



Issue Number 29

January 2009

Dear Aeronauts

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2009 and before continuing I would like to wish all members of the forum a happy fifth Birthday. Yes, it was in January 2004 when the idea germinated into life and the forum started, with a very eloquent request from one Don Piccard who enquired if he could please join the forum. "Don Piccard"!!!! I nearly fell off my chair to get such a legendary name asking me for permission, and at one stroke I knew we were onto a winner. Now, five years down the road and we are around 379 members later we are still expanding at a quick rate. I trust this newsletter finds you all fit and well and having had a nice Xmas break, here in the UK we were blessed with some flyable weather which meant for a change we had a very enjoyable Icicle Meet. There is plenty to tell you about the event, primarily what wasn't there and why, but also who was and what they brought to the table so to speak. Naturally we "Brits" did our best to uphold hopping, and I counted nine different craft on show over the two days (even managing to miss one myself), and getting some older hopper owners geared up to join us. There is some more information gleaned at the event on "subjects various" of interest to you all and an insight into some technology we mentioned last month with a more detailed technical appraisal of the new Ultramagic fabric which was launched at the event (with jpegs).I have been given a sample and have taken some

macro shots so you can see how it works, but it doesn't come cheaply.



The Icicle Four - Three LBL 25A's and my old trusty Colt 31A, left to Right John Hilditch, Kevin Tanner, Steve Roake and Neil Ivison .jpeg by Mel Kirby on Saturday morning.

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In this 29th edition I have for your reading the following choice subjects;

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- 2, **The Features Section**-featuring the following submissions:
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 - At the launch field- Saturday / Sunday

- At the Elcot Park Hotel Exhibition -what was there and more importantly who and what wasn't!
- Aerofabrix- by Ultramagic a more technical look into a wonder fabric.
- The Ultramagic 3hp Hopper fan -flight test.
- More information on G-CFPS Sky 25-16
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- Cameron 3hp Hopper fan as owned by your editor
- G-BSAK Colt 21A Envelope
- G-BSDV Colt 31A up for grabs.

8. Last and not least.

1, Ed Speak by Steve Roake - New and Old at the Icicle.

After all the turkey you could stuff, it was time to concentrate on the Icicle Balloon Meet. Martin Freeston(for example) declared many days before,(over Christmas), how much he was looking forward to it on "Facebook", but with a high over the

country and predominantly dry cold weather leading up to the weekend in question , all the signs were there for a successful event.

Converging on the venue on Saturday morning with -7deg Celsius on the in car thermometer, and a probable inversion it was good to be ballooning again. The Icicle can be one of those events where you just don't know what will turn up or how many will turn out but with 67 balloons free flying (some more than once) and another 7 tethering on the first day alone , you knew it was going to be a blinder! Then you bump into people who you think you would never see there .For example Adrian Cox who owns G-BKIZ a Colt V-31 Air chair and now lives in Normandy France was introduced to me on the launch field. At the Elcot Place Hotel, both Pat and Tony Bubb were over from Spain via Storrington Sussex and amongst the hoppers present was G-BSON which is a Green S—25 which although a hopper has a great history being made from the remains of Nashua a 850,000 cubic feet pax ride balloon. With a strong hopper presence, this year's Icicle Meet will go down as one of the better ones.

Steve Roake

2, The Features Section

The 37th Icicle Balloon Meet 2009

At the launch field on Saturday / Sunday

Saturday

The weather preceding this event had been largely dry across southern England and with a really hard frost overnight I had a really good feeling as I left home for the venue at just gone six am. Frimley to Savernake Forrest is just over sixty miles or an

hour at this time of the day but by maintaining a close look at the car thermometer I witnessed a starting temp of minus 4 Celsius dropping to minus 7 as we entered clearer areas and returning to -4 at the launch site. With my trusty crew member already in the area, I arrived at the reassuringly hard field which was mainly dry and full of vehicles (a good sign)! Formalities dealt with, and a Met forecast at 08-00 of 090 degrees at 5 to 7 knots on the surface with stronger upper winds of 100 degrees at 8-10 knots, with a situation of improving weather as the morning progressed meant that we didn't have to rush to fly and the various hopper exponents present decided to watch a mass ascent and then play as the field became emptier.



G-CFRF, Lindstrand 31A of Tony Attwood (our newest member) free flying at the Icicle Meet .Jpeg by Andy Mac.

