



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

Welcome To October's Cloudhopper News.

Yet another month where we have had Hopper action with the One Man Meet. Against all the odds we had action which is simply amazing and Phil Dunnington had his Luck severely tested as the weather prospects were definitely not looking good prior to the weekend. Unfortunately this reflected in numbers attending but those who did had a cracking time. Also after some serious shouting on my part some of you have come up with articles for inclusion- but I wish more of you will support your newsletter. This isn't my exclusive baby, it's yours too so let's keep it going nicely, all I'm asking for is your enthusiasm. Now let's get into this issue.



This is what the OMM is all about, flyable slots, great scenery and loads of hoppers launching into the air. - Sandy Mitchell captures the moment.

## Contents

### **Ed Speak –**

*Geeky Facts*

### **Essential Extras**

*The stand*

### **The Features**

### **Section –**

*28th OMM*

*Neil Ivison in Israel*

### **Updates**

*homebuilding article*

### **My First Hop**

*Martin Freeston on his first ever hop*

### **Gallery pages**

*More gems*

### **Manufacturer News**

*30th OMM*

### **Adverts/For Sale**

*G-CCKZ sold!  
Klein fan*



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

## **1, Ed-Speak – Another OMM that defies the odds!**

I just don't understand how come the OMM got the flyable slots it did, but once again we managed to get another successful event. With Rain either side of the weekend and some Saturday afternoon, it really defies the odds how we got away with it again.

Now some of you may feel I delve too deeply into my flying, but I love to analyse the data to see how I've been flying and how the envelope is doing (bearing in mind it is now ....wait for it ....26 flying hours old!). The two flights flown couldn't have been more contrasting in both their characteristics and the conditions, but the data is still fascinating. Using the old formula of one litre of gas per thousand cubic feet per hour, The Um 35 is doing well.

Saturday morning we had lovely still conditions on the surface, with an inflation where you could walk away from the balloon and it would just sit there, and then a gentle flight of between nominally 2.7 to 3 knots, picking up just as I landed to around 6 knots, 1 hour 15 mins later with 32 litres used. So just over 50% used. Note to self, quite economically flown! Above the average in frugality. Temperature I think was around 6 deg. Centigrade, and the total distance flown was a mere 3.3 nm.

Sunday Morning was colder, ambient temp was down to just above freezing when we flew having been as low as -3C overnight. Winds were slightly higher at around 6-7 knots during the flight, increasing to just over 10 knots when I landed some 8.3nm later. Whilst dynamically the two flights were totally different, even on this flight I only used 46litres of fuel. If you say I used 75% then 80 mins of flying is still good going compared to the formulae. And when I was landing I wasn't trying to be economical, I was trying to dodge field of cattle and had little choice when a vacant one appeared.

Am I the only one who loves to weigh their tanks after every flight and see how I'm doing? I guess you can't take the engineer out of the boy, but I love this geeky stuff!

**Steve Roake**



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

## **2, Essential Extra's / Tech Talk Talk** –Inflation Stand

I'm sat here pinching myself. two months in a row, and two simple and yet brilliant ideas to make your life with your beloved hopper easier to live with. In this month's essential extra Gary Palmer has a stand for helping with the inflation and ensuring that the balloon doesn't roll during the inflation.

Gary Says, It's just two pieces of 19mm [3/4"] plywood, with lots of holes drilled to reduce weight [but not so many holes as to reduce strength,] plus a piece of old rubber hose lining the top recess. I also put several squares of Velcro on one side of each piece of wood, once painted, so that the two pieces 'stick together' during storage.



The Gary Palmer Inflation Stand as discussed on the forum.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

If I made another unit, I might make the lateral [larger] piece of Wood about 50% wider, because on a couple of occasions the envelope has rolled just enough for the whole thing to tip over sideways. "Practice makes perfect" they say!

Gary actually said he pushes the burner down upon inflation whilst the envelope rises. All in all a neat idea and another perfect example of an essential extra. Many thanks for sharing the idea with us all.

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

#### **The 28th One Man Meet by Steve Roake**

The Annual pilgrimage to this year's OMM saw attendees converging on Welshpool Airfield in Powys on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October very aware that the weather forecasts weren't favourable. The facts actually speak differently, and Phil Dunnington has had over the years an uncanny knack of getting at least one flyable slot at One Man Meets. This is and was one of the reasons that I will always make the effort to attend if at all possible. It's not just about the flying that appeals, there are other bits that are very enjoyable and the company never disappoints.

