

Issue Number 31

April / May 2009

Dear Readers,

Spring is now here! The first "buds" are appearing of things to come over the coming months. There has been some activity over the last few weeks with some new and rarer older balloons emerging from their winter hibernations.



First inflation of Your editors new Toy- jpeg by les Hancock

Let us now hope that the interest now being expressed by those hinting at activity transforms into appearances. The first gathering of the season will probably be classified as the recent Black Horse May Fiesta (incorporating the Solo Meet), followed in the same month by XLTA 5. With both filling up with entries, It is with great pleasure I can confirm that I will be getting first-hand experience at both and am looking forward with expectation to the variety of equipment that will pass before me in May.

Contents

In this 31st edition I have for your reading the following choice subjects;

- 1, **Ed Speak**- An event at last!
- 2, **Essential Extra's** -It's back with a Dongle!
- 3, **The Features Section**-featuring the following submissions:
 - Hopper Envelope weights - Your editor examines the evidence.
 - Inflation Fan News- One that actually works.
 - My Favourites and Why -second edition by Mel Kirby
4. **Updates for the Newsletter/Website/ Forum talk**
5. **Homebuilt Section** -
 - Ian Chadwick's Homebuilding Quest offers an opportunity for some great tutorial.
6. **Gallery Pages**- Another mixed choice of hoppers selected by your editor.
Another three topical jpegs for your consumption chosen by me.

7, Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

- BBML Inflation day.

8, For Sale /Wanted Section

- G-BSAK Colt 21A Envelope is for sale
- G-BSDV Colt 31A Envelope is up for grabs.
- G-BVRL LBL 21A complete kit for sale

9, Last and not least.

1, Ed Speak by Steve Roake - An event at last!

Whilst , "technically speaking ", this magazine is again late this month, we have finally had a gathering of the hopper clan at The Solo Meet and once again this year I find it as interesting away from the ballooning as I do actually flying. This year the "Regulars"(as I call the Hilditches, Tanners, Dudman, Ward's, Dyers and myselfes of this world) were joined by Richard and Gabi Sargeant, Bruce Ross and Paul Dickenson to name a few. The conversation always revolves around what is happening in our sport? How can things be improved? Inevitably weight of hoppers and how they compare always surfaces. So this month I have done a comparison article from submitted weights from the various owners (many thanks to those who replied), and it makes interesting reading. I am strongly of the belief that as fabrics improve then we should see a gradual dropping of envelope weights and with hoppers typically doing under 10 hours a year each, it is perfectly feasible for owners to go for lightweight material and expect 20 years plus of happy ownership. Naturally the wittering on this subject are only those of your editor and I would love your perceptions of what I say (even if you think it is a load of old tosh!), but in my example when I replaced my 19 year old Colt 31A for my 35 Ultramagic I got lightweight material and a weight saving of some 15kgs on the envelope alone. When

coupled to a diet to reduce my bulk by 10kgs or 10% body weight, a loss of 25kgs represents a serious increase in flying time for no great effort. Without going ballistic, it makes you think about weight in general. As they say, "Food for thought"! It just goes to show, the phrase that ballooning is 85% chat and 15% doing it is about right and once again the sociability of the Solo Meet has again proven successful whether we fly or not.

Steve Roake

2, Essential Extra's- Richard Sargeant Introduces the Dongle!

Just when you thought this section was dead and buried, I was introduced by Richard Sargeant to the "Dongle" at the recent Solo Meet. After talking to Roman Mohr at the OMM last year and seeing his version of a hanging pull cord to assist in keeping the Rip Line both handy and yet clear of the swivelling ring on the seat assembly (and hence tangle free!), Richard introduced me to another version which is as easily available and effective.



Richard uses his Dongle on his new LBL 35A demonstrator Balloon and showed those of us present at the Solo Meet the device and

explained that positioned about 3feet out from the ring it has sufficient weight to make the line fall handily but still not get entwined in the quick links when you rotate during the flight. Richard can get some of these if you fancy one for your set up and he can be contacted at Richard@lindstrand.ch , with an expected price of around 20euros plus postage.