Chris Dobson had decided to go to an alternate launch site with a view of flying in, but was spied in G-CEGG his LBL 25A cruising a couple of fields away. The Green S-25 G-BSON (a homebuilt hopper) was inflated on the launch field shortly after Chris disappeared. Around 10-30 four of us decided to have a line up and potentially hop across the field. For me, the main criteria was to "road test" the Ultramagic 3hp fan and compare results verses my own similarly powered Cameron / Lindstrand version.

Neil Ivison was the generous fellow who donated the fan for my trial (more later) and soon enough we had a four ship line up ready to go. My Colt 31 looked positively massive next to the three LBL 25A's, and with Neil sticking to the original plan of staying in the launch field, Kevin Tanner, John Hilditch and myself departed for a short hop. I was predicting a simple couple of fields hop, but following the other two decided to follow for a while longer, we all stayed low and slow dipping below tree top height into the next field to contour fly. After around 20mins I had the impression that both Kevin and John were trying to land as they were very low but it transpired later that John had actually got himself stuck in the trees! I thought he was a tad low but hadn't figured on him being entwined even for a short period of time. He later admitted taking his eye off the ball for a while (we have all been there John)! At this stage, and having not gone much more than 1000ft up but mainly staying low I was flying at about 5.8 knots, (and had decided in fairness to my crew and with an eye on being back to the trade show at a reasonable time to talk business to some dealers), decided to land after about 40mins and not be too greedy. I found an appropriate field and came over the boundary fence at around 2knots, and with crew doing the necessary permissions with the farmer packed away and walked the kit out of the field. Distance flown, 1.8miles thank you! We packed away and returned to the launch field to retrieve the crew persons car

and I shot off to the exhibition missing latest recruit to cloudhoppers forum Tony Attwood inflating, tethering and free flying the new Royal Air Force LBL 31A Hopper G-CFRF.



Beautifully framed shot of G-BSON, the Green S-25 by Bill Teasdale on Saturday morning.

This ended the Saturday flying program with seven hoppers out of 67 balloons taking part. It later emerged that winds were very different dependant on height .Some balloonists saw over 20 knot higher winds and yet one pilot stated to me that at 10,000ft he was stationary. For January, it was great to have snuck a flight in and it felt great to be in the air again.

Sunday

Second day dawned cold and crisp with the air temp again around minus 6 Celsius and again we returned to the launch field and to another yummy bacon and egg butty, to go with the flask of tea I had made earlier! The weather was similar to day one but the high over southern UK had moved south with the effect of a 180 degree change in direction of the winds. The Met forecast was Variable at 5knots at 1000ft and a direction towards the east. For a hopper pilot of 100kgs (i.e. me), this forecast presented a conundrum. The intended flight would either be short(under 20mins), or over 1hr 30 due to the direction, forests and no landing areas on the proposed track with Newbury town along the way . With 1hr 30 as marginal in duration for the 31A with me onboard, and having achieved a flight on the previous day, I wasn't desperate to fly again. This sentiment I found to be a common thread amongst fellow hopper pilots, who had flown on day 1, who also weren't "moved" to fly. Some, who had only arrived for day 2, were more focussed and we helped Julia Dean in G-BWOY Sky 31 and Andy Austin in G-BZSL Sky 25 depart. The launches of these two however, got both John Hilditch and me interested in "playing" as the surface winds were light. We both decided to inflate and fly across the launch field, get towed back and repeat a number of times amassing 30 mins of fun time. The second day total was 46 flights of which 18 were different from the first day. In total for the event we witnessed activity from

Nine different hoppers. Whilst not a hopper , EC-KMM an Ultramagic M-56 was also flown by Tim Revel and Paul Dickenson and was of interest because this balloon featured the new Aerofabrix material and to see "in the flesh" the material in a balloon was fantastic .Quotes n how it flies are featured in the technical review of the product.

The Trade Show at the Elcot Place Hotel

This year's trade exhibition took place at the lovely Elcot Place Hotel near Newbury for the second consecutive year. When you enter the Hotel foyer, an immediate left turn along a corridor leads you to some steps where you descend into the exhibition room. You don't get any indication of what you will find as you enter the room, but I was greeted by shock at the lack of exhibits. Usually this is the place where the manufacturers unleash to their public the new wares for the year ahead. For some bizarre reason, both Kubicek and Lindstrand representatives had decided to not attend the event. In your editor's opinion (and one held by a vast majority of folks canvassed by myself), they had "shot themselves in the feet" by not attending, and most expressed the view that you need to talk to both prospective and current customers and by not attending, they felt both disappointed and let down.

