



Happy New Year to all

I hope your festivities were great and that during the break you didn't put on too much ballast (I think you know where I'm going on that thread)! Welcome to the January Issue of Cloudhopper's News, I hope like me you are looking forward eagerly to a packed year with opportunities to further all our hopping experiences.



A Demo Balloon at a Typical Eventhow many sales have been directly achieved by letting someone "Play" for a first time like this?

Happy birthday to the Forum List .We enter the third year of existence in January with over 263 members worldwide and secured

sponsorship for the newsletter and website now in place (more details later).

Content

In this 12th edition we have for you details on:

1, Ed Speak - Some Statistical Data and chat regarding hopper sales figures and what can we deduce from them.

2, Essential Extra's - Nil received!

3, Features section-

- Hopper building by Greg Winkler -Another Installment?
- The Propeller man- This article had to be rescheduled due to illness of the person concerned -so hopefully more next month.

4, Updates on the Website / Newsletter-

Further news of the progress of these projects.

5, Homebuilt section- Nothing This month

6, Gallery pages-

New balloons and editor's choice of jpegs sent to him

7, Manufacturer News / Updates /Event News.-

- News from the Icicle meet
- New world record for Pauline Baker in Ax-2/3 category.
- Dates for the Eurohop and Solo meet

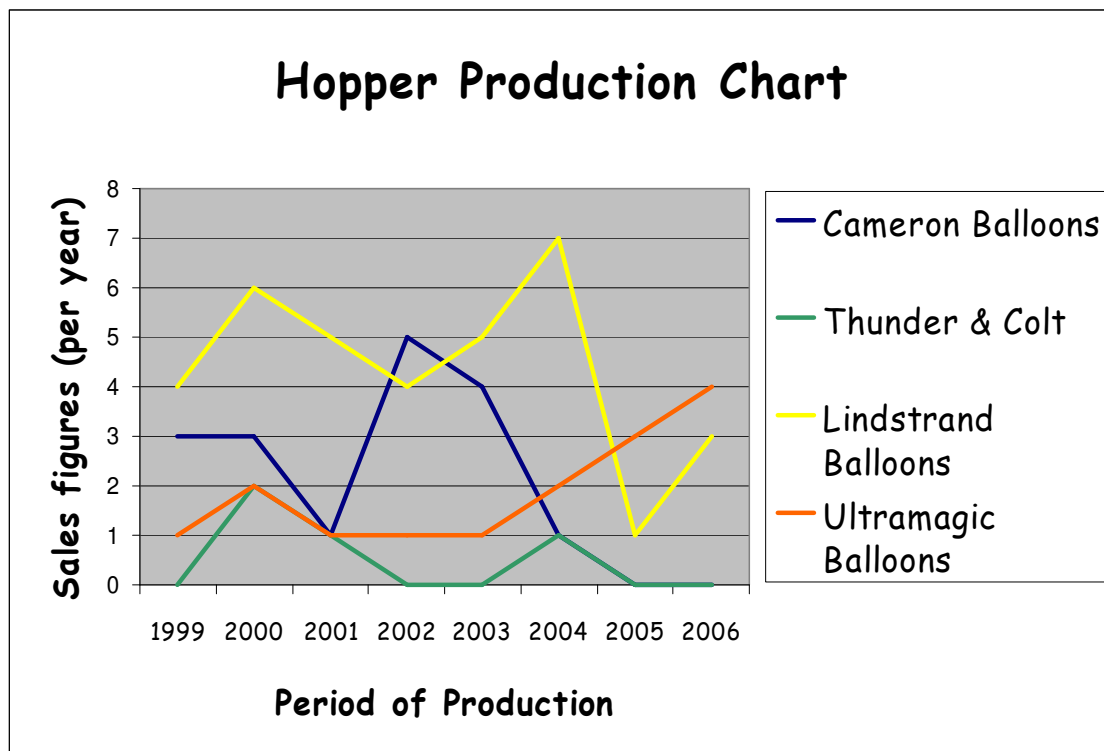
8, For Sale /Wanted. Stuff up for grabs

- Unregistered Ultramagic 42 for sale from Holland.

