

# From the Pits.

The Newsletter of the Weston Model Flying Club

[www.weston-model-flying-club.org](http://www.weston-model-flying-club.org)

April 2003

## Editorial

It's been an excellent start to the year as far as flying weather is concerned. From January onwards there have been many fine sunny days ideal for flying. Let's hope it continues through the summer.



Once again model flying safety is in the news, with the tragic accident in Kent. Don't let safety at our site slip, despite our sometimes frivolous reaction to crashes and 'incidents'.

I'm glad to say that my article about aerial photography in the last issue has prompted quite a bit of interest. Several people have voiced their intention to have a go, and a couple of us have now got some pictures. You can see some of the first results later in this newsletter. It's a fascinating subject, and hopefully this will encourage more people to try it.

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## Flying Site Improvements

While we wait in vain for the farmer to get around to cutting the hedges, **Robin Muir** and **Ron Bebe** have taken the initiative and cut the hedge on the East side of the field, making landings from that direction much easier. Our thanks to them both. Any suggestions that this represents a case of self-interest by Ron are, of course, just scurrilous rumours...

### Safety (1)

Some people have recently been observed taxiing towards the pits. This is potentially dangerous for obvious reasons. Please don't taxi towards either the pits or people on the flight line.

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## Grass Cutting



This is a subject that comes up probably more than any other at club meetings. Currently the club owns a ride-on mower which is kept by one of our members (**Steve O'Brien** for the last couple of years). Naturally this imposes a rather unfair burden on that person, especially if he doesn't always have time to get to the field, and the grass ends up not getting cut often enough.

At a recent club meeting it was decided to try to find a contractor to come in and cut it regularly, but this is proving rather difficult. So, if you know of anyone who would be willing to do it, or if you know of anyone we could approach, please let a member of the committee know.

## Club Meetings

As usual, the club meetings in June, July and August will be held at the field. The meetings start at 8pm as normal, but are usually short and informal with plenty of time for flying. If the weather is bad, the meeting should be considered cancelled, as the room at the Bristol Hotel is not booked for these 3 months.

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## BMFA

If you move house during the year, please remember to notify the **BMFA** of your change of address as well as the club membership secretary **John Hopkin**. If you don't, the BMFA will send correspondence, including the BMFA News, to me instead. I'm currently getting 3 members copies of the BMFA News as well as my own...

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## Gallery



Pretty electric Junior-60 by **Brian Grace**

**Roger Moore's** Mustang about to take off. Spot the deliberate error with the markings...



**Robin Thompson's** T240 coming in to land

## The Christmas Fun Fly

Not many of us can remember Christmas and was there a fun fly? Well yes, not as planned but some of the best times are not planned.

It all started at the November meeting; comments were passed about previous Christmas events and I agreed that I would run a flying event. A poster was put up on the club notice board, I put my mind to some challenges and waited for the day. The 29<sup>th</sup>



of December saw a wet and overcast start but my plane was charged, my brother (Mark) had arrived with his plane in hand, and to crown it all I had a 1970's Lightning that had been given to me by Mark earlier in the year ready for a test fly.

So out to the field, windscreen wipers running, welly boots in the back and all set (I must be mad). On arrival at the field I found there were other club members all anticipating that magic break in the weather. Whilst waiting we stood and chatted, this is what model fliers do best. Then the rain stopped, no chance of any sort of event as the clouds were moving across and it did not look promising, so out with the Lightning.

Now just as all good flying mags do, "the boring bit" I'll tell you the story of the Lightning. NO NO don't just go to the end to see how it flies. The Lightning, not being that old I believe it was some sort of late 60's fighter plane, I expect from the photo that some of you club members will recognise this.

### Specification

Wingspan	approx. 900mm
Engine	OS 40 sr
Controls	Elevons (manual mix)
	Rudder
	Engine

Weight 1no Brick



### The Test Flights

Peg on the board, range check Arial down, control surface movement, control surface movement the right way, control surfaces secure, centre of gravity (seems about right).

OK lets start the motor, a few flicks on the electric start soon had us running, another surface check whilst walking to the patch, a good firm lob from ones brother, and up, up, up into the grass at about 20 feet away. The next attempt was even better sustaining a broken prop. There was nothing for it but to call in the best hand launch man around Steve (javelin) Hockey. This time the Lightning took to the air, a quick trim up and time to play pass the transmitter. This entertained us for several flights until the rain came in, so down to the pub for half of shandy.

