



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

Hello again people and Happy New Year.

Traditionally the start of a new year is a time to look forward, Formulate some plans for the year ahead, and try to set aspirations for the things you want to achieve over the coming months.

For me, the ongoing success of "Cloudhoppers" is a great personal satisfaction, and right now in January 2014, we celebrate ten years of the forum and the setting up of the embryonic world that now encompasses the Forum, Newsletter and instant world of the Facebook page. Back in 2004 I was just an enthusiastic individual who wanted to give hoppers a bigger presence in the ballooning world, and since then I'm constantly amazed when people come to me for advice ( particularly in the used marketplace), and who can foresee where we will be in another ten years time? One thing that is crystal clear for all to see, the future remains in fabric technology and the rate of advancement in this sector will no doubt influence further the economy of flying our craft. Whilst here in Europe we lag behind our American friends in the world of homebuilding, you get the sense that a breakthrough in the world of liberalised manufacturing is just around the corner. Educating the EASA authorities seems the biggest stumbling block to the process but mark my words, change is coming!

Ask me personally, what is the number one ambition you have for hopping in 2014? It's simple to answer. As and when possible, I want to be involved with the BBML (British Balloon Museum and Library) in holding an event inside the airship hanger at Cardington in Bedfordshire for hoppers, giving you the opportunity of coming to a weekend event where for one day only, you get to fly your hopper indoors –Guaranteed! It is going to be such a monumental event, that I feel we need to make it into A social weekend just like the OMM, with sociable gatherings and localised accommodation for the weekend. For me, the magnitude of such an undertaking means telling everyone with sufficient time for international participants given the chance to join in the activities.

Trust me, serious discussions with the right people are taking place and as and when availability to stage such an event

## Contents

### **Ed Speak –**

*Icicle and winter flying*

### **Essential Extras**

*Love Your A2*

### **The Features**

*Section –*

*The Icicle*

*Balloon meet*

### **My interesting flight**

*Tom Hilditch*

### **Facebook**

*Roundup by*

*Dave Westlake*

### **Manufacturer News**

*Cameron*

*Balloons fabric advances.*

### **Gallery**

*Chateau D'oex*

### **Adverts/For**

**Sale**



# Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

becomes set in place, I will be telling the world about it. There are a lot of things that need sorting in order for this to happen, but there is a genuine desire to make this happen, simply because of its uniqueness and guaranteed flying. All I can say is watch this space.

Steve Roake

## **1, Ed-Speak – Icicle and winter flying**

This year's Icicle balloon meet by everyone's standards was a bit of a damp squib, and not only the weather contributed to that. The ballooning world isn't immune from recessionary forces and the messages coming out of the Elcot Place Hotel were of tough times ahead. The weather kept a lot of people away saturated fields and persistent rain prior to the event left the sub soil saturated and fields looked more like lakes than arable land. Talk between acquaintances normally revolves around where you are planning to go during the year, but there seemed little chat during the time I was present at the hotel.

Traditionally, the alpine meets reflect lovely white picturesque snow scapes and vibrant colours reflected against the backdrop, but the seasonal opener at Mondovi was more mud scenes than snow scenes. Tannheim had more snow but hopefully by Chateau D'oex normal service will be resumed. More Hoppers please!

## **2, Essential Extra's / Tech Talk- Love your A2 by Mark Stelling**

Like the Worthington 40 litre tank, the Icom A2 radio has been a mainstay of ballooning for the last 25 plus years. I love them, and have currently got 6 and counting!!

Recently, I have seen a lot of them for sale up on the second hand market, and whilst it's true that in some cases, their owners are getting out of the sport we know and love, in other cases it's because these owners have purchased super whizz new lightweight technology, leaving the old faithful A2 supposedly now redundant.

Whilst not doubting that these new radios are a significant improvement on A2 1980's technology, for the majority we are currently only talking about using radios for ballooning and not navigating to VOR's, and in most of these cases, many are



# Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

just using the ballooning frequency of 122.475.

So for those that aren't planning on doing a long jump or transiting vast arrays of Class D airspace, please find below a few top tips for getting the most out of your old faithful A2, and thus saving you spending £200/250 Euro plus on a new, gadget friendly, .833 compliant A6E, that you will probably never have to use to its full potential! Icom don't really do spares anymore for the A2, but there are now products on the market that are very adequate if not much better than the originals. However their repairs department (in Herne Bay in Kent) should you have a base unit problem, I'm told is excellent, and with very reasonable prices.

