

Firebirds Model Club

Newsletter July 2014

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Committee News

Here's the latest from the committee room.

Potential New Flying Site

Starting from 2nd August we are able to trial an electric-only flying site in Hamble. It is located adjacent to Hamble Primary School. Here is an image from Google maps.



I have adjusted the map of the new club venue at the end of this newsletter to mark the location of Hamble Primary School.

Rules of use need to be laid down before we start, especially as the area in question

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is a public park. There will be some strict no-fly areas and clearly walkers or people engaging in recreational activity at the park will create temporary zones that shouldn't be overflowed.

It will be essential to have a lookout; i.e no lone flying. Apart from the obvious dangers, a few years ago Geoff (our safety officer) was once pestered by a dog so much that he nearly lost his model! There is also the security of flight boxes etc. to think about if left unattended.

In the winter, the park is marked out for three football pitches (or has been in the past) but only two of these tend to be used. The third pitch (or some of it) and a space beyond that are potentially available for our use. If the park is quiet and the second pitch is available, then this may also be used.

Due to excavation work (to uncover Roman artefacts) that was carried out decades ago, the area beyond the third football pitch is at a lower level (2-3 feet) to the rest of the park. The ground is ramped at about 30-45 degrees between these levels. This could make things a bit 'interesting' for take-offs and landings if the wind is East-West.

Hedge End Carnival

Many thanks to Alan H, Alan S, Rob and Russell for supporting this event by turning up with models and chatting to the interested folk who stopped at our display.



Our line-up for the display was Rob's Kyosho Spitfire, Russell's Mick Reeves Spitfire, Alan's Lancaster, My FW 190, Alan's (the other one) AT6 Texan and B17 Flying Fortress.

Being such a nicely made model, Alan's Lancaster received a great deal of interest.

Most people expected that these planes had been produced for static display purposes and were therefore surprised when we told them that they were all flying models.

Five or six people expressed an interest in joining the club, so maybe we'll get one

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new member out of that lot.

One shortcoming that we became aware of not long after people started arriving was that we had no banner to identify ourselves and no handout (e.g. business type card) with contact details. Next time maybe.

Here's a few gathered around Alan's AT6 and B17.

At times we had quite a few gathered around our gazebos.

I think the most frequently asked questions were "How much do they cost?" and "How fast do they go?"



July Club Night

Even though it may be dry, it looks like it will be way too windy for a barbeque & fly at Poplars on Monday evening 14th July, so let's hope that Friday is calm and dry. I will send out an email at quite short notice (Tuesday or maybe even Wednesday) to give the go-ahead for Friday if it looks OK, or pull back to Thursday for a drink at the Hamble club if Friday looks rubbish.

Wings and Wheels

A number of members attended the model Wing & Wheels show. Russell took quite a lot photos so I thought I would include a couple in here. It would have been nice to put a few more in but of course they really add those nasty big megabytes to the newsletter.

This plane has Steve Carr written on the side of it so I assume that the guy with the TX is the man himself. Large 3D models seems to be his 'thing'.



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This is Tony Nijhuis' huge (168" span) Rockwell / Boeing / North American OV-10 Bronco. The model can be purchased [here](#) for £9000. Before you buy it, please note that this cannot be flown the Hamble site because it is IC.

This Pitts Python is another sizable model. At 68" span, the propeller is bigger than the wingspan on most of my planes. Being made of carbon fibre, it probably costs more than



most of my planes too. When sat on the ground, the top wing of this 85% scale model is just above head height for most people. This plane got broken at last year's Wings and Wheels (see video [here](#)) but seems to be back together now.

Vintage Fly In

See the External Events section for details on a Vintage fly in at Waltham Chase 26th July. Please do contact Roger if you are interested.

Fun Fly Event

We aim to have a fun fly event in the early-mid summer months. The exact details have not been decided yet but it will be aimed at all skill levels and will not include any aerobatic manoeuvres. It will require a plane with undercarriage as there will be at least one take-off and landing event. It will occur one Saturday morning, which will tie up the site for that day. Watch this space for more detail.

Planned BBQ Event at Roughay Farm

The Firebirds club has been invited to BBQ and fly at the flying site used by Mike

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Watts. This is an airstrip for full size aircraft so there will be room for any of your models. We just need a good day so watch this space for more details.

Down at the Field

Well as you would hope there have been some nice days recently so here's a few snaps of what appeared on the flight line.

First up, our chairman Pat has had some repairs done. No, not to his plane but his body. His optics are better and his ambulatory systems have been pimped up with metal alloys and high density plastics. To celebrate, he showed up with this fine looking Piper Cub.



