

# From the Pits.

The Newsletter of the Weston Model Flying Club

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

July 2004

## Editorial

Safety has been a frequent theme in this newsletter in the past; we have several club safety officers, frequent safety warnings and perhaps some of you may think it's a bit overdone. But just to bring home the fact that safety really does matter, one of our new young members had the end of his thumb cut off by a propeller last month. It's rather hard to know what specific lessons can be learnt from this particular incident, after all "don't put your fingers in the propeller" is such basic advice that it's rather taken for granted. Hopefully, however, this will act as a reminder not to drop your guard and always be careful out there...



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## Club Meetings

The club meetings in June and July were held at the field as usual. On both occasions food was provided from a barbeque.

The August club meeting will be the last one of the summer to be held at the field. The occasion will, weather permitting, be an opportunity for a photo-shoot, so bring your camera along. We will also be trying to get as many models as possible into the shots, so bring as many different models as you can as well. As with the previous summer meetings this year refreshments, probably in the form of beer and sausages & beef burgers, will be provided again.

All this year's remaining meetings are shown below. Please come along and support them, particularly the October meeting when we have a guest speaker.

| Date          | Title                 | Subject                                      |
|---------------|-----------------------|--|
| 5th August    | "Meeting @ the field" | Bring all your models for a club photo shoot |
| 2nd September | "Film Night"          | Don't Miss it!                               |
| 7th October   | "Newton's third law"  | <b>Guest speaker</b> on Jets                 |
| 4th November  | A.G.M.                | Your club matters                            |
| 2nd December  | "Bring & buy"         | Pre Christmas clearout                       |

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## Web Site

Further recent improvements to the club web site (address at the top of the page) include the For Sale page where you can add your own For Sale items.

## Flying Site Improvements

Particular thanks this time go to **Ivan Steerment** who has been cutting the grass regularly, even using his own mower for a while when the club mower was in for service. Ivan also provided an impromptu and very welcome barbeque one Sunday in May on his own initiative.

The container has been painted at last, and is now the regulation shade of dark green. Thanks to **Mike Ling** and others for this.

Although we have no female club members at present, the lack of toilet facilities has occasionally been an embarrassment when wives or girlfriends have been present at barbeques etc. Now however we have a Porta-loo chemical toilet and tent available, both of which are kept in the container.

### Safety

The use of restraints is now universal within the club, which has been an excellent safety improvement. But note that, to be fully effective, you should make sure that the model is fully forward on the restraints and can't pull forward when the engine starts.

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## Hedge Cutting

Hedges have always been a thorny issue, pardon the pun. The farmer has hardly ever cut them, and last year a few club members spent several weeks cutting the hedge on the Eastern side of the field using chainsaws and loppers.

Recently however, the club has bought a petrol-powered hedge cutter, partly funded by a grant from the BMFA Western Area, which has made this task vastly easier. This year for example, the same job was done in less than 3 hours. The hedge cutter is kept in the container, but please note that for safety reasons it should only be used by agreement with the committee or authorised users.

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## Photos... and Trees... and Ladders...

More and more people just happen to have a camera to hand when something happens. **Mike Adams** was able to capture the evidence as our chairman **Mike Pope** tries out the ladder to retrieve his Gremlin from the big tree.

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## And More Photos...

New member **Jason Streeter** is a keen photographer and has taken a number of pictures of a Sunday gathering a couple of weeks ago. Jason uses a Canon 300D digital camera and the photos are of excellent quality. A couple of them can be seen here and there in this issue, and you can see the rest at <http://www.pbase.com/jstreeter/weston> if you have internet access.



## Casualties



**Mike Barnett's** big Cap232 didn't fare too well when the wing gave way in the air. Soft balsa and lightweight construction commonly used in these ARTF models is suspected as the cause; the break was just past the end of the ply dihedral brace.

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## The Maize Maze

You may have noticed that the field to the west of ours has been planted with maize this year. The plants are already 2-3 feet high, enough to completely hide any model which lands among them. Just recently it took a large group of members over half an hour to find a pylon racer which went down in there. The point is, of course, that since it's on the other side of the high hedge, you can't see whereabouts your model goes down. So for the rest of the summer you'd be advised to be more careful than usual to avoid landing in that field.



