Welcome To Cloudhopper News.

Finally after months of nothing, I actually got to fly this month! Nothing as exciting as a cloudbhopper but flying is flying and thanks to Mark Stelling I found myself over the Yorkshire dales in his fine balloon getting recency. Two early morning flights in two consecutive days reminded me just how much fun morning flying really is. Next step will be to blow the dust off the hopper. August is an amazing month; suddenly the world woke up again and following the Olympics activity with hopping resumed as you will see making your editor happy again.

Ed-Speak – Olympics / Farnborough Airshow

"Atlas Control" might not mean anything to pilots away from the London area, but if you live anywhere close to an Olympic venue then as a pilot you probably couldn’t wait until August 16th when this evil thing disappeared. I’m not saying that it wasn’t possible to fly in R112 as the area was known but more people than not had chosen to avoid the process of trying to fly in Olympic aerospace. This great big swath of airspace was restricted for the Olympics from London southerly to the coast and from Southend west to around the Abingdon area. One month in the year when the weather had actually been reasonable and added to the Farnborough Airshow restrictions, no wonder so little flying had taken place in my neck of the woods. Drastic action saw me venture as far as Yorkshire for some aviation activity and thank goodness it happened, because things have been bleak.

This has also coincided with harvesting the crops (at last) and so now the amount of available landing sites has increased with some now identified with hay bales indicating availability. Let’s now hope we get plenty of more opportunities to use these available landing spots soon. Steve Roake
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

Some many months ago, I wrote about a remarkable Duo Chariot that is owned by Tim Orchard. My version didn’t do the story justice, and then I discovered the man who created this remarkable contraption had written his own story. So Chris Dunkley, in your own words describe the process.

Concorde Flies again-well part of it ! by Chris Dunkley

Tim Orchard is a balloonist. He also holds the record for the fastest ever crossing of the Atlantic by commercial airliner (like with passengers sipping champagne on board and all that Henley-type stuff yah). He, along with Captain Leslie Scott and Senior Engineering Officer Rick Eades, managed to get their Concorde, G-BOAD, from New York to London in the amazing time of 2 hours, 52 minutes and 59 seconds. This record will probably never be broken. Quite an achievement.

“Here come and have a look at this”, said Tim one dismal day a few years ago. I was ushered into a quiet hangar at Wycombe Airpark where these days Tim reigns supreme. Under a blanket at the back was a pair of Concorde seats. He looked at me and me at him (not to be confused with a popular Kinks number) and we both smiled one of those long all-knowing well understood silent beamers.

Simple request really. Could they fly again? Blimey all my dreams came true at once. I’m like the vast majority in that, forgetting I could never afford it, have never flown on Concorde. I have quite a few very powerful memories of Concorde but probably the best was with youngest Alice on Uffington Hill standing on the eye of that wonderful horse. We sort of heard it first, a distinctive quietly powerful deep rumble. We both knew what it was without seeing it. As we looked up the clouds parted for a moment
or two and there she was, dashing across the blue gaps in amongst the white and grey stratus, a glistening arrow heading for America. Never before were Pete Brown’s Piblockto’s words so poignant, ‘The smoky trails where skymen ride their slashing silver swords’. In a moment she was gone, vanishing back into her own realm and becoming a distant thundering roar mopping up the miles as it headed for Devon and Cornwall and the Atlantic beyond. I think we were all proud of Concorde, and those that had the greatest privilege of all and actually flew her. Young and old (and those in the middle) all recognized Concorde. Farmer friends of hours in Devon set their watches by the sonic boom as it shot out over the Atlantic. It was simply fantastic, a thing of beauty and grace.

I’m OK now, the emotions calmed. These seats had so much history in them. Who had sat in them? Where they from BOAD? Tim couldn’t possibly say but he did have a release note for them. They were deemed fit for service. Tim also had a Lindstrand 77 with a turning vent (just the one Mrs Slocombe) so it looked like a plan may be unfolding.

His idea was to make a duo-chariot out of them: A simple thing with a double burner that he could fly under his balloon. Now this is all very well but two things popped up almost instantly in my mind. It was so high profile it would have to be legal and it would have to look the part and do Concorde proud. Very gently, like some sort of priceless antique purchased from Bonhams, the seats were loaded onto the pickup and taken back to base. Little did we know then that it would be a few years before the dream became reality, not through the time taken to create the airchair but the time it was going to take to get the paperwork into place.

