



Cloudhopper News

Issue Number 123

March 2020

What's up people ,

Welcome to your March Newsletter, and the monthly update of all that's happening in the World of Hoppers. Needless to say, with everything that is currently changing at a pace daily, this takes a back seat to the Covid-19 Corona Virus pandemic , so from me to you all, make sure you take all the measures necessary to look after yourselves and remember we will get back to hopping and normality once this important stuff is sorted out. **Please Take Care.**

In the meantime, hopefully I can entertain you for a short period of time with the latest offerings. There are times when as an Editor you despair about the lack of content and equally I'm actually slightly ebullient when I find myself having been promised a certain amount of stuff, and as long as those people deliver with what is in the pipelines and stick to their words , for now I'm fairly happy with what's coming shortly .

More importantly , what do I actually have for you this month?

- Ed Speak- Mr Trump blows out my ambitions to attend Temecula 4 .
- An appreciation of Lindstrand Balloons Ltd (LBL) Mark 1-3 hopper bottom ends .
- Dan Whitelock suddenly finds loads of old and seldom seen photographs and makes them available
- News of another company supporting Cloudhoppers.
- Second hand balloons update
- Paolo Bonnano's Triple Chariot

I'm sure there is more but for now I can't remember all of it. Please send to me articles for inclusion in future newsletters to the email address below.

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1,Ed Speak- Blown out by Donald Trump

As expected in recent days , with the rapidly escalating situation regarding Corona Virus , Donald Trump has banned international travel to the USA and so my proposed trip over Easter to the International Temecula 4 festival has been ruled out . I'm naturally disappointed not to be seeing my friends in the USA this Easter, and the public launch of the Solo Systems Ace hopper, but there will always be other years and thanks to a great bunch of friends I will return again once the world is sorted out and everyone is safe. In the big scheme of things, you need to retain a sense of perspective at the moment and my trip isn't important right now.

This may actually bring forward my plans for the next hopper in my collection which was initially scheduled for delivery after Easter so I will be talking to certain people about a potential reschedule of that, (god only knows when I'll get to fly it currently). However, in an unprecedented piece of access, I have fully documented the acquisition from the decision-making process to acceptance and this will feature probably if not in next month's edition then definitely by May. Suffice to say there have been others involved and I'd just like to thank them for the complete way they have allowed me to document all the stages of the process and hope you guys get a better understanding of what's involved after you have read my write up. To my knowledge, the transparency of the whole thing has never before been documented so I hope you await with baited breath what I will share with you soon.

Hopefully in coming months I will have some new material from both Bill Teasdale on his recollections of Chateau D'oex over the years with regard to hoppers and a great article by Tim Ward about the early Thunder and Colt chariots . However ,with bottom ends on my mind , I have written an article about LBL hopper bottom ends and thanks to Chris Dunkley for his wisdom and insight, have also included his opinions about ownership and the things that can and do go wrong with them . Suffice to say , like me , he is a big fan of the products.

Finally, without letting the cat out of the bag, we have managed to negotiate further future support for the Newsletter and I'm most grateful to the people concerned for showing faith in what we do here. Your ongoing support for what mi trying to do, gives me faith and enthusiasm to continue what started as a bit of a



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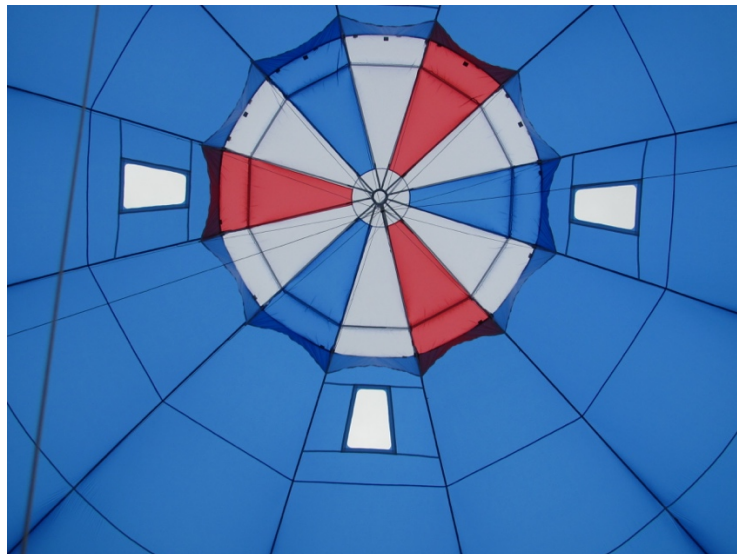
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laugh in 2004. Like most things in life you never know what things will morph into, and whilst I am dealing with personal issues (I'm getting divorced), support from both **Icom Uk Ltd** and the new "supporters" gives me greater desire to continue what I hope is a formula that you all enjoy. Changes can occur and I'm always open to hearing ways to improve the product, so if you have any good ideas please send them in to me.

