



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 61

January 2013

Hello People and Happy New year to you all.

January is a month where traditionally we look forward to the Year ahead, some go off Alpine flying, and the rest of us take stock of the state of the nation and we convene at the Icicle Meet to see what's new in the world of hopping. Sometimes a trip to the annual gathering can be inspirational, and can galvanise us into future plans. Whilst austerity is doing its best to put a dampener on life in general, now is the time for good ideas to come forward that can channel our energies into Sometimes out of negativity, positive progress arrives. If anyone has a great idea for a project or event that might be of interest to our members, then please let me know so that I can include in a future newsletter.

1, Ed-Speak – Ideas or are they a flight of fancy?

The Icicle Balloon Meet has become a bit déjà vu for me. Year in /year out we all roll up expecting something to have changed that will inspire us in our ballooning and nine times out of ten I return home wondering why I bothered going. 2013 was another such year. I always stay local to the event because I get a good rate on my hotel which is cheaper than commuting each day but with the weather we have been having recently (specifically the saturation of rainfall), it was a simple decision to leave both the 90 and the hopper at home. unless a sudden frost appeared, and the ground hardened up, it was never a realistic option.

With the industry in limbo, and some manufacturers completing less than 50 balloons a year , investment in new products or updating old designs whilst necessary, aren't getting the investment they need because the manufacturers know they won't sell the volume that they need to ensure the return on the investment. It's the typical chicken and egg scenario. To produce interest in an updated design with features that will attract new customers, most of the costings are in the type certification with EASA. I have taken an Unprecedented step in approaching a manufacturer with an

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Offer to update a design in conjunction with an existing client. Therefore development costs would be smaller as the client (me) is contributing to the costs, the client gets the revision to his hopper, and the manufacturer progresses the product hopefully inducing more sales and putting new life into a staid design.

My advice to any of you with good ideas for how we can improve the quality of our hoppers is get in touch with your preferred manufacturer and see if collectively we can move on the breed.

My review of the 41st icicle meet is included below, but for now, have a great year, flying safely people.

Steve Roake

2, Essential Extra's / Tech Talk- another set of turning tabs

Spotted at the recent icicle meet was this second version of turning tabs, this interpretation being used by team Hilditch.

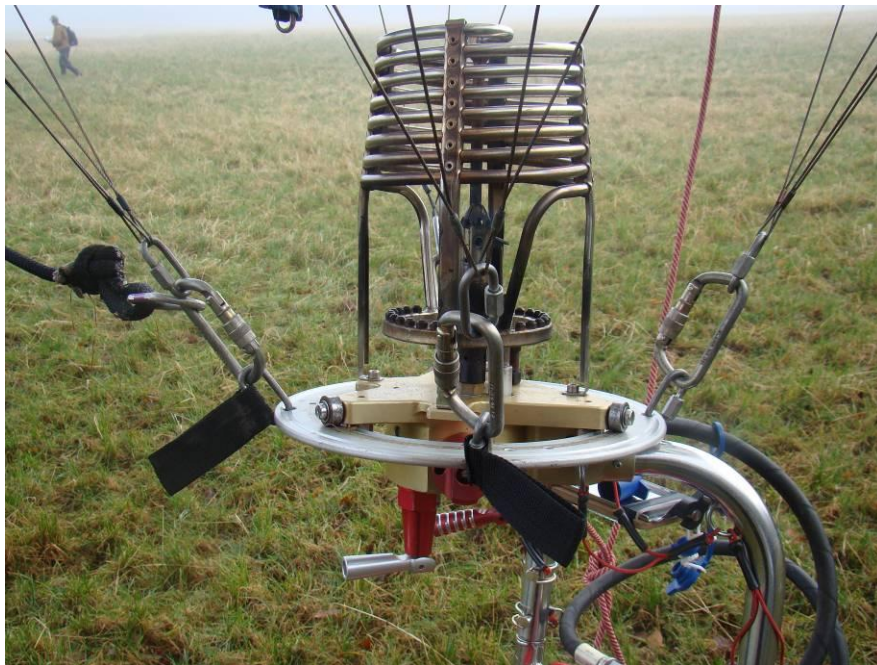


Photo by Steve Roake



3. The Features Section

The 41st Icicle Balloon Meet

Not often I write an article and then delete what I've written, but that's just what I've done here. Can't put my finger on why, but, there was just this sense of apathy connected with the icicle this year. The weekend came just as another bout of bad weather ran across the country and at no stage did I feel a snap frost would appear and therefore I could even contemplate taking a balloon with me.