If I remember right, Pete had just re-engined his buccaneer. It certainly put on a fine show that day.

Paul's Extra and Russell's Bullet sat waiting for their turn in the sky.



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From left to right, my FW 190 still soldiering on, John's fleet of Extra, Sebart Angel & bigger Extra and someone's piper cub (Alan's?).



In the background you can see Roger flying (or setting up to fly) a control-line stunter in the field just behind the flight-line. He is being aided and abetted by recent joiner Terry.

Same scene from a different angle including Alan's riot (not the same Alan who may or may not own that yellow cub but a different larger one).



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Safety Matters

I have a home-grown safety incident to report this month. Just as I was getting used to handling lithium polymer batteries, I became complacent and one bit back.



The battery in question was a 2 cell (7.4v) 4000mah LiPo. One of a pair that I use in my Twinstar.

I charged these both up on the 21st June so they would be ready to use on the following weekend. I charged them at a fairly low current so they took ages, I was in no rush.

When the charger beeped to let me know that the second one was charged, I thought I'd finish watching the telly before unplugging it. Consequently I forgot and left the thing plugged into the charger for the next 24 hours.

When I noticed this the following day, I thought "damn! I bet that has discharged the pack by some percentage". Without checking the pack, I set the charge program off again to top the pack up.

The only mistake I didn't make was leaving the charge process unattended. After about 30 minutes of charging, I heard a small crack followed by a fizz sound. Guessing that this could be the battery (I also thought it might be something I had cooking), I had a close look and could see that the pack had swelled up.

I immediately unplugged it and took it outside (carrying it by the lead). I then prepared a bowl of salt water to provide an environment to safely discharge the pack. I dropped the pack in and went back into the house.

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About a minute later there was a very bright flash and a moderately loud bang. I ran outside to find that the battery had clearly exploded and jumped out of the bowl of water.

Some kind of black deposit mixed with water was sprayed everywhere. The battery continued to burn for about 5-10 minutes.

My guess now is that the battery must have

completely discharged when left plugged in for 24 hours. This would have left the pack in a state where it couldn't be recovered. I guess that the combination of the battery's condition and whatever the charger tried to do to inject a charge, resulted in this catastrophic failure. I will be a lot more cautious the next time I suspect that a pack might be discharged by mistake.

The picture above was taken less than a minute after the explosion and about two minutes after it was inside my house. You'll notice the black charred deposit on the stones either side of the pack. This was where the pack flared intensely for a few seconds after it landed on the stones. The explosion was when the pack was inside the bowl. Imagine that flaring on the carpet.

I count myself fortunate that it didn't explode in my house or while I was carrying it outside. I hope that you can also learn from my experience and exercise appropriate caution with these packs.

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Fly Past

This month's Fly Past features Brian's [DJ Innovations Phantom](#) Quadcopter. Just trying to write this up has made me realise what a feast of technology this thing is.



Brian flies an original Phantom 1 (there's a Phantom II out now). It uses 3s 2200-3500mah LIPO batteries that give 5-10 minutes duration. The basic Phantom is a GPS stabilised quadcopter, which allows the machine to be flown in three modes:

1) Stabilised mode – In this stabilised mode, pushing the left stick forward moves the quad in the direction that the designated 'nose' is pointing, pulling back, left or right moves the aircraft in that direction relative to the 'nose'. So you need to be aware of the yaw orientation to know where you'll be heading. The further you move the stick, the faster she goes in that direction but the pitch and roll all managed on-board to give the desired movement without loss/gain of altitude.

2) Intelligent mode – In this stabilised mode, pushing the stick forward moves the quad away from the pilot, pulling back moves it towards the pilot, left moves the quad to the pilot's left and right...well you get the idea. The clever thing about it is that this all works regardless of the direction that the designated 'nose' of the quad is pointing.

3) No-stabilisation – You're flying a helicopter with four rotors, it's scary as hell.

These modes are engaged by switches on the TX. There is also a Go Home feature, where the user can press a button and the aircraft will automatically return and hover about the take-off point (Home). This mode will engage automatically if the TX signal is lost and the GPS signal is still good. If both TX and GPS is lost, then the aircraft will stop moving and just hover.

There is also an on-board low voltage warning that flashes external lights when the battery is low.

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While all this is pretty cool and high tech, Brian says that the novelty soon wears off and the quad really comes into its own as a First-Person-View (FPV) aircraft. This gives the operator a view of the action from the aircraft itself. To this end a number of items have been fitted to the standard aircraft as follows.



