

Issue Number 15

April 2007

Hello again People,

With Europe basking in good weather over the Easter period the timing was just right for the annual Solo Meet held at Great Missenden in Bucks UK, and as it turned out we had one of the most successful Easter events that I have ever witnessed. The event, now in its third year attracts a good following and whilst actual hopper numbers were down, a large contingent from cloudhoppers.org enjoyed the weekend activities.



Your Editor at playswiveling at the Solo Meet!

Luckily for me, my constant badgering of individuals has lead to a good spread of reports with various viewpoints , so in this instance I will let those who have contributed give you all a feel for the event whilst I concentrate more on a diary of my exploits as a Swivel virgin! Needless to say, there is plenty to talk about!

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1, Ed Speak by Steve Roake -The Solo Meet and Timings?

In terms of the actual event, this years Solo Meet had more flying in the one event than probably the previous two years attempts, and yet the organizers are questioning whether or not they chose the wrong weekend for the event? Graham Philpot asked me for feedback, simply because after a great year two, the participant level was lower this year than the previous one,

and more importantly with the exception of Tim Ward, every other flyer at the event was and is a Black Horse Balloon Club member. I do know that some couldn't make the event due to commitments, (hats off to John Hilditch for lending Tim ward his hopper for the event), and some who had paid to be present just didn't front up, some came without hoppers and didn't fly (why ?), and some came just as spectators. All of the above are relevant towards deciding whether next years event happens over Easter again or moves to the 1st may Bank Holiday weekend instead. Please people let us know what you want. Both Graham and I want to know your thoughts, we feel we have the right blend of flying and camaraderie, and we know that the public are now seeing this as an annual event they can bring the family to enjoy, but we need to get people to come from other regions to truly make the event stand out. With the added mix of regular balloons from the host club present on one slot we saw 20 balloons airborne over Buckinghamshire; the fuel tank actually ran dry, with Tim Orchard from Booker Airfield stepping in to help some of us out (many thanks Tim). Creating any event is a very personal affair and these folks give up their own time to try and get things running smoothly, I personally feel that the key things that make this event stand out are the friendliness, the great topography and the ease of settling into a place away from home and instantly feeling at ease with your situation. When you are relaxed about your surroundings then you can concentrate on having fun, and when you read the reports from Bernie, Peter and Paul (all who live outside the BHBC catchments area), I believe that the Organizers (and I rule myself out of this), have got it right and it is up to us to support their collective efforts in ensuring the event goes from strength to strength in future years. So come on Good, bad or indifferent tell us/ me when is the right time of year and what if anything needs changing to entice you to join us! I for one put this event down as the first thing in my calendar to

do, because "Grass Roots" flying is where it is at, and the more of this I can get the better! So FEEDBACK IS REQUIRED!

2, Essential Extras;

Until Further notice this section is being withdrawn from the newsletter as there has been little or no support for it .If however someone presents me with an item worthy of inclusion it will be resurrected sometime in the future.



Hopper time with Messer Tanner, Ward, Humphreys and Roake at various stages of preparation at the Solo Meet (Saturday).

3, Features Section- The SOLO Meet.

Here in their own unedited wordings are three differing viewpoints from members who attended the Solo Meet starting with Bernie Williams who traveled down from Manchester region

to attend the event in his Motor Home using the weekend as a good reason to try it out in anger for the first time. Photos for all three stories and my submission are provided by the three people concerned or by my crewman Andy Doggett.

As a non-pilot, but enthusiastic helper, I felt very welcome and involved, during my time at the Solo Meet. Congratulations to all those who organized it, and to the Black Horse Club for hosting it.

With the weather forecast looking good, I packed my motor home (RV), and journeyed down south to Great Missenden, to the North West of London, arriving in good time for Friday's 5.30pm briefing. The atmosphere of anticipated good flying was very obvious, and, when it was decided to move to the launch field at Stone, in hot pursuit of one of the local rides balloons, I found no problem in "hitching a ride".

The chosen launch field soon was filled with the 16 balloons, including six one man rigs. I was able to take some good photographs of them all, as they floated away. Returning to the Black Horse, the rest of the evening was spent, enjoying the company, over a few beers, with their tales of the evening flights.



