



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 77

May -June 2015

Hello again Hopper Fans.

I make no apologies about this month's Newsletter, it is basically dedicated to an event that took place at Post Mills Vermont USA, when I had the pleasure of joining the Brian Boland Experimental Airship and Balloon Meet. If I sound pumped up by the event, I can honestly tell you I have never been to a meet anything like it. From the moment I arrived at Boston Logan airport I knew I was in for a good time.



Day one summed up the way the event would go, with a stunning first flight meandering over the airfield with 35 others.

However, this still isn't a one story newsletter. The Australian hopper Community held their first ever hopper event and Steve Griffin send back both photos and a video of proceedings. Meanwhile Bart Geeraerts continues to publicize hopping in Belgium this time on National Television with a beautiful video. So feast on our exploits people and enjoy your newsletter.

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## **1, Ed-Speak – What a trip!**

Ask yourself, what would entice you to travel 3500miles to an event that you have never been to before in a state you have never visited? In my case there were a number of variables that led to an easy decision to visit the USA on the off chance of a lovely 5 day trip away. Firstly, Brian Boland is known by anyone in ballooning who has been around a while and any chance to meet the great man is worthy of an air ticket. Secondly a very generous friend and US Poulo Bonanno dealer Shane Robinson had promised to bring me something to fly (even though he had to drive 1600miles to the event himself – so a thousand thanks). Added to these two elements was the fact that some years ago I had met a number of the participants at XLTA 5 in Amsherst Ma. Knowing how successful the event had been last year also factored into my desire to attend (having previously been held some 14 years before), and finally a real close buddy in Dave Cuff (who I have known since school days) said he would fly in to Boston the day before I arrived, hire a car, and we would spend some quality time together. How would I know he would pick me up at the Airport in a Ford Mustang – what a start to the trip? More on the event later, what else I spied whilst there, and my report on flying the Paolo Bonanno hopper for the first time.

**Steve Roake**

## **2, Essential Extra's / Tech Talk- Instrument pods. – Quick release technique**

This section lives and dies on all those really trick little things that make your hopping experience easier, so they tend to come along sporadically, and for a while it has not had an input, so please if you know of something that will benefit others, please send the ideas in to me so I can tell the world of their usefulness.

This month's handy hint came from Andy Booth whilst at the little and large Solo meet at pidley where he demonstrated his idea on a quick release for use with a hopper. As you can see from the attached photograph, Andy has created a loop in the rope then fed it around The flying wires on the frame, returning through the original loop, via a series of quick pull chains so that when you release the rope seamlessly works its way through the bottom end without snagging.



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Many thanks to Andy for that idea – it may just work for you!

The email address for sending to me has changed. Please use from now onwards; [steve.roake33@gmail.com](mailto:steve.roake33@gmail.com) and I look forward to all your suggestions.



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## 3, The Features Section

### The First Australian Hopper and Duo Meet – by Steve Griffin

The inaugural Australian Hopper and Duo Meet was held over the weekend of the 8<sup>th</sup> May at Alice Springs in Australia. Starting on the Friday morning the event ran until Monday morning and featured 7 balloons over a desert region with pilots arriving at early dawn to beat the high temperatures you get in this central part of the country. Take off typically was around 6-30am and as you can see from the photos and video link, it seemed very successful.



As Steve says; "There is often a good surface inversion here which keeps the surface winds light for an hour or so after sunrise so it is fairly important to get into the air at first light. We had 45 kph at a few hundred feet yesterday so it was important to get away early. We all had 0 knot landings"

Congratulations to all involved in pulling off this event, where the efficiency of the preparation ensured the smooth running of the important logistical requirements necessary for all to participate.

Let's hope this spurs others into joining this event next year, which Seems bound to grow in size and stature.



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Awesome photo of Steve Griffin on approach to land



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As you can see from this nice time lapse video, they start in the dark.

<https://www.facebook.com/SteveWGriffin/videos/10153839834493626/>  
should this link not work – it's available on the cloudhoppers page on facebook.

Finally, a nice photograph of the location.



With thanks to Steve Griffin for his input reporting this event.

## **Bart Geeraerts on Belgium TV**

In his latest public display of cloudhopping in Belgium, one of our latest recruits Bart Geeraerts tells the audience of a Belgium National TV station what it is like to fly these incredible craft.