Friday afternoon I travelled down to the Newbury area and the weather was grey, overcast and threatening rain. Utilising the time to indulge in another interest of mine called Geocaching, I got the chance to see just how muddy the ground was and it was very squelchy underfoot. Any other time of the year you would have binned the idea and been sensible but this was the Icicle after all and they never cancel the event. Staying at a budget hotel within 15 miles of the launch field I awoke to another Grey overcast morning with low cloud and not too many chances of seeing flying taking place. The briefing was delivered in a very "what you see is what you get" way, and with this in mind, we trotted over to the alternate launch field (the normal one being utilised for farming), thinking all I'd see is some tethering by those with older balloons. Surprisingly, with the field wet underfoot, some chose to inflate and eventually some 15 balloons flew in the morning and another three took to the air in the afternoon. In our sector of ballooning, a short tether by Martin Freeston with GCEYD the old Lloyds hopper being the only action. Certainly leaving the launch field I didn't feel inspired and so went off caching the local region until around three pm when I descended onto the trade show at The Elcot Place Hotel for what could only be described as a sense of Déjà vu.

This was like walking into the room one year previously, with the same players were in their regular places, all reporting a quiet day and little business being conducted. It wasn't until I spoke to one manufacturer the following week, that I realised how few balloons had been manufactured in 2012, with under one a week quoted.



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Sunday morning with G-BWHD, and G-BVRL in foggy conditions
Photo by Steve Roake



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The only hopper related news came somewhat surprisingly from Cameron Balloons where Nick Purvis and Colin Wolstenholme confirmed the Bristol based firm have revamped their Millennium hopper bottom end. Whilst the resultant item wasn't present and details were few and far between, they did say that it was to be product tested that very weekend at another venue. (Please see manufacturer news for more details). The only fresh thing in the exhibition hall was a guy selling fire extinguishers and fire courses.



Vintage craft in fine fettle –Tim Ward flies the newly restored G-BOYO Complete with period signage for Thermal Aircraft.
Photo by Steve Roake.



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Sunday morning was even worse weather than Saturday and for those who went to Scotland Farm for the briefing, seeing the launch field shrouded in fog wasn't a great booster for the confidence.



Tim Ward takes G-BOYO for a short free flight across the launchfield.
Photo by Steve Roake.

The met man confirmed that the weather system that was over the UK wasn't doing much and whilst the fog wasn't expected, the likelihood of it clearing wasn't good either. Any action was likely to be tether only initially and with the quality of Saturdays balloons being generally of the older variety, I for one didn't rush to amble over to see what wasn't happening.



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Surprisingly what actually happened was a miniature hopper fest. This was started by Ray Noyce and Richard Phillips displaying the reasonably rare G-BWHD Lindstrand 31A, which for years did very little when owned by the Army Air Corps. This two shades of blue balloon had a checkered past with the original logbook going missing and the replacement stating an approximate number of logged hours. This was then joined by Tim Orchard with G-BVRL another Lindstrand this time an LBL 21A. Further along the field, Martin Freeston once again had the Lloyds hopper out for an airing. Completing the "fest" at the top end of the field was the combined team of John and Tom Hilditch with their 50 houred ex demonstrator balloon G-CBZJ which is a 25A and Tim Ward who had the now fit to fly G-BOYO Cameron V20 complete with older fashioned Bottom end lovingly restored by Tim. After a steady inflation by both and with a lifting of the cloudbase, both took the opportunity to fly low level across the launch field.

So the 41st Icicle balloon meet concluded with some hopper action, but believe me, blink and you missed it and for all of you who missed it, you didn't miss much. Let's hope the next one is slightly better.

Steve Roake

Alpine Hopping

A short round up of the main alpine events so far and the hopper activity that happened at these events. Primary event of the season was Mondovi in Italy and at this one there was one hopper of interest to the British contingent present. This was the Monaco based Ultramagic 42 with the Paulo Bonnano bottom end I-B366 was present and flew during the three days. (this is also scheduled to appear at Chateau D'Oex at the end of the month).