Here Tim Ward and Kevin Tanner dept on Friday night together.
The next morning was also perfect, although, as usual, some of the pilots found it less inviting, than others, when only ten balloons flew out.

On returning from breakfast, with, amongst others, your editor, I found more hopper activity. Paul Sweatman was being instructed on the finer points of inflation of his recently acquired Cameron H-20 (G-BRCJ), and I was (willingly) roped in to help in this process. Later, came the arrival of a couple of model balloons, which, I have to say, don't usually hold my attention, but this particular pair had played a quite significant role in the early design of modern hot air balloons. One was a Thunder 0.5 (500cu.ft!) concept envelope, and the other was a miniature airship – usually operated by remote control.

Saturday evening was a very busy affair, given the size of the Black Horse launch field, and, again, was the scene of 20 balloons, including six hoppers, and a Lindstrand 77 that I last saw in Albuquerque in 1996! Another very pleasant social evening in the Black Horse followed, to end a perfect day.

As Sunday morning dawned, a select group of 8 diehards gathered, and, as already been pre-arranged, I helped to crew for Steve, after being temporarily diverted by Kevin Tanner, and the balloons all set of for a selected target at Chesham, about 5 miles away. Eventually, Steve and three other balloons landed in the same field, which, although having no vehicular access, mercifully, only involved a 50 yard carry-out, all downhill. Once packed away, we adjourned for a hearty breakfast, before returning to the Black Horse, where we said our goodbyes.

I had a great time, enjoying the camaraderie, hospitality, perfect spring weather and relaxed atmosphere that was so evident throughout the event. I am already looking forward to the next Solo Meet.

Bernie Williams

During a chat to Lenny and Helen Vaughan during the Icicle Meet in January Lenny explained that the plans for this year's event at the Black Horse over the Easter period were well in hand. Whilst the event would probably not reach the size or levels of the original "All Fools" events of years ago where some 60 to 80 balloons

would often gather to launch from the field next to the pub it was hoped that this year would be better supported than before.

Watching the weather forecasts on TV with a couple of weeks to go it was difficult to say if the weather over the Easter weekend 2007 would turn out balloon favorable or be traditionally wet and windy. However with the planned event not starting until lunchtime on Good Friday I still had time to check the online London and South East England weather forecast on the Thursday afternoon.

The forecast for Good Friday was *“Early mist and fog patches clearing quickly to leave a dry day with little cloud and lengthy spell of warm sunshine. Winds light, mainly northwest Maximum temperature 19°C”*



Outlook for Saturday to Monday: *"Staying dry with only patchy cloud allowing long sunny clear periods. Winds mostly light and temperatures continuing rather warm by day".*

A quick call to Steve Roake confirmed that I would be going along and if needed would crew for him on Sunday and Monday.

Driving to the Black Horse armed with an old copy of OS map 165 which would be good enough for retrieve purposes I was wondering if this year's event would feel like the traditional Black Horse All Fools Meets of past years. I was not disappointed. Between Friday afternoon and Monday lunchtime a total of 31 balloons gathered on the field (including nine cloudhoppers) to make a total 64 flights emptying the Black Horse bulk tank in the course of the weekend. – Even the atmosphere in the pub was just as friendly as in the days when Steve Kinsey's Mum and Dad ran it!

For me the highlight was to witness the first flight by Tim Orchard in his newly delivered Duo Chariot bottom end which was put together with Chris Dunkley and his Team and included a pair of genuine British Airways Concorde leather seats for the pilot and his passenger. What Luxury!

I understand that this bottom end had been a year in the making with the prototype being assembled from electrical conduit and cord from which the final version was built. The welding done by an aircraft welder at nearby Booker before the finished article was taken to the Lindstrand factory in Oswestry for approval to be used as a bottom end under the Lindstrand 77A envelope G-BWBO. Chris Dunkley had even left home at 4am on the Thursday, driven to Oswestry to collect the bottom end so that it could be flown over the weekend.

All in all it was a good weekend full of promise to continue in its traditional way of being a meet for balloonists organized by balloonists but where anyone enthusiastic about being involved was encouraged and where members of the public could see balloons up close.

Well done to all in the organizing team.