Battery – Let's face it, you've probably never changed it since you bought it, but you will have re-charged it hundreds of times. The cells have almost certainly gone and it now won't hold its charge. Fortunately, you can get replacement batteries on ebay for about £25 delivered; go for the CM7 or BP7 from sellers in the UK or Germany. . I have seen them advertised on the same site for much cheaper originating from the Far East but would advise caution!!

Aerial - the original one was adequate, albeit a bit flimsy so it's probably broken over time where it's been dropped or stuffed carelessly in an old flight bag . Glen Everett at Flying Adverts can supply a super aerial which he has designed himself, which is more robust and user friendly. It also significantly improves the range previously available from the original aerial. I don't want to start adding extra percentage figures here, but it is a noticeable figure and well worth the £20/ 25 Euro each (ish) that Glen charges for it. I can now hear Edinburgh's ATIS from my house eight miles away down by the river in a sleepy hollow, Bargain!

So for fewer than 50 quid / 60 Euro, you can easily recondition your A2 so that you now have a quality radio with a serviceable battery together with a range to die for. Love your A2!!

Mark Stalling



### **3. The Features Section**

#### **The Icicle Balloon Meet- by Steve Rake**

First weekend in January is the time for the Icicle Balloon Meet with the traditional hospitality and Dinner at the Eliot place Hotel. This year following changes to Scotland farm, there was a new venue for the flying side of events on Marlborough Common not that I expected it to be used as the lead up to the event had seen plenty of rain and saturated fields. Driving to the area on Friday morning in the rain with plenty of roads flooded, I couldn't foresee any flying which is why I left the hopper at home. Saturday morning I woke early to predicted weather knowing that nobody would fly. Mid morning I joined the "throng" at the trade show which was actually devoid of people. This was predictably quiet as the rain forecast hadn't tempted too many people to venture out. There was a small amount of interest as Colin Butter got his new lindstrand 31 Hopper (ex Pauline Baker) out for an ARC check indoors. Two manufacturers were present, with both Cameron Balloons and Ultramagic showing wares. You have to remember that we are in the midst of a recession and so it wasn't surprising that Cameron were saying that business wasn't great and sales were hard to come by. Richard Penny at Ultramagic UK echoed the sentiments and yet had two techno collapsible baskets on his stand, for the very popular techno 50 and 70 systems. Simon Askey on the Cameron stand was keen to show me the latest development in fabric technology (see article later for more), which is the most important area for future development in my opinion. The trouble is that, whilst sales are subdued, this is the time that manufacturers need to innovate and inspire the customers to invest which is hard at the best of times. The thing that surprised me the most in the limited time I was at the hotel was the lack of enthusiasm by people generally towards their future planned events, with not too many talking about their winter plans.

Overnight there was an inversion and the keen ones went to the briefing where five teams decided to brave the elements and go for it. Amongst these was our very own Tom Hilditch who decided to fly his hopper. Tom has written up his account of what happened during the flight and how he ended up in a tree near Swindon hospital.

Whilst we can all question the decision to fly etc, I hope we can all learn from Tom's frank and open rendition of what occurred.



# Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

That in a nutshell was the Icicle Balloon Meet, mixed opinions on the new launch site but I guess only time will tell if it meets the requirements.

Steve Roake

## **4, My interesting flight / First Hops- by Tom Hilditch**

### **Just a couple of trees for me**

I went for a flight in January, conditions were quick, fields were wet, burner pressure was low, I had a disagreement with a tree, and then I landed. That is the short story. The long story...

How many times have you been at a balloon meet, the outlook when you load up your balloon or hitch up your trailer and prepare to leave is dismal, you're in your hotel or at the campsite, and going to bed, you know the chances of flying the next morning are slim, and yet, balloon ready, crew all convened, no organisation needed, you set your alarms, and no matter wind or rain, out of respect of event organisers you show you face at the field with a sigh of 'You wouldn't get out of bed for this at home'? And there are those rare occasions that a flyable slot arrives out of nowhere, one you would have missed at home where the effort would outweigh the chance of reward, yet here you are, effort is not required, you can take your reward and fly.

