



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 83

January 2016

Greetings and Happy New year.

Hoping this finds you all in good cheer and full of enthusiasm for the year ahead. January is the anniversary of the start of the Cloudhoppers community (having started with the forum on yahoo groups) in 2004, we seem to be in very rude health and Moving forward with new blood continuously entering our sector of ballooning, so thanks to all those who have chosen to join our journey and a special happy birthday 90 years young to our very first member, one certain Don Piccard. January traditionally is the month of The Icicle balloon meet which has morphed into The Icicle Refrozen, and you then start looking at Alpine meets and possible flying slots. I myself visited Italy and the Epiphany meet in Mondovi which coincided with a beautiful visit to "Mecca", the home of one of the most influential individuals ever to grace ballooning, Mr Paolo Bonnano and his lovely wife Nicole. There is plenty of content for January for me to try and convert into prose for you so without anymore waste of time lets explore what I have for you this issue.

1, Ed-Speak – The 2016 Project- a project too far?

In what can only be called a weak moment I decided before Christmas that a travesty of history needs correcting. I thought that the 56 years of cloudhopper history needs putting into print in one place, and so I have decided (probably foolishly), to write my first ever book. The grand idea is to spend the first six months collating the knowledge from all the great and good who have influenced the hopper progression from the early days of Ed Yost and Don Piccard right up to the current day utilising all the knowledge that is out there before the people concerned are no longer on this earth to tell their tales. So Far I have gained the promises of Per Lindstrand, Don Piccard, Robin Batchelor, Chris Dunkley, Phil Dunnington, Peter Bish and Robin Batchelor amongst those who have agreed to help with contributions. I have gone public with this project simple for one reason alone. I

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would ask that anyone who feels they can contribute to the entity to contact me with their suggestions. The email address as ever is steve.roake33@gmail.com.

Other individuals who have been asked to help include Dave Such, Colin Prescott and Greg Winker. Progress reports will feature as and when I achieve them.

2, Essential Extras-

Whilst in Mondovi Italy, Mark Stelling pointed out to me a Tim Wilkinson essential extra that he thought would be useful to people. Basically it is an old basket pole cut down to approximately a 4-inch length, and then machined over the first inch and a half down to about 15mm diameter. What you end up with is a fuel tank popper. Quite a useful adaption of an old part and recycled for use.

3, The Features Section

The Icicle Refrozen Meet by Steve Roake.

The second of January saw the inaugural running of the Icicle refrozen balloon meet under new management. The old Icicle balloon meet was very successfully run over numerous years by the Dante group and so to transfer the event to a new venue under the 3-4-40 balloon club stewardship was a big deal and whilst the weather was foul and precluded any flying, the actual event in itself was a roaring success and was well attended. The new venue was the Donnington Grove Hotel near Newbury in Berkshire and impressive it was too as you drove up a long meandering drive through a golf course to the quaint oldie woldie Hotel. The trade show had secured the return to ballooning of Lindstrand technologies Ltd and its founder and CEO Per Lindstrand had agreed to be the after dinner speaker encouraging 111 folks to sign up for the dinner.

In terms of manufacturer presence, besides LBL, both Kubicek and Cameron Balloons were present and Ultramagic had space allocated but failed to appear due to illness of Richard Penny the UK dealer.

The people involved with the organisation has done a terrific job with the logistics and even the prices of food at the venue were reasonable. The only slight criticism would be that



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probably the space for the stall holders needs a rethink for 2017 as the majority of people thought that it was a little cramped and more space would benefit all concerned. In specific terms of our sector of the marketplace, there was plenty to talk about. Cameron balloons were delivering two versions of their Millennium bottom end with a beautiful all black example for Martin Freeston and the ex demo version from G-CIJJ going to Colin Butter. Whilst both of these deliveries were great for Cameron's, it left them short of a bottom end for Nick Purvis who wanted to take the ultralight O-31 to Mondovi. This didn't happen and obviously asap they will build another demo bottom end but they are very busy currently.

Other good news happening whilst at the event, Martin Freeston sold on his old hopper proving that if you price something at the right level it will sell easily.



Martin Freeston with new millennium bottom end



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Speaking to Per Lindstrand, he confirmed that in time LBL will return to the hopper market. When I pointed out that the company had manufactured some 99 models over the years (84 in the UK and 15 in the USA), he was unaware that nearly 9% of all sales were in this sector of ballooning. Whilst not exactly in our area, during his speech which was themed on what he had accomplished in the years since he got out of LBL Ltd, he teased the audience with a photograph of a new burner system. Logically I would say that once they get into balloons smaller than the current 70,000 cubic foot lowest in the range currently, then I expect the new burner to feature.

