

Intro from the RC Competition Coordinator - Steve Jackson

I do not need to tell anyone what an unusual and quite scary year 2020 has been! By late January I had a full competition calendar arranged with the venues confirmed, NOTAMS in place and judges firmed up for the early events. Not only was I anticipating a great series of domestic competitions, but was really looking forward to my first trip to the World Championships in Norway and I was complementing myself on my efficiency. What do they say about pride? Still, the year ended with far more achieved than was looking likely in those dark early days of lockdown. Starting with a midweek event at Buckminster in July, and with much help from Graham, we were able to manage to squeeze a few events at the seasons end, individual reports on these are included below. I must at this point express my thanks to Graham, Steve and Roger who put in a lot of effort to develop digital scoring to remove the contamination risk of paper score sheets, and indeed, to everyone who attended events and showed that our sport could be conducted in a 'socially distanced' way. A bonus from these late events is that from the additional individuals who met the qualifying criteria, we have been able to appoint a second World Championship team for Norway, when and if that happens. I have put together a 'wish list' calendar for 2021, but can only wait and see what the year brings!



I am aware from my mailing list, that there are many of you out there who follow the scale competition scene with interest, but do not actually compete yourself. There is of course no problem with that and it is nice to know just how many people show an interest, I would be lax in my job role however, if I did not take this opportunity try to encourage you to come along to events. If you really don't feel up to competing, just come along for a chat and see what goes on (Post Covid of course). For those of you with a suitable model (ARTFs are fine), why not come along and have a go? Please don't worry about making a fool of yourself, you could not possibly do anything that we have not all done before, several times! I will no go into details of my 'procedure turn' at the first Buckminster event back in July, but just say that it was a classic example of what I mean. People flying their first competition will get free entry this year and we shall be giving out certificates for the 'Best Newcomer.' We are also intending to continue the Light Scale class.

Must go now and compose my letter to 'Bojo' explaining why he must give scale modelers priority for Covid vaccinations!

Thank you to the Contributors - Graham Kennedy

I think it is safe to say that Steve and I have almost spoken more in 2020 than we have in the prior 25 years we have known one another. I am somewhat exaggerating here, but between making arrangements for the trip to Norway and then putting all the necessary protocol in place for our comps, it is safe to say that Steve is now on my speed dial list.

On behalf of everyone, an enormous THANK YOU has to be extended to Steve - he doesn't receive the glory of the judging or CD positions, however, without him your RC Sunday comps would not happen. He does a mountain of work behind the scenes, which should not be underestimated.

I would like to thank every one of the contributors to this review - Steve and I have left the contributions largely unedited in order that the individual personalities come across. I hope you all enjoy reading them and smile as much we have.

The last thank you is to Roger Warman who has produced this review and made it look so much more professional.



A Belated start - Graham Kennedy

The first competition is always approached with a lot of enthusiasm as it allows us all to meet up with our fellow scale modellers and friends after the Winter sabbatical. However, this year it had even greater significance when we managed to stage our first comp of the season at Buckminster.... on a Wednesday.... in July.

The midweek timing was not the only unfamiliar aspect as we all had to adapt to the necessary procedures and protocol. As experienced officials who were able to travel were thin on the ground, I assumed the role of CD, Flight Judge and Scorer - although I am grateful to John Carpenter who acted as my debt collector and pulled together the entry list and extracted the necessary entry monies from everyone. I must also thank all the participants who made the role of CD a very easy one as everyone adhered and respected the protocol and did not have to be prompted in any way.

The competition was conducted with great humour and there were certainly plenty of laughs at the flightline from flyers, callers and myself as we experienced some very strange looking manoeuvres as the effects of very little practice were exposed for all to see.

