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Monthly Magazine



Issue No6 -Kelmarsh Hall issue

April 2006

Hello again Folks,

Well, I've got to tell you all, I was just on the verge of sending out an e-mail to you all stating that due to lack of news and no receipt of any content for inclusion, I was going to not bother with the April newsletter, then blow me down, here in the UK we have a screamer of a day at an event with a hopper presence and I actually find something to talk to you all about.

Content

In this edition we have for you details on:

1. Ed Speak- More rantings from your editor!
2. Essential Extras - Nothing to report this month of use to us!
3. The features section.
 - The BBML Inflation day at Kelmarsh hall.
 - One remarkable Hopper G-BHOJ Colt 14A
 - The quest for the Green Ice Six
4. Updates on the website. - NONE!
5. More sightings on the gallery pages for the website.
6. Manufacturer Updates/ News/ Event Details.

Ed Speak- By Steve Roake

Another month nearer the flying season, and again a void to fill (in editorial terms), but hopefully someone out there will get their pen to paper and contribute a meaningful article for future inclusion and so help your editor make this newsletter worth

reading. I do find it frustrating that you all say you like the read, some even promise articles for inclusion but few appear.

Some good news! I have now "road tested" my fan, and have to say that I was quite impressed with how it filled up the 31A envelope. I think patience and fan positioning are the vital points when cold inflating, but so far so good.

It seems that the way hoppers are sold is one contributing factor to how few are actually registered over the course of the year. If you went to your local Motorcycle dealership, you could place a small deposit and then pay the balance over another 35 months with many choosing this way of purchasing. My point here is that having discussed it with two manufacturers, they agree in principle so why don't we see adverts that state £2000 deposit and 35 months of around £190 ish for your new cloudhopper? I'm sure in marketing terms it would help stimulate this sector of the market for something that is about the same price.

Features This month

Kelmarsh Hall- Inflation Day (BBML)

Saturday 22nd April saw an event held at Kelmarsh Hall in Northamptonshire by the British Balloon Museum and Library (BBML), an organization committed to preserving some of the heritage we have from ballooning over the years. Every two years they have an event where you can come along and either tether older balloons or free fly with a special emphasis on balloons of twelve years age or greater.

Naturally, the opportunity of taking the hopper to a lovely setting of a period English Stately home with large grounds in spring

sunshine was too much to resist and so I traveled north to the area (about 100miles for me), the night before and met up with Mark Stelling who had driven 350 miles South from Edinburgh for the same reason. The Friday had been one of those days when it was light and variable and still and the Saturday promised similar conditions.

We arrived before the 08-00 briefing, to find that Andy Austin / Sara lyth had already flown their Duo chariot G-BVRI that morning from the field and with the weather predicting various directions and strengths ranging from 2knots to 6 but getting lighter during the day, with sunshine breaking out later, the possibilities were looking good.