Peter Gray

Having been interested in balloons for 30 years I decided that I would start my own collection. G-BRCJ, a Cameron H-20, came my way in December last year. Unfortunately the weather had been so poor up to the Solo Meet at Great Missenden it stayed in the bag at work. When we had the almost perfect weather on the Saturday I decided this was the time for the first public inflation of G-BRCJ in the UK since 1993. It was also my first real go at ballooning in the hot seat so to speak.



The envelope is in good condition for its age. It only has 46 hours on it and the Cameron house colours are still bright. The bottom end is from a Colt 21A which has been the subject of numerous questions on the Cloudhopper

group. So with a full tank of gas and lots of enthusiasm I enlisted the help of quite a few members of the group to get the H-20 inflated.

The harness arrangement is a little difficult to get right. I think I will have to mark it up for next time so that we don't waste so much time working out which straps go where. Funny, but when you try it on with everyone watching it doesn't fit properly! Sure it is basic, but it is my first Hopper so I have to start somewhere. When you look at how Tim's G-CBZJ has evolved it looks like a Rolls Royce compared to mine.

One problem I knew about was the load ring. The load ring has 4 wires but the envelope has 15 gores and wires with a pairing arrangement such that you can't use it in 4443 formation. I am looking at a possibility of modifying the load ring or splitting the load wire pairs. It will be sorted out for next time but for test inflation it was fine.

The first inflation had to be stopped while a small fault was checked out on the burner. The second inflation went much better.



It didn't take long to get G-BRCJ fully inflated and I got strapped in. I know

I have a lot to learn but it's amazing how quick you learn and how many people offer advice. We did some pictures so that the event was recorded properly and then packed it all away.

I am currently doing my ground school with the Black Horse Balloon Club with the intention of getting my PPL (B). From the experiences I had at the Solo Meet I really enjoyed joining in. I think that at least six people hadn't seen G-BRCJ either. The best bit is where everyone helped me. That's why I like ballooning so much.

So there is another Hopper in the UK this year and a budding Hopper pilot.

I would like to thank everyone involved in helping me that Saturday.

Paul Sweatman G-BRCJ

The Diary of a Swivel Virgin- Steve Roake at the Solo Meet

Friday pm.

Going into the Solo meet this year, I felt nervous! Last flight was in the hopper twice last November some four months previous, and that was with turning vents, secondly Andy my crew buddy and his son were relatively new to hoppers and associated stuff and thirdly Friday nights first flight was going to be from Stone in Bucks, north of the HQ of the event flying back towards the venue and a place I have previously struggled to inflate at due to long grass.

So I was rusty, some elements of the kit were going to be new, the technique for flying was going to change with unknown factors to consider (including how well would the vents shut unaided?) etc, etc! Arriving at the launch site the flipping grass was long! The trusty Lindstrand / Cameron Hopper fan Doesn't inflate well in long grass, and my advice to anyone buying a hopper fan is buy one that is well clear of the deck so that you don't lose efficiency when inflating in these sorts of conditions and if

you can get a compact 5hp fan then do it, there is never a case for not having enough fan grunt!



(See how long the grass is at Stone, A good percentage of thrust is lost in the grass where the fan sits too low).

It was hardly surprising to me that I was last one away, having a really crap inflation that I had to help with the whisper burner to get enough air in the envelope. Settling into the bottom end I got buoyant and tried a few turns whilst in ground effect and then took off tracking south at a fair 8-10 knots. No problem! Back to basics, do a few approaches, see the wind die as I descend and the final full stop should be adequate, except on pulling the

parachute ripline a new feature appeared, twizzle to the right as you pullout!



"Feeling my way into rotating the bottom end by hand"

Interestingly, no one briefed me on this feature so it surprised me and more importantly the wind at 2000ft was equal to the surface conditions, with no dissipation. Luckily the others had paved the way showing me some good landing opportunities, but like anyone will tell you, when rusty you don't fly too well. On final approach, switched off the pilot light at about 3-4 meters up

misjudging the field chosen, decided to fly on after a hasty relight and landed a field later marking myself as a five out of ten! The whole approach was too late and needed brushing up! But on reflection, 45 mins flight burning 32ltrs in a 63 odd hour 31A with 110kilos of me not too bad but could be better.

