



Cloudbopper News

Issue Number 113

April 2019

Hi and welcome to the latest Newsletter.

Easter is traditionally the first Holiday of the year, but more importantly it signifies the unofficial start of the flying Season. And boy what a start it was with at least three events to wet the appetite. Flying took place in Europe and America and whilst none of them were the largest of events they all featured hoppers flying.

Whilst on my travels, something happened which led to some people saying they hadn't heard what I suggested as a solution, so the essential extras section returns with the tale and the answer.

Meanwhile I was contacted by a gentleman from Israel who has a unique duo in a very unique setting. He touched base to let us know what he is up to.

From the Third Temecula Hopper festival you don't just get one view of the event, I've managed to get three differing opinions for the best "balanced perspective" on the ambience and flavour of the meet. Also, whilst there we discovered a rare treasure which features in the gallery section.

Finally, fresh from his homebuilding exploits, Andy Marshall delivers videos of the process.

So, to recap, in bullet point format here is what we have for you in this edition.

- Three views of the 3rd Temecula hopper meet.
- Andy Marshall's video series on building a hopper.
- Dror Ignatt checks in from Israel with his Duo.
- Brief reports from the other events.
- A classic Hopper unearthed in California.

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

Steve Roake- Editor,

Steve.roake33@gmail.com

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1, Ed Speak- Kicking off the season!

The 2019 season is officially now active and whilst you try to seek out new and interesting places to visit I decided a while ago that I would bin the traditional for 2019 and revamp my itinerary with places that would offer fresh adventures and some such as Metz would fall by the wayside since you can only do the same thing for a limited period of time.

My particular season started with a real treat and a trip to the USA. This was only practical due to the generosity of some close friends. Greg Winker has been a friend for a long time and when I suggested to him that we could meet up for the event, not only did he say yes straight away but also agreed to lend me a hopper to fly and also to pick me up at the airport. But the real stars of the event were Kerry and Patrick McGrath who said if you are ever in the area come and stay with us. Taking them at their word not only did I ask to stay, I also asked could Greg (a complete stranger to them) also take up their hospitality. Being "superstars", they said yes, so I had the ability to spend more on my class of seating on the plane. More on this later in the features section but for now my undying thanks to all three of them for accommodating me.

However, all of the above reaffirms that ballooning in all of its forms is a very sociable and the Americans do it better than anyone. I was introduced to my first ever tailgate party and OMG I wasn't at all ready for the magnitude of the event. Such a fun thing to do, but it lasted most of the day LOL. I've often said I think 80% of ballooning is talking about it and 20% is actually the doing part.

One thing that did occur which was a first for me was a small fire occurred during the inflation part of the flight caused by a faulty seal and some of our friends weren't aware of a technique we use this side of the Atlantic that helps prevent the reoccurrence of the problem. Such was the interest that the idea is now listed in the Essential Extras section of the Newsletter.

It's always nice to receive information from around the globe on what people have chosen to fly and why. This particular email came from Israel from a new acquaintance. I'm delighted to bring it to you.

Finally, a classic gem that still flies was unearthed in California.

Anyway, Let's get into the meat of the newsletter.

Happy flying to you all. **Steve Roake**

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2, Essential Extras – Lubricating your Seals.

Whilst in America recently I was inflating a hopper that had been lent to me for the event when suddenly without any warning I experienced my first ever fire which started by the TEMA connection between the burner block and the fuel hose. Naturally everything stopped and the coupling was investigated and once established that the fitting was sound it was tried once again with the same result. Now later investigation showed that the rubber seal had perished and I suggested that one reason why it may have occurred could have been that it had dried out.

Through my racing connections I knew that certain rubber seals can be lubricated with a silicone lubricant and having discussed it many years ago with my repair station, he advised me that spraying the fittings when you refuel once every four or five times prolongs the life of the seals so long as after a quick squirt the outer bungs go back on sealing the now moist fixture. Therefore, the same technique can be applied on the Lindstrand Hopper I was using with similar results.