This very informative concise film shows the finer points in flying a Hopper as he extends his experience with his new toy. Father Guy isn't quite as keen to try the hopper.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeM6B-uj3h4>



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## **Report from Post Mills Vermont Experimental Balloon Event** by Don Folz

Wow, upon arrival, light winds, no fences, and power lines, not many. What's not to like? This is the annual event hosted by Brian Boland who has been building balloons since 1971. Could write a short book on the weekend. 35 balloons, all home built, at least part, mostly envelopes. Brian owns this small airport, Post Mills, which seem to be dedicated to balloons and gliders. The event is always held 2nd weekend in May which commemorates the first launch 44 years ago, when Brian built his first balloon as a science project for a degree. He launches the same balloon each year, kind of. He does a very short lift off. His quick release is a release of the envelope, which then inverts and is pulled to the ground by the crown line. In 1970, no parachute tops, and Brian did not feel comfortable with the alternatives at the time. This balloon is definitely not for high wind landings. He also flew his non-pressurized hot air blimp, powered by maybe a three horsepower engine, maybe smaller, which was kind of fun in the light winds of this valley. Almost whimsical in appearance.

Brian has his own museum, a two story, 300' by 60' building, which may have one of every balloon built, who knows. Some order to presentation but not much, and a lot, I mean, a lot of other stuff he has collected. He also has a few outbuildings, again with all kinds of amazing stuff. America Pickers, the TV show, would enjoy. Plan on two to three hours to walk thru. This belongs in your balloon bucket list.

Flying near the field is light and variable. Cell phones don't work in the area and if your radios are line of sight, they won't work either. Lots of hills and valleys, hills are maybe 500' to 1,500'. So, chasing is an adventure. Friday and Saturday night chases were long and interesting, and got back after dark. Saturday was light drizzle but with good weather predicted for remainder of weekend, a few balloons flew the field.

Although the balloons are often unique, the event is very low key. Brian supplies the porta johns. You pay for your own food, lodging and propane at the field (\$2.00/gallon). A Local volunteer group does burgers and pancakes; picnic tables have table cloths and flowers (When did you last see that)? A family affair. Some local citizenry show up, maybe a hundred to two hundred or so.



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Sunday was very light and variable. Everyone flew until their fuel got low and I doubt if any one went more than a mile off the field. Got to get in some PIC time for a two person experimental and a cloud hopper. Met a bunch of interesting people. Folks come from everywhere. England, Switzerland, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Missouri and a lot of the north eastern states.

Don Folz

## **David Tanzer gives his views**

Many of you are probably aware that the Experimental Balloon and Airship Association's annual meet took place last weekend, graciously hosted by Brian Boland at his airport in beautiful Post Mills, Vermont. There is certainly no other balloon meet like Post Mills, and no other place on earth quite like the Post Mills airport. And there is most definitely no one else quite like Brian!

There were something like 38 experimental balloons in attendance, and a great time was had by all. With the exception of a bit of rain on Saturday morning, we had gorgeous weather. The wind was extremely light on Friday evening, and most of us travelled less than a mile from the airport. Intrepid pilots Shane Robinson, Steve Roake, Mike Lavoie, and Jon Radowski ventured farther to the north. When I landed on Friday evening, I walked across a barn roof and then was assisted by a man with a parrot on his shoulder (he didn't seem to be a pirate, though). My friends, Jeff Snyder and Jay McCormack, co-builders of their "SM Penetrator 54K," Jason Provost, flying his Hixenbaugh/Barlett-built HB50, Noah Forden, flying his self-built, way-cool hopper, complete with a beautiful swivel of his own design, and I piled all four systems in the back of Dave Lavallee's pickup (amazingly, the Ford handled the extreme load just fine) for the short trip back to the airport.

Saturday evening provided a bit more wind, and many of us travelled a bit further—I flew to a knock-down landing on a hilltop after flying for about five miles. Sunday morning's flight definitely took the cake! The winds were so light that most of us never left the airport. Jeff, Jason, and I launched together on RWY 22, and



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landed near the departure end of the runway after about half an hour. Then we hitched our balloons to Dave's mighty Ford (actually, I just held onto Jason's drop line and got carried along), and Dave pulled us back to the departure end of the runway so we could repeat the process.

If you've never been to Post Mills, you should put it on your bucket list! Brian is always fun and interesting to chat with, and his "rusty dusty museum" must be seen. Where else could you see a collection that includes several homebuilt airships, fire engines, a space shuttle tire, old crutches, a three-wheeled Messerschmitt car, a pre-war MG, any number of old balloon baskets of all types (including not one, but two, Rally trashcan baskets), what must be the largest collection of T-3 burners on the planet, old typewriters and dental chairs, and...? And the camaraderie at this meet is like no other—it's a great bunch of people who are there simply to fly for fun and share ideas about building and flying experimental balloons.

