

Issue Number 32

June 2009

Dear friends,

For your Editor the month of May was Magic. Firstly we went to the Solo Meet at Great Missenden where a fine event took place, including some first flights of new balloons (mine included), and with this event now seen as an annual must by UK pilots.



One highlight of the Solo Meet -Richard and Gabi Sargeant from Switzerland show off "their fleet" including personalised registrations G-DICK and G-GABI-jpeg by Bernie Williams.

This was followed up at the end of the month with the eagerly awaited XLTA 5 visit. I have to say, having completed both events, they complement each other well and were a pure pleasure to be a small part of. With the volume of information that I have accrued for you from Amherst, I will leave the reporting of that event until the July Newsletter, but fear not the May issue is fairly stacked with topics. The choice is varied and with the added "Special Report" of a hopper experience from Bob Knupps from Thailand.

So without further waiting, please enjoy this issue!

Contents

In this 32nd edition I have for your reading the following choice subjects;

- 1, **Ed Speak**- The contrast between Europe and America
- 2, **Essential Extra's** -Chris Dobson's map case
- 3, **The Features Section**-featuring the following submissions:

- Dreamweaver 3 -your editor's first experiences with the Ultramagic Balloon.
- The Solo Meet from Great Missenden.
- The concluding story of G-CFPS Sky 25-16
- My Favourites and Why -Third version of this with submissions from Peter Gray.
- Bob Knupps reports on Life with a Hopper in Thailand

4. **Updates for the Newsletter/Website/ Forum talk**

- I have seen the structure of the new website and am excited.

5. Homebuilt Section -

- Ian Chadwick's Homebuilding Quest offers an opportunity for some great tutorial.

6. Gallery Pages- Another mixed choice of hoppers (new and older), selected by your editor.

7. Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

- The 2009 OMM news!

8. For Sale /Wanted Section

- G-BSAK Colt 21A Envelope is for sale
- G-BSDV Colt 31A Envelope is up for grabs.

9. Last and not least.

1. Ed Speak by Steve Roake - Europe verses America

Another month passes, and once again all my thoughts revolve around weight .The interesting thing for me is that whilst I have transferred my flying to a lighter envelope and seeing the benefits in the limited flying I have done with it am happy, in comparison to the American friends I met at XLTA , our systems are still very heavy. I was very interested in the close up view I had of Greg Winker's Tetrahedron hopper which whilst nominally a 28,000cubic feet balloon has probably by virtue of it being a Tetrahedron , more fabric than my 35K Ultramagic and yet weighs in at a miserly 32kgs where mine weighs a respectable 42kgs.The main "liberty" the Americans have is an ability to par down to the minimum the parts used on their balloons such as miniature eyelets on the flying wires and the smallest quicklinks capable of doing the job. European manufacturers by comparison are still utilising very moderate sized components and whilst

personally I am delighted with the progress we achieved with G-UHOP, I think that Ultramagic like all the other manufacturers could be even leaner with the parts selected for the connections. Even the carabiners used on the scoop are considered massive by American proportions. Are we the pilots the only people who are banging on about weight? Cables were another feature on Greg's envelope that was sized according to need rather than conservatism. Whilst in America the question of longevity verses weight reared its head, and whilst 1.09 ounce fabric is considerably lighter, there were examples present of ultralight envelopes that had achieved in excess of 225hours flight and it appeared fine and fit for a lot longer life. The quality of the build of the American craft is also top notch but more elaboration on them in next month's edition (our XLTA 5 special issue).

Steve Roake

2, Essential Extra's- Chris Dobson's modified Map Case

Twice in two months we end up with something to fill this section after months of nothing in particular. Chris Dobson contacted me to say that he has modified his Lindstrand made map case. This made me think because, I too had mine adjusted the same way when I purchased the item from the factory. When supplied directly, the item comes with poppers to fasten the map case to your bottom end. What Chris has done is to change the fasteners that hold the case onto your lower section of your seat assembly. For a carabiner and by lengthening the strap it gives Chris more scope for movement during the flight.



Having suffered the misfortune of losing the map case on take-off when the poppers failed, he now doesn't worry that it is attached and can concentrate on other more important issues.