Saturday am from the Black Horse Pub

Lighter winds on the launch field at the venue, much easier inflation due to short manicured grass and a light southerly launch turning into a westerly at 1000ft. My earlier fears were gone, the inflation was much more workmanlike and agreeable, everyone knew their tasks better, and with light mist in the valleys and with a fantastic sunrise and a good track I followed the hare balloon. My in flight tasking was to be more efficient in the way I flew, less greater inputs and more economical with the fuel to see what difference it made to the flying characteristics. Photographic evidence seen the night before made me confident the turning vents were staying closed as you can see below.



Net result, a lovely 57 mins flight with a 3knot landing in an empty field close to horses that remained unconcerned and surprisingly another 32ltrs of fuel burnt proving my technique was getting better and now forewarned about the turning characteristic on dumping I achieved a much more agreeable landing into a tight corner of the planned field.

Sat pm flight from Black Horse Pub

The Evening flight was again centralized around the Pub venue, and with a similar track as the morning flight, and with a very good crowd present it was a pleasure to once again lay out and inflate on low cut grass. With a nice controlled progression from the transition, the only thing that screwed my total enjoyment of this flight was that in my haste to get airborne I gave the straps over my shoulders a bigger than usual yank and suffered some pain due to tight straps. There was no way I was going to adjust them in the air so I settled down to easing the cramps by taking more of the weight on my footrest bar.

Once again great visibility was enjoyed and after 1hr 10mins I landed on a football pitch near to West Wycombe Hall having used 42litres all in . Upon my arrival a family came over all on bicycles and quickly the kids volunteered to help pack away .All three were under 6 years old, and as Dad had a camera I lined them up for photocall, then did the daisy chain trick with the envelope bag rope with each one. Following this as they went to go, I suggested they went home and the following morning Drew the balloons on pieces of paper and stuck them on the fridge (where else?). If parents approved, perhaps they could bring me a picture the following evening? Naturally I didn't expect to see them again but was shocked to get a pull on my clothing 7am the next morning by one of them with a beautiful picture for me. Nice eh!



The Saturday Night "Hare" was Helen Vaughan in Baby Bel,
The Lindstrand 31A.

Sunday Am

Final flight for me this weekend once again from the Pub at Great Missenden but Easterly this time towards Chesham and again very nice light winds .At 2000ft there was 12knots and down to 3 on the surface to play with . I practiced plenty of approaches followed by low go arounds over the fields and a track close enough for my family to see me

Whilst staying with relatives.



Lennie Vaughan in Budweiser G-BZIH

Drifting over Chesham Town centre four of us managed to land on a smallish grassy park on rising ground. Another 45mins in the book and the whole swivel thing definitely nailed over the last four flights. So four slots flown and nearly 4hrs of flying. Sunday night was a Trifle fast on inflation for hoppers, so only those with baskets flew but after it died down, I watched Tim Ward give his son and crew a go in G-CBZJ statically in the Pub grounds. Definitely the place for a first go and an appreciation of how it feels to hop.

I was also ready for a beer by that stage having helped list member Jonathan Dyer get his new Colt 56 inspected.

Monday morning dawned with low level mist which failed to clear unfortunately.

One other thing to mention at the event, I was approached to try to sell the ex Sainsbury's hopper Flying Circus Hopper by Richard Mould, G-ONCB a Lind strand 31A with 106 hours and a very agreeable price of just over £2500, but such is demand for used stuff, (31's in particular), that before the weekend was out it was spoken for and should now be sold.

There you have it, four unique differing views of the Solo Meet and all praising the event. Roll on next year whenever it is.

4, Hopper Building by Greg Winker

Part 4 – Basic Fabrication

Up to this part, I have managed to avoid any real work. So far all I've done is sit at my desk, play with a few formulas, enjoy some "pilot helper" and daydream. Now if I ever want to fly my new balloon, it's time to get off my duff and start building.

Basic fabrication will take us from bolts of fabric and spools of load tape to a large rectangle of fabric ready to sew into a tetrahedron. Then in Part 5, we'll turn this big colorful ground tarp into a balloon envelope by forming the tetrahedron, installing a throat and a deflation panel.

Since the individual panels are only 17 feet long, I have room in my garage to cut them out.

Well.... I'll have room in the garage once I move some things around.



Before I start I guess I need to create some working space



Ready to start! What a transformation!