In conclusion, whilst there was no flying, the fact that the event took place was a credit to the organisers. The speaker was an inspired choice and 111 people attended with all the hotel rooms occupied. If next year is as good as the first attempt, then its going to go from strength to strength.

Steve Roake

Mondovi – the Epiphany Meet by Steve Roake

In January I had the opportunity to join Team Zufl with my good friend Mark Stelling at the annual Mondovi Epiphany Balloon Meet. This year for the first time in many years it didn't clash with the Icicle meet and so quite a few brits ventured to Northern Italy where the weather was a balmy 12 degrees Celsius. Light winds and a total lack of snow in the area made sure that the was a very pleasant experience. Three very enjoyable flights over a three-day break ensured that the whole team returned home satisfied with their antics. Phil Dunnington flew G-TOHS Cameron V-31 on the Friday morning (which is based locally). This was the only free flight of the weekend but not the only hopper activity.

On the Sunday morning the weather wasn't great for free flying in the morning, and the organisers canned the lift, however Mark had previously chatted with the very affable Gianni Aimo about getting a rare duo chariot envelope out for the UK contingency to see. Being a true gent, he had agreed to get the envelope and tether it for the throng. G-BYJX is a 2003 vintage Cameron Concept 70 which has a total of only 60 hours on its logbook. Used exclusively over a Cameron Duo Chariot bottom end, the envelope belayed its age.

Gianni who loves both flying Hoppers and duo's also spoke



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of a Cameron H-34 that he has and was persuaded to get that out of the store for a cold inflation as he realised that enthusiastic people would appreciate the efforts. G-OBLU has been in storage for some time and has flown less than 20 hours' total time. The telephone company who used to own it were bought out and ironically so was their vendor. The subsequent owners then proceeded to go broke, and so the ownership dilemma has stopped the balloon from being used regularly since. Gianni thinks it will at some stage go on the Italian light weight register.



Gianni Aimo's Concept 70 G-BYJX.



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As you can see from this view G-OBLU is in lovely condition.



A great way to spend a foggy morning in Mondovi.



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Call me indulgent but I just had to have a photograph with the man himself, so here we are together, Gianni Aimo and moi.



Capturing the moment with Gianni Aimo in Mondovi



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The "Bucket List- trip to Mecca" by Steve Roake

Approximately three years ago I met "The Messiah". Simply put, I was introduced to the Adrian Newey of Ballooning. A quiet simply spoken man who when he said something, you knew you had to listen. Not often in life I am taken back by someone, but in this case, this individual has single handedly influenced probably more people than any other within the business. Three glorious days of picking his brains whilst attending a wet balloon festival in Ireland and I was convinced that his ideas were sound and that his company had me wanting to make a trip to visit his home and see the scene of where the genius works.

I followed this meeting of minds with an idea to make sure that his talents were honoured by the BBAC and so embarked on a quest to ensure his talents were recognised and after two years saw the award of 35 year's service to ballooning with a BBAC diploma. This legend of the lighter than air world lives just outside Mondovi in Italy and so during my January trip to the Epiphany balloon meet I had finally the chance to visit Mecca and go visit my good friend Paolo Bonnano.

This was to be the highlight of my long weekend and I have to say I wasn't disappointed when I got to see the hallowed workshop where the magic takes place. The list of things that this man has invented for ballooning is as long as your arm and there seems to be no diminishing of his efforts as he gets older. This is the man who has embroidered his signature on his own branded solo hoppers and duo chariots with at least 15 of the former and 10 of the latter delivered worldwide utilising the brilliant powerplus burner system.

Paolo and Nicole's Home is always open to visitors and so with great excitement I entered the bespoke workshop where the magic takes place. There amongst the multitude of hoppers and duo's awaiting dispatch were all the signs of ongoing development including the mark 31 burner system for Ultramagic Limited. When Paolo tells you that most burners are still "shit" and that the unburnt gas you get in the top of your Envelope seriously degrade the fabric to the point that you can lose up to 200 hours in life just because the efficiency of the burner is limiting the fabric life. Paolo who is the headline designer of our generation when it comes to burners, talks of the co-ander effect and how much better burners can be. He has a



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wealth of experience with Cameron blast valves, Sirocco burners and latterly with an exclusive deal with Ultramagic in Spain. The workshop is more than the sum of its parts and the tooling that Paolo has made to ensure continuity of performance and repeated consistency has to be seen to be believed.



Nicole, relaxed, sits in one of Paolo's hoppers.

The heart of the workshop revolves around a beautiful lathe and adjacent milling machine. The story of how he acquired them in itself is a master of persistence over adversary, and how he got



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a real bargain by constantly asking the former owner for them at a decent price. With these two simple tools the maestro had the ability to create the tooling required to match his designs and come up quality levels that manufacturers repeatedly seek. The coils for example on the Mark 31 burner are consistently exactly the same spacing and the burner itself comes apart for servicing with just four screws removed. Ease of maintenance is a key part of the latest design.