Ed's thought-. I know here in the UK we utilise ordnance Survey based maps for our flying, my one wish would be that as a map case, I wish it was substantially bigger. Currently this size of map case is convenient for only two folds of the current map, my wish would be for a case that I could see four folded sides therefore utilising more of the available map and substantially reducing the need to get the map out mid flight and refold it to a visible section that I am at that time flying on is clearly in view.

I am sure that for a reasonable sum of money Lindstrand would be very capable of supplying a larger version of the above.

Many thanks for submitting the revised modification Chris.
Simple but effective!

3, The Features Section

First Impressions of living with Dreamweaver 3 (G-UHOP) by Steve Roake

The first time a new envelope emerges is a great experience. Deciding what is required to be able to live with it and ensuring that it is to specification takes a small amount of time and each of us has our own quirky ways in which we operate.

The first time we got the envelope out of the new bag I had on hand Jonathan Dyer (fellow local Pilot and interested viewer having placed a deposit for a Lightweight Ultramagic H-42 himself). This is great for the following reasons. Firstly another set of eyes can point out if things are incorrect that could be overlooked and secondly the person can also give unbiased opinions on what may make the living easier.

At no point in what I'm about to say am I berating Ultramagic Balloons Ltd, but in my case There were a few items I wanted to get modified because my 31 Big is the first (to my knowledge), Hopper Envelope delivered without turning vents. I am also a firm believer that you can tell how good an organisation is by how quickly they react to things that aren't quite right. None of the issues were major but by my discussions with both the dealer and factory hopefully the next time an option is placed without turning vents, hopefully these few points won't reoccur. Um must be doing something right because currently they are the most prolific sellers of hoppers. The H-42 in particular is very popular.

My short list had the following four points to be discussed and potentially adjusted.

- The crown line wasn't detachable. (Perhaps should have been discussed at the specification stage) and if wet is better stowed elsewhere separately. Therefore by being

made detachable it can be stored in its own bag and if necessary dried out.

- The Envelope bag had no way of attaching itself to the seat when you fly.
- The parachute line looked too long and needed shortening by four feet.
- Finally the scoop looked "soggy and loose "when attached to the burner ring.

When we arrived at the Solo Meet I took the opportunity to observe how Paul Dickenson oriented his scoop mounting the elastic level with the rim of the tank (some considerable tension on the elastic).



Seen clearly here are the mounting points of Paul's H-31 scoop .jpeg by Bernie Williams.

Stupidly I forgot why they could be tensioned so tight and low and by copying Paul, I set about my first flight with mine

configured the same way - only remembering in flight that they have turning vents and my limited ability to spin was now down to about 30degrees either side hence half of the flight was spent flying backwards (oops!). However all is not lost and despite some vigorous descents to test the parachute, my 1hr 5min flight used only 38litres of fuel (not far off the predicted 1litre per cubic feet of fabric per hour). I felt with better flying by myself, fuel flow could be even better. Second flight, and with the ability to spin properly I achieved 1hr 5mins for only 34litres in what was a great flight into the Chiltern valley near Missenden from the Aylesbury Vale to the North.



First flight action in G-UHOP (actually facing the right way for a change) jpeg by Bernie Williams

Subsequent to these two initial flights at the Solo Meet, the four points considered have been adjusted and so I'm now set for more fun flying ASAP. Many thanks to my crew for the weekend Peter Gray and Bernie Williams and to Tim Revel (Ultramagic UK) for his help on getting my snag list sorted out.

The Solo Meet (Black Horse Balloon Club May Fiesta) 2009

Normally when I write a review of an event, I start on it, churn it out, re-read it for grammatical errors, then submit it without further thought. At this year's XLTA event I got a real sense from those present of "old friends" reconvening at a school reunion, and having heard Greg Winker say that he'd love to come to the UK and do an event, if I were choosing, I would pick either the OMM or more probably The Solo Meet. Why? Simple really, if you want the essences of what makes England English, and want character, quirkiness and the essence of camaraderie that makes a great event, in beautiful countryside, and then this one is for you no questions!

This then led to another conundrum. How do I capture the "real snapshot" of what happened, describing the scene, and grabbing the sense of purpose that makes us serially come back for another fix each year? The answer seems to be describing it like a painting! Place the elements into the canvas and let the audience draw their minds across the pallet to define it in their own way, picking out the parts that matter to them. So here goes, wish me luck!

