

From the Pits.

The Newsletter of the Weston Model Flying Club

www.wmfclub.co.uk

October 2005

Editorial

Sorry about the absence of a newsletter in July. You'll find this one is a bit shorter than usual as well. Both are due to me not having as much time as usual and the usual excuse of no-one contributing articles. Oh well...

We appear to be slipping on safety again. Please don't let it slip too far... See the reminders inside.



Club Meetings

From September we were back at the Ashcombe again. I'm afraid I missed the September meeting, but I'm told **Pat Teakle** gave an excellent talk on gliding. October was a showing of **Jason Streeter's** extensive collection of photos and videos of the club's flying activities.

AGM

The AGM will be on **Thursday 3rd November at the Ashcombe Pub**. Please try to attend. The new committee will be chosen, the fees for next year will be set and the club's future intentions with regard to the field will be discussed. A buffet will be provided, and a raffle will be held with some good prizes including at least one model plane.

Interference Alert!!

There have recently been reports of interference in the area towards the village. Recently **Jason Hyland** saw an electric plane flying in a field near the Noble pub (the new pub at Wick st. Lawrence) which according to Jason is less than a mile as the crow flies from the patch. When approached and challenged the man flying said he did not know there was a flying club near and showed no concern for the consequences of shooting other model aircraft down. He was flying with Futaba gear, had a flight box and appeared to know what he was doing, this is no amateur.

We do not have any further information on this man only to say on that occasion he was flying on channel 67.

If any one has any further information on this matter, please contact **Mike Pope** on 01934 516869. In the meantime it would obviously be prudent to avoid Channel 67.

Members Handbooks

New members of the BMFA are provided with a BMFA Handbook on joining. Earlier this year there was a problem with getting the handbooks and a number of club members who joined this year did not get their handbook with their BMFA Insurance certificate.

We now need to catch up with this lapse and I have a batch of un-issued handbooks for those members. Unfortunately I am not sure who got missed out! Would any NEW members of BMFA this year who did NOT get a handbook please let me know so that I can rectify this omission.

Peter Jones
Membership Secretary

Safety

DON'T taxi back to the pits or towards pilots standing on the patch! They cannot see your model if they are flying, so cannot get out of the way if it gets out of control and runs towards them.

Technology Corner

These two examples of hi-tech rotary-wing flying machines were spotted at the field this summer. What else does the future hold??



Flying Site Improvements

We are looking into putting some coarse gravel down in the car parking area to reduce the amount of mud around the cars this winter. At the time of writing it had not yet happened but look out for something soon.

Safety

There was an incident recently when part of a silencer came loose and hit a car. Although there was no suggestion that the model was actually over the cars, it's a reminder to

- Keep well away from the cars, not just from over them, and
- Make sure your silencer is secure. Use locking nuts, or wire the back part to the front.

Seen at the Field

Another scale model by **Bernard Sutton**, this SE5 flew well after some trimming, but was badly damaged in a hard landing later.

Of particular interest are the functional exhaust pipes, from brass tube silver-soldered to the 4-stroke exhaust manifold.



Sycamore Trophy

The Rhubarb Stick trophy is well known in the club as the reward for the month's most spectacular or embarrassing mishap. Recently however, **Ron Bebe** thought that helicopter flyers were getting a disproportionate share of the awards and merited their own trophy. Consequently Ron presented the club with the Sycamore Trophy. The latest worthy winner was **Dave Cuff** who managed to plug his helicopter battery straight into the 12-volt supply instead of the battery charger, and was seen frantically trying to unplug it before the whole helicopter went up in flames!

BMFA

Just to let you know in advance of our AGM, that the BMFA is proposing an increase in their fees of £2 for Seniors and £1 for juniors for 2006. Obviously this will be taken into account when setting the club fees.

Summer Family's Day Event

Back in July **Alan Meaney** organised a family's day event at the field. The weather was perfect, the site was ideal, but unfortunately very few people turned up. Those of us who did were treated to an excellent show of live music supplied by **Rob Dixon** and his band, with **Peter Spragg** on guitar.





The band was joined at one time by **Alan Meaney** on guitar...



...And **Ivan Steerment** on Barbeque...

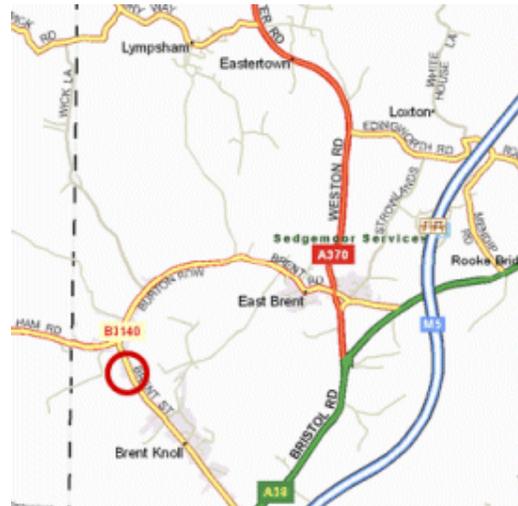
New Year Social Event

Alan Meaney has organised another social event, this time for the New Year. On January 14th there will be a skittles evening at the Red Cow, Brent Knoll. There are only 50 tickets available, at £10 each, on sale at the AGM. The price includes entry to a raffle with a large (non-modelling!) prize.

