



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 121

January 2020

Happy New Millennium people.

As we start the new year and enter 2020 , just a small fanfare to ourselves as we recognise that right now in early January we are entering the 16<sup>th</sup> Year of Cloudhoppers.org and Cloudhoppers News, which I think for just a small objective of giving our type of ballooning more exposure is a great thing to have achieved.

Just back from the Icicle Refrozen Balloon Festival And whilst it wasn't hopper centric there was a surprisingly sizable volume of stuff that could be pertinent to our sector of the market. This will be discussed in further detail in the magazine. I may be putting two and two together and making six but hear me out. There seems a lot of plausibility in what I am about to discuss with you and I think we may be in a position to influence the outcome this time.

News comes of further hopper sales both domestically and abroad and we have news of new events for the 2020 season, so, whilst this may not be the biggest newsletter in the world, let's crack on and dive straight in to the contents.

Here is what we have for you in this edition.

- The 5<sup>th</sup> Icicle Refrozen Balloon festival
- Cameron's Baby Neo- hopper possibilities?
- Recent second-hand purchases.
- Interesting photo by Nathan Allen
- Gallery pages

Please send to me your items for inclusion in future editions of the newsletter to the email address below

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## **1, Ed Speak- It's that time of year- My annual plea.**

I'm afraid I'm in asking mode. Its alpine season with all the normal places having all the normal festivals and as normal id like pretty please any hopper photos taken at any of the usual places because as I always say, to me, these are generally the photos of the year.

I think the appeal is the vibrancy of the colours against the purest of backgrounds and that's why the purity of the result is always so rewarding.

Big news coming soon regarding my hopping going forwards. Suffice to say that my current steed isn't my long-term ambition .There is no reason why G-BYNW won't last for years to come but I have other ideas and want to go in a different direction and am delighted that Stuart Skinner is going to enjoy her moving forward.

Expect to see the Cameron H-34 over the skies in Buckinghamshire soon just as soon as she is mated with Stuarts bottom end. What you may ask will you replace her with ? Fear not people as all will be revealed in the not too distant future and from my perspective – the future is looking bright. I'm looking forward to sharing with you my future plans but like everything in life it's all about timing and I expect to be able to reveal all by the latest around Easter time.

All I can say at this stage is that moving forward I will be exclusively flying hoppers only for the foreseen future as the last exponents of my 120 kit have now found homes with new owners and I wish them all well in their respective endeavours.

Steve Roake

## **2, Essential Extras – alas, another blank month**

Once again, the section that suffers most from feast or famine is in famine Mode. Sometimes there just isn't any crazy great ideas to pass on to you For you to think about incorporating into your kits. Mind you if you think of anything please let me know. Just send me an email with details.

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### 3, The Features Section. –

#### The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Icicle Refrozen Balloon Festival

The Icicle Balloon meet in all of its guises is a funny thing. On the one hand you arrive to the impressive drive on that iconic golf course with hopes and expectations of a busy couple of days with a decent amount of ballooning, and on the other hand you realise that Its January , its been really wet underfoot, the weather forecast isnt too great and you shouldn't get too excited because reality is it will probably be less enjoyable than youd imagine.

Five years ago, the ownership of the event changed hands and also migrated to the Donnington Grove Hotel in Newbury Berkshire with the new name of the Icicle Refrozen. Luckily this year actually ended up with a decent amount of outdoor activity, over both days which actually included flying and the weather whilst not fantastic , wasn't too bad either with a high pressure system over the country and generally conditions that didn't deteriorate over the period. In fact Saturday

afternoon even saw light winds and sunshine. Coupled to the external activities , there was the traditional "trade" show and evening entertainment with after dinner speaker who was Brain Jones of Round the world Breitling fame.

Arriving Saturday morning just before the 8am Briefing, the weather was dry , the launch field was accessable, and if not completely dry it was usable with care. The first positive was that the very necessary Bacon butty van was back in place and Icicle involves Bacon sarnies and Tea. The turnout was as expected slightly light on numbers with an element in Saudi Arabia prefering to balloon in the sand. The weather was delivered by John Crawford with ground speeds of 5-6 knots and up to 20 knots at 1500 feet.

