

2016 Northern League Opening Event-Skelmersdale 12th June.

Well it's that time of year again although you wouldn't think so given the weather! Our first event got off to what can best be described as a stuttering start with only 8 hardy souls braving the elements to get the year going. I'm sure that several regulars were put off travelling by the poor weather forecast although in truth the day turned out to be not as bad as expected with only a couple of interruptions due to showers. We should perhaps take less notice of weather forecasts that seem to be getting less accurate year on year and just get on with our lives. Anyhow that added to the fact that 2 or 3 of our regulars were away on summer holidays meant that we had a short but very enjoyable day. There is a perverse pleasure in getting out there and getting on with it regardless of the conditions!

I took a model along not really intending to fly unless we had the feared low turnout so I did get to fly rather than spend the day with a pen and pad in hand so quite literally 'every cloud.....' etc.

Anyhow on with the days happenings.

The thankless task of judging fell on the shoulders of Messrs Dobson and Protheroe who duly took up station after deciding on flight line, circuit and centre. The pilot briefing was a short and informal affair as the threatening weather dictated that we 'get on with it'.

The batting order was decided in the usual highly scientific method of drawing numbers out of the hat. Barry Sherborne was asked to draw out the first number. Not wanting to fly 1st [none of us do] he refused the top slip of paper which he felt was suspiciously being thrust in his direction and went burrowing into the lower regions only to come out with, you guessed it number 1! You must be more trusting in future Barry!

That said engine starting problems meant that Barry had to step aside for a short while making way for the next man up Keith Fear. Keith was campaigning a lovely DH Moth Minor originally built by Jim Dobson several years ago but not flown by him. Keith had only test flown it a few days prior to the event but as it seemed to have no vices and flew well he decided to give it its first competition outing. The model looks to be around 80" span and is perfectly powered with an SC 91 f/s motor. I didn't get the AUW from Keith but he did say that it was a little heavy although this will no doubt help with stability on those not infrequent breezy English summer days. The model was flown through two very accomplished schedules by Keith and went without incident except for one attempted roll during his 1st round flight which had us all taking a sharp intake of breath as it came out MUCH lower than any of us expected. Fortunately Keith was wearing bicycle clips so all was well in the end! In fact Keith commented at the end of the competition that his second round score was the highest he had ever achieved in these events so it all bodes well for the future. Indeed this score helped him to an overall 4th spot and good points for club and self.



Man & Machine. Keith with his recently acquired Moth Minor.



The Moth looking very pretty settling on finals.

Anyhow engine issues solved it was Mr. Sherborne up next. Barry decided that this event would be an ideal opportunity to give his large Moki 210 powered Pitts Python an outing. This is a superb example of ARTF'ery [not sure that's a word] which fly's incredibly well. Barry put in an impressive first round schedule and looked odds on for a good high finishing position only to have to scratch from the 2nd round when upon landing and during his post flight airframe check he noticed a broken flying wire on the model. As these are functional load bearing wires on this model, and being unable to make a field repair unfortunately that was Barry's flying over for the day. That said once fettled this will be a model to watch in future events. I didn't get a picture of Barry's model but I'm sure we have not seen the last of it this season so should get some next time out.

Third up was one of our regular supporters, Billy Bennett from the Wirral who had bravely ignored the forecast and made the journey to fly. As last year he had brought along his very nice 2 stroke powered Goldberg Extra 300 which he flew well and scored some valuable points for his club; much needed as one or two of his club mates were off sunning themselves on foreign beaches.



The Extra 300 climbing away for its 1st round flight.

I had drawn the number four slot and was flying my 67" Sukhoi Su26. This model was given a couple of outings last year. It is powered by a Laser 150 f/s and is from the now unavailable ASM ARTF kit. As mentioned I did not expect to be flying and so put it in the car as an after thought 'just in case'. The model I have to say does fly well and makes a pilot look better than he is. I'm quite surprised that these are not still sold as they were relatively cheap and in my opinion darned good value for money given their performance. Anyway commercial over and back to the event. I had a couple of decent rounds and although I would rather have been flying my Tiger Moth given the showers we had to contend with I'm glad that I chose it. As last year my intention as a member of both Liverpool and Skelmersdale clubs is to fly for [inflict myself on] both clubs alternately through the year. As this was also the dear old Tom Lamb memorial event for the Skelmersdale club I opened for them so Liverpool will have to put up with me next time out!



Yours trulys Sukhoi getting airborne.