Regards, and Take care out there Steve Roake- Editor.

2, Essential Extras – Clear View Panels

Such a hard section to fill , since you don't know when somebody will send to you a great idea that helps when you go fly, but it's been a while so, I thought I'd share my views on Clear View Panels(CVP's).



Quite a contentious subject I know but I really like CVP's and in a hopper we are in the worst of places for seeing above and to the sides of our Balloons. I think these are an essential extra and should be a no cost option on every envelope, since whilst not brilliant they are another tool in your locker. (As I know to my cost), sometimes you just can't see the balloon above and slightly adjacent to you , but as a safety feature I'd have them on any new envelope.

Hence, they are in this section-an Essential Extra.



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3,The Features Section

Lindstrand Balloons Limited (LBL) hoppers

The following article is your Editors homage and appreciation of LBL hopper bottom ends with some associated views from Chris Dunkley (of Easy Balloons Repair Station), who has a long track record of servicing them over the years. If there is anything you need to know about LBL bottom ends then probably Chris will have experienced it and sorted it out. His technical views are worth knowing if you have one or are thinking of purchasing a version in the near future. Suffice to say there is nothing he doesn't know about them and he is a fan. |



Lindstrand Mark 1 Hopper Bottom end.

Per lindstrand came up with the first commercially available hopper bottom end when approached by Colin Prescott of Flying pictures whilst working at Thunder and Colt balloons. When he went on



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to set up his own company, it was only natural as a hopper pilot himself, that he would want to sell his own version of the craft and by the mid 90's if you wanted a hopper bottom end, you didn't have the greatest of choices, so he created his own bespoke model.

The first in house offering (the Mark 1), heavily resembled the Thunder and Colt version that was around featuring an integral fuel tank and a burner that was mounted via two tubes and a third pin that locked the burner block into place. The good points on the mark 1 design were that the burner was both reliable and effective and it came with the integral 40 litre fuel tank. The bad points were that it was big and bulky and didn't break down to facilitate storage and when you flew it was a pain to refuel. As you carried the complete set up to wherever you were decanting from. As you can also see from the above photograph, they weren't the most comfortable either as they had minimal padding in the seat unit and no real headrest as you sat against the minimal tank covering. However, it was a start and seemed to revolve around the Worthington tank which also limited the range for anyone who weighed more than 70-80 kilos.

Chris Says

It was a great piece of kit punctuated with initial niggles over jetting and the coil and whilst supported by three uprights, it was actually attached to the block by only two of them, with the third dropping on a locating pin. This was probably an attempt to dampen out expansion and contraction but in reality, there wasn't really anywhere to bolt the third leg down to.

The early ones also suffered from failure of the bearings that the load ring revolved on, making the whole thing difficult to rotate but fortunately a modification swiftly followed which solved the problem. The Pilot light was liquid and it had a changeover lever which does tend to be quite stiff to operate but means that a single Jetstream type toggle valve can be used as the whisper or main burner, which at the time, seemed a good idea but if you needed to switch burners quickly whilst on approach could be a problem.

The burner was removable via a threaded ring and safety pin but the supporting arms, coupled to the swing folding seat which stayed with the tank made carriage a tad tiresome. The holes in the load ring also tended to wear quite quickly where the quick links attached,



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probably because the load ring was a soft metal. Attaching the envelope tended to elongate and wear the holes which formed very off round shapes.

For Reference Good examples of Mark ones can be bought on the second-hand market (if you can find one) for between £1500-1800 currently on the used market(please use currency conversion where appropriate).

The Mark 2 Version (1999).