The first step is to prepare the gore pattern. In the design phase, I determined I would need 24 gores with each gore consisting of three identical pieces (I call them A+B+C panels.) That's a total of 72 pieces of fabric. Including seam allowances, each panel has a dimension of 17'6" by 62¼". To make the pattern, I rolled out 20 feet of Kraft brown paper, measured the rectangle and cut. The only tricky part was to make sure I had right angles. And that really wasn't very tricky. While I was doing this, I added a few index marks on the edges of the pattern. As I cut the fabric, I'll transfer these index marks to the panels. When I get to sewing, I'll use the index marks to ensure the panels are lined up and going together evenly.



Making the gore pattern.

I should talk about why I decided to use lightweight silicone coated rip-stop nylon. If you're like me, you've been lugging around multi-hundred pound balloon envelopes for ten or twenty years. At some point, you think to yourself, there's got to be a better way.

Parachutists have long used light weight, high strength fabric to build their canopies. The current generation of parachute fabric is in the range of 1.1-1.3 oz/yd² – about half the weight of traditional balloon fabric. This material has been used by homebuilders for some time now and it has a pretty good track record.

By going with this lighter weight fabric, my back will definitely notice the difference. And my crew will love me. But just as there are positives to choosing this fabric, there are some negatives to consider. Lightweight fabric usually costs more. Using seconds has helped to offset this. Also

recognize that lightweight fabric is not as strong as the normal stuff so there is a good chance you will be sacrificing some longevity. For me that's a fair trade off. If the balloon only lasts 200 hours instead of 400 hours, I can live with that.

Any time you are building your own balloon using fabric you have sourced yourself, it is prudent to test the fabric. After all, you will be risking your life every time you fly the balloon. And far more important, you will be risking the lives of your passengers. To make sure you understand what is going into your balloon, I would recommend testing a sample of fabric from each bolt of cloth that you are using. Tear tests and porosity tests should both be undertaken.

My friend Vic Johnson at the local repair station helped me perform the fabric tests. We used a standard balloon fabric testing set-up, checking both warp and fill directions of the fabric. We pulled all samples to the maximum on the scale (45 lbs.) with no failures. I would have liked to keep going to the point of failure, just so I know where it is. In addition to the grab tests, we performed tear strength tests. Using the same set up, we made a one inch slit in the fabric and pulled to failure. The samples all failed in the 18-20 lb. range with one sample hanging on to 26 lbs. Comparing our numbers to balloon manufacturer's minimum standards, we came out with lots of room to spare. I'm satisfied we are starting with good fabric.



Fabric testing using my NIST calibrated biceps

Now that our fabric has passed quality control, we begin what is probably the most tedious part of the project - cutting the panels. I have chosen to use lightweight silicone coated fabric for this balloon. If you've ever held this material, you know it is very slippery. As a result, I have found it difficult to cut multiple layers at one time. First off, the adhesive tape that I use to hold the fabric in place on the cutting surface doesn't seem to stick to the silicone very well. Then the layers slide around, giving each panel the chance to end up a slightly different shape. So I've decided to cut the panels one at a time. It becomes a much longer project, but I want the panels to all be the exact same dimensions. This makes the sewing a whole lot more enjoyable and results in a higher quality envelope.

On other projects when I've used urethane coated fabric, it's no problem to stack up all the layers and cut them at once. That's a big time saver, and one good reason to consider that material; especially for the first project. Once I got into the routine though, I found it took about 15 minutes to cut out each panel.

Total time to cut and label the panels – 18 hours.



Cutting the panels

Experience has taught me that the best way to start sewing is to first assemble the individual pieces of fabric into full length gores. Sewing began with fabricating 24 sets of A+B+C panels. By following the pattern sheet, I'll know which pieces of fabric to join together and in what order.

I'll be doing all the sewing on my Singer 212G. I picked it up on eBay a few years ago for around \$600. After installing a new motor and some initial adjusting, it's been working like a champ. The 212G is a double needle machine with an auto lubricating system. I can highly recommend this model. Compared to a single needle machine, double needles cuts the sewing time in half. If you are going to purchase a machine, pay up and get a double needle. You will thank yourself later.

Sewing machines have a reputation for being temperamental, so if you make the plunge and buy one, make sure you either 1) get a machine that's in good condition or, 2) have a good mechanic within driving distance. There is nothing worse than having to constantly get your machine adjusted because the thread keeps breaking, won't lock stitch properly or any of a myriad of problems. Once you have your machine, you'll know what I'm talking about.

