

From the Pits.

The Newsletter of the Weston Model Flying Club

www.wmfclub.co.uk

January 2006

Editorial

Insurance has been the 'hot topic' in the club recently, with much discussion and not a little confusion. Finally this culminated in a visit from the BMFA and their insurers to explain it. Highlights are given inside.



The AGM was held in November, followed by an EGM in December due to the insurance issue. Both are reported here.

AGM

This year's AGM saw a number of changes in the committee. **Mike Pope** has decided to stand down as chairman after many years in order to have a change as Chief Safety Officer. **Robin Muir** takes over with **Ivan Sterment** as Vice-Chairman and **Alan Meaney** was elected President. The full committee is given overleaf.

The fees for 2006 remain the same as in 2005 at £100 and £80 for adults and pensioners respectively. However the composition is slightly different. BMFA fees have risen by £2, and the club decided to put a larger proportion into the Field Fund. Membership for juniors remains free with just the BMFA fee to pay.

| Membership Type | BMFA | Club | Field Fund | Total |
|--------------------------|------|------|------------|-------|
| Full members: | £26 | £24 | £50 | £100 |
| OAPs: | £26 | £4 | £50 | £80 |
| Juniors (below 18 years) | £14 | £0 | £0 | £14 |

EGM

Due to initial uncertainty over the insurance issue the confirmation of the club fees was deferred to an EGM which was held at the end of December. At this the club decided to remain with the BMFA, hence the fees were confirmed as above.

Two extra rules were added to clarify the club's position on children and vulnerable adults in order to comply with the requirements of the Child Protection Act.

EGM meetings were brought into line with the AGM in that at least 14 days notice has to be given. A minimum quorum of 15 members is now required before rules can be changed.

All club meetings are now required to be non-smoking.

2006 Committee

| Title | Name | Phone | Email Address |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| President | Alan Meaney | 01934 813957 | alanmeaney@f2s.com |
| Chairman | Robin Muir | 01275844046 | robinmuir.homestead@virgin.net |
| Vice Chairman | Ivan Steerment | 07775 981 677 | isteerment@yahoo.co.uk |
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| Social Secretary | John Dale | 01179246180 | john_jdtowers@msn.com |
| Chief Safety Officer | Mike Pope | 01934 516869 | m.pope180@btinternet.com |
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| Safety Officer | Peter Spragg | 01934621172 | spraggy@easykaraoke.com |
| Safety Officer | Ron Bebe | 01934838131 | ron@rbebe.freemove.co.uk |
| | | | |
| Club Examiner | Terry Davis | 07973 332735 | terry.davis@dsl.pipex.com |
| Club Examiner | Paul Lathall | 07977 412615 | plathall@hotmail.com |
| Club Examiner | Mike Adams | 01934 516237 | m.adams264@btinternet.com |
| | | | |
| Auditor | Mike Ling | 01934625303 | sally@ling23.fsnet.co.uk |
| Auditor | Paul Lathall | 07977 412615 | plathall@hotmail.com |

Clubman of the Year

For the second year running the overwhelming vote at the AGM was for **Ivan Steerment**, reflecting the tireless work Ivan has put into the club.

Club Meetings

The March meeting will be a Bring & Buy event. In April **Paul Lathall** will give a talk on Radio Installation.

Flying League 2006

This year's events will be held from May to September on the first Sunday following the club meeting.

Organisation will be by:

- May Mike Pope
- June Ivan Steerment
- July Steve O'Brien
- August Pat Teakle
- September TBD

Safety

The flying rules cover all model aircraft and there are no exceptions. Flying of electric aircraft can only take place within our specified times and areas.

Who needs rules?

Have any members listened to the Radio Two phone in for the most flaunted law (you know, pinching the pens from work and thinking it's a perk and not theft)?

What do you the members of the club think is the most flaunted rule in our club (e.g. flying in restricted areas, noisy engines, not returning to the flight line until shouted at etc.) and does it bug you enough to put pen to paper? If so then please write or drop me an e-mail. If I can get enough response I think it could make for a lively debate for a club night later in the year.

