

Woodspring Flyer



AUGUST 2006

WOODSPRING WINGS 2006 (or SIZZLING IN SOMERSET)

Wow, what a weekend! Temperatures hit 90 degrees on the 1st and 2nd July this year, with blue skies and light winds. It could not have been better for the 16th Annual Show, organised by Woodspring Wings MAC, at their model airfield between Clevedon and Yatton. Overnight this peaceful part of the North Somerset Levels is transformed into a small, bustling town with fields full of tents, caravans, trade-stands, cars, fast-food outlets, beer tent, boating pool, and around 6000 aero-enthusiasts. The Club was a bit worried that the England v. Portugal World Cup quarter-final might put some off, so a large screen TV was hired for the beer tent. Unfortunately it was not possible to arrange a better result for the punters!

2006 saw a change in organisation, with Bruce “Legs” McKay standing down from the role of impresario, having performed an outstanding service to the Club over many years. His was a hard act to follow, but Cliff Evans rose to the task magnificently so that (hopefully) the transition appeared seamless to those outside the Club.

Some found the heat over-powering and sought sanctuary in whatever shade could be found. Towards the end of each day many of us were visibly wilting but not so our perfectly-matched pair of Show Commentators who kept the public informed, amused and occasionally bemused. Their boundless energy and enthusiasm were breathtaking. Derek Small (authoritative and never flustered – well, hardly ever) occupied a lofty perch in the commentary box, whilst Adrian Charlish (provocative and manic) ran round the flight-line on the pretext of relaying information about pilots and models, but with his own secret agenda of mischief and mayhem. Many thanks guys – without you the Show would not be the same.

On Saturday evening, as the crowds dispersed and things cooled down, it was time for everyone to relax and let their hair down. Some repaired to the bar for booze and entertainment whilst others continued to fly until the sun went down. It seems that two bold pilots may have indulged themselves at the bar first, before flying their pylon racers in a spirited tail-chase around some trees on the far side of the river

As well as attracting more paying public, there were more pilots and models too. I can't possibly mention everyone but will pay tribute to those who won the trophies that are awarded at the end of each Show. Ali Mashinchy won the personal “Best in Show” and Ali's Models won the “Best Team” trophy. Steve Holland took the “Best Large Model” with his DH-88 Comet, Richard Rawle won the “Best Scale Model” with the Mk IX Spitfire, and Bob Blackmore was awarded the new “Superb Pilot and Style Icon” trophy which, I imagine, was specially created for him – I can't believe anyone else could fill those shorts quite so elegantly.

I realise that that most of the pictures accompanying this article feature the larger or more spectacular models, but mention must be made of the many other models that provided tremendous entertainment for the crowd. The crazy combat slot by the Oxford Panic team springs to mind, as does the latest in electricrery demonstrated by the Puffin Models team. Two helicopters shared a slot which ranged from the sublimely scale-like sound of the gas turbine powered Cobra of Dave Hollins, to the frenetic gor-blimey of Jamie Cole's Skyline Synergy 3D on speed.

It only remains for me to urge you to book the first weekend in July 2007 for the next Show and start ticking off the days on your calendars now.

Words by David James

Pictures by John Wheatley



The crowd at the Woodspring Show is as close as you can get to the models without actually touching them. In the foreground are three models scratch-built by members of the Chesil Beach MFC: Phil Parmiter's quarter-scale own design Me 109E (Z-62 power, and a brute to land!), and Don Billingham's Coastal Command B-17 and Short Sunderland. The Chesil boys are great ambassadors for their Club, even helping with the site clear-up after the Show finished. Go to www.chesilmfc.com for more information.



James Morris' 55% scale Pitts Challenger certainly does his sponsors proud. His prop-hanging routine left everyone open-mouthed – when they could actually see the plane behind the dense white smoke. The Pitts' size and inertia allowed the model to execute a slow and stately series of pirouettes (torque rolls) down the runway with the fin barely scraping the tarmac



Ali checks out the BAe Hawk before committing aviation. He acquired the model from Jet Masters World Champion Thomas Gleissner of Germany, and flew it for the first time on the Friday evening before the Show. Lack of familiarity didn't stop him putting on a scintillating display of precision aerobatics – just like it's full-size Red Arrows counterpart. All it needs is an exact scale replica of the BMFA 2005 Top Gun winner in the cockpit. This model was the prototype for the new Airworld kit. It is powered by a JetCat P-160, weighs 50 pounds, and carries a gallon of fuel.