Personally I had reason to review some interest in current products which I could not do, and this coupled to some extra efforts by other parties influenced where my order went. Price was a consideration, but not the only one, and I think taking time to be available is high on my list of criteria by which I decide who will ultimately get my money. The Manufacturers who were present were Cameron Balloons Ltd and Ultramagic Balloons.

The "rush" to get to the Cameron stand to see the new Hopper design was unfortunately ill placed, because due to market pressures, the Sales Team had been told prior to Christmas to get out there and secure some orders. All development work had been forced to be postponed and whilst a naturally disappointed Colin Wolstenholme explained to me that the hopper bottom end has been prototyped, in order to get it to production standards, the need to find sufficient work for the core business took priority over his development program. I was assured by the very frank and honest Colin that it should be done by April with hopefully an appearance at the Solo Meet pencilled in the diary. The second item of interest to us, the new Concept 50 envelope (which will be useful to Duo chariot exponents), has also been sidelined by the events prior to the festive break and again would appear sometime in the future. The longish development of a new blade for the hopper fan had achieved the same fate, becoming a victim of circumstances. All in all quite a disappointing result from high expectations, but at least they were there to talk to their customers.

The other manufacturer present was Ultramagic with representation by Tim and Hilary Revel and support from Paul Dickenson from the factory in Spain. Most of their weekend was taken up with launching the new Aerofabrix material (which I will discuss later in this issue), and on the stand they had arranged for a 3hp fan to be loaned for the weekend for me to try with my hopper, with a view to maybe a purchase. Neil Ivison had already lent me his one on the launch field and whilst the one on display was gleaming, I had already made my decision and was set to buy anyway, and therefore concentrated on getting a final deal for a new hopper envelope which was also successfully concluded on the day.

Zebedee list had their normal stall with an array of useful spares and I took the opportunity to speak with Peter Bash about G-

CFPS the sky 25 that they are currently preparing for sale. It seems that quite a few people are aware of the hopper with lots of interest in the craft but until a price is decided, it will remain interesting to see who ends up with this remarkable piece of history.

In conclusion, the flying at the Icicle Meet was great, the exhibition slightly lacking in depth of produce but for me personally, I had a ball spending money and look forward to receiving my new toys soon!

Steve Roake

SKY 25-16 G-CFPS

Whilst at the Elcot Place Hotel , the opportunity arose to speak with Peter Bish (head man from the Zebedee List), who has recently acquired the ex Austrian Bill Brogun Sky 25 hopper G-CFPS which featured in the gallery pages last month as a newly registered balloon.



(Jpeg by Mel Kirby)

This balloon has a sketchy history as it went to Austria where because it didn't have a basket wasn't needed to be registered. The 1997 built craft has a record according to Peter of only completing three flights and when it will be put up for sale following a Certificate of Airworthiness test, the balloon will be complete with the original bottom end and fuel tank which had at time of speaking just passed its pressure test. So for a really rare complete system, practically as new, I would register your interest with Peter directly at adverts@zebedeelist.co.uk or by phoning or faxing +44 1488 681527 before the rush. Price is still to be determined.

Editorial review of the year (part 2)

I just knew that when I quoted the events from 2008 that were poignant from a hopper perspective, I would leave something important out from the list. Thanks to Malcolm White for quite rightly pointing out to me the exploits of Pauline Baker in 2008, when she broke the female Ax3-4 world records with a flight to 14,016 feet in her Colt 21A. So on behalf of me sorry for the admission and congratulations once again.

Aerofabrix Material -An overview on the technology



As you all probably know by now, I am absolutely fascinated by fabric development work and feel that this is the most exciting area of our sport where in a short period of time we can expect serious development that pushes our lifetimes on fabric forward, and increases the performance verses fuel usage. Therefore, I was delighted following Mark Shemilt's record flight to be able to see" in the flesh" the fabric concerned which is called

Aerofabrix. Ultramagic Balloons Ltd have entered into an agreement with the developers to exclusively use this material to create balloons which they have called Ecomagic Balloons because of their relatively good thermal efficiency qualities. These twin skinned balloons have had some rigorous testing applied to them to see what can be achieved , and one of the development balloons ,EC-KMM an M-56 was actually at the Icicle Meet flying with Paul Dickenson and Tim Revel and following on from an intermediate landing and crew change Rick Vale also took control. The properties of the sandwich construction of the balloon are that the outer layer is a silver fabric which is a close weaved ripstop with the carrier strands every 4-5mm apart.