## Who Moved the Fence?

At the EGM in March we decided, as part of the new safety measures, to put a safety fence across the long grass between the flying patch and the pits area to prevent over-runs. The fence, from orange plastic and metal rod stakes, was duly purchased and installed in April. And that, we thought, was that. Just a couple of weeks later however, we turned up to find that the fence had been moved back to just in front of the ditch, and was now behind the pits, totally defeating the whole purpose. Intense speculation followed about who was responsible. The farmer? A disgruntled anonymous club member? The hitherto unknown Wick-St-Lawrence poltergeist? Sadly we shall probably never know, as no-one has owned up. My money's on the poltergeist...

## Acrowots

The Chris Foss designed Acrowot is one of the most popular sport planes around. I've had two and there are several others currently in the club. However, while its flying qualities are generally excellent, it does have one peculiar vice, in that it 'tucks under' when flying knife-edge and needs an amount of elevator to correct it. While this correction can be programmed into modern computer radios, it's not ideal. Recently I came across these ideas on the Internet on how to correct the Acrowot's behaviour. Rather too late for existing models without major surgery, but if you're contemplating a new one you might like to try them. I should point out, however, that I have no knowledge of whether these modifications actually work, they are merely passed on as suggestions. If you do try them (at your own risk) let us know what the results are.

### Main modifications

- reduce the dihedral by a tiny bit
- drop the tail so that you have 3/4 inch between current bottom and new top

### Secondary (optional) modifications

- enlarge the rudder by up to 3/4 inch at the bottom and 1/2 inch at the top
- reduce the tail chord by 3/4 inch at the root and add 1" to the span, including elevator

## More Acrowots

Talking of Acrowots, probably one of the best finished models in the club is this very pretty one from **Bernard Sutton** (built from the kit he won at the last Christmas raffle!)

Power is a Saito 56 4-stroke.



And by another tenuous link, here is the man himself, pictured just having passed his A-test on his birthday!

In front is one of Bernard's two Kamco Kadets.

## Lost in the Translation

Several years ago whilst working as an engineering officer in the merchant navy, the shipping company that I worked for had a policy of buying Japanese built ships, well built but all technical manuals etc were translated by a little Jap into a sort of English that took some considerable working out. For example one day whilst overhauling a large lump of machinery the technical manual called for a part to be “mantled”; after much scratching of heads wondering what this engineering term meant, somebody realised that it was simply the opposite of dismantle -- simple when you know.

You may be forgiven for wondering why I’m rambling on about marine engineering in a model-flying newsletter but I have just realised the same little Jap now works for Hirobo (model helicopter kit maker---info for plane flyers only) and has translated the instruction manual for them. Luckily the instructions are largely diagram based so it is possible to follow them.

Those of you who haven’t built a helicopter won’t know that the build instructions follow into flying instructions, lesson 4 for the Hirobo Scedu Evolution is how to hover nose in and that comes before trimming the heli.

There is also much valuable advice, the most interesting of which I note below:

1. Helicopters should not be operated by menstruating or pregnant women
2. Do not fly in crowded areas
3. Helicopters should not be operated by tired, sick or inebriated individuals
4. Wear shoes for a solid footing
5. Do not operate whilst seated or lying down.
6. It is harmful to drink the fuel or get it in the eyes.
7. Do not fly near another radio controlled “unit” on the same frequency
8. Before starting the engine make sure that you have no screws loose.

**Steve O’Brien**

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## Coming or Going?



You could be forgiven for doing a double-take as **Dan Phillips’** Alienator passes over from, err, left to right. The forward-swept foam model looks quite different to most.

## Sunday Flyers

I thought I would write a few lines to let the rest of the club know what the Sunday flyers have been up to.

### The Gremlin

In May I went to Sandown with a few club members, the weather was OK the company good and the show losing its appeal with few trade stands. Whilst wandering around I noticed a wing on the Traplet stand with what looked like a piece of square drainpipe for a fuselage. I enquired if the plan was available and sure enough it was, but not only that, the June edition of RC Model World had a feature on building and combat flying of the **Gremlin**. Money was exchanged and the Gremlin came to the South West.



I set to work building. Firstly off to see Pat with a set of MDF Templates, that's nearly it for the wing. Next carve up a piece of drain pipe, a piece of ply for the engine mount and assemble with radio gear. That was easy? Well nearly.

### Long Nose

The balance I found a bit of a problem; even with the radio gear being kept well forward it still needed loads of lead on the front. There was only one thing for it, the fuselage had to be lengthened by 50mm but the addition was worth it, the model now balances with no extra weight.