The landscape - What the area is really like for a visiting tourist.

When you visit Great Missenden, the chances are that from three of the four main directions you arrive downhill into the Chiltern Valley. Sited about 30miles from London on the Chiltern Hills, which lead North to the Aylesbury plain, views from above this

landscape show how the countryside opens up as you radiate away from the Urban sprawl of Central London and you sense the pace of life relaxing as you immerse yourself in country values...Imagine a village with a regional line railway station , one central Supermarket shop , around four roads which wind through the countryside past a mix of arable and pasture fields, with traditional housing and then just as you are about to exit the village limits you come across the Black Horse Pub with clubhouse and launch field and you know you have arrived.

Content -The Friday night routine

The Nature of this event is that everyone tends to arrive sometime during the afternoon / early evening. Those who choose to camp set up their motor homes and tents and adjourn to the varied menu and traditional ales of the pub to "catch up" on how the "old school" has been since the last gathering of the clan. The briefing for Friday evening was deemed non flyable so we all socialised in the pub environment.

Saturday morning appeared all too early, and we arrived at the pub for the briefing. With the direction of the prevailing winds (270degrees at 6knots), a more suitable launch site at Cuddington (to the North), gave a better westerly track. However upon arrival to the cricket ground we experienced fairly low cloud base coupled to the higher ground that most concluded deemed flying a No Go! The cloud was patchy and in between one balloon flew. The morning wasn't a complete waste of time because Gabi and Richard Sargeant took the opportunity with all the help present to inflate both their new Lindstrand 35A and their older Colt 56A. With personalised registrations on both balloons, this was a unique occasion, enjoyed by all celebrated with a glass of champagne.



Champagne Moment! G-GABI LBL35A was inflated on Saturday morning by Gabi Sargeant-jpeg by Bernie Williams

After the mornings activity we all returned to the pub for a hearty breakfast. The great thing about an environment like this is that it is the perfect place for discussions on hopping. With Richard and Gabi present, it was good to get their views on hopper life and equipment and find like- minded souls who have the passion that we all share.

Saturday evening came around with better weather prevailing and a track that at a slower wind speed towards Chesham looked great for a mass launch. The evening flight was to be a Hare and hounds competition sponsored by Ultramagic balloons UK. Tim Revell the UK dealer was to be the Hare in his UM M-77 balloon for all the regular balloons, whilst the hopper contingent followed Paul Dickenson in his Ultramagic Solo H-31. The 28 balloons that flew on this slot made a great sight filling the sky with a spectacular collage of colour. Both Gabi and I were on first flights in our ownoppers, and whilst my flight was "interesting" due to the position of the scoop relative to my lack of ability to rotate, exploring the parachute action and accessing the way it felt to fly. After an initial climb out of the valley where the take off point was, it was possible to explore some low level flying prior to a climb to survey the possibilities for landing around Chesham town centre. Initially on the crest of a hill I narrowly missed a school playing field possibility. Having resumed my flight I was aware of a forthcoming Leisure centre and its fields. My manoeuvring in the air made no difference to my options and the centre slid by to my right hand side. The left on the surface was quite acute, and a third possible football pitch went agonisingly past as I hovered over a hedge at the very edge of the pitch - missed again! Having now travelled for an hour and with no prior knowledge of fuel flow in my new balloon, I decided it was time to be positive in my efforts to land. Seeing Paul in the Hare on a golf course to my right, I could see a set aside field ahead (on my

track) and proceeded to follow another balloon in for a faultless landing at about 3 knots. Having heard people welcome me in to the field I was amazed when the farmer appeared Seething with fury. It transpired that out of sight some cattle were corralled in a barn and he was very agitated. After a period of time and with two other balloons flying on away from the scene, myself and the other balloonist Peter George agreed to pay a fee to charity to get out of our predicament. Working on the basis that I have rarely had a bad experience with a landowner and being 200metres from the barn, I put my £25 fee down to experience whilst poor Peter suffered four times my "Donation". The local relations officer for the region has now subsequently added this place as a No landing spot on the maps. Therefore, later on finding out I was nearest to the hare (by complete fluke), was a nice ending to the episode. Luckily we still found time to return to the Black Horse pub for a full debrief over a pint and some food and whilst analysing the flight after the event, I don't think I would have changed my choice of field and put the chance of that kind of welcome down to a chance in a million. Saturday night gave us a chance for a couple of drinks as we already knew that Sunday morning was not going to be flyable with a wet front coming through the night and winds associated with this picking up by early morning.

