

Issue Number 25

April / May 2008

Dear Members,

As I sit here writing towards the end of May, driving rain lashing down in Southern England outside the windows, 25 knot winds gusting 40, it seems hard to imagine that we are into the great British Summer. The "Weather Gods" are teasing us with a few great weekends followed by a return to prolonged rain storms and yet I for one am happy. Why? It is great to just get out and socialise with other hopper folks at events across the country, and added to that the bonus of some great flying and some contributions to assist with the newsletter, then who could ask for more?



Mass Flying took place at the Solo Meet -jpeg by Sandy Mitchell

XLTA seems to have been an unqualified success and whilst we give you the briefest of details this month , expect more next time around as those who attended please send me their unique views of the 4th event hosted by Dan Nachbar.47 individuals graced the gathering so surely a few of you can share with us your experiences. So without more of an "adieu", here is the latest hopper news and stories.

Contents

In this 25th issue I have for your reading the following selection of subjects:

- 1, Ed Speak- Content at last!
- 2, The Features Section-featuring the following submissions:
 - The Solo Meet 2008. Reports from your editor, Tim Dudman and Peter Gray.
 - The BBML Inflation day -Hopper content.
 - Old Buddies come out to play!
 - XLTA- a brief overview of the event with more detail to come next month.
3. Updates for the Newsletter/Website/ Forum talk
4. Homebuilt Section -
5. Gallery Pages- Another mixed choice of hoppers selected by your editor for inclusion.
- 6, Manufacturer News / Events / Updates
 - Hints of the 2008 OMM from Phil Dunnington.
 - Cameron continues hopper fan blade testing.
- 7, For Sale /Wanted Section
 - Rare Colt 42A for sale on the Zebedee List.
 - Hopper fan moves quickly!
 - G-CEWF- Complete hopper for sale!
- 8, Last and not least.

1, Ed Speak by Steve Roake - Content at last, (in both ways)!

The Collins Concise English Dictionary says that Content is either Defined as 1, "Satisfied with the way things are" or 2, "All that is contained or dealt with in a piece of writing, etc. - i.e. - substance." Either way after the dearth of printable substance in April, I am content in either way you take the meaning to be able to bring to you another newsletter that actually has some meat to fill out my waffle and haver. It is amazing how a small uplift in the weather and a gathering of the good folks from the hopper world seems to put everything into perspective and you then take on a completely different outlook to those frustrating times prior to these events when you can't even fly and the weather keeps you firmly on the ground. Let us all hope that more of the same is to come and not just a flash in the pan. Either way -Enjoy the moment!

2, The Features Section-

The Fourth Annual Solo Meet- Overview by Steve Roake.

The fourth running of the annual Solo Meet took place over the first May bank holiday weekend, with a good turnout at the Black Horse Pub in Great Missenden Bucks. Hosted as ever by the Black Horse Balloon Club, for me a true test of a good meet is to see who travels to other regions to join with the locals. The Bucks region of the UK has a good number of hoppers who like to fly locally, but over the three previous years, you could begin to count on the same people turning up (i.e. the Hilditch /Ward team who had their traditional position in the launch field campsite in full effect), myself, Neil Ivison and Peter Gray and Paul Sweatman. In 2008 (I suspect buoyed by a great Not the OMM

event); extra visitors included Colin Wolstenholme and Julia, Peter Gooch, Tim Dudman and Jonathan Dyer.

With a few away in Italy, duties were shared with Lennie Vaughan providing the met and Tim and Hilary Revell providing the bacon butties and Tea / Coffee. Socials started in the pub on Friday evening with the first flyable slot on Saturday morning from this launch site. With the track towards the Vale of Aylesbury on a 300 degree heading, the only real surprise besides how far the visibility extended, was a fast band of wind which I read at 22mph at between 300/700 feet agl. Above this layer the wind reduced to around 12/13 mph as we flew adjacent to RAF Halton and chequers. The ground below showed signs of the recent wet weather with saturated areas evident, but the approach to land was controlled at a steady 7/8mph after a pre-emptive descent but the retrieve proved eventful with access to vehicles unlikely due to impassable tracks, two of us got a local farmers tractor and trailer to assist in our extraction. Saturday evening, buoyed by the morning flight I chose not to fly in challenging conditions that suited Baskets and chariot bottom ends over "feet-first" landing gear! There appeared to be vast curl over at tree top height but those who did fly came back speaking of large drag landings (definitely not a hopper type arrival).