3. The Features Section

Hopper Envelope Weights- an Editor's View

This is probably one of the most contentious subjects discussed when you converse with owners at events such as the One Man Meet. Everyone has an opinion and with the recent words from Mark Shemilt, I tend to agree that the weight of our envelopes have been traditionally heavy and when it came to specifying what I wanted in my new hopper envelope, for me, with a 35K balloon , I wanted to go under 50kgs . With my nineteen year old Colt 31A weighing in at 57kgs and knowing that weight is the enemy for hopper exponents and any saving in the all up total means longer in the air for the same amount of fuel plus the ability to fly in hotter conditions, I had a goal to achieve.

We all have our own favourite suppliers and as Chris Sanger Davis recently said to me in conversation, "they all do a similar job adequately .You can argue the merits of the "aesthetically pleasing shapes, either smooth or relatively Bulbous, but, for your money any of the current crop will do a job for years easily".

When you get down to the "results" of how comparisons on delivered weights stack up, I found some interesting statistics that influenced my decision. Naturally, the size of your desired envelope influences your choices, for example Ultramagic don't make anything below a 31,000 (perhaps an area they should address), so if you weigh under 75kgs potentially you would

choose a Cameron Z-25 or a Lindstrand 25A if buying new or feasibly with a few low houred second hand 21's available your choices are catered for. When you ask for a 31K envelope in standard fabric, all three have wares that should suffice. Going up to a 35k envelope you are more compromised. Lindstrand have a dedicated 35A option which is fine if slightly heavy, Cameron have their venerable H-34 as the closest fix but haven't delivered one of these in years and Ultramagic get close with a 31Big which utilises the ruling that you can produce an envelope up to 10% bigger than a listed item i.e. a 31K with 10% equals 34.1K as delivered to myself. Coupled to this you can get lightweight fabric as an option which keeps the weight down to the bare bones. Then finally all three deliver 42 sized envelopes for the bigger boned pilots.

My focus on weight was heightened following a conversation with Steve Burden at the 2008 OMM where he expressed disappointment at the overall weight of his LBL 35A which he stated gave little advantage over the 31A of his friend Steve Lacey. Up till this point I was preferring the Lindstrand product which when you look closer is clearly a scaled down bigger envelope with still the same sized load tapes and coming in above the desired 50kg limit I had imposed. Chris Sanger Davis has tried to get the design updated to be more efficient on fabric and weight but to no avail. On consultation with Simon Forze, he felt under 50kgs was possible but the lightest they had produced was 52kgs up till that point. If no discernable advantage was present then there was no point for me buying a bigger envelope. The other thing to consider when ordering your envelope is the improvement in fabrics over the years and how long the fabrics now are expected to last even in lightweight guise. Tim Revell (Ultramagic UK) suggested to me that a lighter weighted design could suffice for me and with hoppers tending to do no more than

10hours a year typically, any typical buy should do many years of service which should exceed 300 hours with good care.

Cost is also an influence, but not the ultimate consideration. Neil Roberts had also told me that his Cameron Z-31 was heavier than he would have thought so I set about collating a table of delivered weights by which to make a measured decision. Whilst there is no reason why the information isn't actively discussed, should you be in the market for a new envelope, perhaps the following weights against specific balloons may help you decide what to choose, and I thought, "blow me let's discuss it further". Most manufacturers suggested that an 8-10% saving can be had by using Lightweight materials, and using less long life materials in the top here are the results.

(as a comparison) Colt Balloons

Colt21A (G-BOLP) 32Kgs

Colt31A (G-BSDV) 57kgs

Colt42A (G-SEAT) 66kgs with Artwork.

Ultramagic Balloons

Standard H-31 usually 53kgs

Lightweight H-31"Big" (G-UHOP 42kgs).

Standard H-42 usually 58kgs lightweight* (predicted under 55kgs).

Sky Balloons.

Sky 31-16 (G-BXVP) 57kgs

Lindstrand Balloons

LBL 21A (G-BVRL) 34kgs

LBL 25A (G-HOPR) 47kgs.

LBL 31A (G-LELE) 46kgs (no hyperlast)

LBL 31A Lightweight (EI-DJZ) 36kgs

LBL 35A (G-HOPA) 65kgs

LBL 35A (G-GABI) 59kgs lightweight material with Artwork

Cameron Balloons

Cam H-34 (G-IAMP) 53kgs.