Young Volcan Dil prepares the enormous 7 metre span ASK-21 jet-powered glider for flight. This was one of two near-identical models, piloted by Dave Stephens and Ali Mashinchy, that put on a beautifully choreographed duo display. The mirror image pass was especially memorable. Each glider weighs 25 kg and is powered by a JetCat P-120



Ali's Airworld Grumman Cougar has the graceful lines of many early jets that are sadly missing from the current generation of angular stealth aircraft. Seen here performing a slow axial roll a few feet above the tarmac, and also with speed-boards deployed prior to lining up for a perfect touch-down on USS Carrier "Woodspring". The Cougar features a sliding canopy and 5 halogen lights; it weighs 39 pounds and is powered by a JetCat P-160



Richard Rawle walks his own-design one-third scale Mk 9 twin-seat Spitfire back to the pits after another successful sortie that helped him win the "Best Scale Model" award. The model is based on a prototype that served with the Irish Air Force.



The striking plan-form of Steve Holland's half-scale DH-88 Comet is shown to good effect over the Somerset countryside. It could be a scene from an airshow in the 1930s. The Comet's cockpit is graced by an exact scale replica of the BMFA Top Gun winner for 2004. The model weighs 150 pounds and is powered by two 150 cc petrol 4-strokes.



Steve Bishop's Jet Provost has an attractive, chubby quirkiness that endears it to many. The model, from a German Jetwelt kit, took Steve and his son Dave one month to build. They liked it so much that they now market the kit under Probuild Models. It weighs 38 pounds, spans 110 inches, and is powered by a JetCat P-120.



The Woodspring Show is not just about model flying. From its very inception it has featured a wide range of full-size aircraft. Here we see the BBMF Dakota, Spitfire and Hurricane in "up close and personal" displays that are virtually unique to this small airfield. There was a special poignancy to this year's Show because the commentary was provided by ex-RAF pilot Rod Dean. As well as having inspected our Show on behalf of the CAA, Rod has also led some of the largest Spitfire formations since WW II. I was there when he lined up the 30+ formation over Duxford on the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain.



Ex Show Supremo Bruce “Legs” McKay was actually allowed to fly this year. He had the very responsible task of demonstrating the raffle prize Trainer (generously donated by Puffin Models) before the lucky winner got his hands on it.



There is a special place in the hearts of all Bristolians for the Anglo-French Concorde, although this one was built in Germany by Michael Bauer. Ali’s model flew with such smooth precision, complemented by high alpha passes with the droop snoot deployed. It is 4 metres long, weighs almost 20 kg, and is powered by two AMT Mercury turbojets.



A nice shot of Phil Parmitter’s Coastal Command Sunderland having drifted off course somewhere over the Bristol Channel and running low on fuel. It is “down amongst the weeds” desperately looking for a suitable stretch of water. The model was built from Jan Hermiken’s plans, spans 168 inches, weighs 46 pounds, and is powered by four ASP 91s. A dummy wheel in the hull, and skids on the floats, allows it to land on the ground just in case it doesn’t find that water!



One of the flying slots featured a nostalgic group of six vintage biplanes stooing around the field in a very leisurely fashion. Featured here are Phil Parmiter's Tiger Moth, which was the prototype for the quarter-scale Flair kit, and club-mate Don Billingham's unusual Airspeed Queen Wasp. The full-size aircraft was a radio-controlled drone with a ground-based transmitter weighing half a ton and had a 200 foot aerial! Don got to know Airspeed drone pilot, Ron Clear, who acquainted him with the idiosyncrasies of the sharply tapered wing. The model has a 93 inch span, weighs 33 pounds, and is powered by a Zenoah 45.

Yes, this is the Show that has everything. The Gary Blinko team put on several state-of-the-art rocket displays during the weekend, each one requiring special dispensation from Bristol Airport. Better to be delayed slightly on your return flight from Majorca than to encounter a rocket at 4000 feet!