The Icicle is a meet where no one usually expects to fly, there were people on Facebook grumbling 'I'm not going to bother going, the forecast is awful, and even if there is a slot, the fields are flooded.' These people were missing the point, the Icicle is not an event one goes to for flying, and at this time of year, if you choose to go based on a good forecast, the likelihood is that forecast will be wrong. The Icicle is a social event more than anything, in the days before we had a hopper, when I was younger; we probably went without a balloon more often than with one. We often tried to guess whether it was worth taking the big balloon based on the forecast, we always made the wrong choice.

This year, we took the hopper, as it doesn't make much difference to hassle by chucking it in the back of car, and also there was cheap fuel available and we had some empties.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

Saturday there were whispers of a possible slot Sunday morning after a front had passed, and before another arrived. Sunday morning we awoke to a freezing frost and still winds in the car park, with the hard time we had scraping ice off the car and trying to open the doors, I kind of knew I'd be flying. Yes many fields were flooded, but the ones that weren't were dry, or at least the ground was frozen hard. We arrived at the field and there was a bit of a breeze, but to be expected on the top of a hill without shelter. One pilot started rigging straight away, having attended briefing the previous day; a sensible decision considering it was really scheduled too late considering conditions were forecast to deteriorate early on. Having stayed in bed due to awful weather the previous day, and not knowing the area, I felt I needed to attend briefing for general meet notes; also I wanted an accurate forecast of actual weather considering upper winds appeared quite quick.



Lift off – photo courtesy of Martin Freeston.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

When I was hot inflating it started to gust, and getting clipped in and off safely proved a little challenging, without a gimbal I find you can't realistically expect to inflate and take off in much above 10 kts, something I consider a good unintentional safety measure. As it was it was probably close to 10 kts and I made sure I went off at the top of the tether as felt I might experience some false lift, having to continuously burned to clear the balloon inflating next to me. As a result I went off pretty quickly, straight into the faster winds. Not fancying a fast flight, I dropped down into a valley and settled into a rather pleasant speed of about 5 knots at low level. This gave me a false sense of security and instead of having a short 20 minute flight like everyone else, bar Richard Penney and Richard Parry in the registration-less Ultramagic Tekno, I flew on for a while.

I was flying up the eastern edge of my first map with the second map to the north east folded in a separate wallet. I was starting to get towards the north east corner of the first map and not wanting to get into the faster higher winds to steer onto the second map, particularly as I would have to take it out and refold it, wasn't familiar with the area, and the ground wind was picking up, that option didn't appeal to me. A big flat frosty field presented itself to me that I was on course to cross the corner of but there were sheep in the field at the other end and a guy standing beside his pick up that was parked alongside, he looked like he could potentially be a grouchy farmer, so I chose to fly on. In hindsight I should have landed, at this point I was probably doing about 10 knots. I then climbed to get a better view of upcoming landing options and to cross the motorway that passes below Swindon at a point to the south east and spotted two fields either side of a road on my track, both with easy access, both small, the second slightly longer but the first slightly drier.

My preference was the first, drier, field, so I started to make an approach. As I descended I veered too far left and towards Swindon and then ultimately the edge of the map and away from my second map. So I climbed again, now on target I began to descend, but not dropping as quick as I needed to. I hesitated, I wasn't sure if I would stop before the trees so I decided to level out and up over the tree line into the next field. Unfortunately I decided too late.

I'm used to the hopper reacting like a sports car, in



# Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

comparison to my 90 being somewhat like a cumbersome people carrier. It will stop on a postage stamp, even in fast conditions. When descending quickly, with a couple of short blasts on the main valve and I'll instantly level out, if not climb. However in my limited flying experience as a pilot, and slightly more drawn out experience as a PUT prior to that, I have little to no experience flying with low burner pressure. Before I've brought tanks indoors or spiked, however, from this flight alone I realised how much the responsiveness of the hopper had dropped and having corrected my path so close to the first field, played in safe and descended at a gentle gradient into the second field.