Mike Pope

New Year Social Event

Early in the New Year **Alan Meaney** organised a skittles evening with buffet meal at the Red Cow in Brent Knoll. To ensure a good turnout only 50 tickets were made available, at £10 per head, and all were sold. Those members and guests who came enjoyed an excellent night with a skittles match (won by **Steve O'Brien**), meal and a raffle draw, of which the winners were:

First Prize (A night in a Hotel in Torquay) – **Ron Bebe**

Second Prize (A meal out at a restaurant) – **Robin Muir**

Third Prize (An M&S voucher) – **Brian Grace**

Casualties

Jason's Camera! For the last couple of years, if you had missed a Sunday flying and wondered what had been going on, it was only necessary to turn to **Jason Streeter's** web site which has been featured before in these pages and look at the large number of high-quality photos recording the day's activity. Unfortunately Jason's expensive camera was damaged recently (not at the club) and the web site has been rather quiet since. Hopefully it won't be long before he gets it repaired or gets a new one.

Meanwhile there is of course the club's own web site to which anyone can upload photos.

John Hopkin's ARTF landed in one of the nastier parts of the sewage works when the elevator failed, as you can probably tell from the body language here...



First Impressions

One Saturday afternoon towards the end of 1995 whilst wandering the back streets of Weston-super-Mare I came across a small model shop with a helicopter in the window. Having just moved to the area and being in the midst of all sorts of time consuming domestic duties I thought I'll have that helicopter when we're settled in the house.

A month or so later I returned to the streets of Weston to find the little model shop. I walked up and down lots of little streets but couldn't find it. Eventually I found Trapnells. I knew this wasn't the little shop I was looking for as it was on a corner but I guessed they would know where it was. I explained to the guy behind the counter what I was looking for. He had a long think, a scratch of the head, rub of the chin, asked the other assistant, but they just didn't know what shop I was looking for as "there weren't any other model shops around here!" (But he could order me a helicopter if I wanted one). So I left and continued the search – stumbling on Weston-super-Models 50 yards down the road! Now in the right shop at last, the man behind the counter had everything I needed. I hadn't realised that as well as the helicopter and the thing with the switches on you had to have a carload of other bits and pieces. He also threw in a set up session and flying lessons (for which he volunteered his son) together with a membership form for Weston Model Flying Club. At last I was all set for a go at model flying.

The following Sunday I arrived at the remote field just before 10 am. **Paul Lathall** had just pushed the mower around the flying patch (which was a circle about 50 yards in diameter). Next on the scene was **Trevor** ("better make an early start as I **have** to be home by lunchtime") **Hoskins**. As we crossed the perilous bridge he was good enough to give me a little bit of advice "helicopters are impossible to fly" I have heard lately that he has now changed his mind and they are a piece of cake to fly - but you also need a car load of bits and bobs to go with it.

Terry Davis was next to arrive towing a trailer with a large red biplane in it. Large was a bit of an understatement. To my untrained eye it couldn't have been much smaller than the real thing. I did point out that I thought this club was for models only and the mowed bit in the middle wasn't big enough for that plane - he later proved me wrong.

Next on the scene (still waiting for my instructor) was some guy dressed for the part - full orange flying suit with loads of badges and wings. Must be the Squadron Leader, I thought)

Then my instructor arrived (**Jamie Cuff**). A quick pre-flight check of my Space Baron showed that its battery was somewhat less than fully charged. "It must be charged" I said "look, if you wiggle the sticks, the helicopter bits wiggle". So, with this being before the days of field chargers, this was the end of my first field visit. (Fancy selling a less than fully charged helicopter to a novice).

"What now?" I thought "I'll watch the experts flying".

I asked the Squadron Leader how his flight was. Apparently the ground had come up unexpectedly and hit his plane hard.