Serious consideration had clearly been thought about when in 1999 the mark two version appeared. Firstly, it was collapsible and came in some pretty nice tailored bags for carriage. Secondly, you now had the opportunity to use any fuel tank of your choice from a Worthington up to a V40(80 litres) without the need for it to be dedicated to the kit. The fuel lines featured a shut off valve which added to the safety as it was relatively easy to get to and the comfort for the pilot had reached a greater level with a proper headrest and a seat that was pleasant to be sat in for periods up to two hours easily.

For me the legendary LBL attention to detail was evident with nice fabrics and anodised finishes(which have lasted well over years of abuse), and you could choose not only the colours you preferred but also the colours of the matching luggage cases which always were bright and vibrant (an LBL trait). I remember the pride I had in buying mine brand new in 2003 for the princely sum of £3000, which whilst not cheap represented good value that would stay the distance and when I sold mine in 2018, I actually returned more money than the original new price such was the strength of demand and lack of supply on the second-hand market at the time.

With limited supply , finding one was the first problem as Pilots tended to keep them and in retrospect , I now wish id kept mine. Straps and a central twist buckle were easy to use and made in fine quality webbing. The only non-standard feature I put into my example during my time of Ownership was to insert some One-inch thick memory foam into the seat swab to increase the perceived luxury of the seat whilst in flight. The swivelling ring could if you wanted be locked into place (replacing the three bearings with fixed blocks for an envelope with turning



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vents), although most preferred to swivel- because of the lack of lift capacity in a small envelope , and the need sometimes to modify your position whilst on approach to landing. Reverting to the three bearing units was fairly fast and aided smooth rotation and negated the loss of lift whilst focussed on landing approaches. Initially rotation rings were aluminium and did have a small tendency to wear a groove into the area the bearings ran at , but this was later on replaced by a steel ring which being slightly bigger in diameter, actually moved the connecting points out further and assisted in less burning of the mouth marginally.

Returning to comfort levels , the seat unit had a couple of positions and a natty mirror which clipped into a great central position enabled you to view the dip-tube gauge on the top of the tank. The connection between fuel lines and the burner block was a "fit and forget" Tema valve With a nice rotating sleeve that you knew removed the chance of it coming off once connected, and there was also a lever action shut off valve inline that you could turn off the supply whilst in flight easily should you need to. The coils were now mounted via four points and the controls had a tactile quality and were sign written.

Chris says

Great idea. It was never cheap, a reflection of the quality and, as it is a very nice bit of kit which seldom comes up for sale, still commands a high price. Over the years there have been a couple of improvements to them including improved padding and a natty handle that attaches to the burner block to make inflations easier and, I'm informed, aids swivelling.

Now despite my ranting on how marvellous they are they do have some annoying traits and as part of the annual inspection we always give them the old once over, just in case like, and quelle surprise my duck, we often find that bits and bobs need a bit of TLC or tightening up so here are a few pointers that may help.

Please be advised that to do the job properly not only do you really need the proper tools but you also need a Lindstrand Maintenance Manual and any repairs signing off (if applicable). Things do come loose from time to time and usually that is all there is to it but you



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should always try and figure out why. Is it a lack of Loctite (if prescribed), a lack of lubrication or neglect causing the problem? If you are in any doubt about carrying out any maintenance ask your inspector or get it to a repair station. Of all the balloon systems out there all Cloudhoppers get you the closest to both flames and propane and as there is nowhere to go if you get a leak or a problem develops and with not much in reach it is vital that they are kept in tip top condition.

For the hopper pilot pre-flight checks should be more than a cursory glance round! Right, on with the show Captain Singe, leak detector and spanners at the ready.

The igniter is the same as the one fitted to the Jetstream and depends on a ceramic sleeve for insulation and heavy handling can cause cracks or even breakage to occur quite easily. The igniter assembly itself is held in place firstly by a threaded collar and thence the aluminium burner body by a grub screw which also allows you to adjust the gap between the electrode and earth lug on the pilot light cup. If the collar becomes loose then the internals will rattle about and this usually results in the ceramic developing cracks which will short out the spark.