As I was trying to level out my approach, I burned and burned, but was continuing to descend. I pretty much levelled right before hitting the tallest tree in the tree line. I hit the trunk dead on about half way up, wearing woollen gloves beneath my pilot gloves, the gloves on my right hand came off easily, the only injury I obtained. Now doing about 12 knots, maybe a little more, the momentum wasn't going to allow me to come to rest in it, but rather pushed me around it and as I flung free putting the seat into a spin. The momentary loss of weight (or 'bounce') coupled with the heat I had previously put it had caused me to start climbing. Having approached the second, triangle-shaped, field at the upwind point, the right with height was causing me to now fly up the tree line along the road that ran up the side. Looking up I discovered the spin had tangled the rip line all the way around the burner frame, trapping the parachute slightly open. For a moment I tried to untangle it, but projected that if I did free it, it'd be too late and I'd be landing anyway, but rather than in the field, I'd perhaps be gift wrapping downwind telegraph poles, or worse, perhaps hitting the house downwind of the field. Considering this, my only option was to rip out knowing I was still above the tree line, and there was a chance I'd be retrieving the envelope from across the trees, however I hoped I'd drift left and collapse into the field. With the trees breaking my fall I then dropped into the field with a small pendulum swing then a gentle thud. The envelope then caught up and deflated quickly enough without as much as a drag.

With just a small upturned L shape tear to one panel just above the equator from flying through the tree, that required 2/3rds of it to be replaced, things could have been far worse.





# Clouthopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

Also the friendly farmer was more than understanding of my prompt arrival, yet my embarrassment was compounded by him being accompanied by his two very attractive daughters.



Things got more eventful when the retrieve was followed into the car park by a police car who informed me an ambulance had been dispatched, which arrived 30 seconds later, but also an air ambulance. The air ambulance was quickly called down when the farmer saw me standing, injury free and engaging him in conversation. It turns out my landing had been witnessed by someone from a window at Swindon Hospital, who had called for multiple emergency services to be put into action!

Out of those people present upon my landing however, I by far was not the most unfortunate. The police car was involved in a high speed motorway crash no more than an hour later, fortunately the policemen escaped with no major injuries but the car was written off! Then 3 days later my dad slipped on the laminate coming out of his lounge, breaking his right leg!

In hindsight, I feel I made the right decision to fly, I felt the conditions were well within my parameters of competence. The windspeed was brisk but quite calm for parts of the flight. It was not, as the rumour mill apparently had it in Mondovi, 35 knots at 700ft! the most I probably experienced was about 15 knots, those who flew higher said they experienced a maximum of I believe 25 at 1000ft, nothing in my flight plan included flying at 1000ft. It always irritates me when people try to pass judgement on situations they weren't present at



# Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

when they base their judgement on wildly inaccurate online forecasts. Sometimes the only true judgement of a weather situation is the one you get from being present on the launch field. Yes there were a lot of fields that were flooded, but common sense would lead one to deduce that a freezing frost would allow for enough opportunities for dry landings, a reason why I don't understand why so many people naively joked that you'd need a wetsuit and snorkel mask to fly. As it was I packed the balloon away dry. Furthermore the sunrise that morning was one of the most stunning I've seen, and the sky almost completely blue.

There were a few areas where I made mistakes. Firstly, whilst I think it's a little bad form to have crew rig balloon on pilot's behalf whilst they bugger off to briefing, on this occasion it might have been a good idea to have everything put together and envelope connected up so the fan could have been flicked on straight away. Secondly, I should have landed after 20 minutes when I was flying in light winds, instead of flying on knowing conditions would deteriorate at some point. Thirdly, in hindsight, I should have learnt from during the flight how unresponsively the hopper was reacting to burner inputs, and not even attempted a steep approach into the first field, as would need to burn a lot to abort it if I needed to delay landing to second field. I guess I just didn't fully respect my lack of experience with low pressure, and didn't give enough margins for error with my approaches. The precision flying I feel I excel at in warmer weather, particularly when taking a 'last field before the sea' attitude to an approach, is something I must be far more accurate, careful and considered with in winter, low burner pressure, flying. Whilst I landed in the field I wanted, I by no means arrived how I would have liked!

Furthermore, by having a minor incident in challenging, but in my opinion, safe, flyable conditions with only a scratch on my hand and a small tear, due to pilot error and not focusing as much as I should / not having obtained an accurate feel for the balloons behaviour in flight, hopefully I will manage to avoid a more serious accident later in my flying career where maybe at 200+ hours I otherwise might have chosen to fly in conditions I shouldn't through the false confidence of experience and being incident free, and not having learnt to be more cautious with a balloon when fast conditions combine with low



# Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

pressure / slow response, I might have written the kit off, or worse, myself.

