



HET F-20, weighs about 1.5 kg and flies really well on 4s4000 – but so it should with 900+ Watts. I've not flown it much recently because it really needs a catapult and ramp for launching, but I've not got round to making one. If anyone else is interested in EDF, please get in touch... (Andy Blackburn)

Parish Notices

Please Stop Upsetting The Chairman

Look, we've all done it – it's one of the first flights of the year, if we're honest we're a little bit rusty, and we decide we're going to fly something that might *not* exactly be in trim. So we stride out to the Astroturf and, without thinking too much about what's about to happen, we take off.

And we instantly find that we have a problem, because not only is it way out of trim but it's not really under full control. We daren't walk back to the pilot's box because we now have our hands full, and when we look back to the model we find that it's *already* gone behind the no-fly line and a committee member or – horror of horrors – The Chairman himself is watching, so there will be Serious Consequences (which might include being grounded).

And on top of all that, landing will be tricky because we're standing right where we want to land, and we daren't move because we have our hands full...

When this happens, Chairman Mat gets really quite upset. And I mean really, properly upset. This is usually a bit uncomfortable for those of us on the Committee, so **please don't fly a model from the Astroturf unless you're prepared to plant it before it crosses the no-fly line.**

April Fool...

Somewhere in this document there are at least three plausible statements that are **not** true; at least one of them is hidden. Anyone who thinks they have identified one can email me with the false statement and an explanation of how they found it and if correct, I have clearance from Chairman Mat to award a small prize (don't get excited, it's not worth much) to the first three respondents who correctly identify at least one.

WLMAC Meeting 8th March – Roy Lanning

We had a second well attended and enjoyable evening at the golf club. The first evening with food saw 11 members tucking into a variety of options including dessert – next month's menu will be completely new, more details later.

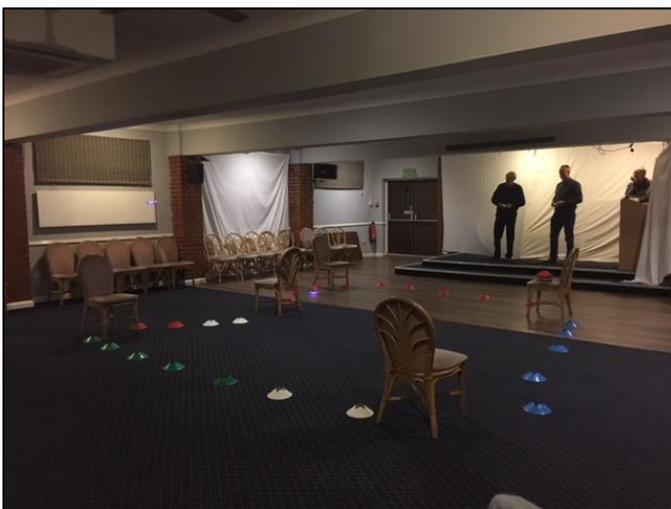


The membership having a feed. Normally this wouldn't be anything remarkable but everyone is using the cutlery correctly. Having said that, one member has failed to remove his headgear before dinner. Tut, tut.



Drone Racing about to start – the course is laid with coloured disks and you have to go around the backs of the chairs.

The drone racing went well and with Mike Marman on official duty and yours truly in the pits with the batteries. All went well with the final being contested between Mark Pressling and John Herman, with Mark being the eventual winner.



Racing well underway. There are two drones in this picture.



Roy Lanning (right) handing the prize to Mark Pressling

Charlie Orrells Has Gone Solo

I bring news that prospective airline pilot Charlie Orrells has passed ground school and has soloed; here's what we know in pictures:



Charlie after going solo...



...and having the traditional post-solo dunking in the pool

First Flight of the Year – Andy Blackburn

I had my first flight of the year the other day (13th March), I hadn't flown since about December so expected to be a bit off-tune, and to be honest it was all over the place; I only just kept it straight on takeoff, the first square circuit was more of a triangle, the practice approaches were far, far too fast and the ailerons felt so twitchy that I was having to constantly correct.

After a few practice landings I had a cup of coffee which seemed to do the trick and – thankfully – subsequent flights were back to normal. I guess most people will have had a similar experience and our flying site is a bit tight (cars and people quite close to the flight line) and we have to be careful, so I thought it might be a good idea to run through the usual checklist of things to do to avoid embarrassment or expense...



