



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 54

February / March 2012

Welcome Once again to your Newsletter

Apologies for a lack of February newsletter. Due to a dearth of material and my 50th Birthday celebrations, this little project took a temporary backseat whilst we celebrated a milestone in my life.

However I now have enough material to fill a joint issue and have some good news to immediately impart on you. Whilst the name will remain secret until we launch the revised website, both the website and newsletter have now an agreed Sponsorship program with a proactive partner who will assist us in taking both the sport and the website/newsletter to the next level. It is great that the collective efforts of the last 53 issues have been recognised and acknowledged for furthering our great passion for flying these unique craft.

Ed-Speak – Generally by March, we are optimistically looking forward to flying again and such events as the Solo Meet. Unfortunately this year due to a variety of circumstances, I decided that this year's Solo Meet should be shelved. This wouldn't be an issue for those keen to attend the venue as the Black Horse Balloon Club were planning a 25th Anniversary celebration of the All Fools balloon festival with hoppers included in their plans. With me attending an alternative event in Ireland I wasn't involved in planning, however to my surprise the Pub temporarily shut putting paid to any activity over that weekend.

I also have to convey to you our sincere condolences to the family of Bob Jones, our very kind host at the OMM in Welshpool last October. Bob was unfortunately tragically killed recently in a light aircraft crash, I'm sure all who attended would want to convey our sorrow at his demise. A tragic loss to all in aviation.

Steve Roake

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Essential Extra's / Tech Talk

Once again this section has no content as no one has come forward with anything useful that they want to pass on to the rest of you. When you have please let me know so I can pass the details on to the masses.

The Features Section

11 take offs in one day? Are you nuts!. (Please let me explain) by Pieter Kooistra

In the Netherlands in the north where I live in the state Friesland in the winter there is a certain kind of virus, the 11 cities virus. When it is cold enough and the canals are frozen and the ice gets thick enough there is a skating tour organised. 15.000 people skate the 200 km tour along the 11 Frisian cities in one day. The tour has been organised 15 times since 1909, so you can imagine that it is very special that it is held, the last time was in 1997.



Because the skating way is dependent on a very cold winter, people Started to think of other ways doing this tour. For instance: by boat, by car, walking bare footed, on wooden Shoes, cycling etc etc.



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We came up with an idea to do it by balloon. The plan was simple: take off in one day in each city with the same balloon. This means 11 flights in one day. The only way was doing this with a small balloon, a hopper of course. I planned 30 minutes for each flight and then the driving between the cities. The total time everything should take was 10 hours. We had a few reasons to do this: no one had done 11 flights in one day and no one had done the 11 cities by balloon.



The 11th of February allowed us 10 hours of daylight. The weather was perfect and a lot of people were skating because it had been cold for almost 2 weeks.

We managed to do all the flights which resulted in a great day of ballooning, each take off were posted on Twitter so people could follow us. One time we took off from the ice. The pilot who did the flights was Johannes Kooistra.

The balloon we took was the PH-PUK, a Colt 31-A from hyperlife. The basket we flew was a UM C-0 basket with a single burner.

More pictures and video's can be found here:

<http://www.balloncentrum.nl/geslaagde-elfstedentocht-per-luchtballon/>

Pieter Kooistra, Joure, Netherlands



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My First Hop- with thanks to Dave Groombridge, here are his views.

In the summer of 2006 I was invited to a balloon festival organised by some friends to be held in Rengsdorf, Germany. I was told I could double up with them as they had a large team so I didn't need to bring crew; all I had to do was get there with my new hopper which I had yet to fly. Having put together a second hand Lindstrand MKII bottom end, acquired through the Zebedee list and G-BXYI a Cameron H34 the old "Fairy" hopper envelope; this seemed the ideal opportunity to make my first hopper flight a memorable occasion. As a regular visitor to Germany for great flying and beer this was not an opportunity to be missed.

The balloon was loaded into my X-trail on a Wednesday night ready for the off after a sales meeting the following day. The meeting finished early allowing me to hit the road and catch an earlier ferry than expected. Having driven through the night with the odd stops for fuel and sleep, I met with my friends for breakfast before they took me for a tour of the Schroeder Balloon factory, a stop for lunch and then finally completing the journey to Rengsdorf.

At the Friday evening briefing we were informed that the first evenings flying was cancelled due to the threat of thunderstorms in the area, and that the following morning's flight was also cancelled for the same reason; however the good news was that it was looking better for Saturday evening.

