



Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 87

July 2016

Welcome Again readers.

Another month of interesting hopper activity, not necessarily all in the air. I personally enjoyed last months Newsletter more than most as I felt it had a balanced perspective on the world of hoppers as we currently see things.

For you this month we have a review of the May Brian Bolland Experimental Balloon and Airship meeting with thanks to David Tanzer. More Photos of New and used balloons and an interesting conversation with inspector Dave Such on the condition of hoppers with approaching 100 hour's life on them and how not to be put off by higher wear rates.

1, Ed-Speak – Conversations with an Inspector (Dave Such).

Sometimes when you have a phone conversation with someone that follows up from a theme, it helps to build a sentiment that becomes apparent that you never realised was the case. This is exactly what happened to me recently when chatting to Inspector Dave Such. The conversation started at the annual Little and Large Meet where Dave was inspecting John Tyrrell's 100 hour Lindstrand hopper G-FFFT. David pointed out the exceptional condition and the quality of the build and we got into a discussion about higher houred hoppers. Dave naturally picks up on the little things and has an appreciation of the Lindstrand hopper that ultimately persuaded him to buy LBL 42A G-CBLO.

I pointed out to him that his comment didn't surprise me as I know of two other Lindstrand Hoppers that have big hours (Steve Burdens G-HOPA and G-CDAD which is owned by Gary Madelin /Jeff Lawton).

Dave's concerns centred around the possibility of failings in higher lifed hoppers, but as I pointed out to him, Inspectors ultimately condemn balloons not fit to fly and quality always shines out.

Most Manufacturers now give 250 hours guarantees against their products and in my view, if you get to those sort of

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hours in a hopper – you've had your moneys worth twice over.

The number of people who will be seriously affected by this seems to be very few. I am also sure that the loadings placed on hoppers have diminished as supply becomes more plentiful and there are less cases of people out there flying envelopes that are undersized for them.

The other thing with the older kit is that in general it isn't lightweight fabric and whilst they may be heavier in comparison to the new super light weight breed, they last pretty well with so many good examples out there. You have to also remember that in the Lindstrand examples, they never had full length load tapes, making their staying power even more impressive.

2, Essential Extras – The Icom A6 Transceiver

Your radio is an essential piece of kit and a valuable tool in a balloonist's locker. The preferred option by most is the venerable Icom A3 which has a great following, however as the radio waves get cluttered the authorities have changed the parameters and new frequency ranges outside of the A3's capabilities loom. Let's make this clear, there is no knee jerk reaction required immediately, but in the fullness of time, there will be a need to upgrade as some of the new frequencies being used will be in the 8.33 MHz range. Initially you would need to replace the item in the basket but remember the base station would also need the new spacings.



The Icom A6E Transceiver



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Naturally ever keen to do us all a favour I contacted our resident Icom Dealer Glenn Everett to see if there was scope to do a Cloudhoppers special rate price on this essential extra. Glenn was gracious enough to agree and I think you'll agree that the prices listed below are very competitive compared to online choices.

Sport Pack will cost £245-00, whilst the Pro/ Pilot pack is £360-00.

Glenn will include for free Postage and Packaging so long as you don't expect next day delivery.

For further please contact him at glen@flyingadverts.co.uk

He also does Hand made Long range aerals and recommends the use of a hand mike not just for hoppers but for regular balloons as well.

The UK CAA has just recently given this product its approval and this is why we think it is an essential extra.

3, The Features Section

David Tanzer reports on The Annual EBAA Meet in Post Mills Vermont

Quite simply, there is no place else like Post Mills, Vermont. It is one of the most beautiful places I know, and, each May, I look forward to the annual Experimental Balloon and Airship (EBAA) Meet graciously hosted by Brian Boland and his partner, Tina.