Moving on to Tannheim in Austria, there was a small yet significant amount of hopper activity which involved G-BXUH Baby Bell and another unregistered hopper from Russia. The unidentified craft belonged to a Russian Pilot called Stanislaw Fuodoroff.

This chap it transpires is friends with Andrew Kaye and Gabi Grunauer, and further investigation showed the hopper to be manufactured by Kubicek. Realising that the Czech manufacturer actually made hoppers after previously being



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told that they didn't, this set my mind racing and further investigation resulted in more information to share with you the readers.

Kubicek Hoppers

Please note the plural here. Kubicek have indeed made "Arabis", the red Russian Unregistered hopper(c/n 836), which it transpires is a BB12 type or 42,000 cubic feet to you and me, however it isn't their first either. With many thanks to Michael Suchy of Kubicek Balloons, he confirmed the details and revealed more interesting information. The dealer price was \$14,000 or £8835 at current exchange rates. The weight of the envelope is 55kgs or 121 pounds, which seems very reasonable for a 42K envelope and then you add in the fact that it's made of Polyester which can last up to 1000 hours and the attraction coupled with an ability to fly hotter with temps up to 120c throws up an attractive package. The 42 is currently being flown with a sky chariot bottom end.



Arabis the Kubicek 42,000 hopper, (c/n836) –photo by Andrew



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Kaye taken at Tannheim Austria January 2013.

In correspondence with Michael, he shared information that Kubicek have also previously made another example which is a 31,500 cubic foot BB9 type. Registered as OK-9682, the 31's weight is 35kgs (or 77pounds), again all made from Polyester. Made in April 2009, this 31,500 is still on the shelves at the factory and available to buy. Working out a price is difficult as this size of envelope isn't quoted on their price listing but if you use the simple formula of taking the price of the 42 and dividing it into price per thousand cubic foot and then multiplying for the 31 would give a price of \$10,500 or £6620 if brand new.



OK-9682 Kubicek BB9 which is 31500 cu feet



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photo thanks to Kubicek Balloons

Whilst I am no expert, the envelope is three years old so I would think and offer just over half price might start negotiations should anyone be curious to buy.

Whilst I have no personal experience of Kubicek ownership, I have flown in their products and they make a fine balloon, the lure of polyester is obvious and I expected the weight to be more than it is, but as hopper exponents do we need 1000 hours? The extra temperature margin is very useful. Hopefully now that we know that Kubicek make hoppers, perhaps demand may increase. I have invited Stanislaw to join our community and hope in time to be able to pass on his thoughts on his pretty 42,000 foot baby.

4. My interesting first Hops - by Richard Phillips

Rivers Deep Mountains High

Like most pilots, when they're training or have checked out, they want to try different flying experiences, other balloons other meets. I'd been aware of Hoppers having seen a few, but frankly had questioned the sanity of those strapped willingly or otherwise into the chairs. So whilst in Todi 3 years ago, I was offered the chance to fly Jeff Lawton's 25, with apprehension I took it.

When you're flying a proper balloon with basket, map pockets, anda side, you have a) someone to talk to, b) something to lean on c) someone to tell you what a fantastic landing you've just completed. Thoughts of a couple of thousand feet strapped to a fuel tank, didn't lend itself to the best night's sleep.

The morning came and I'd psyched myself up. We rigged the 105, and the 25 alongside it. I was handed the dashboard to wear, strapped in, and I thought was going to have a few minutes to familiarise myself, and mentally prepare for the occasion. Next thing I hear is "off you go...see you later" and the quick release pulled on my behalf. I was off. With hindsight the best way to do it, no time to think too much.

The first thing that struck me is how responsive the balloon is. One decent burn, in the 25 and your ascending towards the heavens faster than my buttock muscles would permit. So after a few



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minutes of "dicking about" getting the hang of it, I set a kind of plan. Have a nice flight, land, do nothing clever, but live to fly another day.



A nervous looking Richard gets some tips from Jeff Lawton

For those who've not been fortunate enough to attend the Todi meet, the launch field is a mile or two from the historic town, perched on an Umbrian hill. Most mornings the direction is directly towards the town, and if you're lucky straight over it. My morning in the Hopper was no exception. The direction was straight towards the Basilica. I was starting to settle into the flight by this stage, I hadn't fallen out, the balloon was still flying... by many standards a successful flight so far. My confidence was growing.