Flying (sensibly) was left to pilots discretion, with most giving it a miss due to serious flooding in the direction of travel. However some more local flyers decided to "get one in" and first into the air was the local team of BT with their new Um M-77. One of my companions for the weekend was Greg Winker who had flown in from Denver



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Colorado just for the Icicle, and so we witnessed local pilot Ron Griffin fly his Lindstrand 31A G-CDUJ with a small basket. The weather and the flooded fields locally obviously put off some keen flyers who may have indulged on another occasion but as the day went on so the weather actually improved. After lunch even the sun came out which gave me the opportunity to pop up G-BYNW the Cameron H-34 for around 10 mins and show her to her new prospective owner whilst Martin Mitchell tethered the Servo Connectors special shaped hopper G-OSVO. With a theme of a tribute to 1977 balloons I believe about 21 balloons were witnessed.



Servo Connector Special Shaped Hopper



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The trade exhibition had two manufacturers in the main hall and the usual array of memorabilia and so on. A number of hours were enjoyed including some listening to Paul Spellward outlining what the BBAC proposes in the way of license migration to the EASA type of license and the path we will take in order to smooth the process after April.

Details of some new events for this year being run by John Tyrrell and Wendy Rousell appear later in the newsletter. It is true to say these are all very well run "by balloonists, for balloonists" so why not sign up for some and enjoy the fun.

At the hotel the evenings entertainment was to be a three course meal and an after dinner speech by Brian Jones (of Brietling round the world Fame), and I understand it was quite good. I personally decided to give it a miss because they always hold an auction after that personally makes me uncomfortable about being pressurised into bidding for stuff you don't want.

Therefore my crew and myself went for an Italian and some beers in Newbury and with a few of us staying in the town for the night took the opportunity to have quite a few beers for a change.

All too quickly Sunday morning came around and with it some overnight rain had clearly dropped. We still all trooped down to the Donnington Grove Hotel for the 8am briefing which was generally similar to the previous days one. The state of the ground pleased me that I had tethered when the sun was out on the Saturday morning but this wasn't enough to put off some intrepid pilots who chose to fly. With tarpaulines in place some newer balloons tethered and a few flew including Alan Turner in his Cameron Z-31 G-CINN who won the award for the shortest flight over the weekend.

So once again despite conditions that would have put a lot of people off coming, the Icicle Refrozen Balloon Meet delivered what could be described as a reasonable level of ballooning under less than optimum levels of weather conditions.

Congratulations to the 3/4/40 club for providing another top event and continuing the Icicle tradition which continues to go from strength to strength.

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## On the Cameron Stand- Baby Neo possibilities ?

Now I stress this is just me putting this out there and I have nothing concrete that leads me to believe this will happen but what Cameron's had on their stand at the Icicle Refrozen could be the basis of a new hopper burner. Why do I say that ? On the Cameron stand was both the Baby Neo and a Baby Neo double burner set up. What makes me think that this could be scaled down to a hopper application? I have had some discussions about new hopper burners with Cameron's and the subject did crop up that it could be something they "could " look at in the future.

Why do I think the new Baby Neo could be the basis of a new hopper design? Well as an engineer I appreciate good design and the new features on the Baby Neo are all transferable and could be scaled down to a smaller application. For example, the bottom end of the new Neo has been designed from the start to be really simple to disassemble and service simply coming apart with just four bolts. The outer casing is also long lasting in the type of finish they have tried to use that really looks good . The coils are a very simple push fit and again are fastened with minimal assembly. There has been some very clever thought in the design to simplify the assembly and such things as the jetting really caught my eye . Just like a high bypass jet engine the jetting uses a main jet surrounded by multiple small jets that not only add power but also help contain the noise . By utilising a circular coil , finally Cameron's have distanced themselves from the square cornered, stress raising units they have used over the years. Now all forces are equalised across the coils.

What could be utilised on a scaled down Micro Neo ? Well for starters there is no reason why the bottom end couldn't be utilised and reduced in size. The surrounds that now have longer lasting finish on them can be applied to anything and the simplicity of the design leads itself to future application on more of the range.

I think we have the ability to influence their thoughts and if you agree with my thoughts then now is the time to communicate with Cameron's and relay your desires for a new hopper design and perhaps we can steer the path to a newer up to date smaller, lighter , potentially gimbaled hopper burner . Id love to hear your views on the above.

