Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 115 **June /July 2019**

Hello folks, welcome to the joint June/July Newsletter.

Summer is charging along merrily and with it all the happenings that go with it. Plenty going on in our world to keep you amused, and some nice stuff up for grabs on the used market.
June had a few events including the first ever Cheltenham Balloon Festival and my favourite event of the year Bedale in Yorkshire. July included Northampton Balloon Festival and a little private flyout from deepest darkest Kent.
Time moves along and things change. My two-year deal with Cameron Balloons has now concluded so news on what is happening there included in this issue. All the best to those travelling to Metz France for the bi annual event, for myself having attended religiously the last ten I feel it is time I took a break.

Here is what we have for you in this edition.

- Cheltenham Balloon Festival
- James McDonalds Kent Flyout
- Bedale 2019
- Metz 2019.
- News on My Cameron's Relationship.
- Northampton Balloon Festival
- Recent second-hand purchases.
- A small insight into what it takes to arrange the OMM.

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- Happenings in June /July

You know time rushes by and its sometimes hard to remember what you did only a couple of months ago. Early June I was at the Solo Meet in Great Missenden with a great bunch of people. Since last year the event has gained more popularity and I had a lovely flight in the hopper from Thame to Waddesdon Manor not far from Aylesbury in around 1hr 30 mins. Once I got to Waddesdon Manor I landed in a piece of set aside on the edge of a field of wheat, but wasn't ready for the response to my landing.

Unknown to me, they had a mid-air collision late last year between a helicopter and a fixed wing plane and unfortunately all had perished so naturally when you here a balloon is "down" on your land they thought the worst again. Luckily for all concerned, I wasn't the same case and the very reasonable folks from the estates couldn't have been nicer to me. Just goes to show how a small amount of information can taken the wrong way.

By the time this comes out a lot of you will have pilgrimaged

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to Metz France for the Bi Annual Festival of Lorraine, I trust everyone had a good time, I personally having been ten times in a row just decided that I needed a change and a break from the same old routine and so gave it a miss on this occasion. Will I go back? who knows, but right now I have no urges to do so.

Steve Roake

2, Essential Extras – The "Bag for Life"

This might sound crazy but I'm always finding people who don't know what I mean about the "bag for life" when it comes to ballooning, as was the case recently when I was at Headcorn Kent. This works just as well for a big balloon as for a hopper but it's simple folks.

Take one 10p more robust reusable plastic bag from your local supermarket (or if you feel like splashing the cash a natural fibre one for about £4 from Waitrose), and take it with you when you next go fly. What's it for? What you do is you stow away your crown line up to and including the crown ring inside the bag which then gets tucked inside the fabric of your balloon. Why? The reason for doing this is two-fold. If the rope gets wet at all it isn't going to damage any

of the panels(mildew), and secondly if you feed the rope into the bag in one continuous motion, it won't get knotted when you pull it out again next time.
A very simple idea but perfect for an "Essential Extra" hence the reason It's being suggested to you right here for making your ballooning that little bit better. Like most good ideas it costs next to nothing.

3, The Features Section. –

Cheltenham Balloon Festival

The first Cheltenham Balloon festival took place over the weekend of 21st-23rd July based at the renowned race course site. Hosted by John Tyrrell and Wendy Rousell (who run the OMM), you knew in advance it would be well organised. Alas on the Friday evening, my trip to the event was protracted as I had to come directly from where I was working in Littlehampton (a trip that should have taken 2 hours for the 140 miles distance, any yet took over 4 hours), and so my first indication that I was close was when I witnessed around 12 balloons airborne from a Local landmark called The Balloon Pub which is pitched high on a local set of hills. I was taking the Cloudhopper purely to fly on the Saturday am slot as I had offered to P1 Tara Taylor in her bigger balloon for the rest of the weekend. Setting up my camping arrangements with balloons in the air around you is a great sight although in your heart of hearts you wished you could be up there too.
Some 50 odd balloons had agreed to attend which for a first ever event is a great number, and I wasn't too bothered as the Saturday am slot looked as though it would be glorious. This arrived with pretty much the predicted weather which was light winds, an inversion and no reason not to fly. My crew for the slot were Tony Taylor and Dan Leek who had driven up from Cardiff first thing that morning.