Mark 31 Burners by Paolo Bonnano.

Paolo was delighted to show us all the things he is currently working on including a brilliant adaptation of his duo chariot redesigned to suit paraplegic flyers. His solution to the problem of how a person in a wheel chair can complete the whole process of inflating a balloon for flight comes in a remarkable frame which twists to allow the chair bound pilot to inflate with the burners and then transfer to the flying position with the unit above their head as is the usual case. Simple solutions to complex problems come easily to Paolo who has got the complete bottom end down to a very usable 70kgs weight with the ability to attach up to four fuel tanks for extended range. The simplicity of the solution belies the thought process that was required to



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effectively come up with a workable design that could consistently deliver what the remit required. I like his straight talking approach to what is right and what isn't. Some might say that his work is over engineered for mass production techniques, but you cannot fault the quality of the finish of the parts.



The Paraplegic Duo bottom end with wheels for easy extraction. I have to say that for me, the opportunity to see the great man's work in the environment where he formulates the answers was and is a great delight and lived up and probably exceeded all of my expectations. Luckily for Paolo and Nicole they live in Italy and I'm in the UK otherwise I think I could learn a great deal from the grand master as his apprentice, (I think they would be sick of the sight of me). As an engineer you really appreciate quality design and packaging and with the wealth of experience that this Italian genius has in his sphere of ballooning, you leave the property wondering what else he has inside his brain waiting to bring to the marketplace. Next time I return to Mondovi I must arrange to fly the super light weight blue 28,000k hopper that weighs 28kgs that belongs to Nicole. It was sat invitingly in the loft area of the workshop tempting me. If we could only eradicate the problems of taking Annex two balloons to other European countries I

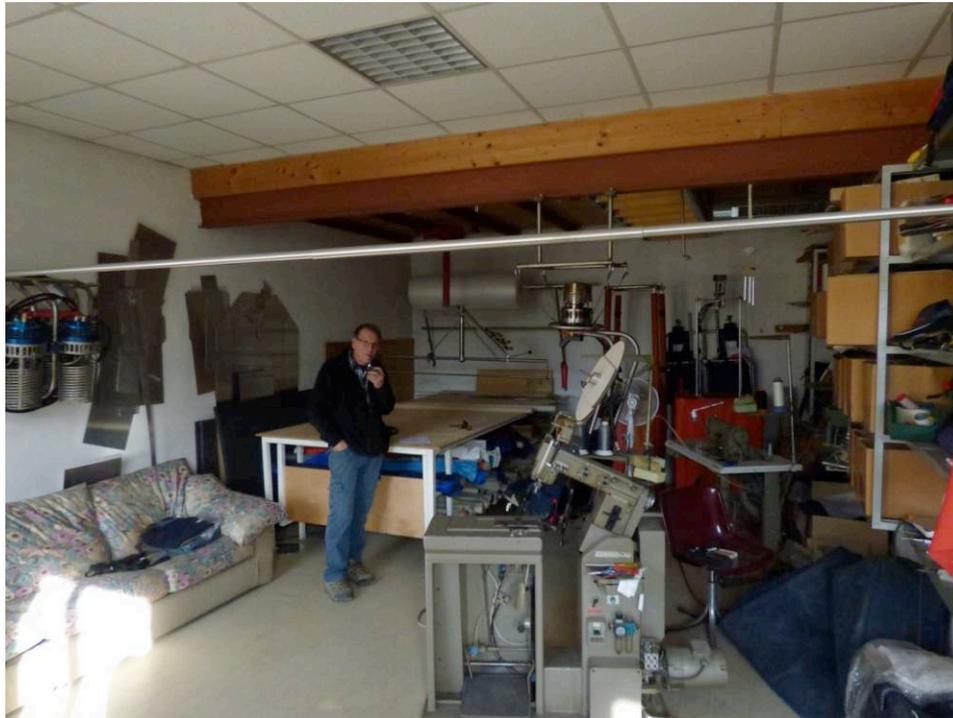


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would buy a Bonnano Clouthopper myself.



The Man with characteristic pipe in hand in the cutting room.

All photos by Steve Roake.

Adrian Brown goes Back to school

Mid January Adrian Brown decided to take an opportunity to fly his first flight of the year in his Cameron Clouthopper. In a very calm set of conditions he took off from Bassingbourn village flying for approximately one hour in near perfect conditions landing around 8-40am in the grounds of the local primary school. Little was he to know that the feat would feature on the local BBC news . The event was a neat way of promoting one man ballooning to the future generations of pilots. The accompanying video of the flight is listed below.