This was the patch on the morning of Sunday 11th March – it's all a bit waterlogged but the Astroturf is OK, apparently it cleared up a lot later and a good day was had by all (photo by Tamas Garai)

Checklist of Things to Do To Avoid Embarrassment or Expense

In no particular order:

Safety

- Try and pick an easy-to-fly, trimmed model for the first few flights of the year!
- But if it's a new model, get someone to check it.
- Ask for help – it'll make your life easier.
- Be prepared (and plan) to ditch the model *before* it crosses the no-fly line; if it crosses the no-fly line, there will be **no** excuses – it **will** be your fault!

Pilot

- Pick an easy model for the first few flights of the year.
- Carry out the BMFA “SMART” and “SWEETS” checks before take-off. Look in your handbook or online, on pages 42 and 45.

- Remind yourself where the no-fly boundaries are (see WLMAC Field Plan). The Yellow areas are *only* to be used for take offs, landings and low passes if the wind direction requires this (they can also be used for practicing taking off and landing). At no time should they be used for general flying.
- Ask for help for the first flight of the year, or if you have a new model.

Batteries

- Flight batteries – sounds obvious, but if you've left too much or too little charge in your flight batteries over the winter, you might have problems getting them to take or hold a charge; ideally, they should have been stored at about 3.85-3.9 volts/cell. Might not be a bad idea to monitor them carefully on the first charge of the year, and use a battery checker just before committing aviation.
- Receiver battery – same goes here, really, without so much of a risk of fire when charging unless you're using a LiPo, in which case I can only assume that you like living on the edge. NiMh batteries can suddenly fail to take a charge after storage, Eneloops seem to be much better, in fact I've never had one fail yet. Use a battery checker.
- Glow plug batteries – if you're using a single-cell 1.2 volt igniter, these need to be in good condition and charged to the absolute max, otherwise there's just not enough voltage to make the plug glow because it's expecting between 1.5 and 2 volts. If your engine won't start or is difficult to start, this is the prime suspect. 2 volt cells are much, much better, if a little less cool.
- Transmitter batteries – Please make sure that your transmitter is fully charged, because we don't want an Incident.

Model

- Pick an easy one for the first few flights!
- If the model has been stored in an un-heated garage over the winter, please check for black wire corrosion and replace the switch harness if there is any doubt at all; they don't cost much, and it might save the model. Give it/them the usual pre-flight once-over and fix anything that looks the least bit dodgy (loose hinges, lifting film, etc...).
- Make sure your prop is still in good condition (no nicks or discolouration) because if it breaks it might hit you. If it hits me I shall be extremely upset and you're going to have some explaining to do, and what happens if it hits the chairman doesn't bear thinking about.
- Before flight, actually check everything to do with the model and make sure all is in good order, as per the BMFA pre-season and pre-flight checks – see pages 44 and 45 of the BMFA handbook.

Letters

The attached letter from Dave Orrells (our OSCE man in The Ukraine) was recently received by The Chairman and has been graciously forwarded to the WLMAC Editorial Offices:

Mat,

It's Tuesday 27th Feb and I've got a day off, I've had my hair cut, been to Spar and now I've got the afternoon to kill, I thought I'd write an update for the Newsletter. This should kill an hour or two, the object of the exercise.

The sun is shining brightly outside, the sky is blue, it's early afternoon here and the temperature gauge is showing -14 C outside. It means a walk to the shops needs a big jumper, a big coat, a scarf, a hat and gloves. The pavements here are covered in a thick layer of pure ice, then snow on top, this makes walking hazardous. The situation here is largely unchanged, fighting is mainly confined to the night time, only a few soldiers die each week, civilians get caught in the shelling and set off the mines that litter the front line. In early February the Christmas ceasefire finally broke down and there was an upsurge in fighting, this too has reduced. Most of the fighting continues to be in the Donetsk Peoples Republic but I'm in Luhansk Peoples Republic which has always been the quieter of the two breakaway areas.

I returned to the UK in early February for a refresher course entitled Hostile Environment Training; this is a compulsory course for any Brit who is sent abroad by the Foreign Office. The advantage for me was that it got me back to the UK so I took a week's leave to reward myself for the long journey. I managed two days at the flying field in brilliant sunshine and temperature measured in positive numbers rather than negative.

We're in the last throes of winter here, the UK is suffering the Beast from the East as I type.