Cameron Z-31 (G-IHOP) 57kgs

Cameron V-42 (G-BWEE) Lightweight material 42kgs.

Whilst this isn't a great survey in terms of the numbers of balloons listed, as a typical census of types and sizes it indicates further knowledge for anyone who may be looking to purchase new and shows the progress made in comparison with older designs.

Inflation Fan News- by Steve Roake

Let's start with a fact. Inflation fans are too blooming expensive. Coupled to this, some (due to naff fan blades) struggle to do the job they are designed for. There is no substitute for grunt, and if you miraculously have a narrow framed colt 5hp fan, my advice is treat it like "Gold Dust", hang on to it and look after it because there will always be a market for this type of inflation fan. As any of you long suffering readers will have known by now, I had a bad relationship with my Lindstrand /Cameron hopper fan particularly as list price was over £1000 and I felt that it never achieved my desired goals of pressurizing the envelope prior to full inflation. Colin Wolstenholme has tried to perfect a new

prop(over the last 2 years), for them that is more efficient than the old multi bladed egg whisk that was on mine, but Tim Dudman (who has a prototype), suggested to me at the Solo Meet a maximum increase of efficiency of about 3%. Not great! So what may you ask is the problem? To me, an enthusiastic observer, it just isn't a big enough diameter and so doesn't get the volume of air past the blade to be efficient. My Ultramagic 3hp fan (£800 List), has been a revelation by comparison. Same Honda GX100 engine but with a fan guard diameter of 55cms and an effective 3 blade diameter of 50cms, it means that the volume of air is up against the Cam / LBL design.



The New Um 3hp Hopper fan -actually works! Jpeg Steve Roake

Even with the old Colt 31A envelope, inflation can be achieved without sending it off at full bore. At the Solo Meet I blew up G-DICK, Richard Sergeant's Colt 56 with relative ease, so no more struggling for me. I predict that Tim Revel will get quite a few more enquiries for this fan in future months as it is both capable and higher mounted from the ground (thus not suffering in longer grass). Although not trying to be biased (as I have one), I believe the increased bulk of the Um fan outweighs the diminutive stature of the Klein and for roughly the same amount of money you have a product that will deliver every time you go to use it. We all understand that this type of product is at best a niche market, but for your hard earned pennies you want to know that the thing is a "Cuprinol" (English advert for fence varnish), it does exactly what it says it will do on the Tin!

My Favourite Jpegs and why-by Mel Kirby.

In this second round of my favourite jpegs and why, your editor has "dumped" upon Mel Kirby to come up with his three favourite jpegs of hoppers or duo chariots and why. In His own words Mel describes his choices and how he came to his decisions.



G-BKIX (Cameron V-30 Air Chair from 1982). I choose this as it was the first balloon I bought, I have only seen it twice since I sold it, but it brings back a lot of memories when I see it. (Ed- I believe that Peter Gooch looks after her these days as one of his ballooning stable).



*Mel Kirby's second selection is Western O-31 G-AZPX from 1972
jpeg by Mel Kirby.*

G-AZPX (Western O-31 from 1972). I didn't choose this because I bought it, just because it had never been seen in the UK by any enthusiasts. It was owned by a very wealthy landowner in Scotland, and all he had ever done was tether it to around a height of 200ft to photograph his formal gardens at one of his properties. I went up there on the pretext of buying it. In reality I just wanted to see it and photograph it. When we got it out it was in fantastic shape and I ended up buying it and somehow getting it in the back of the Fiat Tippo that I owned at the time. I know we haven't had it out of the bag for a couple of years, but it still looks fantastic, not bad to say it was 37 years old this March.



Mel's third selection is the rare G-BUDY Colt 17A.

G-BUDY (Colt 17A from 1982) I chose this again as it doesn't ever fly at any meets. Buddy Bombard was given this as a present from T&C and didn't do anything with it as he was always flying his passenger rides balloons. I went over to Chateau D'Oex for the first time in 1993 and one of Buddy's pilots was at the event. I had a beer with him at lunch time and asked if the hopper had been out of its bag ever. He informed me that he had the hopper with him, so after a bit of arm twisting he tethered it in the afternoon. Fourteen years on and I haven't seen it since. (Ed- This seems to only nightglow at Chateau D'oex these days).