The thread is nylon and the specific type is Size 69. When you are looking around for thread you'll see several common industry terms – none of which balloonists understand. If you're not sure what to use, get some recommendations from your local repair station.

Once the A+B+C panels were assembled, I joined the 24 gores together. Some builders describe this step as tedious. Hour after hour, all you do is form $\frac{3}{4}$ " French fell seams and sew. I don't find it tedious, I find it mindless. (Note – Just in case you were wondering, mindless is better than tedious....but not much better.) The interesting bit is during the sewing phase; your balloon is coming together in slow motion. It's your first opportunity to see what it's going to look like. The more you sew, the larger the pile of fabric. The anticipation really starts to build as you make progress.



Sewing the gores together to form the big rectangle

On normal shape balloons, there are vertical load tapes at the seams that join the gores. They also have horizontal stress bands. Since this balloon does not have horizontal or vertical seams, I'm not able to duplicate the normal load tape configuration. But I do want to include a grid of load tapes into the tetrahedron to provide some integrity. So I had to be a little creative.

As I sew the gores together, every third seam has a $\frac{3}{4}$ " Type III load tape sewn into the seam. A total of eight tapes for the balloon. Then at each of the color changes, and at 90 degrees to the first batch of tapes, I am attaching circumferential tapes. I will also include load tape on the ends of the gores, where I sew the ends shut and form the tetrahedron. All in all, the balloon will have a load tape grid running both directions through out the entire

balloon. This will provide a little more security when I attach the vertical load tapes.



Adding “horizontal” stress tapes to the outside of the balloon.

With that, basic fabrication is complete. We now have a ground cloth approximately 120 feet by 52 feet.

Total time to sew panels together into the big rectangle and add the webbing - 24 hrs.

Coming up next – Finishing off the Envelope.

Greg Winker

Thanks for that *Greg*, love the expressions! *Greg* will now take a couple of months to complete the project and come back to us with hopefully the final installment.

5, Updates to the Newsletter / Website-Slight Backward steps as things crash!

As you are all no doubt aware, your editor is not a computer techie, and survives the traumas of everyday computing by any means possible, but, last month dropped a clanger! I deleted the last remaining copy of the newsletter in word format I had, leaving me with PDF versions of every newsletter. Great you say! Not as much hard drive space needed! Wrong!! If you see this newsletter has been recreated and may differ slightly from the others as I attempt to match what the others looked like. However if any genius knows how to turn a PDF back into a .doc file please let me know.

Just to add to this, the lovely Les Hancock who is helping me construct a new updated website with loads more features and a 2007 spec fresh appearance, has also suffered a hard drive crash .Whilst no information was lost and was backed up, this minor setback has also set the timetable for completion back some time, so please be patient.

Another factor that will impinge on our time is that as it gets nearer, The Euro Hop will need some time for paperwork and presentation so please when you ask for details be patient as we have only so much free time on our hands. THANKS!

6, Homebuilding Section -Featuring Tim Orchard's Duo chariot

Tim Orchard is an interesting chap! Firstly when we collectively ran out of gas at the Solo meet, he helped out from his own supply (many thanks again!). Secondly he is a Pilot, not your ordinary common or garden type! He flew Concorde for BA. "Currently", as he said himself, he runs Booker Airfield for British Airways, so is the day to day manager, landlord to 29 companies, does some training flights in fixed wing stuff based

there, has a rotary license and is active in all types of stuff including balloons. Oh yes! Just to keep his paymasters happy. Once a month he drives a Boeing 777 to keep his hand in! Now, a number of years ago, my inspector friend Chris Dunkley told me that someone he knew was building a Duo chariot as a home project, utilizing Concorde Seats as a basis for the project. Imagine our collective surprise when at the Solo meet, Tim arrives ready to fly the freshly certified outfit on the Saturday night.



Apparently after some delays from our friends at EASA, Chris Dunkley had managed to get the bottom end certified with help from Lindstrand Hot Air Balloons whose LBL77A type envelope goes above the design. Talking to Tim over refueling it seems the man from EASA tried his hardest to deny Tim a certificate of airworthiness based on fears for the type of steel tube used(spec supplied in documents), type of welding done (

document supplied), and finally as a parting try specification of the seats as being fit for purpose. Tim stated that they came off a certified aircraft, and the man retorted that if a bench in wood was there, then there would be no issue but as a new regulation came about recently they would have to comply or be removed.



