



## Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 101

November 2017

Hello again everyone,

This is like the Hang over after the party. After the 100<sup>th</sup> Edition which I have to say I found great to write, we now find ourselves in November with very little content once again. However, what we have, we share.

Mind you, somethings in life simply surprise you, Take what happened to me recently. There are many things in life that surprise you. Sometimes you feel that you don't understand the fuss and are unworthy. Should this all sound weird to you then let me tell you what happened to me still seems bonkers. Out of the blue, I was approached by Adam Barrow to be part of a Podcast on a site called Auntymonkey.com which I'll be honest I knew nothing about.

More about the experience later in the Ed speak section of the magazine.

In other areas we have a report from the excellent XLTA meeting for 2017, and Marie Banks gives us her reflections on this year's OMM and flying her new hopper for the first time at that very public occasion.

For your reading this month we have:

- Mick Murphy's review of XLTA 2017
- Marie Banks on the OMM.
- New/ Second Hand Balloons.
- Merchandise for Xmas?

Please send to me your items for inclusion in future editions of the newsletter to the email address below. Without any more waiting let's get into the newsletter

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### 1, Ed Speak- How did I end up being on a podcast?

Now here is a funny thing. Right out of the blue I get an invitation from Adam Barrow from Australia to take part in a phenomenon called Auntymonkey.com which unknown to me has been around for years in previous guises. Adam is part of the team who interview people and record the podcasts for later transmission. Now the first thought that entered my mind when he broached the subject was Why the hell me? Adam explained that the plan is to interview about 100 eminent people within ballooning and discuss how they got involved and what their backgrounds were, so not just about ballooning. I said to him outright, why on earth with all these people who I admire in ballooning available, would you want to talk to me? I'm just a regular bloke who "waffles on" about hoppers and isn't exactly world record holder, or has done a lot of fantastic things, but the guy seemed genuinely interested so I agreed.

Literally the following day around 10am UK time (9pm in Aus.), we have a skype phone call and Adam admits to having five pages of notes and questions- shit this guy is serious! He suggested we thought of it as two mates having a chat down the pub, so in a relaxed frame of mind we did what later edited down to a feature on yours truly and should you be moved to having a listen lasts 54mins.

Now I'm not crapping on about it because I want to big myself up, but when you consider we have recently achieved some milestones with cloudboppers.org I guess some small acknowledgement is worthy. There you go, it's out there should you fancy a listen, and there is a link below to the site. BTW. I still don't think I'm worthy of being included in such illustrious company but I guess if they get the idiots out of the way first then the more interesting stuff should be great. And I have actually taken to listening to the others so am no longer a Podcast virgin in any way.

[www.auntymonkey.com](http://www.auntymonkey.com) Episode no 4.

And thanks to Adam and Andrew for flattering me by thinking I was worthy of their collective time and efforts. Don't you just hate it when you hear your own voice? I know I do.

**Steve Roake.**

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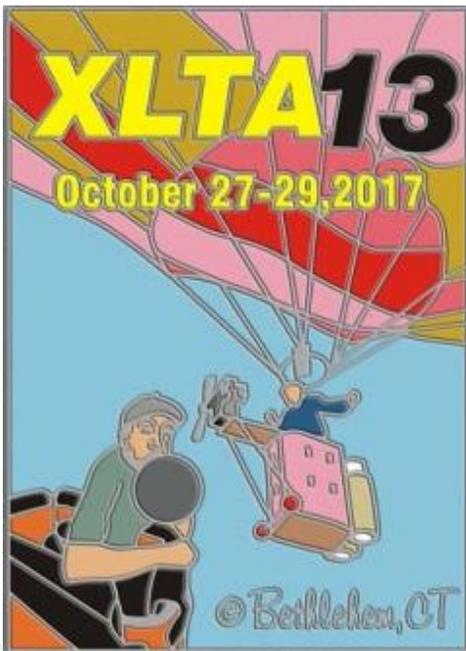
### **2, Essential Extras – Christmas Present Ideas?**

This isn't exactly obvious and I don't want to sound hard sell, but if you are looking for something to top up your other halves Christmas present list Then you could do worse than order either a bung kit for their hopper bottom end or if you want a stocking filler how about a Cloudboppers Mug? Both are available but with limited supply if you want them for Christmas.

If I can assist with either please let me know as soon as possible.

### **3, The Features Section**

#### **Mick Murphy reviews XLTA 2017**



#### XLTA 13

This year marked the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual XLTA hosted October 27-28<sup>th</sup> at Bethlehem Connecticut . Bethlehem Connecticut is located in the heart of the Litchfield Hills And is known for its distinct rural scenery. This area of the state is a major part of the Housatonic and Farmington river watersheds and encompasses a number of Connecticut's highest peaks including Bear Mountain. The landscape in the Litchfield Hills area varies from gently rolling terrain to the south and east to more mountainous (hilly) topography towards the north and west making for a spectacular flying area!

As we mark the 13<sup>th</sup> XLTA, this year's commemorative pin was dedicated to

Brian J Boland, the Zen master of lighter than air flying machines and founder of the Experimental Balloon and Airship Association (EBAA).

