

## **Report on the 36th SAM35 AGM, held at Old Warden Aerodrome, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2016**

As with previous years, here is a synopsis of this meeting which was held in the Princess Charlotte Room of the Shuttleworth Collection, Old Warden Aerodrome.

The 36<sup>th</sup> Annual general Meeting was attended by Brian Lever (President), Ian Lever (Chairman), Kevin Richards, Andrew Housden, Steve Betney, Tony Goodger, Dick Roberts, Bill Longley, Colin Hutchinson, Alex Phinn, Peter Fox, Nick Zotov and 23 Members. Apologies were received from David Parker. The minutes of the 35<sup>th</sup> AGM were approved, and there were no matters arising from them.

*The President*, Brian Lever, reported on the Agenda item relating to Membership Development which had been his remit for the past 12 months. He outlined the history of SAM35 and its membership which by the end of the 1980s had reached over 1000 with the vintage movement gaining considerable press coverage. The first Yearbook was published in 1982, but the formation of various schisms championing specific area of vintage interest led to the breakaway formation of SAM1066 by David Baker and SAM Zero by Keith Harris. This understandably resulted in a drop in membership, but since 1999 SAM35 has been stable and a further 15 Yearbooks published. However, membership in recent years has slowly declined largely due to the ageing membership profile and perhaps a lesser interest in vintage aeromodelling. At the 2015 AGM the SAM35 Committee was given a mandate to experiment with new initiatives that could redress the loss of membership and make the Society more relevant to a younger age group who possibly started aeromodelling in the 1960s or 1970s. These initiatives have included refreshing the appearance of SAM Speaks by means of a new front cover design and columns dealing with RC and scale aeromodelling, two-page articles in BMFA News (for which we are paid), a complete revamp of the SAM35 website, special presentations to clubs and societies with a view to recruiting new members, a SAM presence at the BMFA Nationals and the Modelair events, and consideration of a new trading style for the Society, specifically "The Society for Aeromodellers". The latest membership figures would indicate that these initiatives are being to work. Understandably, there have been some detractors of these initiatives but credit must be given to Colin Hutchinson, Editor, for publishing letters expressing these doubts in Speaks, along with letters of praise to give a balanced picture. Going forward, Brian stressed that every opportunity must be taken to promote the Society and its objectives by means of a new SAM35 promotion pack, the development of youth membership, continued refreshment of our magazine, the publication of a new Yearbook, closer liaison with SAM1066, the re-introduction of SAM sweatshirts, and a need to adapt to the flying sites that remain now that Middle Wallop and Barkston are currently unavailable. Also, advertising space in "Speaks" has been taken by Belair and the Vintage Aircraft Company who include flyers explaining the benefits of SAM35 membership within their kits.

During the year there has been considerable debate relating to the trading style of SAM35. Ian lever outlined how the word "antique" possibly gave the wrong impression of the Society. After considerable discussion within the Committee it was felt that SAM35 should *trade* as "SAM35: The Society for Aeromodellers" with the emphasis on aeromodelling rather than antique. Dick Hardwick felt that the old title using antique was acceptable, but Nick Zotov emphasised the collective view that the move forward was the way to go. Additionally, Ian pointed out that Alex Whittaker of RCM&E is giving positive support to SAM35 because of our new focus, and Brian lever stressed that we need to preserve our heritage but move forward to attract new interest and thus halt a potential decline in the Membership, the new recruits building and flying the models that relate to *their* youth. Another member emphasised that SAM35 members are

aeromodellers and not just "model flyers" with ARTF creations. A unanimous vote in favour of the revised trading style was registered by a show of hands.

*The Secretary*, Andrew Housden, then ran through a number of changes that were deemed necessary when he took on the position of Secretary to update the Constitution and which had been circulated among the Committee for comment, discussion and agreement. Principally these relate to optional honorary membership for Officers and Committee members, the election of new Committee members, the secondment of members onto the Committee, a clear definition of reasons for expulsion from the Society, and the notification of items for discussion under the heading of AOB at the AGM. Additionally, the new Society trading style has provisionally been incorporated, although it must be stressed that the name of the Society remains as "The Society of Antique Modellers: Chapter 35", and in response to the wishes of the Treasurer the financial yearend has been changed from 1 January to 31 December as this fits in better with membership renewals. The changes were accepted and ratified by a unanimous show of hands.

