



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 110

November / December 2018

Greetings Everyone and Happy Xmas from me.

The end of another year and a time for reflection on what has happened during 2018 and how it fared compared to other years. It's always interesting to see in the fullness of time whether or not the sport of Cloudhopping is continuing to grow and Whether or not new blood is still creeping into our world.

In a world obsessed with Negativity, global warming, Brexit and everything else that is sent to depress you, it's great to see solid growth in our sector of ballooning and amongst this is the rise of Home building or Annex 2 as it now seems to be called. It's also very rewarding to see that it is still possible to enter the sport at a reasonable entry level point without breaking the bank.

With a lack of content generally due to the prevailing weather being pants, I will try to dissect the year in manageable bits with objective critique as the year progressed.

Just as a general aside, many thanks to all those who have actively supported the Newsletter in 2018, without whom this publication simply wouldn't exist. Without further rhetoric let's see what we have for you in this edition.

- The year in review
- Personal Highlights
- Paolo Bonnano gains presence.
- Brian Jones Duo sells really quickly.
- New Balloons
- Second hand balloons update
- Interesting photos.
- Dates for your diary

Please send to me your items for inclusion in future editions of the newsletter to the email address below.

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1, Ed Speak- why conduct a review of the year?

Probably a question some of you would think, is why conduct a review of the year in this magazine? I justify this (if I need to), as a time for reflection, taking stock of where our sector of the sport is, and a chance to highlight the best things that happened during the year and how production has gone by the manufacturers.

For me as an engineer, I think you can't argue with data and as such once in print, it's out there for all to see. From this you see trends and you also can see who is bothered about us and more importantly who isn't.

Then you have the ability to relate things comparably with previous year's and without going into the data I think 2018 is actually another year where I perceive that we have once again expanded as an entity. New balloon sales are vibrant and second-hand demand remains very high with demand still outstripping supply and whilst a few have drifted away from the sport there are always willing people ready and able to step into their shoes and take up the mantle.

You can also see the emergence of trends when you look into things, such as recently when a Duo chariot went onto the UK register and then blow me, a second-hand example came up for grabs, the demand was amazing. The number of times one of these comes up for grabs is so rare I can't actually remember the last one that came to market.

The funny thing is that on Duo chariots, only the Poalo Bonnano version swivels and all the others require envelopes with turning vents. Love them or hate them, in balloons of our sizes you need to prepare for your landing so far in advance that it does make you wonder the worth of a lift limited craft having them, and for me personally in this phase of the flight I want all available lift potential for exactly that purpose.

Finally, festive greetings to you all, hope you survive the holiday break and hopefully see some of you at the forthcoming Icicle Refrozen Meet in January.

Steve Roake

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2, Essential Extras – the one for 2018.

While this section is more often than not empty, I still believe that the moments of contribution warrant its inclusion. If I had to pick the best from 2018, it would have to be Andy Booth's quick release mechanism for one simple reason. Having flown hoppers for years tying off at the bottom of the seat structure, this very simple adjustment puts the rope in between two of the four flying wire carabiners and, in an instant, transfers the point of leverage put upon the craft as you inflate making transfer to the seat unit so much easier. Once you have one of these amazing devices the idea of returning to the previous way of doing things seems insane and retrospective in its nature. The most essential extras tend to be of simple design with the emphasis of just making your life easier. At the end of the day that's exactly what this section is all about. Thanks to everyone who sent in submissions, keep them coming.

3, The Features Section. –

2018 – A review of the Year by Steve Roake.

I always expected 2018 to be a quieter year than 2017 since that was the year we attempted a world record and how to follow that up was always on my mind. In the end I think it was plenty busy enough with enough variety to make it interesting.

January started in the usual traditional way with The Icicle Refrozen Meet. Whilst it wasn't the most classic of events due to the weather, it was always a good place to catch up on hopper related news. Martyn Turner bought G-DNGR at the event from Graham Bell. The usual alpine hopper photos were restricted to one submission from Linda Crossland Clarke of her sold Um H-42 to a new Swiss owner at Chateau D'oex festival, but like all alpine photographs she looked spectacular.