Whilst a significant number of "regular" attendees were noted for their absence (mainly due to pessimistic weather predictions), those who did attend included a notable returnee, a first time owner and a brand new qualified pilot about to embark on not only his first flight since gaining his license, but also his first ever hopper flight.

My personal weekend started with a stupid brush with the law, falling foul of a local campaign to clamp down on mobile phone abuse and my brief mistake cost me £60 and three points. All I can say is guilty as charged.

Arriving at the venue, it was clear that the surrounding countryside had





# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

experienced some prolonged serious rainfall with saturated fields abounding, but as a glass half full kind of person, a half wet field is also half dry! Friday was clearly not flyable and so a leisurely hello to others was in order before adjourning to the preferred watering hole for liquid refreshment and banter. The Pub of preference was The Lion in Berriew where some were staying.

With tables filling up quickly, some of us decided to head to another option called the Horseshoe Inn where we knew there would be more space. A hearty meal with good company and an early night ensured that we would be ready for whatever the morning would bring.



Saturday morning action, with a Duo – photo by Sandy Mitchell.



# Cloudhopper News

**Issue Number 59**

**October 2012**

Getting into the clubhouse for the briefing was a snug affair as there were sixteen flyers ready to fly including Tim Orchard who had brought along the Concorde Duo chariot balloon. The weather had been kind to us overnight and after some words of wisdom from Phil Dunnington and a direction that looked like we would head westerly; we all headed for the southern end of the runway and promptly watched the met balloon go north as it always seems to do in this valley.

With my trusty crewman Les, we ended up near the touchdown point of runway 22 a leisurely inflation followed. It was one of those mornings where you didn't have to worry what the envelope was doing as it just sat there ready to fly. Watching others float away, there seemed some right in the air with a very slow flow low down. My initial thoughts were to just fly along the airfield and see what developed. I watched Martin Freeston sensibly easing himself into the event, gaining valuable experience as he developed his knowledge of hopping. Also memorable was the flight of Tom Hilditch who having just received his Pilot's license chose this hopper flight as his first post examination and first hop experience. I watched him explore the various attributes of the hopper both low level and traversing the various layers of wind, even heading back towards the airfield at one point. His eventual landing was also impressive picking a scrap yard in the middle of an industrial estate as the full stop point. I decided a relaxed approach was required, and thinking that this could be the one and only slot of the weekend, I ought to enjoy the flight for as long as possible. However, sometimes you also have to think about good landing choices when they present themselves and so when my track took me towards what appeared to be a rugby ground with football pitches I seriously considered landing.

Luckily for me, Les reported that the access didn't appear to be simple, and only having flown for 45mins I wanted more.

Heading into Weshpool Town itself I decided to appreciate the architecture and at a leisurely 2.7 knots I perused all the potential landing spots which drifted past either side of me as I traversed the supermarkets and eased towards the hills at the far end of the town adjacent to the cattle market. My view was if I stayed low then surely the prevailing winds would drag me back



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

towards the main road and some better landing site options.

Surprisingly, as I skirted the hill the wind really accelerated and whilst I had selected a prospective landing site with two other hoppers in it and it appeared I was on a westerly track towards the field in question, a late lower jetstream reverted to the North, and with easy access close by and carry outs being the preferred recovery, a change of choice was necessary and the approach was indeed steep but doable. A nice controlled landing ended the 75 min flight with no problems and I avoided the cow pats too. Nice to be one of 16 who flew that morning.

We decided it was best to get breakfast before deciding what to do with the middle hours between briefings and therefore headed into Welshpool where with four supermarkets, we were sure a hearty breakfast could be arranged. Choosing Morrisons for our feast, low and behold we bumped into the Hilditch clan with Tom animated about his flight. It was a truly great flight and John (his dad), was already telling him that he has to write it up for our newsletter. It transpired that Tom by landing in the scrap metal yard bumped into a fellow aviator in the form of a lapsed Helicopter pilot.

Les and I after our breakfast, decided to head for the hills and take in a walk in the hills before returning for the afternoon briefing. This was scheduled for four pm and with a large downpour around three, id already taken the decision not to fly the slot. The rain didn't really abate and whilst technically it was flyable, nobody showed interest in getting their craft wet.

A welcome visitor flying in from Sackville Lodge Bedfordshire in his Turbo Grob was Tim Wilkinson who joined the merry crowd before dashing for home between the showers in his frugal machine, burning only 20 litres an hour and capable of reaching Southern France on its 100litre tanks. Now that's a way to arrive in style.