With Plenty of other activities (including work), requiring my attention, this concluded my activity at the Solo Meet but once again it had shown the successful formula works and further flying continued during the weekend as described by our other contributors

Steve Roake



Colin Wolstenholme (the laid back one with hands in pockets and red "signature" Cap), watches Julia depart in G-BWOY their Sky 31 Chariot at the Solo Meet - jpeg by Sandy Mitchell.

G-BXVP Flight Report, Solo Meet 2008 by Tim Dudman

Having woken up early, I am writing this from my front room in a rather fogged-out North Somerset. With the hopper grounded until this afternoon at least, I thought I'd put together a quick flight report from one of the flights at this month's Black Horse Solo Meet at Great Missenden... On the Saturday morning, the gradient was supposed to be about 18kts, but on the launch site it was dead calm. For many it was the first flight back in the harness after a very wet and windy winter.

As I took off from the Black Horse pub there was about 3kts of wind at 50ft, just enough to fly clear of the launch site and hover back down in the still air over the corn next to the railway line.

After a while hovering low with other balloons flying over the top, I climbed out from the valley and began to track over Coombe Hill towards the north. Our track took us just to the east of Chequers, the PM's country residence. It was at this point, with hoppers all around me that I glanced at the GPS for the first time – 22kts! Considering I was about 300ft AGL that was certainly an *interesting* number...



As I approached the escarpment at the northern end of the ridge I descended to fly close to the monument that overlooks Aylesbury Vale. As I flew past at over 20kts I suddenly thought about the very real threat of curl over. As I flew out over the escarpment I put in quite a lot of heat. The envelope started to flutter as the lumpy air buffeted at the nylon. With a decent application of heat I didn't lose any height, and about 300m out from the ridge, the air smoothed out and the envelope settled back into steady flight. Having covered a decent distance in a short amount of time, the prospect of overflying Aylesbury to reach the target at a hotel on the northern edge of the town seemed doable. I crossed Aylesbury at 1000ft, 19kts. When I reached the northern edge of the town (which didn't take long) my track took me along a set of power lines and there was no prospect of landing. After several adjustments to my altitude I managed to get about 100m to the right of the cables. Not wanting to pick up the left on the surface, I sighted a grass field next to a stream and decided to go in steep.

The field was not very wide along my track, and as I descended towards the ground I cleared the trees and headed straight for my spot. It was at this point I realised that I had flown the approach as I would have done in the Z-105 in these conditions. After some last minute futile burning to arrest the descent I rotated myself into position below the envelope and prepared for my first hard landing in a hopper.

As my feet hit the ground, any thoughts of absorbing the impact with my legs went straight out the window. The bottom of the frame hit straight away, the momentum and weight of the 60-litre tank ramming it into the ground. Thanks to the superbly simple design of the Cameron Millennium hopper, the paragliding harness clipped to the front of the frame remained suspended above the ground and all the force was taken by the frame. I don't actually remember feeling any discomfort, but that may have been due to my surprise at the big splash when I touched down!

It turned out that what had looked like a perfectly normal grass field from the air was actually a perfectly normal *waterlogged* grass field when it came to it. A very short drag later and both the envelope and pilot were soaked. Fortunately we had just swapped our Ford Focus for a Honda 4x4 which had no problem retrieving in the boggy conditions.

The next day was also flyable, and Sunday evening saw a much more sedate flight that also served to dry out my envelope before we headed back to North Somerset...

Tim Dudman, G-BXVP.



THE BLACK HORSE BALLOON CLUB

SOLO MEET May 3rd, 4th, & 5th 2008- by Peter Gray

Having returned to the Black Horse for the Solo meet in 2007 for the first time in more years than I care to remember, when it was announced that the Solo meet 2008 was not to be over the Easter weekend 2008 (presumably because Easter was unusually very early) I have to admit I was somewhat disappointed yet at the same time I could look forward to the first May Bank Holiday.