If the grub screw comes loose then the whole lot can eventually drop down increasing the gap and preventing the spark from arcing. Over time the unit also seems to work up inside the block closing the gap. Normally the bottom of the igniter unit should be flush with the body of the block. On top of all this, literally, the pilot cup is attached to the pilot light tube by another grub screw which can also come loose and cause the earth bracket to go out of alignment or prevent a decent earth and cause an intermittent spark.

The igniter itself is pretty reliable and unless they get damp work well. To adjust or remove the igniter unit unscrew the grub screw in the side of the block a few turns and the whole lot should drop out through the bottom or be able to be moved to adjust the gap. To release the igniter itself unscrew the collar using a peg socket (with care a small ended set of pin nose pliers work well enough if you don't have the Lindstrand tool).

The igniter tube can occasionally corrode and stick in the block making it tricky to get out or move. If this happens undo the collar drop the contents out then very gently tap the tube out with the aid of a piece of wood and WD40.



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So, if there is no spark then it is either the igniter itself, the gap between the earth bracket on the pilot cup, the collar coming undone or the ceramic is cracked or broken. Most commonly though, through use, the igniter has probably worked up inside the block and closed the gap. As part of the annual inspection we always check the bezel that holds the pressure gauge in place as invariably it will be loose. A loose gauge can result in a leak. If the gauge itself fails it is best to order the new one with a new bezel as the older bezels will not fit over the newer gauges and also ensure that the new gauge comes with seals. Now, as a fire in your ear can be uncomfortable, if you find the bezel is loose and you tighten it up (not ferociously) then check the gauge with leak detector to ensure all is still well.

The pilot light valve and regulator assembly is once more identical to the Jetstream one and requires little maintenance but like all piston type regulators they are prone to getting clogged up with the heavy ends from grubby propane. We tend to find they need cleaning out every couple of years or so. If you are not going to be using your hopper for a while it is probably better to store the burner with the valve knob pointing down. For a detailed description of dismantling and servicing the unit look in any of the Lindstrand Maintenance Manuals.

Occasionally the circlip on the piston stem, visible in the centre of the valve handle comes adrift or the stem itself sticks making the pilot light not work at all or not shut off properly. If the pilot flame is spluttery it is most likely caused by the piston assembly sticking or the tiny Viton sealing ball sticking. If you take the regulator apart for any reason you should replace the two O-rings in the block, the circlip and replace the Viton ball.

There is a mesh filter in the block that occasionally gets clogged up if you are using dirty propane. This can normally be cleaned with a blast of compressed air. The large regulator spring-seal that goes around the piston seems pretty hard-wearing and seldom needs replacing. After this comes the pilot light itself, again common to the Jetstream jobbies. The pilot jet is tiny and does get blocked from time to time despite a filter under it. Apart from that carbon deposits can build up in the pilot tube preventing a decent pilot flame. To get it apart you'll need to undo the small Allen grub screw in the side of the pilot cup and whip that off then, with a decent well-fitting bar through the two holes in the pilot tube, unscrew that. Beware, if you muller the holes then the cup will not fit back on. The jet will now be visible in its



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mounting. We tend to fit a new jet and filter if it is blocked but if you are away somewhere unscrew the jet and from the back, rook about with a pin on the inside to dislodge any blockage and blow through the wrong way. Do not try and jam something down the small hole as any enlargement will result in a poor pilot flame. The filter lives under the adaptor. Whilst the cup is off its always a good idea to clean up the underside of the earth bracket with a bit of emery the eighth.

To summarise then. If the pilot won't run properly or not at all then it is going to be a missing or dislodged circlip, dirt and oil in the regulator assembly or a blocked jet, filters or tube.

The blast valves seldom give trouble but there is a Cameron Service Bulletin out on the stems so if any leaks or sticking of the valve develops it would be sensible to change the stem and all the seals while you are at it. Sticking is usually a result of the inner quad seal going dry or the friction washer on the top going tight and gripping the stem. This was a common problem early on but not often found on later burners. The flame should stop pretty quickly once the valve is closed with any residual flames in the jet going out within seconds.

If there are residual flames at the jets for any appreciable amount of time then the main seal (seal carrier) is probably leaking. If you need to get them apart then wrap the body of the valve in insulating tape before attempting to undo it. This will prevent damage to the finish and always reassemble with a new copper washer. We do use Cameron KFT 125 grease on the seals when reassembling which prolongs their life enormously. It is advisable to check the tightness of the beautifully named 'toggle valve pivot pin grub screws.