Fabric of the future? - Aerofabrix by ultramagic - both jpegs by Steve Roake

Nominal thickness of this fabric is 0.2mm as measured by myself. The inner material whilst being a looser weave has the carriers every 8mm apart and is thinner at just over 0.1mm thick. The interesting part to the technology is a lump of spacer material pitched every 40mm on the same horizontal plane offset to the next row by 5mm with these equally spaced at 20mm gaps to the previous row. The "hump" is approximately 2mm high and it is this that ensures the boundary layer of air achieves the thermal qualities required. In my sample of approximately 150 x150mm squared, I counted thirty Humps. The other experimental envelope is a half new material half standard nylon H-42 duo chariot and both are believed to have accumulated at least 100hours flying time.



Following this work, the first commercial balloon, an M-105 for Festo has been cleared for a minimum of 400hours life guaranteed. Speaking to Tim after his flight he remarked that "initially it flies like a normal balloon but once the fabric has achieved the desired temperature , it then flies very efficiently

losing the trend to sign wave and with burner inputs of about a third of normal with heat injection every minute."

He went on to stress whilst the fabric is very expensive currently (about 3 times the cost I was independently told), with greater utilisation there is an expectation of reducing costs as it gets more mainstream.

In conclusion, this is a material that probably currently only suits record breaking attempts due to the costs, but has properties that are suited to lesser fuel loads whilst the longevity of the product will have to be seen as more products utilise it. Personal thanks from me for the openness in communication from all at ultramagic regarding this innovation.

Ultramagic 3hp Hopper fan- the 2009 road test!

For a while now I have heard some good reports coming out about the Ultramagic 3hp fan and whilst my Cameron / Lindstrand hopper fan has been adequate for my use so far, I have always felt that in terms of efficiency it lacks something from the multi bladed fan. When I purchased mine in 2006, the list price was over £1000 which by anyone's money isn't cheap. I thought that the performance of the ultramagic fan shouldn't be that much different baring in mind that they use a common engine .The differences in design revolve around the height that the UM fan sits off the ground and a slightly larger fan case with a three bladed propeller.

Therefore I was keen to see if the experience lived up to the hype and thanks to Neil Ivison, on Saturday morning I got my chance on the field. In terms of packing the envelope, it was immediately obvious that the efficiency was better and the cold inflation time seemed a lot less to me. I am not going to slam the Cameron fan but having waited over a year for them to developed

a more efficient fan blade , my patience has run out and so I have priced my fan (hopefully as a bargain to sell quickly) in the for sale section. Would I pay for the Ultramagic fan as a replacement? In this instance Yes, and I have. So there you have it the 2009 road test of the UM fan.....as recommended by your editor.

3, Updates to the website / Newsletter/ Forum Topics

January seemed slightly quieter to me on the forum, with lower levels of banter. There were items of interest naturally but not the volume experienced previously. Alan Lawson sent in this link to his pictorial diary of the build of his hopper, and very good it is too.http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBxF_e-eIq4 I just wanted the workshop which looked well detailed with plenty of available space. Congratulations to Alan on a very pretty project completed.

Another link posted recently from Malcolm White shows video from last year's successful record flight by Pauline baker in EI-DZA her Colt 21A. The video is quite good considering at times Malcolm is in a 1000ft per minute descent and the platform he s flying in is shaking! - here is the link to see for yourselves.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUgtNyLOOXo>

Homebuilt section

Another month with nothing to report in this section, please send in to me all your project news to the usual address steve.roake@ntlworld.com for inclusion in future editions of the Cloudhopper News. Thanks.

5, Gallery Pages.

This section is the Editor's choice of new jpegs, visuals and older balloons of interest



Generally I don't use two jpegs of the same balloon in one issue, but upon receipt of this one from Tony Attwood (one of our latest members), including the message that G-CFRF their LBL 31A is seen here at Halton House which, may be available for a future One Man Meet, it felt right to include it-jpeg with thanks T. Attwood.



Recently Purchased By Martin Axtell -G-BVRL LBL 21A was previously owned by Andrew Holly



After a long period of storage, G-BYCB Sky 21 is now flying again with its' new owner Dave Hopkins from Pidley-seen here in Metz years ago.

