



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 53

January 2012

Happy New Year people.

Welcome to the New Year, and another anniversary of the start of cloudhoppers forum. We are now 8 years young. The impact of the forum and newsletter is growing year on year and as always I'm striving to improve the product so constructive views are always welcome.

Ed-Speak – January is traditionally the Alpine month. This is the artistic month where hoppers (particularly bright ones) show off at alpine events in Austria, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. However this year, believe it or not, there have been unprecedented amounts of snow in Europe with avalanche dangers, which limited the amount of flying available and even the traditional pose of Chateau D'oex didn't bring much hopper activity. We also had the Icicle balloon meet so plenty to talk about.



Sandy Mitchell snapped OO-BVQ at Chateau D'oex

Steve Roake

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Essential Extra's / Tech Talk

After some bleak months, this section returns with a great idea from Tim Ward with a novel solution to an old problem.

You may recall some time ago in the essential extras section (hopper newsletter, no 17, month/2007) I wrote about placing a mirror across the metal reflector used to view the tank gauge. After doing this we found out that using two mirrors can make the gauge more readable and provide additional safety views.

To try this we carried out the following:-

Position the tank with the top of the tank gauge towards the frame.





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When looking through one mirror (on the frame) the tank gauge will look the wrong way around (mirrored).



However when using two mirrors the gauge is then viewed the correct way around and is much easier to read (double reflection).





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The position of the mirror on the frame needs to be set during flight preparation.



An improvement to this would be to use a magnifying mirror at the frame. However to my knowledge this has not yet been tried. Have a go and let us know what you think.

Using a second mirror can also provide an angle of vision not normally available while being strapped into a hopper. To check to see if there are other balloons out of site, holding the second mirror out to one side can provide a view vertically up the side of the envelope.



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The second mirror needs to be on a lanyard or string clipped to the frame; you don't want to drop it!

Many thanks to Tom Hilditch for modelling in the photos.

Soft Landings, Tim Ward

The Features Section

Icicle Balloon Meet-by Steve Roake

In a world of depression and contraction, the Icicle balloon meet is a good barometer of how ballooning is. This year's event was held as ever at the Warren Farm at Savernake Forrest with the trade exhibition held at the Elcot Place Hotel in Hungerford.

Saturday, dawned grey, horrible, and slightly windy and with the exception of one intrepid balloonist, nothing flew including hoppers.



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Arriving at the exhibition area was like a case of déjà vous. Turn back the clock 12 months and very little has changed. Lindstrand Balloons continue to not bother attending the event; Cameron Balloons continues to focus its resources and efforts on rides balloons. Schroeder Balloons had a presence for the second year running and Ultramagic Balloons limited again remains the most focussed on our segment of the marketplace. With hardly any growth in the UK market the manufacturers aren't being forward with their development plans.

The most noticeable change evident was the retirement from Ultramagic Balloons of Tim and Hilary Revel and the first public appearance of the new UK dealer Richard Penny. Abally supported by factory man Paul Dickenson, they had on display the Techno Bottom end that belonged to Paul with Richard displaying his outside for folks who felt like playing. This segment of the marketplace has done very well for UM who have just delivered their first example to Japan. Whilst I'm not allowed to reveal numbers produced, this bottom end set up has achieved very healthy sales numbers with some even being utilised on larger envelopes. In the UK alone we now have two examples being flown regularly and I still hope to bring you a flight test soon. Apart from the UM stand, there was nothing to report from an ultralight perspective. Whilst Sunday morning saw 23 big balloons fly from the farm, no hoppers appeared. There was also a rumour that potentially 2012 would be the last time the event would be held at Warren Farm as it is believed that the owner is going through a prolonged divorce. Let's hope the organisers get an alternative venue sorted quickly. For anyone wishing to put the details of Richard Penny in their address book, here are his contact details.

Ultramagic UK, Suite 81, The courtyard, Minchens Court, Minchens Lane
Bramley, Tadley Hants RG26 5B.

Phone 01256-880453

Mobile 07715-369229

Email Richard@ultramagic.co.uk

Steve Roake



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My First Hop- Alas due to no submissions, this section is empty this month. It's simple, you write about the experience, how it happened, how it felt compared to your expectations and any after thoughts. So that's the format, what happened on your first ever hop and how it felt compared to your expectations? Submissions to me please at steve.roake@ntlworld.com

4. Updates to the Website / Newsletter/ Topics of Interest

Some very good topics of conversation have been on the forum this month, including a tasty morsel on conducting tethered hopper flights and how useful they are at giving people an idea of what it is like to fly one.

