

Editor – Andy Blackburn



Hemal Pandya with EFlite T-28...

Editorial

I seem to be spending more time than expected building and flying scale indoor stuff these days so my barometer for buying stuff seems to have been re-calibrated for kits that are only a few quid; however – is it just me, or are ARTFs getting more expensive to the point where you start to think that it's just not worth it? I looked at a couple of TopFlite ARTFs as something that I can get into the air quite quickly, but I'm just not paying £400 to £450 for a basic kit that won't be as good as something that I've built myself. So I've been looking at plan packs with laser-cut parts (e.g. some of the Traplet range, or Tony Nijhuis designs) and they're much more reasonable. I suppose I should just pick something and get on with it.

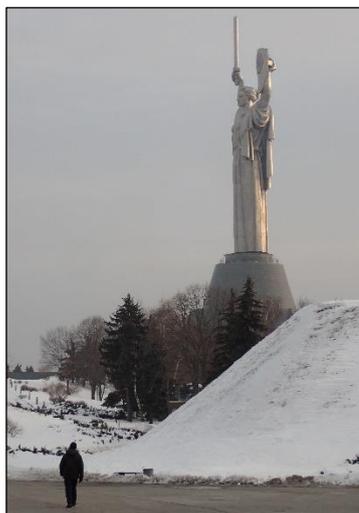
Having said all that, I am seriously tempted by at least one of Peter Murphy's models for sale – see page 8.

A Weekend in Chernobyl – Dave Orrells

As you all know, I'm over in Eastern Ukraine at the moment but during my last trip home a plan was hatched for Chairman Mat and my son Charlie, to make a quick visit to Kiev. The plan was for us all to visit Chernobyl, the site of the terrible nuclear accident in 1986.

Chernobyl is situated about a two hour drive north of Kiev, near to the border with Belarus. The whole area is still subject to a huge 30km exclusion area with checkpoints to deter access.

So, on Friday 17th February Mat and Charlie arrived via British Airways at Borispol Airport on the outskirts of Kiev. I had endured a 17 hour journey the day before to get from Luhansk to the capital the day before, no-one flies over east Ukraine anymore and the Luhansk airport has been destroyed during the war anyway.



We met on the Friday afternoon and visited a large park and museum that overlooked the city. This has got some Great Patriotic War (WW2 to us) weapons out on display. We wandered around and enjoyed the sights, this includes a huge statue of the Motherland, a huge silver statue of a lady holding a sword and a shield. This dwarfs the Statue of Liberty and stands some 90m tall. We then walked around Maidan Square, the scene of the demonstrations 3 years ago. We had, by chance chosen the 3rd anniversary of the demonstrations and there was a lot of security in evidence. The Square had a very heavy Police and Army presence, luckily, they ignored us.

On the Saturday morning we were picked up by a driver and taken to the first activity, shooting!



Charlie having a good time



Dave being relatively serious



Now look what you've done - someone has upset the Chairman...

We had booked a shooting experience and were taken to a gun club on the outskirts of Kiev. There, an English speaking instructor took us through shooting a 9mm handgun, an AK 47, a pump action shotgun, a Dragonov sniper rifle [Ooooh! Ed] and finally a side by side shotgun. All this was booked beforehand but we took the opportunity to pay for extra ammunition and all had another go with the AK 47 and pump action shotgun firing solid slugs.

On Saturday afternoon we visited the State Aviation Museum in Kiev, an outdoor display of Soviet planes on an old military airfield that is now both a museum and inner city airport. The planes mainly dated from the 60-90's, from when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union. There were some great planes on display, we were able to get a lot closer than we're used to in the UK.



Saturday night was spent in time honoured fashion, in a restaurant serving excellent food and beer, total bill for all of us was just over £30.



On Sunday morning we met and were welcomed aboard our new mini coach with SoloEast, the tour company taking us to Chernobyl. This was the company that sorted out the visit for Top Gear when they visited a few years ago. If it was good enough for the BBC, it was good enough for us.

After checking our passports, we were off on a 2 hour trip north, during which they played a documentary explaining how and why the disaster had happened.

At this time of year Ukraine was coming out from a warmish winter, so whilst there was snow everywhere, it wasn't too cold. Well, as we all were wearing long johns it wasn't too bad.