An impromptu talk from Allie Dunnington on a recent trip to central Europe followed with a slide show as a substitute for a talk from the Air Ambulance team who were out on a shout. This was very well received and then thoughts turned to the evening meal venue. Officially, The Horseshoe Inn where we had eaten the night before was the events place of choice,



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

however along with the Hilditches, Wards, Mitchell/Freestone's we decided a more local choice in Welshpool was to our personal liking. Simple food served quickly and a sociable pub just yards away. A few beers later and another early night beckoned with another early start, but weird to be in bed before 10pm. The only concern was potential mist and fog in the morning.

Fear not fellow readers for the morning turned out to be cold, (-3celcius), crisp and flyable with practically no clouds in the sky around sunrise. We arrived at briefing just as Phil instructed the gathered throng that it was indeed permissible with a westerly flow (i.e. North) and around 6 knots upstairs, my only desire being not to be last the one away as I usually am.



Phil Dunnington Prepares to depart on Sunday – photo by Andy Davey

Luckily as it turned out, I was about sixth one to depart from the fourteen that flew. Two less than the previous day with Colin Wolstenholme and Paul Dickinson dually noted as absent,





# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

the latter stating a lack of crew as the reason. It was once again a lovely fuss free inflation with the amusing feature of watching the fan rotate away from the mouth of the balloon due to being positioned on the active runway with little resistance.

Flying away from the busy airfield alongside a returning Nick Godfrey in G-OJNB Lbl 21A was a lovely experience staying low over the thresh hold and hugging the fields beyond. After a quarter of a mile a lake appeared and the temptation to splash and dash was quite strong. However with it being October I decided not to get wet feet rounding out at about 6 inches above the watery surface. The predicted speed was definitely there at around 6 knots but a winters flight has to be enjoyed as they are rare and so I had no desire to land early. Never the less, following John Hilditch towards the cattle market and seeing him plant his LBL 25A on the car park on dry surfaces, part of my brain said do likewise. Fortunately for me, I missed it and followed Martin Freeston and Nick Godfrey into a field on the other side of the road, landing half way across it. Still inflated and watching Phil Dunnington continuing in his Cameron Liveried Z-31 and with retrieve not so close, I thought blow this I'm carrying on! Having flown for 45 mins and with over an hour left with some reserves it was easy to continue. Funny how only ten minutes later you start to question yourself.

The direction is now more to the east and the fields surrounding the Severn River to which I seem attached are actually saturated and I spot dikes built up to protect the farms from serious flooding. One prominent feature id spotted all weekend was slightly lame Sheep (which was later confirmed as Wet Rot- not permanent and treatable but requiring medical care and incarceration in the dry barns). Speed too, was increasing as a look at the watch confirmed it was now approaching 9-40am and Phil and I appear to be the only ones still up.

Confirmation via the radio that Les was close by, I intimated my intention to land as soon as a suitable field appeared. This was easier said than done as ever field now seemed populated by livestock, and a quick check in the mirror confirmed the tank was now registering on the gauge. Time to fly as economically as possible whilst maintaining lift to survey the candidate fields – None as far as I could see. The buttocks are starting to tighten as this thing is turning out to



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

be serious. A quick scan of the instruments confirmed 10 plus knots now and over 8 nm flown, definitely time to get into a field early and prepare to drag. Two possible fields are rejected last second and confirming I'm flying on into the radio, now I'm fully focussed on the need to stop this thing. No time to be pretty, just a requirement that it be cattle/sheep free and hopefully near a road for good access, and dryish.

Eventually with the tank now indicating around 20% left (I mark mine with dayglow Orange when they are 20% and lower), a possibility is selected with serious fluttering of the trees on the edge of the corner as the river meanders around the field. Crossing into the field I'm speeding up, time to ensure I get this one, quick scan that the rip line isn't caught above, turn 45 degrees, shut off the gas and pull out as I head towards a rising dike. I pick my point to land and get very close but drag for what appears to be about 35 feet. Hmm, that was interesting as I survey where I am. two fields away from the yard, crew are close and I'm sorry les but his will be a long carryout and the bloody fields are saturated with water over my boots. It seems only the Dike was moderately dry. This has to go down as one of my worst choices LOL! The land owner seems a lovely lady though, and whilst she is amazed I'm even flying with fields this wet, I'm more than happy to give her a bottle of Vouvray for the inconvenience. We grab the bags from the car and trudge back to where I landed trying to find a path that is moderately dry, when I spy my savours. The two sons from the farm are coming across the field in a tractor with a bucket on the front to assist with extraction.