What a great morning's fun, Robin was so impressed with the Lightning he took it home, my brother retained his engine and I came away with my radio gear. An end to another Christmas fly, roll on the summer.

Just before I go I would like to say many thanks to the other participating members for an entertaining day.

**Mike Pope**

## Casualties



A bit too much down-thrust perhaps? When I reviewed the FK Models ARTF Cap 232 in the October 2002 Newsletter, I expressed some doubts about the rather flimsy construction and whether it would stand up to a heavy "arrival". As you can see I got my answer when the engine cut on pulling away from a "touch & go". Fortunately it's a fairly clean break and should be repairable.

**Lance Bell** had the idea that a light "Junior 60" type plane with a powerful engine would be ideal for the fun-fly event. Unfortunately structural strength is also useful, as Lance found out when the wings folded in flight...



Young **Graham Hockey** made a near-perfect landing with his trainer, except that it was in the only large cowpat around. Here's Graham cleaning it up, while dad Steve seems strangely reluctant to lend a hand...

## Crash Etiquette

While bent over your model tweaking with the needle valve, too often you hear "I ain't got it...," followed by a low frequency thump. Usually, several expletives will be inserted, some used imaginatively. A hand-crafted masterpiece of airframe miniaturization crammed with state of the art electronic equipment and powered by an exquisitely machined engine is no more. The pilot, who is frequently the builder/owner, has made an unscheduled landing or has discovered that the radio in his hands has a greater range than the eyes in his head.

Your immediate problem is how to react. Generally, it is considered bad form to immediately ask if you may borrow the pilot's glow plug battery. Similarly, you probably shouldn't ask if he's finished with the peg.

Any equipment related reasons for the crash you hear are by definition reasonable. Pilot error is too rare and sensitive to suggest, so don't say, "That's odd, I haven't had any problems on that frequency today," until at least an hour after the crash. Offer to help go look. Don't say, "It sounded like it hit something solid." Point out that most lost models are found and returned. Don't ask if he had his name and phone number in the model or wonder out loud if the model hit a house or car.



If it looks like more than enough people have "volunteered" to help with the search, try to weasel out of going. There are thorns and nettles out there, and seeing a grown man cry isn't pleasant. If the pilot takes a plastic bag with him or comes back empty handed to get one, assume the worst. Actually, in a really bad crash, two hands and a pocket are enough space for everything worth salvaging.



Whatever you do, don't hold a post-mortem on the spot. The pilot probably doesn't want to discuss:

Battery condition, poor construction, pilot error, used rubber bands, fuel tank capacity, light blue covering or model selection vs. pilot skill.

As best you can, avoid specifics, sound supportive, and look appropriately grave. You'll want the same consideration some day.

[Taken from the LIRCS Newsletter, Long Island, NY.]

**P.S.** And don't go running after the pilots with a camera to take pictures like those above, because that would really p\*\*\* them off... Ian.

## WMFC Fashion Awards



The cold weather this winter has brought out the best in model flying fashion. Here are some of our club members trying to look cool without feeling it...

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## Fun Fly League

The first event of this year's fun-fly league took place on Sunday, April 6. It could have been warmer, but at least it was dry and flyable. **Paul Lathall** and **Kevin Aldridge** organised a climb and glide on a measured amount of fuel. Most people used the club trainer as recommended, except for two individuals who thought they could do better with a purpose built plane. See elsewhere...

The first few attempts achieved 3-4 minute times, but then **Pat Teakle** used his glider background to show how it should be done, finding the lift from the breeze over the sea wall to record a time of over 5 minutes. Unfortunately for Pat, everyone else then copied the same technique, some to better effect.

To add some extra spice to the event, landings off the patch incurred a time penalty until the plane was retrieved, thus requiring a sprint across the field by some of us who never normally move that fast...

In the end **Ian Armstrong** took advantage of what seemed an extra long engine run to post the winning time even with the afore-mentioned sprint, followed by **Roger Moore** and Pat in second & third places respectively.

Just to remind everyone, this year's league consists of 6 events of which you can take your best 3. Hence you don't have to attend all events to be in with a chance, so it's always worth having a go!

