

Greetings again to all

Welcome to Issue 10 of the Cloudhoppers Newsletter and a busy month has just completed on the hopper front with both Albuquerque and the One Man meet being successfully completed, the latter with an outstanding entry and a sight of 31 hoppers in the air at one time .Is this a record ? If not I bet it isn't far off being one.



The One Man Meet was staged this time around in the Dovedale area of Staffordshire in the Peak National Park. This time around and with more emphasis on showing our far away members more of the surroundings I will include more general shots of the area, please tell

me if you like the idea rather than just concentrate on the balloons themselves.



Content

In this eighth edition we have for you details on:

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- The first report from newcomer Nick Calvert
- John Hilditch sends his views from the event
- Your editor reveals his memories from the popular event
- **Albuquerque**- scant detail from this most prestigious event but Rick Concord reports on Lindstrands new hopper .

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- The new revised Mark 3 Lindstrand Hopper bottom end.

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Ed Speak- By Steve Roake- My One Man Experience...just a big tease in the end!

Here is a tale of woe that had expectation, exultation and in the end frustration .The weeks leading up to the One Man meet I have been determined to get it right this year, following a fantastic event the year we all went to Raglan in Wales where I personally felt the balance was right. Big comfy country house hotel, flying from the lawns in front of the place and drinks in leather bound chairs in front of a real fire to finish it all off. Having tried to repeat this in Scotland and failed, as soon as I knew the venue I booked a recommended hotel "The Peveral on the Peak" and Looked forward to the event.

First indication of trouble was the Monday prior, when my crewmate Les confirmed the worst that he was stuck on an oilrig off the Brazilian coastline and would miss the event, so could I get a replacement to cover for him? No problem .A week is plenty long enough, but a few calls later I'm not so sure. By Tuesday night still no joy, until a friend fronts up from Iraq keen to attend himself ...result! Having missed completely the previous year's event (due to work), I was keen to participate and although JD couldn't do the Sunday, I altered the hotel booking to one night only with the view of doing Friday/sat am/pm and then home. Unfortunately he then gets confirmed on Thursday afternoon that he has to return to Basra earlier than expected,

so couldn't do what was proposed. Cancelled the hotel and planned a long day trip as the final resort.

Bed Friday night at 9pm to get up at 02-30 with a view of leaving at 03-15am! Got to be there for 07-30 briefing and so drove in the thick fog 190 miles arriving at 06-40 plenty early enough. Loads of folks around at the am briefing, I soon had offers of crew! Alas it was unflyable. Retired to a café for breakfast and reflected on the efforts but hopeful of more chance for the afternoon briefing. Back to the site for some photos, off to the pub, and then come the afternoon when the weather played ball, everyone flew except for me who had no crew available with all previous offers departed. Therefore I watched everyone else fly, took photos and then drove home another 190 miles. All in all a nice day to take your hopper for a drive! What a tease! Like the forbidden fruit, you can go but you can't play! Please give me better luck for next time.



A more detailed report follows.

Essential Extra's-

Another month with no Essentials for you, with the exception of one item. When my mark two Lindstrand hopper bottom end was delivered, the one thing that perhaps showed a lack of attention to detail(which is not normally apparent), was that the mirror came wrapped up in bubble wrap. Whilst this was adequate, I didn't think it reflected the way it should be stored, and following a couple of winter flights last week, I was reminded of my desire to have it better cared for.

Contacting the very approachable Chris Sainger-Davies at the factory, I suggested that Lindstrands make a padded foam lined pouch bag for this item with me being the prototype client. Now I'm sure the rest of you feel the mirror is an important item to remain scratch free, so perhaps you should also think about a small investment in one of these Essential Items. A few days later and Voila! Here it is! Definitely a better way to store a valued piece of kit.



Perhaps everybody is now sorted out, but if you know of useful items that help with flying your hopper please share with the rest of us. That is what this section is created for.

Features this month-

Hopper building by Greg Winkler- We were due the third part of Greg's home building project but a house move and a trip to Mexico has left Greg with no time to supply. We hope to have the next installment (The Design Process) next month.