Starting from scratch it was decided to go for a proper Duochair with a good duration, after all we had a ’77 to put above it so a good fuel load would be no problem. The seats and frame would be left unaltered if at all possible. We settled for two 60 litre cylinders and a Lindstrand double burner, not quite the four Rolls Royce Olympus engines of the original but pretty pokey nonetheless. To keep costs down (which like the original project were bound to overrun) we opted to keep the burner and its frame standard so at least we wouldn’t need a dedicated burner.
Since moving into the new workshop we had a pile of electrical conduit leftover so that became the material for the mock-up. If we built a pattern Tim knew a certified (not mad) welder that could replicate it. As it turned out the welder was none other than Paul Sawney who soon became a kindred spirit and good friend as he loved pre ‘65 trials bikes and anything pushbike. Our sort of chap. I spent a few days thinking out how it would be and then galvanized, like the conduit, into action spent a weekend building the mock up using an old plumbers’ pipebender and mig welder so as to cut down a bit on the fumes. This was going to be a work of art rather than a mere Duochair. I wanted it to look and feel Concorde. Difficult in conduit but achievable I felt.

The framework followed sixties Formula One space frame technology, very sixties. It was made up of four main hoops all interlocking and crossing each other and braced. Curves were paramount to absorb a rear facing landing. It had to be light and yet look supremely confident and safe and it had to be created around the seats rather than a frame to plonk the seats into. As the hoops and bracing came together it just started looking right. By the time the seats had been fitted and the tanks and burner put in place we had
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one powerful solid looking machine. It was looking like it meant business. One afternoon, a week or so later, I sat in the left hand seat of the finished mockup and it did feel good. Living art. It was a while since I’d done anything “arty-farty” so it had been a pleasure. Tricky thing balancing practicality, functionality and art. With the finer details worked out we decided to go for the real thing. The trusty pickup was duly loaded and off we set for Booker. Tim was kept in the dark about quite what had been created. Paul stroked his beard and wandered around the art form. “Any drawings?” he asked. Stupid question on reflection. “No but can you copy it?” A moment more of head and beard scratching. “Yes but it’ll cost”. We looked at each other again and started laughing. This was going to be good. We decided it best not to tell Tim about the ‘cost’ bit just yet!!!!

When you weld tubular frameworks it is very time consuming. Angles are not easy and if butted tubes are going to have any strength then they have to be shaped and chamfered just right. You can’t just gob up gaps with weld in these circumstances. This was not a simple job as it had so many angles and bits of bracing. We discussed losing a few but decided it just wouldn’t look right although it definitely wouldn’t compromise strength! A
month later and Paul called to say it was all but finished and ready to be fully welded. It was sat next to the mock-up in the middle of the hangar floor. It was just perfect, a true replica, and it looked really neat. The following week it was finished having been turned and turned again to weld up all the tricky angles. By God it was strong but better still, having been made from thin-walled aviation grade tube, it was incredibly light. This was going to be stonking.

Over the next few weeks we test rigged it, stole Barry the Aviation's (he owns a Mitchell bomber) lorry and Hiab and test lifted it. Cables were ordered from Lindstands and drawings made, often the best way to design anything. The loadings all came well within limits and the frame got powder coated in BOAC blue and a folding footrest was added. We told Tim it was Orange! He didn’t seem very amused.
At last it was finished, Barry rummaged around his yard and came up with a couple of nearly new five point harnesses and we figured out an easy way to make the blast valves easier to operate using turned aluminum leg extensions off the mother-in-laws old persons’ chair.

Meanwhile Lindstrands good bloke Simon Forse set about trying to get the Concorde seat approved. Days turned to months, months to a year and we were going nowhere. Finally over a pint or four we decided it best to test fly the creation. We were getting fed up with having to keep it under wraps in the back of the workshop. It wanted to fly. A chosen few, including my dad whose brother was a senior captain in BOAC and my dog (Ferrit in those days) had got to sit in it. Flight was so tantalizingly close it just had to be done.

We needed a balloon with turning vents. We had one but it was a bit large being a 105. Never mind. Midweek on a
probably tad too windy an evening we went to a hidden location and on a southerly (a direction where no one lives) accidentally launched into a fine sky. Accompanying balloonists were sworn to secrecy. I took our Pete who had just checked out. He had the rotation vent lines I had the red line.

May have been the other way round! We passed low over bemused farmers busy baling and cars that pulled up to see what all the laughter was about. It was good. Not good but seriously grin-beaming loud-laughter good. It was nicely quick. The 105 was barely inflated with such a light load so the turning vents took a while to do anything. We treated them as dump valves and sweeping low across the London Birmingham railway line we touched down painlessly, sliding backwards across a scrubby field finally coming to rest on our backs laughing out loud. Think the earlier grins were big? They were now huge!

