



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 49

June /July 2011

Hello to you all.

Ed-Speak – With many folks departing to Metz for the biannual festival at Chambley, and with June being a Very busy month, I decided to combine the two months newsletter and publish it early. There are quite a few items to be discussed including the Solo Meet. Believe me this will be a no holds barred debate on what happened, why, and its potential future. Your views will be gratefully received and all feedback is useful. Anyway on with the newsletter.

Steve Roake



Nigel Bourke tethers G-SIPP his LBL35A at Thirk Balloon Festival. This balloon was bought a while ago but protracted paperwork issues meant that it has had to remain in its bag up till now.

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Essential Extra's – nothing reported again this month!

The Features Section- The Solo Meet by Steve Roake

There is no easy way to write a review on this event as very little happened. The Black Horse Balloon Club were hosting their twice postponed May Fiesta (incorporating the Graham Philpot Solo Meet), mid June for a number of reasons. The first reason was that the predicted weather wasn't very optimistic so some folks who would have attended decided not to bother.

The second reason I have trouble writing a good report is that the event lacked clear and defined leadership with no one wanting to take charge and actually step up as the Event leader. Tim Crowdy as Club Chairman was assumed as the event co-ordinator as he was present Friday evening being sociable to the half dozen folks who had decided to attend. However, from that moment onwards he took a back seat leaving the logistics to the sponsor Tim Revel, who was forced into taking control. There was also a lack of support for those who had travelled to the event and were camping in the field by Local club members (which is just plain rude). This was a real shame as Tim Ward had come down from Nottingham, Peter Gray from Barking in Essex, and local PUT Helen Creswell also joined Tim C, Tim R, Paul Dickenson and myself.

Tim Ward produced over dinner a technical drawing that he has been pursuing as a project on Sky Chariots. He was scheduled to meet up with Ted Moore on Saturday as pre arranged to complete his measurements with a view of making a historical archive in CAD and ultimately building his own re production of the marque to full accuracy. What actually happened at the meeting was that Ted asked Tim how much he thought it might cost in materials to build the new version and then sold Tim his example for the agreed valuation (a nice and generous gesture).

Saturday Morning was blown out with rain due, so with my crew mate Iestyn due mid afternoon to camp, I ventured to the field to assist Tim with documenting the condition of G-BOYO the Cameron V20 that we cold inflated with assistance from Peter that will ultimately be mated to the Sky Chariot Bottom end. This process completed and having inspected and tried the chariot bottom end



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we awaited the Sponsors who we would adjourn to the pub with for an evening of sociability and good entertainment. Flying had by this stage been put to bed with a forecast that didn't agree with the pilots present. We (well I), decided to eat at the Firecrest pub near Wendover and so six went for dinner which was very sociable.

Sunday morning arrived and a flyable slot. The problem besides lack of leadership was direction and so after a con flab, and agreement over how very low the cloudbase was, it was decided to decamp to Thame showground and attempt to fly from there. Once in the launch field, I decided that for me, the cloudbase was too low.

Seven pilots in regular balloons decided to fly, but most only did approximately 20 mins. It was marginal for hoppers and with no shelter and low cloud it was an easy decision for Kevin Tanner, Tony Jay and myself.

Unfortunately there was no further action and to Tim Revel's chagrin, No prize giving either. As the Sponsor and having a sizable kitty of prizes to be given out he wasn't happy and nor was I. Having set this event up years before with Graham Philpot and Rob Cross, this was a disgrace.

A short version of subsequent events has led Tim and myself proposing taking over running the event from 2012 onwards. If the Black Horse Committee doesn't say yes, then Tim will withdraw his support and sponsorship, and I will take the Solo meet elsewhere. We want to entice you all back with a change of format and prizes on each day with sociability at the root of the event. More on this when we know their decision.

After breakfast the weather was calm enough for me to allow a new pilot Tim Wood the opportunity of tethering my hopper and getting a feel for this type of flying. He enjoyed over 30 mins of fun before I packed up and returned Home.