The One Man Meet -three reports for you, one by newcomer Nick Calvert, the second by John Hilditch and the other by myself.

One Man Meet Ilam 2006

Ilam was to be my first hopper meet where I had attended with my own balloon. My first short flight in a hopper was in 1992 in the National Power G-1AMP and then it was within the grounds of Ashton Court, but I remember thinking that I would like to more of this.

I didn't attend the OMM meet until many years later in 1999 when I borrowed the J&B rare shape with a basket. The meet was held at Crickhowell and I managed one flight but I knew I wanted to do more and preferably in a chair.

In 2005 I got this opportunity when Nick Langley loaned me a Sky Chariot and we both attended the meet at Monmouth where my luck was in. Two flights and I managed to buy my own Cameron Skyhopper and G-CBLO shortly after.

So it was off to Ilam with the kit to hopefully fly having managed only a couple of flights since putting all the kit together.

Having got there in good time on Friday, there were a number of hoppers who wanted to get a flight in. Twelve balloons had a short 15 minute flight

from the National Trust Grounds (mind the sheep muck!) and down the valley in the slightly murky sky.

I managed to fly diagonally down the side of hill, wanting to get close to the track at the bottom for landing and prepared for the event by turning the chair. Rather stupidly I turned the chair up hill, so as soon as I landed it promptly flipped over to the down hill side which was a bit of a surprise, won't do that again!

The flight had produced a mishap at one of the farms which was sensibly dealt with by both the farmer and Phil Dunnington and co.

So having managed a flight, there was nothing better to do than join all the other balloonists at the pub for food, drink and stories.



Nick Calvert "allegedly" correcting his lines Saturday morning...photo by Steve Roake

Saturday morning was fogged in but several balloons were inflated, including Nick Langley and I as we wanted to adjust line lengths, well that was our excuse. Thanks for the ballast Andy Davey. Nick and I were in further luck as Sally and Roz had promised home cooked breakfast back at the cottage we had rented. Excellent! Thank you ladies!

The low cloud and general murky conditions remained all day, not seeming to offer much hope for another slot. However there were rumours that one chap managed a midday flight in the valley which turned out to be true. Then the skies cleared to allow a mass take off of some thirty odd hoppers with the majority all ending up on the same farm at Waterhouses.

This turned out to be my longest and highest flight in a hopper to date. When I had climbed to the highest point, I noticed that I hadn't let go of the rotating ring for some time and was beginning to think my hand had become welded to it. After a short conversation with myself I managed to let go and was rather pleased that I didn't promptly fall out of the seat. Good thing those harnesses!

A very well attended meet showing that hopping seems to be on the increase!

Far better than any drug- by John Hilditch

'Far better than drugs' said one elder statesman of ballooning whilst at the One Man Meet held in Ilam on weekend of 14th/15th October. Not that I have taken too many drugs, but he was absolutely spot on.

Looking at the mist & fog as I left Peterborough where I had been working on the Thursday and Friday morning, I considered a leisurely drive to Ilam on the southern edge of the Peak district. No hurry as flying did not look promising that evening or so I thought.

At least we would meet in the pub, have a beer and a reasonably early night ready for a flight on the Saturday morning.

On my way I received a text from Ian Chadwick to meet at 1700 at Ilam with a view to fly but if not we would divert to the Dog & Partridge. Whilst there were patches of sun shine on my journey northwards but the nearer I

got to Ilam the thicker and lower the cloud became. The gradient wind was also reported to be rather quick!

With crew still to arrive and my crew Tim & Bryce Ward not arriving till Saturday a.m. the plan was for Gavin & I to fly and Ian would retrieve both balloons. Now whilst I have previously doubled up on retrieve or flown without any retrieve at all, but certainly not in the evening at this time of year so close to dusk.

As it happened Ian's crew arrived so we decided to all go for it and see what happens with a triple retrieve. I was able to lay out & inflate with little help and with Phil Dunnington looking after the crown line threw my car keys at someone to remove my car from the National Trust land.

