



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number **60**

November / December 2012

Welcome to the 60th Cloudhopper News!

Hello again People, and happy xmas from me. Who would have thought we would be here celebrating five years of publishing of our newsletter and yet another milestone falls to Cloudhopper News? This is a great achievement that supports the view I had back in 2004 that this side of ballooning needed promoting and had a niche amongst the other periodicals where we could promote and harness the drive and desires of hopper fans to increase our awareness within the sport. The only disappointment, I feel is that those within the workings of the sport haven't recognised our contribution and whilst I haven't actively sought recognition, it would have been nice to be given the nod of approval from our peers for the work done so far.



Just a beautiful hopper shot – with vibrant colours.

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1, Ed-Speak – More Plans!

Last month I spread the idea of linking the 30th OMM with our friends from XLTA in America and having a super event to capitalise on the Thirtieth anniversary. Already I've had confirmation and commitment from one attendee to the event and I'm convinced we will attract more interest. What we have to do is find the perfect venue and assist Phil Dunnington with his task of getting the best event.

I would bring to your attention a nice link to our activities from last month. We were joined by Keith Ogden and Kevin Sullivan who run a website called Aviagraphs .They posted some fine images via the airport website at www.welshpoolairport.co.uk and hit the link on the bottom right hand side, or alternatively direct at www.aviagraphs.phanfare.com . The folks at Welshpool airport did us a great service so I've sent them a copy of our newsletter and some video content for their own web pages, supporting these kinds of people always assists us should we wish to return in future years. Should you have anything suitable for them please don't hesitate to get in touch with them directly.



With the surge in handy cameras such as the Go Pro range, (yes Santa is aware I want one), my strong desire with developing us a newer website is to utilise more footage from hopping exploits. I even tried my hand just with the I phone 4 at the OMM briefly, but as we all master the use of these items, theoretically we should be able to produce better results.

Please any footage you take, submit to me for inclusion. One area that hasn't yet been tackled is how you put together your kit. Perhaps this is an item for a future project.

With Metz only two seasons away, perhaps between us we can produce some serious footage of hopping in the Lorraine region.



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The scope for furthering our sport projection is limitless, let's utilise the technology to our advantage.

Winter months tend to be the time when most of us fly less. This also tends to be then time of year I struggle most for content in the newsletters, so how about making a concerted effort each and every one of you to produce something worthy that I could include in the newsletter.

Here is an example of something we could run with. I'd like to know what area you would like the manufacturers to concentrate on next in making our hoppers better. Which facet of development needs the most attention? Should every manufacturer for example make the next version of their hopper with a gimbal burner? Let's get some data together that can be passed on for future developments. Trust me, all of them read this.

Steve Roake

2, Essential Extra's / Tech Talk – Tony Jay discusses his Instrument panel

Hopper Instrument Panel

I like gadgets and I often fly through controlled airspace with the hopper. When I bought the hopper a few years ago, I wondered how I would mount my VHF radio; GPS, altimeter and maps in such a way that I could fly stress free though my local airspace. The best inventions are modification of others' ideas, so I made a copy of "the Steve Lacey's" Lindstrand manufactured "lap board".

My version was made from scraps; it is an old conference bag with a sheet of plywood in it to give it rigidity. The bag on the left contains an Icom, a spare battery pack and a pencil. The GPS hooks onto a small loop sewn onto the bag. Zipped inside the bag is a spare striker, spare AA batteries, a spare walkie-talkie and paper maps.

This year's addition was to mount my newly purchased Nexus 7 Android tablet by sewing a cheap eBay case on to the fabric. In the UK, the tablet is loaded up with OS maps overlaid with sensitive areas and airspace, while abroad it just runs Google maps ("cached" for off line use). Should there be a tablet failure; the bull dog clip nicely retains a paper map.



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So not to lose all these electronics, the board is clipped around the crutch harness strap using 2 quick release Fastex clips. The strap does not need to be undone to get out of the hopper harness as being trapped to the lap board might be troublesome.

