

# Firebirds Model Club

*Newsletter* March 2014

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## **Committee News**

If you were a member last year and haven't yet re-joined, then March is your last chance to re-join and be guaranteed a place. After that, all applicants will be treated as 'new members' and will require committee approval.

## **Meeting Venue**

We have been using The Royal British Legion at Netley as our meeting venue for many years now but this will soon come to an end. Our next meeting (the Bring & Buy on March 20<sup>th</sup>) will be the club's last meeting at the Legion. After that we will meet in Hamble Club. The address for which is:

Beaulieu Road  
Hamble  
Southampton  
Hampshire  
SO31 4JL

When I tried to look up the address I wondered if I was getting the right place because when driving there you don't use (or even notice) Beaulieu road. The entrance to the club is on Hamble Lane, only a short distance from a pub called The Harrier.

## **Flying Site News**

The PADMAC club are now in a position to be self-sufficient so we will not be sharing their site as hoped. The search for a second site continues. All are invited to pitch in and help. Maybe you can see a potential candidate field on your way to work, or maybe you know someone who is a landowner. If so please let the committee know (contact details on last page).

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Some of the biggest challenges to finding a suitable site are:

1. Residential Housing - finding a field that is far enough away from residential areas is difficult, as we know, it only takes one house to be too close.
2. Other clubs nearby – The BMFA recommends a 2 mile separation between clubs unless a 35MHz frequency sharing plan is negotiated.
3. Horses – these pesky animals make good money for land owners. Usually more per acre than we can afford to pay.
4. Solar energy – Also makes good money and are starting to crop up all over the place. Even flying near one of these places is likely to get vetoed due to the potential for very expensive crashes.

## **February Club Night**

Many thanks to Mike Watts who gave a very interesting talk about his light aircraft overhaul business, specifically related to the engine overhaul work he does. It was astounding to see what he can discover when people ask him to overhaul an engine because “it seems to have lost a bit of power”.

By way of example this photo shows a good valve (on the right) juxtaposed with a valve and its guide (on the left) that was removed from an engine he overhauled. The lower part of the valve guide and the entire valve seat had broken up and been flushed out of the exhaust. The engine was operated for some time after this occurred. The valve return spring did its job but with no valve seat, the valve was being slammed into opening around where the seat had been. This caused the valve to “dish” over and was close to being snapped off its stem.



He gave a number of more worrying examples of engines near their demise. Given this and his previous talk, I would say the next time you think about flying in a vintage aircraft, make sure it's one of Mike's.

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## Down at the Field

This section details what's been going on at our currently swampy flying site. Being a regular hours working dude, I am aware that my reports in this section will typically only include weekend action at our flying site. If you are able to fly mid-week and would like to submit any pictures and/or stories, they would be very welcome.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Feb was the first calm and sunny day after all those storms. I couldn't make it due to work commitments but a few souls ventured down the field. Thanks to Justin for providing a report of the day's proceedings.



The field was still boggy but not too bad. Pete brought his latest plane for its maiden flight, a beautifully made jet provost. Apparently it was somewhat pitchy on its first flight so Pete added some nose weight, after which it flew well.

Justin had fun with his Gemini. The combination of a new radio, no expo, 100% rates & taking off from a boggy patch resulted in the near loss of the Gemini. After Landing and a bit of tweaking, it was sorted for 4 good flights.



Justin said he was very rusty after all this time with no flying. He also complained that his shiny new trick radio (Futaba T14SG) has the trim switches in a slightly different position, making in-flight adjustment a bit hairy. Frankly Justin, anyone who can afford gear like that gets no sympathy from us! ☺

The following weekend 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> of Feb also had one good flying day but I couldn't make it so I've got no report. I know one or two others did (e.g. Darrell – of course!). I was told that the field had drained a bit and was somewhat less boggy.

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March 1<sup>st</sup> produced a calm mostly sunny day. I got down the field rather late and found Alan, Russell, Pete, Pat and Joe were all just leaving. Those remaining were Paul with a profile foamie and his panic (see [Fly Past](#)), Justin with his Gemini, Brian (more about him in the next few paragraphs) and myself with a Laser 3D and a ST Models MX2 foamie. As it had rained most days in the preceding week, the field was still quite boggy.

Brian was airing his 'TOP RC - Sky Cruise 2400' for the first time. He is very keen on First Person View (FPV) flying and had set this plane up accordingly, note the nose mounted camera. This camera has pan and tilt capability and it looked quite spooky seeing the thing nodding and looking around when Brian twiddled the appropriate TX controls.



The maiden flight went smoothly enough and for the first half of it, Brian flew the plane normally, while we all peered into the tripod mounted screen he had set up on the flight line. The picture was excellent and I was surprised that it was only 640x480 resolution. It really showed how bad the field was because we could see glistening areas of water (particularly in the horse field) with only the grass breaking the surface.

Brian then switched places with us and flew it in FPV mode while Paul and I acted as observers for him. The pusher prop is a useful ingredient for FPV flying because the nose mounted camera has an uninterrupted view of the world. When looking through a prop, a horrible strobing effect spoils the view.



