



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2011

Editor: Michael Sullivan

HAREFIELD TO GET THREE TIMES MORE ASTRO TURF AREA THAN PLANNED.

A school's donation to WLMAC of the best part of a discarded Astro Turf hockey pitch will enable the first laying of a rabbit hole-free landing and take off area to be three times the size of the strip originally planned for our field. The first laying will be some 1000 square metres, with the possibility of doubling even that.

Members at December's AGM approved of a scheme to purchase 300 square metres of new Astro Turf at a cost of £8000. But since then Mat Dawson's contact with the Football Foundation identified a school in Orpington, Kent, that would be happy for WLMAC to take away an entire Astro Turf hockey pitch, due to be replaced with Astro Turf tough enough to take football and rugby.

The heavy rolls of artificial grass will become available in April if building work at the school progresses as planned. Removing existing, rabbit hole-scarred turf, levelling the soil and laying the Astro Turf at Harefield will involve the purchase of 150 tons of sand, but experienced builders Mat Dawson and Roger Darvell have the machinery and the skills to tackle the job. The outline of the originally planned, eight metre-wide Astro Turf strip, has been marked out on the site with ground-level flags for some time. But flyers have already been finding that any substantial crosswind makes it difficult to stick to the designated area on take-off or land on it tidily without running off the edges. The 1000 square metre area will amount to a multi-directional field, with the prospect of expanding it still further.



Above: Crosswind take-offs and landings — found to be tricky on the marked out, eight metre wide strip originally planned.

The next monthly meeting at the BATTLE OF BRITAIN CLUB is on THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH AT 8—0 P.M.

ARTHUR CREIGHTON, Former airline captain and Fellow of the Royal Institute of Navigation will talk about his aviation experiences during the Cold War.

Come to the meeting and discuss the exciting new Astro Turf plans with your fellow members and the committee.

ALMOST READY TO FLY? WHAT'S THAT, THEN?

Walk into any model aeroplane shop these days and you'll be confronted by a monster pile of colourful boxes. Almost-ready-to-fly kits are now of such quality that traditional balsabashers seem to be on the decline. But among WLMAC's ranks of talented members there is one who is marching bravely in the opposite direction—marketing flying model kits that cater for the builders who get a kick out of assembling hundreds of ply and balsa components into a symphony of traditional, built-up construction. Long time club member Roger Moffat (above right) played a big part in the technology of hooking up CAD (computer aided design) to a computerised routing machine that can cut small components from a wide variety of materials, to tolerances that are measured in microns. His "Sequoia" machine's needle-like routing heads have been used in the manufacture of aerospace components, film sets and special effects equipment but his unique, slot-together-and-glue model aircraft kits, originally used to promote the machines, have taken off. Roger's machine is turning out tiny plywood and balsa parts that come together with stunning accuracy. His latest design, the Greenfinch 234, is reviewed in several model aircraft magazines, including "RC Model World" and the editor of RCM&E is building a Greenfinch 234 in preparation for a kit review.



Make no mistake about it—the Sequoia series is not intended for ARFT freaks itching to get airborne five minutes after opening the box. The Greenfinch has over 900 parts and a pair of tweezers are an essential part of the toolkit required to assemble it. But there is no shortage of devoted customers, happy to part with £336 for the beautifully packed kit. They are designed to be flown with electric or IC power and full radio control but at least one fastidious customer intends to place his masterpiece, uncovered, in a glass display box in his home!



Left: Roger watches his high tech router at work on a sheet of carefully-selected balsa. Above: The layout on the computer screen is reproduced on the balsa to tolerances measured in microns. The router lifts for intervals of few millimetres around each component, providing "tabs" that hold them in place until the builder releases them with a scalpel.

