



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 56

May/ June 2012

Hello once again readers.

In what seems alarmingly common, another edition arrives with No flying having taken place again on my part. This looks like one of the leanest years in recent times for flying for a variety of reasons. All of these add up to make Jack a dull boy!

This doesn't mean that the opportunity to play with balloons didn't exist, a number of opportunities arose and some of the action is included for your reading pleasure.

So whilst here in the UK the opportunities to fly have been few and far between, let's celebrate with those who have.

Ed-Speak -limited opportunities

I have spoken recently with lots of pilots and the one thing coming out of them generally speaking is that they just aren't flying regularly. Going into June having flown only once this year myself is unheard of -but I'm not alone. At the recent BBML inflation day I had time to chat to many hopper pilots who haven't flown much more than I have. When I say not flying, I'm not just talking hoppers I'm talking any balloon flying.

We are lucky in respect that as well as being involved with the best form of flying, we also fly the least expensive so when you are looking for regency and currency in ballooning at least when we go hop we are doing it on the tightest budget which in the current economic climate can only be a good thing. When the UK weather permits me to fly again at a weekend, it will be the hopper that I select to fly.

Steve Roake

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Essential Extra's / Tech Talk

Once again this section has no content as no one has come forward with anything useful that they want to pass on to the rest of you. When you have please let me know so I can pass the details on to the masses.

The Features Section-

The BBML Inflation day at Lakeside Lodge Pidley

The British Balloon Museum and Library (BBML) hold bi annual inflation days as part of their charge to remain a museum status entity. These tend to be hosted around the UK at different venues to promote others in displaying old and non flyable balloons that haven't seen the light of day in recent years. The BBML display as many if their own collection as possible and over the years that I have attended, I think they have got more and more popular as the public have taken these events to their heart.

This year's event was originally conceived for another venue and hastily changed at the eleventh hour to Lakeside lodge Pidley and a lot of credit needs expressing to David Hopkins for availability of the venue and all efforts to ensure the day went seamlessly well. Arriving on the Friday night, I witnessed four balloons flying from the venue, our own John Tyrell was amongst them in G-FFFT his Lindstrand 31A, and somewhat jealously as I drove out for dinner, I witnessed his 6 knot flight which looked idyllic landing nearly an hour later at RAF Wyton airbase.

Whilst hoppers weren't the overall theme for this year's event, there was enough of a presence to keep any hopper enthusiast happy. With the untimely death of Janet Foulkes, her old Green Ice Hopper had been donated to the museum and so the opportunity arose to get three of them potentially tethered together. With this in mind I had taken my personal bottom end for the BBML to use in this process.

Some other hopper interest occurred during the day with the tethering of some interesting envelopes and also the use of a very nice duochariot bottom end that had some history attached to it.

The morning started with the usual briefing where we established that the winds would remain around 6-7 knots during the day and the moisture that was initially in the air, was due to improve and generally dry out as the day went on.



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Initially, the morning session started slowly with little of interest happening as we all waited the action.



Inside this bag is a small piece of hopping history-jpeg by Steve Roake

After a nice hog roast lunch the activity increased as people realised that time was moving on and we had plenty of balloons to see. In keeping with my warped sense of humour, I'll tease you with another couple of jpegs of balloons to come (not necessarily in the order they appeared).



You know it's a small one by the size of the bag!-jpeg Steve Roake



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Vintage bag and timeless artwork hints at the age of this hopper.

Inside this particular bag shown above was a Thunder AX3 Sky Chariot envelope that had been restored by the museum with copious help from Chris Dunkley and so it was fitting that the inflation of the balloon be performed by Chris who attended the event. G-BIBZ is a 1982 vintage hopper that used to belong to a commercial pilot called Frank Barnes. Frank flew commercially in Kenya, and attended a balloon meet in 1994 in Lancashire and unfortunately became a victim of a power line strike which resulted in the bottom end separating from the envelope at height with the pilot succumbing to injuries from the impact as the voltage sheared through the flying wires.



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This hopper hadn't seen the light of day in over 20 years and extensive repairs to the flying wires and its donation to the BBML meant the possibility of it being tethered in the difficult conditions, secured its place as one of the highlights of the event.



Chris Dunkley does a fine job in spirited conditions without a scoop on G-BIBZ Thunder Ax3 Sky Chariot.

Just prior to this delightful Sky chariot's airing, another of the day's highlights took place. Three Green Ice hoppers were successfully inflated in the difficult conditions. This has to be the largest gatherings of them since the filming



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finished all those years ago, and it should be noted the generosity of Janet Faulkes family in donating her Green Ice hopper (complete kit) to the BBML that made this event possible. In difficult conditions, with hoppers that barely have enough parachutes to cover the opening, these three gave a spirited tether to the large crowds.