This would be my first ever flight with electronic maps at my disposal and so, I was keen to get into the "new age" with the necessary details displayed on my I-phone. There was no hurry to fly as the winds were light on the surface but should you want to go somewhere, the 2000 ft winds were around 10 knots. Joined by my fellow hopper

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exponent and good friend Tony Attwood in the RAF hopper, we decided to "play" around the racecourse and took off together pretty much at the end of the slot intending to try to "Box" the slot.
We both knew if we remained inside the confines of the racecourse we would have no land owner issues, and having flown for over 1hr 15 mins I ended up one field away from where I had started on a manicured archery field with Tony remaining around the launch site just the opposite side of the trees from me. It was a glorious morning and Tony Taylor took this great picture.

Super Light through the "SuperLight"
photo by Tony Taylor.

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You know, its actually really nice not to go anywhere for a change and I enjoy maximising my flight where loitering around the launch field, so on this occasion I was in my element. We were joined by Thunder Ax3 G-BKBD in the air, but Alex Court flew his Sky Chariot away from the field and didn't hang around like we did.

Whilst the rest of the weekend was ultimately flyable, it wasn't particularly hopper friendly and whilst Tony did fly the evening slot it was quite fast. For Tara who was trying to fly her new balloon, we agreed that probably she wouldn't get a lot from the conditions, and I didn't want to push her training backwards with an awkward flight and as it was a new balloon to her I thought it was imperative that the first flight was a good one so we stayed on the ground.

Nice photo by Wendy Rousell

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Tony even got the RAF hopper out for the nightglow, which seemed a fitting way to finish a great day. Sunday am was also flyable but again the word id use would be challenging so once again not right for a P.U.T. The event as a whole was very good, the only thing id change for next time is to provide some showers for the campers. But if it happens next year I will return with pleasure.

James McDonald organises a Flyout from Headcorn Kent.

Saturday 13th July was the planned first gathering of a club of balloonists brought together by James McDonald. Cinque Port is a club of like-minded people who want to fly together in Kent and for this first outing Id been invited to join them at Headcorn Airfield for what would turn into a nice balloon flyout. Apparently, years ago they did this sort of thing and James is trying to get Flying back on the agenda in Kent once more as a social event. I was to fly the Cameron Cloudhopper with local balloonist Peter Greaves agreeing to be my crew for the evening. This is a great move because Peter is a budding future hopper pilot and wants to take a closer look at the kit. With his family and friends present I have a large team to assist me which is great and I can see its turning into a really good social affair. We all wait for the winds to dissipate a bit and around 7-15pm time and winds are right and it's time to fly. We all leave en mass and head south westerly at around 7-8knots. The visibility on the evening was fantastic with id estimate over 40kms of vis. One of the first away was a local rides balloon and I track the Kubicek BB45 as I happen to be inline with the bigger balloon. Listening to him talking on the radio to his crew, I gather there is ample landing spots around the town of Cranbrook and whilst I don't get into the school playing fields that he has picked, soon alternatives come along. The first choice was a field with little or no access so based on Peters advice I fly on. The next possibility is more like it, with baled hay in the field as I home in on my landing spot. As I fly over some copse I actually find a smaller field next to a house and select that one as perfect. Such was the drop off in the winds, behind the tree line I had a stand-up landing. The owner a lovely lady called Eve is the perfect host who sent me photos after the event. Keen to engage Peter with the hopper bug (which he already has), we took the opportunity to give him some ten minutes tether time as the

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evening is perfect for it. So, after we had both had a fix, we returned to Headcorn for a social beer and a quick debrief before I head home. Peter then posted after then flight some footage which is on the Cloudhoppers page at Facebook.

So many thanks to Andy Hawthorn, Bridget, Peter Greaves, wife Kirsty and our youngest crew member Harper for their help in making it such an enjoyable night.

Bedale 2019.