The top of the leaderboard was keenly contested with two of the members of the "Maidenhead Massive" fighting it out for top place. Steve, Nigel and Roger have been a breath of fresh air to the outdoor scene and are all superb flyers who are always looking to develop and improve,

Given my high workload at this event, I decided to introduce electronic tablet scoring, thereby reducing the need for any transfer of paperwork and also removing the need for me to input my scores into the electronic programme later. To say that the first few flights were a challenge is a huge understatement. However, I was kept sane by thinking about how some of our other experienced judges would have reacted. I can think of one in particular who would have become increasingly grumpy, frustrated and probably would have thrown the tablet into the next field-isn't that correct Dad??

I have continued to judge electronically at all events and Steve Kessel (the brains behind the scoring programme) and I have had a thorough debrief after each comp and improvements have been employed. One of the aspects lacking was the ability for competitors to see their individual scores, however, this has been developed greatly and several of you have seen a screenshot draft of the current state of affairs.

Roger, Steve K and I are currently working together to produce a results document in pdf, which can be emailed to every participant after each of the competitions in 2021. This shall be distributed in an EXTREMELY timely manner after the competition has finished and the results validated.

Scaling trees at Buckminster, Tuesday 18th August 2020 – Andy Bowman

Graham asked me if I would write a few paragraphs on the second Buckminster event of this season. He tactfully prefaced his request, "Having been a significant contributor to the entertainment at the event perhaps you would....." (more on that later). This is probably best done in two parts, the first giving brief details of the competition followed by a section on my own trials and tribulations giving discerning readers the chance to skip the latter.

The forecast was for a light westerly breeze, mainly dry with the chance of the odd heavy shower. I left Wigan in torrential rain which abated between Stoke and Derby and arrived at the overcast but dry National Centre to find socially-distanced parking being scrupulously observed. Twelve entrants were already there, most with models assembled. As entrant number 13 alarm bells should have rung at that point (more on that later).

Steve Ansell was giving his pretty Stinson Reliant its first competition outing and though there were no other new models, entrant-built F4C and F4H standard models were well represented by Richard Crapp's colourful Stampe, Steve Jackson's Sopwith Strutter, Dave Knott's smaller Hurricane and Brian Wood's P47 Thunderbolt.



Our judges for the day were Graham Kennedy and Ian Pallister; the breeze was straight down the strip; flying conditions were ideal; what could possibly go wrong? (More on that later.)

Flying standards were high despite limited opportunities this year and the top eight places were keenly contested in round one. Nigel Nixon (RV4) led the way with Dave Charles (Typhoon) in second place. Andy Bowman (Jungmann) was lying third with Dave Knott (1/6 scale Hurricane) a very close fourth. Steve Ansell, Richard Crapp, Brian Wood and Al Foot (Bronco) were all well in contention.

As round two got underway we watched with mounting concern as storms slid past to the North and South of us. We were well into the round when the inevitable rain arrived. I had just completed my take-off as it started; things went downhill from there (more on that shortly).

After half an hour the downpour abated and flying was able to resume. All those who completed a second flight improved on their first round scores. Dave Knott banished any lockdown rustiness to put in the best flight of the day and overtake Dave Charles but Nigel Nixon almost matched his score to retain his lead and emerge the victor.

And so I'll move on to my personal tale of woe. Having completed the take-off and turned downwind as the rain began, Graham suggested I land and continue later. In my haste to lower the tick-over for landing I somehow managed to hit the off-switch on the transmitter, not the ideal moment for a failsafe demonstration. I switched back on just in time for the engine to pick up and accelerate the Jungmann into the trees at the North-East boundary of the field.

