



Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

Greetings fellow one-manners and welcome to your November Newsletter

Hot News, after some serious negotiation with a number of different potential sponsors, I am delighted to announce that for the next few years we will be sponsored by **Icom Uk Ltd**. More on this later in the Newsletter.

Apologies for the last few Newsletters not having the Contents column. I suddenly realised that it was missing so it is back and I hope you missed it too.

Just back from the 36th Annual One Man Meet, held this year in Tenbury Wells Worcestershire. A very well attended event with an interesting unexpected twist for me, fully documented here for you. Considering the weather forecast was "pants", I was amazed just how many of you still turned up. I believe only four cancelled at the last minute and the event was "International" once again with the welcome return of Jacques Bernadin from France with his Cameron O-31.

It is hoped to return next year however there is some thought that the Hotel may be on rocky ground and to that end we don't currently know that it will still be operating in twelve months' time.

Here is what we have for you in this edition.

- The 36th Annual One Man Meet
- Gareth Gray's plan for his 40-year-old N-31.
- The Newsletter and website gets a new sponsor.
- Adrian Brown revises his Flight deck.
- That old phrase "if you know of any second hand."
- Recent second-hand purchases.
- Gallery pages
- **World Exclusive** -New Hopper from Adams Balloons

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

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Contents

Ed Speak –
I've a plan
Essential extras
My IC-A24E.

The Features Section -
The 2019 One Man Meet
Gareth Gray's challenge
New Sponsors.
Adrian Brown revises his Flightdeck

World Exclusive
Adams launches the Ace!

Interesting Photos
N520BR

New Balloons
UM H-31 G-CLGY

Second Hand Balloons Gallery Pages
67-BUR and G-BRCO

Manufacturer News/ Events
2020 Icicle Balloon Meet

Newsletter supported by





Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

1, Ed Speak- Delighted to announce the new Sponsor, and a plan!

Just before I came to press I got the announcement that our new sponsors **Icom Uk Ltd** have agreed to support not only the Newsletter and the website, but will potentially also offer a discounted scheme for their goods. Many thanks to Ian Lockyer for agreeing to come onboard and I look forward to working with him to show you the industry leading brand of VHF radios which we all use in our sport. I look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with them going forward.

As any of you who read this stuff regularly will know, the lovely as new Cameron O-31 G-CJWY has now long gone back to Bristol for onward sale. My current hopper couldn't be more different. I still have my now two-year old millennium bottom end but am currently flying above it a twenty years young H-34 G-BYNW. Considering the age of the envelope it is in remarkably good condition with the Chris Dunkley seal of approval at the recent C of A. However, whilst it is in a perfectly adequate condition and will give sterling service for years to come, the idea of it being my long-term hopper simply never existed. I have had for some time, a plan of action that has been instigated and whilst I'm not going to divulge what is occurring, the long-term replacement for G-CJWY is being created over this winter with a delivery to me in early May of 2020. The opportunity to document the whole process from the initial thoughts right through to delivery is underway and thanks to a great set of people this will emerge once ownership commences. The bit I'm most impressed about is the bit after you have paid your deposit through to collection which normally is a big void of nothingness, but in this case is being punctuated as and when developments occur. Please bear with me and you will get the complete picture when I am able to publish it.

My personal One Man Meet experience was at best alternative, and at worst fairly shocking. All will be revealed in the comprehensive review of the event later in the magazine. One other thing that occurred at the OMM, was a chance conversation with Gareth Gray, about his Cameron N-31 G-BGHS. The conversation was enough to make a short concise article about it, once again included here.

Finally, I've been working pretty hard, coming up with interesting content, trying new things such as the video topics on Facebook

Newsletter supported by





Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

and putting suggestions out there. It's a very busy time for Cloudhoppers, and going forward I'm pumped with what is emerging. I hope it's a direction that you agree with and as always, I welcome your thoughts.