Can't remember how long I've been coming to Bedale, but it remains my favourite event of the year since the formulae is perfect. A nice blend of flying coupled with great sociability means it hits the mark big time. This year though the conditions weren't great for flying and whilst some did I wasn't one of them.

David Head's Hopper Set up

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One who was is David Head who has to be the most prolific hopper pilot I know. In two years with his Cameron O-31 G-CJIX, he has run up a massive 80 hours plus usage. I don't know of anyone who has flown the socks off their hopper in such a way and he is so keen. He flew at least two of the slots and enjoyed the experience tremendously. Note, as you can see from the photograph he is one of a few select people I know who flies with an 80 litre V40 tank.
One slot was towards Catterick on a northerly track and whilst not too much crop had been cut all who flew managed to find decent landing places. The second slot was more easterly with the prevailing winds taking balloons towards RAF Leeming. My reason for not flying was that I was flying the 120 and not the hopper and rain coupled with an in ability to dry it out after the event made me circumspect.

However, don't get the impression I didn't have a good time because nothing could be further from the truth. Great socialising ensued and James McDonald assisted me in becoming electronic on the maps front. This has been a long drawn out affair and my lack of computer skills limited the ability to sort myself out, but at least now the deed is done.

Metz 2019

By the time you read this a large proportion of you will have made the Journey to Metz for the bi annual festival of Mondial du Lorraine. I hope that the weather gods treat you well and that the trend I experienced over the last few years reverses and that you get more flying than I experienced over the last few years.
I have had the pleasure of the festival for the past 10 occasions and seen a lot of changes and for me personally "the formula" hasn't stimulated me enough to want to return on this occasion. Part of my reason is that the French authorities didn't really embrace our attempt to create the world record for the number of hoppers in the air at any one time. So, they mucked us around and could have fulfilled the objective early on in the 10 days when the weather was perfect but chose not to stringing me along with excuses. In the end, we succeeded under duress when their precious line up was more important nullifying the opportunity for a large proportion of hopper pilots to get involved.

Will I return in the future? I really don't know right now my

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inclination suggests not but you never know I might change my mind. For now to all of you who have been, I trust you all had a good time.

My Relationship with Cameron Balloons

As you may remember two years ago this month I entered into a working relationship with Cameron Balloons to cover the record attempt in Lorraine and ongoing with support for both the brand and my newsletter and the website. To support this process, I sold my old balloon set up and embraced the occasion by buying a Millennium Bottom end to go with the Cameron Branded envelope I was given the use of. G-CJWY, has been a very integral part of the deal and over the 24 months I've flown it 20 times for nearly 20 hours of use.

Like all good things, time has run its course and we have reviewed the relationship and so after July Cameron's no longer need me as their brand ambassador. They have agreed that in the last two years we have collectively helped the purchase of an increased number of hopper sales and projected the brand of super light balloons to a new level.

Whilst I am grateful for the opportunity to purchase G-CJWY for myself, after careful consideration I have decided that to own a branded balloon that I have no direct input with the company isn't the way I want to proceed and I also thought that the valuation they put against the envelope doesn't meet my valuation of a 2 -year old balloon with 20 hours on it.

Moving forward, Cameron's say they would like my help with development of the product, they also say they want to still back the website and support the Newsletter. All of this remains to be discussed further and I think I will now have to look into trying to organise another purchase of an envelope for my needs. Clearly going forward, I wouldn't pick something commercially liveried as my choice unless it was seriously discounted in price and should I go down the route of buying new would obviously have my own preferred livery. I'm told there are a number of dealers who want a liveried envelope so I am returning it to Bristol within the next month.

I have no regrets with the last two years joint agreement, I am just surprised that it hasn't been extended, since the proposals that are being talked about are very similar to my existing role.

Going Forward, all I can say is watch this space!

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Northampton Balloon Festival

Let's get this straight. I'm talking about the real Northampton Balloon Festival held on the racecourse not the other one at Billing Aquadrome. I ventured up to the event as part of a day out on my BMW Motorbike. I went specifically to catch up with a Virgin Passenger rides balloon which just happened to be attending the event. However, there was a small amount of hopper activity during the event. The John Hilditch Lindstand Tech Hopper G-CJHV was flown during the event and more significantly Stuart Skinner took to the skies for his first free flight in G-BEUY The Cameron N-31. First ginger steps are always hard to undertake and Stuart wisely decided his first leap into the skies was a short proving flight. This was subsequently followed by a second flight as he took small steps in his knowledge of hopping.