Following the successful 'hopper get-togethers' held at the Black Horse over the last three years the Black Horse Balloon Club again played hosted the event primarily aimed at all pilots who enjoy flying alone whether in a basket or 'leg dangling'. But others were not refused space on the launch field. Described as a 'grass-roots' fun style meet and open to all solo balloonists with no restriction on maximum envelope size. The only stipulation made for pilots wishing to be considered for a 'prize' was the flight is made by pilot alone!

Arriving at around 22.15 on the Friday night there was just time to meet up with Steve Roake, who I had agreed to retrieve for on the Saturday, and grab a pint before getting some sleep ahead of briefing at 0600 on the field. Saturday Morning dawned and with Lenny Vaughan giving a forecast surface wind of 5kts and the Gradient wind giving a track towards Aylesbury thirteen balloons including six hoppers took off from the field next to the pub. By the evening the gradient wind had increased in speed to around 11 knots again heading in the direction of Aylesbury although this was likely to slow down a little later so with numerous members of the public watching from a safe distance by 7pm five balloons had taken to the air.



G-ONCB LBL 31A of Steve Humphreys joins Kevin Tanner G-HOPR (LBL25A) and Tim Dudman G-BXVP (Sky 31A), "Ready to Depart" whilst your editor lags behind -jpeg by Sandy Mitchell.

By Sunday Morning the hot tea or coffee and bacon rolls provided by Hilary Revel ably assisted by Tim (on kettle filling duties) was more than welcome for those waiting for briefing at 6am. The winds had dropped overnight to around 7 knots at 160 degrees and after details regarding refuelling had been given four teams flew plus two local passenger balloons operated by Ted Moore.

Although I had to leave after the morning launch due to other commitments once again it was a good weekend showing that friendly events of this kind can be lots of fun and I for one look forward to the 2009 Solo meet.

Peter Gray

The BBML Inflation Day -Kirby Lonsdale Cumbria.

The Bi-annual British Balloon Museum and Library inflation days are very well received inflation days that are organised to demonstrate to the public older preserved balloons with an invitation to pilots to turn up and display whatever you bring. Trying to ensure that more exotic balloons were exhibited, this year's event was hosted by the UK North West Region and held at the fine venue of Kirby Lonsdale Rugby Club.

With the majority of list members being first and foremost enthusiasts, there was a very large turnout of list members to this event and your editor ventured the 280 miles to Cumbria on the eve of the event teaming up with the Tanner family (Kevin and Keith). Hopper content at such an event would be a small contribution to the vast numbers displayed but with weather fantastic all day (light and variable winds of about 2-3mph), it wasn't long before some of the older statesmen of the hopper world appeared.

After an initial pilot briefing at 08-00 and subsequent drying of the grass underfoot, a steady flow of envelopes appeared over the following eight hours only interrupted for nourishment provided by members of the rugby club in their excellent facilities. My one regret of the day was that I was too slow off the mark where food was concerned and missed the opportunity to sample Lancashire Hot pot which ran out one place in front of me in the queue for food!

Bill Teasdale was amongst those present and is part of the BBML infrastructure. He often provides this newsletter with rarer jpegs and was seen charging around the large site with camera in hand to capture the moments. I believe that the sizable crowd appreciated the various pilot's efforts with a large section venturing across the border from Scotland. I understand the BBML is keen to continue its' policy of taking the event to other

regions of the UK where ballooning events are less regular and so we look forward to the next one in 2010.



G-BKMR Thunder & Colt Ax3 -17.5 Maxi Sky Chariot dating from 1983 - (jpeg by Graham Bann), was one of many balloons displayed by Neil Ivison.



Also seen at the inflation day was G-BKBD, Thunder Ax3 Sky Chariot which dates from 1982, and looks good belonging to Martin Casson, Jpeg by Bill Teasdale.

Old "Buddies" Come out to play!