Tom Hilditch

## **Editors note**

My thanks to Tom for his brutally honest review of his flight an analysis of what he felt went wrong and the factors contributing to the outcome. It is in hindsight very easy to give opinions as to whether or not Tom should have flown, but by being public with this account, others can learn from his experience and as Tom said (and I know personally), the jungle drums take no time at all to drum an in my case I put a balloon into a tree in Metz in 2009, the very next day I had an email from the Serengeti asking was I ok?

We all get our experiences in different ways, all those boringly normal flights pale into a blur in your mind, rest assured this one will stick with Tom and he will be a better pilot for the experience.

So that's the format, what happened on your first ever hop or interesting flight and how it felt compared to your expectations? Submissions to me please at [steve.roake@ntlworld.com](mailto:steve.roake@ntlworld.com)

## **Three Favourite Jpegs and why – zero again!**

This section of the newsletter is increasingly being overlooked and yet it's simple and easy to send in three photos of your choice with some simple prose of why the photos mean so much to you individually.

Please try and dig out some of these to share with the rest of our readers and send them in to me, your editor using the email shown below.

Contributions for future editions of my three favourites and why to [steve.roake@ntlworld.com](mailto:steve.roake@ntlworld.com) please. Do it today folks and share those memories.



# Clouthopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

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

### Facebook Roundup January 2014 by Dave Westlake

A European Alpine winter scene.....



This is a beautiful photo of the Swiss “Balloon Concept” double skinned Mylar long duration AX1 balloon of Pierrick Duvoisin flying a few years ago...Pierrick and his associates are committed to the Eco Balloon concept (now supported by Ultramagic).

<http://vimeo.com/83957639>.

Various stuff of interest has appeared this month, with most of the pictures posted having a recurring snowy theme. Included was stuff from hot air ballooning’s “rebirth”, and unusual small balloons for sale. There was plenty more retro appearing during the month (not to mention my past French solo adventures with a 77, a bicycle and Lady Luck...).

Mathieu Dekock shared an interesting ad for a Hungarian built AX5 for



# Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

sale -\_Probably a homebuilt, but not sure (I think the top looks very stressed...  
<http://ballonbasar.com/drei/showad.php?adid=2642>



Incidentally, not posted on Facebook but on the same site as the above, here is something much more desirable... would be nice to know more detail. Shown below, the envelope appears to be an under 30kg classic "Boland 48" type for 2 people... but what is the Lindstrand "simple single burner with one pilot light" like??  
<http://ballonbasar.com/drei/showad.php?adid=2422>





# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

Even more unusual is what Luc Smeets offered for sale.....



This one, a Kubicek (or an earlier incarnation of), goes back to 1992 and is one of the few “hopper” shapes built. It takes the form of the mascot “Magique” the Snow Imp from the Winter Olympics that year in Albertville. “....It plays with the concept of dream and imagination through its star like shape”.

I can only think of the Servo Connectors one more recently (but even some of the very early Cameron shapes were only this size).

The following cover from Popular Science has surfaced before in our Cloudhoppers discussions.... On the back of this came a series of pictures from the Early Years of Sport Ballooning page, including the very early “Vulcoon” type (with young Mr Piccard).

Also shown is the later one man Raven “S-40” (i.e. 40 foot diameter) green and white balloon with what would be regarded as a “composite” gondola now. They were the original innovators, small and portable balloons really were the original idea.

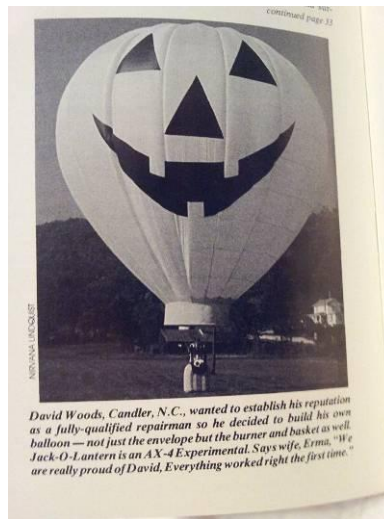
Kasey Schwemmer posted about his findings....the picture bottom right is not a Raven, it’s an experimental Woods AX4 “Jack-O-Lantern”, the burner said to be made out of a frying pan - innovation again.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014



In the same vein, Jim Grazier posted about his aluminium (read “aluminum”) bottom end to go with his Ax5 homebuilt envelope mentioned last month in the newsletter.