Ed Speak- By Steve Roake- Sales Figures and Demo Hoppers?

Whilst digesting the Turkey and expelling the resultant forces applied by "Brussel Sprouts" (we've all been there), I found myself with time to do some data analysis on hopper sales over the last seven years. I know the results will spark some debate and whilst my database is predictably not 100% accurate, I feel

that it is 90% there and so merits credibility when the results are compared. Naturally there will be reasons for trends and I accept for example Cameron Balloons do not push production of T&C hoppers anymore, but should you wish for one, like Andrew Holly did in 2004 then they are still capable of building them at whatever the current price is. Clearly, it is in Cameron's interest to simplify their range of products and Thunder & Colt hoppers fit into the category of slowly dropping off the chart due to their lack of publicity (shame as they are a nice product).



What surprised me more was that Cameron Balloons have let their hopper sales (complete balloons, not just bottom ends) diminish to zero over the last two years(Whilst we aren't talking vast numbers for any of these manufacturers, surely if you have a product in your range it is in your interest to promote/sell it).They would naturally counter, that Profit is in larger balloons

hence emphasis is on the more profitable sides of their business and the market figures would portray the cost effectiveness of larger balloons. The most consistent "player" over the last seven years has been Lindstrand Balloons, who once you dissect the figures, clearly sell more hoppers when they have a demo balloon at their disposal. The one overriding factor is that perhaps price has stripped demand with certain quotations now exceeding £10,000 for a new 25,000 cubic ft hopper; many people see this as a substantial slice towards their new regular balloon costings. One thing I never understand is that if a company has material to spare to make stock balloons, why don't they periodically manufacture a hopper or duo chariot envelope with these off-cuts? With the resurgence in this sector of the marketplace, surely a lower price "End of Rolls" hopper envelope would increase potential interest in bottom end sales. Ultramagic Balloons are now starting to see regular sales of both Duo's and Solo's , so I expect their figures to rise over the next few years as they have seen the popularity increase.

I am a firm believer that if you see the quality of the product in a hopper, it does focus your attention towards your next decision when replacing a regular sized balloon and interest in selling hoppers and delivery times tend to set a precedent in your mind. I am also convinced that if the margins were less on hopper sales, the quantities would increase. My own perception of buying a hopper is that of someone who compares the experience of buying to that of buying a new motorcycle which at similar prices sell in droves. Is it down to easy payment facilities? One lump down and 35 monthly installments? How many times have you rung up your dealer and asked have they got a demonstrator you can try out? In a lot of cases, the sales guys would love to have another hopper for events, logistically it takes up so little space to include one, it is the "Justification to Production" in getting approval for one to be made, and yet demo hoppers sell on always.

I would advocate that as soon as a demo balloon is sold (whatever size it is), another should be scheduled for manufacture.
Am I right? Your thoughts to me please.

Essential Extra's- Nothing submitted as essential this month so this section is empty again.

Features this month-

Hopper building by Greg Winkler- Busy Boy our Greg, has promised more on this subject but alas so far it hasn't arrived, so when we get it you will too, hopefully for the next issue. Furthermore, he has recently experienced some issues with his house necessitating a move out for a period of time. I'm sure the next installment will be worth the wait.

Graham Bell -Flight tests Ultramagic's "Duo"

In a feature I am keen to increase, I am keen to get independent flight tests of manufacturer's wares. Here Graham Bell in his own words gives us an independent assessment of the Ultramagic Duo on a recent flight test held in Spain.

“Back in September I was invited by Tim Revel to Igualada to try out Ultramagic's Duo. I have been flying a T&C Duo Chariot since 1998, and Cloudhoppers since 2000 but this was to be my time flying the Duo. I had previously looked closely at a prototype at the Warsteiner meet in 2004, and not been too impressed with the finish of the burner and frame, but the finish on the demonstrator, EC-JEZ was much improved.



Tim Revel and Graham Bell ready for flight (Tim is on the RHS)!

On arriving at the factory, I found that the chair was fully rigged, so I can't comment on the ease of assembly, although it appeared to be simple.