The weather forecast didn't stop a few model balloons inflating for the gathering crowds, providing a great display. With local conditions appearing good, light winds and no immediate threat of getting wet, I decided now could be the time to get to grips with my hopper. I carried out my first inflation of my new toy and tethered for the crowds, the hopper generated a lot of interest from the local balloonists who informed me there were not many hoppers in Germany.

After a 30 minute tether I deflated and with plenty of crew to help, it was all packed away in under 5 minutes – this must be the easiest ballooning I'd encountered. With a short trip to top up the tank on the way for an evening meal, the scene was set for an enjoyable and sociable weekend.



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After a lazy Saturday at the local outdoor swimming pool complex with near perfect weather we all headed to the launch field with fingers crossed for briefing. My long drive was to be rewarded the weather was perfect, the 7-8 kt surface winds were forecast to drop to 3-5kts and with a 15kt gradient up top – I was pleased that there was some speed to clear some of the large forests we would be crossing.



The launch field was quite small and with a three wave inflation, my friends went in the second wave and myself in the third. My inflation was swift assisted by my eager crew; I launched getting a big cheer from the crowd who had gathered to watch the event – I found myself waving furiously in excitement as I took off on my first hopper flight.



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Floating over the pine tree covered landscape flying at speeds of up to 12kts over the hills, then dropping down into the valleys behind where it slowed up to a near stop made my first hopper flight an enjoyable experience – the feeling of floating free and not being confined to a basket was somewhat unusual sensation however it did provide the feeling of absolute freedom.



Things seemed to be going well and after 30 minutes or so of enjoying my flight on a perfect evening I looked at the map and identified a suitable landing area ahead, I carefully went to stow my map and then burned, when "Oh No....."

My map wasn't tucked into my pocket as I had thought. When I burned it jumped out of my pocket and I watched it float down towards the forest canopy below – no amount of dumping and burning enabled me to catch up with my map, it just floated frustratingly out of reach, and I watched it disappear into the foliage below – Mental note made here – buy a map bag with a decent length strap and attachment so this never happens again!



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Earlier I had radioed my crew to relay both my position and plans for landing, also the position of the other balloon further ahead that they were to retrieve after me. I was approaching the area I had identified for landing when I experienced a change in wind direction and selected two new possible landing areas on my new track. I went to radio my crew to advise them of the change in track and that I'd lost my map, hoping they would be able to see me and know my rough position as I made my approach in to land. This time I got no response on the radio from my crew, so now with no map and no communication I was glad I at least had my gps (positioning only lat/long not moving map) and mobile phone so I could at least relay my position once down and hope they could locate me.

I flew over a small village on approach into some sports fields, many of the local children below started to chase this strange man in the sky strapped to a balloon, they were cheering as I lined up for landing in the sports fields. As I got closer the presence of power lines across my track meant I would have to give the sports field a miss and I opted to fly on over the next small forested area where I touched down in a grass field once clear of the tree line and after 50 minutes of hopping, landing alongside the main road which ran through the valley.

I was relieved to see my crew emerge from the trees just before my feet touched down – they were there to record my flight on film and to help me to help me deflate and pack away. Later they told me they were tipped off by the locals in the last village where I made the approach so they knew exactly where I was heading, making a perfect end to my first hopper flight.

We swiftly packed up and then headed off to retrieve their 105 before heading back to base to celebrate our fantastic evenings flying. Sadly that was the only flight of the weekend with the following morning being blown out> I headed home hooked having had an amazing start to hopping and couldn't wait for my next hop :o)

Dave Groombridge
Portishead Bristol

So that's the format, what happened on your first ever hop and how it Felt compared to your expectations? Submissions to me please at steve.roake@ntlworld.com



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Three Favourite Jpegs and why-by Pauline Baker

In this sixteenth version of my favourites and why, Pauline Baker has supplied us with her three favourite photos and why. Whilst there may be a theme going here, as your editor I have no input on these contributions and thanks to Pauline we have a contribution for this month. BUT, and it's a BIG BUT, I'm getting tired asking for your submissions so please how about you help me out by supplying me with some future material. It takes little time, and is personalised which is exactly what I want from you all. So, stop putting it off and seriously HELP ME!



In her first photo, Pauline says. I like this picture taken during one of my record flights. Why because of the steam rising up the sides - it looks eerie.