I've done a few flights now with the tablet based board; I really don't feel I need a paper map – but they are readily accessible in the bag. Being able to zoom-out for planning or zoom-in for details of landing opportunities seems easier to me than refolding a paper map in flight. I don't even feel as if I need a 10 inch tablet, a 7 inch tablet seems to work ok. Should I need to do a fast landing, the case closes over the screen of the tablet.

If you don't need an Airband radio and altimeter on every flight, my solution is definitely overkill. I like it as my lapboard contains all of my flying kit. I also have a walkie-talkie and a striker mounted on the bottom end, and these live inside the bag between flights. As long as I strap on the board before taking off, I know I have everything I need (along with the spares!). I've even taken to using it tied to the side of my 77 basket as a mini map board.

Tony Jay G-EECO



3. The Features Section

Pauline Baker reports from America

Flights & Tethers in Phoenix, Arizona; Amarillo, Texas; Gallup, New Mexico & Albuquerque, New Mexico

As in 2011, Malcolm & I were invited to attend the 2012 Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta as pilots of Joey, one of the Little Bees. Following the Fiesta, we had left our travel schedule open and were subsequently invited to Amarillo in Texas to take part in the 'Up in the Air for Family Care' event with Malcolm flying Lilly and myself flying Joey. We were given the unique opportunity to glow the baby Bee, Joelly, at the famous Cadillac Ranch – the first time that hot air balloons had been allowed on the site. Our tie-off was to one of the Cadillacs, as these were firmly concreted into the ground. Michael Glen, in his Duo-Chair with Zing Aerosports-manufactured envelope, together with his father, Bill, in another of Bob Romaneschi creations, flanked Joelly for the 3 balloon glow.





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Following the Amarillo event, we were invited to Scottsdale, Arizona, to take part in the 'Spooktacular' night glows with the Little Bees at a site unusually named as Salt River Fields at Talking Stick (Pima-Maricopa Indian Community) where the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies baseball teams carry out their Spring training. Two great evenings with flat calm winds allowed all the balloons to stay inflated for over 2 hours, much to the benefit of the thousands of kids who had come 'trick-or-treating'. Each balloon was given multiple boxes of candy (each must have weighed 20-30lbs!) for the kids and the parents, who were bigger kids – the outfits were amazing and some very scary.

Arizona is the home of the Little Bees, one of which is flown by an extraordinary pilot, Michael Glenn. Michael is the World's only paraplegic pilot and Michael flies Joelly, the Baby Bee, under a Duo-Chair (www.rollingpilot.com). Whilst we were in Arizona, Michael kindly offered us the use of his regular balloon and duo-chair, so off we went one beautiful morning to the north end of Phoenix to join the Rainbow Ryders rides balloons, who were launching from the same location. This was great for us newbies to the area as we could use them as piballs.

Before take-off Michael advised that it was best "NOT" to hit any Cacti (Saguaro), as they make a terrible bang when they hit the ground, due to the volume of water retained in these giants. (They are also protected, so definitely not a good idea!). A couple of miles from our launch site lies Cave Creek (where we went horse-riding later that week) and its claim to fame was having the World's tallest cactus (78 feet tall) before it became a casualty in a wind-storm, knocking it to the ground.



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After launch, the views were amazing and the terrain allowed plenty of steerage around the peaks and plenty of opportunity to do some contour flying (trying to avoid the giant thorny things) and we had a lovely hour-plus long flight, landing on a tarmac cul-de-sac a couple of miles from our launch site (with under 10% fuel remaining!). Michael Glen was our chase crew and was there for our landing. Post-flight breakfast was had at the Phoenix Deer Valley Municipal Airport – what a great start to another lovely day in Arizona. The YouTube link to the flight can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9dMCtuX6g4



Rides balloons as pieballs, and Pauline Baker in action



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(Ballooning Socks - essential)



(No lawns to cut here)

After departing Phoenix we stopped off in Gallup, New Mexico to fly the Red Rock Canyon, which has always been a dream of mine. The first flight was in a Viva 90 owned by our good friend Bruce Sidlinger and the second flight was in Peter Procopio's Lindstrand LBL 105A special shape called 'Koshare Gallup'.



