

Chairman Mat involved in huge mid-air!

Windsock vandalised!

Site fly-tipped during BBQ!

Loads of new planes!

All this and more, read on.



Reliable source witness to huge mid-air!

What? I hear you cry. Our Chairman, possibly the club's second best pilot, involved in a mid-air? Surely this has to be some sort of mistake? Sadly, not. According to a reliable source the incident occurred during a warbird tail-chase. At some point it appears likely that our Chairman, piloting a P-51, failed to give the awesome, yet anonymous, P-47 pilot, sufficient room to maintain flying speed. Rather than take avoiding action and risk stalling, the handsome stranger elected to generate the necessary space by using his prop to cut off the entire rudder and half the vertical stab from CM's P-51. Now that's some quick thinking. You probably wouldn't have been able to do that!

Fortunately, being a moderately accomplished aviator, CM was able to land the plane without further incident while the P-47 provided 'top cover' keeping any bandits off what was left of the Mustang's shredded 'six'. What a magnificent gesture. You couldn't have done that either.



Obviously, whilst wishing to shun the limelight and the adulation of many, the identity of the top-pilot, or TP as we shall refer to him henceforth, is known to a select few. Should that information leak out to the wider membership I propose he be awarded a selection of medals for outstanding airmanship at this year's AGM. In the interim I have suggested he be awarded a purse of monies from club funds. A worthy recommendation which I'm sure you'll all endorse.

Repaired within days the P-51 is once more combat ready.

Windsock vandalised!

You would think that with the windsock positioned right on the very edge of the no-fly zone it ought to be pretty safe. You'd be wrong. It, or the cone it sits in, gets walloped with alarming regularity. In fact I've overheard some people say that when certain club members are in the pilot's box you're possible safer lying in the middle of the Astro-turf than you are standing next to the sock! No, don't try either.

This month, two of the more amusing windsock violations involve a brace of the club's taller, more frequent flyers. The first to, as we say, 'kiss the carbon pole' was none other than mister low pass himself, Jason Schofield. During one of his high speed, low level runs he managed to catch the pole a glancing blow which spun his Spit onto the rockery. According to Jason the damage was 'light'.

Meanwhile Mike 'Too Tall' Faul missed the pole entirely but showed just how much damage a spinning prop can inflict by shredding all but three of the streamers from the end of the windsock. As a result he has been labelled by some as a 'clumsy sock cutter'. Bit harsh that.



Jason's lightly damaged Spitfire

Fly-tipping or a flying tip?

Following the August BBQ, the amount of mess various members left in their wake was epic. Obviously, as there's no way we would ever leave the site looking like a cross between a fly-tip and a waste transfer station, those of us still there at the end had little choice but to tidy it all away. Quite simply, that is not fair. You make a mess, clear it up. Put your chair back in the hut. Put your rubbish in the bin. If you're one of the good guys, and I know most of you are, then encourage, or shame, the naughty ones to follow your example. Do it now while there is still a BBQ to go to!

New Stuff

What a bumper month for new stuff at the field. E-Flite in particular did rather well at WLMAC in August. New models include Tony Bloomfield's Prometheus bi-plane, Roger Darvel's large-scale T-28 and Pete Williamson's Spitfire. Frank DS has a new 74-inch 3DHS Extra which with in excess of 3kw burst power has more under-the-hood than my rebuilt, and around 2.5-kilo heavier, 88-inch Slipstream SBach. Andy Blackburn invested in an FMS 109, but I'm not sure that still exists. In the heli section there's an additional monster in the form of yet another 700-size Roban scale model. This one's another Roger D offering and as soon as Colin Martin finishes his AS350 that'll bring the total to four. Not a bad turnout for a fixed-wing club.

I've heard there are a few new and s/h glow models making the odd appearance at the field but as I can't believe anyone, other than the owner, would be interested in them I've not wasted my time taking any pictures.



Who could not like this?



3DHS Extra, simply stunning



With nothing to give scale this could be a sub one-metre kit. It isn't. That's a 22-inch prop on the sharp end.