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In her second contribution Pauline says, "Stealth ballooning over Sannan airfield - "Spot the balloon" not visible to aircraft or helicopters so my ground crew had to stay in the control tower to advise my position. Another record attempt for duration, in the AX-1category.

Ed note – it's above the middle hut in the photo.

Final contribution from Pauline(with thanks)is seen bellow. AX-1 testrig; 2 weeks in Paolo Bonnanos' workshop designing a system for duration record - it was complicated - don't I look worried :-)



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Many thanks to Pauline for her contributions but this section is constantly a struggle for me, I know not why .So who is going to be next to submit? Contributions for future editions of my three favourites and why to steve.roake@ntlworld.com please. Do it today folks and share those memories.



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4. Updates to the Website / Newsletter/ Topics of Interest

The website is now getting populated and of the 32 sections that I have for its initial launch, I would say I have populated at least a third probably more. With the new sponsor onboard we have some advertising stuff to tie up but I'm hopeful of serious progress towards the launch very soon. Naturally the new revamped site will feature links to all entities usually associated with modern communication such as facebook, twitter and yahoogroups and will feature its own dedicated forum .

My trip to trim over Easter will feature me coming face to face with the great new Paulo Bonanno hopper and a chance to meet the man himself. I can't wait to tell you what happens.

5. Homebuilt section-

Another month with little activity in the homebuilt genre. However Jim Werth did post on facebook in the cloudhoppers section A recent free flight video of his latest project, a 42,000 feet hopper.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEY225ZIZYI>

Definitely worth a view in my opinion.

The other thing occurring on the facebook site has been the initial project report from Scott Nicol on his hopper project and a single photo of progress of the seat unit. For any member who isn't on the cloudhopper link at facebook I suggest you sign up to it ASAP.

The other news confirmed recently by Sandy Mitchell is the sale of two second hand hoppers to Austria, and whilst G-CEJT and G-CESX are hardly used, it is good to see them getting new homes.



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6. 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.



Flying from Barfields school near Runfold Hants on 1st April was G-CDAD a very often used LBL 25A-photo by Steve Roake



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Also flying from the same venue on the same flyable slot was G-CGPH
Ultramagic S-50 Techno. Photo by Steve Roake



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Manufacturer News / Events / Updates

Due to complications at the venue, the proposed two day BBML inflation day event was cancelled and has re emerged as a one day event at Pidley Golf Club in Cambridgeshire. So for all those who want to attend, Set the date in your diary and the postcode in your gps. Saturday 19th May at PE28 3DF.

Martin Freeston had this link recently on facebook, and whilst those who have participated are seriously older now it still is a good video Worthy of a viewing.

<http://vimeo.com/37725699>

Adverts / For Sale / Wanted section

Martin Axtell offers G-CCKZ for sale





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Customcraft 25A, 14hours total time .Multicoloured and lightweight envelope with customcraft bottom end which splits into two like a lindstrand system in red and vgc. Comes with 60litre tank .All Annex 2 so no messing around with EASA etc ...flies great and all paperwork in order. Ready to go £5000ono, Telephone Martin on 07786622802 or email

G-BVUI is for sale

Lindstrand 25A. 1994. G-BVUI. 96 hrs. Lindstrand colours (no words) in red, yellow & blue. New EASA C of A on delivery. £1700 Zebedee Balloon Service - 01488 681527, 1700 British Pounds= (+ -) depending on exchange rate: \$2700.00 Photo of balloon is the first one on the Zebedee list under envelopes. web page:

<http://www.zebedeelist.co.uk/list/list.php?section=envelope>

I also have the matching Lindstrand hopper bottom end that I might be willing to part with. If anyone is interested, E-mail me at advanced@gci.net, or call me in Alaska at 907 242-5860

Jack advises that £3750 buys the complete kit.



Photo thanks to Zebedee list- Peter Bish



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The Klein FAN Smaller is better!



Tiny but surprisingly powerful
inflation fans!

9 kg empty, 10.5 kg full (fuel
+ oil)

2.5 hp Honda engine

One fan easily inflates
balloons up to 2000m³

Two fans will blow your
socks off!

Contact Advanced, Inc.

advanced@gci.net

Tel. +1 907 346-3495

www.kleinfan.com

Visit us on Facebook!

And Finally.

Membership is currently a healthy 444 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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