# Cloudhopper News

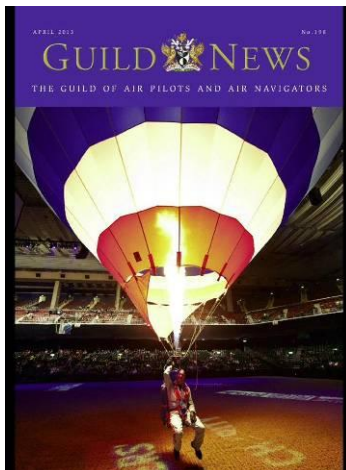
Issue Number 68

January 2014



Personally, I had devised a similar design (in the end) to go with my forthcoming AX4 (prior to purchasing a Mark 3 cloudhopper that is). Glad to see I was thinking along the same lines anyway. I was put straight about using a decent burner like a C2 – just as Jim has used here, with gimbals retained.

Then came more contemporary stuff, including Chris Fopp's indoor adventures in the Royal Air Force hopper. Chris free flew it inside Earls Court, London, during the British Military Tournament in December 2013.



More pictures with snow (alas, no snow in England yet)...and then a rogue one on sand.





# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014





# Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

Finally, Dave McCutcheon asks “green or black?” for his new Cameron hopper.....



## Homebuilt section

Nothing to report on homebuilding this month!

## 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.



# Clouthopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014



Photographed by sandy Mitchell, F-HITI is a Cameron Z-31 and seen at Chateau D'oex on 31<sup>st</sup> January



# Clouthopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014



Another nice shot from Sandy Mitchell, this time of G-BVCY Cameron H-24 airborne.



# Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

## Manufacturer News / Events / Updates



Simon Askey at Cameron Balloons discussed material technology with me at the Icicle Balloon Meet. It is no secret that the future development of ballooning rests in fabrics, one thing I wasn't aware of is that Hyperlite actually doesn't exist anymore. Lightweight RipStop has now replaced this with two different blends available - PU-coated and Silicone-coated. Cameron's have also recently invested in an Accelerated Weather Machine for testing the latest fabrics. Cameron Balloons have seen a gradual increase with customers investigating and requesting lighter equipment, and this is especially interesting subject when looking at sport balloon envelopes.

To look at it in more detail, Cameron Balloons have a number of Silicone and PU-coated (polyurethane) lightweight fabrics in various colours and this year to meet demand we have used the last of these batches known as 'Hyperlite' to manufacture a couple of lightweight envelopes. So, what the advantages of these different fabrics? The PU-coated fabric is sometimes described as being 'richer' in colour (the lighter, the Silicone fabric however generally seems less opaque.) Silicone lightweight fabric is not suitable for use within the 'A' Panel of any envelope due to the radiant burner heat and potential risk of burning the fabric. PU-coated fabric is much more suitable in this area but when using a combination of the two in one envelope, the colour variation of the fabrics can show a slight but noticeable difference. If we compare our current recommended RipStop fabric at 69gsm against the Lightweight Silicone which is 49gsm... that's almost 30% lighter, and the lightweight PU-coated version, which is 55gsm, make this 20% lighter than the more usual fabrics.



# Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

Kevron load tapes are the strong but very light-weight tapes, (similar to bullet proof jacket material) they can also offer a further 4% reduction in weight from the standard envelope weight. These tapes are encapsulated totally in fabric, within the seams, to protect them from any UV damage. (Any Kevron load tape that is not in a seam is fed securely through a tubular tape to protect it and to ensure longevity.)

So, to explain pricing... our current supplement charge for lightweight fabric is 6% based on the envelope list price, and an additional 6% for the Kevron load tapes element. Sadly, the lead time for these special lightweight fabrics is usually at least 6 weeks from point of order from suppliers, which adds to the overall delivery time, which occasionally makes the use of this fabric impossible due to the increased timescale.