Balloon pilots and others travelled far and wide to attend, and it's great to see so many faces that I don't often get to see. It's been ten years since I've seen Steve Roake, editor of the great monthly Cloudhopper Newsletter, and I got to meet his wonder friend, David Cuff. My great friend Jim O'Brien got to make his first flights in his beautiful new Stumpf-built hopper over his nifty new Bonanno bottom end. I got to see Mike Lavoie and Jim Rogers, both of whom I haven't seen for many years, and I even got to see Jim's daughter, Sarah, who I flew many years ago up in Newport, Vermont. The list goes on... Rick Jones, Paul Stumpf, Scott Caplan, Mike Kuehlmuuss and Wendy Curtis, Darrel Long, Mick Murphy, Robert Zirpolo, Ron and Sue Cassidy, Zach Weindel, Danielle Francoeur and Leo Burman, who should definitely get the award for the most beautiful homebuilt balloon, and many, many more wonderful people. I even got to land my C-172 on Brian's beautifully kept grass runway, which is always a treat. Mostly I use my airplane for transportation- many of my hours in it are logged travelling between Burlington Vermont, and New York City where my company is located, but I don't usually to fly to a balloon meet, let alone to an airport with a beautifully manicured grass runway. My friend Sue Snyder graciously offered to drive my Lindstrand Hopper to Post Mills so I would have the opportunity To fly two of my aircraft in the same day. Normally my hopper



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Is transported in our medium sized SUV, but it was away for the weekend as my wife needed to take it to New York City to pick up our daughter from school at the end of her spring semester. So for this weekend, the hopper was stuffed in our Prius. All in all a pretty fuel combination of car and balloon (my friend Jeff Snyder had his hopper in his Prius too). Since my hopper is a production Lindstrand 35, it is too large to stuff in my airplane, so unfortunately I can't transport it that way. Noah Forden, on the other hand, handily fits his homebuilt hopper in the Vans RV-7A he also built himself, and he dutifully showed up at Post Mills on Friday Afternoon after flying there from his home in Rhode Island.



David Tanzer's Cessna

There have been many photos posted on Facebook from this weekend, most of which are public. Check out these for a taste of what Post Mills is all about: <http://on.fb.me/1LtcOFs> <<http://on.fb.me/1LtcOFs>>. You can also view this neat Vermont Public Television video about Brian that Paul Stumpf forwarded on to me: <http://video.vpt.org/video/2365363160/> <<http://video.vpt.org/video/2365363160/>>.



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You should make plans to attend next year, whether you have an experimental balloon to fly or if you just want to have fun spectating. The only downside is that it will take several days to recover from smiling so much, and again, many thanks to Brian and Tina for being such gracious and wonderful hosts to such a large bunch of really quirky people!

David Tanzer

## **My trip to the Brian Boland Experimental Meet by Steve Roake**

The idea to go back to the USA for a hopper meet was sown some ten years earlier when I attended the Dan Nachbar XLTA 5 meet and enthused over the people I met, the balloons they had made and flown and the format of the event where everyone got together and basically hung out for the weekend. Some good friends were due to be at the Brian Boland meet, and having watched the event from last year via all the internet postings, I had the urge to spread my wings and see what gives at the home of this iconic legend from the world of ballooning. I had also previously met Shane Robinson at an event in Ireland with mutual friends and Shane's suggestion that if I made the trip he would supply me with something to fly, I knew inside I just had to be there.

Initial plans revolved around the idea of taking the new Cameron Balloons lightweight O-31 so that Cameron US could show off the remarkable craft and I would act as a courier both ways. However this failed to happen for a number of reasons, and I ended up travelling to Boston sans balloon where I would meet up with a school buddy Dave Cuff who lives in Austin Texas and had agreed to join me on the mission. Now we go back 45 years but ballooning is something Dave is relatively new to, and so I knew he would have a blast. After a number of Trans Atlantic phone calls he would fly into Boston the day before me, arrange a car hire and then drive me to the event once I arrived on the Daily Delta flight from London Heathrow. Shane had suggested somewhere to stay in Fairlee just down the road, and as luck would have it, we bagged the last available room for the weekend.

Dave being Dave had to go the extra mile and when we got to



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the car hire centre I realise we've got a Ford Mustang for the duration. What he didn't know was that having spoken with Shane, he was bringing two balloons for me to fly, one big enough to take Dave in with me, so he would really partake in the event. Boston to Post Mills was around 3 hours in the car and as we were arriving around mid afternoon, we soon spotted the airport, found a local shop to get some beers, and found the Silver Maple Lodge accommodation and checked in. Knowing that the morning was an early start, we ate locally at the Pizza place next door and chilled until a relatively early night (local time wise), or the end of my 21 hour day beckoned our beds.

