

Northern League Round 2 – Arrowe Park 5/7/15.

Well I'm afraid that this second report of the year will of necessity be a fairly short one due to poor weather and me having forgotten my SLR zoom lense....Doh!

I arrived at around 09.30am to an already busy pits area. The Wirral club had again prepared well for the arrival of members and guests alike. 2 gazebos had been erected, one for the commentary team and another to house the Wirral ladies and their mobile kitchen. The Wirral club always make visitors welcome even to the extent of offering free food and drinks [hot and cold] all day with a club voluntary donations bucket for those wishing to contribute, which many did through the day. Thanks to all at the club on behalf of all visiting pilots for a textbook example of hospitality amongst fellow modellers.

The forecast for the day was not too optimistic; fine until early afternoon then deteriorating rapidly. As it happened the much maligned Met Office had got it spot on resulting in us only managing one round before the management team decided to call it a day and pack up before the downpour arrived [which it did] around 2.00pm.

That said it was a well attended event with 15 pilots opting to fly and I would hope all enjoying the albeit short day.

The event was primarily the clubs annual Memorial event to remember a sadly missed member of the club and scale enthusiast Alf Withrup and with that firmly in mind a good turn out from the host club was only to be expected. Alf's widow kindly agreed to attend and hand out the prizes at the end of the day.

On a personal note this is one of the few events through the season when I can come out from behind my clip board and have a go myself, a situation that I began to doubt the wisdom of as I was 1st out of the hat to open the flying! Still at least 1st on means 1st to pack up when the rain comes!

Anyhow due to the brisk wind and the poor forecast I decided to take along a fairly simple model which was easy to assemble, easy to fly and would cope with the breeze so decision made; the Sukhoi Su26 it was. The model is an ARTF from ASM which I believe is now unavailable in this country. The model spans 67", weighs 11lbs. and is powered by my old faithful Laser 150 F/S turning a 17"x 6" ASP propeller. As I'm a member of 2 competing clubs, Liverpool and Skelmersdale I decided that the only fair way to decide who got stuck with me was by the highly scientific method of tossing a coin! Skelmersdale lost the toss and got stuck with me, sorry chaps. I landed after my flight thinking...Hmm.. Could have done better, but I'm sure everyone thinks that. Anyhow the judges didn't punish me too badly for my errors and gave me a decent score.

Second man to fly was Skelmersdales Barry Sherborne flying his Rearwin Speedster. This model is very lightly loaded and Barry normally flies it with absolute precision at not much above walking pace. Today however the wind strength along with an unpredictable area of turbulence coming off the tree tops at the right hand end of the take off run meant that such lightly loaded models were having to fight for stability. Barry put in a very good flight in spite of this and scored good points to eventually place 5th. Barry has recently completed a superb 80" span four stroke powered twin engined Bristol Beaufighter. I've seen this model fly and it is truly superb. At just over 9lbs. weight it looks so realistic; I only hope that we manage to get a decent calm day for one of our events so that he can demonstrate it.



Barry's' Speedster [Picture from the 2014 event]



Barry on the sticks with brother Neil calling the manoeuvres.

Number 3 on the list was local man Colin Martin who had brought along his large Sukhoi Su26. Looks a bit like mine after it had grown into long pants! The Zenoah 62 powering it made short work of the wind and turbulence. Colin put in his usual, and dare we say expected solid flight to secure a well deserved 3rd place, earning good points for both himself and the Wirral club.



Colin's' Zenoah 62 powered Sukhoi Su26 [2014 pic]

Pilot number 4 was Wirral's John Melling flying his petrol powered Blackhorse Ryan STA. The model is quite large at around 92" span but is very lightly loaded and so again is a model more suited to calmer weather. That said John battled the wind manfully and managed a very creditable score. Let's hope that he gets a kinder forecast for future events when he will be able to show just what this excellent model can do.



File picture of the Blackhorse Ryan showing its pretty lines to good effect.

Number 5 on the list was Skelmersdale flyer Andy Bowman who had brought along his World Models ¼ scale clipped wing Piper Cub. This model is well known to all on the local 'circuit' as Andy has flown it successfully for several years now. Indeed Andy has commented in the past that the O.S. 120 F/S powering the model is now significantly older than many of the competitors! Still as the old saying goes 'If it aint broke' etc. Andy would probably have chosen a different model in hindsight given the weather conditions but battled on through the turbulence for a fighting 6th equal final placing.