I believe I was the 9th of 10 balloons to take off which resulted in a 15 minute flight at pretty low level. To go high, I would have ended up in 8 octas and probably the other side of Stoke. The flight was wonderful although with the light disappearing it was clearly going to be a short flight. Landing on the side of a hill was interesting and fortunately virtually all the balloons ahead of me were in adjacent field, including Gavin & Ian. Packing away my Lindstrand ex demo was difficult & stuffing it into the bag as I was on a pretty steep slope I was knackered and sweating profusely and now it was getting dark! However I was able to roll the envelope bag down the hill and thus with the Chadwicks able to claim the only triple retrieve of the weekend. Although thanks also to Nick Langley as there was no room for my tank and he took this back to Ilam.

Saturday morning had more low cloud and the gradient wind was picking up. Some went off to the Amber Valley but only one hopper flew back landing at the front of the Ilam House. Some hung around to look at and play with some rare hoppers and envelopes and others went back for breakfasts to return and play later.

Lunch time Saturday and as it turned out Sunday's prize giving too was in a gem of a pub, The Yew Tree at Cauldon. It is 300 years old and full of bygones and memorabilia, pianolas, music boxes, ancient guns and a penny farthing. Great Pork Pies too which are a local delicacy, so we were told and Gary's Dark Mild. What was also interesting was that the only member of staff was the landlord who was also about 300 years old; at least he had been there, so he said for only 45 years. I could have spent ages here but then I

would not have been in any fit state to fly as was becoming a distinct possibility for the Saturday evening.

Unfortunately due to an incident on Friday night we were unable to fly on the direction from Ilam House as likely to pass over a SA, so we relocated about a mile to the east near to Izaak Walton Hotel.



What a sight, 30 plus hoppers & other 'One Man' balloons which I understand was some sort of a record. Many flew back and landed on the estate, but I and many of the others flew on and landed in the Waterfall area after, in my case about 4 NM. Only 35 minutes, but wow it was great; a chat with the farmer and then off to find the other intrepid balloonists.

That was it, many friends made and acquaintances renewed. Once again it was well organized in a beautiful part of the country, both challenging from a flying perspective and retrieve (as it was virtually impossible to get a cell phone signal most of the weekend).

Thanks to Phil Dunnington and others for organizing this 'historical' event which is getting more and more popular as each year goes by.

Now like many I guess eagerly looking forward to next year.

Epilogue

Those of you who attended this meet would be aware of an unfortunate incident during Friday's flight involving a cow which had to be destroyed. On a related note Ian, Tim & I were chatting to the farmer at our bed and breakfast. He told us that cows do not like balloons because some of our burners emit the same frequency as the Gadfly. He told us that a balloon landed on one of his fields and now his cows don't go to that corner of the field because they think the Gadfly are out to get them. I have never heard of Gadfly but this is the common name of any of the various flies that are parasitic on animals or human beings, particularly the botfly and the horsefly. So now you know...!

The One Man Meet -by Steve Roake

Another One Man Meet, and yet another successful years' flying in the month of October. I cannot imagine where Phil Dunnington gets his luck as far as the weather is concerned but yet again the OMM succeeds in being flyable when the prevailing weather all around the date has been foul. This year set in the picturesque area of the Derbyshire Dales where rolling hills and dry stone walls are everywhere. This time the foreign element was evident with Andy Davey from Germany, Steve Burden from Munich and a Spanish registered Demo balloon from Ultramagic.

I hope the pictures give you a feel for the scenery because you travel down single tracked roads to approach the site with passing places for oncoming traffic to pass.

The Village of Ilam where the meet was to be held was a pretty, well attended affair with a river in the valley and quaint stone housing with manicured gardens. Secured in the very bottom of

the valley is a National Trust land park with an old House (now used for conferences and educational training), and a rambling Estate full of Sheep. Unfortunately the beautiful lawns in front of the House were out of bounds due to some quirky ruling about no closer than 250m and all the attendees had to have insurance to the tune of £2.0 million cover for the event.



The Countryside around here is absolutely beautiful and when the sun shines (as it eventually did mid afternoon), it shows off the uniquely britishness of an old village. I'm always amazed how much time people put into their gardens as they keep them neat and tidy.

