Welcome to your July / August Newsletter.

Here is the latest post Chambley / Bristol Festival’s Newsletter, that is full of the latest information regarding what is happening in the Super light world of Ballooning. Plenty to talk about with regard to both, some great, some not so great but at least we concluded our World Record Flight and news of that further inside this edition of the magazine.

For your reading this month we have:
• The Mondial Air Ballons Festival review
• New Balloons / Second hand Sales updated.
• The Solo Record Flight Update. What happens next.
• Interesting Photos- its not a basket, and its not a hopper bottom end – its both!
• Manufacturer News from Metz.
• Cameron Stock O-31 for sale
• the Annual OMM for 2017.
• The 39th Bristol International Balloon Fiesta
• Limited edition Record Flight Tee shirts for sale.

Please send to me your items for inclusion in future editions of the newsletter to the email address below.

Without any more waiting, let’s get into the newsletter.

Steve Roake - Editor. Steve.roake33@gmail.com
1. Ed Speak- Hopping again at last.

Do you know how hard it was to get a new Hopper and not fly it? Looking into my pilot logbook I realised my last hop was last September 2016, because I didn't fly at the OMM due to the imminent sale of G-UHOP and a fear of damaging the goods prior to sale. The reason for not flying G-CJWY before Chambley was to maximise the potential for the Banner empathising the Solo record flight. The nearest I got was a quick 15 min tether prior to travelling to France where luckily I spotted a small problem which resulted in a trip to Bristol to resolve.

Maiden flight photo taken by Kevin Tanner.

However, the wait was worth it and a beautiful flight was had in the company of both Marcus Ekeroos (G-CEFB Um H-31)
and Kevin Tanner (G-HOPR Lbl 25A) who took some simply stunning aerial photographs during the flight which for me lasted 1 hour 25 mins and wasn’t exactly a fuel saving exercise with some pronounced climbs and descents and yet still left some 25% in the fuel tank. The details of the flight are in my review of Mondial Air Ballons but it was a blessed relief to finally achieve what we set out to do. Many times I have imagined it not happening, and if I had a Euro for every time people asked me in Chambley when it was going to happen, I’d be in my Penthouse suite in Monaco by now. I try desperately to be impartial with the way I write the Newsletter but, I cannot tell you how emotional the week was with ebbs and flows and a structure in place that changed their minds every five seconds without regard for the variables involved with flying hoppers. I am not ever going to diss an organisation who run a balloon festival (having been there myself in 2002), but Jesus H Christ, this was verging on ridiculous. Ah well, moving on …!

2. The Essential Extras- PRM’s

Having just lost a cheap PRM in Chambley, (I never fly the hopper with them, but did for the record flight and it fell off on the launch field never to be recovered), Its time to look at getting some more up to date replacement models. So what I hear you say is the criteria by which we judge a good set of PRM radios? Number one they have to be of decent range (I guess 10km straight line). Number two they need to be affordable and number three, if they are by a reputable manufacturer so much the better. Price range? From £25 - 80 for the pair I’d say. Where does that leave us? Well, when you Google search on the cheapest Walkie-talkies, with quite a few options. The model that seems to fit the criteria is the Motorola TLKR T80. Now ballpark figure seems to be £75-80 for a pair which to me seems very good value. Being made to be abused is also a plus point in the extreme model whilst cheaper models are available with reduced performance, this one seems to fit the remit perfectly.

It is only an aesthetic thing, but I also think being finished in a vibrant Colour is also a good thing making them visible easily if ever misplaced. When you consider the package available gives you two radios, a combined charger unit, ear pieces and two belt clips and two landyards and features rechargeable batteries it really is good value for your outlay.
The offer price I quoted is through a company called One Direct.

Therefore, this product is fit for inclusion in the Essential Extras section of the newsletter and comes with our personal recommendation.

3 Features Section

**Mondial Air Ballons 2017**

The review of this year’s Bi annual Balloon Festival at Chambley Airfield in the new East region of France will be split into two Sections. This first will be my personal overview of the event as a whole and then the second will deal with more specifically the
Cameron Balloons Solo Record Flight which took part during the event.