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Church Rock in the distance



Heart stopping scenery and colours

To keep this "Hopper related" – we landed on top of the rocks and Malcolm "hopped" out of the balloon to take some amazing photos, wearing bicycle clips, for fear of the balloon taking off again without him, as a helicopter rescue would have been the only way down.





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Our chase truck – 80,000lbs of custom Freightliner. Roadside landings essential.

Our next opportunity to fly came shortly after returning back to Albuquerque, when Malcolm was asked to carry out an annual inspection on a UK-registered balloon. Malcolm was contacted by Graham Bell – who stated that he “supposed we would need to fly the balloon as part of the inspection”. Malcolm said that would not be necessary, however, after getting a bruise on his leg from me, decided to tell Graham that he was correct and we would “have” to fly the balloon ☺. (Graham was surprised at Malcolm’s first reply, so it was all a bit of a giggle.)

Early the next morning, we headed up to the West Mesa to carry out the inspection and to get the balloon – a Cameron Duo-Chair and Kubicek BB20 70,000 cu.ft. envelope – ready for flight. Unlike flying from Fiesta Field, where the landing opportunities to the south are scarce, the West Mesa offers wide-open spaces with opportunities to land on, or alongside, dirt roads allowing easy access for the retrieve crews and no power lines or other hazards. After 40 minutes, we landed on a track, just to the north of the Petroglyph National Monument and Double Eagle airport’s airspace.



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Two flights in two different Duo-Airchairs was an unexpected bonus for our trip to the USA.

My next flight took place on Saturday 24.11.12 in my new "Irish Green" Bonanno hopper details in the next newsletter.

Pauline Baker

4. My interesting Hop- by Tony Bubb

Hopping in Chateau D'Oex

Now old and grey with false teeth and cataracts I only have fairly distant memories of hopping, but will always remember one weekend in Chateaux D'Oex in January 2000. As a private pilot I had flown many major events in UK and abroad, including flying in the Alps, but had never achieved my ambition of gaining an entry to the Chateau D'Oex meet. My wife Pat had been in contact with the Lindstrand factory in relation to her own balloon and when she heard that Mike and Barbara Webb were taking the Lindstrand Hopper to Chateau D'Oex she suggested that we might fly over and join them for a few days.

Mike was supporting Peter Mason and the Financial Times balloon team and Peter had wanted to obtain shots of the Financial Times balloon and the Lindstrand hopper flying out of the Arena in tandem. I had my own Lindstrand hopper and by then had something in the region of 30 hours hopper time as well as



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several hundred hours in our other balloons, so Mike suggested that if Peter flew the Financial Times balloon I could fly the hopper. Although I did not have an entry I had not neglected to bring my licence and log book, so Peter took them to the organisers to do the necessary arm twisting and all was arranged.

Pat was offered a flight in the Financial Times Balloon and had her camera so was able to take shots of me following her out of the Arena.



Tony Bubb- in action at Chateau D'oex



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After a short hop we landed downwind of the Arena and then Peter suggested that pictures be taken of the hopper stacked on top of the FT balloon. The answer was to fly the hopper on a tether but to use the FT crown line to climb to the top. I had not tried this before but it sounded like fun.

After this little stunt I was allowed to join the other passengers in the FT balloon for the flight proper and was able to look down to watch the recovery team packing away the hopper that I had just flown! One of the few times that I have envied the privileges of a commercial pilot.

Tony Bubb

These are the few shots that I have of the event, See below.



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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



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My first cloudhopper Flight by Rick hauffman-

DREAM WELL BALLOONS

Before I start my ballooning adventure story, let me give you a little background to set up the story.

We sometimes have to make life altering choices that are difficult. Those choices can take the wind out of your sails and seriously crush the soul in the process.

Twenty five years ago, in mid to late the 1980's, I was a crew chief for a Balloon ride operation in Orlando Florida. He had 2 balloons for a long time then upgraded to a larger (8 passenger) Cameron around 1989. There were booked flights every flyable day of the week. My job was to chase, and maintain the ground equipment and keep the balloons in clean condition. For every five flights I crewed, I would receive one hour of flight time, with instructions when required. However;

There was always a reason for me not getting my hours of flight. I had all my training requirements and I had passed the written tests. All that was left was my check flight. After months of delays, it became apparent that I was not getting anywhere. I stopped crewing all together and then married life got in the way for the next 16 years. Then work life kept me away from Ballooning. I never did get my license.