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One thing I was unsure of was fuel consumption; I've yet to see any hopper with a sensible legible fuel gauge that you can read without undoing the straps, walking around the side of the tank, and reading the gauge. Not practical at 1700 ft. So I kept peering up at the mirror, wishing that my bad back would give me a bit more movement. Not ideal, but I could just detect the gauge, it wasn't reading yet, but I had a perfect landing site coming straight at me.....the Basillica's grass lawn around it, there's even a traffic junction in front of it so loads of space. Would I try? The thoughts of "nice and simple" over-ran my ambitious plan. I was flying an unfamiliar balloon and had a vague idea what to do when the ground came close, but would landing a 25 be anything like landing a 77 which I was used to. If I got it wrong, there was the shame of "the bloke who hit the basilica". I might not be asked back. I flew on.

Another 15 minutes or so of houses, rooftops and barking dogs, I seemed to have left the rest of the pack of balloons that had launched. I was alone, and starting to think that landing would be a very good idea, about half a mile ahead of me sunflowers. Great, I'd easily get it down close to the ground and if needs be Doddy (John Dodd), could walk me out. With the final 10 minutes of the flight plan thought through, I was starting to relax. What I hadn't accounted for was the temperature. Todi in July is hot, 28°C by 8am is not unusual, it was 7.30 and warming nicely. The balloon had stopped. The speed I'd had earlier in the flight just disappeared. My plan needing back up. Below me horses, still ahead of me sunflowers, and an interesting effect whereby as soon as I descended, I started going backwards.

After about 3 delicate box spirals of 1500 ft, I finally managed to be at a height where a landing below me, rather than the next field was possible. I still missed it and ended up the other side of the river.

When you're radio-ing the crew to tell them which field you're landing in, the experienced crew will look at the pilot's experience and take a view of they're ability. It might not be "THE" field you originally tell them, but with a bit of blagging, and post-landing negotiation you can blame landmarks and misinterpretation of which "THE" field really was, but you always land in the field you want to...right?

I landed the other side of the river, with no bridge nearby I was retrieved after a 5 mile re-route by the crew. What a shame they'd misunderstood which "The" field was.



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The best part of hour after the adventure had started I was back on terra firma. I'd survived my own company in the air and maintained my sanity. Would I do it again? Just 2 days later, and a carbon copy of the earlier flight, but without the river coming into the retrieve. My legs were firmly grabbed, and I was manhandled balloon and all, at sunflower height out of the field. We wanted beer, and my skilfully chosen landing spots weren't going to get in the way of it.

My next hopper flight was in a 42 in Ireland. I was attending the Irish One Man Meet in Birr with Peter & Rowena Gooch and Ray & Annie Noyce. We had a 90 (it was the "Irish" one man meet after all) and Peter's 42, very thoughtfully registered as G-OOCH. Unlike Jeff's 25 where the seat and tank are integral, this 42 has a chair with a burner frame above, and a couple of spaces where you bolt 2 Worthingtons either side. Visible fuel gauges, fantastic.



Flying Peter Gooch's G-OOCH Ultramagic H-42 in Ireland



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Like my earlier flight, I was a bit apprehensive, new balloon, not sure of it response etc, but I quickly settled into it, and just planned to enjoy the flight, but keep up with the rest of the pack, we were double retrieving again. Could I get the damn thing to go in the same direction as everyone else? Despite my best efforts I must have been a good 10 degrees to the east of the pack. I found myself over some woods, and had a play with treetops, and then a river. Now you might be forgiven to think that rivers seem to feature heavily in my Hopper flights, and apparently they do.

Anyway the river was coming up, and flying parallel to it, I had to work hard to get myself directly over it and maybe, just maybe have a go at a splash and dash. What Kudos there'd be, Phillips, not only having done a splash with loads of ballooning buddies watching, but in a hopper at that, one extra element of skill achieved. I edged down gently, also appreciating the huge egg on face, if I got it wrong, and poised myself and flying machine for what could have been the pinnacle of my flying career to date. I thought it probably wise, just to dip my feet in the water. There were a few hours of Guinness to be enjoyed later on, and Guinness with a wet bottom, less pleasurable.

Before my feet touched the water, I had a strange sensation of something happening that shouldn't be. I was clear of the water but either side of me were 2 bow waves. I'd forgotten that the bottom of the tanks sit at foot level, so as I'd closed the gap to the water, and kept my feet up, the tanks had made contact first. Oops, time to return to some normal flying which had lesser downside to it.