A GoPro Hero 3 camera (GoPro Hero 3) attached the underside of the quad, facing forward and angled down to give the best view of the flying area.

The camera feeds its video signal to a FPV transmitter mounted on the top of the airframe. This item is made by the well-known brand Fat Shark. This transmitter is powered by the same 12v supply used for the four lift motors.



My Extra/MX captured by Brian's Phantom at take-off.

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The transmission can be received by Brian's 'Ground Station', which comprises a receiver (compatible with the Fat Shark TX), a small LCD TV screen and Lipo battery to power it all. This kit is mounted on a tripod stand that is setup on the flight-line prior to take-off.

The Ground Station has a dual diversity antenna setup. There is a white directional antenna that gives very long range probably >1km, the spotters eyes give out after that! The circular antenna gives good all-round closer coverage. The unit runs off a 5000mA 3S lipo, which also powers a small video recorder via a 5v switching regulator.

In addition, the video signal may be simultaneously received by someone wearing a Fat Shark headset (i.e. goggles with a mini TV screen for each eye). I can tell you from experience that the view from the headset is an impressive and immersive experience.



It is usually best to sit down while you're wearing a headset because your visual frame of reference is panning and tilting while the ground underneath you stays fixed. This messes with your head a bit and can result in falling over.

In addition to all this, Brian has added another GPS system on top too to give an On-Screen-Display (OSD) readout of some of the aircraft's vitals. I don't know exactly what Brian's kit does but typically OSD will show things like: Distance to home, Battery usage, Dynamic Directional Arrow (compass relative to 'Home'), Altitude, Flight time. This information is overlaid on the video feed so that it appears rather like Head-Up display information in a full size aircraft.

Brian's Phantom is less than a year old and he says that it is starting to get a little bit tatty. It feels safer to fly in FPV mode especially with the OSD and all the safety measures built in. It's great for hunting for lost models in nearby fields.

At the time of bought his the Phantom was priced between £500 and £700. The current Phantom II seems to be between £350 and £500. Once you add on all the bits for FPV, the price quickly heads towards £1000.

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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.

Middle Wallop Glider Meet

July 12th - 13th

Cosford

July 19th and 20th

The largest of the LMA shows

Old Warden WWI Model Weekend

July 19th - 20th

Waltham Chase Aeromodellers Vintage Day

As Chair of Waltham Chase Aeromodellers, Peter Sanders has invited any interested members of Botley Firebirds to their Vintage Day, staged on Saturday 26th July 2014. This will include R/C models and R/C assist for models designed before and including 1964 and vintage control line models up to 3.5cc (0.20cu.in). No free flight, due to the restrictions of our site. We will need BMFA Insurance verification to fly only. The venue is Tangier View Farm off Tangier Lane Bishops Waltham, Hants.

An all-day BBQ will be running, under supervision, but you have to bring your own food: soft drinks provided. No flyers are allowed to consume alcoholic drinks until they stop flying.

This is our first Vintage meeting and we thought our closest Club should be invited to participate, if your members wish. Could you give me an idea of participate numbers so we can make arrangements to accommodate our invited guests.

There will also be a raffle for a brand new, reproduction Keil Kraft Southerner 60" span vintage, electric converted kit from The Vintage Model Company.

If you are interested please contact Roger Stanton who would like an idea of the number of people going (his contact details are at the end of this newsletter).

Middle Wallop Large Model Meet

August 2nd - 3rd

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The BMFA Nationals

August 24th – 26th

At Barkstone Heath RAF Airfield

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

July-August 2014

The plan for the summer months is, if weather permits, to hold a series of barbeque evenings at Poplars. Our new club meeting venue (the Hamble Club) will be the fall back, should the weather scupper our BBQ plans.

The BBQ, if held, will be on either a Monday or Friday evening (weather dependent) of the third week in the month. Otherwise, the normal Thursday meeting night will be used if the meeting has to be held at the Hamble Club.

The thinking behind moving these meetings from Thursday to either Monday or Friday is that we will also be able to fly between our hamburger/hotdog chomping.

If the meeting has to be held at the Hamble Club, then micro indoor planes/helis are welcome. The meeting room is a bit larger than the one at the Legion.

Members will be notified by email (and phone to those without email) a few days in advance when we have a good idea about the forecast. As with the club’s previous BBQ events, please bring your own food. The club will provide the fire.

September 2014

TBD.

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.

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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 or see him at the field.