Steve Roake

2, Essential Extras – Icom IC-A24E

With reference to our new sponsors, (Predictable obviously), I thought I'd write about the need that we all have for modern .833 spacing air band radios. Obviously, there are other brands out there that do perfectly adequate radios but if you are in the market for a decent transceiver then clearly only one name springs to mind, **Icom**. For years I had a thoroughly great pair of A3 transceivers which stood the test of time. I think I had them for a good 15 years. The only thing I ever changed whilst in my ownership was the battery pack with a replacement bought. As with any premium brand when I looked into replacements I went to where I knew my money would be well spent.



Icom's A-24E as used by your editor.

Newsletter supported by





Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

For me, I want simplicity and proven ruggedness with a great battery life, all of which I get with my A24E. Glen Everett, (a hopper pilot himself), did me a very nice deal on a pair of these and so impressed we were with them that my friend also purchased for his Auster fixed wing aircraft. Now for him there are additional features which we don't need to be bothered about but in its application, I can turn it on and forget about things such as the squelching function and the clarity of the sound is great. New radios aren't the cheapest things going but when you know you've got to comply and upgrade so you can tune the balloonist's frequency of 122.480 into your handset you want the risk taken out of the purchase and so for that reason alone, I classify this as an essential extra and gladly put my money where my mouth is and haven't regretted the decision.

3, The Features Section. –

The 36th Annual One Man Meet

With the regular two-yearly change of venue in mind, the 36th Annual One Man Meet relocated to Worcestershire this year to be centred around the town of Tenbury Wells. This idyllic rural location was set in a natural bowl and was suggested to our hosts John Tyrrell and Wendy Rousell by local resident Richard Parry. Stone walled fields set in rolling countryside gave a very welcome protection to the prevailing weather conditions which was a saving grace when considering the forecast leading up to the weekend of the event. Generally, across the UK sweeping rain storms had punctuated the preceding days and the land was generally fairly saturated but upon arriving (in rain) to the Host centre, The Cadmore Lakeside lodge Hotel which was tucked away down a short drive from a country lane, you could see the potential from the word go. The grounds of the hotel featured a former golf course available to all for sheltered launch sites and a glorious lake.

The briefing was a very short affair with crews joining up on Friday evening in the hotel for a sociable meal and initially I was impressed by just how many teams had chosen to attend considering the forecast wasn't brilliant. Crews accommodation varied from Local Bed and

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Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

breakfast rooms through the budget hotel brands to those who had chosen to stay on site in the fourteen available rooms at a premium rate.

As we all convened for Dinner around 19-30, I wasn't prepared for the turn of events that would focus my weekend. I had travelled up earlier via Gloucester Staverton Airport where my crew man lestin was coming from after work, and whilst I had travelled through some pretty rain sodden roads I wasn't expecting him to be so late as he had already texted to say he was enroute around 4pm. Indeed, the lads from Cameron Balloons had arrived having left Bristol at 16-15 which was actually further away.



Peter Bish in Viva 31 G-BXIT photo by Bernie Williams.

Newsletter supported by





Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

News started filtering through during the dinner that Iestyn was missing. It seemed he had been involved in a Road Traffic Accident on the A449 just south of Worcester and had been transferred by ambulance to The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

First news came via his son Dan who had police knocking on his front door, (which must have been a shock to the 22yr old). Sketchy details were that he was stable but being transferred to the ICU department which had already shifted my direction for my weekend. Hopping would have to take a back seat as more important stuff needed dealing with. Later through the desert section of the meal, I received a call from his younger brother stating that he was okay, not life threatening but being transferred to a regular ward. Phew. I have to say all sorts of emotions were pinging through my head – you just don't know and it hits like a bullet out of the blue. Returning to our accommodation for the weekend alone, was eerily weird, since "Spike" as Iestyn is known can be fashionably late upon occasion but never quite like this.

My mind was in overdrive as I contemplated my friend's unknown fate. However, after a night's sleep I would be more reassured and could enjoy watching the morning antics, should they be able to fly.