Rigging the balloon was very simple, and in the calm conditions 3 of us quickly had it hot inflated. The envelope was a H42 and with the temperature at 15C, we must have been close to max weight. Despite the load it was very responsive, and I

estimate what for the 60 minute flight we used about 50 litres of fuel (includes inflation)

Once seated, the 5 piece harness was easily locked

I immediately felt very comfortable both physically and mentally with the set-up, the squeeze grip remote I found much easier to use than having to reach overhead to use the blast valve, but on this size of balloon I myself would have it fitted to the liquid fire as I tend to fly on it most of the time. (This is an option) Tim had told me that the turning vents were very effective, and so they turned out, the best I have ever used. Pull one, the balloon turns, release it, it stops.

The mirrors, one for each tank, were easily adjustable.

For high speed landings, each fuel feed has an easily reached fast shut-off, but I am still a little uncertain what the damage the drag may do to the tanks, knowing what the metal plate on the bottom of my Duo Chariot is like. The Duo should be much easier than the Chariot to keep upright on landing, and also not drag as far. (No skid-pan on the underside)

One change I would have is that instead of the one piece headrest, I would have individual ones, so when landing backwards I can look over both shoulders.



The burner has dual everything, blast valve, liquid valve and pilot light.

I noticed that the scoop had a large cut-out at the bottom, I was told this was because there had been some problems with lack of air for the pilot lights, but I would also think that it would avoid a lot of scorched scoops as the burner frame is much smaller than a standard frame, and hence the bottom of the scoop very close to the burner.



I would have bought a bottom end, but for the burner frame is significantly smaller than a T&C or Lindstrand frame, and neither

Lindstrand nor Kubicek, the manufacturers of the two envelopes I would be flying over it were keen to certify the set-up”.

Thanks for the report Graham, more of the same please folks!

Updates on the website / Newsletter

Christmas break slowed the progress of the updating of the website as was expected, but I am very pleased to report that I have shook hands on a deal to support both the website and newsletter and thank those who recognize the service we are giving and look forward to a good, long, healthy working relationship with them in the future. When the website is finalized and the sponsor is happy with their content we will naturally have the announcement of who we are working with.

Homebuilding Section

I had great hopes for this section of the newsletter, and initially the response was very good. Whether it is the nature of the beast, or just you guys take the entire time making and have no time to write about it, suddenly we are in a situation where there is no content for this part of the newsletter. If you wish for this section to continue, please support it and send me stuff with a header stating that the content is for the home building section. Many Thanks.

Manufacturer News / Updates / Event News

The Icicle Balloon Meet-What happened.....or what didn't!

January in Blighty (UK) is wet, wild, miserable and generally a washout. Those that can go "Alpine Flying" are chilled out, those that can't get excited about the annual Icicle Meet and trade show, with the result that in marginal conditions which lead to rain and low cloud, even a blow out morning with muddy field temps around six people to go fly their balloons. Driving down the main highway (M4) to the trade show in Swindon around 9-30am, I reach a set of services called Membury known for a large aerial which is shrouded in rain and low cloud (I cant even see the top of the mast), when my eye is drawn to an adjacent field in which is a Cameron 77 fully inflated! I could only hope that take off and flight was more pleasant than the retrieve task. It later transpires that two hoppers have had gentle flights from the launch field, with Andy Austin /Neil Ivison guiding the old BBML Smirnoff Hopper G-BIDV Colt 14A over the field and Bill Mackinnon flying G-IAMP the Cameron H-34.

Arriving at the trade fair venue, with my thoughts firmly on my recent database results I approached those manufacturers present to see what is going on with Ultralight ballooning in Europe and what we can expect from them in 2007. I say "Those present", because one manufacturer was absent. Lindstrand Balloons were not there with any presence. I know Chris Sanger Davis wife was very expectant with their first baby (congratulations to you both), and Kelvin Oakley has been ill of late (get better soon), but to have no representation seemed crazy to me and I guess sends out mixed signals to all those expecting them to have a stand. Of those who were there in no particular order, I had a very nice time conversing with representatives (and good friends) from each company and will give their news in company based points.