Next morning at silly o'clock we headed to the airport to say hello to a few folks, unaware that Shane had got in from Joplin Missouri around 3am having driven 1600 miles. First person I bumped into at the airport was Shane who asked "are you going to fly"? Totally unprepared for this with no radios, instruments or a map, I was slightly taken back but as it looked light and variable the idea of cruising around the airfield perimeter sounded idyllic to me so I jumped at the offer. In no time at all Shane, Myself and good friend Jon Radowski who had also just got in from Phoenix were airborne in Shane's balloons amongst 32 others having the time of our lives. Jon hadn't even considered where he was going to stay, so with a spare bed in our room, Dave and I invited him to bunk down with the Boys. I couldn't believe I was flying straight away and all I took with me was my striker, and I love those flights where you take time to hover over your launch field so I was immediately in Heaven. The other great plus with Shane being the new dealer for our good friend Paulo Bonnano in the USA, was that finally I got a chance to fly the Bonnano Hopper (more on this in my flight test later). There I was in a 40K home built hopper, loving every second amongst the great and good of the US experimental fraternity. Finally when my Worthington was empty I deflated exactly where I had started from and went to meet our host Brian Boland. Both Jon and Shane were still flying both having two tanks, and in hindsight I should have borrowed another one as the Bonnano comes with the ability to use a manifold and a second tank and whilst I wasn't to know it, with the surrounding countryside, having lots of fuel is a real plus point. The trouble with flying in Vermont with its mountains, Forrest tundra and pretty lakes, is that whilst landing options are limited in some directions, you just want



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to fly for longer. This event really is one that you decide the accommodation you desire to suit your budget, and anything goes with regard to flying as and when you want to. Suitably enthused by my exploits and with Shane's excellent local knowledge we set off for his favourite local diner for breakfast in what would become a daily ritual. The Fairlee Diner is exactly what you thought a 50's style diner would be .Busy, friendly and excellent food, it sets you up for your day, until it was time to reconvene for the evening flights.



This time around I was to fly Dave in a 52 system, with two external tanks, lightweight basket and triangulated burner. Shane suggested we should go fly and work out a retrieve plan later on. So we took off with the idea of following my host. Jon followed in the 40, but we went further than most with only Mike Lavoie joining us in leaving the airfield. Being in a balloon you don't know, over terrain you don't know, without your normal aids, with a burner that seemed to be all or nothing definitely throws you out of your comfort zone and whilst I never felt in danger, I definitely didn't feel comfortable, and you've also got your buddy dependent on your decision making. Suffice to say when I finally found somewhere to land, I didn't find the greatest landing zone, putting down in a culvert and actually finding a dead Vulture



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under the envelope when we packed up. I'm sure Dave appreciated (not) the massive carry out, and the young feisty bulls that followed us around the field I had intended to land in originally, made me appreciate that I didn't pick that spot. We managed to haul our kit to where Jon landed the hopper, just as he got back with a vehicle. Two balloons in an SUV, three people and an envelope strapped to the roof of the car summed up what was a great day. Getting back to the field and gassing up at a ridiculously low, (to a brit), \$2 a gallon (4 litres), we then set off for dinner some 30 miles away at a place that stayed open till 2am.

The next morning (Saturday) dawned with light rain predicted and as we got to the airfield, it arrived. Brian had just celebrated the anniversary of the making of his first balloon called The Phoenix, and to celebrate its 45<sup>th</sup> year it was inflated in front of a large crowd. Following this, Brian got out a single man Hot Air Airship in the shape of a pair of lips, with a Trash Can underneath and a motor on a wooden extension with a prop on the back providing forward motion. In the rain he proceeded to do circuits of the airfield.



We departed to our favourite Diner for breakfast and to consider our options for the rest of the day. A full day of chilling out ensued and as soon as you knew it. We were back at the field for the evening launch window. The direction whilst similar to the previous night was slightly more westerly and whilst a number of balloons inflated and flew into the hills, armed with my limited



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knowledge of the area and a single Worthington tank, I elected to stay on the airfield and enjoy the spectacle. Both Jon and Shane flew and we took the opportunity to get Dave another flight this time in the more experienced hands of Jon. I can honestly say after the previous nights experience in the 52, I wasn't exactly keen to repeat the process and thought another slot would probably arrive with a more favourable direction and more conditions suited to me. Reports back from David Tanzer for example spoke of wind shear on the landing. I didn't regret my decision, but appreciated that with two tanks – I may have made a different choice in the 40.