These two boys are just about to save me around an hour of serious labour and toil. The envelope is damp (and will require a check a week later at work to ensure it is dry), and whilst breakfast has to be sacrificed in order to be back for prize giving at 12-00, we are packed and away from the farm in Criggion before 11am and celebrating two hours and 35mins of flying over the weekend. Later I find out I used 46 litres in what developed into "testing conditions".

Returning for the prize giving, we all gathered for Phil's choices of the categories that occur annually.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

**The Prestigious Cock Up Trophy-** is awarded to an individual who in the judges eyes had a fairly substantial error during the weekend. Nick Godfrey won this by travelling from Tring having left half of his machine at home. To his credit, he returned home and got the rest of his kit and flew with the rest of us. This was a popular winner.

**The Wooden Tit Award-** is awarded to an individual who " wouldn't it be nice" if something happens. In this case Phil emphasized the need to get new blood into our sport, and in Tom Hilditch we had a Brand new pilot who was a hopper virgin and chose to complete his first flight post graduating in a cloudhopper.

**The Paulo Contegiacomo Award** –is awarded to people who embody the "Spirit of Hopping" and was last year awarded to Bob Jones the then airport manager at Welshpool. Since we had last year's event unfortunately Bob had a tragic crash in one of the based aircraft and perished and we all felt the loss of such a personable chap who encouraged our form of the sport. In the Clubhouse, alongside the various aircraft photographs are a number of hoppers. It was decided to award The award posthumously to Bobs widow Linda in perpetuity to remain at the Airport where she is now running it. The welcome we received was both gracious and warm and her contribution to our event cannot be under valued, as we had a perfect weekend once again in Wales

**The Out of the Woodwork Award-** is a new for 2012 award of a small structure like a nesting box with the centre of it made from Bees Honeycomb. The name of the first winner was placed in the Honeycomb and was hailed as Nick Godfrey who was returning to the OMM after an absence of some ten years.

**The Fearless Footprint Award-** is a small miniature pair of wellington boots and awarded to someone who boldly did something. Last year it was jointly awarded to three individuals, one of whom was Ian Ashpole. As the prize giving ceremony took place; Ian flew in to the event in his Cessna 150 G-AWUJ. Whilst receiving a warm welcome for attending, Phil didn't award this trophy in 2012.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

In keeping with the norm, we have now had two great years at Welshpool with the OMM; whether or not it returns next year for a third time remains to be seen.

A small video taken by myself from about 800ft on Sunday morning can give you an idea of what it was like to be there.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6020AmAMyVQ&feature=plcp>

Steve Roake

## **Neil Ivison on Hopping in Eilat Israel**

During 3-6<sup>th</sup> October Rize Up Balloons held a balloon meet in Timna Park near Eilat on the southern tip of Israel. The meet was attended by balloonists they had met whilst travelling round Europe researching how to run a good balloon meet.

Following an introduction to Efi and Tal of Rize up Balloons in January, I was lucky to be invited to take my cloudhopper to their meeting. They predominantly were looking for special shapes, but as there are no cloudhoppers in Israel decided they would like to see one flying at their meet.

Timna Park is an area of ancient copper mines designated a National Park famous for the King Solomon pillars making a spectacular setting for ballooning.

Although there have been a number of balloon meetings at Timna Park, this was only the second meet Rise up balloons had organised, and their first at Timna. It has to be said they did a fantastic job and their research really paid off.

A number of balloons were attending from Europe. Andrew Kaye was attending with his Orange, Karle/Gaby Grunauer with Murr Electronics round balloon and Action Man, to be flown by Steve Kinsey. Nick Purvis took the Disney Up balloon and Chris Sanger-Davis took a Lindstrand Demo 120. Other teams came from Germany with the Fox and Sputnik Spaceship, from Holland was the Festo balloons and from the Smurf came from Belgium. 14 teams were present





# Cloudhopper News

**Issue Number 59**

**October 2012**

consisting of 7 special shapes, 1 hopper and 6 normal balloons, the biggest being a brand new Lindstrand 210 for Rize Up balloons.

The teams were flown out to Tel Aviv over the weekend of 30th September/1st October, and then once everyone was together we were bussed down to Eilat during Monday. Those of who flew out on the Saturday had the Sunday to spend exploring Tel Aviv. Not really knowing what to expect I was almost surprised that it seemed very relaxed, exactly the same as any other Mediterranean city, except for the market stalls selling hand guns and police/military walking round with machine guns!. The seafront has many modern looking buildings, beach bars and lots of high rise offices and hotels, probably a sign of rebuilding after past conflicts. The rest of the city in was a typical Mediterranean city full of concrete tower blocks with little vegetation.