Suffice to say once the offending seal was replaced the following day, the problem was resolved. All good silicone sprays can be found at your local repair stations or alternatively any good DIY store.

You might say, well why have you put this information out in this section, well, it was suggested to me that this kind of information is an essential extra and therefore I am happy to oblige.

APPs

I'm always happy when someone shows me a good app for my phone, even more so when it's good for ballooning. One of my close American friends put me onto this one whilst on my recent trip to California.

UAV Forecast is a drone weather app that is perfect for us and its free. So, in the right tradition I'm passing it on to you guys for your appreciation.

I like to get as much information as possible when assessing whether or not to fly and this one seems to be pretty detailed with good detail at various heights in whatever location you find yourself. Therefore, it fits as yet another "Essential Extra".

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3, The Features Section. –

The 3rd Temecula Easter Hopper Meet

Starting with the view of the Host Ernie Hartt

Organizing a small, unsponsored balloon rally isn't really a lot of work. Mostly it is nagging your friends from near and far to make sure that they get their acts together and show up at a time and place you get to choose. Well, sort of; I chose Easter weekend, but didn't get to decide when that would be. But the nagging worked, and at the appointed time and place, 6 other 'Hopper pilots joined me for my "little event." Joining me and my Cameron V-31 N21880 were California pilots Dan Walsh (Lindstrand N861LB) and Tom Keller (Lindstrand N30060), Arizona pilots John Ninomiya (Lindstrand N352JN) and Jerry Paulin (BRET N41GG), Colorado pilot Greg Winker (Raven N153MM, with LBL bottom end), and special guest Steve Roake from across the Atlantic, who was supposed to fly Greg's tetrahedron 'Hopper, but who ended up flying Pat McGrath's Lindstrand (N788LB) instead due to a burner O-ring leak. Steve and Greg were newbies to the 'Hop, but the other pilots had been present for at least one of the previous 'Hops.

The winds looked favourable for nice flight, but there was a low (1000' ceiling) overcast layer which was not very thick, so at the short pilots' briefing I conducted (which boiled down to "fly smart - don't land on horses, citrus, or grapes"), the possibility of early thermals was mentioned. We headed to a nearby launch site, with an intended stand-up at 7 AM. The site is large (for Southern California), which was good, as we joined, and were then joined by even more large commercial ride balloons. The veteran pilots were all standing shortly after 7, but having had the O-ring leak, Steve and Greg were a bit behind the others.

Not knowing what was going on with Greg and Steve, I coordinated a launch with myself, John, Dan, and Jerry, then Tom followed a bit later.

The ride guys also began launching, so there were a fair number of balloons going up at about the same time.

We initially hung around the launch site, then the winds shifted

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and picked up a bit, carrying us off to the northeast. Some of us contour flew over the citrus grove across the street from the launch site, and looking back I could see that Steve and Greg had their balloons standing up.



After crossing the citrus grove, Jerry and I had to gain some altitude as we were approaching houses and horses, then we dropped back down after we had passed them, and took a sharp turn to the east when I had expected to head northwest. Then passing over a small ridge, Dan, Jerry, and I, along with a basket balloon carrying Pat McGrath and Kurt Adesburger started rapid ascents, descents, and direction changes as we all got caught in a developing "cold thermal," the first of three I experienced (UV through thin cloud layers can make for early thermals).

We all managed to get out of the thermal, and I dropped low to take the first available landing spot, getting caught twice more by thermals before I put the balloon on the ground. We had a short walk-out to the perimeter road of a nearby vineyard, where we deflated. Jerry and Dan both landed their 'Hoppers nearby, as did Kurt and Pat in the basket balloon. After Twist & Shout was deflated and squeezed

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out I saw Greg and Steve fly by. Once I had landed my wife Jenny had to bail for a “previous commitment” so my other crew person, Teri Lee, down from Oregon for the event, helped me pack up, then we went to check on the other pilots and balloons. All of the nearby balloons were down safe and packed up, but Steve and Greg had flown on and Greg landed in a preserve area that we generally try to avoid. The park’s rangers were helpful, though, and soon all of the balloons were packed up and on the way to the tailgate party, held at the home of balloonists Kim and Dave Lynch, owners of the former G-BLVY T&C ‘Hopper. Steve was introduced to the very American tradition of tailgating, and a good time was had by all.



