

SAM 35 Chairman's Report 2017

In my last 2 reports I identified 3 major challenges facing aeromodellers in general and the Society in particular.

- 1 Access to Flying Sites
- 2 The age profile of the membership
- 3 The difficulty in recruiting and keeping committee members, event runners and planners.

I think these still remain the main challenges facing us, but there have been developments during the last year which lead me to be cautiously optimistic about our future.

Access to Flying sites

The cancellation of last years BMFA National Championships at Barkston Heath was a powerful reminder of the difficulties we face. However, we have had positive news this year with our involvement in a successful Free Flight Nationals in May, where we ran many successful competitions. We have this years Power Nationals in August to look forward to.

There is still however doubt over the availability of Barkston Heath for events in the future but it seems that for now a more positive view is being taken of our aeromodelling activities.

The permission to use Middle Wallop for free flight by SAM 1066 was withdrawn in April last year.

All is not gloom however. Thanks to the efforts of David Lovegrove, SAM35 ran an event which included Radio Control, Radio Assisted Free Flight and Control Line at Middle Wallop on the 11th June. There will be another event on the 8th October.

We continue to benefit from our relationship with Modelair at Old Warden. The Mayfly, Scale Weekend and Festival of Flight events are supported and enjoyed by many of our members.

The acquisition by the BMFA of Buckminster Lodge for the creation of a National Flying Site has been a positive development from SAM35's point of view. As a BMFA Specialist Body, we were invited to view the site and to bid for exclusive use of the site

As a result, we will be running a 2 day fly-in on the 2nd and 3rd of August and a one day competitive event on the 1st of October. At a recent visit to Buckminster to finalise the details of the upcoming event, it was pleasing to see the development of the site that had already taken place. The BMFA are keen for us to run events at Buckminster and we are already discussing with them events for next year. There will be the full range of traditional SAM35 activities and we are investigating the inclusion of the classic radio fraternity.

Many SAM35 members were involved in this year's Indoor Nationals at Wolverhampton and for the second year, SAM35 had its own competition for its members, won this year by your President.

The Age Profile of the Membership

In my last report I identified the threat to the continued existence of the Society as a result of its declining membership.

Members at last year's AGM authorised changes to the constitution of the Society which enabled us to take action to widen our membership base. The committee had previously been authorised to take action to increase the recruitment of new members through experimental marketing approaches.

Kevin's report shows that we continue to lose members, largely through the effect of having a predominantly ancient membership. We have taken a number of initiatives, led by our President, to attract new, younger, members.

Kevin's report shows that these have started to bear fruit, with 33 new members so far this year. However his report also shows we have 50 members who have not renewed. We clearly need to do more to attract and retain members and I am pleased that we have an enthusiastic volunteer, Roger Brown, who has offered to take over as our PR Secretary. Roger has lots of ideas on how we can make more people aware of our activities and I am confident that those efforts will be successful.

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 selling the Society as a home for people who use traditional skills and materials to build and fly model aeroplanes.

The new approach has generated debate on the pages of 'Speaks and no doubt elsewhere. ' I personally remain committed to working to keep SAM35 alive by rejuvenating the membership.

Finance

Our Treasurer's report for the year shows that we are financially stable and in a good position to develop further. I would like to thank Kevin for his work in keeping the society on a firm financial footing.

Recruiting People to Run the Society and Events

We are fortunate to have people who are prepared to give up their time to help run the Society on our behalf.

I noted the difficulty in recruiting people to run the Society last year. I was then fortunate in having volunteers from the floor to fill two positions, those of Webmaster and PRO. Both these are critical to keeping us in the public eye and how we are seen by potential members.

Alastair Simpson agreed to be our PRO until we could find a replacement.

Andy Green took over as Webmaster and has continued to develop and maintain our website, which is now a really useful window on the Society and its full range of activities.

Alastair who has acted as PRO since our last AGM, has now decided to stand down from the position. I would like to thank Alastair for overseeing our activities over the last year and in particular our continuing presence in BMFA News. There have been a variety of articles from members on all aspects of our activities, and this has been a useful promotional tool.

I am pleased therefore that Roger Brown has agreed to take over as our Public Relations Officer. Roger has many ideas on how we can raise our profile with potential new members and I am looking forward to a positive effect on membership numbers.

There have been a couple of developments. We have produced a second batch of SAM35 Sweatshirts and we now have two SAM35 banners to enable us to find each other more easily on the field.

The SAM35 Yearbook is always eagerly awaited. Unfortunately finding people who can not only mastermind its production, but also inspire people to produce content, is difficult. We need to renew our efforts to establish an effective team to produce the next Yearbook.

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 SAM35 Speaks into an easy to read magazine 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.

We are fortunate to have an active, competent and dedicated committee working on our behalf and I look forward to continuing to work with them to keep the Society an active force in preserving real aeromodelling.