The EBAA is a loose congregation of aeronauts who have built, are flying, or own any sort of Experimental, Ultralight or Homebuilt Lighter-Than-Air Craft.

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Every person fitting the above description is automatically a member. We had attendees from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Florida and Massachusetts, which never ceases to amaze me. The dedication of the core group that has attended each year since the event began in 2004 is wonderful.

We had two great flights this year, the first on Friday evening with sunny skies and light winds out of the southwest taking us over several farmers' fields, and out over the Pitch Reservoir with gentle landings. Nine balloons flew.

All balloons returned back to the hangar for a welcoming social of pizza and salad.

Saturday morning, we had similar winds with good steerage taking us to the west of the reservoir with landings in Litchfield. Post flight the host balloonists' wives and daughters cooked breakfast for attendees which allowed plenty of time for socializing and spending time together!

Many balloonists explored the beauty of the Litchfield Hills, enjoying local products

including chocolates, wine, ice cream and cheeses and other area specialties.

The highlight for many balloonists is the Saturday afternoon lobster bake which has turned into a XLTA tradition of steamed clams, lobster and a selection of other items to satisfy landlubbers alike!

The weather on Sunday only allowed for another home cooked meal to close yet another chapter of XLTA experimental ballooning with family and friends. We wish to thank all those experimental LTA enthusiasts who continue to make this a special and magical event!

Next year's event will be held October 26-28, 2018, please be in touch for additional information on attending, or like

<https://www.facebook.com/XLTAUSA/> for news and photos!

Mick Murphy

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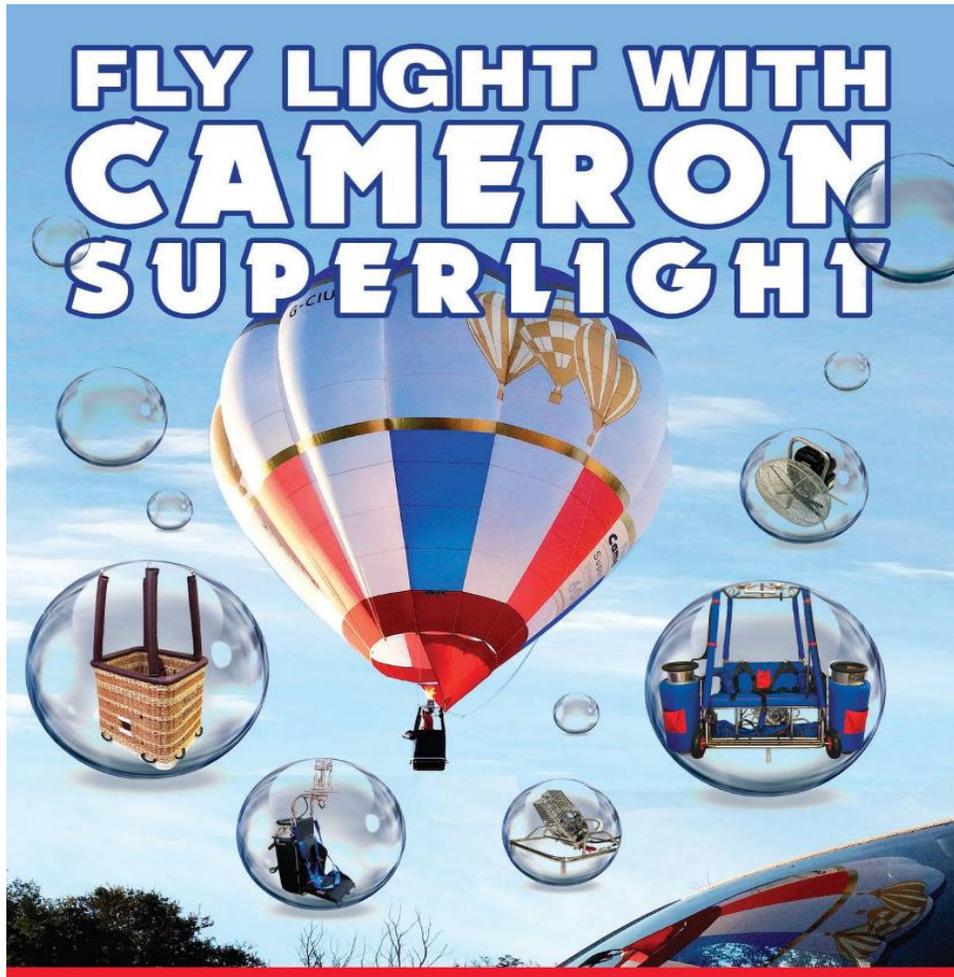


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### Marie Banks reflects on the OMM from her perspective

#### Say "Cheez" says Marie Banks

The OMM has a special place in the calendar every year but this one was anticipated with even greater excitement than usual. I turned 40 in June this year and was the very lucky recipient of a new balloon, G-OWLY, which embodies my lifelong love of owls. (Well, one toy owl in particular, named Owly). OWLY has a small mouse by the mouth and, at some point after taking part in the Solo Record flight in Metz, Dad and I decided it was time to upgrade our shared hopper and give the mouse its own canvas. And so OWLY's little brother, G-MOUZ, was born.