Sunday morning's weather was more problematic, with the wind coming from a direction that is not usually the best for 'Hopping, and forecast to pick up sooner rather than later. As the site that the commercial balloons were intending to head to was a fair distance from any good landing spots, and I felt that if any of

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the 'Hoppers did fly they should keep the flight short, we headed to Saturday's launch spot, intending to stand up and get pictures, and then, if possible, do short flights. John Ninomiya and Jerry Paulin stood their 'Hoppers up, but the wind began to pick up, so we decided not to stand up, and started packing the 'Hoppers away, then watched as the ride balloons flew by at sporting speeds.

After packing up, most of us headed back to the Kim & Dave's place for an Easter morning tailgate. A huge "Thank You" to the crew who came from near and far to help out. We couldn't do any of this without you. Make your plans now for next year and the 4th annual Temecula International Easter Hop, Saturday and Sunday, 11 and 12 April 2020.

All photos credited to either Kerry McGrath ,Wolfhartt Images or Andrew J szikla.

Then the views of Greg Winker

So, Steve Roake rings me up about six months ago and says its time for us to go ballooning together. He'll meet me halfway - somewhere in the United States. I live in Denver which is right in the middle of the country, so I'm "close" to everywhere. Right?

Steve chooses the west coast and the Southern California Balloon Association's Easter Hopper Meet. Cool. I've seen the photos, read the stories and daydreamed about participating. Steve's visit will bring it to reality. To be a good U.S. host, I've offered to bring a second hopper for Steve to fly. It's no extra effort for me and it much easier for him.

Denver is about 1,000 miles from Temecula, so that makes it a road trip. It's been a while since I've done one, so I'm excited. Driving across Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nevada and California I finally arrive in Yucaipa where our southern California hosts Pat & Kerry McGrath have been waiting for my arrival. From here, it's just one more short 90-mile drive to the LA airport to pick up Steve.

Saturday morning arrives and the weather looks promising. Eight hoppers are present, but only seven fly. My Tetrahedron, which Steve is scheduled to fly, has a leak the fuel hose. The flight is not to be.

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But our hosts spring into action and offer their hopper to Steve. With that, the two of us take to the skies.



Temecula is known for two things: wineries and good weather. Skimming over the vineyards and orange groves is great fun.

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This is my first real flight with *Oceanic* so I'm really excited to see how she flies. Steve stays near me the entire flight and we dance around the sky with 14 other balloons.



Greg Winker, Pat and Kerry McGrath and Steve Roake Tailgate.

Before you know it, it's time to land and head back for the tailgate. These guys from California know how to tailgate. After five hours of eating, drinking, telling stories, catching up with old friends, meeting new ones, playing games and applying sun cream, we call it a day and head home. Sadly, Sunday was a bit breezy and the hoppers opted to stay on the ground.

So, was it worth the drive? Absolutely. The Southern California

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balloon group is a really tight knit group and a pleasure to hang out with. I can highly recommend the event. It's already on my calendar for next year.

Finally, your editors view

There are so many things leading up to my decision to go that weighed heavily upon me, from a desire to do something different within my ballooning itinerary and not repeat the same old Metz routine, to a desire to refresh my interest in ballooning by going to new events in new places with a chance to catching up with friends.

Let's make this blatantly clear, for me the only way I could do this was because of the generosity of four people. Number one, Greg Winker, said he would lend me a hopper and having driven for three days from Denver Colorado would be happy to pick me up from LAX airport.