Apart from that I was only there for one slot so can't really comment on the event which seemed okay.

Useful stuff (Essential Extra's 2)

Whilst at the Solo Meet in Great Missenden in May I came across the setup that was being used by Andy Booth for when he goes flying in his hopper. Naturally whilst transitioning to electronic means of navigation I was keen to see what solutions others had and Andy kindly said to me he would photograph his solution and email me a picture for the Newsletter.

Andy Booth's flying solution.

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So, as you can clearly see he runs a Garmin Sat Nav in conjunction with his phone and is running the Android mapping app provided by Tony Jay.

I particularly liked the phone cover because my solution saw me hot spotting my I-pad on my lap from my I-phone and I thought why have two forms of map reading when one will suffice and I go nowhere without my phone. I investigated the software only to discover it isn't for I-phones. No problem as I have Memory Maps on my phone and once the S/a's and the Airspace was applied I was ready to go. The only question was where could I purchase a cover similar to the blue one in Andy's Photograph? The Solution was around the corner from me.

This little baby came in at a meagre £7-00 from my local Decathlon Store .

If this is your preferred way of moving forward with electronic maps on your phone, then perhaps this product will be of interest to you in the future, for me it was a real no brainer, in my humble opinion the best £7 I've spent in years.

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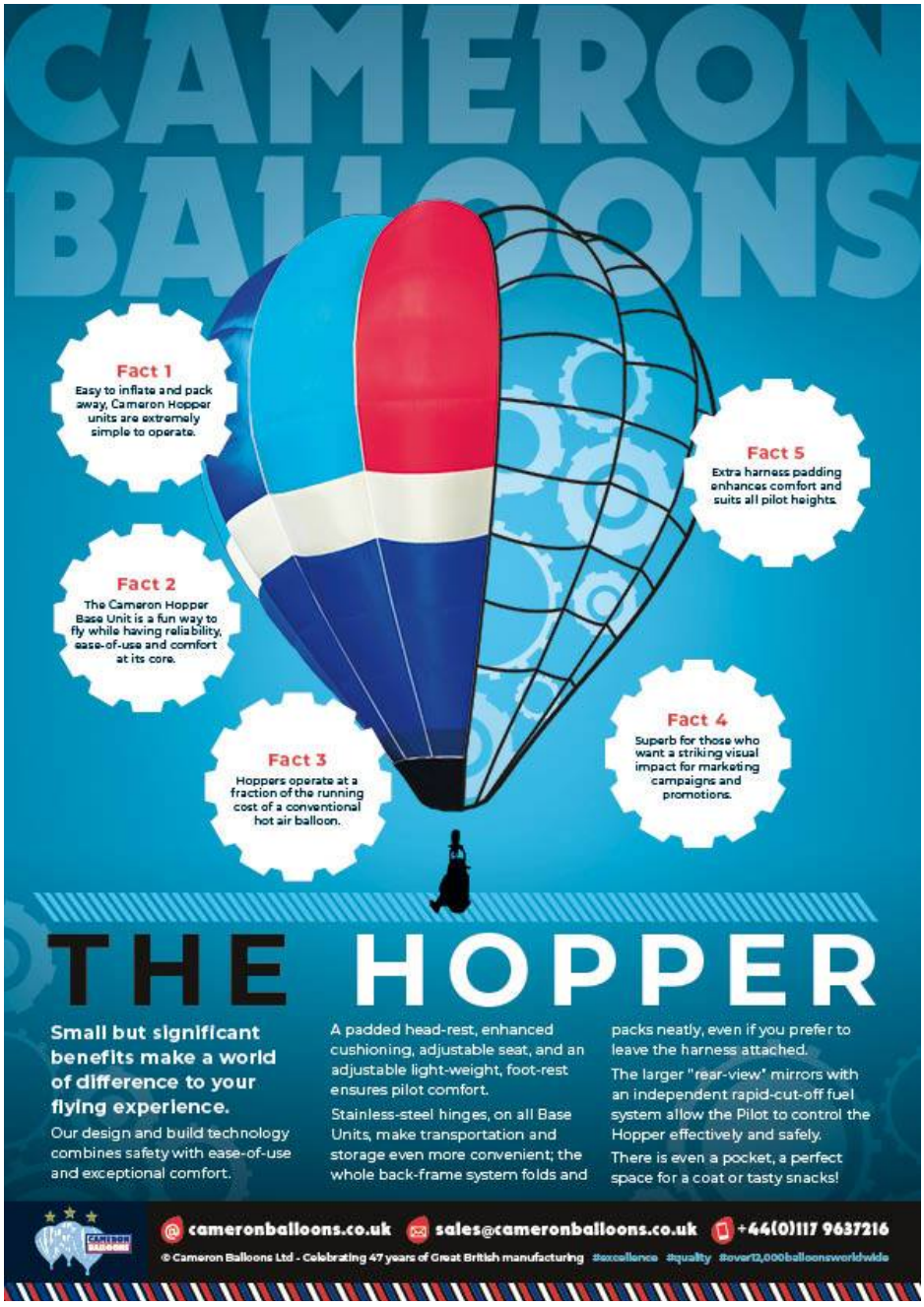
Advertisement