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## **4, Homebuilding**

Superb video by Andy Marshall really details how he got his basket made and the things to consider when building your own one-man bottom end . Probably a subject that doesn't get enough coverage.

<https://youtu.be/CshdXf-SuDY>

As ever with anything Andy does, a lot of thought has gone into the making of this video with particular emphasis on getting all the right views of the salient points . I'm sure if you are thinking of making your own basket, this will be of great use for references for your project. It has been posted on Facebook under Annex 1 balloon group but I'm sure Andy doesn't mind that I linked it to the Cloudhopper's page. I'm sure that Andy would love this video just to inspire one new individual to have a go at home building and through his series of videos on building his own craft he shows the passion and dedication required to get to the end of the project with a positive result.

I can also say he is the most approachable kind of person going, so should you watch this and still have issues that you can't get your head around , then simply drop him a line and ask that question that's been gnawing at the back of your head .

He is an engineer by trade having previously worked for Lindstrand Balloons Limited so has a lot of knowledge on manufacturing and has also turned his hand to making scale model remote controlled balloons too.

This section has for a while been missing from the newsletter not for any reason other than the fact that it can only survive with your submissions of the things you are currently making , so feel free to send news of them to me with photographs at the email at the top of the magazine.

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## 5 Interesting Photos



Nathan Allen enjoying himself in Australia

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## **6, New Allocations This Month / Changes of Ownership**

Not new allocations as such but I do know some interesting hopper news. Cameron Balloons have just delivered a Millennium bottom end to Australia and, if my information is correct, (and I'm pretty sure it is), there will be two new Cameron Hoppers registered on the UK register before Easter, with the first around March. This ties up with what I was saying last month about a better year than last year.

I look forward to telling you more on both of these as and when they go live on the UK register which I guess will be after delivery to the new owners.

## **7, Second Hand Balloons**

Once again proving if an item is priced right it will sell , G-BYNW (Cameron H-34) has just changed hands . New delighted owner is Stuart Skinner from Aylesbury. Stuart will mate the H-34 with his millennium bottom end and BYNW will replace G-BEUY as his regular steed.

## **8, Manufacturer / Event News/ Industry News**

One thing not yet documented from this years Icicle Refrozen balloon meet is the expanding world of events being staged by Wendy Rousell and John Tyrrell. They had a stand at the trade fair and announced new venues for this year alongside some events that they continue to support including the One Man Meet .The full list with dates are below.

- Cheltenham Balloon Festival Friday 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June.
- Northampton Town Festival Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>-Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July.
- Staffordshire Balloon Festival Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>-Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July.
- Oxford Balloon Festival (PROVISIONAL) Friday 14<sup>th</sup>-Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August.
- One Man Meet TBC Friday 9<sup>th</sup> -Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October.

With the exception of the OMM , all events feature a balloonist package which includes , Free Gas , farmers Gift , Breakfast and Meal Vouchers , Camping and Caravanning on site, and Fun Prizes. For more info Email: [Balloontyrrell@btinternet.com](mailto:Balloontyrrell@btinternet.com)

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## 7. Gallery Pages –

Your Editor's choice of New and unusual topical balloons.



David W Koenig at play in N103GB.

The above balloon is N103GB which is a Grazier 43K, which is a 16 gore , made of 1.3 oz nylon construction in 2016. David , from Appleton WI , USA says it has done around 30 hours since being built in 2016. He has a couple of hoppers and a duo chariot and flies all year round over Farmland over the summer months and over frozen Lakes during the winter months where he said, "It's pretty much just us and the cows ".

His other hopper was built in 1996 and has around 80 hours on it. Sounds to me like there would be plenty of folks would like to swap places with David.

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N5HJ is a Wilson Flying Farce-1. Photo sent by Greg Winker.

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Hoppers are out in the Alps . OY-NON has been seen in Filzmoos ,  
whilst Bob Garnett caught this beast in Chateau D'oex.

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Facebook membership continues to rise with the current level of 1365 (correct to the 25th January), current and still rising. Let's hope this trend continues as the popularity of hopping embraces even more people. All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your Editor a week before the end of each month please. Please forward them to [steve.roake33@gmail.com](mailto:steve.roake33@gmail.com)

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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