Then having driven both of us the 90 miles to Yucaipa, we were graciously both accommodated by Pat and Kerry McGrath who were superstar hosts. Finally, many thanks to Ernie Hartt who lent both Greg and myself fuel tanks for both days.

This also afforded me the chance to upgrade on the flight both ways and I have to say Air New Zealand's service was lovely. Arriving late Thursday night gave me the time to relax before the event started at OMG o'clock on Saturday morning.

Gathering at the South Coast Winery in Temecula for 5-45am meant a 4-30am start but soon enough we arrived and I had achieved one goal, now the event was "International". Meeting Ernie Hartt for the first time I was delighted to put a face to a name who I had only previously corresponded with. There would be others who I equal high regard for but that time would be later, at my first ever tailgate party.

Ernie drew everyone together noting where the local rides balloons were flying from and a decision to relocate to the same field meant a total of 16 balloons would be flying that morning.

In fairness, seven hopper took off that morning, the total should have been eight but unfortunately whilst inflating N207BW The Winker

Tetrahydron, I suffered a small fire around the Tema Fitting so the

Mark 2 bottom end was grounded for the morning pending a seal change.

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Pat McGrath being a true gentleman, insisted on me flying and gave up his LBL35A N877LB so that I could fly. He flew in one of the bigger balloons. A glorious flight ensued over vineyards with very great scope for directional changes but having taken off fairly late in the morning (around 7-30 am) most only flew for a short period of time with Greg and myself last off the launchfield.



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A 45min flight followed with an eventual landing abreast a main road in a field with some very inquisitive young cows.



LBL 35A N877LB which was my steed. Photo by Kerry McGrath.

Greg had a more challenging landing and we took our time to retrieve both balloons successfully. Then we were off to my first ever post flight Tailgate party which was a real eye opener.

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Such generosity by everyone concerned proved a great success. The opportunity to meet more of the folks present ensued and amongst them was one person who set me off on this path back in 2004 when I started Cloudhoppers.org based upon what John Ninomiya had done stateside. This very unassuming person has done more hours on hoppers than anyone I know with his balloon N352JN now on its third iteration(LBL35A) having the previous two achieving over 300 hours each(both previously LBL31A's). It was my pleasure to finally make the acquaintance of the man after all these years and his lovely wife. They had driven from Arizona to attend the meet.

Other people present were all introduced from lovely crew members to the Host Kim Lynch(a local rides Pilot). Another pilot I had conversed with previously and yet had never met was Jerry Paulin.

Highlights of the party included a very nice Chilli which brewed on the tail of a pick up truck before I demolished three bowls of the yummy stuff. New friendships were made and all seemed to have a great time. We eventually departed having tried most of the local ales and some fun times and returning to my hosts residence , it was good to get an early nights rest before we recommenced on the Sunday morning.

Back at the winery at stupid o'clock for day two, the rides guys had decided to go south to fly . the consensus of opinion was to go to the field and decide whether or not to fly but get some tethering of balloons together for photographs. Once again I was trusted with the Tetrahydron shaped hopper with the now fully repaired Mark 2 bottom end. However my desire to fly this interesting craft would have to wait as the weather just wasn't playing and the tet is even more affected by winds than regular hoppers. Jerry managed to fully inflate but even he ripped out and when the rides guys arrived (fairly quickly) we could all see we had made the right decision not to fly as they were moving fast.

Back for tailgate party number two and again we had a great time even getting buzzed by someones other half in a Cessna overhead. Most agreed the vent had been a great success and vowed to return next year . For me ballooning has always been 80% socialising and 20% doing it. Will I return next year ? I would love to but will have to run it past "management" before committing to such a trip.

