



A BMFA Affiliated Club

## ***BFRCMS NEWSLETTER*** ***(The 'Flyer' September 2010)***

Dear Members,

Welcome to the latest edition of the BFRCMS 'Flyer'. In this issue we'll cover some info on lipos, an update on the jet lads on tour and I'll let you know about the indoor events planned for this year's winter season

### **LOVE YOUR LIPOS (John Higgins)**

So, you have been converted to the joys of electric flight. You have realised that you can nip out with your electric model and have half a dozen flights whilst your fellows are messing about with burnt out glow plugs, flat starter batteries and blocked carbs. You can even go flying in your ordinary clothes and not go home reeking of oil.

The joys do not end with convenience, either. Modern electric set-ups are in most ways superior to the traditional glow-powered arrangement. Electric models can have more power than one might reasonably need, they can swing big props and they fly for a good length of time. The weight of motor plus battery is, in many cases, less than the weight of an equivalent glow motor plus fuel. Developments in technology have given us powerful, light motors and the magical Lipo battery. It is this latter bit of wizardry I now wish to focus on.

Lipos are not cheap, but provided that you buy the right ones and look after them properly they will give you long and faithful service. I don't want to "tell granny how to suck eggs" and I'm sure that many of you will have your own "care plan for Lipos" in operation but here are a few dos and don'ts. These are mainly accumulated wisdom and I claim no authorship to many of them... however, they make sound common sense and have been shown to maximise the life of Lipo batteries.

#### **The dos:**

- Always use a charger with a proper Lipo charging programme and charge at 1C.
- Always balance the packs when charging.
- Try to limit the discharge rate to 60% of the stated "C" rating. This makes sense as a 20C pack run at 20C would discharge in 3 minutes!
- Aim to limit discharge to 80% of stated capacity or less. Monitor what you put back into the battery when you recharge it.



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- Use a timer when you fly so that you keep to the 80% recommendation. If you run a pack below 3.0v per cell on load you will do it no favours, run it down to 2.5v per cell and you will damage it.
- Make sure that there is some air flow over the pack when it is in use in the model. This is good practice and makes us feel that we are doing something to ease the strain on the poor little battery. Personally, I am not convinced that the heat developed in the heart of a pack can conduct to the surface of the pack and be dissipated by forced convection in the time of a flight – especially with larger packs.
- Keep your packs warm in winter! Let the batteries have a good soak for 12 hours in a warm room before taking them to the flying field. In winter I put a pop bottle full of hot water in my battery case and wrap the batteries in bubble wrap. High discharge rates and low temperatures will damage the health of your packs.
- Always **measure** everything (current, cell voltages, flight times etc.), **guess** nothing.

#### The don'ts:

- Anything other than the above!

Fly safely, have fun.

John Higgins.

## BFRCMS Jets on Tour

For the past 2 years I've been involved with a motley crew (Big Dave, Harold, Jason, Zack, Tank Dave) from our club taking part in a number of the Large Model Association public events throughout the country. It all started with my first turbine powered jet, a modified Mick Reaves Super Reaper that you may have seen at the field.

Having flown in a number of public displays in my youth, it had been a longstanding ambition of mine to fly at one of the major modelling shows. Towards the end of May in 2009 I achieved my LMA proficiency and duly started to apply for slots at a number of LMA events over the summer 2009. The plan was to fly at the closer Longhorsley, Southport, Cosford, Woodvale and Rufforth events as a minimum.

As this would be my first season at the shows I had one major problem, it's compulsory to have a helper at these events, not just to help restrain models but also to act as spotter while you're flying. Now my wife is a little too scared of the jet, so I recruited the support of one infamous 'Tank' Dave. Some may say that this could be considered to have been a somewhat risky strategy, but when you get used to being the subject of his quick wit and your head gets around his strange culinary practices, he was definitely the best choice.



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I saw 2009 as my training year for such events, getting to know who's who in the LMA world, working out how to make sure I get a flight and instilling some confidence in the regulars that I can actually fly safely. I think it's fair to say I made an impression, if not always the right one!

My very first event with the LMA was in May at Longhorsley in Northumberland. This was my first introduction into just how prepared you need to be, if only to make sure you get your allocated slot. The turnaround on the flight line goes at quite a pace when the weather is good and everyone wants to fly. The day turned out to be a cracker. This is when I discovered that our field is pretty damn smooth compared to Longhorsley. I ran into problems with getting the Reaper back on the deck, the nose just wouldn't stop bouncing back into the air at even the slightest hint of a bump, culminating in a rather ungracious flapping effect until it eventually slowed down enough.