## Ted Richardson

At the April Meeting Ted Richardson announced that due to some personal problems he felt that he would not be able to take an active role in flying in the future. It was a shame to hear this as over the years Ted has been a good friend of the Club and it would not be exaggerating to say that if it were not for him, it is unlikely that our Club would be in existence today.

Ted became Chairman in the early 90's taking over from Vic Hollingsworth and at that time our membership was a very modest 30 to 40. Every year we were always worried that we would not have sufficient members to pay the rent. But somehow we struggled through and at the same time we were only flying on an annual planning permission. Gradually various committee members resigned and there were no volunteers to fill the positions and eventually there was only Ted and the Treasurer, Tom Flynn remaining. Rather than let the Club fold, Ted took on the position of Secretary and not only ran the Meetings but recorded the minutes as well.

It was eventually decided that we should put in for permanent Planning Consent and who stepped forward to do this? Yes, Ted. After completing a mountain of paperwork and representing us at various Meetings, Ted was successful in getting full Planning Permission. That really proved to be the turning point in the Club's history for we went from strength to strength. Our membership increased year upon year and peaked in the year of the foot and mouth disease at 110. The Committee is now up to full strength and it takes 9 people to do what Ted and Tom did together!

Ted also holds a unique position in the Club as being the only Honorary Member in its history. This was awarded to him in 1998 for his outstanding services to the Club.

Although no longer flying, I'm sure I echo the Members' wishes when I say that I hope Ted will visit us at the field and still come along to the Meetings to give us the benefit of his knowledge of the Club.

From all of us, thanks Ted.

## Gerry Crossman

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### Fuel

This year, as in previous years, the club will be making a bulk purchase of 50 gallons of fuel at a discounted price. See **Mike Pope** or **Steve O'Brien** if you would like to buy some.

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### Tips

Most people have their favourite methods of cleaning their model at the field after use, varying from washing-up liquid to floor cleaner. I used to just wipe it down with paper towels to get the worst off and wash it properly at home. Recently however someone suggested car screen wash fluid, and this is very effective, as it is designed for use cold unlike most other cleaners.

## Seen at the Field



Photo by  
Alan Meaney

This pretty Ryan PT19 trainer by **Bernard Sutton** is a near scale model, built from a plan. A home-made in-cowl silencer helps keeps the lines smooth.

Bernard tells me the pilot is giving the “thumbs-up”. Certainly seems to be some kind of hand gesture anyway...



Photo by  
Alan Meaney

An interesting and different model is this twin-rotor autogyro by **Gerry Crossman** from a DB Sport & Scale kit. It spans 46” across the rotors, weighs 3lb and is powered by a Leo 25 originally bought for a pylon racer. Gerry’s first flight ended in the lake when the elevator linkage failed. However, although waterlogged the model was otherwise OK and has flown again as shown here.

Gerry describes it as easy to fly but a bit off-putting when one rotor stops turning in the air!

More details of the kit are available from DB's web site on [www.dbsportandscale.com](http://www.dbsportandscale.com)

## Massacre at Wick St Lawrence

At first I was going to try to write an entertaining piece reflecting on the safety (or lack of) recently observed at our club flying site. That was until I heard recently of the tragic death of a poor young girl at Dartford Heath in Kent. Fatal accidents are very rare in our hobby thank God so they always find their way into the national press. I don't know the issues surrounding the incident and therefore wouldn't dream of making comment however it did, with the help of Mandy my wife, make my mind up to report the issues as witnessed over the last few weeks and not to make light of such an important subject.

I'm not into naming and shaming because I've been as guilty as the next but please reflect on this information and with just a little imagination work out the possible results should things have gone wrong.

- A member was seen priming his engine more than once with the glow battery feed still attached. This was also being done on the flight line whilst other pilots were flying airborne models within feet of said member. The same member then proceeded to flick over the engine to start it with his fingers.
- Another member tried to fly his model with the wrong model loaded in his transmitter resulting in a £112 repair bill. (I got off lightly don't you think)
- Whilst attaching his glow battery feed to his primed engine a member's engine started because it was "at that point" in the compression stroke. This has been known to have happened before so please make sure you are not within the arc of the prop at all times.
- In the last three visits 5, yes 5 mobiles have gone off and been answered in the pits. (Don't we have a club rule covering that?)
- Taxiing towards the flight line and / or pits seems to be the pastime of most members that manage to land with their engine still running.
- A members plane wings folded up in mid-flight. Was there previous damage or was the model being flown in a style unsuitable for the aircraft? We may never know!
- The over flying of the cars and sometimes the pits seems to be the norm of late.