Tim rounded on the Eurocrat, stating that as they were certified prior to the new regulation, they didn't have to comply and as fit for flight in Concorde's Manifesto, that would be good enough!! Our continental "friend" knew when he was beat and conceded! The airworthiness certificate was from the day before the event!

So the process went something like this. Tim got a friend to design the rig around the two "Exclusive Seats" , then utilized staff at the airfield to manufacture for him the spec of frame (at a price) and then added double jetstream Lindstrand burners with two tanks and a fold down foot rest arrangement. Project

time scale was three years as Tim was busy during the build process.



The whole outfit needs a name, I suggested "Short Haul"!!

Saturday evening was its maiden flight. I'm told "they cruised at FL002 but in-flight catering wasn't up to much"!



So there you have it, quite an interesting project that finally surfaces after completion. Looked great from the air congratulations all round.

7, Gallery Section -Editors selection of jpegs both new and older duo chariots and hoppers



G-BYCB Sky 21-16 which has been for sale on the Zebedee list for some time now and is subject to some debate as to whether it has got a manufacturers type rating.....Anyone know the correct story?



Another hopper that hasn't seen the light of day in recent years due to customer logo changes, Cameron H-34 G-BZBT .How long until this may reappear?

Shortened Gallery section this month due to excess content elsewhere .Never thought I'd say that!

8, Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

Dan Nachbar writes of a great initiative to assist builders

For some years there have been discussions on various email lists of creating an open source balloon design. The idea is to have a freely available set of plans for a basic balloon design that a first-time balloon builder can use to get started.

Today, without such plans openly available, first-time builders often have to puzzle out lots of details on their own.

(For a more complete description about how "open source" works, see <http://www.xlta.org/plans.html>)

Lots of folks seem to agree that having such a set of plans would be a good thing. But like many would-be good things, getting started is the hardest part of the project.

In order to get the ball rolling, I applied for a small grant from the Wolf Aviation Fund. (See www.wolf-aviation.org for details of their general aviation grant program.) My proposal is to hire an experienced balloon designer/builder to put together a basic small balloon design. (I am not qualified to do the task myself. I'm a blimp guy.) I was recently notified that the grant was approved. Yeah!

Paul Stumpf has agreed to take on the job of creating the initial design. The plans will focus on construction of an envelope and will include not only the fabric patterns but also other key information such as lengths and positioning of parachute lines, etc. The plans will be freely available for use, modification, and redistribution via the xlta.org website and from any other websites that choose to redistribute copies.

Before starting the detailed work, both Paul and I would like to sit down with other experimental balloon designers/builders/pilots and chew the fat about what the package should and should not include.

Since XLTA Amherst is coming up (see www.xlta.org), that venue seems like a natural place to get together. I'll schedule some time on Saturday June 2 for an informal discussion session. (We will also be adding some other informal workshops and such this year.)

If you're coming to the Amherst event, great. If not, please feel free to send your comments/ideas to myself or Paul (psstumpf at AOL dot com) so that we can include them in the discussion.

Further to the above

The Third Annual Amherst Experimental Balloon, Hopper, Chariot, and Airship Gathering (sometimes known as XLTA3 and/or XLTA-Amherst) will be held between June 1-3, 2007 at Amherst MA (two hours by car West of Boston in the beautiful Connecticut River valley)

All builders, owners, and fans of experimental and ultra-light LTA aircraft are invited.

For more information, please see

<http://www.xlta.org/invitation2007.html>

Dan Nachbar

9, For Sale/ wanted section

Nothing to report this month in the adverts section.

10, and finally, last but not least.

The article promised by Graham Bell from Mexico has been held over to next month's issue.



When we talk about the Black Horse Pub, it does exist! Here captured by Nicki Byrne the pub is seen at the Solo Meet. Membership stands at 292 currently and still rising .thanks to all who contributed to this issue, you all know who you are!

All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your editor. Please forward them to info@cloudhoppers.org and feedback good, bad or indifferent is always welcome. Views aired by contributors may not be those of the Editor