Moving forward to March, and at the BBAC agm your editor was recognised for services to one man ballooning receiving a Diploma.

The reassurance that your peers recognise your efforts within this sphere of ballooning is simply lovely to know. You never fully know if people think that the work you produce is worthy and this kind of confirms it as being good enough.

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In May I was delighted to be able to report on a hopper festival located in Australia with some great photographs coming out of the event which coincided with the delivery of two new Cameron O type balloons. The event clearly sewed a seed as a third delivery would also join them by years end.

Moving forward to June and through hard work Peter Gray and Stuart Skinner re introduced the SoloMeet + Black Horse Balloon club hopper festival and whilst there may have only been 4 entrants , seeds were sewn that will genminate next year with a bigger more intensive event that will pull in more entrants because the formulae is so right. This is simply a great event which focusses on the flying and commaraderie of the exponents. Good food , a common bond between friends, and some simply beautiful flying over picture perfect flora and forna will ensure its success. The intimacy is the key to its enduring appeal. I will be returning .

Next Hopper event was Bedale (a small niche meet held in Yorkshire), which constantly attracts a few hoppers. You might ask why? The answer is simple once again. The ingredients that make up the event are perfect . Great venue, good sociability with togetherness amongst the top criteria , fantastic scenery and a welcome second to none .



Glowing the brand at Bedale.

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Next Significant hopper event of the year was the inaugural Midlands Balloon festival where a number of craft took advantage of the lovely conditions to box around the grounds of Ragley Hall, Warwickshire.

The annual Bristol Balloon Festival took place in challenging conditions but the 40th edition of the event saw at least two significant launch slots. There was a small hopper contingent who exploited the weather slot on the Sunday morning to enjoy the opportunity in front of large crowds. Tethering on a 40 foot line you got the best of views whilst some vintage craft were reunited with the expectant crowds.

Come September it was time for the largest event in the UK calendar with the Exclusive cup at Longleat Safari Park. A small but valued hopper contingent exploited the interesting conditions to fly out of the park North Easterly. Some extensive curl over curtailed longer flights but amongst the fold was a new Cameron O-31 (G-CKYX), for John Tyrrell who took the opportunity to sort his new craft and free fly it.

Very shortly after Longleat, it was time for the 35th International One Man Meet held in a lovely part of the country, The Cotswolds. All the usual suspects were joined by a frenchman Jacques Bernadin who came over to fly his Cameron O-31 (F-HHJB), especially with the group. This turned out to be the best supported event in the history of the OMM. And some stunning flying took place with fantastic socialising that will be hard to beat next year. The thing I liked best about the whole event was the return of some old blood and the arrival of some new exponents to the sport keen to get involved.

I truly believe that the essence of one man ballooning hinges on the social side of flying.

But what normally is the final event of the year, wasn't this year. Oh no. Tim Wilkinson who beats all his drums for homebuilding, held the first ever Annex 2 meet at his home airfield of Sackville lodge. Of those who attended, some 25% were hoppers with two being of orphaned or homebuild origin. Whilst this was a statement of fact. Here we are, this is what we do, why don't you come and join us. It also was a chance to engage with Mark Shortman from the CAA who gave guidance on what is and isn't possible within homebuilding parameters.

Simply put, it was a meeting of like minded people who collectively will go further together broadening the appeal to other cost conscious and determined enthusiasts who want to get their

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position considered at the table on meetings concerning ballooning going forward. I see this as a real growth area in our sport and cannot rule out joining them at some stage in the future. It was a joy to see sixteen balloons take to the air in celebration of liberation of ballooning. Whilst this will never replace manufactured products, it does give an alternative entry point into the sport.

So that was 2018, what of 2019?

Personal Highlights of 2018 By Steve Roake.