Adrian Hayward and Steve Jackson kindly came with me to assess the possibility of recovery. It was nestling about twenty-five feet up a tree which had no low-level branches so climbing up was not an option. Disappointment and relief vied for the upper hand in my emotions. I might have given it up at that point but fortunately Adrian is made of sterner stuff and was not yet ready to quit. A search of the National Centre outbuildings yielded a floorboard and a flagpole which, lashed together, had the requisite length. With it we managed to punch a few holes through the fuselage sheeting but also moved it down a foot or so. Our improvised model dislodger was terribly heavy and unwieldy but just as exhaustion and despair were overtaking us Graham arrived and renewed efforts brought it crashing to the ground. I had to admire Adrian's fleetness of foot as he nimbly sidestepped its trajectory; an aptitude I had not previously associated with him. Apart from a dislodged empennage and buckled struts, little real damage was sustained. Adrian, Graham and Steve have my heartfelt thanks for their help.



The Black Horse ARTF Jungmann flies well but has several far from scale features which could be readily improved to yield a more acceptable appearance for Flying-Only events. I had always intended to make a narrower cowling, replace the inter-plane and cabane struts, add bracing wires, strip off the plastic film covering and apply doped fabric before re-finishing it in the light blue and silver livery of Anna Walker's G-BSAJ so the mishap will just hasten that along. I'm told if I use Anna's scheme I'll have to include her trademark clover-leaf and rolling-circle manoeuvres in my schedule; perhaps a re-think is called for.

Super Spins - Pat Blenkinsopp

The Druids scale meet on 6th September was a huge success and we were blessed with near perfect weather. This was a flying only comp with an excellent entry of 15.

The standard of flying was very high and there were no mishaps. I took the role of flight judge for both rounds and was joined by Tony Bull and Pete Fullard for one round apiece. We had our work cut out to get two rounds of flying in, with such a large entry. The competition was run very smoothly by Graham Kennedy and other members of the Scale Technical Committee were on hand to assess models and do some static judging for potential future UK scale team members.

The comp was justifiably won by Dave Charles flying his superb Hawker Typhoon with two near perfect flights and it looked magnificent doing wide circuits and very realistic manoeuvres. This was an object lesson on how to fly a scale warplane. Andy Bowman flying his beautifully built Tiger Moth did the most perfect 3 turn spins that got perfect 10's from both judges!! It was great to see slightly more risky manoeuvres being attempted. John Carpenter finished second with his Tiger Moth and local boy, Al Foot was third with his OV10 Bronco.

One of the things that struck me was the increasing number of ARTF's that were taking part. Almost all of them have been "enhanced" in some way and quite a few of them were electric powered. I think this is a good thing as it is making the hobby far more accessible and encouraging for folks to get involved. Sadly there seem to be only a hard core of us scratch builders out there.

The flying Druids did a wonderful job of preparing their magnificent site (it has to be one of the best model clubs in the country with its remote location and no chance of upsetting anyone nearby.) I am sure that all who took part enjoyed the day and would offer their thanks to The Flying Druids club for being such generous hosts. It is hoped that the Covid 19 will be over next year and we can return once more to this superb site.

Ripmax Trophy and Flying Only @ Ramsey MAC: Sunday 13 September, 2020 - Paul Hoey

The Ramsey Model Aero Club is based just outside the Cambridgeshire village of Warboys on an immaculate grass site. Whoever cuts the grass does a fantastic and not inconsiderable task. Therefore thank you to the committee and members of Ramsey MAC for making their site available to the BMFA and 12 competitors.

There were 5 participants competing in F4C for the Ripmax Trophy and 7 in the flying only class. The late summer weather (25c) but, at times, stiff breeze which backed and veered through 70 degrees made for flyable conditions where attention to pushing upwind and avoiding drifting downwind were important to balanced manoeuvres.

As a first time Contest Director I was largely preoccupied with trying to keep competitors informed and the schedule flowing smoothly. Thankfully from my perspective everyone else knew what they were doing whilst I pretended! One of the benefits of volunteering is you get an informal masterclass from various conversations during the day, looking carefully at the models and watching the high standard of flying throughout the day or to put it another way there are real benefits to volunteering.