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Many Thanks to all for making a brit feel fully at home, Ernie Hartt for encouraging me to come and to my three amigos , your help will always be remembered – thanks a million. All that remained was getting ready for my champagne flight home – tough old life isnt it ?
Steve Roake

Dror Ignatt's Duo

Whilst on my recent travels I was contacted by Dror Ignatt who resides in Israel. He contracted me to let me know about his Duo which started life as a regular Ultramagic B-70 with a basket until he transformed it into a Duo with the purchase of the two seat bottom end. As a commercial pilot with over 10 years in Israel he wanted a second balloon for Travel and Flight. 4X-BND was the answer because whilst being light it has the powerplus burner and very frugal fuel flow giving up to three hours duration up to 25 degrees C.



4X-BND Ultramagic B-70 Duo.

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Future plans include a trip to this years Mondial Air balloons Festival in France at Metz and its also nice to get some lighter than air action from a region not often featured in the Magazine , Many thanks to Dror for getting in touch .

The Jack O'Neill Hopper days.

Back in the day one Jack O'Neill (yes the one from wetsuit fame) used to spend vast amounts of time on the sea. He developed a love for the waves that culminated with his design of the early wetsuits and a love affair with boats. However he wasn't exclusively busy on the water as he developed a love affair with flying over it launching off a catamaran of his making . Using the boat as a launching point Jack Pioneered the use of his Piccard envelope free flying from the boat landing back aboard it after .



N2C Piccard Ax 2 Serial Number 001

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Michael Glen recently posted the article about this on Facebook and Don Piccard confirmed the envelope in the article is infact N2C which was Piccard Ax2 serial number 001 which also was the first balloon featuring load tapes. Greg Winker alerted me to the story. Whilst the photo is black and white, clearly we are talking Hopper history here and thank all involved for unearthing the story .

Other Easter Events

Two other easter flyouts featured hoppers in the UK . The 3/4/40 Club had a flyout and two members flew .Both Ron Griffin and David Head utilised the unseasonably good weather to fly their craft. The other notable flyout was at the traditional Easter event staged by the Black Horse Balloon club. The All fools meet has been going since the early eighties and this year featured two hoppers . Kevin Tanner and Tim Orchard flew their 25 sized hoppers during the six available flying slots.

4,Homebuilding Section-The Andy Marshall homebuilding Videos.

Fresh from his launch of G-CKVE the AM31, Andy Marshall has followed up by supplying a series of videos utilising time lapse photography to show what is involved with building a hopper envelope. I believe there are a total of seven on all but all are available on U tube.

<https://youtu.be/YTVE4DTkORE> takes you to the first episode.

Right through to the last one shown below.

<https://youtu.be/QOi5xBzwCpE>

Hopefully it will inspire more of you to take up the challenge and build your own balloon. The final balloon looks to be a very quality item and is a true credit to all those who helped Andy along his path.

Interesting Balloon recently sold.

Derek Hancock recently contacted me. He is a brit who currently resides in Portland Oregon USA. He has just recently bought from Martin Axtell the iconic Kubicek Shapped Hopper. Current plans

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are to get it on the UK register and The Balloon should be attending events both at Longleat and in Israel this year. His thoughts are to try and run it under Annex 2 rules but im not sure this will give him the freedom to travel with it.



With so few shaped hoppers out there im sure the iconic Kubicek will be a welcome addition to any event.

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Advertisement

CAMERON BALLOONS

Fact 1
Easy to inflate and pack away, Cameron Hopper units are extremely simple to operate.

Fact 2
The Cameron Hopper Base Unit is a fun way to fly while having reliability, ease-of-use and comfort at its core.

Fact 3
Hoppers operate at a fraction of the running cost of a conventional hot air balloon.

Fact 4
Superb for those who want a striking visual impact for marketing campaigns and promotions.

Fact 5
Extra harness padding enhances comfort and suits all pilot heights.

THE HOPPER

Small but significant benefits make a world of difference to your flying experience.
Our design and build technology combines safety with ease-of-use and exceptional comfort.

A padded head-rest, enhanced cushioning, adjustable seat, and an adjustable light-weight, foot-rest ensures pilot comfort.
Stainless-steel hinges, on all Base Units, make transportation and storage even more convenient; the whole back-frame system folds and packs neatly, even if you prefer to leave the harness attached.
The larger "rear-view" mirrors with an independent rapid-cut-off fuel system allow the Pilot to control the Hopper effectively and safely.
There is even a pocket, a perfect space for a coat or tasty snacks!