May produced a surprising coincidence with three Budweiser
hoppers being displayed at various venues. At both the Solo Meet
and the BBML inflation day, Martin Freeston displayed G-BUEU
Thunder and Colt 21A with hand painted artwork. Seen below at
Kirby Lonsdale the hopper was captured by Bill Teasdale.



The second unconnected Budweiser hopper sighting was sent in by Chris Dobson who caught G-BPFX Colt 21A at the Abingdon Air and Country Fair. This one is slightly earlier vintage and dates from 1988.



Graham Bell hints at XLTA fun- more next month!

The 4th XLTA rally took place between the 16th and 18th May in Amherst, MA. Although the the weather didn't cooperate particularly, I had a great time and am already planning how to get back next year with my Duo Chariot.

Organised by Dan Nachbar, the event is for both hoppers and experiment balloons and was almost equally split between the two. Overall 22 balloons and 47 pilots, crew and interested people turned up. Short, interesting seminars and videos were arranged to fill some of the time between and after scheduled flying, and were well attended.

The weather curtailed most flying, heavy rain on Friday evening, and although the rain stopped soon after sunrise on Saturday, with the wind forecast to get up quickly and a 3000 ft wind forecast at 25-30 mph nobody decided to free fly. Led by Curtis Pack with his tank-rider, about 7 balloons tethered until the the wind picked up.

The evening was still breezy, with rain showers about. This did not stop one balloon from tethering when the wind dropped. Suddenly it picked up again to 15+mph, which led to a very rapid and interesting deflation



Group Shot from XLTA 4 Amherst 2008- by Graham Bell.

Sunday morning's forecast was hopeful, although still with a strong 3000 ft wind. After trying one launch site, the piballs indicated a bad direction, the group split into two with about 4 balloons flying from each new launch site. The majority decided to watch as the wind picked up a bit and became gusty. I know several of the landings were of the "sporting or interesting" variety.

After a quick breakfast, Dan had organised food all weekend for everyone who wanted it, we all started heading home, some with long road trips to Florida, West Virginia, Missouri and Canada.

Myself, I had one more day before flying back to England so I used some of the time to visit the New England Aircraft Museum, www.neam.org , at Hartford/Springfield airport(BDL). It's well worth a visit and has a small display with an 1870's gas balloon basket.

Many thanks must go to Dan Nachbar for organising such a fun event, and for my full story, but you will have to wait until next month as Steve doesn't have anything for that month's newsletter YET.

As Editor I am looking for more details from XLTA 4 please for inclusion in the June newsletter.

3, Updates to the website / Newsletter/ Forum Topics

Topics on the forum have naturally centred on the activity that has happened this month. XLTA 4 at Amherst featured with general responses complimenting the organisers for another great event, emphasising the great communal spirit that comes across from everyone who comments.

Greg Winker has been in Los Angeles doing a project in conjunction with Discovery channel in trying to put a rocket motor to a hopper. We await the results with baited breath.

4, Homebuilt section

There have been no submissions for this section in the last month so this section is naturally empty. Please send to me details of all your projects at any stage of construction for future inclusion in this section of the newsletter.

5, Gallery Pages.

This section is the Editor's choice of new and older jpegs. This month I am taking a slightly changed format for one reason alone. Graham Bell took his Kubicek two seater to Albuquerque last year but suffered a problem when another balloon tore a massive hole in the side of his balloon on the launch field. Subsequent repairs carried out at the factory resulted in a new look as some of the original fabric was no longer available. So here is the original Look.



As delivered from the Czech factory in 2003

Following the extensive reconstruction process here is the second or current appearance for G-DNGA



Spot the difference! - Both Jpegs courtesy of Graham Bell.

Finally a jpeg of G-CEWF which is in our For Sale section this month. Photo taken on recent test inflation in Hampshire.



If your hopper /Duo picture has yet to feature in this section of the Gallery pages, send me a jpeg of approx 600kb size for future inclusion. Usual address Steve.roake@ntlworld.com

6, Manufacturer News /Events /Updates



Following a recent chat with Cameron Balloon's Colin Wolstenholme, I can bring you the latest update of progress with the ongoing drive to create a better hopper fan blade for the existing Cameron dedicated fan. The progress is currently ongoing but two types of fan blade have now been evaluated and rejected and Colin is product testing the third type. We hope to bring you definitive news of a break through to end the underwhelming performance of this product soon.