Open the valve fully and look under the handle where you will see a small drilling in the handle body each side of the stem. At the bottom of these are small 2mm Allen grub screws. They should be fitted using Loctite 243 and be tight but not overtight. If they come loose then there is every chance the pin will come adrift and you will have no handle. We have never had any problems with the earlier change-over valve the only complaint being that they can be quite stiff to operate but this is quite normal.

That's the twiddly bits sorted now for a quick bit of fettling around the rest of the burner. The coils seldom give any



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trouble and we haven't had any leakages from them however we have found the 19mm union where they attach to the block loose on some of them. This should be tight. Do not use ptf tape on this joint.

Jets do leak. The easiest way to see this is to run neat propane through them and watch for 'dampness' around their base. There was an upgrade to these jets available using jets of varying sizes so if you remove the jets to clean them ensure they go back in the correct order. On the Mk2 the jets adjacent to the two jet ring feeds are blanked off intentionally. It's a bit more random on the Mk1! Tightening the jets with an 8mm spanner usually cures the problem but occasionally you will find that there is a small crack within the thread of the jet itself causing the problem and a new jet will need to be fitted. These have a tapered thread and are very easy to overtighten and break off so be careful.

If a jet does break or you find a broken one don't panic just very gently tap the tapered tang of a small file into the centre and the broken bit should come undone quite easily. While you are in the area its always worth checking the Allen bolts that hold the vertical coil brackets in place. Now, what no hopper pilot wants to happen is to part company from their envelope. That would be bad so make sure the screws holding the load ring bearings in place are good and tight and the bearings free and not rattly.

Underneath them is the security washer held in place by an Allen bolt. These must be tight as well. It is actually quite hard to remove the load ring through the top of the burner without the security washers being removed so worst-case scenario if a bearing failed would be that the whole shooting match would just jam but you don't need that sort of excitement. The load ring itself should be regularly checked for wear and damage along with the Quick links that the flying wires attach to. If you leave them on the ring make sure the gate is fully closed and tight.

The seat unit is pretty self-explanatory but again do check the Quick links regularly to make sure they are good and tightly shut (use Loctite) and that no damage has occurred to the straps or fabric of the seat and harness. Check all the stitching especially the boxes. On early built in units a long bolt and two shorter bolts are used to hinge the seat.

Make sure this is in fine fettle and that there is indeed a locknut on the end of them.



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The beautiful Lindstrand Mark 2 hopper bottom end.

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The harness clasp should work faultlessly and pressure should be necessary to both attach the straps and to unlock them. On the later models the isolation valve is mounted on top of the top rail of the seat frame. Check the fittings for leaks as part of the pre-flight check and always make sure that the Tema connector (or both) have undamaged seals in them.

Lubrication is the key to this! The only thing that does seem to happen is damage to the seat base including cracking of the board especially on the one-piece Mk2. These are made of plywood and can be replaced quite easily by unzipping the cover however, the hole that the straps run through on the Mk2 is exceedingly tight so it is wise to make the new one with a slightly larger cut-out. Finally, the tank straps on the Mk2 must be in really good nick and work properly. They are much longer than standard and must be used doubled over. Any damage, get a replacement.

For Reference If and when you find a lindstrand Mark 2 hopper bottom end be prepared to pay top money for them. Supply is the big issue here and owners are hanging on to them because they are lovely. Price point ?

Last one I saw sold for £3400 and they are only going one way and that is upwards. For top nick examples I wouldn't be surprised for them to change hands for £4000 plus.

The Mark Three (ultimate version)

The third iteration of the LBL hopper bottom end had all the nice points from the mark 2 plus some stuff that was "Marmite". You either loved it or hated it. For me a hopper is all about weight reduction and eliminating those things you don't need so for example whilst wheels that clipped onto the frame and helped you to walk the bottom end out of a field in one piece might sound attractive, but for 90% of the time you are carrying extra dead weight. The seat unit had now got triangulated storage pouches which again seemed a nice idea but again encouraged you to carry more kit which goes against the principles of ultralightweight flying. This was lindstrand's way of giving you more luxury for the price. The extra handle which helped on inflation was still there



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but apart from the wheels this final incarnation of the product was as far as it goes. The sales dried up , the company folded and Don Cameron bought out LBL limited. On a trip to the Bristol factory during 2018 I spied a mark three kit sitting on its own in the warehouse. This transpired to be the final ever version and through Cloudhoppers was sold to Greg Winker in the USA in perfect condition in April 2018 for around \$7000.