Bill Whelan and Sandra are celebrating another record flight in Canada with a five hours plus flight recently. I am hoping that when they stop celebrating, perhaps another article about the flight will make its way here for inclusion in a future newsletter.

My personal news is that by the time you read this another major step in the right direction will have occurred with the new website. The architecture of the site is the hard part followed by the implementation of the text and pictures. My friend Les, the builder has also linked in with remote control of the pc and so very soon we should be able to bring a more dynamic website online with easily upgradable sections that potentially I can improve on my own. Updates as I have them on my progress.

Update: Architecture all finished, now time to populate the pages!

5. Homebuilt section-

Bill Whelan builds his own hopper

AX2 and AX3 – Building her Dream!

This past year, Sandra had asked me about building two new very small balloons for our very cold winters and her desire to re-write the Canadian record books. She already has AX4, AX5 and AX6 records, and she decided that she wanted to have some records in the



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smaller categories as well. I would say that she just likes to see her names in print, but since the Canadian records aren't even published anywhere – I think she just likes to fly!

We agreed on the sizing and set out to build the balloons. We chose AX2 and an AX3 category balloons.



All panels cut and in the gore bags!

In the past we had used the spreadsheet from the Balloon Builders Journal, and had some great success. The balloon builder's spreadsheet has helped me to build some 20+ balloons in varying sizes.

This time we wanted to vary the shape a little, so our good friend, Marcos, at RVB balloons in Sao Paulo, Brazil, helped us. He and I would design the balloon, or rather, he would operate the computer and I would watch.

We discussed the balloons, and their main purpose (records), and considered different envelope shapes. Marcos, having the CAD program, could help us quickly visualize different designs.

Together we chose what looked like a perfect design. Ah... the world of computers... I wish this old dog knew more. We decided on an 8-gore balloon in the AX2 category and 12-gore balloon in the AX3 category. Within minutes he produced the computerized patterns, and estimated fabric requirements. Paper patterns were later produced (thanks Marcos!) saving us from having to create them ourselves.



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Normally we use lightweight material for our balloons. And, we had been thinking of a double walled balloon for the AX3 category. But after discussing the pros and cons of a double walled balloon, and the performance of some newer fabrics, we decided to abandon the double walled scenario. We decided to order a black material with Mylar coating, hoping that the insulation property would further improve the performance of the small balloons without the weight of the doublewalled construction. Not having to build the inner wall would also save on fabric and time!



Sandra and Bill with 1st gore completed!

Construction began in November 2011, and we planned on having the balloons completed by Xmas time. We cut all the fabric for both balloons at the same time. Those computers sure know how many yards/meters to order! Talk about CUTTING the fabric close to the end of the roll! Don't make any mistakes – there isn't much left over! Thanks to one of our students from Taiwan (Martin), who was staying with us at the time, we were able to complete the cutting task very quickly. Both balloons looked very similar – with the black material above the equator, and lightweight grey fabric below the equator. To distinguish them a little, we put a band of red in the AX3 and a band of green in the AX2, along with matching pennants.



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Sewing of the two balloons was completed just before Xmas. Martin and I sewed most of the AX3 balloon. Much to our chagrin, Martin had to return to Taiwan before Christmas. We would miss him dearly and were disappointed he would not see the first inflation of the balloon he had helped to build.



Inside of Rip panel top cap

We asked him to sign one of the pennants – so that “he” could be there on the first flight. That balloon is now aptly named “Martin”. Sandra’s mother, Muriel, an experienced seamstress herself, intrigued by our stories of balloon building, wanted to see how a balloon was constructed. So she came to the shop for a weekend and we began sewing the AX2. Sandra pinned, Muriel sewed with the single needle machine, and I sewed with the double needle machine. In two days we had all panels in the gores sewn, and 6 of the 8 gores sewn together. Before she left, we asked her to sign a pennant, so the AX2 was named “Muriel”. Over the next few days, I finished off the sewing on the AX2 myself. Cables and attachments were completed over the Xmas holidays.

We decided to build a rip-panel instead of parachutes for these balloons. They are so small, that any leakage from an ill-fitting parachute may seriously affect performance. Sandra hasn’t flown with a rip-panel, so I keep reminding her that she only gets one pull!