Photo by Nick Banks.

The lovely folk at Cameron Balloons took on our quirky design and the girls and the machines on the top floor in Bristol burst into action with a promise of delivery in time for the OMM.

Actually, MOUZ was ready a week early and, as we had



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plans to be at the York Balloon Fiesta, we took it with us – with some tinge of guilt that the first outing should really be at a hopper meet, surrounded by friends. 'Luckily' the weather at the end of September was terribly wet and we kept MOUZ safely in the bag, hoping for better weather in the Cotswolds a week later.

From York, I had to go up to Inverness and wasn't due back until Friday afternoon. The Friday of the OMM weekend. With perfect flying conditions

...

I arrived in Chipping Norton just in time for dinner and to hear about the lovely flight (which Dad had done in our old hopper, as he didn't dare get MOUZ out until we were both together) and look at the forecast for Saturday (which wasn't promising). We kept John company in the car park in the morning, but MOUZ still stayed tucked up inside.

Eventually, Sunday morning dawned with the most perfect hopping conditions. It was time to see if the MOUZ could fly as well as the OWL. After all the anticipation and excitement, I then realised I was a bit nervous about having to take my first flight with such an esteemed hopper audience. But, apart from Wendy Rousell taking photos and Phil Dunnington wandering free as he wasn't flying, I realised that everyone was pretty busy getting their own rig ready. So, I roped Phil in to help me launch (thanks!) and then took to the skies with a huge grin on my face.

I say 'took to the skies' but it was one of those beautiful mornings for bobbing around so I spent the first 20 mins at about six feet over the launch field before climbing to get a better view of the countryside and following the rest of the pack eastwards into the rising sun. Half an hour or so later, I followed Dad into the same field, where he had packed BVRL, our old hopper, away and was ready to take over for MOUZ's second hop of the day.

It was perfect! And to top it all off, Wendy and John recognised my 'fear' at launching in front of a group of hopper aficionados by presenting me with the Fearless Flyer Award ... and some cheese!

A really big thanks to Wendy Rousell and John Tyrrell for the organisation of another great OMM and providing the best flying conditions, to Nick and Trish for retrieving Dad and I with no flying joy for themselves, to Cameron Balloons for building me not one, but two (well one and a half as MOUZ is shared) fantastic new balloons this year, and to my Dad, Tim Orchard, for sharing with me the fun of flying . Marie Banks

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G-MOUZ first inflation photo by Wendy Rousell.

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### **5, Homebuilding Section.**

For anyone thinking of trying to build their own hopper design, I would suggest you contact Brian Mead for assistance with plans and templates. Not only does he have the old Airtour plans for a hopper, He has his own bespoke BM series of cad programs for the design .Recently I found some more details for an older series of designs ranging from a 21, to a 25 and a 31 hopper design, and so have passed on the details to Brian in the knowledge that they may help any budding builder formulate your plans . Should anyone not know Brian and need his contact details, contact me and ill forward them to you.

### **5, Interesting Photos.**

This month there have been some classic hoppers on Facebook.



G-BHXE, Old Classic shot of this Thunder Sky Chariot.



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G-BJGE sent in by David Head photographed at Cofton Park in 1985



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### **6, New Allocations This Month / Changes of Ownership**

I'm still in a position where I can't tell you some of the interesting things that are coming up shortly in the next few months but let me tell you there are at least three exciting pieces of news that I'm having to stay tight lipped about and all three are great for Hopping.

One should become public knowledge in December with very big publicity associated with it. This will be an interesting process which will involve Cameron Balloons. Obviously more on this subject when I'm allowed to announce it.

The other two events as time progresses, will naturally come to the point where they too can be announced and once again this will be broadcasted as and when permission to do so is received by myself.

### **Second Hand Movements**

There will in the new year be some very reasonably priced examples appearing in the marketplace from various owners who are taking differing decisions. So, if you are considering entering the sport and are intent to do so on a budget, my current advice is try and get your finances in place this winter and expect some Cost effective products coming onto the market after the winter months.

### **7. Gallery Pages –**

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



Icicle Balloon meet 1985, unknown balloon by David Head.



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Here at Cloudboppers News, we need no excuse to show you a Duo chariot because there simply isn't enough of them. This one, VH-XBI belongs to Steve Campbell from New South Wales Australia, and uses a Bonanno Duo with a BJ-60 home built Envelope.

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### 8, Manufacturer / Event News/ Industry News

Jonathan Harris from the 3/4/40 Balloon club wanted me to remind you about the forthcoming Icicle Refrozen Balloon meet. Hoppers have a special entry fee of £10 only up until the 21<sup>st</sup> of December when it rises to £15 per balloon. Please remember the after-dinner speaker is none other than Josep Costa from Ultramagic Balloons Ltd.

More details from [www.icicle-refrozen.com](http://www.icicle-refrozen.com) or look at their Facebook page.

Facebook membership continues to rise with the current level of 1147 current and still rising. Let's hope this trend continues.

All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your Editor. Please forward them to [steve.roake33@gmail.com](mailto: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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