



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 74

January 2015

Happy New Year and Happy Anniversary.

Hello again people and welcome to 2015, a new year and another small anniversary of the start of our Cloudhopping adventures. I still pinch myself at the thought of Don Piccard asking me to join Cloudhoppers way back in January 2004; I mean the one and only Don Piccard no less! So here we are eleven years later and our sport still grows ever stronger. More people continue to join our family and I'm personally delighted to see Peter Gregory fresh from gaining his pilot's license joining the Facebook page and getting a go in Alan Turners hopper at the recent Icicle meet.



This great shot was sent in by Tim Ward which is himself in G-BOYO, Cameron Viva 20 photographed by Susan Richardson.

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Not only is there growth in the numbers of people entering our sport, demand for second hand equipment still outstrips supply with a good example being G-BXVP the ex Tim Dudman Sky 31. Barely 12 hours after being posted, Tim set up a meeting with the new owner, which resulted in a sale. Good kit at the right price always sells.

2015 always starts with the Icicle balloon meet and whilst this year's event marked the end of the Dante Group leadership, we did manage some activity and all the news from the event is featured later in this issue. Some seasonal photos have also been sent in by members.

## **1, Ed-Speak – Forward Planning.**

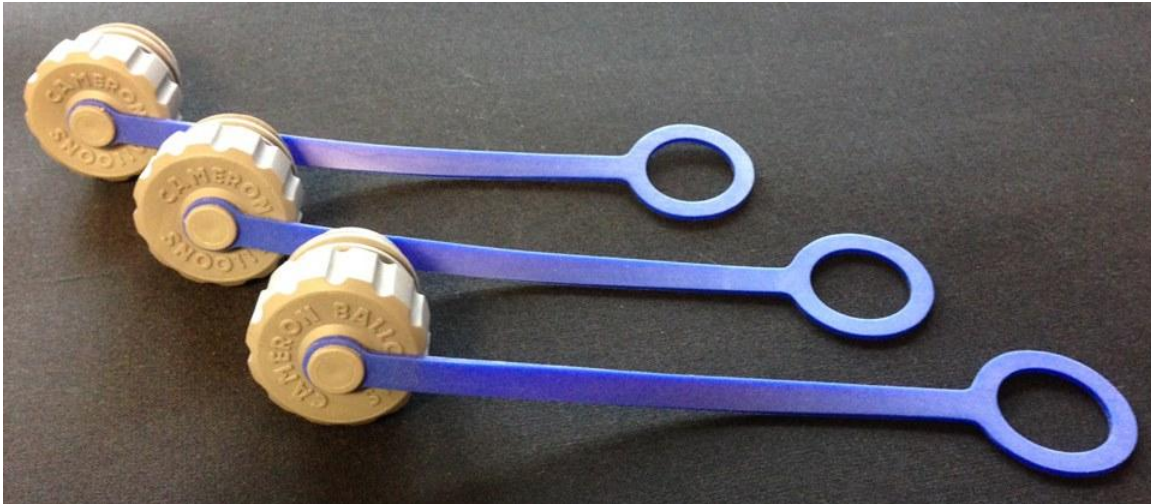
As usual January appears and we all start to think about plans for the year ahead and where we want to go with our balloons. As we look into what is available from a hopping stance, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Little and Large meet in May features with a new venue of Pidley in Cambridgeshire. Following on from a very successful first year, this event is eagerly awaited. The Annual One Man Meet has new hosts with Wendy Russell and John Tyrell potentially speaking of hosting their first event at the same venue as last years. Then potentially there will be (as yet to be confirmed) the Brian Boland meet in the USA which had great support and I for one have tentative plans to try and attend when it is confirmed. Finally the Bi annual pilgrimage to Metz in the Lorraine region of France is always high on the list for UK flyers with most completing a significant percentage of their annual flying at this venue.

Whatever your fancy, one thing you can guarantee is that you are more likely to see hoppers at every event this year than previously.

**Steve Roake**

## **2, Essential Extra's / Tech Talk- Cameron Rego Straps.**

Whilst not exactly exclusively for hoppers, in conversation with Simon Askey of Cameron Balloons, he eluded to the new straps that have been developed to replace those that always used to break on a regular basis on your Rego end caps on your fuel tanks.



What you don't see from the photo (copyright Cameron Balloons Ltd), is the elasticity of the strap itself and whilst not expensively priced (£1.35 plus VAT each), represents a once only requirement to replace older types for some that will last. So as with every feature in this section, they qualify as an essential extra.