At Christmas the Mission bought us some new toys, two DJI Phantoms and two DJI Inspire 2's. However, one of these Inspires was shot down when I was back in the UK, they managed to get the remains back so that's been despatched off for repair. It was missing a motor that had been shot off and then suffered damage to the camera and gimbal from the subsequent return to earth. There are checks and balances designed to stop this sort of thing happening, but these fail regularly. Both sides have signed an agreement not to fly anything at all, not even small UAV's. Add in the MH17 tragedy from July 2014 and nothing is seen in the air over here, I mean nothing at all too. We are allowed to fly our UAV's but then both sides fly their own UAV's illegally. We call both sides top brass and tell them when and where we're flying from, giving them 30 minutes notice - in most cases, though, this is not enough time to tell every single soldier in the area. It's supposed to be enough time to alert their troops but not enough time to hide their weapons (in theory anyway) so, the average soldier stood in a concrete bunker, freezing his bits off, sees a

UAV. He knows it isn't his sides UAV because he'd be told by his lot. He also knows that the purpose of the other side looking at his positions is to target their artillery at him meaning he's in for a disturbed night to best. It's an easy choice, he shoots at the thing.

Our Phantom is often shot at but it's a small target, the Inspire 2 is a fair bit bigger. I've only flown the Inspire a few times but it is incredibly easy to fly. Take your fingers off the controls and it just hangs stationary in the air. It flies about 3 or 4 km away from us at 100m altitude. It has two batteries that incorporate a self-heating system, meaning DJI claim its good down to -20C. However, without any heating at all we still get similar performance from the Phantom. Luckily there is no such thing as Beyond Line of Sight over here, no DJI-imposed 'no go' zones either.

Both sides have signed an agreement where they've agreed to a buffer zone where larger weapons are banned, we look for these banned weapons. The smaller things like BMP 1 and 2's are not subject to any restriction so are everywhere. These are smaller 'battlefield taxi's' designed to transport 6-8 troops around with a smallish gun for protection.



This is a BMP 1 with a 73mm cannon, these soldiers were coming to meet us so we could tell them we're about to fly.

BMP 1's and 2's are ten a penny over here. We look for tanks, artillery and rocket systems. They know that we look for them, as do the other side, so they hide them. The Foreign Office won't let me go out on patrol at night because it's too dangerous. Most of the other Western Governments make this restriction too, the Eastern Governments don't seem to care. However, the OSCE has to work with what it gets and therefore we don't patrol at night, hence the fighting at night. If the OSCE changed its policy the Foreign Office would withdraw me as it's too dangerous. They'd then lose the Americans, Canadians, Germans and all the Nordic countries too. They'd lose half their workforce in a stroke and the money we pay I'm sure!



Me and a "legal" tank, it's a T-64 and is now a memorial to the soldiers who died.

A normal day for me is to get to work around 8 am, attend a safety and security briefing about yesterday, overnight and today's events and then leave on patrol around 9.30 am. We fly 3 to 5 times and then return to the office around 2pm. We then spend a couple of hours writing reports about what we've done and if we found anything. Charge the batteries for tomorrow and go home around 5 pm. I live in a hotel (don't imagine The Grove when I say hotel, it ain't that grand) and I'm free to move around the city but there is an 11 pm curfew for everyone in the city.

Not just us, everyone who lives here. Restaurants start to close around 9pm as the staff have got to clean up, shut down and get home by 11pm too.

The Mission is incredibly bureaucratic, we have to complete endless reports most of which I'm sure will never see the light of day again.



The Inspire 2 coming into land on 26/2/2018 at Dovge. The landing gear comes down automatically when it sees the ground

Right, that's it, I've had enough. Read it, digest it and send it to Andy for publication.

David

Events

Date	Event	Location	Description
Thursday 12 April	Club meeting	Uxbridge Golf Club	Skills Evening. Demos by Dave Chinery and Mathew
Thursday 10 May	Club meeting	Uxbridge Golf Club	Chuck Glider competition
Saturday 9 June	BMFA Scale practice/tuition	Harefield	Competitors practice for tomorrow's competition, also tuition for members with a scale model who want to see what it's like.
Sunday 10 June	BMFA Scale competition + BBQ	Harefield	BMFA Scale Competition with BBQ for members and competitors. Spectators welcome, normal flying resumes when competition finishes at about 3pm.
Wednesday 13 June	Field meeting	Harefield	BBQ and Electric Flying
Sunday 1 July	Family Fun Day	Harefield	Scale Day and Fun Day
Sunday 8 July	Family Fun Day reserve date	Harefield	(Only if rained off the previous week)
Wednesday, 11 July	Field Meeting	Harefield	BBQ and Electric Flying
Wednesday, 08 August	Field Meeting	Harefield	BBQ and Electric Flying