Another challenge facing manufacturers is minimum supplier order quantities. This can be as much as 3000m in some cases... when you consider, a Cameron Z-90 is constructed from approximately 900m, this does rather leave a 'Catch22' situation where multiple orders are required to make lightweight fabrics really viable to order and stock for balloonists.

Of course expensive shipping costs and import duties are another burden so we try hard to ensure orders are bundled....

However, lastly and most importantly, in terms of fabric life, our experiences of using these fabrics suggest that 300-320 hours is achievable. Clearly, this is considerably less than our standard RipStop fabric, but when most private balloonists are only averaging 15-25 hours per year, this would suggest that envelopes constructed using lightweight fabric have a potential of at least a 10 year or more life.

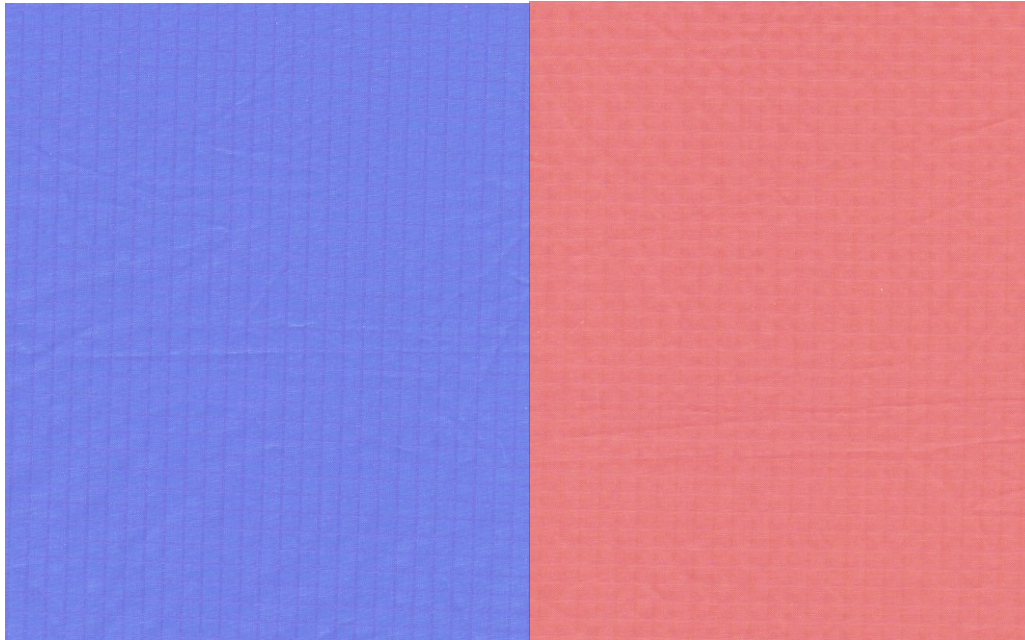
See below for the comparable materials



# Clouthopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014



Lightweight  
Silicone-Coating  
49gsm

Lightweight  
Polyurethane-coating  
55gsm

Many thanks to Simon Askey for that technical update.

## **Event News**

Paul Stumpf reported on facebook that Brian Boland is hosting another one of his legendary meets, hosting an Experimental Balloon and Airship Meet at the Post Mills Airport & Museum. Dates are set for May 16-17-18, 2014. All experimental balloons and airships are welcome. No registration necessary, no fee to attend. Just bring your aircraft and your best manners. Camping at the airport for free. Propane will be available at cost. Pancake breakfast on site. — in [Post Mills, Vermont, United States](#).

Another event gaining momentum is Dave Such Little and Large Solo balloon meet being held at Sackville Airfield, Riseley, Bedfordshire over the weekend of 31<sup>st</sup> May -1<sup>st</sup> June.



# Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 68

January 2014

Things are progressing well and the event is open to all. At this stage, email Dave directly for the information pack.

[Littleandlargemeet@btinternet.com](mailto:Littleandlargemeet@btinternet.com) for all your needs and further information.

## **Adverts / For Sale / Wanted section**

Nothing currently being advertised here. If you wish to advertise contact me directly.

## **And Finally.**

Membership is currently a healthy 461 members and numbers are slowly rising once again. All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your editor. Please forward them to [steve.roake@ntlworld.com](mailto: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.

© Cloudhoppers.org

Issue 68 January 2014