Concorde, or a bit of it, had flown again. Some months later Simon finally came up trumps with an official bit of paper so it could be flown with Tim’s ’77. It was designated as a Concorde Skyseat. Neat name. We put an extra turning vent in his ’77 just to make life simpler. Tim went off to the museum at Brooklands and tethered it alongside Brooklands’ Concorde G-BBDG, a pre-production model. Finally we could announce that a bit of Concorde had once more taken to the skies.

The first time I saw Concorde in real life was down near Fairford. I went with a mate of mine, he on a Velocette 350 me on a Boyer Bonneville 650 (pre-unit naturally!). His aunt lived in a caravan a few miles from the airfield where the testing was taking place. We had barely arrived when it came over, wheels and nose down, seemingly hanging in the air like some sort of prehistoric bird, a Canberra close by. It was a grey old day and we decided we had glimpsed the future. That future was never surpassed and I doubt it ever will be. Everyone recognized Concorde and everyone looked up when she flew over. Can’t be many planes, apart from the Spitfire, that ever got that sort of accolade or remain so iconic. Last flying Concorde I saw went over my head as I went round the M25 with our Pete, the traffic bunched up as everyone slowed to watch the glow from the afterburners as it climbed purposefully away into the early evening sky.
Tim’s record breaking G-BOAD first flew on 25 August 1975 from Filton and clocked up a staggering 23,397 hours (her seat a bit less!) She departed from Heathrow for the final time on 10 November 2003, and flew to JFK airport in New York where she was then shipped by barge to the Intrepid Museum, New York. In December 2006 she was moved to Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn where her condition deteriorated until in 2008 she was moved back to Pier 86 in Manhattan and this time placed on the pier, rather than left on the barge. In contrast the seats reside in Tim’s heated garage coming out to take part in charity events on behalf of British Airways from time to time. The pattern is in our store awaiting further development into something a bit simpler to build! Huge thanks to Tim for his vision, patience, and forbearance. Hopefully, one of these days, I’ll get another go in those seats, maybe with Captain Tim on the blast valves. Now that would be one for the logbook!

http://www.airwaysflyingclub.co.uk/

Chris Dunkley

**Bristol Balloon festival- by Steve Roake**

The Annual pilgrimage to Ashton Park Bristol for the international festival was remarkable for the amount of flying that actually took place. Directionally the flights were not great and shorter flights were undertaken but from a cloudhopping point of view only one manufacturer embraced the event and that was Lindstrand Balloons Ltd. In what was an uncharacteristically Lindstrand orientated event (particularly as it is a Cameron stronghold usually), they maximised their demonstrator hopper G-CEOU was actively utilised in the launch arena pushing the brand identity. The informed word from Simon Forse, their MD, was that there is a hopper fan within the factory who is taking an interest in the craft and therefore the demo
machine is being seen more frequently.

_G-CEOU LBL 35A on extended tethering at Bristol –photo by Steve Roake_

**Groombridge Place Ferrari’s and balloons- by Steve Roake**

A week after Bristol, along with Dave Sandford, Trevor Read and the ever travelling Mark stelling, I was invited by Steve Richards of Kent Ballooning Ltd to join a quintessentially English garden party at a beautiful stately home for an afternoon out enjoying the glorious summer in the surroundings of many beautiful Ferrari motorcars and Ducati motorcycles. Joining the vast crowds soaking themselves in the afternoon sunshine were also MG owners, Lamberetta scooter
fans and vintage Rolls Royce owners. Topping off the ambience was a local steel drum band which made the whole affair “Pimms o’clock”.

The view from the marquee overlooking the glorious car displays whilst devouring a very nice meal –photo by Steve Roake.

The weather on the day just fell into place and having agreed to tether G-UHOP my Um 35 hopper for the audience, the ever diligent Mr Stelling had established that Tony Shields from Hastings was going to be in attendance. All of you who know your hoppers will appreciate that Tony is the owner of a rare Ultramagic H-42 G-CEAY, and following a couple of phone calls by Mark and myself, he had agreed to put the envelope in his car so we could see the rare beast. Now with mine also present I offered him the opportunity of tethering it whilst some photo opportunities were exercised by those enthusiastic members who were present. The very affable Mr shields, turned out to be a very nice man who shared a common bond with our own Captain Frommage (Mark Stelling), both being airline pilots. It also later transpired that my prompting phone call had caught Tony in his jacuzzi!
with little persuasion the aforementioned G-CEAY was inflated in calm conditions and presented to the enthusiastic crowd whilst Steve Richard commentated to the captive audience.