Mark 3 LBL hopper kit including wheels.

Now Chris didn't have any specific views over the Mark 3 which really is a Mark 2 with tinsel and glitter but did have some pointers that should Lindstrand Tech ever make a bottom end might like to consider.

Chris says

If Lindstrand Technologies do bring out a new Cloudhopper

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bottom end what would we like to see? Well the block could be lighter but, as it is, it is simple and easy to keep clean and access every component. The pilot light regulator could be simplified and easier to dismantle and clean but is pretty reliable so may be nit picking there. Although the ceramic insulator is prone to cracking they are great insulators so maybe leave that as well. Top priority would be sorting out the jets coming loose and maybe develop the burner so all jets can be used making it a proper mini-burner that can be used with larger envelopes as it is pretty good and is nowhere near used to its full potential. Hmm, that means it doesn't need a lot of improvement apart from the use of a bit of Loctite here and there!

So, there you have it, a briefly guide to maintaining your Lindstrand hopper bottom end. Don't bodge it, mend it and use only genuine parts with a Form1. Pay heed to any Airworthiness Directives, Safety Bulletins or Service Instructions that come out even if you are using it under a Homebuilt or Annex 2 balloon. Cameron Balloons now carry pretty much all the Lindstrand parts and as most of them are common to the Jetstream supply isn't a problem. Make sure that if you do carry out any repairs then check for leaks using soapy water or a decent quality leak detector afterwards. Finally, our criticism of all the manufacturers is that they do not supply burner bags as standard. Why on earth not? Bucking the trend though Lindstrand provided nice robust comfy bags for all the Cloudhopper bits so please use them for transportation.

For reference (£5000+)

Its impossible to price one of these as there are so few of them produced. Greg's example at time of purchase was the same price as a brand-new Cameron Millennium bottom end but probably is worth more than the equivalent example. I'm guessing north of £5000 is a realistic price should you find one. Obviously, the owner will know its value by now and id be inclined to pay the asking price .



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In Conclusion

The LBL hopper bottom end was probably the nicest product out there (particularly in Mark 2 guise), if you own one, my advice is to keep it forever. It certainly won't let you down, financially or physically. My thanks to Chris Dunkley (superstar) for allowing me to take segments from an article he wrote in 2016 and can be found on the Easy Balloons Website. Let me know if you appreciated this and perhaps we will do some more on the other two main manufacturers wares .

Dan Whitelock

Once in a while, you get surprised when something happens that you least expect. This is what happened to me when out of the blue I get a message from Dan Whitelock asking me did I want some photographs of hopppers? Obviously rare photos are always welcome so the answer was clearly yes , but what I wasn't ready for was the volume of photos .



Typical example is G-BLHI, which is a classic Thunder & Colt 17A.



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There are loads of goodies within this treasure trove of balloons from various locations and so periodically I will unleash them on you.



G-BVOZ T&C 56 Duo Chariot from Chateau D'oex 1998.

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4, Tripple Chariot by Paolo Bonnano

Now here is something I wasn't aware of. Whilst doing a new twice daily Feature on the Clouthoppers Facebook page I featured a photo of Markus Ekeroos from Sweden who furnished me with this next photo. It seems in 2015 when the photo was taken, Paolo Bonnano decided to do a one-off Chariot which can seat three. Not only that, two seats are removable to accommodate a wheel chair in the position.



Markus , Paolo and friend in the three-seater.



Being a Bonnano it's bound to swivel although the photo gives nothing away on that front. Whether or not the concept achieved any more than this prototype feature remains unknown. I remember when I visited there was one for a disabled passenger that had a mechanism which meant they could do the inflation and then the structure would move into the flying position once the inflation was completed.