The Post Mills Airport, home of Boland Balloon since 1989, is quintessentially Vermont. Post Mills is a bucolic small town complete with the requisite white, steepled church. The airport has two manicured grass runways and is also home to the Post Mills Soaring Club. Brian has constructed some very unique structures there, the most prominent of which is the "Balloon Museum," containing all manner of balloons, airships, antique cars, dental chairs, vacuum cleaners, crutches, and, of course, the obligatory Space Shuttle Tire.

The airport is quite likely the only aerodrome equipped with a runway-side grand piano, because, of course, the folks that



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land there might have the need to play something after exiting their airplane, glider or balloon.



May is always particularly beautiful in Vermont, which has now been my home for almost twenty years. Spring finally arrives after a long winter, and that is always a particularly sweet experience. We don't see leaves here until the second or third week of May, and the trees are verdant during the weekend of the EBAA Meet each year, coloured with that special shade of green that only brand new leaves are allowed to have.

What makes this meet special is that it is limited to experimental balloons and airships. Experimental aeronauts come from far and wide to participate, and one always gets to see unique creations, many of which were conceived by Brian



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himself. One of the most notable is Brian's airship, aptly named "A Fish Called Wanda." "Wanda" is an airship that looks like a fish, and Brian spends a good part of the weekend motoring about the airport in her. Morning winds at Post Mills are often very light, and this was certainly the case on Saturday morning of this year's meet.



Many of us literally hovered over the airport for more than an hour that morning, and Brian flew circles around us for most of that time. It's one of those experiences that seems like a dream. My very own Magical Mystery Tour. With bright green hills all around you, incredibly beautiful grass runways below you, a small cemetery to the northwest, stunning Lake Fairlee to the east, and the neatest experimental balloons pasted in the sky all around you; the view and experience is incomparable.

All you can do is hang in the sky and smile.

I'm fortunate to live only about an hour and a half north of Post Mills, and I drove down on Friday afternoon and met my good friend and fellow hopper pilot, Jim O'Brien, from



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Connecticut. I found Jim in the Museum that afternoon, giving Santo Galatioto a tour. Santo, who is a Designated Examiner and also from Connecticut, was making his first visit to Post Mills with his new experimental envelope flown over a Boland-style basket. Santo had the typical facial expression of someone seeing the Museum for the first time, it's a unique look that is a mixture of wonder and perplexity. I've seen this look many times—sometimes I bring people to Post Mills just so I can experience it, and it always makes me smile.

Jim and I got settled in the nearby hotel, grabbed a bite to eat at Baker's General Store, and then returned to the field for the afternoon flight. It was a gorgeous afternoon—virtually still on the surface, with very light north-westerly winds aloft. The area surrounding the airport is fairly wooded, so most of the nearly 50 balloons flying elected to climb up and fly over the ridge into the Connecticut River Valley. I landed on a dairy farm in the small town of East Thetford, right along the western bank of the river. Many balloons crossed the river into New Hampshire and landed on farms there. As I was descending toward my landing, I spied my friend, Noah Forden, flying low over the river in his homebuilt hopper. Noah is particularly unique in that he not only designed and built his hopper, but he also constructed the Van's RV-7A airplane that he uses to transport his small balloon. Both of his aircraft are beautifully constructed.

There is a lot to do in and around Post Mills between flights, but one of my favourite things is just to spend time touring around. Even though Vermont has been my home for almost two decades, I still enjoy exploring it, and on Saturday I convinced Jim, Santo, and Santo's student, Fabio, to take a drive to nearby Strafford, Vermont to find the Strafford Farms Organic Dairy. My wife and I enjoy Strafford Farms' milk, which still comes in glass bottles. And the dairy makes the best ice cream anywhere, which is how I convinced my friends to go on a drive over hill and dale with me. Alas, nothing was actually sold at the dairy, but we sure enjoyed the sightseeing! Of course we still had to fulfil our need for ice cream, so we headed for the "Whippi Dip" in Fairlee, Vermont, where you must be very careful. If you order a large ice cream cone there, you could hurt your back when they hand it to you.

After a great lunch and desert, I headed back to the hotel for the all-important afternoon nap prior to the evening flight.



