



Cloudhopper News

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Hi People.

Another twin edition with once again a fair smattering of flying having taken place. Following on from the successful event at Sackville, I ventured north to Bedale in Yorkshire. Who would have thought that after four flights over a weekend in Bedfordshire, it would be followed up by five in Yorkshire?

This was also followed up by a very sociable event in Tiverton in Devon with flights achieved at both.

1, Ed-Speak – Feast and Famine.

This phrase seems to be associated with me. Having not flown at all between October and May, I have now got over ten flights within a relatively short space of time. At Sackville it took a while to get back into the feel of the flight but luckily when in Yorkshire, things seemed natural from the word go.

Steve Roake

2, Essential Extra's / Tech Talk- Mark Stelling's Saucy Tip

If you have older carbineers which are looking past their sell by date, Mark Stelling has a nifty way of making them look good again. He recommends going to your local supermarket and purchasing the cheapest bottle of brown sauce available. Chuck the carbineers into the sauce and let them immerse in the liquid. Sometime later remove the items, clean the residue from them and voila they look pristine once more. Whilst I have no idea what is attacking the attachments, I am assured that this works and so I list this as a top tip. Thanks to Mark for the information.

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Bedale- The friendly meet

Travelling to Bedale near North Allerton in Yorkshire for this event brings back great memories because it is the essence of a lovely easy going event. Being invitation only, you always feel privileged to be invited to such a lively friendly well organised weekend where nothing seems to be a problem. The weekend is sorted by Richard Bowater and his team ably assisted by Mark Stelling who had been in conversation with me prior to the event and suggested that it may be worth travelling up a day earlier to complete my EASA check flight. Therefore with the car rammed full, I set off on the Thursday morning with the idea that I would try to arrive by about 3pm giving me plenty of time to establish my camp for the weekend before we go fly that night.

Progress was good and arriving at the social club around the predicted time I had plenty of time to get my tent sorted and go into town for some sustenance before Mark arrived. He had done some active pr for the event inviting the station commander and his wife from nearby RAF Leeming to fly with us that evening. This would also be a flight for me signing off the requirement for the instructor flight for my EASA license requirement and a very nice time we had too flying with another balloon and a local Microlight and arriving in Fearby about an hour later and finding the local hostelry very accommodating.

The following morning dawned fairly calm and having had the forecast those who were present flew towards the northwest at a very easy 5-6 knots. Following on from my Sackville experience I was very attentive to the set up of my flight, and was delighted that the inflation and launch were worry free with the parachute sealing as it should. Flying fairly close to Mark and Tim Wilkinson, we headed towards the A1 main road and played around in some lovely cut fields and around a small pond that evaded my splash and dashing abilities. The boys had landed after about 45 mins and yet I hadn't found a field suitable so chose to fly further, initiating my descent to land towards a lovely manicured back garden on a farm in Kirby Freetham with a cut hay field alongside it after another 15mins.



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The owners wife appeared as I touched down suggesting a cup of tea might be the order of the day so asking for three (to include my volunteer crew mates) was a lovely welcome. Having packed the balloon away, I was amazed the lady concerned had time for us, with four kids under the age of six, pigs, cows, chickens and so on to attend to (on a school day), not forgetting workmen who were converting her barn into an indoor tennis court, she still said I had made her day, so the bottle of complimentary wine was placed very firmly in her hands with thanks. I was amazed how on a school day such a lady can still find time to entertain visitors in such a nice way. These kind of people reinstall your faith in human nature and reaffirm why we choose to fly.

We returned to the campsite/ launchfield for debriefing and then got a crowd of us together and departed to Mark Stelling's suggestion for breakfast. This was a roadside café of the old style from days gone by but the food was lovely and we returned suitably sustained. By the evening slot, a load more balloonists had arrived and the hopper content had increased. The winds were generally stronger and the direction had changed but once again it was flyable. This time my track took me over the town of Bedale and off towards Cowling. Whilst the flight was only 55mins long I managed 3.7nm and took the opportunity to track Mark in his Z-105 until the winds picked up markedly and the available landing spots decreased. I watched Mark grab a lovely cut field slightly off to my left and continued until I managed to find myself some scrubby set aside on a corner of a field of wheat and screamed into it at about 11 knots.

The volunteer crew were fantastic, arriving almost instantaneously, but the evening was memorable for seeing Nigel Bourke take his Lindstrand 35A for its only second UK flight and hats off to him flying G-SIPP in such testing conditions. Over 20 odd balloons flew on this slot.