So what were the highlights as I saw them? The judges are always right (aren't they?) and in awarding their special 'Judges Prize' to Adrian Hayward for the way he flew and communicated with them so they knew exactly what he was doing made perfect sense. If you are familiar with the way Shuttleworth's Super Cub side slips into land, Adrian's model of G-SVAS beautifully replicated the full size approach.

I've followed Dave Knott's progress with sorting his Hawker Hurricane (R4118) and hoped with cautious anticipation that the 'gremlins' had been tamed. A really great flight invoking the spirit of the Hurricane was only diminished when it ran out fuel on the landing approach. Purely by coincidence a friend who has no interest in aircraft came to see me last week and whilst looking in my workshop mentioned that his great uncle flew Hurricanes in the war. It turned out his great uncle was Pilot Officer Christopher 'Bunny' Currant DFC of 605 Squadron who flew R4118 on 7 September, 1940. See Page 46 of Peter Vacher's Book 'Hurricanes R4118.

Steve Jackson's Avro 504K always impresses me both on the ground and in the air as were the judges who placed it first followed by Richard Crapp with his Stampe SVE which flew as steady as rock and David Toyer and his Tiger Moth.

In flying only Dave Charles and his Typhoon put in a typically precise 2 flights followed by Brian Wood with his P47 (great engine sound and presence in the air) and Nigel Nixon's RV4.

All that remains is to thank Doug and Graham who judged static and Steve and Peter who judged flying.

If I can get my act together I might even enter ...

A Duo of Debutant Danny's - Graham Kennedy

September 20th saw us travel north and provided me with a significantly shorter 'commute'. I have been a regular visitor to Blackpool for the last 18 months when I perform my audit assignments on behalf of Wickes and Red Bull and as such it was decided that I would book accommodation and Dad would defrost himself and be my judging partner.

I ended up being a very last minute substitute at the BMFA Council meeting on the Saturday and I have to say that I initially joined via Zoom in the Wickes car park as it was too early to book into our B&B. Nothing like a bit of variety to keep the interest levels high.

In the lead up to the weekend, Dad had said to Mum that he would still travel to Blackpool, irrespective of the weather for a "Boys Weekend" - perhaps he was forgetting that his sidekick, Mick Henderson would not be travelling. In the end after a long walk along the promenade, a fish supper on the beach steps and a beer in our room, I think we were both asleep by 2130 - Mick, we have missed your company enormously this year.

Sunday dawned bright, if a little breezy and Dad followed me to the excellent Blackpool club site, complete with views of the Blackpool Tower. I have to thank the Blackpool club for their very warm welcome and for their assistance in taking care of the Track & Trace procedures which had just come into place.

It was great to see so many regular faces make their first appearance of the season, including 'Big Noisy' the appropriately named Stearman, belonging to the one and only Alan Glover. We also welcomed two new competitors, Danny Paton and Danny Fenton. Danny F is of course known to most of us, but this was his first venture to one of our outdoor comps - I am sure Danny will not mind me saying he was exceptionally anxious before his first flight, not least because he doesn't normally fly in as challenging wind conditions. However, he acquitted himself well and I'm pleased to say he ended up enjoying himself. Danny P is a rare species -an outdoor RC competitor who has over 30 years to go until his retirement!! Danny was flying a Clipped Wing Cub and was ably assisted by Andy Bowman (the model used to belong to Andy). Once more, improvement was achieved round on round and it is clear that the raw ability is there.

This is only the second year we have visited Blackpool and despite the conditions the entry level was much higher this year and I have no doubt this shall continue in 2021 as I feel there may be a Scottish contingent joining the party.

Pontefract: 11th October '*Lovely new runway, shame about the wind direction!*' - Steve Jackson

The 11th of October saw us at Pontefract for a rearranged scale event run with Social Distancing. For the event to go ahead I had to complete a Covid risk assessment, I had not done any Risk Assessments since I retired and completing it reminded me of just one more reason why leaving work has been such a good career move!

