



NEWSLETTER

Seasons Greetings

Editor : Bob Young
DECEMBER 03

REDUCED SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2004 MEMBERSHIP

The club membership subscription for 2004 is £65 (Juniors £32.50), a reduction of £10 (£5) on last year's figure. BMFA membership has been set at £23 for adults and £13 for juniors, the same as last year. So when you come to the **Annual General Meeting on Thursday evening, December 11th, at the Battle of Britain Club**, please bring a cheque or the EXACT AMOUNT in cash, to speed the collection process. If your BMFA membership is obtained elsewhere, please bring your membership card and/or a note of your membership number. Anyone who joined the BMFA during the year and possesses a pink credit note should bring that as well. Or you may send your cheque, payable to the West London MAC, to treasurer Peter Nielsen at 176, Cherry Tree Road, Beaconsfield, HP9 1BA. Telephone 01494 675716. There will be drink and food on the house as usual. The Treasurer's financial statement, to be delivered at the meeting, will show a good increase in reserves which has allowed the committee to reduce the subscription this year.

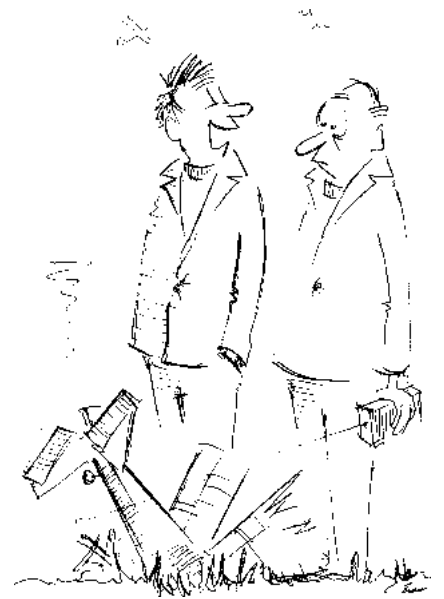
MILITARY HELICOPTER HAZARD WARNING

The BMFA have recently issued the following warning about possible interference from military helicopters connected with the visit of President Bush. In view of the position of our field, this is drawn to your attention in case there are similar situations in the future.

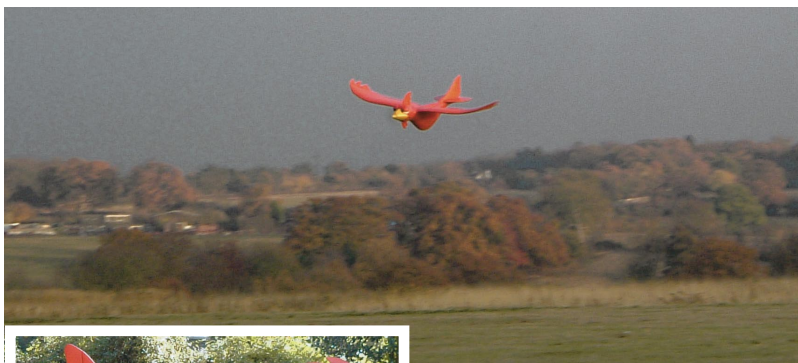
"Due to President Bush's visit to the UK there has been an increased level of military activity particularly in the London area.

The BMFA has received a report of low flying US forces' helicopters which not only presented an airmiss hazard but are suspected to have caused two RC model aircraft to crash as a result of interference. This would be the case if the helicopters were transmitting high powered signals or using broadband electronic counter measure equipment, which is likely."

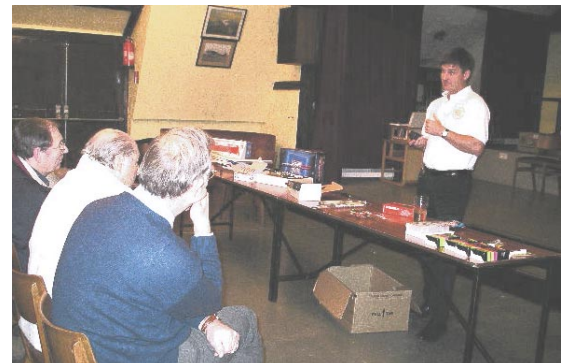
Consequently, all members and clubs are advised of the potential interference and airmiss hazards and that on sighting any low flying military aircraft, particularly helicopters, to land and stop flying until the full size aircraft have departed the area.



"Didn't get the BMFA Warning in time then?"



Tony Taylor's latest acquisition seen recently at the field, is designed to make sure everyone is awake and paying attention.



David Wilsher shows the latest products and having just returned from Model jet flying in Florida he also talked about the international flying scene.



A picture from our archives

MODEL DEATH INQUEST REPORT

A 14-year-old girl died after being struck by an out of control, poorly-built model plane, an inquest was told in November.

Tara Lipscombe, a pupil at Wilmington Girls' Grammar in Kent, died in April after the plane, with a wing span of almost 5ft, hit her on the head as she walked with relatives across Dartford Heath.

Mike Goldby, representing the British Model Flying Association, which presented an accident report to the inquest, said the model plane had an unreliable and sub-standard remote control battery.

He added: "The build standard of the aircraft was very poor and an unsuitable adhesive had been used to attach the rudder and fin which subsequently broke away, causing the accident.

An investigation revealed there had been several past near-misses. In particular, in March 2003, a concerned mother contacted Dartford council after an aircraft crashed within feet of her small child." The inquest was told, though, that the district council had not carried out any risk assessment after the near-miss in March, a month before Tara died.

Alan Ives, who was flying the plane on the day of the accident, said the model had started to break up in mid-flight and he had then lost control of it. Roger Pamplin, who built the plane, said he considered it soundly constructed.

SAFETY INITIATIVE FOR 2004

The recent inquest report on the tragic death of a young girl in Kent reminds us yet again of the dangers inherent in our hobby.

For some time, concern has been voiced by various individuals, including a BMFA Chief Examiner, about the safety risk inherent in our pits layout at Harefield when the wind direction is from the south or south west. The pits area in question is that triangular space between the club-house and the container that extends northward towards the flightline.

As most will know, other clubs routinely move their flight lines and pits areas to accommodate changing wind direction and thus reduce risk to their members, but the permanent setting of our clubhouse, car park and work tables limits our flexibility in this important respect.

For several months WLMAC committee members have been observing and analysing this situation with a view to a solution, and in that time have observed a number of heart-stopping near-misses involving wild take-offs over the container and clubhouse. Action is clearly needed before a serious accident occurs.

Conscious that a workable solution will only be effective with the cooperation of the membership, after long discussion the committee has decided to put the following proposal to WLMAC members:-

"For reasons of safety, the western pits area (as defined above) will be deemed out of bounds when the wind direction is from the south".

At this stage, this is merely a proposal and we actively seek members' views as to whether there is a more workable solution. Please consider the facts, as appropriate discuss them with others, and make your view known to a committee member in person, by phone or by email. To those who would be reluctant to vacate their habitual "setting up" pitch in the western pits area we remind you that the larger pits area at the other end of the clubhouse has lately been extended and now can accommodate many more than habitually use it.

It is planned that the results of this informal survey, will be revealed in the January newsletter with a view to implementing the majority-agreed solution in good time for the 2004 flying season.