Directions:

The Red Cow, Brent Street, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 4BE

From Weston, take the A370 south, turn right at Brent Road and follow round to Brent Street.



The Sheep Dip.

This is a story I wrote a few years back. OK, it's nothing whatsoever to do with flying, but (a) I've got a page to fill and nothing else to put in it, (b) it might amuse someone, and (c) it's true...)

It was in 1974. I had just left university, and was spending a few weeks helping out at the family home before moving to Bristol to start work at Rolls-Royce. A few years previously, my parents had bought an old run-down farmhouse in Shropshire to renovate, along with a couple of acres of land. My father, an engineer in a power station, had always wanted to be a farmer, and now saw his chance. After a fairly disastrous episode keeping cattle, he decided on sheep. After all, sheep just stand in a field and eat grass, don't they? We had about eight I recall.

By law sheep have to be dipped once a year. Of course 'proper' farmers have no problem here, they have a large tank with a fenced path leading the sheep straight in. With just eight sheep, we couldn't afford anything like that. My dad, a Scotsman whose motto was always "I'm not paying for that when I can do it myself for nothing", decided to improvise. He sank an old iron bath in the field and filled it with dip. The next step, as he explained to my increasing horror and disbelief, was simple. We would pick the sheep off one at a time, tie its legs together and then, holding it upside-down by its feet, dip it in the bath much as one would dunk a biscuit in a cup of tea...

It's not until you've tried to wrestle a fully grown sheep to the ground that you realise just how big and strong these animals are. It took us an hour for the first one, and that was after isolating it in an 8' by 8' shed. Once on its back, however, all resistance ceased and we were able to tie its legs together easily.

The next part is best imagined. The two of us, dressed in overalls, gloves and goggles (you're not supposed to get this stuff on your skin or eyes) drag a sheep upside down across a field and dunk it in a bath...

Of course the other thing that 'proper' farmers do is to get the sheep sheared before dipping. We hadn't...

It's not until you've tried to lift a fully grown, waterlogged sheep out of a bath that you realise just how much water a fleece can absorb. We couldn't lift it out. I spent the next ten minutes holding the poor thing's head above water while my dad rushed around frantically trying to make an A-frame out of scaffolding poles, with the intention of hauling the sheep out with a pulley, until it occurred to us to just cut it free and let it clamber out by itself, which it eventually did.

We stood and looked at each other. It had taken us two hours to half-dip one sheep. Most of the dip had gone, there was more on us than on the sheep, and we were totally exhausted. In one of his better decisions, Dad said "I think we'll call it a day for now".

And that was that. He later got a local farmer to dip the sheep along with his own flock, which is what I'd suggested in the first place.

I rather hoped that would cure my dad of his eternal optimism of how easy everything was going to be, but then I've thought that numerous times before and since. About the same time he bought a second-hand tractor, a 1950s Massey-Ferguson with an open rear seat, no cab or roll-bars, the type commonly known as a death-trap. I asked him what would happen if it turned over. "No problem" he replied, "I'll jump clear". I looked at the metal steering wheel just above the knees, the levers, brackets and battery boxes around the seat, apparently carefully designed to catch on clothing, and thought "I couldn't jump clear of that, what chance has he got?". I implored him never to use it on anything other than flat ground.

Two years ago, while repairing the track that leads around the side of the hill to their house, the edge of the road began to give way. My dad, now in his mid-seventies and with arthritis in both knees, jumped clear as the tractor rolled sideways down a 45-degree slope and finished 20 feet down on its back.

We don't believe in Gods, so I guess it must be the Law of Averages which lets you get away with the ones which really matter. I have a feeling, though, that he's used up the family's quota for quite some time...

Determination

Sometimes it's hard to accept that it's not going to fly like that...



Safety

Don't forget that you should not fly when there are people out on the patch. Although it may be frustrating to have to wait, you must do so rather than risk flying and having to land urgently with someone still out there.

Events

Forthcoming events this year:

Thursday 3 rd Nov 2005 8pm	Club meeting at the Ashcombe
Thursday 1 st Dec 2005 8pm	Club meeting at the Ashcombe
Thursday 5 th Jan 2006 8pm	Club meeting at the Ashcombe
Saturday 14 th Jan 2006 7.30pm	Skittles Event at the Red Cow
Thursday 2 nd Feb 2006 8pm	Club meeting at the Ashcombe

Club Meeting Venue



Ashcombe

Email

If you currently get this newsletter by post and you would prefer to get it by email, let me know at the address below. Email recipients get their copy earlier and in full colour!

All club meetings apart from those in the summer months are at the **Ashcombe** pub in Ashcombe Road WSM.

How to contact the Editor

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The Newsletter is issued (with luck!) 4 times a year, at the end of January, April, July and October. Any contributions should be sent to the editor by the middle of that month.