Now into the 15th iteration of the festival, Mondial Air Ballons (MAB) has evolved into the most significant festival in Europe and for 2017 over 600 balloons participated. Significant investment over the years has lead to vast improvements in the facilities with refuelling the most immediate one that springs to mind. “Checking in” can be a longwinded process and queues were fairly long over the first weekend and favours those who arrived early, with my particular process being under half an hour in total when it was quieter (Friday lunchtime). A small but dedicated team of about 8 staff put together the whole festival, with volunteers assisting during the event. Generally during the 10 day period the weather would be called changeable with an initial few days of shorter fine flying slots of roughly 30-45 min duration prior to incoming rain, followed by a series of missed slots where the depression passed through. The end of the week saw another series of flyable slots to round out the week with a maximum of about 12 flyable slots if you were spirited in your outlook. Personally I did 8 of them, on one occasion deciding my cut off time had elapsed prior to the flight being called on. There were a couple of incidents attributed to Uk pilots who were caught out by their circumstances but generally no one got hurt and kit can be repaired.

For a change the wind direction was mostly towards the eastern path from the airfield, overflying Chambley village either heading northeasterly towards Rezonville area or on a couple of slots slightly south of the village in the direction of Gorze which suffers from more limited landing potential. One particular slot afforded 50 degrees of steerage and a longer (1hr 50mins) flight took our team past Pont a Mousson for a 13nm jaunt.

To say that the weather played havoc with the organisers original agenda is an understatement, but like most things all bar the Nightglow took place over the duration, and most crews flew a decent amount of slots, mine exceeded my 2015 total. Like all festivals, Chambley MAB isn’t without its criticism, most vocal one being that more could have been made of the pilots area with a more village like Bar area and the ability to purchase foods other than the provided continental breakfasts. All the major manufacturers were present in one form or another but without bias, I have to congratulate Cameron Balloons Ltd. who turned up on days when the others failed to show. Nice to see Lindstrand Technologies presence at a
major festival again an offering a unique deal where if you bought a complete kit for a time limited period you would get a hopper for free. All appeared to be doing good business which is a very healthy sign in our sport.

Generally the briefings had the weather pretty much sorted , but for me it was useful to also have the app “windy”, which featured chambley Aerodrome amongst its criteria so I could make my own appraisals of whether or not to go to briefings and on the two calls I made , my judgements were proved to be founded as flying was abandoned.

How many hoppers in one photo? Well 15 actually, preparing For the MAB / Cameron Balloons Solo Record Flight.

– photo by Greg Winker

Security was enhanced during the event which was inevitable after the recent isis atrocities and armed guards were to be seen regularly, however much angst was directed at the entrance and the length of time it took both to enter and exit the site as it had a dual role and wasn’t exclusively for balloon crews. If I were the patrons of the event I would instigate an alternative balloon crew only in and out entrance somewhere over by the gas refuelling where you don’t get embroyalled in public lunacy where they try intently to get to where they shouldn’t be.
It has to be said, at one stage this event was in doubt as the three regional assemblies who have previously funded the event were amalgamated into the East region and therefore one source for funding. Having invested to such an extent in the past, I for one, couldn’t see it never happening.

Yes this time around there were no gas balloons, but the Hopper record flight filled part of the void. For anyone who has never run an event, I would humbly suggest you think about the issues they had to deal with on a daily basis.

That aside I have to say I was unimpressed with the approach of the officials towards our Solo Record Flight. All the way through the lead up to this attempt, they haven’t really engaged in it, and whilst promising that the flight would take part on the earliest possible morning slot, this simply didn’t happen even though suitable weather was available. It quickly transpired, that their focus was on the “Grand Line” and when that wasn’t Possible, everything else took a back seat to it. Having to forcibly voice my opinions (which is something I care not to do), eventually stirred the pot and whilst the flight took place alongside the Grand line flight a certain percentage of participants felt that their duty was to fly their crews first and foremost and so the eventual numbers of participants was diluted by 10% due to the conflict of interests put upon them by the organisers. The situation was so bad that I felt “they” felt guilty suggesting that another go could be done on their Saturday am slot. I simply said in order to have the maximum amount present, owners needed fore warning as kit needed sorting from the various accommodation types prior to the flight. In the next breathe, they advocated we flew later that day giving 90 mins warning of their change of position. Eventually I talked them out of the whole re do thing as id had enough. Naturally we don’t know exactly how many took part until all the entry forms are back in but it appears that 34 is the figure which is very commendable.