No 5 to fly was Paul Lawton. You may recall Paul's superb Hawk turbine from last years event at Bickershawe. Sadly the Bickershawe club have just lost their flying site but as they are still looking for an alternative field should they wish to we will allow them to still fly under and for that club name. Paul flew a lovely Brian Taylor 81" Mk 9 Spitfire powered by a Moki 210 motor. The model was not built by Paul who reports that he bought it off a chap who had spent 1500 building hours on it. Looking at the quality of this model I can believe that. Superb. Unfortunately Paul had undercarriage issues when the electric motor on one of the legs seemed to strip its gears and become inoperable for the day and will need further investigation and fettling. Undaunted Paul locked the U/C down and carried on. That's the spirit. Two good flights gave Paul a well earned 5th place. Apologies to Paul but I didn't manage to get any pictures of this super model. Hopefully if he flies it at one or two of the later rounds we will all get the opportunity to admire it.

Andy Bowman flew 6th with his now well known clipped wing Cub. Two solid and consistent flights gave Andy a well deserved 3rd spot. In fact so consistent was his flying that he scored 92 points in both rounds. Andy has reluctantly decided to sell this model as he has been flying it for a few seasons now and feels that because it fly's so well he has got to get rid of it in order to force himself to fly some of his other models; his words not mine! Anyhow if any of you out there have a spare 120 f/s lying around looking for a good home and fancy a lovely scale model of an all time classic that still looks as good as it fly's then have a chat with Andy before it goes.



Andy and his Cub. Soon to be parted?



And as we will remember it.

Number seven was Mike Rawlins who was flying his Seagull Yak 54. The model is around 65" span and is powered by an SC91 f/s. Mike thinks it is underpowered on this engine but the rest of us think it's just fine. The fact that Mike flew superbly and secured 1st place for himself and the Liverpool club with the highest scoring flight of the day [not to mention a bottle of plonk] would seem to bear this out! Mike has had to burn a bit of midnight oil to get the model ready for the competitions as a couple of weeks earlier whilst flying down at his local patch the engines con rod broke. Mike had to order replacement parts then set about an engine rebuild and test flight to get it ready but managed it just in time. Now that's modelling!



Mikes Yak 54; pretty isn't it?

Last man to fly was Skelmersdale event organiser, modelling enthusiast and all round good egg [no pun intended but he organised our egg dropping hit Simon Cowell in the kisser comp. this year!] Fred Corless flying his own design scratch build electric powered RV3. Sadly in the second round Fred copped for the worst of the weather and was delayed waiting for a shower to pass through before getting airborne. Not to be beaten Fred set about the second round and put in a very good flight which outscored his first round giving him 6th place overall.



A pretty model whether in the air or on the ground?

So that's it; 1st round done and all that is left is to list the results but not before a few thanks. Firstly to Skelmersdale Model Aircraft Club for kindly preparing and allowing the use of their facilities. Secondly to the 2 hardy [and by now waterlogged] judges, Jim Dobson and Gary Protheroe. Next thanks to Peter Lowe for risking his camera in spite of the conditions to secure a few photos of the event for posterity and

finally to those brave souls who risked life, limb and models on a less than ideal day; the competitors.

Our next scheduled event is the Alf Withrup Memorial event on Sunday 3rd July over on the Wirral at the Arrowe Park venue so here's hoping for better weather where hopefully a few more pilots will ignore the weather forecast [guestimate!] and have a go for queen and country; well club anyway! I'm sure that the Wirral boys and girls will be out in force to close the gap and put in a challenge to retain their place as top club for a 3rd successive year?

Right then on with the scores. Remember that only the highest 3 pilots from each club score towards their club total but every pilot scores points towards his/her personal tally.

As this was the 1st round the below table also reflects each participating pilots individual position and score.

Name	Club	Model	Score	Club Points	Ind Point
Mike Rawlins	Liverpool	Yak 54	191	10	10
Alan Glover	Skelmersdale	Sukhoi Su26	190	8	8
Andy Bowman	Skelmersdale	Clipped Wing Piper Cub	184	7	7
Keith Fear	Skelmersdale	DH Moth Minor	169	6	6
Paul Lawton	Skelmersdale	Mk 9 Spitfire	157	0	5
Fred Corless	Skelmersdale	RV3	152	0	4
Billy Bennett	Wirral	Extra 300	148	3	3
Barry Sherborne	Liverpool	Pitts Python	87	2	2

This means that after round 1 the club positions are as follows;

Position	Club	Points This Rd	Total
1 st	Skelmersdale	21	21
2 nd	Liverpool	12	12
3 rd	Wirral	3	3
4 th	Bickershawe*	0	0
5 th	Delyn	0	0

*Even though Bickershawe have lost their current flying field as they are actively looking for another site we will honour their club name and award any points scored by their members to them. For this year and until their future is known the Wirral club have kindly offered their venue, Arrowe Park on 7th August to Bickershawe to be used both as their 'leg' and also as the venue for the 2016 Traplet sponsored Yorkshire v Lancashire 'War of the Roses' event.

Cheers for now.

Alan.