Andy and the Cub in calmer days; the hat would have come off this year!

Number 6 was local man and event commentator Ant Cliffe flying another of his new [to me] models, a Seagull ARTF Savage Cruiser. A very pretty high wing monoplane the model spans 2 metres and is powered by an ASP 120 F/S engine. Again this is a model that would ideally suit calm weather but Ant fought the weather bravely before getting back on the mike to keep us all informed as to what was going on, a fine example that proves men can multi task; Germaine Greer take note! Sadly I have no photos of this model but hopefully will get some at one of the later events.

The next man to fly was Liverpool's John Wheeler flying a piece of real modelling nostalgia, a Flair SE5a of around 52" span. The model is powered by an OS 48 F/S motor and brought back memories for me of a time when this was regarded as a bit of an exotic and expensive combination. For younger flyers let me tell you that not many years ago this model would have been a crowd puller back in the days when we had to build 'em! Sadly the weather proved a little too much for the little SE and it dropped in quite hard damaging one of the wing panels. I'm not sure if John intends to repair the model or not yet; I expect he will need to sit down with a cuppa and assess the damage back in the workshop. Sadly the only photo I have is one taken by Ant Cliffe immediately post crash so here it is. Very sad, commiserations from all of us to John not least for keeping traditional modelling alive.



A sad end to the SE5a flight but hopefully not the end of the model?

Number 8 on the list was Keith Fear from the Skelmersdale club. Keith brought out the big guns this year with a ¼ scale ARTF ASM 62" span Pitts Special. The model weighs in at around 12-13lbs and is powered by a Laser 180 F/S! Think that's enough Keith?

The model made short work of the winds that were troubling other models and will pull verticals all day. I'm sure that when he gets a little more used to its characteristics [he's only flown it half a dozen times] he will put in some good scores with it. A decent flight from Keith gave him a very respectable score and points towards the individual element of this years competition.



A slightly fuzzy Pitts on take off. Goes like stink on its 180 Laser!

Local man Ian Bottell followed Keith. Ian was again flying the World Models Saito 150 F/S powered ¼ scale Piper Super Cub that we 1st saw at Skelmersdale in June. As already mentioned the weather conditions on the day were not kind to this type of model and Ian had a real fight on to keep the 14 lb. model behaving itself. That added to an engine cut during the inverted element of one of his manoeuvres meant that Ian finished in a lower position than we have come to expect. Given better weather and after giving the engine a good talking too I'm sure that Ian will be thinking that as the terminator would say, 'I'll be back'.



Ians Super Cub on take off. Could still be a bit rich there Ian.

Ian was followed by another Wirral flyer, Steve Muscat flying a 102" Aeroworks, DLE 111cc twin cylinder powered Yak 54 aircraft. The model flew with all the authority you would expect from a model of this size and power, managing the weather conditions admirably. All seemed to be going well until the landing when the undercarriage rolled into of all things a horses hoof print [I kid you not] which almost tore the leg out damaging the fuselage side and propeller in the process. Talk about bad luck; don't bother with the lottery this week Steve!



The judges getting a good view of Steve's Yak 54 on take off. Impressive model.

The 11th flyer to go was Brian Wood from Bickershawe club who again elected to fly his 80" Brian Taylor designed, scratch built Vought Corsair fighter. The model is completed to an incredible standard and is complemented by a Laser V 240 twin F/S engine [40cc.] and Brian's own design home made retract units. There is no point trying to describe a model like this, you have to watch it to appreciate it. Again Brian found the weather not to the models liking; Brian Taylor is renowned for designing light models which is great for calm days but makes flying them a bit of a handful on days like this. Still a decent score meant more points for Brian and the Bickershawe club.



No apologies for another shot of this wonderful model.



Lovely.

Number 12 to fly was local man Mark McKee. Mark was again flying his Blackhorse petrol powered ARTF Spitfire. Talk about a steep learning curve. Mark flew at Skelmersdale last month and after a 1st round to 'get the feel' of these events dramatically improved his second round flight score there. Back at his home patch with more knowledge of what is required [and possibly after a little practice?] Mark flew the pants of the Spit and finished in a thoroughly deserved 1st place. If he sticks at it he is one to watch!



Marks Spit captured by Ant Cliffe. Looks good doesn't it?