Cameron Balloons -Colin Wolstenholme

Cameron Balloons had expected to show their new Hopper bottom end at the Trade Show, but due to production difficulties (with part of the burner block) were unable to complete the first item for the show deadline. He has promised jpegs a.s.a.p. for this magazine when available but then went on to add, that by March they hope to unveil a new Hopper Envelope Range in 16 gore variety with sizes from 21,000 up to 42,000 inclusive. I enquired if they will be "competitive" with market rates for hopper envelopes and was assured that whilst they won't be the cheapest on the marketplace, they will be "ballpark" priced.

I was asked by one of our members to enquire "if Cameron's are bothered about the private buyer these days, as most of their production seems to be either big rides balloons or special shapes." To his credit, Colin neither ducked this question nor ignored it simply stating that, "Private buyers are in their opinion scarcer than at previous periods, and that the purchase represents a substantial sum of money in difficult times". He added that "2006 has been a weird year for Cameron's, with some quiet months leading to redundancies in the factory, followed by an incredible autumn when they sold 50 balloons. Of these, predictably larger rides balloons that total 150plus hours a year and have typical 3 year cycles and need replacing feature, and shapes are something that they are known for hence the answer to the sales Demo graph".

Ultramagic Balloons-Tim & Hilary Revel and Paul Dickinson

Tim Revel and Paul Dickinson Live and breath the hopper and Duo chariot concept and with the Ultramagic Solo and Duo are finding success right across Europe including a recent sale to Serbia.



Paul Dickinson's personal hopper was on exhibition, bottom end in a demonstration frame and the 25 envelope G-CEFB teasing enthusiasts with its ultra-light fabric but staying in the bag.

Both independently enthused about buoyant sales figures with good growth in 2006 following their appearances at both the Easter "Solo Meet" and the "OMM" assisting in sales in the UK, and hinted at more imminent arrivals both in the UK and Europe.

They agreed that having Demonstrator models helps promote the sales and Tim hinted that given the right set of circumstances , he would look forward to having a Duo demonstrator in the UK in the near future for clients to try(see Graham Bells flight test opinion later this issue). I broached the idea to them that in my time in ballooning, no manufacturer has ever made a "Stock" hopper envelope out of "End of rolls" of material, and suggested that if sold at a slightly reduced price compared to list; this might even help bottom end sales. This was taken on board by them for the factory to look into the possibility of doing as an experiment.

Their commitment to growth of this market sector was reassured and we look forward to seeing the results in due course.



Forgive the deviation, but this is how Paul attaches his instruments when flying and having discussed this subject at length, I felt compelled to take the photo and include it! Very Neat setup!

One thing I would like to clear up, forgive my ignorance, but Tim assured me that whilst all Ultramagic envelopes are certified with turning vents to go above Solo and Duo's, should you be in

the market for an envelope and use a swivel bottom end, you can order your envelope without vents which I admit was not an option that I was aware of.

Kubicek Balloons-Chrispin Williams

Kubicek is not a company you associate with hoppers. A number of us have been badgering Chrispin to get into this sector of the market since Kubicek use Polyester based envelopes which take greater heat and seem to have a longer lifecycle.

I have included them here because in a tie up with a company called Fly in Balloons SRL of Villafalletto, Italy, finally they seem to be on the verge of embracing Ultra-light ballooning. Details were sketchy to be sure, but Chrispin promises more details as soon as they can give them to us. However, Kubicek make a nice product and I'm sure that when they deliver on ultralight balloons, based on their current price for a basket based 42,000 of just over £4000; they will be very well received.

Kubicek are a slow to expand type of company but have great attention to detail when they apply themselves and Czech detailing seems very good. For example I would deviate slightly from topic matter to tell you about their new burner system called the Ignis. This was at the Icicle meet and looked remarkably like a pair of Sirocco burners except for a triple mounted coil arrangement. Finish quality was good utilizing in house manufacturing and I guess any hopper bottom end would use a derivative of this type of burner (hence the reason to include it in the news).