It's not all bad news though as restraints are being used by most if not all pilots.

We can all take the approach that it won't happen to me, but it just might.....

Whilst we are making an effort to purchase our site and find backers the last thing we require is bad press because some Richard Cranium knew better.

I would also like to make the point that safety is the responsibility of ALL MEMBERS and not just at the times when the safety officers are about. If YOU see something going on that YOU think is unsafe then YOU do something about it thereby protecting YOUR flying and that of others.

Thanking you for your time and I trust you all view this piece in the manner that it was genuinely intended.

**SAFE and therefore HAPPY flying**

**Alan Meaney**

## Aerial Photography



**Robin Thompson** mounted a cheap but effective film camera under his Precedent T240 with rubber bands and foam. A servo activates the shutter. With an ASP 120 4-stroke for power this model is capable of lifting even a heavy camera with ease. This camera only had a manual advance, so Robin had to land after each picture. He later fitted a camera with electric wind-on and was able to take multiple shots before landing.

The picture above shows the pits area, bridge and car parking.



Getting the right view of the ground is hard enough, but air-to air photography with models is even trickier. Here Robin just catches Roger's Jupiter flying underneath the T240.



I made a lite-ply box for my Minolta digital camera and rubber-banded it under my venerable Kamko Kadet trainer. The camera, box and micro-servo only weigh 7 ounces, so although only 25-powered, the Kadet managed to carry it aloft with no problem. The advantages of a digital camera are that you can take a large number of pictures, and just discard them if not satisfied, for no extra cost, and you can look at them in the LCD window immediately after landing. The downside is that digitals generally have slower effective shutter speeds than film cameras, so are more susceptible to airframe vibration.



On one fine Saturday I took 89 pictures in just 3 flying sessions. 55 of these were in attempts to get some air-to air shots, of which only 11 succeeded, and of those only one was really good.

The main picture here shows the whole of our flying patch at Wick, the inset one shows the ponds at the nearby water works.

#### **Altitude Measurement**

Once you have a picture, you can estimate the altitude of the plane. You will first need to calibrate the camera by taking a picture of an object of known size at a known distance. From that you find the camera's field-of-view angle, then, if you have an object in the picture whose size you know, like your car, you can calculate the distance from camera to ground. In the main picture above, I made the altitude about 600' (200m).

## Pre first flight checklist

This is a brief guide to what to check on a model before and during construction, and before the first flight. Most of it is common sense, however even the best of modellers overlook things so it's always best to check before you risk the (often valuable) aircraft.

### Structure

- Is the structure strong enough?
- Have all the glue joints set and adhered properly?
- Has anything been damaged during handling?

### Flying Surfaces

- Are all the flying surfaces square to their datums and seatings?
- Are they unwarped and properly secure?
- Are all the control surfaces securely hinged, in-line with their flying surfaces and free moving without binding (If the resistance is strong the servo may stall and buzz, this is not good for the servo and requires more power from the onboard battery). Don't settle for sloppy neutrals and sticky throttles.
- Have you set the correct control movements (throws) as recommended by the plan/instructions?
- Are the main control surfaces linked to the servo by strong control rods/snakes (don't use screw clamp servo connectors for the main surfaces, they're just not up to the job. Proper metal clevises are a better option, or plastic quick-links.)

### Radio Gear

- Are all 4 servo screws fitted on each servo, are they done up?
- Is the battery and receiver wrapped in foam, vibration can damage a receiver usually resulting in a crash.
- If the wing is removable, is there an extension lead long enough to allow you to dismantle and assemble the aircraft without putting stress on the servo or receiver?
- Have all the servo arms got the retaining screw in, is it done up?
- Is the receiver switch in a place where it could get knocked into the off position? Switches should have "on" towards the back of the aircraft or an extension rod, which has to be pushed in to operate the switch placed inside the aircraft.
- Are all the plugs in fully?
- Are none of the wires damaged?
- Older batteries can suffer from "black wire corrosion", check the negative pad on the plug of the battery, if it's tarnished (compared to the positive) it should be investigated further.