However I didn’t appreciate one American individual who only gave notice about not travelling to the event under 24 hours before it started with a one line email. With people investing both time and money to thank you for coming, that is just plain inconsiderate especially when you know shippage takes two weeks and the decision had been taken way earlier.
Other than that, it seemed like a normal MAB. Numbers camping on the airfield seemed up, but in Jaulny some 10km away the popular Camping-de-la-Pelouse campsite appeared emptier than years past. I have to say, having participated in the last 9 consecutively, I think my bubble has burst. But two years lay off has a funny way of refocussing your mind, so never say never.

The Solo Record Flight

Finally the opportunity arose to fly the MAB / Cameron Balloons Solo Record Flight on Friday 28th July. Weather was suitable, but being combined with the Grand Line, I advised most to wait 20mins after the others had inflated their bigger balloons even before we started as we didn’t want to spend half an hour waiting to free fly. My desire to fly my new hopper had got to the very summit, and so to actually strap in and go fly was a positive delight, spending most of the actual 1hr 25mins alongside Kevin Tanner in his LBL25A G-HOPR and Swedens Marcus Ekeroos in his UM H-31 G-CEFB. The direction was towards Chambley village and then on to Tronville and ultimately for the greedy amongst us finally Rezonville. Such a beauty to fly mid pack, low level in complete solitude. Leaning forward in my harness, skimming over the sunflower plants was devine and the French were out en mass to wish us Bon accord! The aerial photographs just don’t do the flight justice with conversations possible as we gracefully skimmed across the crops at 6-7 knots. Knowing my crew would need time to exit the launch arena I had pre planned to fly minimum of 1 hour and then talk to them on my PRM radio, but this went to pot as I dropped the radio some 30 seconds after take off never to retrieve it. Oh well – time for an upgrade (see Essential Extra’s). In the end, I landed on cut grass, exiting the hopper to assist in catching Kevin with his crew and brother keith. At no point during the flight were we more than a couple of hundred yards apart, and he very gracefully strode over to congratulate me on the first flight of G-CJWY upon landing which was a nice touch.

With crew soon on site, we packed away quickly and headed back to base camp with some 25% still in my 60litre V30. Later that afternoon I took the opportunity to cold inflate it again for fear of getting it wet on the landing site. This was unfounded, but you
never can tell. “All that remains”, note the brackets, is colating all the information, photographic evidence, videos and thanking the sponsor Cameron balloons for their generous gift packages for all who took part, and now dealing with Guinness World records to verify our claim. To all who took part, many thanks for being there, and get the forms back to me please.

Manufacturers at Chambley (MAB)

During the ten days I spent a considerable amount of time with the manufacturers who had chalets in the pilot area. All looked to be doing good business and pressing the flesh, and in no particular order, here is my appraisal of what they had there and what was occurring with them.

Lindstrand Technologies

Firstly I was delighted to see Lindstrand Tech. back at a big event, especially when they were supporting an event in Italy at the same time. Their stand was supported by Kelvin Oakley and he was assisted by their new Belgium Brand Ambassador Arne Lips. Arne is a nice lad, a definite asset to them and should go far in the industry. On their stand wasn’t anything to do with hopping except that they had a unique offer during the event where if you bought a complete kit they would give you a hopper with it.