Since we were last at PANDAS they have had their strip levelled and extended to provide an excellent venue and, as always, we received a very warm welcome from club members. The weather was cooperative in that the 'risk of showers' did not materialise, but a stiff breeze persisted throughout the day and was cantankerous enough to be at ninety degrees to the runway. Although, the runway was plenty wide enough for into wind take-offs, landings were a bit tricky as the 'no fly' areas made for some tight turning and side slipping on approach. That there were no incidents on landing is a testament to the general high standard of flying.

Pontefract: 11th October - Photos by Danny Fenton



Twelve entrants eventually flew out of a pre-entry of fifteen. Colin Terry of the host club was unfortunate in having retract problems which meant we did not get to see his lovely Sea Fury in action and Dave Toyer suffered a take-off mishap in the first round which caused a lot of damage to his Tiger Moth. Fortunately, this was his 'second string' Tiger and not his super scale version. This reduced the 'field' to ten. The strong cross wind did catch a couple of people out (including myself) with models drifting back toward them during manoeuvres, but some good scores were returned nonetheless and it gave Alan Glover the opportunity to invent a new aerobatic manoeuvre that no one had ever seen before! Unfortunately, it looked nothing like what he had told the judges he was going to do!

For my money the day belonged to Martin Fardell with his large and extremely lightly loaded electric powered Blackburn Baffin which flew majestically and demonstrated Martin's mastery of rudder control as he flew straight down the strip with the model crabbing to maintain heading against the side wind. All credit however, must go to Adrian Hayward who flew his Super Cub accurately and consistently to take first place. Adrian has come on in leaps and bounds recently and is definitely a man to watch. It was really refreshing to see non-aerobatic aircraft taking first and second slot on a breezy day! Andy Bowman flew his venerable Tiger Moth with great skill to take third place, pipping Geoff Brown's Tigercat by a single point! Another highlight for Andy was that he managed to go the whole day without having to climb a tree! (See Buckminster report) Richard Crapp proves himself to be a man without fear as he continues to campaign with his World Championship team qualified Stampe, (my Avro is in cotton wool!)

Altogether a great day, with thanks going to the father and son team of Judges, Alex and Graham Kennedy, who once again proved that judging can be achieved without pieces of paper and helped move us another step into the twenty-first century! Thanks also to Martin for being CD and keeping things moving. Special thanks also goes to PANDAS members who gave up their days flying to accommodate us, without clubs who are willing to make such sacrifice our options would be limited indeed.

My Journey to the Judges chair (Or how Graham went Fishing for Judges) - Pete Fullard

Because of Covid restrictions this year the first competition Dave Knott & myself attended was Buckminster 18th of August, this time for me it was different as I would not be competing but would be assisting Dave as he was fielding his new large Hurricane & space was limited. I found that whilst walking up the flight line I was not being recognised by everyone and got a lot of surprised looks when the penny dropped, I was sporting a lockdown beard.

Not flying gave me the opportunity to watch the guys in good weather conditions, the flying std was very good, as I had not flown since September 2019 I was rather pleased not to be competing against them.. during the lunch break I got into conversation with Brian Wood, while he was sorting a problem on his Thunderbolt.. Having watched his first round flight I advised him of the errors he was making regard the calling of maneuvers, to late on starts, too early finish calls, leveling of wings & not reducing throttle after take off before calling finish, as it happened his wife could not do his calling for the second round so, I did it. I'm pleased to say he was very much improved, he however had retract problems on landing, but even though without those points he still scored higher than a complete first round score, This proves that you should have a frank debrief afterwards with your caller..

So ended my first comp as an official, was I going to do it again ? Well that question was soon answered by another Whats App message from Graham asking me to do so again as I was not

Baiting the hook

I believe my pep talk helping Brian, impressed Graham so much so because I received a message from him looking for suggestions for flight Judges at Druids on the 4th of September for The comp on the 6th, He already had Pat Blenkinsopp in the bag, I suggested TonyBull and John Thomas I even called Steve Fish but he had other commitments and would not be there.. Graham messaged me back, Tony isn't available, and not sure that John was active at that time, So I messaged back, if you're really stuck I would be willing to have a go although i'd never done so. But I have been a good critic in the past!