### Flying

With an LA 25 up front and a breezy Sunday it was off to the field to give it a go. The Gremlin drew some attention from the usual crowd, all of them eager to see the fun. The engine was started and out to the patch and with a bit of help the wing was let loose with a gentle under arm launch.



To my surprise it flew with remarkable stability only needing a bit of down trim and a gentle touch of the sticks as I had set up the model with too much control (I did not believe the plan), this was no excuse and the transmitter was passed along the line.

### The Verdict

The plane has been given the thumbs up, and there are now a number flying, in fact there were enough to get four up with streamers for a bit of combat practice on a Sunday afternoon in early July. The model has proved to be a versatile flyer, being able to handle almost any conditions.



### **Combat**

We are going to have a Combat Fun Day in September so make a point to attend the August meeting for more news, or keep an eye on the notice-board.

### **Meeting**

I hope to see you all at the August meeting as I will bring the Gremlin for anyone who wants to have a go, there will also be refreshments.

### **Mike Pope**

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## **And you thought the Titan was a bit big...**



Not really the type of model any of us are likely to fly at Wick, but I thought I'd include a couple of photos taken at the Large Model Association show at Cosford this year. The number of seriously big models continues to increase, as these two half-scale examples show.

## Flying League 2004

After a slow start with no April event, the 2004 league got under way in May with a timed flight with a slight difference, organised by **Mike Pope** and **Ian Armstrong**. Contestants had to do two flights, each with a minimum of two circuits, and aim for the same time for both flights. Surprisingly all the entries were very close, perhaps it's too easy! Winners were **Paul Lathall** and Ian Armstrong, both with time differences of only 2 seconds.

June saw a novel contest organised by **Steve O'Brien**, and using **Paul Lathall's** bungee-launched Zagi glider. No fewer than 16 club members took part in this one, making it the best attended event in recorded club history!

The winner was **Kevin Aldridge** with a time of 69 seconds, followed by **Mike Pope** and **Paul Lathall** with 62 seconds each. However the most entertaining flight was provided by **Bernard Sutton**, whose first attempt hit the ground before the stopwatch was even started, and ended a split-second later with the glider firmly wedged in the hedge. Bernard's second flight was much longer, at 3 seconds! All in all, this was a very successful and popular contest which everyone enjoyed.




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## Seen at the Field



**Mike O'Leary's** twin-rotor autogyro flies quite well, but one or even both rotors can stop in flight as the wing takes the lift, which makes flying rather interesting...

### Safety

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, getting your fingers caught in the propeller is really not a good idea...

When starting your engine, don't reach past the prop to undo the glowplug or adjust the needle valve. As soon as the engine starts, go round behind the model and do all further adjustment from there.

Remember that if your fingers touch the back of the prop they will be pushed back and you'll get a scrape or bruise. If they touch the front they could be pulled in and cut off.

## Readers Letters

Dear Sirs,

I would like to take this opportunity to express through your newsletter my sincere thanks to the members of what is obviously an extremely friendly club. Only last month, one of the other members was kind enough to let me fly his brand new plane, a 'Magic Stick' which he had painstakingly put together by himself. Unfortunately the plane suffered some damage when I became disoriented, but even then my friend was very gracious, making it clear that there was no rush to replace it. What marvellous people, I'm sure I will be very happy here. Thanks again everyone!

**PM, Weston.**

Dear Sirs,

As the member referred to in the previous letter, may I just say that it was a pleasure to be able to help out a beginner, this is really what the club spirit is all about. I look forward to my friend soon being able to fly by himself and being able to provide me with a replacement aircraft so that I can get back to flying again.

**AJ, Yatton.**

Dear Sirs,

Well of course I'm not exactly a beginner, I've been flying for some years, and naturally I will be providing a replacement as soon as I can find one at a suitable price.

**PM, Weston.**

Dear Sirs,

Not a beginner? He could have fooled me. After all the work I'd put into that plane, to have my masterpiece turned into confetti like that brought tears to my eyes. And I'm still waiting for a replacement.

**AJ, Yatton.**

Dear Sirs,

Masterpiece my arse. It was the biggest pile of crap I'd ever seen, I only flew it because nobody else would let me fly theirs. And there aren't any cheap ones on EBay at the moment.

**PM, Weston.**

Dear Sirs,

I totally refute the suggestion that my model was crap. I had slaved over that model for months, there was nothing on it that was anything less than perfection. Why doesn't he just go out and buy one at the local model shop?