So not a great event, but it had elements of pleasure, and could have been so much better and thanks to those who could be bothered to turn up and be sociable.

Steve Roake



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Jack Klein's New hopper – The full Story

The Alaska Hopper Project

Eight Stars of Gold on a 35,000 ft³ Field of Blue by Jack Klein

Jack Klein and his wife Carol have been flying balloons since 1980 and building them since 1999. They operate an FAA Repair Station in Anchorage, Alaska, but you never know where in the world the Klein's will pop up. Jack also builds the ^{KLEIN}FAN.

Our Alaska hopper took a few weeks to build, but the project really started 23 years ago, when I took my first hopper flight in France. Many years later, my wife, Carol, took her first hops in Switzerland. We were both hooked, but the commercially-built hoppers seemed ridiculously heavy for their size. The obvious solution was to build our own. As with any other homebuilt project, things did not always go smoothly, but in the end, we got what we wanted. And that's the whole point!

The project really kicked off in 2010 when I went to the UK and bought a used Lindstrand Hopper. My intention was to keep the bottom end, sell the top, and build my own light-weight envelope. The hopper-bottom and I made it out of England just as the Icelandic volcano was starting to blow, and then I was stranded in Switzerland for 3 weeks, waiting for a flight back to Alaska. Off to an auspicious start.

Back in the US, we were very pleased when Ron Cassidy offered a cutting pattern for a 16-gore, 35,000 ft³ envelope. I would have preferred a 12-gore balloon, to save time cutting all the panels (plus the added cost for materials like load tapes, rigging, etc.), but we really liked the shape of Ron's balloon. The only problem was that there were not enough panels for our "trademark" Alaska flag graphics. Ron's solution was to reduce the panel height from 62 to 48 inches and add more panels. This worked well for the graphics, although it wasted a fair amount of fabric.

I had hoped to build the envelope using leftover fabric and load tape from our Repair Station, but we didn't have quite enough of anything. Rather than making a patchwork quilt out of scraps, I ordered the extra fabric, but still ended up with a couple of different dye-lots that will bother my wife as long as we have that envelope!

I needed about 100 yards more load tape, but nobody had the right tape in stock. I bought a heavier load tape, but we really did not like the bulk or weight, so we decided not to use it. With some creatively camouflaged splices and colour changes, we managed to squeak by with leftover tape from the shop.



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Sewing the balloon was the usual case of man *vs.* machine. I *hate* my double-needle machine, even though we've used it to sew 9 new balloons so far. One of these days I will replace it! Carol had been looking forward to doing a lot of the sewing, but managed to break her elbow ice-skating. She couldn't contribute anything other than some constructive criticism of my thread tension.

The cables and rigging were really challenging, since I had no specifications. I got helpful and sometimes very scientific advice from several people, including Paolo Bonanno, but for the most part, it was trial and error. And Alaska weather being what it is, we had to wait several frustrating weeks before we could even do test inflation.



Once we could inflate it, (with the help of the trusty Klein fan, of course), there was a lot of shortening, lengthening, running back to the shop for forgotten tools, and other minor setbacks like - oops - burning the red line in half. After wasting several yards of aircraft cable, I built temporary "cables" out of parachute cord (and burned a few of those in half, too) until I got the lengths right.

Now I've got the numbers, and the next one will be a lot easier. And of course, there **WILL** be a next one, because obviously Carol and I each need our own hopper! I will probably build the bottom end for the next one as well.



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The final step - FAA inspection and issuance of the Special Airworthiness Certificate. And then, we are ready to hop. The envelope ended up weighing 30 Kilos or 66 lbs. Envelope in the bag is 32 kilos or 70.4 lbs.

Again, we want to thank Ron Cassidy for his help and support, Richard & Gabi Sargeant for their hopper and inspiration, and Paolo Bonanno for his much-appreciated (if futile) effort to explain the math.

So what do you do once you've built your hopper and you are Jack Klein?