Fast forward to April 2010.

I currently have a career in aviation and I work for a large international aviation company as a Quality Contract Specialist. My job takes me all over the world. Every once in a while, I would see balloons beautifully drifting in the distance and I longed for the adventure and peace in my soul that I had once when I had the privilege of flying balloons.

One day in April of 2010, while I was visiting Orlando Florida, I decided to go out and crew for my good friend and flight instructor [way back when]

Skip Pringle and his 'SMILIE' balloon. That was all I needed. I was hooked again. At breakfast after the flight, there was a gathering of other balloonists from that morning. They all talked and shared stories and I listened with a heavy tug of jealousy. Finally I asked the big question. "Does anyone have a small balloon that I can buy"?



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The next day, Skip and I made a pre-buy test flight of a 50,000 CF homemade balloon. After the flight, I forked over the cash and drove off into the sunset.....

Two days later I had a call from my employer and the next week I found myself in Japan for a year, without my balloon.

While I was in Japan, I started to glean several websites looking for balloon gear and stories and pictures and videos and... well I was starving for information and stories about ballooning.

One day I stumbled upon Aerostatz.com and saw [to my eyes] the most beautiful AX-3 envelope. I immediately made an international [Magic Jack] phone call to Mike Emich in Toledo Ohio. I had to have that envelope. On the phone we made the arrangements for bank funds and I was happy. 3 days later I had an email from Mike asking if I would also be interested in his basket and burner? Well—Heck yes! Now all we had to do was get everything to my storage unit with all the rest of my belongings.

Four months later, I was finally home [in the USA] again. The first thing I did after getting off the airplane was go to the storage and unpack my new Toy. Two days later, I was in Orlando Florida flying along with Skip Pringle in 'Smile' and Orlando Balloon Rides new 425,000 CF mega-monster balloon. I was in heaven again. A couple of weeks later I was sent to Italy for three months and all my ballooning stayed back home.

But, once again, I started to get hungry for ballooning info and videos and pictures and stories, and once again I opened Aerostatz.com and saw to my amazement a Cloud Hopper for sale.

I made another international phone call to Patrick Smith of Tailwinds over Frederick and we made the arrangements for bank funds transfers. I was now an owner of a Lindstrand Type 1 Lower and a 42,000 CF homemade envelope.

Several weeks later, I was home again. I made the long drive from Arizona to Maryland to pick up my new Cloud Hopper. Now I was ready for my return trip West and the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. But first, I stopped off in Orlando Florida again to team up with Skip Pringle and start out for AIBF.

Along the way, we decided to go to Taos New Mexico and fly the Rio Grande River Gorge with a few new friends.



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This is where the Cloud Hopper Flight begins.

October 2, 2012, 4:00 AM. I woke up and start thinking of all the things I need to do for the flight. I pulled up the weather forecast. Surface winds 350 at 4Knts, 42 degrees F. I am going to need a jacket. I dug through my luggage and found my Red hoodie jacket from the Hard Rock Café I got in Munich Germany a few years ago. Perfect! A red jacket with my Red Lindstrand Cloudhopper lower.

I got my radios and my Flytech, I dug out a few cameras. Then I thought, I do not want to be distracted from the flight with a lot of cameras and other gear. I have a GoPro helmet mounted camera which will be enough for this flight. OK, what else was I going to need?

Gloves, sun glasses....an endless list of junk. I stopped all the nervous searching and sat at the desk. The internet was still running so I pulled up a video of a cloud hopper flight from England and watched it for a few minutes.



Preparing for the flight

I needed to keep in mind that this is a small AX-3 envelope. The Lindstrand burner is pretty strong and it will not take much to get the envelope hot and climbing.



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I went over in my mind any emergency procedures I might need to make, just in case. "OK, I think I am ready."

My good friend and flight instructor is going to chase for me this morning so I know the van and all the gear will be in good hands. That is one less thing to worry about. So after a cup of coffee, Skip and I pile in the van and drive out to the launch site.