Saturday morning dawned far too early and some flew but for me the conditions were a tad fast for a hopper and in the direction predicted I just didn't fancy the flight so I sat it out and helped others launch. I thought that the evening held better promise for a flight and so I wasn't very bothered. It transpired that the flight was fairly fast and a few folks had issues with a particularly irritable land owner.

The evening briefing revealed that it was indeed flyable but the inflation process was punctuated with fickle winds that caught out a few but not being one of the first to fly I avoided all



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the fuss. The direction literally changed by about 180 degrees, and following a swift reposition I inflated in slightly spirited conditions. However, this didn't matter as I had a very normal take off with the direction different to the general track talked about in the briefing. Initially my track took me northerly but it was abundantly clear there was plenty of variation and steerage. The direction on the surface was about 90degrees opposed to the upper winds. I initially tracked further north but noted the general track by those ahead of me and so took the decision to drop and track towards Masham where I found a lovely field that was cut for an early landing. 35mins is one of my shorter flights but sometimes you realise you must not be greedy and having flown considerably over the weekend I was keen not to ruin the fun and awaited the predicted good weather for Sunday morning.

The final (fifth) flight of my weekend was a leisurely flight on Sunday morning which was a very beautiful serene jaunt across Bedale town and over the railway low level. The wind speed was only around 4-5 knots but there was no need to rush and I meandered along the B6268 road sometimes one side of it, sometimes the other indulging in some delightful low level stuff over clear fields. Funnily enough, there were points during my flight when I tried to land failing abysmally to get the drift into the chosen landing spot. The first attempt was a lovely football pitch just behind a caravan park in Firby but as is the normal case, instead of heading to the middle of the chosen field, the track of the balloon clipped the corner and I abandoned my approach. Climbing to avoid a local sensitive area the wind pushed me back towards my original travel and not wishing to complicate the retrieve (who were very friendly local farmer friends new to ballooning) I attempted to land in a nice cut field surrounded by animals in adjacent ones. Once again in the descent the balloon decided not to play ball and veered off in a direction that wasn't predicted. I once again decided to concentrate as I had flown now for an hour and made sure that I was clear of a couple of surrounding no landing spots. The winds that had now backed very slowly dragged me up towards a triangulated junction of the roads with one possibility of a landing spot and I worked hard varying the heights to achieve a decent landing in a cut field after 1 hour 15mins. The farmer was delightful having watched from a distance my antics. I walked the balloon (still inflated) up to the gate and then deflated as he approached, having agreed permission. Whilst this was a



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more tasking flight, it was a lovely way to finish off a beautiful weekend. The total distance flown was a meagre 4.7nm, but not every flight needs to be long to be enjoyable and the return to the launch site was swift.

Packing away the tented accommodation, I was just about spot on for the 11am prize giving ceremony with many fine gifts donated including some fine stuff from Cameron balloons which I was fortunate to win due to achieving the flight nearest to the edge of the map.

. With many thanks to Richard and his team, this was a really good event which when invited, I will return to fly at next time. So if you fancy a really sociable, back to basics event put Bedale in your diary.

Steve Roake.

Enchanting Tiverton by Steve Roake

Mid July found me travelling down the A303 towards Cider country, rolling hills and the Tiverton Balloon Festival run by Charlie and Arthur Street from Aerosaurus Ballooning. Weather was supposedly going to be okay and having had a discussion with Captain Fromage himself (Mark Stelling), we were both agreed that if we achieved two flying slots from the forecast weather we would be doing good.

It had been a few years since I had been at Tiverton, and previously the festival was hosted at a site near a golf course, however the school grounds were perfect for our needs with decent facilities for those of us who had chosen Tents for the weekend.

Arriving at the school festival site around midday, I had plenty of time to unpack and erect the tented accommodation for the weekend.

Immediately bumping into Mathew Hume from Twickenham, and I discovered that Mathew tended to fly in the area rather than back home and had agreed to tether for Arthur later that afternoon. Knowing the wind was likely to be too quick for a Hopper flight I agreed to help my low housed friend in front of the local Itv television station who were going to have a live feed from the site. Winds were going to make this a challenge and between us we did a good job with G-CBEY Mathews Cameron Concept 80.

The balloons around us rolled around and yet the concept stayed relatively in shape and with serious tethering experience; I



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managed the crown line alone, whilst others suffered at the winds challenge with multiple people hanging on. Aersaurus had their Lindstrand 105 in the main location with the Concept next up and Peter Harding's Ultramagic Tekno M56 package G-FWJR rolling around on the end. The weather definitely wasn't good for free flying with a late drop out expected and that's exactly what happened.

Nobody flew the slot because the drop was way too late for any serious flying but as darkness descended we set up for the Friday Nightglow. Teams from Doombur, Fairway, Loughborough University and CJ Hole joined the three originals and a spirited show was put on for the assembled public.