Its always difficult to single out things that were your highlights of 2018 but for me one flight stood out more than any other and came at a time when I needed to be inspired again with ballooning. From October 2017 until June 2018 I hadnt flown. This was a conscious choice to try and gain back my undoubted enthusiasm for flying, having decided that 2018 would be primarily a year to get more involved with classic motorbiking and let the flying take a back seat. Clearly being back meant nerves and attending the Black Horse Solo Meet+ gave me the perfect chance to enjoy getting back into the sport with Andy Booth, Mike Woodcock and Tim Orchard / Marie Banks. What I wasn't prepared for was a flight of my life which involved flying from the Black Horse Pub(always special), heading out some 7-8nm following Spencer Craize in the Virgin Rides balloon, deciding to then drop down and seek a nice place to land, and watching the flight develop into a return to the launch field and a successful attempt to land close to the launch field. I had watched from about 3000ft both Andy and Mike testing the ability to box back towards the field but was intent on flying a minimum of one hour with the idea of going longer because I have a goal for G-CJWY where the average flight time for the craft will equate to over one hour typically. The way the flight progressed just reminded me of all those reasons why you get involved in hopping and the icing on the cake was to even get close to returning to the field, let alone the concentration required to actually get into the car park. "Elation" wasn't the term for how I felt after the experience.

I was pumped up big time. It was also very pleasing to be able to help sew a small seed in Stuart Skinners head which ultimately saw him join the throng of hopper owners later in the year. Im sure

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Stuart will fly himself at all fools in 2019, ensuring that the line up increases in participants.

Clearly another strong contender for Highlight of the year was when Roger Kunnert gave me my Diploma from the BBAC for services to one man ballooning. I wasn't looking for acceptance of my contribution to hopping but its always nice when someone (thank you whoever you were), nominates you for an award. Passion for flying hoppers is what drives me on and I hope in some small way you find my words infectious.

Anyway enough about me, thanks to all who made 2018 a vintage year and have a great christmas from me.

Steve Roake

Paolo Bonnano gains presence.

Anyone who hasn't heard of Paolo Bonnano in ballooning must have had their head stuck in the sand. This demi god of burner designs and influence with at least two manufacturers, has over the years built his own bespoke designs as a Solo or Duo. I was very fortunate a few years ago to go meet the man in his hallowed workshops and get a feel for all he stands for and the thinking behind his great designs.

With the liberalisation of Annex 2 within the UK, he tends to be the go to guy for burners for homebuilders who want tough, powerful, dependable creations simply as much as anything since there is a real shortage of supply for suitable powerplants. The "power plus" is just a fine piece of engineering which is very strong in delivery with a great narrow flame pattern, just right for hoppers. The other thing about his designs, is that he has thought out about the application of both products. For example, the Duo is the only one in the marketplace that swivels (thus not losing valuable lift capacity), and the solo has a really neat set of flying wires just above the burner frame that ensures that the envelope mouth is as far as possible from the flame pattern.

In 2018 he has gained a presence in the UK with support from two exponents of his wares who both know a good thing when they see them. Mark Shemilt has matched a Bonnano Duo bottom end over

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his Eco Fabric S-50 Envelope to create a formidable machine that just belies belief when you see how long it can fly for using minimum fuel. G-CKUK just flies forever .

The other person who has Purchased Bonnano wares is Tim Wilkinson who is a very accomplished Home Builder in his own right. Tim rightly sings the praises of the Bonnano Solo (a machine I got to fly at the Bolland Meet a few years ago). I can see Tim incorporating the Power plus into his own burner frame designs for future application.

You might say – Hey this is only two people! But from small seeds does a market grow and I see potential for plenty more Bonnano products in the UK in the future and potentially see myself as another exponent of the wares for my Annex 2 ambitions.

More information on the Bonnano produce from Paolo or more likely wife Nicola : bonnanoballoons@me.com .

Duo Chariot for sale



Duo Chariot that was for sale recently

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Approximately three weeks ago I was approached by a friend who was selling a Cameron Duo Chariot on behalf of Brian Jones (of Breitling fame). It's always funny when coincidences take place and being on the subject of Duo Chariots with Mark Shemilts Bannano one I thought the timing was rather apt. This very well appointed Cameron was bought new by Brian and came equipped with two tanks, the inflation fan and a purpose built trailer that stored the lot.