When I did awake on Sunday, the forecast was right and as expected the right decision had been taken .Sunday evening was also expected to be marginal for flying and so it was that on the evening slot, once again we remained grounded, but with the knowledge of a possible inversion and a ground frost over night, so looking good for a cold morning hop.

"Fresh and chilly", was the way I'd describe the early morning dawn on Monday morning. The frost had indeed arrived and some

of the campers had a cold night under canvas. The briefing gave very encouraging signs with which we all decamped to the Thame Show Ground for our launch site. This was about 25mins drive from the Black Horse pub, in a North westerly direction. The great thing about this flight was that upon launching in the Vale of Aylesbury, we would reach the ridge where the valley in to Missenden started and with luck should be able to fly into and down the valley for a target of a cross next to the pub. Whilst only around 15 balloons flew this slot, it was by far the nicest. Prevailing winds were around 110 degrees at about 7knots but with some variation that allowed both of the RAF balloons to make it home to base at Halton Air base. Tim Dudman chose what seemed to be an early landing opportunity in his Sky 31; it later transpired that he had planned it. Not only was he landing near to his accommodation for the weekend, he had already booked his breakfast for a certain time and didn't want to miss it! The visibility at 2000ft was fantastic and by staying relatively high I could ensure I followed the local balloons on the right track for the ridge and subsequently be able to descend into the valley for some great low level "blimping" at slow speeds. Being one of the last three balloons away from the launch site I was able to get a first hand view of those ahead as they made minute manoeuvres trying to reach the cross. With very slow speeds, the patience needed was intense and quite a few get close to the target as I arrive on scene. I'm happy to be within 300metres but off to the left hand side so fly on to make a lovely stand up landing at about 4knots in a manicured grazing field. My arrival is greeted by an older gentleman who it transpires is having his first day back in the UK after many years of living abroad and whilst enjoying a cycle ride is buoyed by seeing this unique sight. We have the time of day, wish each other well and he is off again on his way. My chosen field has access within 50 feet and as I am on a bridleway when my crew arrives, we pack up and walk the kit out of the field.

returning to the launch site for another hearty breakfast. Once again it transpires I have flown for 1hr5mins and this time used up 34litres of fuel. Prize giving completes another successful event so enormous thanks to the organisers , the sponsors and all who helped make this year's Solo Meet another one not to miss.

G-CFPS the Sky 25-16

In what seems to have been a monthly series, here is hopefully the final instalment now that the Sky 25 was ready for sale. When it came onto the marketplace, I was informed by Peter Bish of the Zebedee Balloon Service that the balloon was a complete system and not envelope only. Whilst there were only 10 sky hoppers made, I wasn't sure that I had ever seen a sky bottom end so contacted Celia Kunnert who kindly supplied a jpeg of it



G-CFPS Sky 25 Bottom End-jpeg by Zebedee Balloon Services

I expect there are many of you out there who can remember this type of bottom end with its' Swing Seat which as you can see hitches from the attachments which are on the protruded shoulder extensions. The mounting of the fuel tank is also unusual being held on the upper collar of the fuel tank.



As you can see from the above jpeg, the balloon with only 4 hours total flying time on it looks great and will be a fantastic asset for whoever purchases her. Normally kept in the For Sale section, as we have had some dealings with the beast I feel it is only fair that we list her below. I guess she will sell quickly and represents

a substantial saving compared with a new hopper so if this is for you, my advice is hurry! Good luck.