### **3. The Features Section**

#### **The Duffers guide to becoming Hi-Tec by Steve Roake**

There are moments in your life when you suddenly decide the time is right to gear up and move with the times, and become a Hi Tec balloonist. I reached this point around Christmas 2014 fulfilling a desire to acquire an I pad mini for use with my hopping (and part of a plan for a future upgrade of my instrument pod as created back in 2004), and with Moving map technology also helping flight management by overlaying the sensitive areas and promoting easier decision making with regard to finding landing spots. What could be easier? or so I thought.

Don't get me wrong, I love maps; always have always will, but this stuff is so affordable and I felt that I deserved a treat at this time of year and so utilising the Amazon online Boxing day sale set about purchasing the right spec Ipad Mini for my needs.



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Having a sibling who dotes on hers, I felt that once I'd bought one I would find more ways to get the most out of it, and so chose one with a big enough memory for my needs. However, let me give you all a cautionary note of guidance. Make sure unlike me you know what you specifically need prior to purchase or you could end up following me on a trail of frustration and enlightenment.



Once, twice, three times lucky! Photo by Amy Roake

I thought I'd buy a 64 GB Ipad mini with Wifi to use in conjunction with my Iphone 5c when flying. Utilising the Hot spot from my phone, there would be no need to sign up to another contract but like most things in life, it just isn't that simple. The product was





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selected from their website with express delivery guaranteed for 24 hours later, and low and behold, as promised it was dually delivered. Plugging the new item into my laptop to synchronise with I tunes, for some reason I don't remember I thought I'd just check it was the desired specification and discovered to my horror they had sent me a 16gb model by mistake. A quick phone call to the helpline at Amazon and the return had been set up and I had ordered I pad mini number two (at the same discounted price as on the sale day). This was scheduled to be delivered two further days later and upon returning from work on the designated day I again expectantly unwrapped Ipad Mini number 2. Plugging in to the laptop as before I checked that it was 64GB as ordered and hurray it was. After setting up my email accounts and generally playing around with it for a short while I thought okay, lets get the two recognised apps for use with Moving map technologies as used by most pilots. They are called Memory Maps and Hot Air. For some inexplicable reason I couldn't select them from I-tunes, and as it happened, Tony Jay was online on Facebook in Ottawa Canada, so in full knowledge that he is decidedly more techy than me, I picked his brains over my dilemma. He delicately told me I had purchased the wrong specification of I pad Mini and that the model I required was a 3G version. The reason for this is that the 3G version is equipped with the GPS needed for moving maps. Another call to Amazon (this time with egg on my face) and now I pad number 3 was purchased. I had previously thought (wrongly) that the GPS function would have been conducted on my phone – apparently not it transpires. Therefore when I pad Mini number 3 arrived, I got my daughter to take a photo and we put it on facebook with the caption "Happiness is never knowingly having too many I pad Minis!" Briefly I had three in my procession.

All that remains to be done is to download the overlaid sensitive areas and start using the equipment.

## **The 43<sup>rd</sup> Icicle Balloon Meet –by Steve Roake**

This year's Icicle Balloon meet was the 43<sup>rd</sup> running of the event by the Dante Group and also their last. The feelings of Pete Bish and co were that they had done enough over the years and due to their aging year's and lack of availability coupled with the loss of warren farm and the move to Folly Dog which is surrounded by a massive shooting area with subsequent



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no landing opportunities, they felt the time was right to hand over the reigns to someone else, and as far as I understand, there is a will by the 3-4-40 balloon club to ensure continuation of the event.

Travelling down towards the venue on the Friday in glorious winter sunshine, you had no idea how the weather would turn overnight but thanks to a great forecast which proved to be very accurate, I didn't get up to venture down to the muddy field in the rain where there was no activity of an aerial style. A long lie in at my hotel, followed by a short leisurely drive to the Elcot Place hotel (where the trade exhibition takes place), found me arriving just before 10am. The rain was still coming down and associated mist and fog proved I had taken the right decision not to attend the early morning briefing.

Whilst not exactly busy, the lack of people gave me a good chance to speak to the trades that were present. On the Cameron Balloons stand were Simon Askey and Nick Purvis who had with them the "Game changing O-31" and a customer ready Duo chariot.



The Cameron Balloons stand at the Elcot Place Hotel.



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The most amazing statistic they told me is that the lift capacity of the hopper would support two passengers of 80 kilos up to 10 deg C. Whilst I'm sure these figures are correct, I'm not too sure I'd like to find out if they are true.