I flew on for a couple more miles, to be picked up by Ray. He'd been followed all the way along the retrieve by a chap riding a Honda Goldwing, in his shorts blaring out country and western from his In-bike stereo. Strangely though, after I'd landed in a field which had been recently vacated by cows, this accompanying follower had disappeared. His love for Country and Western not extending to mixing with the country herds.

Later that year I purchased G-ONCB with Ray, hopping was now available anytime and any meet. ONCB was one of the Sainsbury Flying Circus Hoppers. With the "Sainsbury" removed from the graphics, and sporting the declaration of "Flying Circus" it could only be nicknamed "Monty" We now have G-BWHD, having sold Monty on to Martin Freeston.

Richard Phillips.



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So that's the format, what happened on your first ever hop or interesting flight and how it felt compared to your expectations? Submissions to me please at steve.roake@ntlworld.com

Three Favourite Jpegs and why-by Rick Kauffman

This month's three favourites and why comes from Rick Kauffman who has a great selection.

First choice is taken in ABQ on Oct 4, the day before AIBF. this contraption is a mock-up of Ed Yost original ballooning system with airborne heater using the original seat. I had the awesome pleasure of sitting in Ed's seat.



The second picture is also taken in ABQ on Oct 9th in mid afternoon. The replica of Ed Yost original hopper with airborne heater takes to the air on a tether. Tyvek and silk (i think)....it



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sure was a crowd pleaser. (Ed- I think this balloon is the one made by our good friend Greg Winker).



In his third submission, Rick discusses his good friend and flight instructor Skip Pringle and "SMILIE" next to the giants of Orlando Balloon Rides in Florida. Where ever you are, SMILIE always brightens a launch site.



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Thanks very much to Rick for these fine choices. Contributions for future editions of my three favourites and why to steve.rooke@ntlworld.com please. Do it today folks and share those memories.

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

Seen recently on face book, posted by Andy Kaye, was this great time lapse video featuring two hoppers from Tannheim Austria.

<http://youtu.be/PAZfIMuNOGQ>

In another video posted by Martin Freeston from Chateau D'oex, Pauline Baker is inflating G-CEHX her LBL9A Ax1 balloon.

<http://youtu.be/ilyYv2Tkdkg>

Both show how these new Go Pro cameras are changing our lives and giving us remarkable coverage .



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Eric Van Dooneward also posted a video of a nightglow at Inzell.

http://youtu.be/6blcl_hrNrK

5. Homebuilt section-

This month I have no information on this section of the newsletter, please let us know how your projects are doing so we can share it with other prospective builders.

6. Gallery Pages – “ This month Chateau D’oex photographs”

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.



This great photo is of Busy Bee N995LB belonging to Bob Romaneschi
And flies with a Paulo Bonnano Duo chair. Photo by Pauline Baker.



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According to Pauline Baker, Joelly the Busy Bee is made by Zing Aerosports of Arizona. It is available for events in Europe this year, and if you are interested, contact Bob Romaneschi at Zing.Aerosports on facebook or via Pauline Baker at flights@balloons.ie or phone +353 46 9483436.



This lovely looking balloon is a Kubrick BB20E with a duo bottom end.
This stunning photo comes thanks to Sandy Mitchell.



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Vast arrays of duo chariots joined the hoppers at Chateau D'oex,
included in these was This ultramagic with duo bottom end.
Photo with thanks to Sandy Mitchell.



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Manufacturer News / Events / Updates



As stated earlier in a previous section, whilst we were all bemoaning the lack of change taking place in our world at the Icicle Meet, Cameron Balloons Ltd had a significant trial going on at Ashton Court Bristol. Four local pilots including Pete Dalby were given the opportunity to sample and comment on the Cameron Balloons latest Hopper bottom end which supersedes the millennium version. Apparently, whilst details are not widely given out, the bottom end includes some upgraded features but no gimballed burner.



Test flying at Ashton Court using G-BKFG-photo by Pete Dalby

We will bring you specific details and specifications on the new bottom end as soon as they are released, but significantly they chose to use this beautiful 30 year old T&C envelope as the test balloon and apart from some flying wire work, this immaculate example is exactly how it has been and clearly is in stunning condition.



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Adverts / For Sale / Wanted section

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 442 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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