Brian Wood brought along son Dale to have a go with his electric powered ARTF Sbach aerobatic job. Young Dale flew the model through some very impressive aerobatic manoeuvres including a superb bunt [outside loop to you and me] which drew many approving comments from onlookers. Not only was this Dales first competition flight but to our amazement we discovered that he only passed his BMFA 'A' test one month ago! Phew how good is he going to be!



Dale Wood's Sbach away on its [and his] 1st competition take off.

Mike Rawlins representing Liverpool was next off for what turned out to be the penultimate flight of not only the round but the competition. Mike was flying a Yak 54 ARTF Model from the prolific Seagull company. The model spans around 65" and is powered by an ASP 91 F/S engine. Although Mike flies the model very well [as you would expect from an ex model show display man] he feels that it would benefit from a bit more power. He again put in a good score but I don't think this will stop him from re-engining the Yak with a 120 in the not too distant future.



The Yak along with the back of Mike's [and caller Barry's] head during take off.

That just left local Wirral man Sam Evans to fly to complete the round of 15 pilots. Sam was flying a petrol powered Edge 540. I didn't get the chance for more details or a pic of the model but can report that Sam has set it up with what I would describe as 'enough' movement on the barn door like control surfaces. He flew the model well with what I can only imagine was the most delicate of touches on the sticks!

At the end of the flying for the day we had the traditional prize giving and club raffle. I'm sure one or two competitors went home very satisfied with their day. Some of you may have heard of the R/C hotel in Corfu; well they had offered a 2 week free holiday for 2 as a prize! One happy member will be enjoying that shortly. Others going home happy were Keith with his 1st prize a Hitec 2.4 radio system. Andy Bowman will probably have difficulty reading this report for a few days as he bagged the bottle of whiskey! I saw others disappearing with prizes including fuel and red wine so I doubt that the worsening weather bothered them to much.

And so another leg of the 2015 event bites the dust. I hope we did dear old Alf proud at his clubs memorial event. Thanks must go to the Wirral club for opening their doors to us visiting flyers once again. Also many thanks to the judges who put up with the conditions [fortified by regular hot drinks and burgers!] and gave us their time. Speaking of the food and drink a big thanks also to the 'Wirralets' [Wirral ladies] for looking after us so well again.

I will finish off as usual with the current standings which starting with the days results are as follows;

Pos	Name	Comp Points	Team Points	Individual Points
1 st	Mark McKee[W]	77	10	10
2 nd	Alan Glover[S*]	74	8	8
3 rd	Colin Martin[W]	72	7	7
4 th	Steve Muscat[W]	69	6	6
5 th	Barry Sherborne[S]	67	5	5
6 th =	Andy Bowman[S]	65	4	4
6 th =	Mike Rawlins[L]	65	4	4
8 th	Brian Wood[B]	61	2	2
9 th	Keith Fear[S]	56	0	1
10 th =	Dale Wood[B]	54	1	0
10 th =	John Melling[W]	54	0	0
12 th	Ant Cliffe[W]	48	0	0
13 th	Ian Bottell[W]	42	0	0
14 th	Sam Evans[W]	38	0	0
15th	John Wheeler[L]	0	0	0

+ Decided by my usual highly scientific patented pre competition 'coin toss' system!

Next are the club positions and points;

Pos	Team	R1 Points	R2 Points	Total
1 st	Skelmersdale	25	17	42
2 nd	Wirral	15	23	38
3 rd	Bickershawe	3	3	6
4 th	Liverpool	0	4	4
5th	Delyn	0	0	0

Finally the top 10 individual scores [well actually due to tied scores top 11];

Name	R1 Score	R2 Score	Total
Colin Martin	6	7	13
Barry Sherborne	8	5	13
Andy Bowman	7	4	11
Mark McKee	0	10	10
Andy Rigby	10	0	10
Alan Glover	0	8	8
Steve Muscat	0	6	6
Brian Wood	3	2	5
Ian Bottell	5	0	5
Lindsay Todd	4	0	4
Mike Rawlins	0	4	4

Just a reminder to those interested that the next leg is scheduled for 19th July at Liverpool's Halsall field. This is of course the LMA Cosford weekend so we are likely to be down on numbers but we will give it a go. Hopefully we will get some decent weather and a good turn out.

We will fly to the same rules and schedule as for the Skelmersdale round and so will use the same score sheet format which I will ensure is e mailed to all interested parties prior to the event date.

That's all for now folks.

Alan.