With thanks to Mel for his fine selections, now you can see this is exactly what this section is about .History and moments of special interest that may just remind folks of great times gone by .So now who else would like to make their unique choices of hopper or duo chariot favourites? Selections to me as ever please, care of steve.roake@ntlworld.com.

Next Month I am hoping to have harassed a poor individual from the XLTA meet to come up with their three favourite shots with an explanation of why they like them.

3, Updates to the website / Newsletter/ Forum Topics

Forum changes

Having recently conversed with my fellow moderator David Barker, we would like you to embrace a small but useful change to the way you sign off your e-mails please. From now onwards please sign your full name at the end of any correspondence but also please PUT YOUR LOCATION. So in my case for example, it will be now Steve Roake Frimley Surrey.

Thanks for your help with this!

No recent activity to speak about concerning the website, construction continues but at a slow pace and whilst progress is

coming, I cannot tell you when it will be finished as I am in the hands of others who are helping.

The forum has seen some recent activity to do with homebuilding and specifically trying to help Ian Chadwick with a centring problem of the parachute with G-CEWF his Jacobs 35A. Good advice continues to flow across the internet and I believe the advice given has helped Ian understand both more on the nature of his problem, and more importantly some ways to deal with it. However, the most important news is listed below with an opportunity for UK based tuition.

4, Homebuilt section

A chance for some new Tuition classes (UK only).

Over a protracted period of time, Ian Chadwick has had a dream of building his own home build 42A hopper envelope. Like many UK based pilots he has harboured the idea of manufacturing the future requirement for his hopping but as the man at the CAA , Ian has been handily placed to check up on what is possible under Annex 2 rulings and the new EASA control of our sport. Now I know ,(having spoken to him at length on the subject),that what Ian requires is some tuition to get him going and help establish a UK platform by which we collectively can nurture a home building fraternity. Other people who seem interested in Home design and manufacture (also of 42's coincidentally), are Dave Such and Jonathan Dyer. The problem occurs in where do you go for help and the knowledge?

Ian , (not being one to be put off) has engaged in some months of correspondence with the leading home builder and Guru of this subject Arnaud Deramecourt from France who singlehandedly seems to run the home building side of life in that country giving protégées tuition and nurturing the build

processes. The short version of the encouragement Arnaud has transferred to Ian via his e-mails has convinced Ian that it might be possible to conduct direct tuition in the UK for budding home builders by getting Arnaud to conduct a course in Britain in English for a group of like-minded enthusiasts who want to learn how to build their own craft.

In order for this to happen, there has to be a minimum number of people willing to undertake the course. Arnaud has indicated that six is a very good number and whilst costs have yet to be established, Ian wants to know how many of you would like to join him in this opportunity. I myself support the idea of Home building a suitable craft in the future but having just purchased a new hopper envelope cannot commit currently but am willing to use the newsletter as a place for progress reporting and pushing this great idea to those who may express the desires to have a go in the future.



An example of a recent Arnaud Deramecourt led project is this French homebuilt 900cu metre hopper. 31-MW was recently finished and belongs to Michel Lafourcade. It will be at Metz!

You can see by the quality of the above jpeg the level of design and execution achieved using Arnauds' expertise and I would encourage anyone with an interest to send Ian an email to get involved at aerovision.balloons@virgin.net This seems the chance we all have to get the impetus going and it seems that legally the French have shown EASA how to do it and we can copy from their lead.

Steve Roake

5, Gallery Pages.

This section is the Editor's choice of new jpegs, visuals and older balloons of interest or alterations.



Seen recently over Sussex, this Homebuilt Jacobs V35 G-CEWF is now with Ian Chadwick and has recently flown several flights. -jpeg by Ian Chadwick.

The second balloon this month dates from 1988. G-BOLP a Colt 17A has changed hands recently. John Rose used to own the 28houred craft but recently sold it to new owner Martin Axtell who inflated her (see below) at the recent Solo Meet.