Take Off.

Taos New Mexico is a tourist town that got lost in the 1960's. Which means there are still a lot of old Hippies and Flower Children wondering around. But Taos also has the Rio Grande River nearby. In this area, the river flows through a grand gorge that is perfect for hiking and camping. It is also a pretty good place to fly Hot Air Balloons.

Skip and I stop at the Pueblo Balloon Company and team up with Mr. Ed Smith and his crew and passengers for this morning. After deciding the conditions were perfect, off we went.

There is a wonderful spot on the upper plateau next to the gorge cliffs that is tailor made for launching Balloons. Skip and I



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arrive about 20 minutes after sunrise and start to assemble the Lower End. Then the envelope layout. Ed has his 140 and big basket laid out next to my single tank with a seat and the 30,000 CF envelope. Several of Ed's passengers are curious and ask what this is? Then I get the wide eyes of amazement as they watch the activities.

The best flyable drainage winds that will pull you out over the gorge in the morning only last about 15 minutes. Those winds were now present and I had to pick up the pace if I wanted to fly the gorge.

The assembly of the burner frame and the safety harness was not as smooth as it should have been.

Since the tank and frame subassembly will not fit in my van upright, I need to remove the frame for transport. Therefore, I need special tools in my kit. This subassembly took about 5 minutes of precious time. Then the harness was giving me a very bad time. I could not get the quick release to latch and hold. The envelope was laid out but I needed to get the load lines attached to the swivel ring. If I can't get the harness problem solved in the next 2 minutes, I will need to scratch the flight and try again the next day. Now I was getting frustrated. Thoughts of scrapping the harness and replacing it with WWII aviation style harness with a flip release was rushing through my mind. Then, something clicked in the quick release and the harness worked.

The fan fired up and in about 2 minutes flat Skip and I got the envelope filled with cold air and as I popped the first breath of Dragons Breath into the mouth of my DREAM WELL 2 envelope, I could tell that this baby was going to stand up pretty darn fast.

Four very short burns and the balloon was standing on its own, alive and ready for our next adventure.

I sat on the seat, strapped in, check the radio and turned the FlyTech on. The helmet camera is running, the RED line is attached. The crown line is hooked on the carabineer. I make one last look around and make one last mental check of the gear and then it hits me;

Oh my god, I am actually going to do this !!!!!

I looked at Skip to ask for any last minute advice, but I could not get the words out. All I could say was, "Do a radio check".

Radio check good.



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"OK Boys, here I go..." My God, this is my first Cloud Hopper Flight, and only my 5th flight with the Dream Well 2 envelope. There are a lot of things to think about and I found that I did not have time to think about anything else.

The winds were not going the direction I wanted on the surface so I climbed up about 500 feet. I still did not have what I want. I want to go down into the Rio Grande River Gorge! The gorge. THE GORGE! I climbed up to 700 feet and there it was. The slight left turn I needed. Oh OK, now I can descend.

I was headed straight for the river, until I got to 400 feet. The wind was pushing me back to the right of the gorge. Drats. I popped up again to 750 feet and sat there until I was over the other side of the gorge. Then down I went.... It took about 2 minutes to get down to the river. Little burns. Short burns. Well, I made one burn too many and up I went again. Wow ! This Lindstrand burner really puts heat out. OK, I think I have it now.

My second attempt at a Splash and Dash [feet wet] was not as good as I wanted either. The winds through the gorge are not easy to read. At 2 or 3 Knots, the leaves on Sage brush do not move. Reading the water surface didn't work well either because of the current and the rapids. This time the breeze put me on the beach away from the river. I sat the tank down on a rock and then I pushed out with my feet towards the river. Well, this only made me swing a bit but it did help the momentum a little. I still was not going over the water like I wanted. Well, as you might have guessed by now, I climbed up a bit again and caught the drainage wind from the canyon wall which put me squarely over the water.