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5 Interesting Photos



This beautiful Classic Hopper is a Thunder and Colt 21A dating from 1985, the balloon (ex G-BLVY), was UK based until May 1991 when it was sold to Holland. At some stage it came into the ownership of Wim Van der Horst who it is believed imported the balloon to the USA. Now housed with Kim Lynch in Temecula California since 2014/15, it is flown in the ultralight FAR 103 unregistered category, whilst slightly porous still airworthy.

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6, New Allocations This Month / Changes of Ownership

No newly registered hoppers have come to light this month. However as documented elsewhere Derek Hancock is currently registering the Kubicek shaped Hopper on the UK register (the registration is as yet unknown).

7, Second Hand Balloons

The demand for second hand stock remains unabated but the key to moving on stock is the price. My recent trip to California showed up the sensible and the darned right crazy valuations that some people put on their kit. My good friend Patrick McGrath secured a few years ago a LBL 35A full kit with only 6.75 hours on the clock for \$10,000. This had sat in a barn stored for some ten years unused. My friend Greg Winker has just sold the ex-Graham Bell LBL 35A kit (G-CDIW) for around \$8500 with 57 odd hours on the logbook. both of these appear to be great value.

However, whilst out there I came across an older Cameron H-34 full kit that the owner speculatively was asking for \$24,000 which is just barking mad. Not only is it an older kit but not a really popular model so I'm not surprised that it's still for sale.

The moral of the story is be realistic on price.

8, Manufacturer / Event News/ Industry News

The next two events both happen next month and what an event the first one is. The annual experimental airship and balloon meet happens at Brian Bolland's Post Mills Airfield in Vermont over the weekend of the 15th-17th May. Quite simply, this is a must for all homebuilders and if I had extra time and the funds I would be going. It is a brilliant event staged in fantastic surroundings in a really pretty part of the USA. The event allows you to attend in any way you want, stay in any type of accommodation and simply hang out with the great and good of homebuilding USA. This event continues to attract significant interest from the UK.

The end of may also will see the return of the Solo Plus meet by the Black Horse balloon Club. Plenty of socialising with great flying from the pub in Great Missenden. This is also a real must for all UK hopper pilots.

I'll be thereand so should you. details from Peter Gray via email peter@bmss.co.uk.

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Advertisement

Cameron "Stock Hoppers" for sale exclusively to Cloudhoppers.org. These two beauties are both available with the regular discount using the code CAM01SJR and come in either 26,000 or 31,000 sizes to suit all. Prices start from £7335 excluding VAT and delivery for the O-26.

To purchase the current offerings please contact Cameron Balloons directly on +44(0)117 9637216, quoting the code "CAM01SJR" and ask to speak to either Craig or Simon about the Cameron O Types that are on the Cloudhoppers page.

O-26 : Stock 1 of 1 CAMERON BALLOONS

V20.954	Fabric Colours Used:	Envelope SUPERLIGHT													
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O-31 1 of 1 CAMERON BALLOONS

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Designer: AB	<small>This visual is for guidance purposes only. Because of the limitations of graphic representation, colour scheme and artwork will be defined by the final order document.</small>														

Cameron Super Lightweight O types are currently the best-selling lightweight hopper envelopes available and whilst most purchases require three-month lead times minimum, these are a lot easier to purchase and are available immediately by request.

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7. Gallery Pages –

Your Editor's choice of New and unusual balloons.



Kevin Stephenson has inflated his new hopper in Albuquerque

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Facebook membership continues to rise with the current level of 1289 (correct to 30th April), current and still rising. Let's hope this trend continues as the popularity of hopping embraces even more people. All articles for inclusion in future issues will be gratefully received by your Editor. Please forward them to steve.roake33@gmail.com 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.**

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

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