Saturday morning dawned oh too early and at the briefing we got the news we had expected .This was the banker slot of the weekend. Surface winds of 300 degrees , 4-5knots and upper winds of 310/5knots at 500ft , 300/11knots at 1000ft and 270/6-7 at 2000ft all confirmed a nice pleasant flight with an easterly track over the town and out towards the M5 motorway and loads of grassy fields . Taking my time to assemble the Hopper I watched two others fly out , firstly Geoff Downs in G-BZNV his lindstrand 31A and then Colin Butter in the ex Pauline Baker Lindstrand G-CIET .





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Being one of the last five off the launch field gave me a great chance to check where the others had flown to and the variation in wind direction with height. Approximately 39 flew the morning flight, with our resident photographic experts Sandy Mitchell and Martin Freeston there to capture it all digitally.

However directly in front of me as I climbed to 1000ft was a school playing field and so an approach into this was the first order of the day. Rounding out at about three foot at about 3knots I rejoined the mass where the upper winds were around 12 knots. It was easy to catch up others who were loitering low level and I flew about 45 mins before I decided I ought to start looking at potential landing spots. The winds were very fickle this morning with nothing below about 400 feet literally leaving you with zero knots and a direct descent. No steering was possible and when you required a small left to put you into your chosen landing spot, it just wasn't there. First choice was binned, and then a potential landing spot looked populated by a few teams so I chose to fly on. Reaching the town of Collumpton, a third desirable spot seemed on the cards employing a big dump towards the target field but once again it got away.

I was now becalmed over a housing estate and upon checking the fuel status I realised that the diptube was now reading. Telling myself not to get worked up and just fly the bloody balloon I manoeuvred towards the motorway at about 5 knots just above the inversion. Things were (to my mind), beginning to get serious. I decided that as soon as I was clear of the houses I would look intensely for a landing spot initially binning a derelict scrap metal yard, and flying on looking for something softer to land on. I had now reached the motorway and whilst it is hard to tell yourself to relax, I thought I just needed to be patient and an opportunity would appear. I was now on track for an industrial estate, a DIY store, a garden centre and then finally a field that appeared grassy.

The approach entailed staying high for as long as possible and some pseudo alpine type flying of getting it right into the middle of the field and then dumping the balloon positively into the chosen place . This did (Luckily) as previous attempts and came down vertically and with good access I gratefully took my field. The flight had travelled 6.6 nm in one hour 25mins and I actually had used 42 of my 60 available litres of fuel.

Lovely people turned out to see me bringing their kids, mostly amazed at how rapidly I had dropped from the sky.



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To me this was just a controlled descent but you have to remember from other perspectives it could have looked more dramatic. Crew were there ready to help pack away and so we adjourned to Collumpton where the pilot brought breakfast for all.

Returning to the launch field I noticed a few teams had got their envelopes wet and were cold inflating to dry them out. Luckily for me this wasn't necessary.





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Next "action" was around 11am where John Vinery, myself, a P.U.T. from Loughborough University and Virgin's Celia were going to do a live spot on BBC Radio Devon. The funny thing with this was that at the proposed live feed time, they were all outside as the fire alarm had gone off. Luckily the delay wasn't too long and the flannel was done and over. Later in the afternoon we had some public interaction and I assembled the hopper for folks to try the seat out, and no less than six people recognised me from the radio interview.

Saturday evening arrived and with it more spirited winds, allegedly six knots on the surface but gradually increasing upstairs from 260/10knots at 500feet to 270/18knots at 2000 feet. Having had a lovely hop I declined the desire to go again but some did staying low over the town and enjoying another flight. Captain Big Cheese was instructing Joel Down in Line pad a Lindstrand 120 with some new crew , a certain Mike and Barbara Webb (not sure if they have a future in the sport- lol).Joel needed some faster landings so off they went . I'd guess all in about 15 flew, with no problems encountered.

The Night glow wasn't quite up to the Friday night one with only four balloons taking part. However it was well received and some of us decided that local Cider was the order of the day with one registering 7.8% proof. Going to bed and having seen all six of the balloons I wanted to from the entry list and not the most favourable weather forecast for the Sunday morning, I was amazed when once again some hardy souls flew. Once again surface winds were predicted to be 6-12 knots with upper winds of 22 knots at 2000ft but those who chose to fly stayed low once again and for the organisers , three flyable slots was very commendable . Definitely not a hopper morning!

Summing up. Nice event, no hassles, easy flying if you kept your head in check, no land owner problems and a lot of fun. I think if invited I will return.