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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-35354768>

or as seen from the pilot's perspective.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/cloudhoppers/#>

The textbook landing in G-BZBT Cameron H-34 named Helios clearly caused a stir with the children on the frosty morning.

4, Homebuilding –

Right now this section of the Newsletter is empty. I'm happy and delighted to include your project news in whatever stage of progress you have achieved. Please send me your contributions for future inclusion.

5, Interesting Photos.



Jonathan Harris sent in this sensational photo from Chateau D'Oex Balloon festival in Switzerland. As you can see Conditions were ideal for a spot of tethering . Once the venue for multiple Cloudhopper flying activities, this year's event featured a couple of flights with also Lindstrand Technologies also hopping .



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Proving that a good product , priced sensibly always sells , this 90's vintage Cloudhopper bottom end recently sold for good money . Martin Freeston's twist grip hopper found very quickly a new home in Belgium.



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6. Gallery Pages –

Your editor's choice of new and interesting hoppers and duo's active in the world of ballooning.



Keith and Debbie Sproul have just free flown for the first time their new Cameron Duo Chariot. The purple beauty was delivered over the Christmas break and compliments Keith's home built envelope called Indecision.

The last few days of January saw the acquisition of Cameron H-34 Cloudhopper G-BYNW by joint owners Mark Stelling and Steve Roake. The 1999 vintage ex "Energis" sponsored balloon has only 80 hours' total time in the logbook of which a paltry



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6hours 35mins is of free flying. The pair intend to reverse this trend with the intention to initially fly it under a Cloudhopper bottom end but in time acquiring a mini basket set up which Mark will utilise.



G-BYNW Cameron H-34 with former owner Ian Ashpole.



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7, Event News

Little and Large Solo Meet 2016 by Dave Such

Friday 3rd (evening), Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th June 2016 at Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre, Pidley, PE28 3DF

We are delighted to announce that following a thoroughly enjoyable 2015 event, we have been invited back to Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre - www.lakeside-lodge.co.uk - at Pidley, near Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire by David Hopkins for our 2016 event. We will be running the event on Friday 3rd, Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th June 2016. This event is being organised by Dave Such with support from David Hopkins and John Tyrrell.

This private meet will be run as a friendly, no pressure and enjoyable event that allows the freedom to fly in a great area in all directions with friendly farmers.

Everyone is welcome but to fly your balloon – Little (or Large) – IT MUST BE FLOWN SOLO and your envelope having a MAXIMUM VOLUME 80,000 cu ft.

As in previous years, we will be awarding the Derry Moore Trophy commissioned in 2014 for our first event.

We encourage all those who love solo ballooning – whether that be in a Cloudhopper, a Sky Chariot or in a basket – to attend, placing the emphasis on fun flying and socialising.

Event Information

- The entrance fee is £20 per balloon.
- Places are **restricted to 25 balloons** so please apply early to avoid disappointment.
- Free flights proposed for Friday 29th May (evening – for those arriving early enough), Saturday 30th May (morning and evening) and Sunday 31st May (morning).

We will have refuelling facilities and propane cost will be



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announced at the first briefing. Cylinders will be weighed before and after filling. Payment by cheque or cash only before you leave the event. The Bar and Restaurant is open daily offering an extensive range of Food and Drink (alcoholic drinks are served from 10:00am) and last food orders are taken at 9pm (later if an evening flight has taken place) with the Bar closing at 11pm. Free camping and caravan pitches - shower and toilet facilities are available within the Lakeside Lodge complex.

Accommodation - there are a total of 64 en-suite bedrooms located throughout the Lakeside Lodge complex. 30 twin rooms, 28 rooms with a double and single bed, 4 double rooms and 2 singles. To make a reservation for accommodation please call Lakeside Lodge on 01487 740540 or email reception@lakeside-lodge.co.uk

For further information and to request an entry pack, please email littleandlargemeet@btinternet.com

We look forward to welcoming you to the Little (and Large) Solo Meet 2016 at Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre in June.

Dave Such

Grass Roots Meet 2016 is on with Ultramagic UK sponsorship. By Rob Cross.

We're delighted to invite you to this year's event.

The format remains similar to previous years with two exceptions:

1. We will not be rolling the event if the weekend of 8th -11th September is not flyable. Your entry will be carried forward to 2017.
2. We have added two extra flying slots to the event - Thursday PM and Friday AM.

The entry form is available from our website together with further details at www.grassrootsballooning.org.uk.

Deadline for entries is 15th August.



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And Finally

Facebook membership continues to rise with the current level of 787 increasing by 3 in the last month. Let's keep the trend going and aim for the 1000 mark.

Steve Roake

All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your editor. Please forward them to steve.roake33@gmail.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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