As described elsewhere, on Friday afternoon around 14 hoppers got together in the launch field and had a small hop out of the estate grounds, over a local farm with most landing 15-20mins later due to low cloud and not too good visibility. Unfortunately at the farm in question, a dog got out and spooked a cow which

unfortunately got damaged and needed putting down. Not the best start at an event, but these things happen. Phil Dunnington commendably took control of sorting out what could have been a very difficult situation and luckily the farmer was a very reasonable man. A solution was found over the weekend and all those who flew this slot contributed to a remuneration that left the farmer satisfied and didn't prejudice future possibilities at this lovely site.

Saturday morning, a very large gathering assembled in the launch field at 07-30, and after a few kind words from Phil about how the cloudhoppers.org set up has increased awareness, a few hardy souls inflated and tethered including Phil Dunnington with Dave Sanford's G-BKDS a rare old Colt 17A.



A couple of hoppers had C of A's, but with permission only to fly within the grounds given a lot didn't bother. With the previous evening's problem, a few went down the road to Amblegate with a view of flying back to the site but were blown out by excessive winds. Some of us took the opportunity to fuel up internally at a roadside café, and then I returned to the site primarily to get some "scene" shots.

Back at the launch site, Ian Chadwick and son Gavin were deep into a viewing a potential purchase of G-BSAK a very low houred Colt 21A with a chariot bottom end.



As you can clearly see, Kevin Meeham had looked after her and I believe after some haggling, a deal was later done. Speaking with John Hilditch and son who were also present at the time, it became apparent that we could hear another balloon burner in the distance and low and behold, through the trees flew in John Russon in G-BXIZ, the very tidy Lindstrand 31A having launched

downwind. He was flying with the old Western 31 basket of 1972 vintage. (Check out how low the wicker is!) The weather was obviously improving. Here caught on landing (see below)!



Following more ballooning activity than expected, we all adjourned to the lunchtime watering hole (i.e. the pub), a quaint affair full of weird musical memorabilia including a Pianola which Steve Burden's wife and Peter Dalby gave us a demonstration of. I think the landlord was taken back by sixty odd balloonists and

crew livening up his day.



The popularity of the Yew Tree pub (seen above), encouraged Phil Dunnington to change the prize giving to this site rather than another pub, the pub's claim to fame being maker of the worlds best Pork Pies , and a few dozen of which were consumed during the stay.

After Lunch the decision to fly from another site opposite the Isaac Walton Hotel was taken with a view to flying up the valley and into the grounds of Ilam Hall with everyone using a field opposite .Whilst most vehicles could get into the field, a steep entrance drop meant that the two Steve's (Lacey and Burden) using the Le Electrical van decided to carry their gear into the launch field and whilst I now knew I wasn't flying, I made my car available to them for launching from. A really beautiful sight

made the evening ascent look fantastic with most pilots flying for around 40mins. A few of the nicer shots are below.



Peter Gooch in G-BVFB



Richard Turnbull in his Colt 17A

Upon the return journey home, I reflected upon this year's event as being Probably the best received One man Meet in terms of activity balloon wise And the sight of thirty plus craft in the air over the Staffordshire / Derbyshire countryside and congratulations must be sent to those who Suggested this venue as suitable for this year's event. Hopefully we will be Able to use this venue again as it represents a central location by which Most regions of the country can get access and it was nice to see some Foreign participants making the effort to come to this annual pilgrimage. Once again congratulations to Phil Dunnington and his team of helpers for Another stunning success and look forward to the 2007 event wherever it is



Andy Davey's beautiful lightweight Cameron Viva 42 came to the event from Germany, whilst Martin Axtell purchased G-BRCO specifically with the event in mind.



Albuquerque -The world's biggest festival from the hopper/ Duo chariot perspective.

Very little to report from the worlds biggest festival, surprisingly considering that there was hopper and duo chariot activity.

Malcolm White was active at the event flying the Irish Smart Telephones hopper with representation at the flight of nations.

Sadly I have to report via Graham Bell, the theft of a Duo chariot and trailer from the car park at the event, particularly as the balloon belongs to a disabled pilot who was left grounded for the event.