Just a couple from Roger D's fleet. The Roban 700 AS350 looks impressive from any angle but low and slow is best. Budd from Quick UK put in a short test flight at the field before handing the keys over to Roger. In the same paint scheme as CM's Bell 429, it'd be great to see them both in the sky at the same time.

Meanwhile Roger's T-28 and mine have already flown together. I know of another club member who has one of these still in the box. So any day now there could be three.

Cut it out

Last autumn the club spent a lump of money on hiring two very large tractors to eradicate the brambles below the main flight path and cut the hedges down to the gate. While it's hoped the hedge won't need doing for at least another year the outfield has needed a trim for a while. True, the brambles may not have returned but the stuff that's grown in its place, whist less prickly, is equally impenetrable. However, by the time you read this that will be a thing of the past as yet another tractor's booked for the start of September.

What's more as we're scheduling at least two outfield cuts next year no more will you be looking for downed models among the six-foot tall weeds. Unless, of course, you elect to crash just that bit further out.

Droning on

As Dave Whiteley gets to grips with all the features on his DJI Phantom quad the quality of the pictures he turns out just get better, as does his ability to accurately hold position on-station. As a result we, and I say 'we' as he lets me work the camera, are at the point of going into the model finding business. Sadly, due to the crap weather, and the resultant reduction in flying, business has not been brisk. We do have an on-going project, to pick up on once the outfield has been cut, but as no one's too sure which field that model is in success is not guaranteed.

Colin Martin however, was much luckier. He knew roughly where he'd lost his Mustang yet despite it being well within 100 metres of the mown grass he'd been unable to locate it. In despair he called in the D-team and within seconds of Dave taking off, I was taking pictures of it.



Having provided an exact location Colin thrashed his way to the undamaged P-51 and it was back in the air within 48-hours. Obviously, we can't guarantee a prize every time but this is the third plane that's been spotted by drone and we do work for peanuts. Or biscuits.

Training

With a large number of trainees on the club books, and with that number certain to grow next year, we're set to massively overhaul our training programme. Starting early October and we're yet to set the exact date, training will take place on Saturday mornings from 10am to 1pm.

Aware that might not suit everyone Matt has also opted to run a session every Thursday, also from the start of October, from 4-7pm until we shift the clocks to back BST. So not very long then.

Why the change? Well we wanted trainees to know for sure when instructors were going to be at the field. We also need more instructors and if we're going to get people interested in that role they need to know what they're signing up for.

Obviously, trainees can still arrange to fly with an instructor at a time that suits the pair of them but from October no longer is it advisable to turn up at the field unannounced and hope for the best. All of the trainees will be contacted by Matt via e-mail once the scheme's in place and normal flying will remain unaffected during all training sessions.

If you'd like to help out with the training, then we'd like to hear from you. You don't need to do every session, I certainly won't be, and even once a month would help. Nor do you have to do the full three hours. Remember, somebody took the trouble to teach you, you might just like to pass that favour on.

Buddy-Box change

With immediate effect no novice will be allowed to fly unless on a buddy-box. However, that rule may be relaxed at the point where their instructor deems them ready to take their test. Obviously, even at this stage in their training they must be supervised each and every time they fly. If the instructor on any given day, which may well not be the one who felt they were ready to take their test, has any concerns with the student's ability then they must insist on using a buddy-box.

What a lot of rubbish!

Bins in public places can be something of a double edged sword. Positioned close to takeaway food shops they go a very long way to keeping the streets clean. Elsewhere, including out club hut, they become 'muck magnets' encouraging people to dump rubbish they could quite easily have taken home. To make matters worse at our field the rubbish you leave has to be taken away by a fellow club member. What I propose is that we collectively adopt a policy of 'you haul it in, you can haul it out'. Take your food wrappers home, recycle your drinks cans and under no circumstances use the bin to dump modelling materials or bits of crash damage.