I spent valuable time chatting to other pilots who had also agreed with my decision including Christine Serra and so was thoroughly entertained whilst the boys played. Earlier I had ventured into Brian's eclectic collection of things various in his barn. Now I was told there was no way you would be prepared for what you were about to see, but shock of the variety of things collected cannot be overstated. I had to sign the wall upstairs to gain my seven years of good luck, but honestly when you visit – and you must – come and be amazed by the artefacts.

Being Saturday night, we drove to a local town to have dinner with David Tanzer and Jim O'Brien. Suitably refreshed we reconvened early Sunday morning on the airfield and having driven around Lake Fairlee which had substantial early morning fog, we knew that light winds had returned and there would be another chance to potter around the airfield in the hopper once it lifted. I can't tell how much it gives me pleasure to potter around in a hopper, most of the time you fly off to your destination and with 38 other balloons ascending and doing the same, the collage of colour against the early morning freshness was

Breathtaking. In my hour plus of flying, I think I moved eventually perhaps 600 yards from my take off point. Shane commented that in the sunshine he nearly fell asleep in the seat. We eventually moved very slowly at low level across the dewy grass towards the other end of the airfield. Being a greedy type of person I got Dave to pull me back to my start point so I could have another go.

This time however, I was asked to allow another pilot the chance to try hopping for the very first time, so obviously we swapped places and I always love the expressions you witness when people get their first fix of cloudhopping. Contented by the fact that I



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had achieved three flights over the weekend, and having a chance to try pancakes and Maple syrup for the first time, whilst a local band played Eagles tunes, I took the opportunity to have a really close look at Dave Tanzers lovely Cessna that he flew in to the event in what is a unique way. Noah Forden had also flown in with his Van's RV-7 homebuilt plane, (homebuilding gone mad, balloon and plane no less). All too soon we had to leg it to our Breakfast in Fairlee and an all too soon departure for Jon who was heading back to Phoenix. It's funny, we had only been together three days, and yet part of our team was gone.

By the time the three of us who were left returned to the airfield on Sunday afternoon, the shock of the emptiness was amazing. Almost everyone had departed home having vast distances to achieve and we were treated to something akin to a Pierce Brosnan moment( in The Thomas Crown Affair), as some high performance sailplanes beat up the airfield literally above our heads and then landed having completed 300 mile cross country ridge soaring flights. The wind was once again around five to six knots but 180degrees reversed and the four balloons left all flew into the valley which was forrest lined and with a beautiful lake in the bottom.



I could see that at the end of the gorge there was some manicured grass and if I stayed higher on the right hand side



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of the ridge I would naturally turn left and arrive plumb centre to my landing site of choice, and for once everything went to plan and I greased it. What a special way to finish off a fantastic adventure.

The fact that my post landing packing away was photographed just adds to the speciality of the trip. Now please forgive me, but I have to say thanks to all for making me feel so welcome, to my friends who made this trip happen – thanks for encouraging me to come, and to Shane Robinson, a very generous man who drove from Joplin Missouri with balloons for us to use- I owe you big time. Brian and his family, thanks for hosting a truly unique special, one of a kind event that I will return to given the chance . I would rather return to Post Mills than attend Albuquerque, such is the stature and history of this festival. The only Way to describe how I felt after this weekend .....Stoked!

Steve Roake

## **Little and Large Meet 2015-by Steve Roake**

The trouble with follow up meets is by their nature they always have a tough act to follow. This is exactly the case for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Little and Large Solo Meet, which had a brilliant first event at Sackville in 2014. For 2015, Dave Such had decided to change venues to The Lakeside Lodge Golf complex in Pidley, owned by David Hopkins and as I had said I was going, and even though the weather forecast looked shocking, I arrived on the Friday afternoon expecting not many participants to arrive, the only thing I'd done in advance was to remove one fuel tank as the expectation over flying was minimal. My view is that if you say you are going to an event – you go support it and having set up base camp next to my Norfolk cousins, we went to the evening briefing held with Jon Tyrrell who delivered the expected news that it wasn't flyable. A simple discussion also ensued which lead to the morning briefing also binned. You may well think this may lead to some gloom and doom, but far from It, as ballooning is 80% talking about it, and 20% participation. Once my friend Iestyn Leek (crew for the weekend), had arrived from Cardiff and we had established Base Camp Alpha, We joined Dan and Jules Wilson, Steve and Heather, and Sandy Mitchell and Martin Freeston in the local pub for a hearty meal and much entertainment. We then adjourned to the accommodation site where drinking into the small hours ensued.



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Saturday morning arrived with the predicted weather of winds and some overnight rain but nothing stops the early morning golfers. An alfresco breakfast en mass followed, with an action plan of evoking Plan B. Now everyone needs a Plan B just incase you can't fly, and in my case it meant going geocaching locally looking at local churches, and arriving back some four hours later, clocking that Cameron balloons in the form of Simon Askey and Andy Booth were holding court with new products and a revised hopper bottom end.