Between events the undercarriage problem was fixed with some extra bracing and by moving it back about 25mm. Numerous test flights at the field proved this to be a far better configuration. Things came to an abrupt halt, however, when we joined the more informal Southport event supported by the LMA. Disaster struck as I throttled up into the first quadrant of a loop. I noticed a large flame shooting out the back of the model just as a young lad in the crowd behind shouted "look dad, that one's got an afterburner!". The model was landed quickly, still on fire, and we managed to get the flames quickly, but there was still some minor structural damage. Turns out that the temperature sensor's ability to detect changes quickly enough had reduced to the point where the engine management system kept demanding more fuel. i.e. it flooded and ignited!



This couldn't have happened at a worse time as the one event I had set my heart on, Cosford, was just 2 weeks later and it was clear that I wouldn't get a chance of repairing it on time.

Cosford came and went with me acting as support for Big Dave and Jason. Woodvale 2009 was the first time I really felt comfortable with a reliable model and a bit of confidence. Now some would say that it's not unusual for me to be caught going too fast, however, this time it was off road with no rules to break and I could only grin as I was politely asked to slow down a bit by the marshals. Apparently the Reaper is a bit faster than they expected. I've significantly strengthened the original kit but most people only look at the 38 pounds of thrust in a 19 pound model!

Rufforth and Hucknall turned out to be superb events towards the latter half of 2009 with no mishaps and a lot of fun had by all.





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The 2010 season saw a distinct change in tack by the Blackpool crew. Whether they knew it or not there was more of an intent to behave and act as a team rather than just a group of individuals. Everyone got involved in making sure that the machine ran smoothly, even the wives!

This was all helped by the arrival of two new models, the Grumman Panthers from Harold Dowbekin and Dave Swarbrick. These models have a habit of stealing the show wherever they fly, and quite rightly so. Seeing them fly together for the first time was one of this year's highlights for me and has encouraged me to plan building a scale jet over the winter.

This year Jason and I also plucked up the courage to try some synchronised flying. Now this is hard enough at the best of time but borrowing the jets from Harold and Dave (Tsunami and Boomerang) just added to the pressure. It's early days, but we were encouraged by the reception we received when we tried it for the first time at Woodvale. Face to face manoeuvres at speeds in excess of 100 mph certainly heighten the senses. Again it's the team that makes the difference, as this would not have been possible without our spotters, Zack and Tank Dave, adapting to supplying an almost constant stream of positioning information in our ears as we fly the schedule.

Our LMA exploits ended on an immense high with more flights over the weekend at Rufforth than we would ever have hoped for. Personally I got 10 flights in when I only expected a maximum of 4. There's just one event left this season at Hucknall, but I'm already looking forward to the 2011 season.





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## Club Archives

I'm starting to build up a fairly extensive archive of photographs for the club, all of which are available from the gallery on the website. In most instances, the photographs on the site are of reduced quality to make sure that the site isn't too slow.

I keep the full resolution images as part of an electronic store of club documentation. If any members would like full resolution images sent to them by email then please email me via the webmaster links on the website.

## What's happening in Committee then?

There will be a few empty places on the committee for the AGM this year, particularly as Geoff Brown has indicated that he will be stepping down from the treasurer post this year. To be fair, Geoff told us from the start that he would only take the role for 2 years and he's done a great job of keeping us on track. Even in these austere times the club is still on plan to make the target budget for the field lease renewal. Clearly Geoff's tight hold of the purse strings, sometimes not far short of downright fanatical, is the way to go to make sure we survive the recession. Many thanks to Geoff and whoever takes his place has a hard act to follow.

Jason Reid is also standing down from his position as membership secretary. Jason has done a fantastic job over the years of dealing with both the club membership and with the BMFA insurance for those who decide to request it via the club. Once again many thanks to Jason for all his hard work. Fortunately Jason has decided that he would like to look for another position on the committee, yet to be determined.

If anyone is interested in joining the committee or discuss the work involved in these duties, please contact Geoff, Jason or any of the other committee members.

## Event Calendar

Details of the up and coming events are as follows:-

- 6<sup>th</sup> October Indoor glider event at Tennis Club (Glenn Block)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> November Informal bring a model night at Tennis Club
- 6<sup>th</sup> November Bonfire night at Weeton Field
- 1<sup>st</sup> of December AGM at Tennis Club
- 15<sup>th</sup> of December Hot Pot and Quiz at Tennis Club





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## 6th October Indoor glider competition

The first indoor meeting of the season will include a glider building and flying competition.

Each guest or team will be given an equal length of balsa, a cutting board, a straight edge, some glue and a knife. There will be a nominal charge for materials, approx. £1.