Let the punishment fit the crime

If the club's litter louts fail to respond to a friendly warning, then clearly they need to be punished. In the event of 'serial littering', say two incidents of failing to remove or bin their own rubbish in a 24-month period, the proposal I'm about to put before the committee is a three-week suspension followed immediately by a lifetime ban. A tough, no nonsense stance is clearly

what's needed in such instances. However Mike 'Softy' Faul is of the opinion that the level of punishment proposed is just too harsh. On reflection I must admit that my youthful exuberance may have got the better of me and I have decided to moderate my proposal by reducing the suspension to just one week. Obviously the follow-on lifetime ban remains and I have simplified the appeals procedure by removing it.

Looking ahead

Loads to look forward to starting Sun 11th Sept when the BMFA are holding a scale competition at our field. The following Weds, the 14th, is the last club BBQ for 2016. The very next weekend, Sun 18th, we've all been invited to the Wycombe club's fly-in while towards the end of the month we're invited to the Watford Wayfarers club night. Expect further club e-mail reminders with more details on all the above events.

And Finally

At our August BBQ one of our members managed to pile in his brand new BF109 on take-off. What he could have done was claimed sun-spot activity, poor alignment with Uranus or any number of radio probs. He didn't do any of that and has decided to come clean in the hope you can learn from his mistake. A gutsy move made all the more so with no attempt at anonymity. However I am going to help him out in that regard by changing his first name and thus rendering his true identity impossible to ascertain.

Over to you then, Angus Blackburn.

I'm not really into foamies. I had a Multiplex Acromaster several years ago and have acquired a couple of smaller foamies since. But I've always liked the look of the larger FMS Warbirds. Particularly the desert camouflage 109F. I have six or seven Li-Po's that would fit and so eventually ordered one from my nearest shop, Mantua Models in Windsor.

Once assembled, everything that could be checked without running the motor under load was checked. It needed ballast to get the C of G in the right place, lateral balance wasn't too far out, control throws set, the prop and spinner were carefully balanced on a magnetic balancer and I was careful to never plug in the LiPo indoors with the prop attached.

Anyway, I turned up with my new 109 at the August BBQ evening, assembled it, then went to stand in line to monitor the progress of my sausage and burger. Eventually, stuffed to the gunnels, I enlisted the services of Frank Dalby-Smith to do a 6-axis range check, during which all the flight controls were checked. We then did a wattmeter check (55 amps) and attempted some mental arithmetic to work out what the timer should be set to. After a couple of minutes arguing about whether it was the number of ma/hours or amp-minutes that mattered, I settled on 4 minutes.

So, time to commit aviation. I took the model in one hand and the Tx in the other and marched out to the crowded pilot's box. I didn't want to rush so I waited whilst the guys currently in the process of launching got themselves sorted out, shouted "on the patch", walked out, positioned the model and returned to the pilot's box. I think I shouted "taking off" but my memory is slightly traumatized by what happened next. No sooner had the wheels lifted, there was a very slight roll to the right, so my fingers applied a bit of left aileron. The roll got worse, so we had a bit more, it then accelerated into a half-roll to the right and ended upside-down about half-way down the strip.

You guessed it; I'd managed to take-off with the ailerons reversed. I've been flying power models since about 1984 and I have never, ever done that before.

How on earth did I manage that? Someone asked "did you check the ailerons" and of course I said "yes", because I had, at home. However, in my rush to stuff my face at the BBQ I had failed to check the model properly (including all the basic control checks) when it was first assembled at the field. And being anxious not to get in anyone's way I didn't put the thing in front of me and do a final control check from the rear of the model before going back to the pilot's box.

I'd checked the controls at home with the wing separated from the fuselage, just connected to the receiver and battery, and had ensured that with "left" stick the left aileron went up, and vice-versa for right.

Unfortunately, the wing was facing me at the time so the "left" aileron was actually on the starboard wing...

Obviously, I would never make such a basic mistake. And if I had, and I haven't, there's no way you lot would be reading about it. So you'll have to take my word when I say it's never happened to me. Is that clear? Good. Meanwhile, if you can't learn from Angus' misfortune then at some point you will experience a very sick feeling in the pit of your stomach bought about by the infamous 'death-roll on take-off'. Or so I've been told. I wouldn't know. How could I?