Simple.... if your name is Jack Klein, you bolt on one of your fans and go try it out. Apparently test flying with the fan in place went smoothly but with Jack being Jack, apparently he is looking at a twin fan set up for future consideration and assessment. I think Jack just realised that by mounting it there it was damned good product placement.

My First Hop - by Sander G Beenen



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This first hop story comes from Sander who flies from Joure Holland. As he posted it on the forum and it gives a great idea of the sensation of a first try, I thought id include it for you all to enjoy. He had his flight on Wednesday 15th June.

Yesterday I did my first ever cloudhopper flight with a borrowed Cameron Z-31 + Millennium bottom end. It was great!

Arriving at the launch site, the setting up of the bottom end was a bit of a hassle not having done that before, but it worked out to be pretty straightforward. I found the strapping on of the tank (72 L) a bit difficult due to the self locking buckles and shortness of the tank straps though. Connecting, folding out and inspecting the envelope was great fun with its tiny load tapes and tiny crown ring.

Cold inflation was performed with an 8 hp fan running at half throttle. The cold pack was so tight that no folds were visible at the envelope's bottom anymore and prepped the way for an easy hot inflation. I didn't have a guy at the crown line, but this wasn't a problem due to the calm conditions. As the envelope started to rise I had my crew holding the balloon down while I strapped myself in the seat. I found the Millennium seat very comfy and easy to strap into, only the lack of some kind of protection to stop one from inadvertently opening the quick release safety buckle (some kind of flap perhaps, like Lindstrand's bottom end) felt a bit uncomfortable. I didn't go anywhere near it during flight! I strapped on my alti-vario, clipped on my transceiver and off I went.

It took some time to get used to flying such a small balloon. You can actually feel the heat of the burner reaching the top of the envelope, resulting in very light jolts. After longer burns one can feel the air being expelled from the mouth of the envelope. Normally (in bigger balloons) I do some five second burns to keep the balloon at level flight, but in this thing the burning time reduced to less than two seconds. The balloon was very responsive and it was very easy to arrest both climbs and descents indeed. The only thing I found a bit clumsy was that the bottom end rotates to face the bottom parachute pulley when pulling the parachute. That was a little unhandy when I was manoeuvring into my final and tight landing spot, but not a major problem.



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During flight it is striking to notice that sounds from the ground are perceptible better than when flying in a basket. It might have something to do with the basket muffling the sounds, but yesterday I was able to clearly hear and understand a girl riding and talking to her horse 1500 feet away.

My first landing was in a field close to a road. I started to "hop" the balloon around to find a gate but I couldn't find one, so I took off again before landing 150 meters further close to a gate just minutes before sunset. Great fun!

After the final landing the pack up was easy and swift. The Millennium bottom end breaks down into two large bags for burner and main frame, so carry out is easy as a pie. The envelope, however light, packs into a normal envelope bag - don't know if that's standard; I've seen others being packed into a kit bag - so it was still a two man job to lift and carry it due to its size.

All in all my first ever hopper flight was the biggest ballooning fun I've had in ages. No passengers to entertain: just me, the balloon and the world below. One could say that a solo balloonist is an egoist, but no: people on the ground see a tiny balloon floating by, with just a seat and gas tank backpack as "basket". It draws more attention than a - tongue in cheek - boring regular balloon! The taking on of silly Superman stances is mandatory here...

Yep, I want one.
Sander G. Beenen
Joure, The Netherlands

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

Three Favourite Jpegs and why-by Richard Gahan



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In this twentieth selection of my favourites and why, Richard Gahan selects his three favourite photographs with reasons why he loves them.



Richards's first photo is a stunner. Great background and a pretty balloon.

Usual Chateau - Ultramagic M-56 HB-QTC demo hopper with basket hanging over the "house on the hill" in snowy Chateau d'Oex in 2010. Such a magical place to fly and photograph balloons.

Whilst Richard doesn't do vast numbers of words, those he include seem to sum up his own sentiments perfectly. In his second submission he focuses on two lady flyers known to most of us although one is in fancy dress.) Technically not a hopper photo - but two leading ladies in the "hopper world" - Pauline Baker and Allie Dunnington preparing Allie to fly in G-HEXE (Thunder and Colt 17A



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Cloudhopper) at Chateau d'Oex in 2010. Fabulous photo of World Record holder Pauline inspecting burner and envelope before Allie gets strapped in.