H-31 "Steve Roake"

Ref.: 919 B



Visual of my replacement for G-BSDV. The new hopper is actually a H- 31Big coming in at 35,000 cubic feet with the reg G-UHOP being registered as we speak. C/N is 31/09.

6, Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

Events

Confirmation that XLTA 5 is planned for the last weekend of May with the usual gathering taking place in Amherst from Friday 29th May. Looking forward to meeting some of you out there having just confirmed my flights -so look out because your editor is coming!

The Solo Meet is supposed to be pencilled in for the first May Bank Holiday 2009, but needs confirming from the organisers. When I requested confirmation of its' dates, I got a luke warm response from the previous organiser. Can I ask for those of you who are thinking of attending, please can you show the Black Horse Committee that the popularity warrants their efforts, which is a strange situation bearing in mind that this has consistently been their biggest event of the year since its inception .

7, For Sale /Wanted section

For this month we have three items for sale for you .I apologise for supplying two thirds of the offerings myself but due to upgrading of my own equipment I find these items surplus to needs, and would particularly like to help someone who is trying to enter our sport get established and up and running . Second hand hoppers are rare at best and 31's in particular don't often appear on the market place. G-BSAK, a Colt 21A, also has very low hours for a balloon created in 1990 and for someone of a lighter disposition represents great value for money with so few hours in the logbook.

Cameron / Lindstrand 3hp Hopper fan for sale



Cameron 3hp hopper fan, one owner from new used less than 9 hours so still mint condition. Purchased February 2006. After consultation it is now priced to sell and offered at £495.

Telephone 07721-358758.

Email as ever steve.roake@ntlworld.com

G-BSAK Colt 21A is for sale

G-BSAK is a standard Colt 21A envelope, built, with fitted turning vents, in 1990. It was built for the Airship & Balloon Company Ltd, of Telford, England, to be flown to advertise "Perfect Pizza". Not sure what happened, but lots of "Perfect Pizza" shops in UK disappeared about that time and the balloon ended up doing 7 tethered events for them, and no free flights. The balloon was then bought by Kevin Meehan, the UK's Senior Balloon Examiner and did tethers on 9 days at Kevin's family events and kids' school events. The artwork was also part removed to what you see in the photos. Kevin finally undertook a flight in the balloon

(the first ever free flight in G-BSAK, despite her being 16 years old)!



In October 2006, after agreeing to sell her to Gavin Chadwick. Once Gavin checked out (general flight test) he could not have his balloon licence until his 17th birthday, so he bought G-BSAK in order to fly solo flights. He has since undertaken 12 solo flights

in the balloon, 10 in Mondovi, Northern Italy, 1 in southern UK and 1 in Metz, France.

The genuine reason for sale is that the Sky Chariot is heavier than a Cloudhopper / Lindstrand Hopper bottom end, and also has a 60 litre horizontal tank. Therefore, Gavin can only use when the temperature is quite cold, based on standard loading calculations - and he would never dream of ever overloading a balloon! The 21 size is better suited to a Cloudhopper / Lindstrand Hopper bottom end, and the turning vents (if not required) will self seal in flight - you just take the lines out. G-BSAK is in very good condition and has been well looked after. We are looking for GBP 1,400 for her. Any shipping and export Certificate of Airworthiness would be at the buyer's cost. However, in the USA she may qualify as Ultralight. She packs very small in the bag and weighs just 81 LB.

Contact Ian or Gavin Chadwick at ian.chadwick@virgin.net for more details.



Both jpegs of G-BSAK - copyright Ian Chadwick

G-BSDV Colt 31A is for sale



Due to new envelope coming, my trusty Colt 31A G-BSDV is now available for purchase. First registered in April 1990, she has total time of 75hours and comes with the obligatory EASA C of A and ARC and has been inspected annually since purchase by Chris Dunkley. Additionally of interest is that the original turning vents are still in place (but not used) and with addition of lines could be reinstated for use on a chariot or basket bottom end. Never flown over temp, she comes with the original Colt bag (for

purists) and a two year old Lindstrand replacement (as new condition) with quick Links replaced by 3.5 ton carabiners. With rarity of hoppers of a usable size, she represents a great way to enter your hopping experience. Price £2000(no offers) and naturally any inspection welcome. For more details Steve.roake@ntlworld.com or 07721-358758.

And Finally

Membership is currently a healthy 381 members and still rising. We are getting closer to the magic 400 mark. 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 flying Steve Roake.

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