Monday morning, once the whole group was together we began our trek to Eilat via Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. Rize Up balloons wanted us to see a little of their country so kindly organised a 3 hour guided tour around Jerusalem where we were shown the various religious sites and told of the city's history. We were in Israel during the religious festival of Hamoed Sukkot. During this festival many families create little huts in the street outside their houses where they eat during the holiday to remember pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

From Jerusalem we drove to the Dead Sea where we had the opportunity to have a little swim. Often you hear descriptions of floating in the Dead Sea but nothing really prepares you for what a weird experience it really is. Once lying on your back it's really difficult to stand backup, and twisting in the wrong way instantly puts you face down in the "freefall" position wondering what happened.

A couple of hours later we arrived in Eilat for a relaxing evening before the next day's fun. Walking along the seafront at midnight we spotted an LCD

screen showing the temperature, 29 degrees, we wondered just how hot it would get during the day!

Next day we were taken to see the launch site/potential landing zones, unpack our kit into trailers and meet retrieve drivers.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

Timna Park has landrover safari tours for visitors, but for this week they were employed as our retrievers meaning everyone had a nice 4x4 with trailer.

They were also supplying crew from a local copper mine. My hopper was on double retrieve with action man, obviously pay back for having the smallest balloon to pack away!

We were given a good briefing of the area by Paul Burrows who was the meet director, and were informed that we were about 5 miles from the Jordan border to the East and not much further from Egypt to the West. Flying into either was to be avoided which gave the pilots a couple of things to think about. The area of the launch site was a natural bowl surrounded by mountains. The area looked good for doing short hops although it was mainly solid ground. We were only to do morning flights as the temperature would be in the 22-25 degrees region, during the day the dessert still gets up to 42degrees during October and doesn't cool quickly.



3:30am next morning the hotel alarm call came through so were ready to leave the hotel at 4am for a 30 minute drive to the launch site. After coffee, muffins and briefing we got the balloons ready and waited for 06:00 when the local airport opened to give



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

permission for us to fly. Chris Sanger-Davis was supposed to be the first balloon off so cold inflation commenced. As the sun came up it became gusty blowing his envelope around badly, eventually leading Chris to deflate and wait a while. A short while later Koen from Belgium inflated the Smurf and took off. Despite a gusty inflation he reports of 4kts on the surface came back and inspired a few others to have a go. A number of the balloons decided to stand up only, but I decided to have a go at flying and keep low. I planned to go to the first road just under 1km way and land as it looked rocky beyond. I made an approach and turned left to track the road so had to climb again to get nearer to the road. When I came back down I tracked right and simultaneously caught a down draught and had a speed increase to 10kts.



I just had enough power in the burner to arrest the descent but it was still a harder landing than I wanted on rocky ground. I was near to Andy Kaye who tried to catch me but I had still



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

dragged a good few meters before stopping. A quick check over revealed a few scratches and bumps, but overall not too bad, definite adrenalin rush! Later on we heard that a couple of the balloons that continued further on had broken basket canes from fast landings on the hard ground.

Following the flight we were taken to a petrol station to gas up, then back to the hotel for a relax by the hotel pool. The retrieve drivers took the balloons back to the launch site so the next time we would see them is the following morning.

Later that evening we were taken on a chartered yacht out into the Red Sea for a while before mooring up allowing us to have a swim. Whilst swimming they prepared food on the boat where we ate and spent the next hour relaxing on deck. Were we really at a balloon meet?

Next morning we arrived back at the launch site to find similar ground conditions to the day before, but having the previous experience everyone just got on with it. I took off and stayed 100-200ft above the ground noting the gps showing 12-14kts, could be an interesting landing. I flew over a rock formation and could see I was heading for a vehicle track so got low and stayed a few feet off the ground, meaning if needed I could drag my heels to scrub off speed before ripping out. As I came down I had a bit of turbulence before passing into a slowing layer, but was still moving 6-8kts. It looked a bit stony near the track so I decided to try the not recommended "running landing". After carefully dragging my heels for a few seconds I managed to slip off the seat and run whilst ripping out, happily the balloon soon came to a stop and deflated with no bruises or scrapes for me. It has to be said I got away with it this time but wouldn't really recommend trying it at speed it unless the situation dictated.