As you can see from the above jpeg , this demo item featured a natty secondary vapour feed using a blanked off bung which when changed from blank to feed via secondary pipework, meant your liquid feed burners could be changed for countries where fuel supply is less assured and perhaps alternative fuels required. You can see from the close up shot below , manufacturing is of the highest quality and being modular in build design , multiple burner setups are possible and block coloration (in this case a bright red) can be specified on ordering . If the same degree of precision is applied when they get into hoppers (apparently the bottom end is the hard part), then perhaps our wait will be worth the effort. Another thing that surprised me from kubicek was their inflation fan which sported a one piece fan guard which was uniquely shaped behind the prop so the fan guard comes off at an angle and eliminates the possibility of guard detachment.



Malcolm White /Pauline Baker - Record attempts Ax1- Ax4

With High expectation for a full report from Malcolm in the near future reporting all their attempts currently taking place in Italy and Later in Switzerland, I am pleased to report that Pauline Baker has already been successful in the AX-2/AX-3 Categories for women. Flying the ex Chrispin Williams T&C 14A G-BVKX, Pauline set the new standard for this category extending the old record of 2hours and 40mins to a new record of 3hrs 36mins. This was set on 7th January at Brunico, Italy. More details on their website at www.balloons.ie/records.html. This is a record that had stood from 1975 so all the best to them on their achievement and the margin they have extended the old record by. Pauline also extended the distance record for this category on 14th January

raising the record from 18.1km to 22.75km for this class of balloon.

Event News

Two events to bring to your attention.

The Solo Meet -Held at Great Missenden by BHBC is happening again this year. Dates are April 6th -9th (i.e. Easter weekend) and it will be run along similar lines to last year with potential alternate launch sites dependent on winds. Please if you are interested in going contact Graham Philpot at graham.philpot@ntlworld.com as soon as possible for details. I believe camping and Gas are available again this year.

The First EuroHop

Barbara Reed has put together a cracking meet to be held exclusively for hoppers/ Duos in September from the 1st -7th at Chauvigny near Poitiers France. Set in an area with free airspace all around, this sounds great. Entry Fee (to be decided but roughly £30) is minimal and covers admin etc, with camping and accommodation available and a real week's planned event involving all the locals. All correspondence will be coordinated via me hopefully fully electronically via E-mail but at this stage, we need to know who is coming. So please email your interest to me at steve.roake@ntlworld.com titled EuroHop. What we need to know here people is the scale of things, so please get your responses in quick as possible thanks.

Gallery Pages-Editors choice of New and Older choice hoppers and Duo chariots.



Brand New Ultramagic 25 YU-AOL C/N 25/07 is the first hopper in Serbia, but more importantly belongs to recent new list member Dragoljub Zamurovic, and is evidence reflecting the current growth of hopping throughout Europe.



New Lindstrand 9A (yes 9,000 cu ft), For Malcolm White/
Pauline Baker is C/N 1147 .Hopefully more on this lightweight
balloon next issue.

For Sale / Wanted Section -

Only one this month

Peter Kooista has the following for sale

I have for sale a new factory fresh UM H-42 Envelope for sale. C/N is 42/03 .It is unregistered and has Zero hours flying time. (See jpg below...Ed). It was purchased by a client that did a one day tether with four of these and then did nothing else with them, so is as good as new!

The price I ask is € 6.500 ono. this is including shipment in Europe.

Kind regards,

Pieter Kooistra.

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(Editor's Note ...the above envelope may need wires extending for use with Hopper bottom ends...source Paul Dickinson Ultramagic).

Next Issue

In the next edition of the newsletter, I will be hopefully looking into the following items.

- More from Greg Winker on his Homebuilt hopper
- Hopefully the rescheduled visit to a propeller maker
- First of a couple of features on photographers This time Ian Berry of TZ Aviation will be under the spotlight.

And finally.....



I like this jpeg because not only is it the only one submitted showing Malcolm White in the flight of nations at Albuquerque 2006 in EI-DJZ the Smart Telecom Lindstrand 31A, but it also shows Ian Berry 's photography and hopefully will wet your appetites for the full feature Next month on his work.

Fly Safe everyone, Membership stands at 263 plus (mid January 2007).

Soft landings and happy flying Steve

All articles for inclusion in future issues, please forward to the editor at Information@cloudhoppers.org and all feedback good, bad or indifferent will be welcome. In future we might even run a letters/email section. Views aired by contributors may not be those of the editor.

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