This impromptu update of all things new for ultralight flyers at Camerons, lead to some great fillips for the magazine (see elsewhere) and an admission from Gary Davis that he had never flown a hopper. Very quickly the O-31 G-CIJJ was allocated to Gary should we fly later that evening. The opinions on the prospects varied dramatically but as the time got closer, so the wind speed started to drop off. I have to say Jon Tyrrell was very confident of flying, and so my non expectations turned into more hopeful thoughts but still maintaining the view that I would ultimately decide on the field later. The breifing time came and so did the flyable slot. We all convoyed to the far end of the



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Golf course with a view that those who only wanted a plod, could land on another fairway, whilst the more intrepid ones, could fly out towards the fens en track Chatteris. To add some spice to the mix, a task of lobbing a numbered golf ball at the 18<sup>th</sup> green as we flew over was added. Taking full advantage of the sheltering around the green on our launch site, once airborne I thought I had a good chance of getting fairly close with my marker but feeble flying and a pants through showed that I had failed abysmally even descending towards the driving range and temporarily halting one players practise swings. Apologise suitably exchanged I then realised that should I want to stay on the course , Nick Bettin's Concept 60 was clearly in my way so chose to join the others flying offsite. Staying low level over the fens was delightful and I tried to ensure I flew sympathetically, using fuel lightly when needed. Much of my flight was spent near John Hilditch, Andy Booth and Dan Wilson, and after 55 mins of surveying all the crops from peas to cabbages etc I saw Dan was about to be caught by his crew on a side track. I delighted in following him into the same place receiving similar treatment and avoiding stinging nettles, gauze bushes and other related stuff that Dave such reported back with later. Some 17 balloons had snuck a lovely flight in surprisingly, and the event could be called a qualified success once again. For those of a more expansive mind, I did 4.4nm in 55mins on 29litres of gas. Some did more , Gary Davis being seen somewhere in the distance , and Martin Freeston held his pants together to eek out one hour 5 mins from his Worthington tank, landing on not too much!

Jon Tyrells statement about the weekend summed up the event well. "a great weekend relaxing and catching up with other solo ballooning friends. Saturday evening was fantastic, low level and no animals. The launch field was alive with activity- everyone mucking in and helping each other. Let's hope next year's event will be as good. I did 1hr 10mins, max speed up to 12 knots landing in 3 knots on the waitrose roundabout at Rushden – Text book!"

This just left the prize giving duties which were brought forward on Sunday due to the no flying slot with the following awards dually given Out.

To the pilot making their first hopper flight – the prize went to Gary Davis Who receives the unique Derry Moore Trophy.

The Saturday night competition of nearest the 18<sup>th</sup> green was won with a distance of only 4m by a surprised and yet



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delighted event organiser Dave Such.

Next prize of an Annual C of A and an ARC supplied by Easy balloons Ltd and to be performed by Dave Such, went to the most recently purchased solo balloon, and to our host David Hopkins who flew G-BXIZ Lbl 31A.

Next the smartest new balloon at the event award went to Alan Turner with G-CINN Cameron Z-31.

An award to the youngest person to fly at the event supplied as were quite a few of the awards by Cameron Balloons Ltd , went to James who aged 12 flew with Sheila Antony.

Smartest Annex 2 balloon was won by John Hilditch.

Oldest pilot to fly at the event was awarded to Derry Moore who seems to have this one covered each year.

Finally there was a booby prize award presented to Andrew Davison who nearly landed on a stack of bales by mistake.

Thanking our host it was announced that next year's event would again be held at Pidley over the weekend of 4th -6th June .

Who would have thought of the 25 entries, 19 would appear over the weekend. Let's hope we have the same sort of fun next year.

Steve Roake



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## Flight Test on the Paulo Bonnano Hopper- by Steve Roake

As you are aware by now, I flew a homebuilt balloon in Vermont whilst using a Paulo Bonnano Hopper bottom end lent to me by Shane Robinson. The exact example is for sale currently at a very generous \$4500(so contact Shane Please). This particular example is finished in a nifty green colour scheme and was previously owned by Pauline Baker. Shane is the new Dealer for the USA and is based in Joplin Missouri. This example is still in lovely condition and assembled quickly. The most useful feature of a Bonnano Hopper over the alternatives is the ability to utilise either a single tank installation or two side by side to extend the duration ability of the craft.