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During the balloon construction process -- me being a "busy beaver" as always -- I decided to build a small burner. The balloons were after all going to be very short, the overall gore length was only 45 feet, and all our burners had flames that were way too tall. Our regular burners were just too big, and too heavy as well.



Top Cat completed

In all my dreams of ballooning I never once thought about building a burner, even though I have had several hundred burners apart while performing all types of service. I wasn't looking for a machined burner, just one that had function. I collected all the old burner parts that I could think of, made up the bottom fuel flow configuration, with redundancy, and put it all together. I had asked some friends who had a machine shop, if we could turn a coil for the burner. We picked some material that I thought would work and twisted a coil. Second time we had the correct size of coil for the burner. Bending a small piece of flat material to protect the pilot light, and interior burner parts was harder than building and assembling the whole burner. All the burner tests went well.

These balloons are too small to have baskets, so we are working on a hang harness for the pilot. Everything has to be lightweight, but robust and safe. We have looked at various chair designs for balloons, paragliding and parasailing harnesses, and we are designing our own purpose-built harness.



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The balloons are sitting waiting for the completed paper work approval, after which, we can inflate the balloons and take the first flights. Here in Canada, Transport Canada needs to come and make sure that we have all the correct paper work in order, and the work was performed in a reasonable manner.



Closing the balloon!

They have little experience with home-built/amateur built hot air balloons, let alone burners and harnesses. This was the first time they had seen the entire aircraft built from scratch. Needless to say – they were a little wideeyed on their visit! This has all been completed. Now we just have to wait for the paper to work its way through the system.

We are excitedly looking forward to the first inflations of the balloons, with the small burner, and a hang harness. Sandra is anxious to get out there in the cold weather and hang around for a few hours! Go figure!

Bill Whelan



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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.



Beautiful new Techno S-50 for Japan, JA-A1425(c/n 50-07) is called "Shingo" Thanks as ever to Paul Dickenson for the info and jpeg.



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Seen at Mondovi and photographed by Ian Chadwick, Mark Shemilts
Ax1 G-CGIU is only 8000 cubic feet and relatively rarely seen.



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Proving to be very popular at the moment Paulo Bannanos new hopper is seen flying on 24th January at Mondovi being flown by Virgins Ken Karlstrom and the envelope weight is only 28kgs (31,000cubic feet).jpeg by Ian Chadwick



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Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

XLTA 2012

I have received news that XLTA 2012 is looking dubious this year. Pencilled in for the 8th-10th June, word has arrived via Graham Bell that Dan Nachbar's circumstances have changed recently and due to his new working commitments he doesn't now have the time to do the logistics of this popular event. There is a possibility that somebody else could fill the void and do the organising for the event to take place, but as things stand currently the likelihood of this happening is minimal. I would just like to say thanks to Dan for all his efforts running this event with his team of volunteers over the years and let's hope it returns.

BHBC Anniversary All Fools Meet 25 years this easter- But No Solo Meet!

The Black Horse balloon club is holding a 25th Anniversary Balloon meet to celebrate the events history over the easter weekend of 6th -9th April. I'm sure there will be plenty of fun for all those who attend however there will be no official Solo Meet this year. This is an event I've run with assistance from Rob Cross, the late Graham Philpot and with considerable help from Tim and Hillary Revel. However with Tim's retirement from ballooning and an offer to attend the Trim Easter festival, I decided not to run it this year. Apologies to anyone who was looking forward to the event, but it will return next year perhaps in a revised Hopper only format and potentially maybe at an alternative venue. So for those who go enjoy the fun?

Expect a full on report from Trim with some interesting hopper projects Being scheduled, I'm sure there will be plenty to talk about. One expectation that Pauline and Malcolm want to do is to inflate all their various Ax1, 2, 3 and 4 balloons alongside one another. So if I'm there I guess I'm there to help achieve it. So if it happens you will be the first people to know.



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Adverts / For Sale / Wanted section

Just want to remind people that adverts are no longer free in this section. A one off contribution means your advert runs until the item is sold and can be adjusted at any time. For more details email me at Steve.roake@ntlworld.com

Martin Axtell offers G-CCKZ for sale



Customcraft 25A.14hrs multicoloured and lightweight Envelope.customcraft bottom end. Splits into two halves like lindstrand in red...vgc with 60ltr tank. Annex 2 so no messing around with EASA etc....Flies great...all paperwork in order...ready to go.£5,000 ono.tel martin 07786622802.....will even leave insured for 1 year.



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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.



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.

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And Finally.

Membership is currently a healthy 438 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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