5, Corona Virus Therapy- "Hopper of the Day"

Whilst the whole world goes into lockdown I thought it might prove to be entertaining to people to see some wonderful photos of Hoppers in a feature called "Hopper of the Day". This has sparked some really great interest with some great contributions coming in from right around the world. Such was the interest that by day four I decided to do it twice daily. The upside of doing this is also it generates some great photos which can also come into the Newsletter so many thanks from me for your continued support and I hope it briefly makes you smile once or twice a day.

6, Second Hand balloons

In the rapidly changing world out there, the second-hand market is a funny place, with things that seem to be happening getting turned on their face. For example, Dave Such recently put up for sale G-CGFO his Um H-42 , however a change of mind has stopped that thought and the lovely hopper will remain with Dave and his partner Mark.

Similarly, there was an opportunity recently to buy a US based Cameron Duo Chariot with a 70K envelope but once again the owner has changed their mind and the deal is now off.

I have heard though, that a Lindstrand Tech 31A that got auctioned at the exclusive meet at Longleat may be up for sale once again. G-HEAL has under 5 hours total time on it. The owner is said to have had a change of mind regarding its future. Recently G-XAIM Um H-31 was exported to Austria as OE-SAI. The new owner is unknown and doesn't favour Facebook, and the first inflation as OE-SAI got canned due to CV-19.

Brendon Mulloy got in touch recently .He is one of a growing number of Aussie Hopper pilots and has just registered Z-31



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VH-ENO(3) on 26th March, c/n 11824, and ex (VH-VUN ntu. and G-HTEC). Brendon , based in Canberra , has another love and that's bikes and he reckons Hope stuff is the dogs danglies so the hopper fits the bill.

7,New Allocations

A while ago I said I knew of two Cameronoppers coming onto the register, and now is the time to "come clean". One of them is for me. It was scheduled to Test inflate during the week of 23rd March (this did not happen due to the factory closing for corona virus). If this isn't allocated to the UK register then it will be very soon . G-CLKC(C/N 12347) is a Cameron O-31 which we were going to unveil to the world at large at the Midlands Festival but as it, like so many other events, has been pulverised by the Corona Virus situation, I think a low-key introduction is now preferred. Whether or not it actually flies in 2020 will remain to be seen but I'm delighted with the result. There is another O-31 also due for delivery in March , also due to Test inflate on the same day, more on this one when I have it.

I know the lovely Simon Askey at Cameron's(so dedicated to the cause), was hatching a plan to take a few envelopes home with him during the lockdown and doing the test inflations at Askey Towers. Whether G-CLKC is one of those will be found out in due course. (Sadly, this plan also failed due to the factory lockdown).

8,New Supporter of the Newsletter

In recent days I have secured another company who wish to support what we are doing with the Newsletter in a multi-year deal. The company concerned who will advertise with us is **Solo Systems** of Albuquerque New Mexico , and are a wholly owned subsidiary of Adams Balloons and owned by Andrew Richardson.

Solo Systems manufacture and supply the product called the Ace. This is a 38,000 cubic foot one-man balloon system which could be yours for \$10,000 complete, consisting of a collapsible basket , burner and dedicated envelope . After a quite quick release to