Three Little Green Ice sitting in a Row – photo by Sandy Mitchell

Note the lack of scoops on all three- just adding to the fun in trying to tether without damaging the envelopes. I can confirm that thankfully no damage occurred whilst these had an airing.

The next hopper to immerge was another one of a trio. Currently on the Zebedee list for sale, G-BOLP is a Colt 21A and was displayed by members of the Dante Group. Whilst clearly in flying order, this ex Pepsi Liveried envelope is showing signs of its age with some mildew evident across quite a large area of the envelope. Whilst it does date from 1988, a previous owner clearly hasn't bothered so much about the condition of the envelope – which is a crying shame.



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Photographed By Bob Garnett-G-BOLP Colt 21A

Whilst there were a few other hopper sightings during the event including an annual C of A for John Tyrell's G-FFFT Lindstrand 31A and checking out the new parachute for Dan Wilson's G-LELE Lindstrand 31A, the other star display was the Colt 17A of



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Sebastian Pooley lent for the event to Martin Freeston. Whilst the wind conditions didn't allow a total stand up inflation of the balloon, enough effort was expended on its participation.



Colt 17A G-BKIU photo by Steve Roake

A good day was had by all; trouble is what will be found for next time to keep the insatiable crowd happy from a hopping perspective? If you have never been to a BBML inflation day then you don't know what you've been missing!

Steve Roake



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Interesting Duo Chariot sighting at Pidley

Amongst the hopper activity at Pidley there was a sighting of an interesting Duo Chariot which belongs to Shirilee Collins from Kent.



A small piece of history at Pidley-jpeg by Steve Roake

This beautifully finished Duo Chariot was dragged out of a trailer to inflate the Robertson's Golly shape 31 envelope. Speaking to the owner at length, it transpired that this was a small piece of history because it was the last ever Cameron Duo Chariot with the laid down tank. This duo normally flies below a 105 envelope so when flying burns are about one a minute.

The bottom end was in as near to factory fresh as you could have got with only seven flights in the logbook. The rarity of these bottom ends made seeing this beautiful kit that much more pleasurable with a lovely dent free sump guard.



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Another nice view of the Duo Chariot -jpeg by Steve Roake

This appears to be an asset that will only appreciate in time since the style is preferred to the newer arrangement and Duo Chariots generally don't appear very often on the used market.



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My First Hop- by Rick Jones

Six years ago I was looking for something new and exciting to distract me from losing my best friend to cancer. I settled on a barely used Cameron M-34 cloudhopper with just 3 and a half hours on it. It has proven to be the adventure of a lifetime, just what I needed. I wrote these thoughts down right after the first flight in July of 2006:

Saturday morning was the first flight of my new Cameron cloudhopper, which I've named Footloose. Best lyric from the song of same name: "You can fly if you'd only cut loose, Footloose."

Launched from a fairgrounds in Vermont with the help of David Tanzer, and his wife Lori chased. The fairgrounds is in a nice little valley and it was very calm, making for an easy inflation. Everything seemed in order, so after a few last tips from David I took off, trying to get a feel for the responsiveness in flight.

Careful preflight preparation included wearing my lucky ballooning shirt for the first time in years, and the beautiful wool socks that list member Barbara Reed knit for me. With hopper-pilot knit socks and a lucky shirt, I knew everything would go well.

The plan was to stay low, getting comfortable, practice touching down, see how much burning and venting got the desired reactions.

First thing I noticed was that the seat, set in the "tall pilot" position to be exactly level on the ground, sloped slightly forward in flight. It felt like I could slide out of the hopper. I wasn't actually slipping forward, and the harness would have stopped me eventually, but it wasn't a great feeling and I held on with my left hand whenever it wasn't needed and applied backpressure on the footrest throughout the flight. Earlier I'd felt that the alternate position tipped me too far back, but it was now clearly a better choice.

Overburning slightly I missed a chance to land in a field just after launch, and found a small wooded mountain directly before me, and steadily climbed above it. Went right over the peak, where it was very windy. On the far side it dropped away steeply and I found myself 1500 feet up over a dairy farming area. There was good steering, with a right at my altitude and a left near the ground. Great views of the Green Mountains to my right, Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains to my left, and lots of big farm fields spreading out in front of me.



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The height and being in the chair didn't bother me, overall it felt just like flying a regular balloon, especially when I looked into the distance. My right arm was a little cramped reaching for the burner; hopefully the seat adjustment will improve this.

Descending closer to the ground it was clear I was going quite quickly. A bit fast, really. The last 200 feet above the ground had significant wind shear and lots of turbulence. Had to adjust my hat to keep it from blowing off. I looked up to see the sides of the envelope caving in several times, especially towards the mouth. Was happy to note that this didn't affect my ability to burn, the system functioned well.