Kevin Aldridge was next on the scene. He seemed to be hovering nicely, high in the middle of the circle, when the model suddenly turned nose in, aimed at him like a heat seeking missile and he took rapid steps to avoid being hit by it (in short, he ran for it)

Next in the air was **Paul Lathall**. A good minute or so later his tail plane came off and that was the end of that model (lack of glue during the build was blamed). Unfortunately this was also before the days of ARTF.

Next up was **Nick Salmon** who was doing a lot of wandering around during his flight. His concentration was briefly interrupted when he stood in a very fresh cowpat wearing his sandals and socks much to the amusement of other members.

Well first impressions were mainly that this lot are nuts but it looks like fun so not much has changed since then!

Steve O'Brien

(p.s. Does anybody know who the Squadron Leader was? I've never seen him since)

[Does anyone else have memories of their first encounter with the club? It doesn't have to be back in the mists of time, even new members' impressions are of interest. Send them to me for the next newsletter. - Ed]

Variations on a Theme



Two Sukhois from **Mike Pope & Mike Barnett**.

Useful Tips

It's common to use cyano to secure the screw in the top of a servo arm, but obviously it can be rather difficult to remove. Heating with a soldering iron risks melting the plastic and the fumes from hot cyano are noxious and dangerous. A better way to secure the screw is with Tippex, because you can see where it is and it will come away with a bit of force. Thanks to **Roy Shaw** for this tip.

Insurance

Ever since the incident late last year when part of a silencer came off a plane and hit a car, the subject of Insurance has been the main talking point at the club.

Manny Williamson of the BMFA and **Richard Doubleday** of their insurance brokers attended the February club meeting to give a presentation on the insurance we get as part of our BMFA subscriptions. Some spare copies of the presentation are available if required.

In summary:

1. The BMFA insurance gives Civil Liability cover, i.e. if you as a pilot cause damage or injury to someone else, the insurance will protect you from being sued.
2. You are always covered as long as you are acting lawfully, i.e. if it is your fault the insurance will pay on your behalf. If you are not responsible (i.e. it is regarded as an unavoidable accident) then of course there is nothing to pay anyway.
3. It is not a comprehensive insurance policy. If your car is damaged by a model then you claim on your car insurance, not on the BMFA insurance.

Below are the questions from club members which were sent in advance to the BMFA and answered by Richard at the meeting.

1. Must you admit liability before a claim can be paid out?
 - a. No, you must never admit liability to anyone. However you must fill in the incident report honestly.
2. If you admit liability are you breaking the terms of your insurance? By admitting liability you admit you are at fault and therefore negligent, no pilot will admit to being negligent!
 - a. Yes you are breaking the terms of your insurance.
3. I would like to know more about the 'Product Liability' cover and what exactly it does cover. It would appear that if I provide a member with a faulty radio and his model crashes causing damage then I am covered.
 - a. Yes you are covered.
4. What happens if a component fails and it has not been supplied by another member?
 - a. You are still covered.
5. Are Royal & Sun Alliance prepared to extend cover to include accidental damage to a third party and if so what would be the cost?
 - a. No, but note the point about 'accidents' above.
6. How many claims have been submitted in the last 5 years and of those how many have been accepted and paid out.
 - a. About 50 claims totaling about £211k with £96k outstanding. About 50% settled, most of the others dropped or 'timed out'
7. How many were rejected, and of those how many were rejected on the basis that they were just an accident.
 - a. No records available, but some causes of rejection are:
 - i. admitting liability (see 1)
 - ii. acting outside 'normal lawful activity'
 - iii. genuine accident as decided in civil court
8. Are we insured with a fly away? E.g. the aircraft loses contact with the radio and literally flies away, then lands a mile or so away causing damage to a third party.
 - a. Yes

9. Does the pilot need an `A` cert. To be insured? Our rules say we cannot fly without one.
 - a. No.
10. Is a representative from the BMFA qualified to answer insurance related questions?
 - a. Yes. But filling in an incident form to be passed to the insurers is the usual way.
11. Are there any circumstances where a pilot is not insured?
 - a. Yes if acting outside the 'normal lawful activity' of the BMFA
12. If there is an accident during a training session with or without a buddy box and there is conflict between instructor and student with both refusing to accept liability will the club be protected, i.e. the officers if someone is looking (the injured party) for some recompense?
 - a. Both (and the club) could be sued. If necessary a court would decide if rules had been broken.