G-CEAY Ultramagic H-42 –photo by Steve Roake

This beautiful balloon has only 13.5 hours total time on it and is normally flown above a single chariot bottom end utilising its turning vents. Many thanks to Tony for bringing her for us to
appreciate in all her glory, definitely worth the journey on its own I felt. Following the 42, I got my 35 out for the crowd and Trevor Read spent half an hour entertaining the crowd with his tethering display whilst introducing a natty line in ballooning attire. You had to be there to appreciate the clothing!
If you have never been to Groombridge Place, on a good day it’s a lovely day out and many thanks to our hosts for fine cuisine which all of the team appreciated.

Steve Roake

**Interesting Hop**- by Gary Palmer

I thought I would send you a couple of pictures from a flight I made in September of 2010 from The Stratobowl, near Rapid City, South Dakota, USA. I had been invited to join a small group of ‘regular’ balloonists for a weekend of flying in this magical ‘hole in the ground’. As you may know this natural hollow was used for several research balloon flights, including one in 1935 to 72,305.

The floor of the Stratobowl is at an altitude of 3,950 ft. amsl, so
some care is required with the load chart. I believe that my 24th September 2010 launch from there was the first by a hopper. I was flying Cameron M-34 S/N 6323, registration N510UX. One of the attached images shows me just about to clear the rim of The Stratobowl. In the background can be seen four stone monoliths, which were placed there by famous balloonist [the late] Ed Yost, to commemorate the exploratory flights which took place from this special place. Another shot shows me navigating down Spring Creek Canyon, which winds away north from the edge of The Stratobowl.

The land which encompasses The Stratobowl is owned by The Forest Service at the rim and by the Tomovick Family in the bowl. Ken and Cory Tomovock live in the bottom of the bowl, as does his mother, [who remembers some of those early flights from her childhood!] As you will see from their web site, http://www.stratobowl.com/index.html one can rent accommodation in the bowl from them! Click on <the Stratobowl> tab to see a little of the ballooning that has taken place there. [For some reason, there is even a little video,
featuring me rigging my red/white/blue Viva 77 there, in 2011!]
You can find the site on Google Earth by searching < Strato Bowl Rd, South Dakota > then follow the road north a little way and look for a field on the east side of the road with a huge inverted ‘Peace’ [UK = ‘Ban The Bomb’] symbol mowed into the grass, the confluence of which is at N 43° 58' 35.34'' / W 103° 20' 42.09''.

So that’s the format, what happened on your first ever hop or interesting flight and how it felt compared to your expectations? Submissions to me please at steve.roake@ntlworld.com

Three Favourite Jpegs and why-by ?????

As nobody could be bothered to submit anything, for the first time this section is empty.
Contributions for future editions of my three favourites and why to steve.roake@ntlworld.com please. Do it today folks and share those memories.

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

Whilst not strictly our territory, news has emerged from Ultramagic Balloons Ltd that the Techno 50 is getting a bigger brother. The Techno 70 is a scaled up version with collapsible basket as the smaller one just slightly bigger. Thanks to Richard Penny for the information.

5. Homebuilt section-

Once again despite my asking, either nobody is working on any projects or you guys can’t be bothered to write to me with whatever you are doing which seems a shame as there are loads of people out there waiting for your experiences and your knowledge and wisdom on how to get round the problems. Come on get writing folks.
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.

G-CHIM Ultramagic H-31
Built to advertise a Pop concert, this balloon was used only once and according to Glenn Everett (its operator), probably the artwork will be removed and the balloon will be sold on in the future at some point.
G-BXHM was recently tethered at the Aviation and Transport Fair held at Manchester Airport held earlier in the month. Brought by Trevor Read, it was tethered by Martin Axtel, Martin Jeynes and Richard Gahan.

**Manufacturer News / Events / Updates**

Well we are only one month away from the One Man Meet and so it’s time to go dust off the trusty hopper and book some accommodation and come and join the party in Wales, see you there.
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

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.

Adverts / For Sale / Wanted section

Martin Axtell offers G-CCKZ for Sale (Now only £3500)

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. Now without the 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 £3500. 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
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
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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9 kg empty, 10.5 kg full (fuel + oil)
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And Finally.

Membership is currently a healthy 435 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@ntiworld.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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