However Rick Concord reports below on the new Lindstrand hopper as displayed at the event.

Lindstrand had their new hopper on display at Albuquerque Fiesta this week, on a hanging stand so you could sit in it. There are a number of interesting changes, though overall it is quite similar to last year's model. Evolution, not revolution. Here are the changes I noted:

- New stainless steel load ring (spinning disc), eliminates groove in top for a series of many holes drilled through it. This is to help grip it to spin. Also reduces weight somewhat. To avoid confusing where to attach the envelope the four proper holes are marked in red. This disc looks to be much more durable.

- A large red metal handle on the front of the burner/load ring that connects the two. Designed as a handhold for inflation, and to prevent the disc from spinning during inflation. It's held on with a couple of pins, and unless you want to keep the disc locked in place in flight (turning vents) or whack yourself in the forehead, you'll want to remove it before flight.

- Padded triangles at the base of the seat, near your hips. Foam filled, covered in nylon, they connect the seat to the back providing some protection in a fast landing. The right-hand one has several handy pockets on the outside, the left one is plain.

- Wheels. (Mysteriously not on the display model) Apparently the base of the frame now has short metal stubs that accept wheels similar to inflator fan wheels so you can roll the base unit out of a field. The wheels pop off and store in pockets on the tank cover.

- Flame pattern. I wasn't able to observe this, as they didn't want a hole in their tent with the rain coming again, but adjustments are being made to create a tighter flame pattern in response to owner requests.

I didn't have a camera with me, so no photos, though I'll bet someone else got some. Did get to see the Smart Telecom hopper flying here, that was fun.

Rick Jones
Concord, NH

Also present at Albuquerque was Greg Winker, but as he flew off for most of the event in a gas balloon (2359km to the Atlantic Ocean no less) unfortunately he had nothing of great note to report.

Website Updates / Newsletter News

Progress on the revitalised website is that as we speak we are playing around with formats and will release details of when we will go live nearer the time it is completed. This is as you can appreciate a time consuming process and with a great deal of content will take a while to complete.

Whilst also on the subject, with a view to improving the ability of the team to produce developments which will sustain the website independent of my money, we have contacted potential sponsors for sponsorship of both the website and newsletter. Up till this point all the charges directly related to the cloudhoppers.org setup have been paid by myself, any suggestions on how we can

create income generating streams are most welcome, not with a view to creating large scale income but to provide sufficient to make this a stand alone facility. One possible solution is that subject to approval by the members we may accept donations for For Sale item inclusions that are featured in both sets of classified adverts.

Homebuilt Section

Nothing to report this month from the world of homebuilding balloons. I'd like to think that is because everyone is far too busy building their hoppers and bottom ends to send them in to me. Let's hope for better next month!

Gallery Sightings



Forgive the indulgence, a sky full of hoppersthe OMM 2006



New Ultramagic Solo H-31 for Paul Dickenson G-CEFB
C/N 31/06 and called "Free Spirit".



Two Budweiser Hoppers inflated in Buckinghamshire over the August Bank Holiday weekend were, G-BUEU which is an old but nice looking Colt 21A, whilst G-BZIH is a very low houred Lindstrand 31A. Jpegs by Martin Freestron.





Scott Wooge sent in these two jpegs of Hopping in Iowa with his Lindstrand 35A (looked a great day).

Manufacturer News /Updates /Event News

Received from Chris Sainger Davis this month from Lindstrand Hot Air balloons some details of their revised Hopper the mark 3. Clearly as indicated by Chris this represents an upgrade to the mark 2 rather than a completely new approach to the design and as with most things evolution is better than revolution. Whilst I haven't received a jpeg of the complete item, you can see from the attached jpegs where the differences have been affected and the reasoning behind the changes as stated.