Steve Roake

Photos by Sandy Mitchell and Martin Freeston.



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Bristol Fiesta 2014

This year's Bristol international Fiesta had a smattering of hopper content and for me one superstar. Brian Jones of Breitling Orbiter Fame has continued his connection with the watch manufacturer by setting up a scheme called the Breitling Academy aimed at teaching pilots with disabilities how to fly. The recipient of his tuition at Bristol was Brian Catchpoole of the Aerobility Trust based at Blackbushe in Surrey. Brian who is already a fixed wing pilot was taking his second flight in the Cameron Concept 60 Duo Chariot.



G-CHVC Cameron Concept Duo



4, Homebuilding section –



A rare piece of activity via facebook on the homebuilding front. Dean Donley is constructing this bottom end and very nice it looks too.

5. Gallery Pages –

This section is the Editor's choice of new jpegs, visuals and older balloons of interest or alterations. If you know of a new or interesting hopper or Duo that hasn't featured in this section, then feel free to forward details of it with a suitable photograph to me using my normal email address.



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Returning to the UK registry recently after periods in Germany and Lithuania is G-BUPH which was seen inflated by new owner Malcolm White (still wearing its previous reg).

Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

XLTA 10 by David Tanzer

Well, XLTA 10, hosted by Mick and Tom Murphy, Tom and PJ Whelan, and many others, took place this past weekend, and was, once again, awesome! Some of the nicest people in our sport show up at XLTA, and this weekend was no exception. For the last several years XLTA has taken place at the beautiful Whelan Farms Airport in central Connecticut. The weather wasn't terribly cooperative and we were only able to get one flight in on Sunday morning (with the exception of Keith Sproul, who flew on Friday afternoon), but



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that flight was spectacular. The flying in and around Whelan Farms is stunning.

Mick's local gang of pilots are great, and many other notable pilots showed up from all over the country. Greg Winker, formerly of Washington and now a world traveller, and Drew Barrett from Florida certainly got the "travelled farthest" awards. Noah Forden flew in in his homebuilt Van's RV-7A with his homebuilt cloudhopper split between the copilot seat and the baggage compartment. Now that's homebuilding! Noah's nephew Zach came with his stirrup hopper (don't ask me to explain it—you have to see it), and Paul Stumpf was another Vermont attendee—I think Paul was responsible for designing and/or building something on the order of 30% of all the attending balloons. I had my fourth flight in the Snyder/McCormack-built S&M Penetrator 54 (designed by Paul) along with Jay McCormack, who flew his first solo last Thursday evening in the Champlain Valley. Jay flew his second solo on Sunday evening after returning from Connecticut, and he's diligently working his way toward his check ride. Jay and I had the privilege of having Scott Caplan, son of hall-of-famer, Nikki Caplan, and soon to be hopper pilot, Jim O'Brien, crewing for us. They were diligently waiting for us in the field we landed in when we arrived. Leo Burman and Danielle Francoeur came down from Montreal with their stunningly beautiful homebuilt butterfly balloon. I sat with them for quite some time on Sunday afternoon and was captivated by their stories and photos of flying in Nunavut.

Not only was visiting with everyone fun, but Mick and his team served up awesome steamers and and steamed lobster on Saturday afternoon! When's the last time you had fresh steamed lobster at a balloon meet?

Small experimental balloons rock!

Thanks to Mick and his crew for putting on yet another incredibly wonderful balloon meet.

David Tanzer



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OMM 2014

By the time you read this we won't be too far off this year's annual One Man Meet. The venue is the Llansantffraed Court Hotel in Clytha Monmouthshire over the weekend of 10th-12th October and being the thirtieth anniversary of the first event, the unofficial goal of the event is to get 30 hoppers together. Whilst the usual suspects will be present, it isn't too late to register your interest in attending. One extra reason for attending is the first unveiling of the new Cameron Balloons light weight hopper. Being involved in this project in a very small capacity, I do know it will be extremely light and a valuable new part of their product listing. The hotel is fairly pricey and whilst you don't have to stay at the venue, the experience is lovely and should you wish to join us please just drop Phil Dunnington a line stating that you are attending. Email phil@gonewiththewind.org.uk I hope to write a test flight report at a later date on the hopper.

Let's hope the weather plays ball and we have a successful event, and should it turn against us do not fret because we will have a great social anyway. See you there!

And Finally.

Membership is currently a healthy 560 members and numbers are generally rising. All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your editor. Please forward them to steve.roake@ntlworld.com and feedback good bad or indifferent is always welcome. Views aired by contributors may not be those of the Editor Safe and happy hopping! Steve Roake.

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