**AJ, Yatton.**

Dear Sirs,

Perfection? The covering came off in the air because he'd not taken the backing film off, the engine fell out because the bulkhead wasn't glued in properly, and the wings folded because he'd not used the fibreglass tape as the instructions stipulated. The prices in the model shops are far too high for this heap of garbage, you can get a much better deal on EBay.

**PM, Weston.**

Dear Sirs,

What utter rubbish. He told me that he would replace it straight away and that money wasn't a problem.

**AJ, Yatton.**

Dear Sirs,

No I didn't.

**PM, Weston.**

Dear Sirs,

Yes he did. Skinflint.

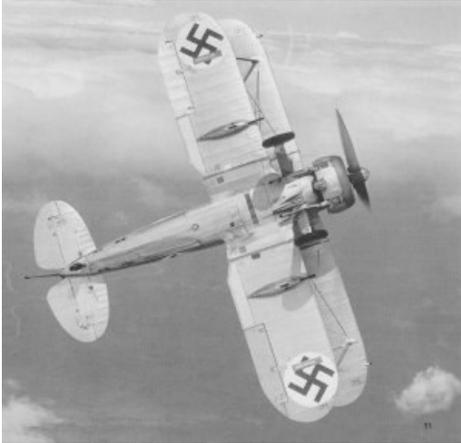
**AJ, Yatton.**

Dear Sirs,

Tosser.

**PM, Weston.**

## Know Your Aircraft

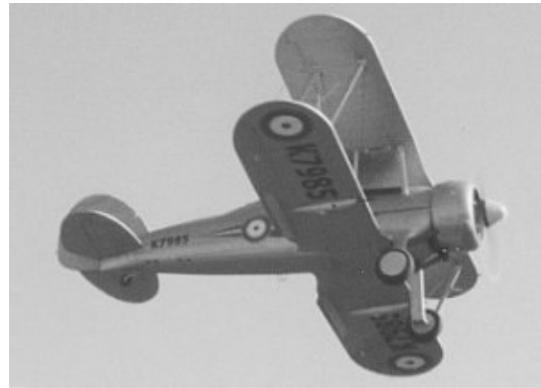
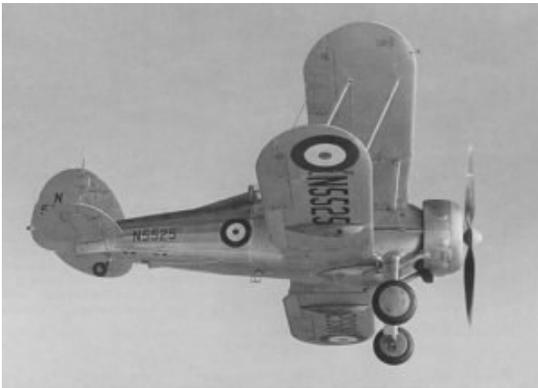


The plane pictured in the last issue was a Gloster Gladiator of the Latvian Air Force in 1935.

Hands up those who thought it was German? Well of course the Luftwaffe only used swastikas on the tail; the wing and fuselage markings were black crosses.

In the mid-1930s the swastika was just another symbol, common in northern Europe, and didn't have the Nazi connotations it had later. Hence both the Finnish and Latvian Air Forces had it for their markings; the former was light blue at 0° & 90° and the latter red at 45° as shown here.

## Spot the Model



Yet more Gladiators...One of these pictures is of a model (mine) and the other is a real Gladiator, photographed in 1939. Which is which? Not too difficult if you look closely. Answer next issue.

## For Sale

- ARTF Super Fly (low wing) with OS40 max. Flown approx ten times only. Ideal for first low wing. Radio needed. £65.
- MDS 28 with silencer - very reliable - genuine sale. Best offer accepted.

Please telephone 01278 641467

**Terry Norman**

## Events

Forthcoming events this year:

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2004 8pm  | Club meeting at the field           |
| Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2004        | Fun-Fly meeting (*)                 |
| Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sept 2004 8pm | Club meeting at the <b>Ashcombe</b> |
| Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2004       | Fun-Fly meeting (*)                 |
| Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2004 8pm  | Club meeting at the <b>Ashcombe</b> |
| Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2004 8pm  | Club meeting at the <b>Ashcombe</b> |

(\*) details to be confirmed

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## 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.

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## How to contact the Editor

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Thanks to **Steve O'Brien** & **Paul Lathall** 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.