

Free Flight Report to the 2018 AGM of SAM 35.....John Ashmole

There is a degree to which the future of free flight in this country depends upon what we do since there are clearly serious problems affecting us at present. One of my tasks is to work alongside our friends in the FFTC in order that we may dovetail our activities with theirs. I am there to speak for the sports flyers and my "sports competition" colleagues. I am also pushing for a greater consideration of the future of our sport, and consequently "future planning" is climbing up the FFTC agendas.

I am writing in *Aeromodeller* occasionally on Small Field Flying, also in the 2018 Free Flight Forum Report (which has already generated support overseas,) and in *BMFA News*. A fuller account of life as a F/F CD will appear in the forthcoming SAM 35 Yearbook, although I hope this will not put you off buying a copy.

So far our well intentioned attempts to make proper use of this field (at Buckminster) have been of only limited success, although weather has been the main issue. The FFTC tried twice last Autumn and were blown off the field both times. They may yet attempt a Winter Series, and are considering the principle of "flexible dates." It may be worth trying this idea if SAM 35 is to have more three day bookings here & I will discuss this with the people who are likely to be involved. SAM 35 has not had the best of luck so far: although there is no reason why on a calmish day and after certain crops have been harvested that we should be able to fly to a ninety second max. Our next attempt at running a F/F contest will be here on Saturday 7th July, with the "Ajax and Achilles" event. (I shall return to the use of this field on this later.)

As for the numbers who take part, the situation seems to be worse than I thought when taking over this job. Numbers tend to be low and consequently my job is not always as rewarding as it could be. There is a few stalwarts who try to support us in anything we try to do, and of course their presence is greatly appreciated. Also, some newcomers have joined us after experiencing the good-natured sporting atmosphere surrounding our competitions. However, I have been concerned that those who live away from the East Midlands do not receive the opportunities to join our events that I would like them to have. I'm pleased that the "March Wynde," although fought out mostly on Barkston, was won on Bodmin Moor. However, limited response to the Postals has resulted in the withdrawal of one, leaving only the "Lulu" contest, which is of course a continuation of a longer tradition. Much effort has gone into trying to set up a series of events, often from scratch, and I listen to competitors requests in the hope that I am providing what people want.

Clearly, those who DO attend our events are having a good time and I get very strong support from those who do participate. Certain categories are attracting particular support, and I am beginning to identify certain "Blue Riband Events" which will be kept on the Calendar whatever happens. The "March Wynde" for Mini Vintage Rubber, the 4oz/8oz Wakefield contests (they will be separate next year) and Under 25" Vintage Rubber at the Nats, the Ajax/Achilles event, the P30 Area Postal (which is important to endorse the fact that we are not exclusively a Vintage club) the Masefield Scale comp at Old Warden and of course the Rubber Bowden, which was the success story of last year.

... I certainly wish to keep the tradition of small field flying at Old Warden alive, hopefully reaching down to those enthusiasts who live nearer the South of England and so the three weekends will each continue contain a contest or two on the Sunday.

Returning to the Buckminster field, and refusing to give up in my determination to see a comprehensive free flight meeting at this venue, I have put together on an FFTC booking, a programme of events for Sunday 2nd September (a date which has become available by the enforced move of the PMFC Flying Aces to the following Sunday.) This enables us to promote a kind of "Small Field Double Header" over that week. The playbill contains comps run by BMFA, some by SAM 35, some by a local club (PMFC) and a scale contest. Sports flyers (of whom we see too few these days) and trimmers are welcome. In doing this, I am trying to show the FFTC that there is good support for such events. Consequently the attendance of SAM 35 Free Flighters would be more than welcome.

Finally, I am more than willing to continue to promote our Calendar of events for a few years more, and which has provided me with more good days than bad. Just.