Briefing at the hotel car park was at 07-30 and it was both dry and flyable if a touch faster upstairs. The field was available, there was the customary no pressure to fly approach and of the original thirty crews booked in, some twenty-six had turned out and of these eighteen went on to fly the morning slot with another one tethering. Many thanks to all of those who offered help to get me into the air, but I had decided already to go to the hospital once the launch had finished and see the patient. Appropriately the first to launch was the local man Richard Parry in his Ultramagic H-31 G-CKBJ. Loitering around the lake he was shortly joined by Gareth Gray in the forty-year young G-BGHS Cameron N-31. This started a very civilised progression by the teams only interrupted by an idiot who was broadcasting Live to Facebook(me). I wondered around interviewing the various pilots prior to their departure. Most had a lovely flight mainly staying low enjoying the protection of remaining in the natural bowl but eventually rising to catch the prevailing winds which took them over Tenbury Wells and off on a North Easterly direction away from any sensitive areas.

Newsletter supported by





Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

Unknown to the crowd, Ron Griffin from Newbury Berkshire had taken to the skies without the benefit of a crew. Had he asked I'm sure someone would have driven his car for him as his wife doesn't drive, or he could have arranged a joint retrieve. It transpired later that he flew and then walked five miles back to the launch site to get his car and go retrieve his balloon G-CDUJ Lindstrand 31A.



Ron Griffin just prior to his Solo Mission
In LBL 31A G-CDUJ.

Newsletter supported by





Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

In terms of rarities there wasn't much to please the spotters present however two of note were Jacques Bernadin from France who flew F-HHJB his red Cameron O-31 and Tim Wilkinson who flew his lightweight Sackville BM56LW G-CLJT. Also, out for an airing is the lightly used Peter Bish owned G-BXIT Zebedee Viva 31 which was flown over a basket. Despite this balloon dating from 1999, it has only flown some twenty odd hours so still looks fresh.

Four teams had cancelled prior the event probably based on the perceived forecast and four of use chose not to fly for various reasons but those that did all declared the flights as great with around 10 knots at 500 feet and up to 18knts at 1000. Most had near on stand-up landings but one Adrian Brown decided to get his vehicle stuck in a farmer's field despite crew chief Helen advising him not to drive onto the field in question. G-UHOP his Ultramagic H-31 now has some 60 odd hours on the logbook and was one of two (the other being Tim Wilkinson), who took the opportunity to return earlier than the afternoon briefing to fly the afternoon slot prior to rain which was running in to the site.

The funny thing was at role call at the 3-30 briefing Adrian Brown reported present as he flew by at about 400 feet telling us he had 8 knots speed which corresponded with the seven knots predicted. However, nobody else fancied flying as they could all see the weather front coming and didn't want to risk the balloon getting wet. Adrian reported later that the balloon got put away dry whilst Tim's did get a slight soaking that got reinflated two days later.

Saturday is always a free night for crews to do their own thing and one of Richard Parry's local recommendations was pre-booked for 16 of us by Alan Turner to continue the sociability. The Pembroke House Pub in Tenbury Wells saw his team joined by Team Bish, Cameron's, John Tyrrell and Wendy Rousell, and some others including Darwin Peltan and Simon Whatley, Jacques Bernadin and crew and myself all enjoy a very pleasant meal in sociable surroundings.

Whilst the flying had completed for the weekend, what remained was the Sunday morning Prize giving, which was brought forward to 9-30 in order for teams to get away earlier on their journeys home.

Speaking for myself I always go into the awards hoping I will avoid the prestigious "Cock up award" or the infamous "Wooden Tit" and luckily for me I had given the judges no ammunition by

Newsletter supported by





Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

which they could nail me in 2019. Luckily, I missed another year. Usual expressions of gratitude to our host hotel and Richard Parry for his support and local knowledge preceded the main awards.

Then on to the prestigious awards themselves. The first award is called **the Wooden Tif**. This is a play on words. "Wouldn't it be nice if" on this occasion applied to Alan Turner who was laughing as he realised he had been rumbled. Alan had tried to go fly his hopper only to find the inflation fan had no fuel. Yes, I may have passed the information on to John and Wendy, but a very deserving recipient none the less. Alan won a pair of Cameron Gloves and a Cloudhoppers.org OMM T shirt.

Wendy's Wellies were presented to Jacques Benadin from France who encouraged a new lady pilot to have her first experience of hopping in a tether. Along with his Cloudhoppers.org V neck T-shirt, Jacques won a Cameron Laptop Bag.