Don't forget that our new meeting venue is the Hamble Club at this address:

Beaulieu Road
Hamble
Southampton
Hampshire
SO31 4JL

The entrance to the club is on Hamble Lane, only a short distance from a pub called The Harrier. The club looks like this:



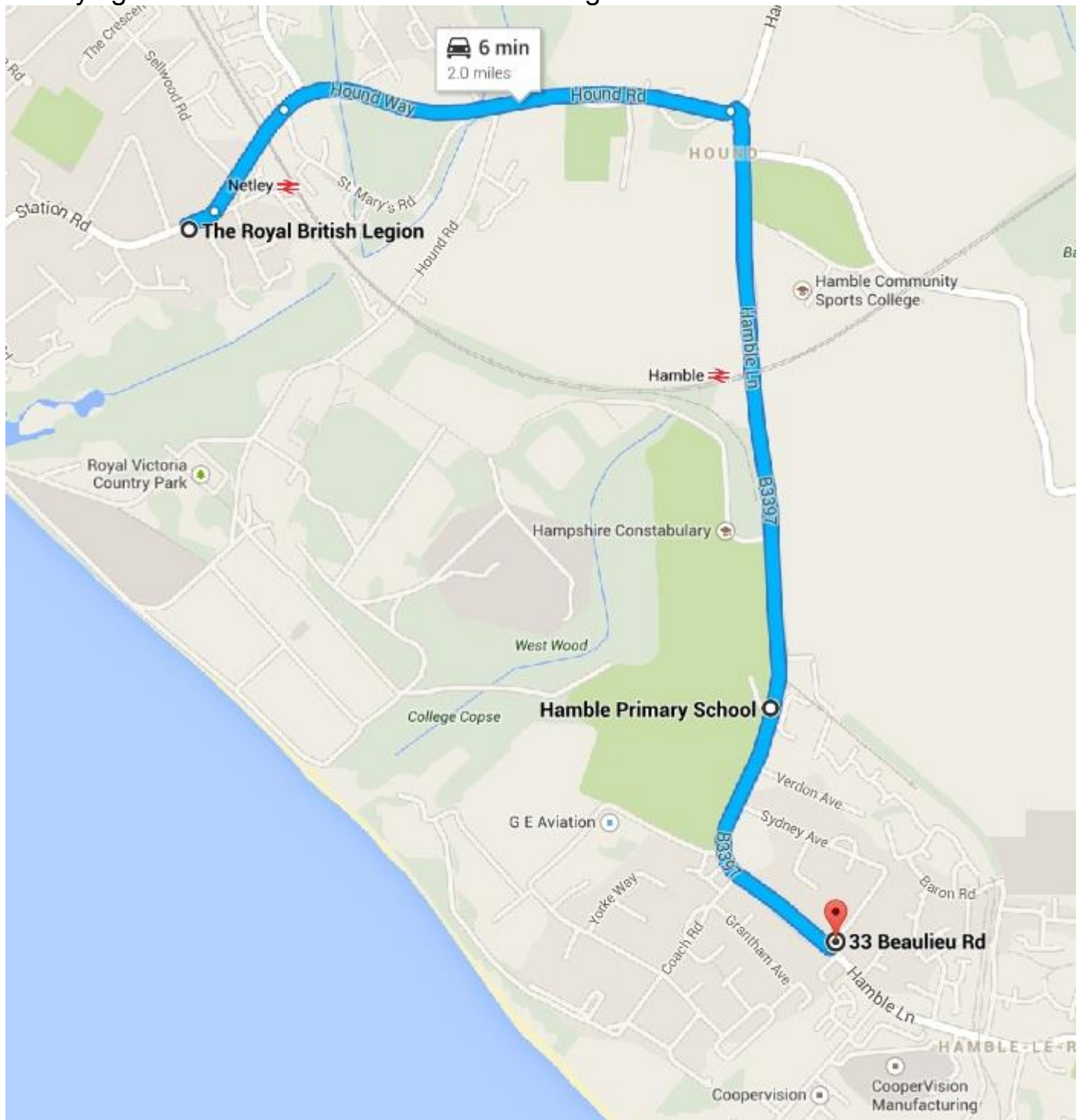
The following page contains a map showing directions from the British Legion to Hamble Club (well actually it's the house just opposite the club because Google maps

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shows the club as being a fair distance up Beaulieu road, which it isn't.

The map also now includes the location of Hamble Primary School, which is adjacent to a flying site that we will be able to trial in August.



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



Remember...
Safe flying is no accident.