Ultramagic Balloons

The lovely Josep Costa Llada was present at Chambley with various members of his family and seemed very busy with customers. In our field their success with the Tekno brand and their hoppers is of interest to us. They had their latest hopper bottom end on display in a rig for people to try for comfort. Unfortunately Josep wasn’t able to join the record flight as he had intended, as members of his team left the envelope in their accommodation gite. With a recent batch of new hoppers registered by Ultramagic it proves that their hopper product is as popular as ever and the second version of the solo bottom end is receiving good acclaim with buyers.
Cameron Balloons

The Cameron Stand at Chambley focussed on Super Lightweight products. They had on display a lightweight basket with the prototype of a newer version of the Single that thinks it’s a twin Burner. Designed to be lighter and more compact it just takes what has worked well over the years and improves on it. The main impact item was a hopper bottom end on a stand which featured Camoflage scheme and matching accessories.

Just another example of personalised customer choice.

The idea behind the jazzy scheme was to highlight the choices
that customers now have. Gone are the days when you only had one option and Cameron’s are keen to expand the choices available. The standard rig was being joined at Bristol Fiesta by a new de luxe version for people who want a higher grade of finish. In Chambley having had input from my daughter Kelly who has a more youthful outlook on life, we discussed how 90% of all balloon things are now sorted, so companies are looking for that unique feature to convince you to buy their products. She pointed out that whilst all focus has been on performance derived upgrades, perhaps there is a place in the range for a “Comfort” version which focusses on giving the client more padding and more creature comforts for their money.

**Limited edition Solo flight T Shirts**

Designed By Cameron Balloons Ltd to celebrate the achievement of the Solo Record Flight, a Limited supply of blue and Grey T shirts were available on the stand at Chambley and after via a direct call to the factory and for collection at the Bristol Balloon Fiesta. Whether or not any remain for sale now is questionable, however should you be interested, give Charlie Rawson a call at the factory.

Limited edition Commerative T shirts
Bristol International Balloon Fiesta 2017

The 39th annual Bristol International Balloon Fiesta (BIBF), took place at the Ashton Court Show grounds from August the 10th through to the 13th, and surprisingly the weather turned out to be better than expected. The sunshine leading up to the event looked to be pietering out before it had started and yet more slots were flown than expected.

Traditionally Thursday evening is the shapes Rodeo and whilst I took one with me, it simply didn’t happen as the winds were too strong only dying out in time for a 25 balloon Nightglow around 9-30pm. Friday morning was a whole lot better with an inversion and upper winds of around 9 knots. Peter Gregory flew the BWS Security Systems Cameron O-31G-CJRK, and whilst it sported a couple of new ripped panels, it still looked good.

Peter Gregory in G-CJKR Cameron O-31.

The flight took crews across Bristol city skylines and out over the countryside near the A38. This was also joined in the air by the
Airtour G-BLVA of Simon Church / Darwin Peltan but I couldn’t tell you who was flying it on this occasion. These were two of 103 craft that flew in the morning sunshine, and truly a sight to behold.

Richard Parry enjoying the latest version of Ultramagic’s Bottom end

Unfortunately the evening wasn’t quite so nice and the evening slot simply wasn’t possible, as the upper winds were too strong, and as we went to bed the prospects for Saturday morning weren’t great as the predicted gradient winds were 15-19 knots. Overnight a front was supposed to go through with rain up until about 3am. As it
transpired the Saturday morning came with a weaker inversion and a small window of opportunity to fly but passing low clouds precluded a mass ascent with only 28 balloons actually flying. This was the right call to can the slot but there were a big number of disgruntled pilots who on reflection would have seen it as a good choice of judgement.

Kevin Mclaughlin captured this marketting departments dream picture

In my opinion the dregs of the previous nights weather were still around and the low cloudbase over the city meant that the call to stop the take off’s was indeed the right one. But you try telling 18 punters who are in your basket that you now cant fly …not a conversation I would have liked to given my passengers.

Saturday evening once again turned into a breezy affair with
an early call to say that free flying had been cancelled. The predicted drop in windspeeds didn’t occur early enough for free flying but still allowed another 25 balloon Nightglow in front of over 100,000 fans. Most Pilots worth their socks, already knew that Sunday morning was going to be the slot with speeds of between 1-3 knots predicted for the morning. In the end with a lovely inversion the speeds were 2 knots all the way up to around 3000 feet where miraculously from somewhere 9 knots appeared. This was (as I had originally expected), a hopper slot.