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As it turned out, the wind didn't settle out until late on Saturday afternoon, so a bunch of us decided to remain on the field to tether our balloons. While I stood on the field chatting with another pilot, two student balloon pilots spent an hour tethering my hopper. Hopefully they'll show up in Post Mills with an experimental balloon of their own next year!

As forecasted, Sunday morning dawned drizzling and damp, but a little rain never stops Brian! He launched off in one of his larger balloons, while his summer intern, Jordan Long, flew off in another of Brian's many creations with his dad, long time balloon pilot, Darrel Long. They slowly departed to the east and, after quite some time, Jordan managed to find just the right wind and made a return flight to the field. I'm sure that Darrel was proud of his son's excellent pilotage.

One shouldn't ever leave Post Mills without having breakfast at the Fairlee Diner, so that's where Jim, Santo, Fabio, and I headed before reluctantly heading home after yet another wonderful Post Mills weekend!

David Tanzer

4, Homebuilding – Chris Sanger Davis gets stuck in.

Having had the idea to build something for himself for a long time, Chris Sanger Davis is hard at it with the build program of his Annex 2 31K envelope. Luckily for Chris, he recognises the wealth of experience he has on his doorstep in Oswestry with current seamstresses and previously employed ladies who live locally to call on when he faces problems. Being a person who is a bit of a perfectionist, Chris is his own worst enemy being highly critical of his own efforts.

One recent minor setback was whilst sewing the parachute, Chris realised he had sewn a panel in back to front, but after some unstitching he completed the task. Next up Chris moves on to the first gore. Hopefully more progress reports soon from Chris.



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Nice looking Parachute in 3 colours – photo credit Chris Sanger Davis.

I just wish we could get this Annex 2 category approved for Foreign usage without a load of fuss because I'm sure we would see a lot of extra activity in this segment of our market if it were- Ed.



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5, Interesting Photos.



G-XAIM Ultramagic H-31 belongs to Glenn Everett .
Believed used only once for the client it is probably the rarist of UK
hoppers, vying with G-CGFO for that accolade.....unless you
know differently . Now there's a challenge!



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6. New Allocations This Month / Changes of Ownership

Newly registered this month is

G-CJHV Lindstrand Tech Series 1-31 c/n 007.

This is believed to be a second prototype utilising ideas and improved upon from the first prototype N516LT which was made for them by LBL USA in May 2016.

7. Gallery Pages –

Your editor's choice of new and interesting hoppers and duo's active in the world of ballooning.



Many Thanks to David Head for the photo – 1st inflation of his Newbury based New Cameron O-31 G-CJIX taken in July



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8, Manufacturer / Event News

Mid July I had a Grand Idea – by Steve Roake

During July my mind turned to the bi Annual festival Lorraine Mondial Air Balloons (better known as Metz). The authorities there, love setting Guinness World Records and something that has been on my Mind for a while now is why isn't there an official Clodhopper World record for the number of hoppers in the air at any one time? Unofficially I know that the record is 29 from an Annual One Man Meet event held at Ilam in Derbyshire in 2003. So I contacted Philippe Buron Pilatre and asked if we could organise one for 2017. Following on from this, I put out a request to see the level of interest in attending an organised event on Facebook and within 48 hours had expressions of attendance from over 20 pilots with Interest in attending coming from as far as Australia and the USA. I am very hopeful that the LMAB authorities will say yes, and have prepared detailed plans for the event. I hope to have some updated news very shortly on this and expect this to be a once in a lifetime opportunity to showcase the world our fantastic craft, with www.cloudhoppers.org in the midst of everything , completing all the administration involved with the attempt. **More when I know it....**

And Finally

Facebook membership continues to rise with the current level of 857. I never know if any of you read this little segment but it has been a goal for a long time of mine to get past the 1000 mark. Surely between us we can find another 143 people who would benefit from membership of our unique "club". Please help me achieve the goal.

Steve Roake

All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your editor. Please forward them to steve.roake33@gmail.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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