, apparently. Time is distorting, because I seem to be thinking, processing and doing an awful lot in such a short space of time. Another field. Good? No. Damn. Power-lines - OK on another day, but not good, not good at all at this speed. I see some distinctively shaped lakes by a road - a quick report to my retrieve. An acknowledgement. Good man, that brother.

Look ahead. Open moorland. Reeds, sedge, water, moss. And rocks. Wet, mossy rocks. Open to the road after some more pits and ponds. Not great. Look ahead. Small peak - entirely shrouded in cloud. Seriously not great. Bugger. OK - perhaps the moorland looks good after all. They are mossy rocks, after all. And water is soft, right?

Cross the fence. Cross the road. Wait. Wait. Cross the pits & ponds.

Wait. Wait. WAIT! No basket, remember? - keep a nice shallow approach trajectory. Stay calm. OK. Committed. Last burn. Pilot off. (Can't reach the tank shutoff from the seat in this hopper).



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Feet up. A gentle tug on the rip and the seat and tank rotate so that the tank takes the correct position - i.e. tank hits the ground first. Thanks, hopper. Rip. Rip. RIP! Splash. Super. Water. A lot more water than I (thought) could see. Thump. Hit head. Hit head hard. Must check that later. Drag. Bounce. Pull, pull, pull. Swear. Pull some more. Rip not working? No. I've already pulled all the ripline there is to be pulled. Bugger. Swear some more. Bounce. Drag. Roll onto left side - round things, thanks. Brief thoughts of broken things and (lack of) proximity to help. Stopped. Really? Yup, stopped. Silence.

Twist harness release. Stuck. Damn. Not stuck. Just me panicking. Calm down. Undone. Roll out of the seat. More water. Splendid. What next? Oh yes. Check legs. They work. Check head. Umm. Blood. Decide to forget about the blood for the time being. Radio? Found radio. Check radio? No answer. Great. Not in sight of road, not in contact with anyone, head bleeding. Best I get in sight of the road then.

Wow! What a lot can happen in just a few very short minutes. Or was it even as long as minutes?

Things got better from here on up. I dragged some of my kit to the road (the seat unit is easily recognised for what it is) - road not so far away - closer than I imagined - and stood it there as a marker. Within a short time my brother worked out where I had to be from my landmark reports. Good job, bro! The kit was soon off the moor and into the car. The head was soon checked and proved to be not serious. And we got back to the hotel in time for bacon butties. Someone else that morning was also caught up in the same winds, experienced the same turbulence, and (from what I saw) they amply demonstrated that the bog that I landed in was actually a pretty soft option. Their landing was obviously hard - so hard, that when I went to help them out, it was in the full expectation of seeing something very bad. But that's their story to tell.....

I learned a heck of a lot in a short space of time - and I'm still reviewing and replaying some of it. The lasting impression for me, both during and after the events, was just how much of my training, and how the knowledge (picked up from sharing with other balloonists) kicked in and kept me out of trouble.



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Things could so easily have gone from exciting to dire if I had not played the "stay calm - keep flying" mantra in my head. I learned some new lessons. And I relearned the value of some old ones.

One new lesson, already implemented. Crash helmet for hopper flights: certainly hopper flights in unfamiliar and changeable territory. Heads aren't easy things to fix, especially not by the roadside, miles from anywhere.

Barry Birch

4, My interesting first Hops- by nobody

Again an empty section, despite no end of requestsso 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

Three Favourite Jpegs and why -Currently Empty!

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

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

As suggested earlier, this month sees the start of a review of all that is facebook by David Westlake. So without further waiting, here is David's First submission.

Facebook Roundup: March / April 2013

The year so far has been particularly active with postings on the Cloudhoppers Facebook page, more has appeared on there than Yahoo. There is a lot to be said about the instantaneous accessibility and appeal of Facebook as a medium, but it is understood that many, for whatever reason, won't sign up. Whatever your opinion



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on Facebook, it's here to stay as a communication and sharing medium for the Cloudhoppers Community. At the time of writing (09/04/13) "Membership" on the page currently stands at 224 and subscriptions are rising at a rapid rate, (now nearer 250 Ed 6/5/13).

For those who only subscribe to the Yahoo! Groups element, here is a summary of the discussions and input which has appeared on the groups Facebook page.

March began with a posting by US member David Tanzer with thoughts and personal experiences relating to the Polyester vs. Nylon trade off. This was prompted by the excellent article on the same subject in the last newsletter by your Editor. As materials technology progresses in other areas outside of ballooning, like most technology based sport, benefits of alternative and new fabrics will filter through. The argument isn't won yet! Mathieu Dekock posted some pictures of the inflation and tethered flight of a Cameron O-42 OO-BSS. These show it in use with a Cameron twin tank Skyhopper bottom end. From memory, I believe Marc Sevrin set an AX5 record with this aluminised envelope in the 1980's.



A week in to March and Steve Roake reported that subscribers to the Facebook page had passed 200.....

Member Bash Cie has put regular postings on about his Homebuilding activities and is notably brave in putting together his own burner to be flown with a paragliding harness.



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He has posted videos of his burner tests, some of which can be found on Youtube

<http://youtu.be/8nKjCYRIBBE> Interesting stuff.



Again, the medium of the Internet has proven itself for exchange of advice and ideas. On one posting, Bash pondered over which valve to adopt on his burner and advice was offered.