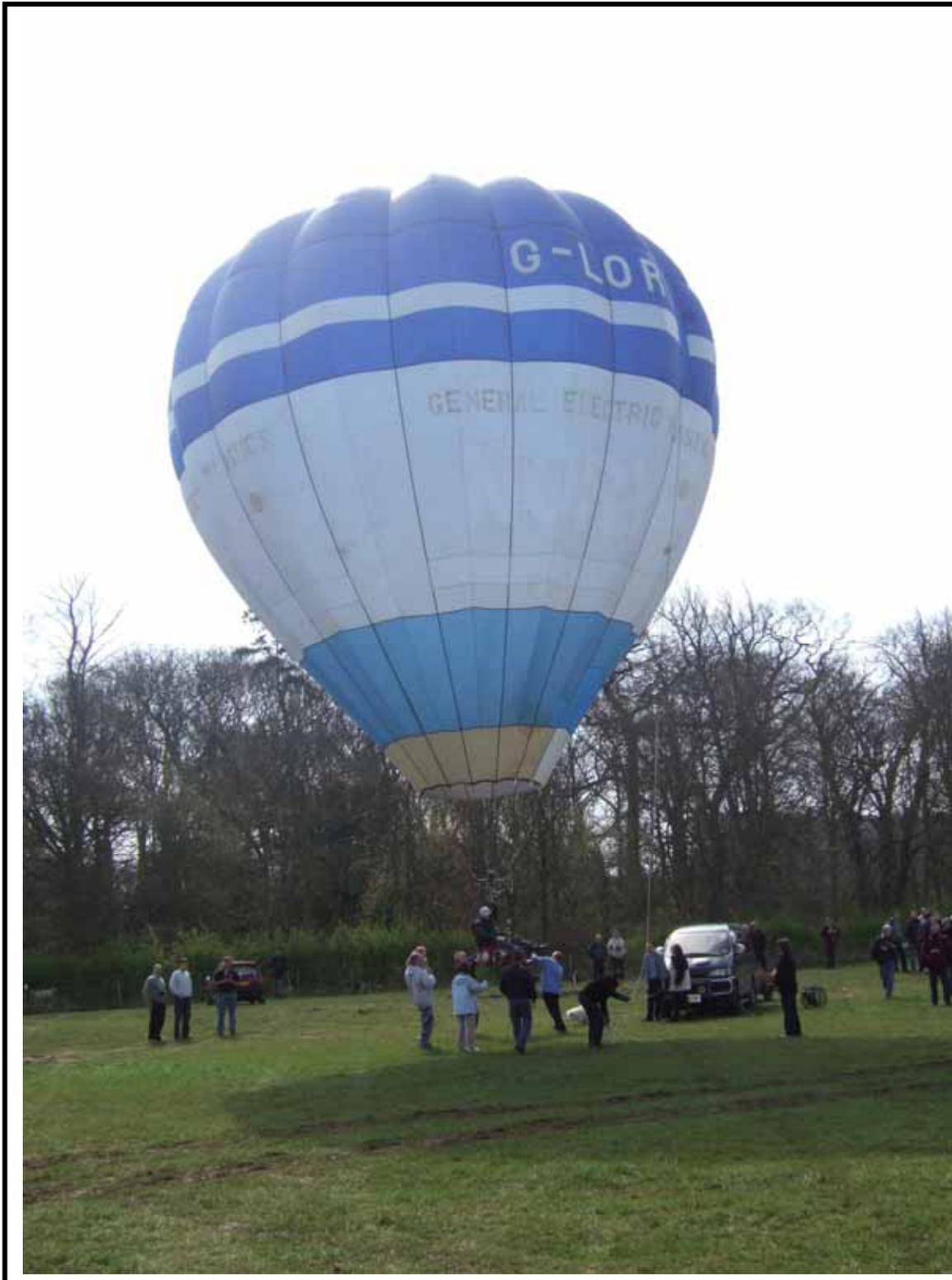
Amongst the 80 envelopes displayed from 7am until my departure time of 4pm there was a sizable array of hoppers taking part. The BBML have some remarkable pieces of Hopper history in their collection including G-BI DV the first commercially available hopper "Smirnoff" a Colt 14A.



Whilst not in the best of conditions, the balloon put on a spirited tether for the large audience, and had clearly received numerous repairs over the years. Another of the museums collection to get the tether treatment was one of the Colt 14A balloons from the film Green Ice G-BHKN. This was in a worse condition with the parachute decidedly past its best and substantial holes around the base of the balloon. The gallant Andy Austin managed to get it tethered for its rare appearance.



With much perseverance and a lull in the wind it was to be seen stood upright which was no mean feat for a balloon dating from 1980. Derry Moore also inflated and free flew a Thunder Ax4-31 across the launch site, G-LORY initially collided with a tree but was pulled off with no obvious damage and then proceeded to fly across the massive launch field .the sound of the whistling burner



(all noise and not much go), a treat for all those who assembled. Not bad for a balloon dating from November 1978. The winds seemed to abate a bit during the day with just occasional gusting

that made some hopper tethering “interesting”, but generally the conditions remained favorable and so they kept coming out of the bag.



This stunning shot of Andy Austin in G-HOUS Colt 31A was taken by Nikki Byrne and sent in by Kevin McLaughlin (many thanks).