G-BOLP Colt 17A at the Solo Meet jpeg by Paul Coman

"Lima Papa" was one of three Pepsi branded Colt 17A's made (G-BOLN / P and R), leading me to try to bring all three together at

this year's OMM for a unique photo opportunity. Glen Everett who has "Lima November" has indicated willingness to attend subject to availability; Martin is keen, leaving "no pressure" on Chris Sanger- Davis who has "Lima Romeo" to make up the trio. Watch this space for updates on whether or not it will happen.



G-GABI LBL 35A at Cuddington on May 2nd .Great shot of her in the early sunlight by Sandy Mitchell.

The third balloon this month is brand new for Gabriela Sargeant and her husband Richard, who are the Swiss Dealers for Lindstrand Hot Air Balloons Ltd. The colours obviously reflect that this is a marketing tool for them, but rest assured they are both Passionate Hopper exponents first and foremost. However to the purist, their balloon differs from stock Lindstrands in having Swiss sourced Fabric which Richard prefers.

Richard told me that given a hopper demonstrator to utilise, he has always felt he could sell it such is the interest even though Switzerland has a tenth of the UK population and therefore smaller potential for balloon sales.

6, Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

Prior to the Solo meet I contacted all three manufacturers to see what news is forthcoming about recent purchases or updates to their product ranges. All three are subject to the recent credit crunch and therefore activity in our sector of the marketplace is naturally weaker than normal. I was hoping to bring you updated news of the next generation of Cameron Hopper with its' gimballed bottom end but when asked Colin Wolstenholme couldn't supply details of when it will be revealed to the public.

Lindstrand Hot Air Balloons Ltd also said without Nigel Bourke's ex Swiss hopper going through the factory, there was no current news.

BBML Inflation day West Wood way House (Newbury) Berkshire

Few details available for this event except for the confirmation of the dates, 20th-21st June are now set. Optimistic organisers speak of 100 balloons with hoppers playing their part. For more details see the following link

<http://www.westwoodhaygardenshow.co.uk/Balloons.htm>

Inflation days are generally well attended events.

7, For Sale /Wanted section

Further proof of the power of this section (as if it were needed); on the sales front with news this month of the sale of HB-QIT the LBL35A to Nigel Bourke from Middlesbrough. Nigel is a very happy new owner, securing the purchase of the low- houred machine for under 5000 Euro's. When such craft become available, it is great to see a new crop of hopper exponents coming on to the scene. The Balloon is now in the UK awaiting its national registration and EASA documented certification and C of A. Nigel came down to the Solo Meet and seems keen to get started, we wish him fun times ahead and look forward to him joining us at future events including the OMM.

G-BVRL LBL 21A is for sale

Martin Axtell offers for sale his LBL 21A G-BVRL which is in Lindstrand Demo Colours with only 28hours total time. The balloon kit comes with a practically new T& C mark 2 bottom end in fantastic condition with electronic pilot light and cow burner. It features a swing seat and comes with an EASA C of A.

Martin can be reached on 07742-666554 or at mjaballooning@hotmail.com .Price is £3200 ono.

Reason for sale is the purchase of G-BOLP so no need for two!

G-BSDV Colt 31A for Sale (Price reduced)!

Your editor is selling his Colt 31A Envelope, registered on 19thApril 1990, she has done 76hours 15mins (last flown 21st

march 09) and cold inflated at the solo meet. EASA C of A until August 09, she is now surplus to requirements with the new purchase. Turning vents are currently disconnected but lines will be supplied and can be reused. In the current climate, a price reduction to £1850 seems fair from the original £2000 previously quoted. The price includes the original Colt bag and stylish Lindstrand 31A replacement bag. Great entry to Hopping Balloon with loads of life left in her, she needs new Loving owner! Contact Steve Roake on 07721-358758 or 01276-516125 after 7pm weekdays or Email steve.roake@ntlworld.com

And Finally

Nigel Bourke visited the Solo Meet to exchange views with other hopper flyers. Whilst present he took some footage which you can see using the link below. More on the event next month but to wet your appetites enjoy this.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XA0HMY-c6vA>

Membership is currently a healthy 378 members and still rising. We are getting closer to the magic 400 mark. 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 flying Steve Roake.