Finally Richards's third submission features a Duo Chariot that belongs to Karl Heinz Grunauer and is a Cameron N-56 on top of their latest style of duo bottom end. In this particular photo, the significance is that Richards good friend Caroline Jones is in the process of experiencing her first ever Duo flight. The flight took place whilst both parties were attending the 2009 Warstein Balloon festival in Germany. I believe that G-CFJP is now available for purchase, so if anyone is interested seriously, then contact me directly and I will put you in touch with the owners.

All photos with thanks to Richard Gahan.



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Many thanks to Richard for his contribution, like him you too can send me your favourite three shots and the reasons why you like them. This section lives and dies by you agreeing to support me with your shots and views on why you like them.

Contributions for future editions of my three favourites and why to steve.roake@ntlworld.com please. Do it today folks and share those memories.



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

Many interesting subjects were discussed on the forum this month. Sander Beenen's experiences with his first ever hop and the ability for the chute to float were high on the list of subjects discussed. This then lead to Don Piccard telling us about his anti stall tweak that fixed the tendency for the parachute to drop out. Ernie Hartt contributed with the story of how his Lindstrand 31A got modified to assist in preventing this likelihood. I have to say though, my favourite posting was from Around Derancourt



Who successfully added sections of material to a 25k balloon
Making it nearly 31k in size once modified.



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5. Homebuilt section-

Plenty of Homebuilt stuff this month from Jack Klein discussed elsewhere , but once finished and signed off by the FAA ,Carol (jacks better half), got to free fly the balloon.





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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. More new Ultramagic Balloons from Spain.



First Newby this month is Techno 50B HB-QTO c/n is 50/04



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Second new Um is this Solo H-42 LY-EUR c/n 42/18 .This balloon Utilises the ex Paul Dickenson Solo bottom end and is flying in Lithuania.



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Third jpeg with thanks to Paul Dickenson for the continued supply of shots and info is This Techno 50 for Germany. It was delivered with a techno basket. D-OONB is another S-50 c/n being 50/05.



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Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

With Metz in mind, Arnaud Deramecourt is holding some Home building forums whilst there. Details below.

As two years ago, for those of you who are coming to Chambley, if you are interested, we organize a small informal meeting.

As some come the first week-end, and other the second, I think the best is to propose two dates:

* Sunday the 24th, @ 11h00 AM, just after the refilling, let's have a drink or a picnic.

* Saturday the 30th, @ 11h00 AM, same program

Place of "rendezvous": at the entrance of the briefing hall

To have an idea, could you please inform me if you are interested. Do not hesitate if you have other suggestion. :)

In case of, my phone number is

* 06.37.62.31.17 phone number from France

* +33.6.37.62.31.17 phone number from France

See you next week! :)

Best regards

Arnaud Deramecourt



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Adverts / For Sale / Wanted section

Ultramagic H-42/05



Ultramagic H-42 (Year of Manufacture: 1996), believed to be C/N 05. Zero hours flown only 2 or 3 inflations. Possibility for attaching banners to envelope.

Price: € 5.500,- ex VAT. Contact: Pieter **Kooistra** joure, The Netherlands

Phone: +31 - (0) 513 - 417503 E-mail: kooistrapieter@yahoo.co.uk

Sounds like a bargain to me - Ed!

Klein selling G-BVUI

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.



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The Klein FAN Smaller is Better!



Tiny but surprisingly powerful
inflation fans!

9 kg empty, 10.5 kg full (fuel
+ oil)

2.5 hp Honda engine

One fan easily inflates
balloons up to 2000m³

Two fans will blow your
socks off!

Contact Advanced, Inc.

advanced@gci.net

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And Finally.

Membership is currently a healthy 431 members and numbers are generally still rising. 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 hopping! Steve Roake.

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