Another message just to set the hook, Thanks Pete. Really appreciate it, perhaps I could get you and one other to do a round each, Well I have to say I spent time reading up on the judges notes and rules plus watching videos of full size planes in flight cruising and aerobatics, of note all the Tiger moths did egg shaped loops not round..

Dave Knott and I got to the Druids comp a little late due to a diversion, because of a good turn out, Graham started the comp early having seconded Tony Bull to judge with Pat, I watched the flying & called for Dave when it was his turn to fly.

Round two my time in the judging chair started, clutching my Dave Knott supplied professional clip board I carried my chair out to join Pat on the fight line. Being worried I asked if he could keep an eye on me so after about four flights, I showed my score sheet to him to my surprise we were only % a mark different. See, he said its just like riding a bike..

Both Pat & I noted the flying was of a very high std that afternoon in almost perfect conditions, I Particularly enjoyed Martins Fardell flying his Giant Moth performing in a very realistic manner. There was only one Query made re my scoring, That was resolved in my favor by the CD.

So ended my first comp as an official, was I going to do it again ? Well that question was soon answered by another Whats App message from Graham asking me to do so again as I was not competing at comps but going anyway with Dave Would I like to judge at Warboys flying scale & Ripmax trophy comp this would mean Dave, Cary & myself would have to set off very early to arrive on time, he confirmed that was fine.

On the day, I was with Steve Kessel The day was cool and dry but a stiff breeze (I use the term loosely) competitors did struggle with the conditions that day in particular the biplanes and the Baffin of Martins he put in a heroic second flight, I can say I was willing each to do well confirming the center point had changed for the 2nd round to be very aware of the drift the wind strength causing most of the lower power & slower models to drift well right of the centre point ..

Being a Judge out in front is a very dangerous place too, as on the day the runway had a bumpy area that cause a few bounces 2 models bounced & veered towards us one So close I almost abandoned my position.. of note at the end Mine and Steve's scores compared well worst case 2 points in it .. Had A great time although I did feel chilly at one point 'must be an age thing' as Steve sat there in shorts.

At the end of the day most were acceptive of the scores in those less than perfect conditions By that I mean I was not called names at least I never heard any, For me I was very pleased with the new flight score sheet easy to follow in order the maneuvers making marking quick for those who did some turn around flights.

The hardest part I thought was the Realism in flight, flight display maneuver selection. One would expect warbirds / aerobatic types to do just that those, and at least one slow dirty pass as an option to show off the full flight envelope maybe, touch and goes only as a last resort as the chance of that going wrong is very high & approach landing points lost ..

It's my opinion that all those who compete have a go at judging noting mistakes being made and translating that to improve their own flying .. It's not easy, I know too well some of my flights as they say "all the right maneuvers but not necessarily in the correct order'.. brain to fingers glitch ..so in all did I enjoy the experience being a judge of my peers in competition Yes I Did..

And finally, heard on an airfield somewhere in 2020....

Dave Charles "I now know how the Typhoon glides. I'd rather not have found out how badly though"

John Carpenter "Did you have your gyro switched on Richard?"

Richard Crapp. "No, I wanted to experiment and see how it flew without it"

John Carpenter "Put it back on!"

Another John Carpenter classic was overheard in the pits at Buckminster on a day with a tricky cross wind. "Oh bu**er, I was hoping it wouldn't start!"

Alan Glover "Denise always likes it when I've been out flying. I am all talked out by the time I get home" - Denise is Alan's wife

And my personal favourite,

Steve Jackson when calling for John Carpenter "This isn't a calling card John, this is a wish list"