The flight went well and she came in to land with no problems.

Brian's FPV quadcopter was very popular with the visiting scouts last year because he brought his Fat Shark headset along, as well as the tripod mounted screen. Our visitors all had a turn at getting a bird's-eye view of the flying, which impressed them immensely.

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March the 8<sup>th</sup> was flyable at times but interspersed with very windy moments. March the 9<sup>th</sup> turned out nice, breezy but definitely flyable.

## Stop Press!

Congratulations to Justin who passed his 'A' certificate yesterday (13<sup>th</sup> March). Geoff G. was the examiner on the day and was able to pass Justin on his first attempt. Nice one Justin.

If you are not familiar with Justin, then he is none other than our club clothing rep. This is hardly surprising as he is something of a fashion guru. Here you can see him sporting one of his own hat design modifications during a particularly windy slope soaring session.



*[Note: If you pass your A test, I will not take the mickey out of you in the club newsletter. This only applies to Justin – he had it coming 😊]*

## Safety Matters

Have you checked the failsafe settings on your aircraft? It's easy to forget about this step. Most receivers these days are fitted with a failsafe capability to for example close the throttle when signal loss occurs.

I once flew an electric plane where this hadn't been checked and after a flight, I returned to the pits and turned off my TX before removing my flight battery. I was horrified when the plane went to full throttle. By luck, I had it secured between two stakes, so it didn't go anywhere. This occurred because when I first bound the receiver to the transmitter the throttle was back-to-front, which I corrected but hadn't realised that the receiver failsafe was now set on what it thought was the idle throttle position. As I had never checked it, I never discovered the problem until the day it went wrong.

**The BMFA Handbook says:**

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“Any powered model aircraft fitted with a receiver capable of operating in failsafe mode (i.e. PCM receivers, Digital Signal Processing (DSP) receivers or 2.4 GHz equipment) should have the failsafe set, as a minimum, to reduce the engine(s) speed to idle on loss or corruption of signal.”

## Fly Past

This new section will focus on an individual plane/flyer. We may come and have a chat if it looks like you've got something shiny and new, or you're just having fun with something you've had a long time. This month we will focus on Paul Adam's new Panic biplane.

A few years ago Paul wrote off his old Panic. I got a great report from him on the new plane as follows: “My old Panic was one of the early ones with the fibreglass fuselage, foam cored wings etc. It was one of those models that you can fly anywhere in any conditions and you know it will do its stuff, so I decided to watch out for another one. Sometime later (Jan 2011) I saw one on E bay about 10 miles from where my sister lives up in Lincolnshire, so bid for it and won. When I got it home (a couple of months later), it was in quite a bad state of repair. I patched it up and flew it, but it was not the same at all, so it sat in the back of the shed. I then made an electric Mini Panic which I flew a couple of years ago, but it wouldn't handle winds and again was not the same as he full size version.”



Having recently written of his Acrowot, he was motivated to dig out the Panic, Strip it back to wood and rebuild / repair it. He continued: “I modified the ailerons to the same size as my old one (85 mm wide), and decided to try out the Hobby King covering (which works very well). Unfortunately I thought Red white and Blue colour scheme would go very well, but Red white and glittery Turquoise doesn't. I may have to spray paint over the glittery fuselage, which will be a shame.”

“The first flight I had with the rebuilt model was 25th Jan this year, The model flew

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much more like the original Panic, but still needed some trimming. So far I have moved the C of G back (and I think I could move it further back still). During today's flights I have mixed in some rudder elevator mixing (finished up with 20%) which gives a very smooth knife edge that you can fly all day, but I need to add a bit more down thrust to the engine as it picks the nose up when you throttle up, but it's getting there."

"So what does it fly like – It can poodle around all day on just over tick over, or you can open the taps at which time it turns into an out and out fun machine. Take it up high, put it into a spin, add aileron and full throttle and it spins with very little loss of height. Turn it on its side and fly round on knife edge all day. Is it a serious model – No, it's not precise enough, it's not meant to be."

A bit about the model:-

Wingspan	120 cm (48")
Length	110 cm (43")
Height	42 cm (17")
Weight	2.9Kg (6.4 lbs)
Engine	SC 91 two stroke

"Would I recommend it? If you need a winter hack, something that will handle the winds, rough ground and yet be fun – Definitely Yes."

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## External Events

This section details events in Hampshire (or further afield if they are significant events) that might be of interest to club members. While the event is still in the future, I will leave entries from previous newsletters in this section.

### The Great Southern Model Auction

If you need a cheap way to bolster your fleet, then why not get yourself along to the biggest RC auction in our area. This event is organised by the Hampshire Model Flying Association (HMFA) and therefore 95%+ of the lots are fixed wing model aircraft and helicopters plus their associated paraphernalia. The odd few tools and other bits show up too. The auction takes place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2014 at Mountbatten School, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 5SY.

- Doors open at 9am, auction starts at 11am.
- Entry £5, under 16s free. Refreshments available.
- If you're selling, then the minimum lot is £10.
- Pre-booking of auction lots is strongly recommended, contact Paul on 07500 175897.