Showing the Bonnano hopper to a potential customer



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Once assembled the inflation process is exactly the same as on other hoppers and as the balloon becomes upright, you transfer to a very comfortable seat and strap yourself in for the flight. The top two straps have loops on them and the lower left hand side has an extended tongue which you feed through the top loops and engage into the RHS lower strap clasp. Finally to ensure safety you engage an R clip which prevents detaching in flight. Surveying around the flight environment, there are plenty of pockets for stowage and also a nice neat handling line which can be a handy thing to have. So I hear you ask, what does it fly like? Truthfully its lovely, the burner is a work of art, with a lovely action. The seat support worked well for well over an hour, but if I was moved to criticise anything, it's the lack of a mirror to check your fuel contents. I flew by knowledge of the contents of the tank and using my watch but it is reassuring to be able to check with a mirror.



Simply having a blast in a Bonnano hopper



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Not really a gripe on my part, just a preference. Otherwise I like it. Shane's example being a newer example had nicer luggage bags as they had been redesigned and made with more padding.

Steve Roake

## **4. Favourite Photos – More submissions**



Brian Boland's Iconic Building which looked great from my vantage point top left hand side in the 40K hopper.



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## **5. Gallery Pages – Fans this time!**

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, and then feel free to forward details of it with a suitable photograph to me using my normal email address.



A couple of views of the new Cameron Mini Fan



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Featuring a Multi bladed twin prop.



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Seen at the Boland Meet, tucked away in a corner was this inflation fan made up of some parts Brian acquired from Carol Klein and mated to a Briggs and Stratton engine. Again a four point stand!





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## 6, Manufacturer News / Events / Updates



Cameron Balloons came to the Little and Large Solo Meet with a wealth of new products and information and brought the Ultra light O-31 and various other goodies for us to peruse over. Not only did they attend with Simon Askey and Andy Booth but brought a special edition Newsletter detailing all that they have that's new in our sector.



These items will be discussed individually below but it is very news for us and encouraging to see this push to further the technology utilised in hopping. It seems that no stone remains unturned as Cameron have acknowledged what others have been doing and have moved to offer its own versions of the popular products.



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**Rabbits Superlight**  
Rabbit Superlight events are the most popular of all 100% superlight ballooning events. Cameron Balloons built the world's first Superlight Balloon for Rabbits ballooning team.

It will be the perfect size for the first flight of a Cameron Superlight Hopper. It will be a great first & will give you the most fun. Please visit our website for more information. There are many Superlight Balloons for the great service, visit a Superlight Balloon.

**Superlight Fabrics**  
Years of testing and development have allowed Cameron Balloons to offer a range of new high tensile, lightweight fabric options that allow incorporation of a full seating weighing just 20kg. A ready stock offer the following products in standard, heavy duty and fully custom approved envelopes.

Available in all CMC approved sizes up to 120, this really is, as not above the line, is lightweight ballooning.

**NEW Millennium**  
Did you know? - the latest Millennium Hopper base still benefits from larger rear view mirrors, an independent emergency fuel cut-off packed handset, and positioning for ease of inflation, increased comfort in the seat and crucial the seat there is even a handy pocket, ideal for storage.

**Testing the NEW superlight Nano V4**  
Behind the scenes view. Exciting, revolutionary design and thorough testing brings you the best superlight basket in the world! The fully collapsible basket is the most generous in the long and intelligent line of Vikings. Available in standard or hi-spec, providing an easy way to transport and store the basket inside most big 4x4s, such as a Land Rover Discovery or Landcruiser.

Fully inflated, the standard version is 1180mm from base of basket to top of seat, and the hi-spec version is 1200mm, with maximum external measurements of 540mm x 1200mm.

Including an exclusive composite floor design and titanium upright supports, the Nano V4 is superlight, weighing less than 35kg. The floor is made of 6mm thick, individually each upright only weigh 300grams (each).

The seat and wall construction is 100% continuous - there are no gaps, forcing you get trapped or fall through the basket base, either in flight or on landing.

Safety in paramount - the Nano V4 is a superlight basket that is fully compliant to EASA's CS21b (design and construction code).

Weeks of design, research and testing culminated in a product we are very proud to put our name to, and with our solid price at the start of production, we believe that this superlight kit will get lots more of us flying much more easily.

**Drop Testing**  
When asked to manufacture a 'fall' Hopper bag, we happily obliged. Measuring 50cm in height, this bag is specifically designed to stand upright in the boot of a 4x4. Available in a wide choice of colours.

**Wheely Good Idea**  
Why lift when you can roll? Snap, snap it, wheels to Cameron Balloons designed for the Millennium Hopper. These wheels turn your Hopper into a 'narrow' making it wheel easy to move equipment around.