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5 Interesting Photos

PH-HOP Peter Van Harten's Z-31 on its first flight (ex G-CIBX).
Photo by Peter Van Harten.

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6, New Allocations This Month / Changes of Ownership

The only new allocation that I am aware of is a Cameron Z-42 to Per Lesser of Sweden. G-CLFF was registered on the 10th July and once delivered, Per has promised us a picture once the client has seen the balloon at its launch. Hopefully this will be for next month.

7, Second Hand Balloons

No changes known on the second-hand market this month.

8, Manufacturer / Event News/ Industry News

A Small insight into what it takes to run the annual OMM

I'd be the first to admit there are times when as an organiser of an event, somebody constantly bugging you for information on where is it going to be and when must be frustrating. I am unfortunately that person who is constantly asking John Tyrrell and Wendy Rousell for that information so that I can pass it on to you guys. However, what you don't understand is their dedication to putting on the event and the efforts that go behind the scenes in order to pull off a great weekend away. Living where they do, in order to facilitate the event means going away for weekends and sussing out venues for their suitability and also checking out the lie of the land with regard to the facilities we all need when we are there. I know for a fact that this year's event is going to be somewhere in the Monmouthshire / Wye valley area of the country. I also know that as of the end of July, our intrepid hosts have surveyed over six sites so far in their quest to find the perfect location. I just thought on this occasion I would share this information with you all so that you fully appreciate that for them it is more than just the love of hopping.

In advance of the 2019 event, I would publicly like to thank John and Wendy for all their efforts and look forward to releasing the details of this year's event to you all very soon.

Watch this space….

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Advertisement

Cameron "Stock Hoppers" for sale exclusively to Cloudhoppers.org. These two beauties are both available with the regular discount using the code CAM01SJR and come in either 26,000 or 31,000 sizes to suit all. Prices start from £7335 excluding VAT and delivery for the O-26.
To purchase the current offerings please contact Cameron Balloons directly on +44(0)117 9637216, quoting the code "CAM01SJR" and ask to speak to either Craig or Simon about the Cameron O Types that are on the Cloudhoppers page.

Cameron Super Lightweight O types are currently the best-selling lightweight hopper envelopes available and whilst most purchases require three-month lead times minimum, these are a lot easier to purchase and are available immediately by request.

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7. Gallery Pages –

Your Editor's choice of New and unusual balloons.

Stuart Skinner in G-BEUY his 1977 Cameron N-31.
Possibly the oldest active hopper still flying in the UK
Photo by Wendy Rousell.

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Facebook membership continues to rise with the current level of 1325 (correct to the 31st July), 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. Please forward them to 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.**

For all previous newsletters visit www.cloudhoppers.org/newsletters

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