At the 30km mark we stopped at a checkpoint and had our passports checked by the armed Police guards. We then advanced to an abandoned village for a walkabout. Once the authorities had realised the severity of the disaster all villages inside the 30 km radius were either abandoned or knocked down. The occupants were

relocated and literally all buildings knocked down, bulldozed into a hole and covered over; this was because they had become contaminated during the accident and the subsequent fire which continued to spread the contamination for days and weeks afterwards. We then moved through the 10km checkpoint and towards the reactor site. This is now covered with the new

sarcophagus which is now being made airtight. Once so, robots and cranes will be used to dismantle the first concrete enclosure which is collapsing.

After a quick stop there, we moved onto Pripyat, the city where the workers used to live. This was abandoned three days after the accident, the occupants were told that they had three hours to pack but that they would be allowed back when it was safe.



As we all know, they never were allowed back and the city has been left to rot ever since. We were allowed to wander around the city and taken to various buildings for a quick look around. The buildings have been stripped of some things over the last 30 years but are an eerie place to visit.

We visited the iconic amusement park with its ferris wheel and dodgem cars and took the obligatory snaps. The whole city has small trees growing everywhere, slowly reclaiming the city back to nature.

We then visited a huge, over the horizon early warning radar station that the Soviets had tried to make work before satellites took over. This was a huge aerial system built to detect American missile launches. It was built close to Chernobyl as it required huge amounts of power to work. At the time of the disaster there were 4 reactors working and they were building 4 more with the plan to go onto 12 in total. All work was abandoned on the other part built reactors, the workers just leaving everything in situ and walking off the site.

On our way home we stopped and had to go through both checkpoints again with detectors looking to see if we'd picked up any containments, luckily we hadn't! The snow actually helped, it's the soil that contains the contamination now and we walked on the snow on top of the soil. Over the years the contaminated particles have been washed by rain off the trees, roads and

buildings and into the soil. We arrived back in Kiev safe and sound around 8 pm, we had received less radiation than a transatlantic flight so we were slightly disappointed not to be glowing in the dark.

We had a quick walk around on the Monday morning and left for the flight home to Heathrow having enjoyed a quick and cheap trip to Kiev.

WLMAC Parish Notices

Training Now Also on Thursdays

In addition to the normal Saturday morning training sessions, now that we're on British Summer Time Mat will be conducting flight training from 5pm onwards on Thursday evenings. Normal flying can of course continue whilst training is in progress.

Improvements to the Clubhouse



Mike Marman has installed some, um, "dangly bits".



We've also got a new wing mirror; presumably, this is so that you can see when someone is sneaking up to steal your sandwiches...



Charlie Orrells with the new Aero-loop pole thing for recovering recalcitrant models from trees.

New WLMAC Achievement Awards

Following on from the recent revamp of the BMFA's Achievement Scheme and the launch of the new website <http://achievements.bmfa.org/>, WLMAC will also be instigating some new schemes to recognise our club's facilities and the particular skillsets of the members; the first will be available from the start of the month and we hope many of you will participate. The WLMAC "A" is to promote the use of our spectacular runway, which thanks to the efforts at the last work-party is in excellent condition.



It doesn't get any better than this...

What you will need to do to achieve the award is to demonstrate your ability to land reliably on the Astro-turf; the examiner will need to see a minimum of 5 successful landings on the Astro-turf out of 3 declared attempts, without running on or landing short. Slight bouncing will be acceptable but your model will - of course - need to stay the right way up; you can't land and then tip it on its nose to avoid going into the long grass, in other words.



The WLMAC "A"chievement



"A"S3X - It makes no difference!

We will be arranging a series of test sessions, and if successful you will receive a badge that can be displayed on your flying attire or flight-box. AS3X and other gyro users will also be catered for, although the award will be granted to their receiver and will therefore be a smaller version. Please email the chairman to register your interest, he can then contact the appropriate people to make sure you get tested as soon as possible.

Impromptu Work Party



Mike Pugh and Mike Marman formed an impromptu work party to replace the buffer padding on the model benches



All done. Vote of thanks to the Mikes, please...

Events

Date	Event	Location	Description
Thursday, 13 April	Club meeting	Battle of Britain Club	"Drone" racing
Thursday, 11 May	Club meeting	Battle of Britain Club	Chuck Glider competition
Saturday, 10 June	BMFA Scale Training	Flying Field	BMFA Scale flying training day - anyone can turn up and fly
Sunday, 11 June	BMFA Scale heat	Flying Field	Heat for BMFA scale flying competition. Flying approx 10:30 onwards
Wednesday, 14 June	Field meeting	Harefield	BBQ and Electric Flying
Sunday, 02 July	Family Fun Day	Harefield	Our Annual Scale Event
Sunday, 09 July	Reserve date only for scale event in case of bad weather	Harefield	Reserve date Family Fun Day