Toby Brown posted some detailed pictures of his Lindstrand Series 2 bottom end (for sale at that time in Colorado), and Shane Robinson posed a question to the group on what the differences are between the 1st, 2nd and 3rd generations of the Lindstrand hopper. Again, this question prompted helpful and practical responses about ease of use and subtle differences.



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Regular contributor Mathieu Dekock posted interesting shots of a rare and vintage Adams "Little Devil" (again with Belgian registration) prompting fond responses from contributors worldwide including those in the US where this design originated.



Nigel Tovey provided a great link to an addition of Popular Science from August 1978, this really illustrates how things have come full circle with the desire for small and easy to use balloons.

http://books.google.com.tr/books?id=mM8DAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA2&lpg=PA2&dq=mike+ehrler+hot+air+balloon&source=bl&ots=qTydlCxmON&sig=TuBP1p6nSwWtgDkkXaSiyl0kV1M&hl=en&sa=X&ei=vTs_UZH5JcSx2QXLslCoAg&sqi=2&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=mike%20ehrler%20hot%20air%20balloon&f=false

Again, this powerful medium came to the fore with the cross sharing of a link from the British Balloon Museum and Library Facebook page.

Originally put on by member Jenni D'Alton – "Subterranean Balloon glow breaks records in 1994" explains about a record set in 1994. Dr

Bill Bussey and others inflated and flew five one man balloons inside Marvel Cave in Branson, Missouri, USA.

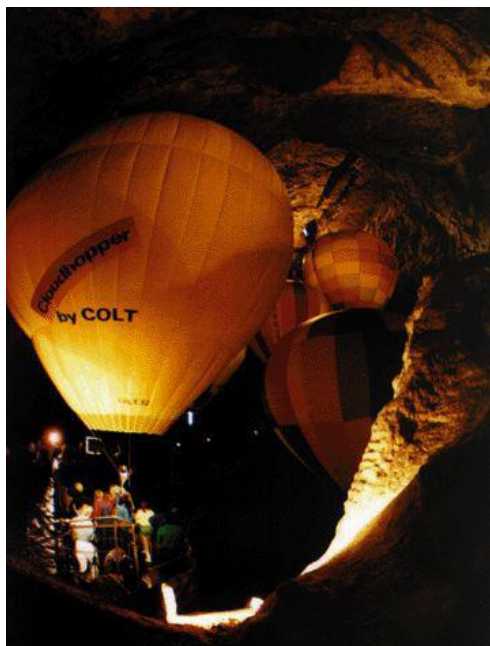


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Plans are now in progress to attempt to beat the record at the same location, which is described as 20 storeys tall and a city block long, in 2014. Exciting things to come.



Regular contributor Roland Escher now owns the Cloudhopper in the foreground of the picture and plans for it to be present on the next subterranean hop.

Next, Jane Dunkley posted an important, universal tale of Propane safety which can be read via this link...

<http://www.easyballoons.co.uk/2013/03/11/in-the-wake-of-poseidon/>

Peter Van Harten posted some great pictures of his hopper flight in the ex uk registered Sky 25 PH-ZSL -

[http://www.facebook.com/l.photo.php?jaar=2013&map=0407ZSL"\);](http://www.facebook.com/l.photo.php?jaar=2013&map=0407ZSL)

Bob Romaneschi posted about the Bonanno Freedom hopper and it's 250 ball bearings in it's swivel frame. Now available in the US from Zing Aerosports.....

And lastly, as a contrast to this, Andy Richardson has announced that Limelite Balloons (USA) is bringing out a new 35,000 cubic foot hopper system, the base unit having a fixed loadframe. This is still in the construction stage but it is planned to make it available for



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general sale. The latter has promoted healthy debate on the merits of rotation vents in small envelopes with strong views for and against. This is what internet forums are all about, but unfortunately it does become trial by forum on occasion!! Thankfully, tensions were diffused by humour. In summary, an active month on the Cloudhoppers page. Appreciated, Facebook isn't everyone's cup of tea but it's an instant and useful reference source and an asset to the Cloudhoppers community. Hopefully, this roundup of activity may prompt those not on Facebook to re-start discussions on Yahoo groups once again.

Dave Westlake

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

Video's

Once again there have been some videos added this month on the facebook site. There are three fantastic ones from Rick Kauffman and Links to these are here below.

<http://youtu.be/Zz2q6SNhXtY>

<http://youtu.be/XQvgE06cxGO>

<http://youtu.be/ndxOpaDZ844>

All three are great videos and well worth a viewing.

5. Homebuilt section-

Not exactly "new", but eighteen years after building it , David Bristol posted a photo of a hopper he build that has now returned home to him. Originally constructed for a client who sadly passed away, this 25k envelope has only got about ten hours total time on it and luckily has been stored dry so is in great condition. David plans to modify the bottom end he has for it and then fly it himself.



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The Bristol BBC -24.5K as seen on facebook



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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.



Latest Ultramagic Techno 50 C/n 50/11 is for Japan and registered JA-A1467. As ever thanks to Paul Dickenson the jpeg and info.



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Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

Cameron Balloon News

Hopefully by the time this comes into cyber print, the new Cameron Hopper bottom end will have flown in production variant. My man on the inside, Colin Wolstenholme recently confirmed plans to fly the production variant at an event by the end of April. Naturally we all await more information and lovely photos asap.

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, 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 2000m³

Two fans will blow your
socks off!

Contact Advanced, Inc.

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And Finally.

Membership is currently a healthy 448 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 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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