It was pointed out that the answers to most of these and other questions asked could be found in the BMFA Members' handbook, BMFA News and the Web Site. I'm also going to reprint the extract from the BMFA bulletin that I originally put in the October 2003 newsletter, as it's highly relevant here.

INSURANCE CLAIMS PROCEDURE

Would all members and clubs please note that should an injured party (the third party) claim against a member who has caused them damage (the first party), then a claim has to be actually made! The accident notification form that we request completed by the first party, is **NOT** a claim form. It is simply a notification to the insurers of a **POSSIBLE** claim.

This procedure applies to all claims including a member to member claim. The fact that the third party may be a **BMFA** member is irrelevant as it is the first party's insurance cover which is being invoked.

Should the third party's damaged property be independently insured, e.g. a car, then we advise that the third party contacts their own Insurers to settle the claim on their behalf in exactly the same way if they had a road accident and they held the other party responsible.

Remember, the fact that the first party has submitted an accident report does not mean that a cheque is going to miraculously appear in the post for the third party. Insurance, no matter which type, simply does not work that way. The insurers will always want to satisfy themselves that the first party is indeed responsible for the accident so it is up to the third party to demonstrate why they hold the first party culpable and to state what they are claiming for, preferably in writing.

It is imperative that you get it right, particularly member to member claims, which will assist in the expedience of claims!

Flying Site Improvements

Car parking has always been a problem in winter – sometimes in previous years the car area has become almost a quagmire and club members have been seen pushing cars out amongst a shower of flying mud from the wheels! This year however the problem has largely gone, due to the laying of 20 tons of ‘scalpings’ (old road scrapings). Now we have a surface which has stayed solid. Thanks to all those members who turned out to help on a cold bright Saturday morning in November, including **Ivan Steerment** who used the farmer’s tractor instead of a spade!



Ivan is also responsible for the club’s latest site-improving acquisition, a petrol-driven strimmer. This was bought with the profits of the club raffle, which has been extremely successful in the last couple of years, thanks to the enthusiasm of **Ron Bebe** who organises it.

Pride and Ego – A lethal combination

There is no place for ego trips on aircraft flight decks. The strong urge to land at all costs at the nominated destination must be closely controlled. It takes a lot of guts, moral courage and a large amount of personal humility to recognise that bruised pride must be set aside after a bout of poor handling during the approach has created a potential emergency. If the approach flown turns to worms, it must be discontinued. “Get away from trouble” is the message, regardless of the fact that crew cars are parked just round the corner. Push the throttles wide open as the nose is rotated upwards to the target nose-up angle and carry out a missed approach. Loss of face...? What loss of face....? It is no more than just good and sensible airmanship. Having honestly admitted that on this occasion the aircraft is in no position to land safely, there is only one safe alternative, ... blow pride and do what must be done ... fly another approach.

The above is an extract from The Aerospace Professional, Flight Operations Group to which full acknowledgement is due.

When I read the paragraph, it immediately made some connections in my mind (yeah, I think I have one?) with respect to our own operations at Lower Wick. I appreciate that professional pilots are in a different situation being responsible for the safety of people's lives and multi million pound assets. However, the principles are the same; we want to land safely.

It's understandable after wobbling and pitching on final approach, then passing through turbulence near hedge or rhyne that you think “Oh, bother (?), let's get this ***** pig down anyway!” And there you are, an accident about to happen!

Of course we all misjudge our landings from time to time. We've all been there, the perfect approach that ends in landing short or long (in the hedge or rough grass). These comments are not about misjudgements but about responding to the increasingly large can of worms as your approach disintegrates into chaos. The well known pilots Wun Winglo, Toohi Dive and the brothers Wot Hej and O'That Hej are experts at this form of chaos.