I let the envelope cool a bit and started a slow descent towards the rivers rapids. Cautiously, short-short bursts to slow the sinking rate. Tiny burps. 20 Feet, 15 feet, Tiny burp again. 10 feet, Burp, 3 feet. Whoh. Too fast

Too fast, Burn, Short burn. Finally, splash! Feet wet!

Almost too fast to notice, I was climbing out again. Drats, Too long of a burn again. The sight of the rapids coming up fast made me just a tad nervous and all I could think of was dunking deep into the water. The image of me soaking wet to my neck caused me to over react and I burned 1 second too long. That three second total burn was all it took for the Lindstrand burner



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and the 30,000 CF envelope to get me climbing at 180 feet per minute. Later that afternoon I watched the video I took of the entire flight and it was exactly 3 seconds.

I checked my watch. 25 minutes of flight so far. I wanted to try one more time to get my feet wet. From about 300 feet above the river I started my last attempt. This time I studied my movement more closely. My FlyTech showed 0.0 on the Variometer, then .1 decent, .4 decent. Burp. Slower than the last time. 5 seconds later, burp again. That water sure did look cold. 3 feet, 2 feet. I had to really steady myself and make myself not burn too much. Inches, inches...Was I dropping too fast? Was I going dip the seat into the water? Steady Rick, steady. Feet wet !



I lifted my feet up out of the river and the seat came within an inch of getting wet. Tiny burn this time. 3 feet, 5 feet, level, 2 feet, Dip, Feet wet again ! Now I had to burn and get out of here. I had been airborne for 55 minutes. I did not know how much fuel I had in reserve and I could not see the mirror above me. This is something that bothers me about the Cloud Hopper.

Once I got up and over the top of the plateau I could see for miles and miles. I climbed up to 7500 feet for almost 15



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minutes and caught an Easterly breeze to the far side of the gorge where I made a very slow descent and a soft smooth landing on a dirt road. I sat there on the road and went over my landing/shutdown procedures in my mind. I also took a minute to let my adrenaline level drop. When I took my gloves off, my hands were a bit twitchy. There was no breeze. It was totally calm and quiet. I shut off the pilot light and listened to nothing. I made it. I did it. I had a successful flight and there was nothing more I could do or say that could top this today. I was a very happy man.



The retrieve vehicle arrives- all jpegs courtesy of Rick Kauffman

On this flight I flew a total of 1 hour 25 minutes. Later when I re-fueled I needed 8 gallons of fuel. With the seven gallons remaining, I probably could have flown another 45 minutes, but since I could NOT see the gage, it was best to not overdo it on the first flight. I know I used a lot more fuel than I normally should have with all my up and down manoeuvres. But considering that this was my first flight and I was up and down like a super ball on a soccer field, I think I did pretty well with my fuel use. Next flight I will gain more experience and the next and the next. My goal is to make a 2 hour flight and still have a little fuel in the tank. But it will have to be in a colder environment with a flatter terrain.



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Well this is the end of my story. We all have goals, and we all have dreams. My little dream of owning and flying a Cloud Hopper is now a reality.

So keep dreaming. Someday you may see your dream become more than wishful thinking. Be Safe, Be Happy, and as always....dream well!

Rick Kauffman

Three Favourite Jpegs and why-by Andy Davey

This month's three favourites and why comes from Andy Davey.

Picture One- Smirnoff.



This picture sums up hopping, a bit of craziness, stunning views and nothing under your feet.



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Picture 2 Ross /G-BOYO



My first Hopper, I bought this when I worked at Cameron's, at cost price, before I even had a licence. To ensure we could put it against tax, we added the Ross Balloons Artwork. A very rare balloon now owned by John Hilditch. Only two V-20's were ever built. I made the bottom end myself from original Cameron drawings.

Picture 3 – Sunset in the Loire

I bought my V-42 in 2005, and used my old homebuilt airchair bottom end on it initially, before building this lightweight version in 2006. This was taken on an evening off from passenger flying in the Loire valley in France.



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Thanks very much to Andy for these fine choices. 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

Euro Hop?

Sometime ago we discussed the idea of holding a hopper event in Europe which I grandly called Euro Hop. In the end, there were a grand total of two of us committed to the event which was to be hosted in France, so due to the necessary work involved and lack of enthusiasm we cancelled. However, the seed of the idea has always been on my backburner and the notion of a hopper only event still burns deep.