The Cockup Award. This fine phallically styled cane was awarded to Adrian Brown who despite the best intentions of Helen his crew, still drove his 4x4 VW transporter van onto the landing field getting stuck in the process. Adrian acquired a Cloudhoppers.org T shirt and M&S Vouchers for his misdemeanor.

A Cameron Special Prize including the obligatory Cloudhoppers T shirt went to Gareth Gray for his 40 hours to celebrate 40 years challenge with G-BGHS his Cameron N-31 (now approaching 140 hours young). This is probably the most active "old" hopper in the UK now.

A special award of a Cloudhoppers T shirt went to Ian Chadwick who despite questioning the dates of the event and rearranging his daughter's engagement party, still managed to miss the event due to family commitments.

Some other notably funny awards were, a Virgin hat to Richard Parry who flew a helium balloon onto powerlines at the briefing and also Gin and a Cameron Travel Mug for organising the event.

A bottle of (Bristol fiesta) Jack Daniels whisky to Nick Purvis who conducted an audit in the middle of the weekend. A bottle of wine and M&S vouchers to Helen Ashworth for her landowning relations when Adrian Brown got the vehicle stuck.

Northampton Brewery beers to both Adrian Brown and Tim Wilkinson for grabbing a second flight prior to the afternoon briefing.

Newsletter supported by





Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

Celebration chocolates to Peter Mossman's crew who did a public service by nicking Derek Maltby's Super soaker when he wasn't watching, and a Cameron Clip to Derek himself for being a good sport.

A box of Quality Street for Iestyn to help his convalescence and finally Boxes of rainbow meringues to Tori and Shannon at the hotel to say many thanks for their help.

Everyone enjoyed the fun and John and Wendy sent everyone away with jars of Ludlow jam/marmalade and local chutney.

The 37th annual OMM is scheduled for October 2020 and it is hoped it will be at the same venue, time will tell, but many thanks as ever to our organisers without whom it just wouldn't have happened.

Gareth Gray's Plan of action for his 40year old hopper.

Gareth Gray is a prolific hopper pilot, who for the last ten years has flown Cameron N-31 G-BGHS. The Champion spark plug balloon was originally registered in January 1979 and has the original crinkly fabric has stood the test of time very well. To my knowledge, this is the second oldest and most active hopper in the UK, and Gareth informed me at the One Man Meet of his mission to celebrate the crafts fortieth birthday.

Gareth who likes to fly the balloon with a V40(80litre) tank decided that in the balloons 40th year he would try to fly 40 hours to recognise the occasion. The balloon had (by the time of the One Man Meet) done over half of the hours and on the Saturday morning, Gareth put another hour in its logbook. Gareth is hoping for a long cold dry winter to speed his way towards the target and we wish him well with his mission.

"Champion" shows no outward signs of its age and following a prolonged ownership with Bill Teasdale, looks likely to serve its current owner for many years to come even though he is hinting about buying a replacement potentially from Kubicek in the not too distant future. At over 140 hours use, it's not really that many when you divide it by the number of years the old crinkly fabric has been around for. Obviously in 1979 black was a good colour fabric to choose from the Cameron range and hasn't suffered like certain other colours such as infamous red.

As you can see by the photo below, the balloon still packs nicely and flies great according to Gareth.

Newsletter supported by





Clouthopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019



G-BGHS, the very pretty 1979 Cameron N-31,
photo by Gareth Gray.

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

The New Sponsors- ICOM UK Ltd .

When seeking new sponsors for the Newsletter and Website , I wanted to branch away from direct sponsorship from a manufacturer but wanted any potential tie up to have a direct link to our sport and still have a chance to form an ongoing relationship where members could get a tangible benefit from the arrangement.

Therefore I was delighted when Ian Lockyer from Icom Uk Ltd agreed to back us and saw that we are a leading link into ballooning. All balloons need VHF Radios and a tie up with the industries leading supplier Was always going to be good news for both parties. Not only can I now bring to you the newest innovations in the world of Airband Transceivers, but we can also provide a discount against sales provided by Ian and his team. We may all fly hoppers but most have other balloons and the Newsletters get passed on to other types of flying clubs. Radios are necessary to each and every form of flying and it will be good to review the latest hardware as it appears on the marketplace.