Sky 25-16. G-CFPS. 1997. Under 4 hours, stored for last 10 years. Rainbow stepped horizontal panels with Hyperlast parachute. Older Sky Hopper bottom end including 1986 Worthington cylinder. PPT & PRV just done. EASA C of A till Mar 2010. Just like new. £4950 (too late sold already)!
Zebedee Balloon Service – (0044) 1488 681527

Postscript 23rd June- All of the above was written earlier in the month, and I caught up with Pete Bish at the BBML inflation day at West Woodhay House near Newbury over the last weekend. He told me earlier that "the first to see it will buy!" and guess what? He was right. First viewer bought the balloon. Her new owner is Geoff Lescott of Oxford. I hope he brings her to the OMM!

My Favourite Jpegs and why-by Peter Gray.

In this third round of my favourite jpegs and why, your editor has "summoned" upon Peter Gray to choose his three favourite jpegs of hoppers or duo chariots and tell us why. In His own words Peter describes his choices and how he came to his decisions.

1st choice-G-OSVO Cameron Hopper Servo 30 C/N 3077

'Twocon' Press Morning Longleat 1993 balloon festival, Flown by Dee Shapland with a Mountain Bike as the bottom end. Dee spent all morning 'playing' on launch field for the press instead of free-flying. (This was the first special-shape hopper ever made)



G-OSVO Servo Connector Special Shape-jpeg by Peter Gray

2nd Choice from Peter is G-BUSU Colt 42A Airchair C/N 2323
Whilst attending the Chateau D'Oex Balloon Meet in 1994 I was given a flight by Neil Lindsay in G-BUOU and remember watching G-BUSU being flown by John Christopher. (Ed's Note. Just a beautiful demonstrator colour scheme)!



Just a superb looking Demonstrator balloon, how could anyone not want to buy one of these looking at the factory fresh colour scheme? There was once a great photo from Chateau D'oex where three various sized Colt Demo balloons are pictured in a snowscape, looking absolutely gorgeous, I would have loved to be there!



Third of Peter's submissions actually got spoken about at XLTA 5 this year, so I'm personally delighted he has chosen this duo chariot bottom end. Bottom End owned by Tim Orchard at the Solo Meet 2007. Peter found the story of the building of this bottom end interesting. It was made for Tim by Chris Dunkley and used 2 genuine leather aircraft seats from a BA Concorde. Many thanks to Peter for a great set of choices.

Next Month I have harassed Greg Winker from the XLTA meet to come up with his three favourite shots with an explanation of why he likes them.

So now who else would like to make their unique choices of hopper or duo chariot favourites? Selections to me as ever please, care of steve.roake@ntlworld.com.

Bob Knupps reports on Life with a Hopper in Thailand

I can't remember when I first landed on the cloud hopper website, but it was the same day that I began badly wanting to fly one. I live in a rural area of Thailand and had no idea if it was even possible to obtain suitable gas to fly a hot air balloon, and it was the search for that info that led me to this group. Once I found that it was at least theoretically possible I ordered a Cameron hopper with a V31 envelope, with the intention of teaching myself to fly it on a tether. I was going to need an inflation fan, so my pal Graham, an ex RAF aircraft engineer, built this one for me.



It uses a Honda 4hp motor and the shroud is made from an oil drum. Cost was about \$600 US, half of which went to import the 3 blade prop and hub from the States. Nice and light, it puffed up the V31 really fast during our first test inflation.

It was still the rainy season and on the warm side so I talked Graham into going up first on tether since he's quite a bit lighter, so he could burn off some fuel (and test out the valve cartridge he had just replaced in the tank valve per the Cameron AD). He'd never flown a balloon before (not to mention his instructor) but is a veteran scuba diver so buoyancy was a familiar concept.



This is a pretty good view of a Cameron hopper bottom end. Note that I had both the pilot and the tank improperly strapped in. Erm, sorry about that Graham!

Fortunately before I could become a Darwin Award finalist I discovered that there was a balloon ride operation in Chiang Mai, about 3 hours away, so I went down there early one morning and met their pilot, a Dutch guy named Wout who generously agreed to teach me how to fly on mornings when there were no customers. Also at about that same time a second-hand duo chariot came up for sale on this group site and I purchased G-BVRI, a T&C 54 that proved to be a very good training machine for the hopper. Rien Jurg, the Cameron agent in Holland, was also very helpful importing both balloons into Thailand and I have to say at this point that I have found the entire ballooning community most welcoming and helpful.