As you can see from above not all of the outings were tether only with some free flights taking place in the grounds of the Hall Estates. G-HOUS is part of the BBML collection and looked good for a 1980 hopper, another somewhat newer hopper to prove popular was the Graham Bell Colt 31A G-DNGR having a rare auk outing.(This balloon has up till now traveled with Graham predominantly across the USA).



Once again, Kevin McLaughlin has come up trumps again with the jpeg and don't you get a feel for the atmosphere with the integrating crowd. Two further hoppers appeared over the day G-HOPR, Kev Tanners lindstrand 25 made an appearance and G-BSDV also hopped across the field (and although it is mine, seeing as he was doing so well with his own, I let Graham Bell play with it).

Those of you who were present may be on the verge of pointing out that I have missed a hopper out of the attendees list, G-BHOJ a Colt 14A which belongs to Janet Folkes. However, it is not missed out, whilst welcoming Janet to our membership, this remarkable machine gets its own column.

G-BHOJ-Colt 14A

I actually overheard Janet behind me talking to Derry Moore whilst queuing for a cup of Tea from the refreshments stall. So being a hopper junkie, I introduced myself and got talking about her balloon. What you have to realize is that about 50kgs, a 14A represents a manageable balloon for her.

Ultralight ballooning takes on a whole new meaning and shots of her equipment on show that day show just how minimalist hopping can actually be.

For example , if you look at the bottom end of her balloon, which was "Green Ice " number 6 , you will see the worlds smallest burner and tank arrangement , but remarkably Janet informed me that her longest hop so far with this gear was a remarkable one hour ten minutes!

The Inflation fan also merited attention from my camera, I have never seen a Husqvarna engined fan before- and I'm still unsure of its power output now. As the following pictures show the whole kit definitely deserved a mention in its own right and as another

part of the "Green Ice" film dynasty, the inclusion was merited on that reference alone.



What capacity is that tank? I remember Robin Batchelor telling me that during filming, duration was a scant 21mins at altitude.



A better view of the fan is seen below. Quite compact!



Here is Janet in full swing inflating the Colt in gusty conditions.



Janet still prefers to clip herself into the harness and be part of the balloon utilizing the webbing rather than sit on the seat. Finally a couple of shots of G-BHOJ. I wondered what the area on the envelope which looks like it should be cut out is all aboutanswers to your editor please!



The Quest for the Green Ice Six?

We now know that two of the Green Ice Hoppers were present at Kelmarsh Hall, and that the BBML has a third one based currently at a museum in Newbury (I hope to visit this soon and get a jpeg or two). The question that springs to mind is where are the others? I know Robin Batchelor has got the bottom end of another one but I feel to put this whole thing to bed once and for all, we need to establish where the other three are. Your help in getting the answers is invaluable. Answers please to steve.roake@ntlworld.com .

Website Updates

Yep hands held high ...nothing done about it again this month, intentions of trying to get it fixed and updated but so far not enough time or support on this subject so it will have to wait.

Gallery Pages-

Most of this newsletter has been about sightings, but "Hey", you can't have enough of a good thing.



(LHS), Noah Fordens New Hopper with remarkable bottom End sledge arrangement has now flown successfully. (RHS) New

Lindstrand 31A for Janice Frazer Who isn't yet a member anyone know her? We must get as many members as possible for fullest coverage of our sport.

Manufacturer Updates / News / Events

Stories coming from various people at Kelmarsh Hall, all speak of updates to hopper provision by the manufacturers. I can't speak directly for each company, but it seems both Cameron balloons and Lindstrand are looking at their own hoppers with a view to something new (more when I have it). Graham Bell informs me that Kubicek (via Crispin Williams), may have seen the error of their ways and may now actually go ahead with a Hopper design at last. Their current range of envelopes starts at a 42,000cu ft and so anything smaller will have to be a new build. Interest in the UK alone for a Kubicek hopper is Plentiful. Let's hope the news is confirmed shortly.

The next XLTA event in the USA is now open for entrants with online registration at www.xlta.org .

Next Month

- The Solo Meet held at Great Missenden - what actually happened
- Green Ice -The quest continues.
- More Banter and diatribe from me!
- Anything your editor receives worthy of entry

Fly Safe everyone, Membership stands at 178 (early April).

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.