Based on the unexpected turbulence and the large hayfield directly in front of me, I let Lori know I'd be landing and lined it up. I had read and reread Bill Mackinnon's windy landing article from the December 2005 Aerostat, and studied the accompanying photo of a muddy Glen Everett, and set out to follow their example. Turn sideways, pilot light off, feet down, vent hard, drag, drag, drag.

It was really quick, and uphill, so I was surprised how far it dragged. About 150 feet, with the whole system and tank on its side for the last 100 feet. When it finally stopped I waited a bit, popped out of the harness, radioed the crew that I was fine, and stood up. There was quite a breeze, the other balloon tells me it was about 13 knots when I landed. It felt like it. Not what I'd wanted for my first hopper landing, but it went just how the article had described. In fact, I looked a lot like that photo of Glen, except I had much larger grass stains mixed with mud stripes. I was really wired, it had really gone well, and several things that I would have held off on for a while got tried, so I don't have to worry about them now.

When the other pilots caught sight of me at breakfast, they had a good laugh about the mud and grass stains.

With flying at altitude and high wind landings out of the way, I'm looking forward to practicing basic manoeuvres, contour flying, and stand up landings over the next few weeks. Overall I'm pretty excited about this new way of flying. I'm glad to join you.

A special thanks to David and Lori for their help and hospitality.

Rick Jones

So that's the format, what happened on your first ever hop and how it felt compared to your expectations?

Submissions to me please at steve.roake@ntlworld.com



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Three Favourite Jpegs and why-by Jane Dunkley

In this eighteenth version of my three favourites and why, I am delighted to receive a submission from Jane Dunkley.



Colt 17A in the garden-jpeg by Jane Dunkley

This is my favourite, taking off from the neighbour's garden over 20yrs ago. The house unfortunately was repossessed and we were inflating one day when the estate agent brought people round. They were horrified and didn't buy the house which was lucky for us as the next couple did and would have had it especially because we were flying from their garden. None other than an aircraft anorak - Trev of "shed" fame, so thanks to the hopper we still have our lovely neighbours. It was the first hopper I flew as well-happy memories.



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Jane's second submission is a familiar balloon from some time ago when herself and hubby Chris were part of the commercial circuit with flying pictures.



I had the nicest flight in Bud, perfect evening from the Black Horse, Great Missenden Bucks.

In her third and final selection, Jane exhibits her unique sense of humour. Anyone who knows the Dunkley's will understand exactly what Jane is on about, and this typifies the fun you always encounter when visiting the Dunkley Emporium near Wendover in Buckinghamshire.

"Chris flew this little hopper until it was completely "knackered", and despite some hairy moments it always got him down safely! I think you can see why we needed to have a repair station"! (Ministry of Understatement me thinks- Ed).



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I'm wondering if this is the very same hopper that Chris discussed with me some time ago, where he was inflating it and got some gas inside the envelope but continued to inflate it, and then when hot inflating the balloon, Chris burst the seams as he fired the hot air into the Envelope. It also makes you wonder what completely Knackered means in Dunkley terminology?



For the records, I think this was G-LUGG-Ed

Many thanks to Jane for the contributions but this section is constantly a struggle for me, I know not why. So who is going to be next to submit? Contributions for future editions of my three favourites and why to steve.roake@ntlworld.com please. Do it today folks and share those memories.



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

Just letting you know that the newsletter still presents a problem in terms of content. There have been no homebuilding submissions in recent months. The question is Why not? There is also a dearth of content for my three favourites and why and for the easiest of topics, my first hopper flight.

The funny thing with all of these facts, as I recently discussed with our own Chris Dobson, the fact of the matter is that the hopper is going to be the most popular balloon soon simply as it's the cheapest to run and in a recession, keeping your recency is going to be hard to maintain. Simply stated, cloudhoppers are cost effective. They retain good residual values, are cheap as chips to fly and are the most rewarding type of flying going.

Currently there is a total lack of investment going into hoppers by most of the major European manufacturers who seem non bothered by small balloons as they bang out 400 plus pax rides in their droves since that is where the money is. £12k on a hopper system is small potatoes compared to the ever increasing costs of large balloons. A recent Z-750 built by Cameron Balloons Ltd for France carried 32 passengers and costs over £130,000.

However a lesser known fact is that certain hopper envelopes shapes in production don't lend themselves to carrying advertising and/or branding well since the gore numbers don't divide by 3, the standard number of times an envelope is usually art worked (due to only being able to see a third of a sphere at any one time). This in itself isn't a problem since demand for artworked hoppers isn't that great but the problem is that those manufacturers whose product doesn't lend itself to artwork, don't seem bothered about changing the product to enable them to be artworked more easily. The exception to the rule seems to be Ultramagic who are supplying whatever is required particularly to shrewd operators such as Glenn Everett who singlehandedly seems to be keeping UK sales going by himself.