Recognising that the approach is in a disastrous state is the first step in responding to the situation. Deciding to go round again is only a short step from there but is often not made because of the apparent ignominy of not getting it right first time! There is no shame in aborting your landing. Deciding to abort is a sign of increasing skill and maturity, something that we all should be encouraging.

The “get it down at all costs” syndrome is something I've been guilty of as much as anybody else. If you (or your helper) are not happy with the approach by the time you're over the threshold, don't do it! Throttle up, rotate and climb out! Do a circuit (or more than one) to settle down and fly another approach.

Happy Landings!

Robin Muir

Seen at the Field



Mustangs are always worth watching , and this large one belonging to **Rob Dickson** is no exception. From the Hangar 9 kit, with a Saito 180 4-stroke engine.



Fuel

Thanks to **Ron Bebe** and others the club has a supply of fuel available for purchase. The types available are:

- GX 5 £8.40
- GOGLO 5 £9.80
- HELIMIX 10 £13.40

Fuel is stored in the container. Please note that payment must be made by CASH or CHEQUE at the time the fuel is purchased. Payment should be made to the key holder who lets the member have the fuel and the cash cheque etc passed on to the Treasurer or a committee member.

Key holders:

Mike Barnett
Ron Bebe
Mike Ling
Robin Muir
Ivan Steerment
Pat Teakle

Sunset Times for 2006

As you all know, flying at Wick must stop 15 minutes before Sunset on any day (or 1745 on Sat & 1545 on Sun, if earlier). Here are the sunset times for this year, which are also posted on the notice board at the field. It is a condition of our planning permission for the flying field that the times are made available to all members in this way.

All times are GMT except between 0100 on the last Sunday in March and 0100 on the last Sunday in October when the times are BST (1 hour in advance of GMT).

| | | | | | |
|----------------|------|-----------------|------|------------------|------|
| JANUARY | | FEBRUARY | | MARCH | |
| 7 | 1621 | 4 | 1707 | 4 | 1757 |
| 14 | 1631 | 11 | 1720 | 11 | 1809 |
| 21 | 1642 | 18 | 1732 | 18 | 1821 |
| 28 | 1655 | 25 | 1745 | 25 | 1833 |
| APRIL | | MAY | | JUNE | |
| 1 | 1945 | 6 | 2042 | 3 | 2121 |
| 8 | 1956 | 13 | 2053 | 10 | 2127 |
| 15 | 2008 | 20 | 2104 | 17 | 2131 |
| 22 | 2020 | 27 | 2113 | 24 | 2132 |
| 29 | 2031 | | | | |
| JULY | | AUGUST | | SEPTEMBER | |
| 1 | 2131 | 5 | 2053 | 2 | 1956 |
| 8 | 2128 | 12 | 2040 | 9 | 1940 |
| 15 | 2122 | 19 | 2026 | 16 | 1924 |
| 22 | 2114 | 26 | 2012 | 23 | 1908 |
| 29 | 2104 | | | 30 | 1852 |
| OCTOBER | | NOVEMBER | | DECEMBER | |
| 7 | 1837 | 4 | 1640 | 2 | 1607 |
| 14 | 1821 | 11 | 1629 | 9 | 1604 |
| 21 | 1807 | 18 | 1619 | 16 | 1604 |
| 28 | 1753 | 25 | 1612 | 23 | 1607 |
| | | | | 30 | 1612 |

Electric Revolution

Two very different electric powered models.



Events

Forthcoming events this year:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Thursday 2 nd Feb 2006 8pm | Club meeting at the Ashcombe |
| Thursday 2 nd Mar 2006 8pm | Club meeting at the Ashcombe |
| Thursday 6 th Apr 2006 8pm | Club meeting at the Ashcombe |
| Thursday 4 th May 2006 8pm | Club meeting at the Ashcombe |

Club Meeting Venue



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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Thanks to **Steve O'Brien** 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.