Reports were then received from the Chairman, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, R/C Secretary and C/L Secretary:

*The Chairman*, Ian Lever, explained that in his previous report he had identified three major challenges facing aeromodellers in general and the Society in particular: 1) Access to Flying Sites, 2) The age profile of the membership, and 3) The difficulty in recruiting and keeping committee members, event organisers and planners.

The cancellation of the 2016 BMFA National Championships at Barkston Heath is a powerful reminder of the difficulties we face. Additionally, there were doubts about whether the Free Flight Nationals would take place in May, but fortunately they went ahead and a good time was had by all with for once good weather. There is still doubt over the availability of Barkston Heath for any events in the future and there are few grounds for optimism. Also, permission to use Middle Wallop for free flight by SAM 1066 was withdrawn in April this year. Nevertheless, we continue to benefit from our relationship with Modelair at Old Warden for the Mayfly, Scale Weekend and Festival of Flight events which are supported and enjoyed by many of our members, and our relationship with the BMFA has meant that we were able to run many competitions at this years Free Flight Nationals which proved to be a successful event for the Society. Additionally, the BMFA have managed to identify or retain the use of sites for competition use; these include Salisbury Plain for Free Flight, and RAF Honington in Suffolk for this years scale C/L and Radio Nationals. Many SAM35 members were involved in this years Indoor Nationals at Wolverhampton, and for the first time SAM35 had its own competition for SAM members, won this year by your President. We have also been able to use the fantastic facility of Manchester Velodrome at BMFA organised events.

The BMFA continues its work to secure the use of a new National Flying Site and as a BMFA Specialist Body we expect to be able to make good use of this facility when important legal, financial and planning issues have been resolved. At that time, hopefully, there will be a site where a major showcase event like the Nationals can be held.

In terms of the age profile of the membership, last year we identified the threat to the continued existence of the Society as a result of its declining membership. Members at the 2015 AGM authorised the committee to take action to increase the recruitment of new members through experimental marketing approaches. However, we continue to lose members largely through the effect of having an ageing membership profile, but we have taken a number of initiatives led by our President to attract new members with a younger look to them; to date this has attracted 42 new members. Of particular note is

our column in BMFA News, the re-introduction of a Radio Column in 'Speaks by Mike Goulette, the introduction of a Junior Members Scheme and a focus on promoting the Society as a home for people who use traditional skills and materials to build and fly model aeroplanes. Not unexpectedly, this new approach has generated debate on the Pages of "Speaks" and no doubt elsewhere but we remain committed to working to keep SAM35 alive by rejuvenating the membership.

In terms of recruiting people to run the Society and events, we are very fortunate to have people who are prepared to give up their time to help run the Society on our behalf. The difficulty in recruiting people to run the Society was noted last year, but we were fortunate in having volunteers from the floor to fill two positions: Webmaster and PRO. Both these are critical to keeping us in the public eye and how we are seen by potential members. Nick Zotov volunteered to take over the running of the Website for a limited period. His work on the site has been inspirational. Not only has he overhauled the site technically to make it easier to manage but he has driven changes to the content of the site to make it current, interesting and useful. His work to ensure that rules of all our competitions are up to date and in one place was a major undertaking. Nick deserves our thanks for a job well done over the last year. Alistair Simpson took on the job of PRO at a critical time and introduced us to the wider BMFA membership through his column in BMFA news and ensured coverage of SAM35 in the wider aeromodelling press.

Finally, Ian stressed that SAM35 Speaks is the cornerstone of the Society; it is why many members join and is fantastic value for money. Colin Hutchinson, our editor, has transformed the magazine into an easy to read offering with a new look and feel. His changes have generated a lot of comment, but it is clear that the vast majority of our members welcome the change he has brought – indeed, we are fortunate to have an active, competent and dedicated committee working on our behalf.