For all of you who havent as yet changed to the .833 format of radios, now is the perfect time to upgrade to an Icom. Based in Herne Bay In Kent, Icom Uk are placed nicely to serve all of our needs with a wide and varied range of transceivers with a proven track record for reliability and dependability which at the end of the day is exactly what you want from your radio.

Ian Lockyer is very keen to get involved in our sector and is taking a personal interest , there is talk of a competition soon so watch this space .

Thanks for coming onboard and supporting both the website and the Newsletter.

Adrian Browns Flight Deck revised

Adrian Brown is a precision engineer by trade. Awhile ago he developed a perspex instrument pod which he christened the Flightdeck. At this year's OMM , Adrian arrived with a few examples to sell that had been slightly tweaked in their design. I was going to include stuff of his in this newsletter but despite many prompts it failed to arrive. Apparently a few were sold at the OMM.

Newsletter supported by





Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

World Exclusive -Adams Balloons Launches the "Ace"!

On October 29th I was privileged to announce to the World the brand-new hopper product from Adams Balloons. Andy Richardson had very graciously allowed me to tell the news of the "Ace" a 38,000cubic foot One-man balloon aimed squarely at the Hopper market. This new product joins an extensive range of Adams Balloons and has been months in the making. I've been included in the loop as Adams has tried various iterations of design finalising on what you see below.



First Shot of the Adams Ace.

Newsletter supported by





Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

The system includes a collapsible basket and burner and retails from \$9995 and an envelope only costs from \$5995. The whole thing is designed to work around the part 103 regulations, meaning they can be flown under the experimental ultralight unregistered category. Adams Balloons have gone to town to make this product both affordable and plentiful for all those new budding pilots. There is talk that potentially the system may make an appearance at the Easter Meet in Temecula California.

5 Interesting Photos



Recent photograph of Jim O'brian's lovely Stumpf /O'Brian 35 N520BR. Photo with thanks Jim O'Brian

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

6, New Allocations This Month / Changes of Ownership

It is unusual to get new allocations in late months of the year which is why it is good to see another Ultramagic H-31 come onto the register. This time G-CLGY is registered to David Hempleman-Adams and is C/n 31/20. Registered on the 25th October, it just reiterates how the UK is the epicentre of world hopping. There are others coming that I am aware of but they haven't been registered just yet, and I expect they are for 2020 delivery.

7, Second Hand Balloons

Surprisingly there appears a lack of movement currently with second hand stock despite some seriously good offers out there. The Chris Dobson Cameron O-31 G-ISOB remains unsold and Chris Monk in a bid to move his Cameron H-34 on has reduced the price of G-BVZX in an effort to sell onwards. At the lower end of the market, cheap introductory envelopes such as my Cameron H-34 G-BYNW move on quite quickly since they don't have the greatest value. Indeed, mine will become available towards the end of January but there is current interest in it already.

8, Manufacturer / Event News/ Industry News

The 2020 Icicle Balloon meet has opened its entry list, and once again this well-run annual kick off to the new year has a guest speaker. The 3/4/40 run event has persuaded Brian Jones of round the world Breitling Orbiter Fame to come and speak. Cloudhoppers always pay less to participate at this event so if you want to go and think you are going to fly I suggest you put your entry and money forward prior to the date.

See you there for all the usual things and apparently the bacon butty woman is already pre-booked, and advanced entries are £20 per balloon or £25 on the day. We just didn't enjoy it so much last year without the traditional bacon to fire up your day so I'm delighted this feature has returned.

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

7. Gallery Pages –

Your Editor's choice of New and unusual balloons.



Especially for Tim Ward, French Homebuilt hopper 67-BUR.

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019



An oldie but a goodie, G-BRCO taken at Pidley a number of years ago.

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Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 119

November 2019

Facebook membership continues to rise with the current level of 1339 (correct to the 5th November), 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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