This was a morning for letting all the other balloons disappear and then having the arena to yourself. Whilst Simon Whatley flew out in G-CKSW his O-26, and the G-BLVA team joined him, for the spotters at least there were two new additions to the weekends activities with the
arrival of Richard Parry’s new Ultramagic H-31 G-CKBJ and my Cameron Liveried O-31 G-CJWY on its first uk outing. We were joined in a mini hopper fest by Martin Mitchell in his Lindstrand 31A and Derek Maltby in the BWS liveried Cameron Z-31 G-CJRK. We all took turns to fly down the field in harmony with one another around Neil Ivison (another hopper exponent) who was tethereing a Maxwell house shaped Jar of coffee.

I really enjoy these infrequent play sessions and allowed Rob Clements 25 minutes to sample the fun in my machine.

By also inflating after most of the regular balloons, the early morning Dew had burnt off and putting the craft away was possible in dry conditions.
So that was Bristol 2017 styley and not a bad year for this festival. Plenty of time to catch up with what is going on in the ballooning world and still a remarkable amount of people showing major interest in joining our world who are fresh to it. Long may the impetus remain with us.

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Solo Record Flight – Post flight analysis

So the deed was done and 34 of us flew the flight. Now comes the after flight work to prove we did it, and get accreditation from the Guinness people. The only way I can do that is by getting all the paperwork back in and having it in preparation as proof if proof were needed. Eighteen good people have already sent their forms back to me, should you be one of the named ones (on Facebook), who haven’t yet please get on with it asap thanks.

Guinness themselves have been in touch, recognising the category by which we wish to claim this world record, but it seems they don’t understand it since they “claim” the current record is 128 which, trust me, had it of taken place previously I think we would all have known about. Therefore I have gone back to them to challenge such an assertion and think a long drawn out path may lay ahead as we educate them on what a cloudhopper actually is.

For a world authority they seem to lack expertise in this field and every bit of correspondence has a cavat of two weeks between responses.

So just reitterating – please get the evidence back to me as soon as possible …many thanks .

5. Homebuilding Section-
This recent photo from Chris Sanger Davis shows us his home built bottom end and uses the design created by Chris Monk. The original feature on Chris Monks version (in yellow), is in an earlier Newsletter from years ago. Thanks to Chris Sanger Davis for the photo.

When looking at the original version, some major points have been addressed, particularly the number one desire of most — a gymballed burner. Should you want to build one contact chris via email address: chrismonk1@yahoo.com for more information.
Meanwhile in a quiet sleepy hollow in Newbury Berkshire, away from all the other Homebuilders, Ron Griffin has been busy. Working the old fashioned way using paper and drawings as opposed to CAD/CATIA programmes Ron has been creating his RG-28 G-CKIA. To say the results are stunning is a true understatement.

G-CKAI the RG-28 photo by Ron Griffin.

Quietly working away on his own, Ron has completed the balloon in four months and it is a real credit to him that the shape is arguably as good as anything ever created. Weight is 38.5kgs in the bag.

5. Interesting Photos.
What do you do if you’re not quite ready to give up your basket for a Cloudhopper bottom end? Well, Toby Brown recently posted on Facebook the Firefly balloons answer which originates from 2014. This hybrid basket cum seat unit is definitely unique and sort of satisfies the question not being one or the other.

Interesting Concept by Firefly Balloons.
After many months of waiting, Giovanni Aimo has finally received from the Italian authorities his new registration of I-B855 for the former G-OBLU Cameron H-34. This means that at last after many years he can start to re use the craft.

Giovanni graciously got the hopper out for us at the Mondovi 2016 event where it looked in great condition. The previous problem with ownership was that the original company had been taken over by another who went broke and the ownership details were both protracted and illuminating.