**NEW superlight Cameron Balloons O-31 Hoppers**  
Envelopes that weigh from only 30kg! This stunning design in fabric technology allows even lighter ballooning available from Cameron Balloons and a Cameron Millennium Hopper base and A basket, at just 18kg and an amount design the perfect fit. (12kg kit) or a Vikingan O3 cylinder at 10kg (6kg kit). And you can have passed a full second breaking set of equipment. Watch this special Superlight ballooning in July going to be much more meaningful than ever.

**BRAND NEW hopper fan**  
A spark of an idea drawn from the drone and model aircraft world, Cameron Balloons have designed a brand new 2.1hp hopper fan using smart, lightweight, propeller blades.

Combined with the super-reliable Honda 4-Stroke engine, this fan addition packs a powerful punch. Daring testing on the specifically designed Cameron 'Dung' using on the specifically designed Cameron 'Dung' water, this fan is registered a huge 11.5hp (8.5kW).

With ease of use design and weight added down to just 10kg, Cameron Balloons have also simplified transportation and storage challenges for Hopper balloons.

**Hinged Hoppers**  
Millennium Hopper base units are now fitted with a set of stainless steel hinges - making transportation and storage even more convenient. This simple system allows for the back frame to fold and pack neatly, even with the harness attached.

But fear not if you already have a Cameron Millennium base unit, these can be retrofitted for you in our Bristol-based factory. Retrofit price - £210 (€294) inc vat.

**Retrofit Hopper Ring**  
Cameron Balloons have developed a Hopper ring that fits to your existing Millennium base burner unit.

The simple, lightweight design makes flying a Cameron even more comfortable as no longer do you have to rotate the harness via the loading.

Contact us today to arrange a retrofit.  
Tel: 0117 963 7210

**Top LHS-** The New Millennium Hopper Base has a host of changes, from Larger rear view Mirrors, an Independent emergency fuel cut off valve and more comfort from the seat padding.

**Middle LHS** – Cameron have created a new superlight collapsible basket called the NanoV4. Coming in at only 35kgs and featuring a composite floor design it passes stringent testing parameters.

**Middle RHS-** They brought to the event a version of their Brand new Hopper fan. The Honda engine 4-stroke fan looks surprisingly similar to the Klein fan with twin prop blades, but four legs and a weight of only 10kgs. The initial versions are priced at £850 plus vat.

**Bottom RHS-** This is the heart of the news. They have developed a new design of Hopper ring which fits to existing Millennium hoppers. This Bonnano inspired design makes swivelling more comfortable as you no longer need to rotate yourself using the loading.



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The most exciting piece of news is that the millennium Hopper now comes with a nifty set of stainless steel hinges, allowing the unit to fold and pack neatly and as an added bonus it is retrofit able to existing client's base units at a cost of £210.



Seen on the Demo unit on the right hand side and zoomed in on the LHS this is a much needed improvement to the design and will be popular.

I'm certain that the new improved hopper fan will be nicely received. Superlight fans have been en vogue for quite a while pioneered by the late Jack Klein, but the Cameron version has a much more steady four legged platform, and is very similar to the Boland design seen in My gallery photo page. Cameron claim the mini fan registers 11.5lb ft or 49N of power and I know of at least one interested party at Pidley who was looking to purchase based on what he had seen.

Finally the O-31 now has a duffle style bag standing 90cm high with more of a sleeping bad style of lid to assist closing.

For more details on all the above stuff contact your local dealer or dial direct to the factory on +44(0) 117 963 7216.



News in brief

## One Man Meet 2015

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October

Tissington Hall  
Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 1RA  
(GR:176 256)

One Man returns to the Peak District, the launch field is at the top end of the village with some shelter and parking.

There is a good supply of accommodation from a Premier Lodge in Ashbourne, local B&Bs and hotels, plus self-catering in Tissington village.  
Then there's the food and beer!

We will be following a similar format to previous years – relaxed flying and a good social event.

Open to all balloons under 60,000cuft to be flown solo, unless you are entering a duo-chair.

Entry fee £20

First Briefing – Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October at 15.00  
on the launch field

Email - [onemanmeet@btinternet.com](mailto:onemanmeet@btinternet.com) for an entry form

*John Tyrrell and Wendy Rousell*



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## And Finally.

### Wow what a large one that was !

There you go with all that's happening right now in our world of hopping. With the new flying season kicking off, now is a very good time to send me your stories, photos and anecdotes from the world of cloudhopping. So with baited breath I await your submissions. The audience figures for Facebook participation continue to rise with over 628 members now subscribing, but feel free to introduce more fans, owners or prospective owners to our group.

## **Steve Roake**

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