- Any design of glider can be used and there will also be several designs available on the night to use if needed.
- Competitors will have 1 hour to build and trim you glider after which we will time your models flight.
- Longest timed flight wins.
- Judge's decision is final!

This competition is open to members and invited guests (i.e. other clubs from around the area), so we need to make sure that the BFRCMS gets well represented!

## Bonfire Night

We intend that the Society should celebrate bonfire night in the customary fashion at the Weeton field on the evening of Saturday 6th of November.

However, due to the more restrictive financial conditions which apply because of reduced membership following the "Credit Crunch" a few changes in the organisation of the night have been suggested in order to conserve Society funds:-

Food will be, as in previous years, by Jacob's Join and we hope members will contribute as generously as they have in the past. Fireworks are increasingly expensive items and therefore this year we are proposing that members either donate a sum to Mark Conlin for him to purchase and organise the display fireworks, or bring along their own fireworks on the night. In the interests of Health and Safety all fireworks, no matter how they are furnished, will be set off by Mark as the nominated Committee representative.

Provision of wood for the bonfire is a difficult logistical task and the committee are seeking the cooperation of any members who can help with this task. If you have suitable bonfire wood you wish to donate, please contact any member of the committee so that we can coordinate its delivery to site by the 6th. Please make sure that only suitable material is



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provided, no metal, plastic, nails, etc. There will be children helping to feed the fire and we need to make it as safe as possible.

We want to make Bonfire Night an enjoyable, inclusive family evening as it has been in the past and the Committee would be grateful for any help you can give in terms of finance or personal time in the production of this year's event.

## Field and Facilities

### New Gents Toilet Facilities

Some of you may have noticed the new gents toilet facilities at the back of the steel container. This is vastly improved from the al fresco situation we previously endured with full surround modesty panel and even some self cleaning plumbing to keep the facility more acceptable. Please keep the facilities as you would wish to find them. Many thanks go to Jason and Tank Dave or their efforts.

Earlier this year the portable toilet in the club hut went missing. Unfortunately the culprit hasn't been found but it must have been someone with the code to get into the hut. A new facility has been purchased. If you do find yourself in a position where you need to use this facility then please make that extra effort and offer to empty it now and then.

### Roof Repairs

The club hut roof was repaired over the summer after reports of a leak. We also took the opportunity to improve the tarpaulin anchoring points for the decking roof frame and bought a new larger tarp. This should make setting up for events much easier in the future. Once again Jason and Tank Dave were instrumental in getting this done.

## WEBSITE

Owing to lack of usage, the club forum has been discontinued. The link from the club website has been hidden though any direct links to the forum will be available for a time while I work out how to remove it from the hosting service. If members feel particularly strongly about keeping this then it will be recoverable until the end of October. There would need to be a groundswell of support for this!



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## A VIEW FROM THE HEDGE (By Will Sparrow)

*"Another instalment from will - if a bit later than planned! Sorry, my fault Ed."*

**7<sup>th</sup> November:** Autumn is a strange time for us little birds; yes, there is plenty of food on twig and branch (and we do need to fatten ourselves up for the winter), but other changes are afoot. We have lost our urges. I can't even remember what hens are for; a feeling that the hens seem only too willing to reciprocate. There is definitely a nip in the air around the hedge these days.

I was just settling on the twig for the night when I was roused from the arms of Morpheus by activity over by the club hut. A fire was being lit and people were thronging beneath festive lights, some were giggling and drinking red liquid, others were helping themselves to food. Now fully awake, I determined to fly over and have a look-see. I know it was dark, and I am well aware that I don't have a night rating, but I reasoned that the hedgerow committee might not notice a small brown bird on a dark night. Perched on the corner of the hut, (a view from the edge, perhaps?) unobserved by the humanity below, I witnessed the annual rite of bonfire night. I really enjoyed the fireworks and seeing the kiddies of all sizes frolicking by the fire but I had to return to the hedge before the end of the festivities because the fumes from the generator were making me a little woozy. Back on the twig safe and sound...or so I thought.

"Did you know that you need a night rating to be flying at this time?" boomed a dark-brown voice behind me.

My blood ran cold. I froze on my twig. The committee had got me at last; I would be grounded for weeks. I unfroze when the voice of the committee changed to the cheeky chirp of Jim Sparrow (no relation). Having a lark he was. I was in two minds about giving him a sharp peck, but then remembered that he was 5 grams heavier than I. Common sense prevailed over anger, and peace, once again, descended on the hedgerow.

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## Contributing to the Flyer

As ever, if you have any ideas for what you would like to see in the Flyer then drop me an email, a text or a letter and I'll see what I can do. All ideas will be considered.

That's all for now folks, apologies for taking so long getting this edition out!

Happy Landings!

Mark Conlin