### Fuel Tank

- Make sure the tank is secure, up, down, fore and aft.
- Is the tank plumbing correct? The clunk should go to the carb, one breather can go to the silencer if a pressure fuel system is used and the other can be used as a filler. Depending on how many pipes the owner wants, some will use 2; the silencer tube as a breather and the carb tube as the filler/ drainer. Others prefer a 3 pipe system; the silencer tube is used as the breather, the carb one for draining and a filler for filling.
- Is the clunk free moving and not binding with the back wall of the tank, some people include a length of rigid fuel pipe in the clunk line to prevent it doubling back. This

may be used on more aerobatic models to prevent the clunk getting stuck at the front of the tank and cutting off fuel supply.

- Is the line to the carb as short as it can practically be?
- Is the tank at the right height, the centre line of the tank must never be above the spraybar in the carb as this may lead to siphoning and a flooded engine.

### Engine

- How easy is it to fit and remove the engine? If retaining nuts can't be reached then a spiked variety may be preferable to prevent loss in a cowl.
- Check down/side thrust, the more added usually makes the model more docile, avoid up thrust, unless the model is "a pusher".
- Can the needle valve be accessed through any cowl?
- Take a few different props of different sizes for the first flights, possibly a few sizes each side of the manufacturer's recommendations.
- It may be worth setting an engine up at home first before visiting the field; it may also be worth keeping the engine a bit rich for the first few flights both to increase reliability and to help a new engine run in.
- It may be better to remove a cowl for the first few flights to allow easy access to the engine.

### CofG

- Is the centre of gravity in the right place without fuel, it may be better to have it slightly forward of the design location, moving the flight battery can usually achieve this if not then lead may have to be added.
- Does the model balance laterally, if not then add weight to the light wing tip. An imbalance can be surprisingly deadly to smaller models.

### General Notes

- Before flying, if there is anything you think you may have forgotten of done wrong, check it. If the model crashes it is better to know you flew it into the ground than it failing mid air and crashing.
- If you are new to modelling it is also a good idea to get the model checked over by an experienced flyer, they may spot things you didn't.
- Have you remembered to charge up your starter and glow, don't forget or you won't be able to fly at worst or have to borrow at best.
- Do a range check; the radio should still have full control over the model at 25-30 paces with the aerial down.
- Are the control surface going the right ways (on the aileron the surface should rise up to the stick as you push it in each direction)
- Are you sure all the screws are done up, check the engine hasn't worked them loose.
- Do you have full throttle travel, can you remotely stop the engine by trimming the engine full shut?
- On the take off, if the engine stops, push the nose forward and prevent stall, keep her straight and flare when returning to the ground to prevent bad damage.
- As David Boddington once said, "Spectators are best dispensed with"; a quiet day is probably best.

Article taken from [www.51ml.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.51ml.fsnet.co.uk)

## For Sale:



**VMAR Cap 231EX** semi scale sports model. Suitable for 40 - 53 two stroke (was flown with an Irvine 53).

1.5m (59") wing span, good condition although minor repairs have been carried out following one of my usual heavy landings! £45.

Contact **Gerry** at the field or on 01275 373983.

## Events

Forthcoming events this year:

Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2003, 8pm	Club meeting at the Bristol Hotel
Sat / Sun 4 <sup>th</sup> / 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2003	Sandown Model Symposium
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2003	2 <sup>nd</sup> Fun-Fly league event **
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2003, 8pm	Club meeting <b>at the field</b>
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2003	3 <sup>rd</sup> Fun-Fly league event
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2003, 8pm	Club meeting <b>at the field</b>
Sat / Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> / 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2003	Woodspring Wings show
Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2003	4 <sup>th</sup> Fun-Fly league event **
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> August 2003, 8pm	Club meeting <b>at the field</b>
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> August 2003	5 <sup>th</sup> Fun-Fly league event

\*\* Note that the May and July fun-fly events may be postponed by a week because of the clash with the Sandown & Woodspring shows. More details closer to the dates.

## How to contact the Editor

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Thanks to **Steve O'Brien & John Hopkin** for printing and distribution.

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.