Day three and the flight directors were expecting the wind to pick up so they launched us a bit earlier than previous day. At the time we launched the winds were light on the surface but much faster at height so I decided on a short hop keeping close to the ground. At 5-10 meters off the ground I found 3-5kts and landed in a sandy area near to a tarmac road. After a quick pack-up we were off to





# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

retrieve action man. One good thing about double retrieving with Action man was once it was launched I had 6 people to crew the hopper, for once possibly too many people! Post flying we were all taken to a warehouse where the kit was packed ready for shipping back home. Those of us who arrived on the Saturday of the first weekend were flown back to Tel Aviv ready for a Saturday morning flight back to the UK. Those who arrived on the Sunday were travelling back to Tel Aviv the following day so made the most of Friday afternoon by going scuba diving in the Red Sea.

It has to be said we were extremely lucky to get some flying as the day after the festival finished an unidentified drone was shot down two hours north of where we were flying. For several days after all non-transponder flying was banned throughout Israel.

Despite this, it was an extremely well ran balloon meet, extremely friendly people in a surprisingly relaxed and amazing country to have the privilege of visiting and flying in. Lucky doesn't go far enough.

Neil Ivison

[Credits to Shani Levy & Inbar Kodovizky for the pictures]

## **Jane Dunkley's view on The Grass Roots Meet**

Best balloon meet, well in fact the only balloon meet you will find us at, apart from the odd social appearance at the Icicle, is Grass roots. This year we thought that an overnight stay was in order and Chris would take our trusty old Unipart 105 and the hopper in the hope that after some considerable time he could have some "hands on" and actually fly himself. The 105 got flown with baby daughter Alice, her bloke Jamie, and Charlie (her son 4yrs), first flight for the boys. Sunday would be a flight in the hopper. A phone call for a check flight late Saturday evening put paid to that. As it happened, Sue Kidd (the other half of team G-SUED) with Ed Lubbock has always wanted to have a go in a hopper so as the rest of the balloons drifted away with Chris and his successful candidate Jonathan Tyrell, I grabbed Ed and Sue and we found a good spot for a little playing with the hopper. After some considerable time deciding how it all fitted together (thank you



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

Steve) Sue was soon floating up and down on the end of a long rope having fun, followed by a cautious ED. Of course this prompted an audience so of course they all had to have a go.



It ended up as a London region fun morning with Jeff and Val Roberts both having a go, Val took to it like "Duck to water" – I think we know what she wants for Christmas! "Wow, how high can I go? I love this – I want one Jeff, I'd fly in one of these" Steve and his missus next and then Ken "the fire" Lowry.

An hour or so later we finally pulled down the hopper and packed it away. What fun and what a brilliant meet, THE EVENT of the year, thanks to all the Sackville flying club who had no problem with us messing about on the airfield when all the balloons had long gone. See you all next year, think we will bring Frank "the lorry" to sleep in though as a bubble is not the most comfortable of places to sleep and quite a challenge to put up for a pair of idiots.

Jane Dunkley

**4, My first Hop**- by Martin Freeston

**First Hoper Flight** – G-ONCB LBL 31A - Moor Green to Haultwick,  
Herts – 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2012 – Flight time of 35 Mins.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012



I have had an interest in aviation for as long as I can remember. As a child I would often visit my local airport to “kop” the latest Monarch or Britannia – some would say this is rather sad I know but there you go. After about 10 years of being constantly nagged by Sandy I finally gave in and agreed to attend the “All Fools Meet” in Great Missenden. Well from that moment I was totally hooked on Ballooning. I will never forget seeing Chris Dunkley in a hopper and thinking “I will do that one day”.

I gained my PPL with Chris on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2004 with my first tether in a hopper in what was then our editors Colt 31A G-BSDV on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2008. That tether started out what would become a rather long hunt for our first hopper. It was not until 16:35 on 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2012 on my favourite launch site “Moor Green” in Hertfordshire (I did both my check flight and my solo from this launch site) that finally Sandy released the rope from “Monty” and I could finally say “I did do that!”.

When Sandy and I purchased “Monty” from Richard Philips, we asked him what the envelope was called, Richard replied “Monty as in Monty Pythons Flying Circus of course”. I should have seen that one coming!



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

When a few pilots found out that we had purchased "Monty" I was given a lot of advice, so I must now say thank you to all those pilots and crew who gave me that advice. This advice ranged from ensuring that I did plenty of high tethers to get a feel for the burner, ensure you have plenty of packets to put kit into, to "just go for it" and most importantly "Enjoy it!" As it turns out I actually did a single high tether and then just went for it and I can confirm that I defiantly enjoyed it.