It's a funny market out there. Here in the UK, despite the obvious recession, there has been a small uptake in private balloon sales, which seems at odds with the general trend. Unfortunately the desired sizes chosen are within the 77- 105 range and not in our sector.



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5. Homebuilt section-

Another month with no content, so therefore once again, it remains empty. Please notify me of the status of your projects so that we can let the readership know what you are building and more importantly can incorporate all the useful tweaks into their projects too.

I would also draw to your attention the versatility of the Cloudhoppers page on Facebook. This is by approval but seeing as I'm the administrator I can't see that being a problem and whilst being a forum it also supports pictures and video uptakes, therefore it another way to support our community and as a tool I suggest you all take advantage of the facility where currently only 130 people partake. Enjoy!

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.



Nice "New" Duo Chariot for Erik Jan Doornewaard- PH-EJW is an ex Swiss T&C and is 69,000 cubic feet.
- photo thanks to Eric Jan.



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Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

After months of little or no news about events, this month we have details of three forthcoming events with hoppers in mind. In no particular order here is the information that you all need to plan ahead your future flying.

The One Man Meet - Welshpool North Wales 12th-14th October

Recently advertised in Aerostat magazine, Phil Dunnington has confirmed that this year's OMM is returning to Welshpool Powys over the weekend of 12th-14th October. The main difference with this year's event is that Phil has been in contact with the National trust and potentially has another launch site at Powys Castle to add to the airfield site. So if you have ambitions to be at this annual gathering, drop Phil an email outlining your desire to be involved. contact details as shown below.

phil@gonewiththewind.uk.com

Grass Roots festival Sackville Lodge Beds – New Sponsor

In the light of lack of support from the BBAC this year, the organisers of the Sackville Lodge Grass roots festival have managed to secure sponsorship for the event from Ultramagic UK Ltd. Dealer Richard Penny recognises that back to basics, down to earth, grass roots events is where the majority of UK balloonists are likely to be and should be applauded for stepping in where others have let down the membership. Dates for this year's event are from September 7th-9th with the usual proviso that should the weather be inclement, then the whole event will roll over until the next available flyable weekend. The event features all the renowned elements that has made it popular over the years with free camping and showers on site. For further information and entry forms contact via the website at

www.grassrootsballooning.org.uk



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Note. If you intend attending this event in recent light of CAA action following the incident at Bristol festival last year, please ensure you comply with recency requirements and ensure your paperwork is compliant including your medical declaration. The organisers have had to toughen up on these issues and you will see on the entry form that the wording is now very specific.

XLTA is back on

Following the announcement a while ago that Dan Nachbar couldn't host XLTA festival this year we had all got into our minds that it just wasn't going to happen. Surprised the other day when email notification arrived for this year's event at another venue. So XLTA 8 which is The 8th Annual New England Experimental Balloon, Hopper, Chariot, and Airship Rally will be held over September 7-9, 2012 at a new venue at Bethlehem, Connecticut Hosted by: EAA Chapter 1097. The Contact Person is Mick Murphy.

New Location! New Host! Same Great Event!

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

This is a small private non-profit event: no paid rides, no public audience, no muss, and no fuss. Just experimental LTA and the people who love to build and fly them (as well as friends and families, of course.) This event provides both an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences amongst builders and a chance to fly together informally.

Online registration at -

<http://www.xlta.org/regform2012.php>



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Adverts / For Sale / Wanted section

Martin Axtell offers G-CCKZ for Sale (REDUCED PRICE)



Customcraft 25A, 14hours total time .Multicoloured and lightweight envelope with customcraft bottom end which splits into two like a lindstrand system in red and vgc. Comes with 60litre tank .All Annex 2 so no messing around with EASA etc ...flies great and all paperwork in order. Ready to go now reduced from £5000ono to only **£4300**. Telephone Martin on 07786622802 or email him at mjaballooning@hotmail.com

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>



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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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Pauline Baker offers for sale EI-DJZ Lightweight Lindstrand 31A

REDUCED PRICE



Pauline Baker offers for sale her Lightweight Lindstrand 31A envelope. a rarity at any time, this record breaking envelope has only done 30 odd hours, of which 20 are free flown. Whilst artworked, the envelope has a current C of A and ARC and weighs in at a very respectable 36kgs weight. Was £4000, now only £3500 secures the envelope. Call Pauline via email ballooning@eircom.net or phone +353 46 9483436 during office hours.



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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.

advanced@gci.net

Tel. +1 907 346-3495

www.kleinfan.com

Visit us on Facebook!

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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