WLMAC Newsletter Jan 2017

Editor- Andy Blackburn

Tony Parrott, Peter Williamson and Jason Schofield having a bit of low-pass fun (Mat Dawson photo)

Not Quite Sure What Happened Here

Well, actually, with hindsight, I can now see where I went wrong – I answered the phone, and from that point on my fate was sealed; I dimly remember Mat saying "Tony's stepping down as newsletter editor, do you know anyone who might be able to do it?" and then someone said "Well, I suppose I could give it a go" and after a few seconds I realised that it was me…

Training days

Club Training will resume in January, weather permitting. Turn-out for the last few training days has been a bit patchy – if you want to learn how to fly, you can't do it in front of a screen - you have to actually turn up! Training in on Saturdays between 10:00 and 1:00.

Trainers are Mat Dawson, Tony Parrott, Mike Pugh, or if you're really unlucky, Me (when the weather warms up, of course – I have a Doctor's note for inclement Winter conditions). Contact Mat or Tony for details.

2016 AGM Highlights

The AGM: Members Reluctantly Come to Order (Andy B photo)

New committee member Mike Faul (Andy B photo)

Mike Marman is also a new committee member (Andy B photo)

The Committee was re-elected, and a vote of thanks to Mathew and the committee for their continued work in making the club what it is today was proposed by Leon, on behalf of the members.

Relations with SITA are ongoing and our lease is continuing; we have just paid the rent for the 1st year of our 5 year term. There has been some speculation over people appearing unannounced, although most of it appears to have been groundless – see below for further details. Club Fees for the year 2017 had again been kept the same, and it's intended that they will remain the same for the next four years.

Events

The Family Fun day format was adopted for 2017 and following the success of the 2016 event, WLMAC is intending to host a BMFA Scale heat again in 2017.

Club Nights

Club nights will continue in the existing Format except the Vapour round the pole event has been replaced by Drone racing in 2017.

Other Matters

There are no major changes to the rules or constitution. The meeting noted the sad news of the loss of two of our members, Bill & David.

Solar Panels

Tony Parrott and Phil Snowden have had a look at the Solar Panel situation, and it seems that the batteries are completely flat. We've had them for – what – a couple of years and they might be due for replacement as they tend to get deep discharged. They've been taken away for cycling and a bit of TLC, but in the meantime Mat has installed an Under-Voltage Protection Device – basically, it switches off the lights when the voltage gets too low and at that point the only solution is to put out the Solar Panel to get the voltage back above the cut-off point.

This is Mat's installation of the Under-Voltage Protection device. He admits that he might not have read the instructions (Mat Dawson photo).

This is where the Solar Panel needs to be placed (Mat Dawson photo)…

IC Engines for Electric Flyers

Rossi R15 – 0.7 BHP at 25,000 RPM from 2.5 cc on straight fuel, circa 1973.

As some members may have noticed, there appears to be a trend for new flyers who have already learned to fly on electric - because, basically, that's the default setting these days - to consider dabbling in the world of Internal Combustion (two evocative words that speak of hidden promise and potential excitement); some well-known electrickery flyers have even been seen sidling furtively up to Chairman Mat when they think no-one is looking, and asking if he knows where they can get a good four stroke. At least, I *think* that's what he said…

And I can see why; here are a few of the inherent advantages of I.C.

- Noise. Oh yes, Noise. Tiger Moths are noisy. Spitfires are noisy. Real planes are noisy.
- Smoke. Glorious clouds and trails of white smoke.
- Smell. Real planes smell, proper planes smell. You come home smelling like a Coal Miner, a (Steam) Engine driver or an Engineer. Not a florist.
- Fuel. You can fly all day with a few pints of fuel, no one hour recharge between flights with the associated risk of setting your house/car/shed/garage alight…

So in the spirit of public service, I thought I'd write a quick health and safety primer for those electric flyers who might be thinking of trying I.C.

Installation

One thing that you won't be accustomed to is the amount of vibration that is generated by an internal combustion engine; this is quite normal and is nothing to worry about, just use nylock nuts (although real men use threadlock) and all will be well. And don't forget the fuel proofer - some ARTFs have entirely porous firewalls and if they're not given a good coating of proper fuel proofer (or finishing resin) the whole front-end can easily disintegrate if you have to put it down in a hurry in the long grass - that's how my Topflite AT-6 met its maker.

Starting

Always make sure that the model is properly restrained, preferably on the model stand directly in front of your own vehicle so that the beneficial exhaust residue has a chance to coat your car properly so that the effects of rain, snow and salt are reduced; the idea that exhaust residue is in any way harmful to car paintwork is surely a falsehood put about by those wishing to discredit the Church of Internal Combustion, and in any case it's demonstrably less harmful than someone flying their foamy electric P-51 into one's car roof...

If you *must* hand-start your engine (owners of Laser engines often do this just to show off, which is understandable, I suppose) then you should always use a finger protector or a chicken stick; if the prop catches your finger it won't continue slicing through skin, tendon and bone like some Schwarzenegger-esque Terminator in quite the same lethal way the way that an electric motor backed by a 6 cell LiPo will, but there will certainly be blood and you'll probably still need a trip to A&E. Unless it's a small engine, in which case it will hurt and hopping from one foot to the other with some very bad language will probably suffice.