There seems to be a small uplift in italian hoppers with another duo example seen in Chambley. I-C256 utilises an Adams A-50S envelope coupled to a Paulo Bonnano Duo bottom end with vertical Cylinders.
I-C256, Adams Duo Chariot featuring a Bonnano seat unit as photographed by Sandy Mitchell in Chambley during the MAB festival during July.
6. New Allocations This Month / Changes of Ownership

This month (August), there are no known newly registered hoppers besides the Ron Griffin RG-28 G-CKAI shown above. There is plenty of interest including an enquiry which may lead to a bigger sized Cameron offering, but until that happens it is only rumours.

Second Hand Movements

The most reclusive of second hand hoppers has now been sold on. G-CGFO Ultramagic H-42 has never flown since delivery in 2009. To my knowledge only two of us have ever seen it inflated and even then it was partially. The balloon should be more common now being owned by Dave Such.

![Rare photo of G-CGFO on its test inflation.](image-url)
7. **Gallery Pages –**

Your Editor’s choice of new and interesting hoppers and duo’s active in the world of ballooning or good themed photos. As promised in the New balloons section last month, here are the three latest allocated hoppers in the UK, all of which have been active recently.

![G-CKSW Cameron O-26](image)

**G-CKSW Cameron O-26**

First flown in Chambley, This Cameron O-26 (first of a new size available), belongs to Simon Whatley and was active at Bristol Balloon Fiesta. At 29kgs in the bag it gives the discerning pilot another version of the Super light range to choose from being specifically designed to accommodate the New 40 Litre Cameron Tanks. The more observant of you will also notice the new revised Cameron Balloons Ltd. Logo which debuted on this very product. I think you can expect to see this balloon at the forthcoming annual One Man Meet which this year will be held in the Cotswolds.
region of the country. Second submission is the Ultramagic H-42 for Josh Taylor. c/n 42/19 was captured flying at the recent Cornbury Festival by Sandy Mitchell. Sometimes less is definitely more with advertising and it works well in this instance.

Finally, the third new balloon in the gallery section is another Ultramagic, this time an H-31 for Glenn Board. Whilst nominally registered to his uk address, G-CKHJ is kept and flown in Spain, c/n is 31/18.

G-CKHJ Um H-31 c/n 31/18 photo by Glenn Board.
Pretty stock hopper from Cameron’s

Unbelievably still on a special offer deal from Cameron Balloons, is this lovely stock hopper which is on a special price of £7800 using the discount code “Facebook Deal 01”. Contact Cameron Balloons in Bristol to secure this beautiful beast and enjoy the saving over list price. Amazed it hasn’t sold yet- Ed!
In a unique move, I have come across this product that may well appeal to members of this group. I have been able to negotiate a better price for members for this photo frame that has an unusual selling point. You can include video footage and so this may appeal to some of you.

I hope you all appreciate this new dimension to the newsletter and realise that for this product to be included took some serious thought as to its usefulness to everyone here. Feedback is invited –Ed.
8. Manufacturer / Event News / Industry News

**CAMERON BALLOONS**

Bristol Balloon Fiesta gave me a chance to catch up with the inner group that develop new things in the Cameron brand and whilst the expected “De Luxe” version of their Millenium hopper seat unit failed to appear, it is still definitely on the cards, just delayed by the snowball effect of chambley and Bristol and the orders and enquiries that go with it. The new version of the brand will appear as soon as time is available to create the first version. Same deal with the “comfort” enhanced comfort version.

These two items aren’t the only developments happening at Bristol. I am privy to other things that will impact on our sector of the market but as yet I cannot disclose the nature of the innovations.

**So to next month’s Newsletter**

Included in the next issue will be
- A review of all the current offerings for Inflation fans.
- SkyDive Dubai’s two Cameron Z-42’s.
- We look forward to the 32nd Annual OMM.

Current Membership of the Facebook page is 1103 and still rising steadily. And so that was the July / August edition of the Newsletter, hope you all enjoyed it. **Fly Safe people … Steve Roake.**

All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your Editor. Please forward them to **steve.roake33@gmail.com** and feedback good, bad or indifferent is always welcome. Views aired by contributors may not be those of the Editor.

For all previous newsletters visit **www.cloudhoppers.org/Newsletters.**

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