As my balloons are bright colours, I always think twice before taking one to a winters meet, and had decided that I wouldn't bother taking one to the Icicle, but that didn't mean I wasn't involved in the ballooning business. I spent some time with Paul Dickenson and Glen Everett on the Ultramagic stand talking hoppers and whilst not actually in our sector of ballooning, I took the opportunity to make a cheeky bid on an item for sale with Pete Bish from the Zebedee List which ultimately led to a purchase shortly after the event.



Sunday weather was always going to be better with light winds expected and an expected improving slot, but the problem would be two fold. Firstly would the overnight weather generate a frost? Answer was yes, and secondly would the expected mist and fog lift so that some free flying could take place? Unfortunately the answer to the latter question was a no.



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However this didn't mean that there wasn't any activity and as always hoppers lead the way. Cameron Balloons took the opportunity with a large number of prospective clients present to demonstrate their O-31 G-CIJJ. With negligent winds, others followed suit including Alan Turner who got his recently registered Z-31 out and allowed others a first try of the craft whilst on a tether. This was swiftly followed by Team Hilditch who tethered their recently acquired Airtour 31 G-BKVY.



Whilst this wasn't a vintage Icicle meet, there was sufficient to justify the trip and if as expected, the event continues under new guidance from the local region taking over the reins then it will remain the first item in my diary. Thanks to the Dante Group for their 43 years of service

Steve Roake





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## **Santa Claus is coming to Town by Marcus Ekeröos**

Early on the morning at Christmas day, I got a really strange phone call from a man named Claus. He told me about a major problem, his reindeers were sick and he has heard about my new ride. What do you answer when Santa is calling?



So, out we go just on Christmas day! The weather was just perfect for a flight. I started to fly low over my old hometown and it was truly amazing to see how people react when they saw me. They open their doors and waved and the children run out on the streets just to catch my attention. I was sitting there just smiling and shouted "Merry Christmas" to everyone I saw. A flight to remember!

Markus Ekeröos



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## **4, Favourite Photos – More submissions**

Following on from last month's initial submissions, here is the next batch of favourite photos. Please keep up the impetus and let's make this section of the newsletter a success.



Dean Donley sent in this great shot.



Sent in by Vincent Fossey





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Sent in by Paul Dickinson, this shot is him with son Antony taken at the 1987 One Man Meet.



Another by Paul, This time from Chateau D'oex.



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## **5. 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, and then feel free to forward details of it with a suitable photograph to me using my normal email address.



Sent in from the recent Tannheim meet, Andy Austin witnessed this Lindstrand flying complete with unusual skirt, HB-QAC is a 31A.





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Early Evening Flight over Aroostook County, ME. Aug. 2013

This great view was submitted to the facebook page by Milt Smith, the only thing he failed to say was whether or not it is him flying it.



VH-IBA Itty-Bitty AX-1 8.1kg envelope  
Sent in by Steve Griffin



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## 6, Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

### News in brief

News from Cameron balloons is that they have sold a third lightweight O-31 hopper recently following its successful launch in October.

It seems nobody has done more than the 180 hours that Jeff Lawton and Gary Madelin have accumulated in G-CDAD, Their Lindstrand 25A.

ABQ Hot Air is a company who have been making balloons for a while now and in our sector they produce both a hopper and a duochariot. The details of the cloudhopper are as follows.



Their 35,000 Cubic foot grass hopper complete system with single seat Chariot style bottom end. This system retails for \$9,875, the standard features on the system is a beautiful 16 gore envelope which comes with your choice of 9 standard rip-stop nylon colours, nomex mouth panel and scoop, dual turning vents, steel cables, and parachute top. The lower end comes equipped with single



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burner, 20 gal lay down tank, and flexible uprights with 4 point carabiner hook-up. Flytec instruments available at additional cost. The envelope only option comes in at \$6,500 envelope only 1.9 oz nylon with 6 year 600 hour warranty.



Great photo of the hopper with its bigger brother.

Their Duo chariot is in the following specification. It will have single burner. 36 gal tank padded seats for pilot and one passenger 4 point hook-up. The envelope will be 16 gores with a volume of 62,000 cubic feet; it will have dual turning vents parachute nomex mouth and scoop. And steel cables. The price will be 14,995 or 16,250 with 3040 flytec.

Whilst the timing isn't quite right, this company expects a big Announcement about its future and as soon as I can tell you about it, rest assured, I will.



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## **And Finally.**

Just to let you know that we have exceeded the 600 mark on Facebook on the cloudhopper's page, so thanks for all your subscriptions and please spread the word because there is room for many more.

## **Steve Roake**

All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your editor. Please forward them to [steve.roake@ntlworld.com](mailto: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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