The Treasurer/Membership Secretary, Kevin Richards, circulated his annual report together with a statement of income and expenditure, plus the balance sheet. He explained the reasons for changing the accounting period to 1 January – 31 December; principally these were to bring the membership and financial years into line. The 15-month accounting period covered by this AGM shows a loss of £2,890. On paper this is a disappointing result, but if the income of approximately £1800 over the last (and extra) 3 month period is weighed against the expenditure of £4,200 for the same period, it is possible to say that our normal 12 month period would have produced a loss of around £500. This discrepancy will not happen in future years and things will be clearer. Also the accounts they show that income was down by £1300 from the previous year, the main cause of this being a loss in subscription income of £965, a £280 loss from events income and Yearbook sales down by £220. There were small losses in other income streams but a fair increase was seen in donations which were £261.00. In terms of expenditure, most streams saw a decrease, but magazine printing and mail costs showed big rises due to the extra 3 months accounting period. Administrative costs were down by £351 to £847.00 and the balance carried forward was £29,497.00. Subscriptions for 2017 are unchanged, and it was agreed by a show of hands that Roger Stonelake, formerly H.W, Renwick & Co, continue as Examiner.

In terms of membership, this was down by around 40 at the end of the year. At the AGM in July 2015 it was stated that we would make recruitment of new members a priority. By the end of 2015 we had managed to recruit around 20 new members, which actually means that 60 or so of the 2014 members failed to re-join. Some of this number is due to the demise of members or increasing age and infirmity, the rest may be down to either not feeling that SAM 35 is the organisation for them (some relatively new members failed to re-join), forgetfulness, or even some intrinsic failure within the reminder system we use. Up to the date of the AGM we have managed to recruit 43 new members. We still have a problem in this area in that we have currently about 50

pre-existing members who have not so far renewed; this does not include the 8 or 9 members who have died since the start of the year. SAM35 currently has a total of 672 paying members, including 30 overseas. Additionally, investigations are underway to assess alternative methods such as direct debit for members to pay their subscriptions, and paid advertising in Speaks by companies such as Belair and the Vintage Model Company is beginning to generate an income stream that will become apparent in the 2017 accounts.

The R/C Secretary, Bill Longley, explained that RC events run included vintage power duration, vintage precision and single channel spot landing. Vintage power duration ran over 10 events through the year with the best 6 scores to count for the Tasma Trophy. This generated a very good entry at the Nationals with several spectators expressing interest, some not aware such a competition existed. VPD was decentralised with Wes Denton flying at Beverly, Bill Longley at Blanford and Ian Lever/Andy Brough at Rochdale with scores emailed to a coordinator. Thanks are due to Leon Cole of Belair for the donation of prizes. Additionally, a new concept was tried in the summer months of having a similar decentralised competition a Wednesday evening, with the flights to be made between 5 pm and 6:30 pm. This proved to be very acceptable. Also, two extra events were run at the Old Warden meetings, these being restricted to the 0.8 cc / 100 watts class to show that it was fully acceptable to be able to coordinate among the freeflight fraternity at this restricted venue. Overall results of the Tasma Trophy 2015 were: 1st Wesley Denton, 2nd Ian Lever, 3rd Bill Longley.

A model of exceptional note through the year was the KK Halo the with 100 watts electric power, flown by Ian Lever.

2016 brought the Eurochamps to Belgium during the last week of June with over 10 events during the six competition days. The only British person at this event was Neil Sommerrin who claims to represent the UK on the International committee, but he is neither a member of SAM35 nor 1066.

The Editor, Colin Hutchinson, reported that the redevelopment of Speaks has largely finished. The most notable change has been, of course, the front cover (which seemed to cause a few readers to wake up and take notice), but the section headings will continue to be adjusted in a small way to accommodate changes to the writers and subjects. Also, several of our regular contributors have recently been unwell to some degree or other. The net result is that some subjects have not been covered, so there is a potential anger of copy shortfall. Accordingly, members are asked to think about what would be of interest in the magazine, and if they see an interesting idea, model or person write to Colin and tell him about it, but bear in mind that a contributor has to be found to write about it.