Claiming out alongside and then over the top of Rupert Stanley in G-RUPS I levelled out at around 1'000 ft and looked down to earth and though "gee it's a long way down". I soon settled into the flight and got a feel for the way one has to fly a hopper. When you are told by a pilot that a hopper is the F1 of ballooning they really are not kidding. Rupert called me on the radio to check that all was well and commented on just how quickly my hopper was responding to inputs compared to the racer he was flying alongside me. It took a little while to get the hang of the hopper technique.

After a nice 30 minutes or so of flying, the "gas" alarm was on its first warning, so following the advice from others; I made the decision to land as soon as possible. I spotted a nice bit of set-a-side along the edge of a field that had good access and made my landing approach. Sandy was already in the field (with permission of course) and caught me as I drifted into my chosen landing spot. So that was it I had successfully entered the world of hopping!

The first lesson that I learnt on this flight was to ensure that the rip line is not too long. I had to fly for most of the flight holding onto the rotation ring with one hand to ensure I was facing the direction of travel as the rip line had got caught up in the tank. Thankfully it was not actually pulling out the parachute and I was able to safely complete the flight. This has now been sorted and I very much look forward to the next flight without this issue. The next lesson is to ensure that I have all my flight instrumentation in an easily reachable position. I had decided to wrap the altimeter and GPS around my leg. BAD IDEA as this is fine whilst in flight, but it does make the transition from inflation to strapping into the seat a bit of a faff. I must find a better solution for the next flight.





# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

All in all my first flight in a hopper was very enjoyable indeed and I very much look forward to many more in the future.

Martin Freeston

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](mailto:steve.roake@ntlworld.com)

## **Three Favourite Jpegs and why-by Sam Canders**

Samuel Canders gate crashed the recent Crown of Maine Balloon Festival and selected not three but four photographs as his favourites. Here he explains why he selected each shot.



This is my favourite simply because it is MY hopper! It is hard to get Photo's of you in your own hopper! And better yet, this is after a splash and dash! 28K homebuilt by Bert Padelt with a Lindstrand bottom end.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012



You can't do this in a basket! Sorry for the footprints I left on your balloon :-)



Feet up! Launching just off the balloon field with buddy hopper pilot, Noah Forden.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012



And finally, Noah and I both skimmed our feet across these oats before landing in the grass...I love the shadow of his hopper...

Many thanks to Samuel for his contribution and support of this section. So if Samuel can find time to send in his favourites ...why can't you?

Contributions for future editions of my three favourites and why to [steve.roake@ntlworld.com](mailto:steve.roake@ntlworld.com) please. Do it today folks and share those memories.



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

**OMM-2013** Whilst attending this year's OMM, Phil Dunnington expressed a desire for nominations for a venue for the event for 2013. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that we could attend Welshpool once more however; the normal pattern of events is to visit a venue for 2 years and then go somewhere else. With the season being autumnal, Phil has a strong desire that certain criteria are met.

His preference is for a venue that has some hills affording some weather protection, with a local supply of fuel readily available and some good local accommodation . An added bonus would be the ability for aerial visitors to attend the event so places such as suggested by Tim Wilkinson such s gliding schools fit the bill. Nominations to either Phil or myself please.

## **5. Homebuilt section- Homebuilt UK hopper – unexpected goings on behind a garage door. By David Westlake**

I'm finally getting down to the practicalities of building an EASA Annex 2 balloon.....so rather than leave the Homebuilt section empty again, here's the story so far....

As my spark of inspiration came from the Land Rover Freelander TV ad years ago, this has been one hell of a long time coming.

I had practically given up and had been contemplating going full circle and getting back into mini ballooning again. I had been involved with that as a teenager under Charles Saffery's guidance. That Freelander ad, and seeing how expensive a full set of "Modellballone Boelling" kit is (even when building a model envelope myself) I thought I might as well make use of my balloon licence again and go for building a hopper.

A fair amount of information on homebuilt ballooning is there on the Internet for anyone interested enough to find it – a bit from Australia and France, but mainly to do with the US experimental (XLTA) scene. I came across references to the Balloon Builder's Journal (BBJ) edited / instigated by Bob Ledoux, and thanks to him I have a copy of the "Compendium" CD of all the issues. This, along with subscribing to the "Balloon Maker's" email list, has been the main source.

There are many other useful sites and blogs there to be





# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

found (not much on Brian Boland surprisingly).  
Aside from “sphere on cone” shapes, it would appear that design wise the most utilised is the “Natural Shape” or “zero horizontal stress” shape. However, the “Sky” (Deramecourt?) shape seems quite popular. The Natural Shape is familiar to most as the Cameron N Type (along with other types). I guess the first modern hot air balloon that Ed Yost built may have been the first time this shape was employed with hot air as a manlifter? (see the picture of the beautiful replica created by the Sioux Falls Ballooning Association).