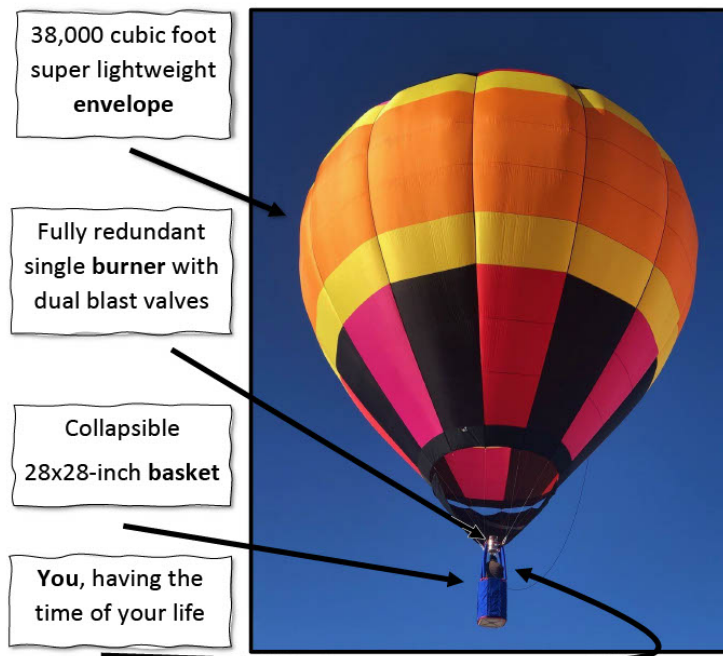


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market , they have run up impressive figures of early sales with plenty of internal interest within the USA. Adam has ambitious plans to expand his sales further once he is knowledgeable about which category his products will fall into in the European market place. Obviously as the product develops I am in place to bring this news to you as it evolves , but I thank them for their support with Cloudhoppers going forward.



Starting at \$9,995!

Available in Experimental or Part 103 Ultralight configurations

ACE by
Solo System



SoloSystem Balloons
yournextballoon@gmail.com

Solo Systems actively support Cloudhopper News .

Newsletter sponsored by **ICOM**



9, Interesting photos

The following is an advert sent in by Greg Winker from Denver Colorado and he thinks it dates from the mid 1960's .

RAVEN SPORT BALLOON

RAVEN S-40 THERMAL BALLOON SPECIFICATIONS

OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS

Crew: 1 man
Altitude range: 0-10,000 ft.
Gross load: 600 lbs. (includes 80 lb. balloon wt.)
Flight duration: 4 hours
Inflation time: under 10 minutes
Completely portable for remote operations

BALLOON DESIGN DATA

Volume: 30,000 cu. ft.
Diameter: 40 ft.
Gores: 24 vertical panels
Operating temperature 180° to 230°F.
Material: 1.1 oz. ripstop nylon plastic coated
Burner system: two liquid propane fed burners 2,000,000 Btu/hr. total capacity
Rate of climb: \pm 500 fpm
Deflation: electrically controlled immediate deflation after landing

RECOMMENDED SERVICE

Pilot training, recreational, exhibition contracts, competition

GROUND CREW


In calm weather, two men can launch the balloon. Under conditions of higher wind, more crew is helpful. Tracking and recovery can easily be done with a passenger car. No truck is necessary.

COST OF OPERATION


This balloon burns about two dollars worth of propane per hour.

The research and development program leading to the S-40 was sponsored by the Office of Naval Research.

Balloon design, manufacture, test, operation and sales by RAVEN INDUSTRIES, INC., Box 916, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.



S-40 IN FLIGHT



PILOT'S SEAT AT TAKE-OFF

Classic Raven Advert by Greg Winker



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The Ace by Solo Systems.

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10, The Photo section

As any regular reader will know, this section of the newsletter is an utter indulgence by your editor of photographs received of new or interesting hoppers or duo's. It is a real pleasure to receive your nominations and with the recent "Hopper of the Day" attempting to cheer some of you up whilst incarcerated in your own homes some new gems have emerged.



Simply stunning view of N805LB which is a Best Aviation services MD36.
Photo by Patrick Smith from Walkersville , Maryland ,USA.



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When you look at the quality of the photographs being received you realise quite quickly that one a day wasn't enough so after four days we went twice daily. There was some initial concerns that I probably haven't enough photographs to cover this section adequately – let me assure you this isn't the case.



VH-IGH Ultramagic H-42 (c/n 42/18) photo by Andrew Clements

Lovely story connected to this one. Andrew Clements from Northam Western Australia , found this beauty for sale in Lithuania with only 2



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hours total time in the logbook back in 2014. Suffice to say now with 40 plus hours, he adores his purchase . Ironically it isn't him flying the balloon on this occasion but his friend Damien Hays (who is also a Cloudhoppers member).

11, News and Events

With a fast-moving world at the moment, the whole ballooning world has over night pretty much shut down. Don't expect any events in the next few months and early casualties include The Midlands Balloon Festival and the BBML inflation day. Others are bound to follow as major events with multiple people present are now banned and sympathies go out to all event organisers who put so much time and efforts into the preparation of these great events.

And finally

Thanks to a raft of new members , current membership on Facebook stands at 1401 which is superb , many thanks. Still growing which is a good thing . Views expressed by contributors may not be those of the editor but are wherever possible entered un edited for fairness and equality.

Please send all submissions for future editions to Steve.roake33@gmail.com

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