The Webmaster, Nick Zotov, explained that the SAM 35 website had been coded in a form quite frequently used for corporate websites, but was unusual for the site of an amateur society. Accordingly, it has been redeveloped into a form that someone familiar with Word would find fairly easy to cope with as webmaster. There were some development problems, but these have now been resolved. The inherited site and database were unencrypted and on shared servers so it has been unadvisable to offer some services which would have been useful, but would have required members' details, for which we did not feel we could give the necessary privacy protection. As members will have seen, the website has during the year been completely refreshed and the opportunity taken to update the SAM35 rules contained therein. Nick explained that personal problems would prevent him continuing as webmaster after the 2016 AGM and accordingly, the Chairman thanked Nick for his considerable efforts, a sentiment that was reflected in a round of applause for the members.

The Control Line Secretary, Peter Fox, stated that he had not prepared a formal report as there was little for him to say. However, profile Weatherman is going reasonably well although recent participation has fallen, and two new classes relating to "profile proto" using 29-size loop scavenged or F2D silenced engines had been introduced. Additionally, "Taster Stunt" was increasing in popularity and this year 27 models had been entered for SAM35 competitions. There was some associated discussion concerning the grass length at Old Warden which Peter Fox agreed to take up with Shuttleworth.

Election/Re-election of Officers was as follows:

- a) Vice Chairman – No nominations
- b) PRO – Alistair Simpson volunteered to fill this vacancy for a further period of 1 year.
- c) FF Secretary – John Ashmole has offered to undertake this role; accordingly he was proposed by Alistair Simpson and seconded by Any Brough.
- d) Webmaster – Andrew Green said that he was willing to take over as Webmaster; he was therefore proposed by Peter Fox and seconded by Ian Lever.

All other officers were willing to continue for a further year. However, a situation has now arisen whereby the change to the AGM date plus the point at which previous committee members had resigned means that some committee members are overdue for re-election and others would have stood for re-election in 2016 had the AGM been in November. All the committee members present, with the exception of Nick Zotov who agreed to act as webmaster for one year, stated that they were willing to continue in office. In view of the difficulty in attracting members to serve on the committee, and there being no nominations for any of the committee positions (with the exception of John Ashmole as FF Secretary and Andrew Green as Webmaster), it had been suggested that one third of the committee should be notionally re-elected and their positions ratified at this AGM, these being those longest in post; accordingly, Bill Longley, Ian Lever, Steve Betney and Tony Goodger are to be re-elected at the July 2016 AGM. Andrew Housden, Kevin Richards, Colin Hutchinson and Dick Roberts will be re-elected at the 2017 AGM, and Brian Lever and Peter Fox in 2018 assuming they are able and willing, at that date, to continue. The meeting accepted this proposal by a unanimous show of hands.

Life Membership: There are two vacancies for life members.

Yearbook: There are very few copies of the existing yearbook in stock. However, Roger Simmons (aka Jetex Jim) with help from Colin Hutchinson has volunteered to act as coordinator of material for a new issue, but at the moment his health issues are a concern.

Event Reports and Events for 2016/17: Ian Lever explained that decisions were awaited concerning the availability of Barkston for the FF National in 2017 (incidentally, the 2016 FF NATS had generated an income for us); additionally, it is hoped to work closely with Modelair at Old Warden in 2017.

Any Other Business: Andy Brough reported on a meeting with Ken Shepherd of Modelair concerning the restriction model weight and engine size operable at Old Warden that was deemed necessary following two recent incidents when models hit spectators. The current limitation is 0.8cc/049 for engines and a 500 gram maximum weight, and first indications are that this plus a more clearly defined flight line are working well. Some members felt that this would obviously preclude many models powered by, say, a Mills 1.3.

Ian lever reported that new SAM35 sweatshirts were available from him at a cost of £15.00, plus postage. Finally, he presented the Tasma Trophy for Vintage Power Duration to Wesley Denton.

*Date and Venue for the 37th AGM:* To be advised, but the use of Old Warden on a Modelair flying day was deemed to be a success and should be repeated, the exact date in July to be promulgated once the Modelair dates are known.

*Close of Meeting:* The President thanked all of the Committee for their work, and the meeting was closed at 14:55 PM.

Members who wish to see the full text of each Secretary's report or the AGM Minutes can obtain them from me on receipt of a large stamped addressed envelope; alternatively they are available by email. – Andrew Housden, Secretary.