As with anything like this there is a rarity factor. The interest in this item was immense which reflects how few of these come onto the marketplace and at £8000 all in this represented a considerable saving compared to a new one direct from the manufacturer.

Some "tyre kickers" just wanted to knock the price down but as expected the item sold for full asking price within a very short period of time proving the adage that if you think its good enough, don't dilly dally and offer what the thing is worth.

Lets hope the new owner enjoys the purchase.

4.Homebuilding Section-

Whilst this section of the newsletter has suffered from famine or feast syndrome, I still think it is very important to consider this side of hopping and would encourage all of you who potentially want to build your own hoppers to consider sharing the process with others as it really does help enthuse people who would otherwise still be sitting on the fence. The simple things that you complete in your build process could be the stumbling block that others have struggled over and cant see the wood for the trees.

Those of you who have contributed in 2018 are now seeing the fruits of your labours and I would just like to say thanks for sharing the journey with everyone else.

The undoubtedly positive point on this subject is the response we have recently seen towards Annex 2 ballooning and the surge of enthusiasm in general towards getting down and dirty with fabric.

Going forward, into 2019, with all that is trying to be achieved by the Tim Wilkinson group of people, is the establishment of an entity who gives homebuilders a voice and fights for recognition

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within the circles of authority and breaking down of the barriers which have been put up so far by the Euro authorities with regard to freedom of movement of these craft.

Advertisement

CAMERON BALLOONS

Fact 1
Easy to inflate and pack away, Cameron Hopper units are extremely simple to operate.

Fact 2
The Cameron Hopper Base Unit is a fun way to fly while having reliability, ease-of-use and comfort at its core.

Fact 3
Hoppers operate at a fraction of the running cost of a conventional hot air balloon.

Fact 4
Superb for those who want a striking visual impact for marketing campaigns and promotions.

Fact 5
Extra harness padding enhances comfort and suits all pilot heights.

THE HOPPER

Small but significant benefits make a world of difference to your flying experience.
Our design and build technology combines safety with ease-of-use and exceptional comfort.

A padded head-rest, enhanced cushioning, adjustable seat, and an adjustable light-weight, foot-rest ensures pilot comfort.
Stainless-steel hinges, on all Base Units, make transportation and storage even more convenient; the whole back-frame system folds and

packs neatly, even if you prefer to leave the harness attached.
The larger "rear-view" mirrors with an independent rapid-cut-off fuel system allow the Pilot to control the Hopper effectively and safely.
There is even a pocket, a perfect space for a coat or tasty snacks!

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5 Interesting Photos



Markus Ekeroos joins us in wishing you seasonal cheer.

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6, New Allocations This Month / Changes of Ownership

Unsurprisingly with people's attention turning to the expense of this time of year there have been no significant changes of ownership, however as you'll read in the next section there isn't a lack of choice. The only brand-new Hopper allocation I know about is VH-WNA which is a Cameron O-31 with can 12174 which had its first flight in October in Australia. Congratulations to proud owner Nathan Allen.

7, Second Hand Movements

Well now is the time if you want a second-hand hopper. Currently there are five envelopes for sale on the open market ranging from £1250 for the one on the Zebedee list to £7000 for an almost new one on the site balloons4sale.eu which boasts no less than four choices. A perfect late Christmas present I'd say. Catching up on movements, G-LEAU may have slipped by in your knowledge, but this lovely Cameron N-31 is now with Martin Axtell. As you will see in the Gallery section, G-CKYU the ex-Belgium LBL31A (ex OO-BXX) has been flying in Mondovi Italy and proves that some older envelopes have got still great potential left in them.

8, Manufacturer / Event News/ Industry News

Hopper sales in 2018 remained buoyant with the most productive being Cameron Balloons. They achieved 6 completed sales with a stock O-26 still available for purchase currently. Surprisingly half of those sales went to Australia which is a country that traditionally hasn't taken much to hoppers so let's hope it is a sign of things to come with continued growth.

Lindstrand Technologies gained a sale during 2018 with G-HEAL (a series 1-31), which when inspected by myself at Longleat (where Mark Warne allowed graciously myself to get it out), looked very well built.