OMM 2008

Bumped into Phil Dunnington at a recent event in Wiltshire, and naturally within 30 seconds I was asking about the OMM 2008. Phil confirmed that after initial efforts to stage this year's event in Devon, He then suggested to some prolific hopper pilots that The Wye Valley would suit the event. Unfortunately obstacles to this proposal meant that this second suggestion was withdrawn. The event seems to be heading to central Wales with a fallback option of Husbands Bosworth as a backup should the primary option fail. None of this is set in stone so be prepared for further confirmation of the venue nearer the time.

7, For Sale /Wanted section

Quite a busy month for hopper stuff, with a couple of items becoming available and news of a successful sale of a 3.5hp fan in only 4 days.

First item recently spotted for sale on the Zebedee List is this Colt 42A Hopper. This Swiss example typifies what is becoming a

rarer find on the second hand market. As 42's are rare at the best of times so this represents an opportunity to get a bigger hopper when there are not many available.

Colt 42A. 1995. 118 hrs. Mostly yellow with balloon pattern at base. T&C Bullet basket, 100 x 95cm made in 2000, 106 hrs. T&C Stratus single burner also made in 2000. 3 x Worthington tanks. Ultramagic 5.5hp fan built 2003 & like new. Probst trailer. Will split. Price complete Euro 8500

Chris - +41 79 695 1369 or info@ballonfahren.ch

For pictures see www.zebedeelist.co.uk

For Sale- G-CEWF

Complete hopper system Annexe 2 (less tank)

The Envelope is a South African Home built and registered as a Jacobs 35. It was brought into the country by a Pilot from up north it was claimed and documented to have 8 hours on it (this looks about right its very new and a nice silicone almost crispy fabric. No signs of stress or overheating but no temp label or heat flag in it. Its construction was very good and it does have turning vents which the lines have been taken out. Pete Bish initially looked at the balloon and put some extra reinforcing stitching to the crown tapes area. I took on the balloon with a view to adding it to an as new condition Lindstrand bottom end. New Kevlar parachute lines were added at the top.

Its reg is G-CEWF.

I have inflated the balloon three times on all occasions to check it out

- 1, Initial check then parachute re trimmed by Commercial balloon rigger and new Kevlar upper rigging lines.
2. Where the rigger checked the rigging
3. I inflated and flew it tethered for 20 mins.

Anyway after 2501 parachute jumps decided that hopping feels too much like parachuting so have decided to can my hopping intentions to convert too lightweight balloon kit. Recently I have been doing a lot of instructing and flying my Collapsible Basket with a 56 so along with my 90 that's enough for me on the hopping front (for now)

Bottom end

An as new condition Lindstrand bottom end which had done 7 hours before I got it but you would not know, Complete with travelling bags and protective covers.

The kit is sold as seen without inspection and a tank is available on further negotiation for around £275 60 litre QSO T and C Rego

I could be persuaded to part just with the envelope and that would be £1800 which is what was paid before some of the work was done. **The bottom end is not available on its own** so please don't ask.

So price without tank is £4000 Check out the price of a hopper bottom end and this one looks like it's just out of the factory.

Please call or text Jonathan Dyer on 07967 986486 for further information or email Skydyer@yahoo.co.uk

Hopper Fan

A used 3.5hopper fan became available through the forum recently being advertised by myself for a friend. In very good condition, it represented good value for the price at £395 and I am pleased to say that after only four days Neil Roberts arrived

from Cardiff and took delivery. This typifies that the cloudhoppers list and the Newsletter are definitely the place to put your adverts for a quick sale to people who want the items that we specifically identify as suitable for inclusion.

Adverts to Steve.roake@ntlworld.com

And Finally

Membership is currently a healthy 363 members and 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 flying Steve Roake.
© Cloudhoppers.org

Issue 25- April-May 2008