I found flying a balloon to be much more difficult than I thought it would be and way more fun too. It's probably a good thing that balloons were the last category of GA aircraft that I learned how to fly; because it's so much fun I'm not sure I would have wanted to try anything else. Northern Thailand is a fairly relaxed place to fly and there's nothing better than skimming over rice paddies and rooftops, talking and waving to friendly villagers as you float past. I've had a lot of different flight instructors but few calmer than Wout. He usually didn't talk much and usually just let me fly and see what happens, on at least 2 different occasions solemnly pronouncing "this is the worst situation you can possibly be in". I have some interesting air-to-air video of one of our duo flights I will post on YouTube once the internet connection here sufficiently improves.



So after over twice as many hours as it took to solo a plane some 35 years ago I finally got the nod to strap on the hopper. I took off first, with Wout and his girlfriend supervising the flight in trail from my airchair. The hopper was actually easier to control than the duo and I immediately felt comfortable in it as we slowly drifted away from the airport. Wout was busy taking pictures while his girlfriend flew the balloon, and I grimly noted she was apparently having no trouble matching my altitude excursions despite never having flown before. After about 20 minutes or so I sat down in a wide-open field and shouted over to Wout asking what he wanted to do, whereupon he gently suggested that if we climbed higher than 50 feet we might find some wind. Of course he was right and at about 200 feet we got into very nice stream that took us over a village and then on to some fields where our crew was already waiting and I was able to set the balloon down gently right next to the road after an hour-long first solo. My wife was there and when I asked her what she thought about it all she just frowned and asked me why I landed directly on top of a (dry, fortunately!) cow patty...



First balloon solo with Wout supervising in the airchair from shouting distance. (All jpegs supplied by Bob Knupps)

The weather turned bad as the seasonal forest fires caused the vis to drop to IFR levels so it was another month before I made my 3rd and most recent hop. I got invited to fly with an informal group including Wout that was going to fly over the Kwai River in Western Thailand, about a 10 hour drive to the south. There were 4-5 balloons and I took off at the same time as Wout, who was flying with a couple of friends in the ride balloon. The surface wind was light but we immediately flew over the river and then right over the whole city at a few hundred feet.



Crossing the River Kwai about a mile upstream from the infamous bridge. As we left the outskirts of the city our speed began to pick up as the wind funnelled between two hills. Wout wouldn't let me use a GPS for most of our training and I wasn't carrying one then but he later said we were doing 10 knots. There looked like nothing but trees ahead as far as I could see and we were slowly angling closer to some big power lines along the highway running through the valley. The learning curve was steepening rapidly and I was starting to get a bit scared, and I told myself that I would land in the first likely spot that came up even though we were only 25 minutes into the flight.



Low pass over the hilltop temple at ten knots; doesn't look too landable ahead!

After what seemed like an eternity but was probably 5 minutes a small field opened up ahead of the treetops I was now skimming over at speed. I came down at a steep angle and the highest sink rate I had ever landed anything other than a parachute. Unfortunately I was concentrating so hard on my descent angle over the trees that I completely forgot to spin around backwards and landed facing only about 45 degrees to the right of my track and smashed up the back of my left hand, my first-ever scratch from a flying mishap. The envelope rebounded enough to lift my upper body a few inches off the ground before depositing me directly in front of one of those foot-high clay berms that divide up the paddies. The up side of this collision was that all further dragging was immediately arrested and the envelope deflated harmlessly out of reach of the surrounding trees and a good hundred feet from the power lines. I was utterly amazed at how light the wind was on the ground behind the trees. I was also never so happy to be back on the ground again since flying a glider into an isolated mountain valley 20 years earlier. One thing is certain anyway - I won't be forgetting to turn around before landing again!

Well the season here is over until November. There is a balloon festival near Bangkok in December so if you need an excuse to check out ballooning (or possibly other activities) in Thailand visit <http://www.pibf.info/news/> for info. From what I hear the conditions there aren't super for hoppers but I will be flying immediately after the festival back up near Chiang Mai if anyone would like to come fly hoppers in what has to be one of the world's hopping paradises. Flat, open terrain and the WX is typically clear with light/variable winds and temps in the low to mid teens, cheap gas, friendly locals and scenery like this...