Ultramagic Balloons Ltd hoppers fared less well, plenty changing hands second hand but no new sales, but they did gain market share with G-CKUK the interesting Eco fabric Duo envelope which Mark Shemilt bought, and I look forward to reviewing in the future when we can get together and go fly her.

On event news, clearly by this stage of proceedings, you should all be aware of the excellently run **Icicle Refrozen Meet** at

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Donnington Grove Hotel in the first weekend of January. The annual gathering usually involves a few hearty souls flying balloons and a trade show which is always worth a look.

News is filtering through about events for 2019 and one of the first out of the blocks is the **2nd Midlands Air Festival**. A change of location sees its second year based at Arbury Park Nuneaton Warwickshire, and going on last year's initial event it should be popular. I believe spaces will be capped this time around so don't leave it too late to get your interest registered. Coordinate with James McDonald for more information at balloons@midlandsairfestival.com. Dates are 17th-19th May inclusive. Other known event dates are as follows:

19th-22nd April All fools Meet (run by Black Horse Balloon Club). Held at Great Missenden over Easter weekend at the Black Horse Pub HP169AX.

Solo Meet + Same venue as above 31st May -2nd June.

For both if you are interested contact Peter Gray at Peter@bmss.biz for information.

Coming Soon....

Had a chat the other day to my Good friend in America Greg Winker. He has told me about a recent find of his that he is going to share with us about a hopper he has uncovered with a very unusual history.

The craft in question is very old. Some 47 years old to be precise and according to Greg is in very good condition. The balloon in question has been used by its former owner but not for a very long time. Naturally I don't want to spoil the fun of the whole story because it is better to hear the full tale in its entirety rather than bits and pieces from me so I'm just going to leave you guessing with a small nugget of information about who the former owner was.

Hopefully I will have the full story for the next edition of the Cloudhoppers Newsletter, but for now all I can say is that the former owner of said balloon was Walt Disney.

More Next time when we celebrate 15 continuous years of Cloudhopping News and the forum etc.

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Advertisement

Cameron "Stock Hoppers" for sale exclusively to Cloudhoppers.org. These two beauties are both available with the regular discount using the code CAM01SJR and come in either 26,000 or 31,000 sizes to suit all. Prices start from £7335 excluding VAT and delivery for the O-26.

To purchase the current offerings please contact Cameron Balloons directly on +44(0)117 9637216, quoting the code "CAM01SJR" and ask to speak to either Craig or Simon about the Cameron O Types that are on the Cloudhoppers page.

O-26 - Stock 1 of 1 CAMERON BALLOONS

V20.954 Envelope SUPERLIGHT

Fabric Colours Used: PS ORANGE, PS NAVY, PS DEEP BLUE, PS ROYAL BLUE, PS MARINE RED, PS BRASSON RED

Artwork: - August 2018 Designer: WO

Scoop / Nomex: YELLOW Load Tape Colour: White Black

This visual is for guidance purposes only. Because of the limitations of graphic representation, colour scheme and artwork will be defined by the final order document.

O-31 1 of 1 CAMERON BALLOONS

V20.435 ALL SUPERLIGHT

Fabric Colours Used: BRASSON RED, SAFFLOWER, GOLD, ROYAL BLUE, PURPLE, LIME, GREEN

Artwork: - December 2017 Designer: AB

Scoop / Nomex: Yellow Load Tape Colour: White Black

This visual is for guidance purposes only. Because of the limitations of graphic representation, colour scheme and artwork will be defined by the final order document.

Cameron Super Lightweight O types are currently the best-selling lightweight hopper envelopes available and whilst most purchases Require three-month lead times minimum, these are a lot easier to purchase and are available immediately by request.



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7. Gallery Pages –

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



LBL 31A G-CKYU is c/n 140, seen here in Mondovi Italy.
Photo with thanks to Graham Dey.

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Nathan Allen's lovely new Cameron O-31 VH-WNA. c/n is 12174.

Facebook membership continues to rise with the current level of 1235 (correct to 13th December), 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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