(Picture credit to Mark Meier / SFBA Facebook pages)



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

The tool to generate this type of gore profile is found in an Excel spreadsheet (actually available on the cloudhoppers.org document list). I have gone with a metric version in my plans.

I have been indecisive on envelope size from the start. The original plan was for something really small like 15000 cu ft but I ruled that out – I want something practical and with enough capacity to utilise standard modular second hand kit in the bottom end (i.e. a “conventional” Worthington and “standard” burner). The planned size rose to a 25, then a 31, then a 42 but I’ve now settled on a 31. I’m not heavy (I average 80kg) and a 31 seems a popular size.

The envelope is to have 12 gores, each made of 2 halves. The halves are made up of 12 horizontal panels. I have ended up making a model envelope (55 cu m) to check my interpretation of the spreadsheet data. All the models I made as a teenager were of the sphere on cone design, so for me using a computer programme to generate a pattern is new. This model is pictured below. If you look where the seams are, it shows the way the gores are put together. There are only straight lines in this design. The conical half scoop was also an experiment; that seems to be okay too.





# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012



Now I “trust” the (long proven) program and have confidence in laying the data down on paper, I’ve made the templates for the full size 31. One of the half panels (panel 5) is shown laid out the table in the picture, reversible for the left and right side of each gore. Panel 1 is the Nomex base panel, panel 12 goes up to the edge of the parachute opening.





# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012



If you look closely at the picture, the template has castellated edges; these have a purpose. The “outside line” incorporates the seam allowance, the “inside line” produces graduation marks on the panels for more consistent alignment when I start sewing. The templates are made from craft paper and the edges are double thickness. Quite time consuming I know. I wonder if anyone else has made templates in such a way?

For those interested the table is approx 5 feet wide by 7 feet long made of chipboard flooring sheets – as you can see from the picture the garage is very small and cramped but I am managing. I recon I could construct larger balloons (with more gores) on this table if I stuck to this construction method.....



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

I have to say I have spent more time physically on the table crawling around as opposed to *standing* at it. Boards on the floor would have been okay but, for me, backbreaking. I am still working on creating space to sew the thing together, that's my current issue.

The fabric I have acquired is crisp PU coated ripstop similar to that used in 1970's UK balloons. As things progress I will post on the Facebook page for anyone interested.

David Westlake

## **6. Gallery Pages –**

This section is the Editor's choice of new jpegs, visuals and older balloons of interest or alterations. If you know of a new or interesting hopper or Duo that hasn't featured in this section, then feel free to forward details of it with a suitable photograph to me using my normal email address.







# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

This lovely looking Envelope is the new UM M42 for a Monte Carlo Based client. It is being mated to a Paulo Bonnano bottom end with a fan attached to it. It has been registered I-B366 and is C/N 42/20.



Richard Phillips in his LBL 31A G-BWHD over Mondovi – jpg by Richard Phillips



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012



Taken by Sandy Mitchell at the Amersfoort old timers day  
PH-OLA is an old Thunder and Colt Ax3- 17.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012

## **Manufacturer News / Events / Updates**

In two year's time the One Man Meet will be 30 years old. In keeping with tradition, this is a significant milestone and therefore it needs to be celebrated in fine style. Any good ideas for the event or a suitable venue please let us know in advance so we can plan something special. Personally I have two ideas to float at you for consideration.

The First is to try and combine the event with our friends from XLTA and invite some friends over from the states to join us at the event and then secondly my idea is to try and establish a Guinness Book of records for the number of one man balloons in the air at one time. This would entail achieving more than 30 hoppers airborne at the same time.

So what do you think to the idea?

## **Adverts / For Sale / Wanted section**

Another month with movement in the second hand market. If the balloon is priced at an honest realistic selling price then just like Martin Axtells G-CCKZ, it will sell.

### **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](mailto:advanced@gci.net), or call me in Alaska at 907 242-5860

Jack advises that £3750 buys the complete kit.





# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 59

October 2012



Photo thanks to Zebedee list- Peter Bish





## 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 2000m<sup>3</sup>

Two fans will blow your  
socks off!

Contact Advanced, Inc.

[advanced@gci.net](mailto:advanced@gci.net)

Tel. +1 907 346-3495

[www.kleinfan.com](http://www.kleinfan.com)

Visit us on Facebook!

### And Finally.

Membership is currently a healthy 441 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](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.