Second hopper flight. Air-to-air photos by Wout Bakker.

That was a fantastic report and great jpegs, on behalf of everyone, many thanks Bob- Editor Steve!

3, Updates to the website / Newsletter/ Forum Topics

Yes, I know you all want to know, about the website upgrade, and with thanks for the kind offers at XLTA to help with the process,

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it spurred me to stir the pot and see what's happening with the site. Les, my good friend has sent me the template for the new site and whilst the architecture is now more or less finalised, all it now needs is the content so "Over to me". What we are trying to achieve is that once activated, I can update the content myself without bugging Les too much. So Nearly there! I have to say I'm really excited about it and hope you are too.

4, Homebuilt section

Nothing to report again this month! You Guys must be busy sewing, leaving no time to write up the work.

I have to relate one quick experience from XLTA. With us on the trip from the UK was Crispin Williams who is employed as an adviser to Kubicek Balloons. They have just made a prototype envelope for hopping, and whilst Crispin is a real hopper fan, seeing Noah Forden's sledge got Crispin all excited. I caught up with him in the departure hall at Hartford Airport in Connecticut sat in a rocking chair sketching out a sledge design of his own! LOL Ha Ha!

Firstly what a great idea to have Rocking chairs alongside the departure windows and secondly great to see how an event like the XLTA can get a person with over thirty years in the trade all excited about a project like that .

5, Gallery Pages.

This section is the Editor's choice of new jpegs, visuals and older balloons of interest or alterations. This month for your perusal we have another hopper from the "Worlds Most Prolific Hopper Manufacturer" (Ultramagic Balloons Ltd) and also some choice oldies from the recent West Woodhay inflation day held by the BBML at a stately home near to Newbury in Berkshire last weekend.

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Ultramagic OE-RCJ is another of the popular H-42 range of envelopes .c/n 42/16 is for an Austrian owner who apparently has a homebuilt bottom end credit for the jpeg to Paul Dickenson at [Ultramagic balloons.com](http://Ultramagic.balloons.com).



Neil Ivison gives G-HOUS the retired Colt 31A an airing at West Woodhay.



Peter Bish gets Colt 14A G-BKHR, one of the Green Ice balloons (no 5) out of the Bag. (This one was in Newbury museum for ages).

6, Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

XLTA Seattle. The 3rd Annual XLTA in Seattle is happening over the weekend of July 25-26th. Hosted by the Lovely Greg Winker, this event is a must if you are in the west coast of America. Beautiful flying is assured in a stunning location but you have to let Greg know you are coming. Contact Greg at rozierpilot@yahoo.com for all the information.

OMM 2009- Published as being hosted by Phil Dunnington at a location in Wells Somerset, having spoken to Phil recently, it transpires that there could be alternative plans as some of the local "Nimbys" are fairly anti the event being held here. So before you go ahead and book your hotels, please register your interest with Phil at phil@gonewiththewind.uk.com. The fall back solution of Husbands Bosworth is being touted as a substitute.

7, For Sale /Wanted section

Hopefully by the time this is printed Martin Axtell's G-BVRL LBL 21A should be on its' way towards Lithuania and a new owner. Yet another great bargain finds itself a Home.

G-BSDV Colt 31A for Sale (Price reduced again now only £1750)!

Your editor is selling his Colt 31A Envelope, registered on 19th April 1990, she has done 76 hours 15 mins (last flown 21st march 09) and cold inflated at the solo meet. EASA C of A until

August 09, she is now surplus to requirements with the new purchase.



Ready for a new owner -who will buy G-BSDV Colt 31A?

Turning vents are currently disconnected but lines will be supplied and can be reused. In the current climate, a price reduction to £1750 seems fair (as she will need a C of A soon), from the £1850 previously quoted. The price includes the original Colt bag and stylish Lindstrand 31A replacement bag. Great entry to Hopping Balloon with loads of life left in her, she needs new Loving owner! Contact Steve Roake on 07721-358758 or 01276-516125 after 7pm weekdays or Email steve.roake@ntlworld.com

And Finally

Membership is currently a healthy 385 members and still rising. We are getting closer to the magic 400 mark. Not far now! 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.