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With regard to this I wondered if I was looking at the wrong season of the year and thought perhaps the answer was to do it in the winter and even perhaps somewhere in the Alps. Conversations with Richard Sargeant have convinced me if we had the right venue then we could have a great time and the idea would be for two pilots to help each other with one hopper, instantly giving you economies of scale and a retrieve that knows what is required.

I wondered if the time is now right to discuss this possibility , with you giving me direct feedback so that a database of ideas could be formed and perhaps the idea could progress to possible planning for such a thing to actually happen.

So what do we need? Preference for when, for starters, Ideas for type of accommodation people would wish for would help.

How about a venue and how about people stating whether or not they would want to go? My idea is about being sociable collectively for the whole event so that bonding of like minded folks occurs without splintered groups emerging. Please send your feedback directly to me and given some enthusiasm this could develop. Am I talking out of my bottom?

5. Homebuilt section-

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.



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Proving that there is life in the old dog, Sandy Mitchell
Sent in this of G-CEYD the ex Lloyds Bank hopper.



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ZK-PMS is the Latest Techno S-50 from Ultramagic Balloons Ltd.
With thanks to Paul Dickinson the c/n is 50/10.

Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

In two year's time the One Man Meet will be 30 years old. In keeping with tradition, this is a significant milestone and therefore it needs to be celebrated in fine style. Any good ideas for the



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event or a suitable venue please let us know in advance so we can plan something special. Personally I have two ideas to float at you for consideration.

The First is to try and combine the event with our friends from XLTA and invite some friends over from the states to join us at the event and then secondly my idea is to try and establish a Guinness Book of records for the number of one man balloons in the air at one time. This would entail achieving more than 30 hoppers airborne at the same time.

So what do you think to the idea?

Adverts / For Sale / Wanted section

G-BVUI is for sale

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 complete kit.



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Photo thanks to Zebedee list- Peter Bish



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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.

advanced@gci.net

Tel. +1 907 346-3495

www.kleinfan.com

Visit us on Facebook!

And Finally.

For this festive edition I have for you a special treat courtesy of our good friend Robin Batchelor. Here repeated for the first time in years is a copy of a perfect present for the discerning Christmas purchaser of an eighties vintage . Please enjoy and have a happy new year and fly safe.



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The Colt Cloudhopper

The Cloudhopper 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 Cloudhopper in the Autumn of 1979. It was immediately covered by press all over the world and featured on British T.V. The Cloudhopper also came to play the lead role in a major motion picture film "Green Ice" where Ryan O'Neill and two accomplices used three Cloudhoppers to rob a roof top vault in Colombia. We have sold Cloudhoppers 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.



Robin Batchelor collection.



The Cloudhopper Envelope

The Cloudhopper is normally supplied with a 17000 cu. ft. envelope but a 14000 or 21000 cu. ft. envelope can be supplied on special order. All envelopes are of smooth gore construction and have 2 mm stainless flying wires and an all Kevlar cord rigging system. Deflation is with a parachute type valve operated on a direct action 6 mm 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 golfbag 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 Cloudhopper unit opens up a whole new sphere of balloon advertising since it can be flown inside courtyards and shopping centres and similar confined spaces.

While the 17000 cu. ft. envelope will cater for most flying conditions with a pilot in excess of 210 lb or flying at high altitude we recommend the 21000 cu. ft. envelope option. The 14000 cu. ft. envelope is only recommended for very light pilots or for record attempts.



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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 not to 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 aluminium load ring running on three sealed ball bearings. This way friction is at a 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" screws hold the overhead structure to the collar.

The pilot's 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 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 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.



Robin Batchelor collection.



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Roof top sequence from the film "Green Ice" where three Cloudhoppers were used in the main stunt event. This scene was shot on location in Mexico City and shows Ryan O'Neal watching the third Cloudhopper land.

DISTRIBUTOR



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Robin Batchelor collection.

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Robin Batchelor

Robin Batchelor supplied all of the above –many thanks!



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Membership is currently a healthy 441 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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