See [www.hmfa.hampshire.org.uk](http://www.hmfa.hampshire.org.uk) for more details.

### Blackbushe Model Show

Like Wings & Wheels, this is a pretty big show and is somewhat easier to reach. It boasts a professional flying display organised by Ali Machinchy, including top UK pilots and International guests. It all happens at Blackbushe Airport on Saturday the 17th May. The Airport is just off the A30 between M3 J4/4A and Hartley Wintney GU17 9LQ.

- Gates open at 09:00 – Flying from 10:00 till 17:00.
- All persons Over 16 years £9.00 per person
- All persons Under 16 years £4.00 per person
- OAPs £7.00 per person
- Bring and Buy £9.00 per person

See <http://www.blackbushemodelairshow.co.uk/> for more details.



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## **Daedalus D-Day commemoration**

Thank you to John Williams who has submitted information on a D-Day commemoration event at Daedalus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> June. See:

<http://www.leeresidents.org.uk/014-DaedalusD-Day70thAnniversaryCommemoration3-4June2014.pdf> for more details.

## **Model Wings & Wheels Spectacular**

Yes it is a bit of a trek but it's definitely worth seeing at least once. You can get to see some of the exotic stuff normally only found on YouTube e.g. super-sized scale models, gas turbines and superb aerobatic displays. There is also quite a big Bring & Buy sale there too.

This very large model show takes place on the 28th & 29th June 2014 at North Weald Airfield, Epping, Essex, CM16 6AR.

- Show times: 9.30am - 5.30pm

For enquiries contact: [admin@wingsnwheels.net](mailto:admin@wingsnwheels.net) or Tel: 01242 604126

See <http://www.wingsnwheels.net/> for more details.

## **Club Information**

This section gives a summary of club services and contact details. Apart from the "Future Club Night Programme" most of the info here is fairly static.

## **Future Club Night Programme**

The following events are planned for the third Thursday of each month.

March 20th 2014	Spring Bring and buy sale
April 17th 2014	Firebirds History– by Pat Parsons-founder member
May 15th 2014	TBD but may be a meeting at Poplars (over a barbeque) and possibly on a Monday or Friday flying evening rather than Thursday the 15 <sup>th</sup> as listed.

## **March Club Night**

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The next meeting is the spring bring and buy. There's a fair bit of work to do beforehand so if you are selling anything please turn up early (about 7pm) to allow time for the lots to be prepared. The cut-off time for this activity is 7:50pm.

Building a large scale petrol powered plane? Worried about the high cost of large wooden propellers? Fear not, Mike Watts has donated the prop (pictured right), which will be auctioned at the Bring & Buy.

Of course, you may just want to hang it above the mantelpiece. Quite a nice little surprise for the missus too I should think, women like that sort of stuff.



## **Cheap Glow Fuel**

Fuel is available through the club and supplies are held by the club. All grades of fuel are available to order. Terry holds many other useful items: glo-plugs, propellers, glue, fuel tubing, wing bolts etc.

**Contact: Terry Jacobson on 023 8040 2080 or see him at the field.**

## **Club Clothing**

A number of items of club branded clothing are available from a local supplier. The current prices are:

Sweatshirts	£14.25
Polo shirts	£12.50
T shirt	£ 8.50
Caps	£ 7.95

All shirts are Fruit of the Loom and available in all sizes up to XXL & most colours. There is also a huge range of quality outdoor wear that can be embroidered with the club logo.

**Contact Justin on 07572 613190, email [windgyber@hotmail.com](mailto:windgyber@hotmail.com) or see him at the field.**

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## Firebirds Club Committee

The following are the contact details for the Committee. Each has given permission for their phone number and email addresses to be included in this Newsletter.

Chairman	Pat Parsons	023 8056 2611	<a href="mailto:patrickparsons.parsons3@googlemail.com">patrickparsons.parsons3@googlemail.com</a>
Vice Chair	Russell Lewis	023 8056 1397	<a href="mailto:russell@pilot1.co.uk">russell@pilot1.co.uk</a>
Treasurer	Paul Adams	023 8069 2729	<a href="mailto:paul.adams10@tiscali.co.uk">paul.adams10@tiscali.co.uk</a>
Secretary	Roger Stanton	01489 784152	<a href="mailto:roger-stanton@sky.com">roger-stanton@sky.com</a>
PRO	Peter Clark	01489 692881	<a href="mailto:psclark911@hotmail.com">psclark911@hotmail.com</a>
Flying Site Rep.	Dave Hoppe	07704 826343	<a href="mailto:davehoppehome@gmail.com">davehoppehome@gmail.com</a>
Safety Officer	Geoff Griffiths	023 9265 5931	<a href="mailto:gcgriffiths@hotmail.com">gcgriffiths@hotmail.com</a>
Membership Sec.	Geoff Scott	023 8039 0013	<a href="mailto:geoffrey.scott100@ntlworld.com">geoffrey.scott100@ntlworld.com</a>



**Remember...**  
**Safe flying is no accident.**