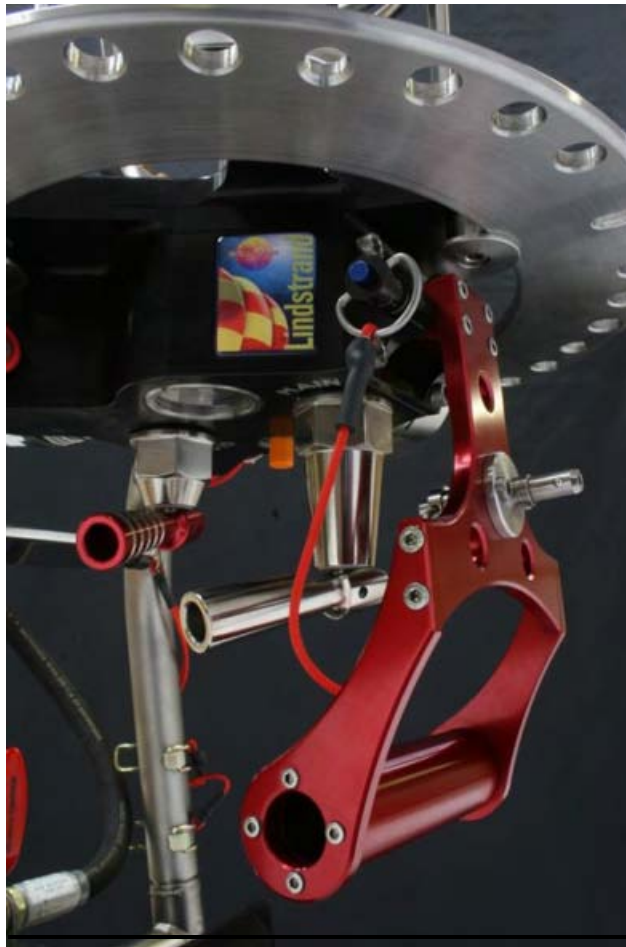


The first two changes are apparent from the above jpeg. These are the inclusion of a detachable handle to assist the inflation handling of the kit which slots into the turning ring and is in response to a customers request for such an item. The second and probably more fundamentally a better revision, the swivel ring has been now manufactured from Stainless steel.

This change is directly in response to clients who have reported wear in the older aluminum versions with usage. When specifically asked about the viability of doing a retro fit onto mark 2 Lindstrand bottom ends, Chris intimated that whilst prices aren't yet fixed for this piece, it will be retrofit able with a price of approx £200.



The other changes to be included in the mark 3 include the provision of a webbing based side pocket provision for both sides of the chair with invaluable storage space around the hip region. These are a welcome answer to the perennial problem of where do you store your instruments. Finally Chris spoke about the inclusion of detachable wheels on the unit. These are again customer driven and aimed at helping extraction from the field of the bottom end as a built up kit , and are used in conjunction with the handle (which I guess is stored somewhere prior to flight). He suggested that at Albuquerque where the kit was displayed, customer interest was substantial. No indication of how these changes affect prices was given but I suggest a change in pricing isn't envisaged after recent annual price repositioning.



With all things Lindstrand, great attention to detail is apparent and I would imagine the provision of a stainless ring will be received well.

I am looking forward to reporting on the latest rendition of the Cameron Millennium hopper shortly, when details are received.

For Sale Section

My newly built/renovated Airchair is for sale!

It's a single seater, with Cameron MK3 single burner (double gimbal), 4-point harness, and padded seat. The construction is from steel tube 34mm diameter, and is collapsible by removing 4 pins near the base of the uprights.

Photos are on the photo page, showing construction and first flight.

I'll upload some from the one man meet shortly.

It's in excellent condition, and flies beautifully! You'll just need 2 Worthingtons or possibly 2x 60 litre tanks with a small bit of modification.

It's currently in Germany, and I'm away until the beginning of February, so there's no rush! Collection can be arranged in France/Germany/UK/Holland in February or by mutual agreement.

I'm only selling it because I've acquired a T&C Skychariot.

Price: 1000 GBP ONO...

Rgds Andy Davey on Andy Davey [andy@spiritballoons.com]

Next Issue

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

- Andre Van Wyks Bottom ends
- More from Greg Winker on his Homebuilt hopper
- Any other stuff that comes my way

Fly Safe everyone, Membership stands at 245 plus (early November 2006)

See you all soon safe 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.