*PAW 19. A right little s*d, in my view*

I bought my first chicken finger many, many years ago after getting a smart rap over the knuckles from a PAW 19 Diesel turning an 8x6 in a Warlord, although to be fair it wasn't run-in. But to this day I still approach PAWs of any size with a healthy degree of wariness.

On the whole, then, it's usually easier to use an electric starter (I can see Chairman Mat nodding approvingly); but do make sure that you can turn the motor over first because if you try to use an electric starter on an IC engine that has a hydraulic lock, it'll usually bend the con rod. Or so I'm told. And anyway, it was a long time ago…

Once this splendid mechanical reciprocating device has started, you may find that all the noise, smoke and unaccustomed excitement causes you to forget what to do next - this is quite normal and is nothing to worry about, and it's why we always recommend that you have a helper.

Tuning

I see some people fiddling with the needle valve on every flight, but once it's had the first flight of the day you don't usually need to touch it unless atmospheric conditions change, or unless you want to *look* as though you're extracting the last possible ounce of power – however I appreciate that the look of the thing is important to some members, so I shall try not to be judgemental. Basically, all you need to do is:

a) Find maximum power revs by closing the needle valve a few clicks at a time (**wait** for revs to stabilise for a few seconds) until it stops getting faster or starts to sag (in which case, smartly open it half a turn and try again), then;
b) Open the needle valve until it drops about 300 revs (500 if it's in a cowl) and **wait** for revs to stabilise for a few seconds, then;
c) Get your helper to do a nose-up test at full power. If he/she succeeds in hanging on to it and the engine continues to run without slowing down, you're good to go. You can, of course, do a nose-up test yourself but there's always the chance of getting blood and gore everywhere and some of it might splash onto my new jeans, so please do be careful.

On the Patch

You may have to raise your voice to make yourself heard over the glorious sound of your new four-stroke (or, if you're living on the edge, a two-stroke), but don't let this distract you from doing all the usual control and safety checks. In particular, you ought to be accommodating to any of your fellow (electric) flyers who may be struggling to make it back to the patch on the last few electrons after a few minutes flying.

Flying

Once you've taken off, the continuing reciprocating heartbeat of a nicely-running four stroke can be mesmerising but you'll probably need to get used to the continuing existential concern that the engine could well stop running at any moment; this is quite normal and is nothing to worry about, although it does add a soupcon of additional excitement to every flight and to be fair, they don't stop that often unless you've made a right mess of the installation. But there's always a nagging thought running around the back of your head that it *could* stop, which is one reason for the heightened sense of awareness that one sometimes experiences when flying IC. And you will get better at forced landings.

Flight Time

You may find yourself automatically setting up for a landing after 3 or 4 minutes, but I assure you that this is entirely un-necessary; by all means have a practice landing if it makes you feel better, but I.C. models will usually fly for quite a while (15-18 minutes, some of them) so just relax and luxuriate in the unaccustomed freedom. Whilst this means that accumulating flight time is a lot easier, you may find that your take-offs and landing will suffer because you don't get nearly as much practice.

Landing and Post-Flight

Landing an I.C. model is no different to landing an electric one, other than the attractive banging and popping of a high-performance four-stroke at idle; I know several people who have more than one approach just so that they can listen to the reciprocating mechanical music. When you finally get the thing down, you may find that your hands are shaking a bit and the grass might well look greener, the sun brighter, the birds are singing louder and you may find that all your senses are heightened; this is quite normal and is nothing to worry about.

However, you will also find that the model is, for want of a better term, a bit oily. This is quite normal and is nothing to worry about but I'm afraid there's nothing for it, you're going to have to clean it. You can't expect all that excitement to come for free...

Security and SITA

We've had another instance of people getting into the site and blocking the gate so that we can't get in without going to find them so that they can move their car; in spite of anything they might say, it seems that these people are nothing to do with SITA (and it doesn't matter who they say they know), although they may have done work for SITA in the past.

The bottom line is that anyone who is trying to get into the site who *isn't* accompanied by a SITA employee (who will know the code) are not on an official visit and under no circumstances whatsoever should we tell them what the code is, or allow them to see the code before it's scrambled. Also, vehicles should never be allowed in – we don't want fly tippers (or worse) on the site. Call Mat if there are any problems.

Help!

I haven't the time or inclination to write much for the newsletter (on account of being congenitally lazy; I have some pills for it but I don't take them because of the side-effects) so please send some stuff (photos of a build, letters of complaint, etc.) that we can publish; I'd particularly like some good, sharp photos that we can use on the title page. Don't worry about spelling or stuff like that, I'll sort all that out.

And Finally…

Mat has come up with the idea of using some thermoplastic yellow tape to make a "No Parking" area in front of the gates (chevrons, etc.), which can be installed at the next work-party using a blow-lamp or industrial hot-air gun or something similar. Since this is obviously a prime job, we've decided that it will go to the person who either a) submits the best photo/letter/article to the newsletter, or failing that, b) supplies the Chairman with a sufficiently, um, "generous" fiscal inducement. For club funds, obviously.