

Ashmole: Free Flight

I shall keep this fairly short, as there is little point in repeating what has appeared in print, or is already well known.

I'll deal with the past, present and future of the situation in f/f.

Past:

My interest in doing something for F/F began with the “Conference on the Future of Free Flight” held in February 2016. I did not attend it, but I could perhaps be considered to have done as much to aid its future as anyone else in the country.

Present:

(Referring to the paper “I am a Free Flighter, what can SAM 35 do for me?” from Speaks, May '19.)

So we have a comprehensive calendar of events covering a wide range of classes. No model needs to be heavier than 250 grammes, which may help to overcome a future problem. Some contests are of my own creation, such as the March Wynde, the Rubber Bowden and the Rubber Rally, some have been passed down to us by the FFTC such as the 4 oz and 8oz Wakefield classes and Lulu Duration, some have been included by request of competitors, such as Classic A/1 and the “Ajax and Achilles” event. Our aim is to please the customer.

We had 58 entries at the Nationals, which may be something of a record for SAM 35, and a dozen entered a very competitive “March Wynde” earlier in the year. It is pleasing to see that several competitors of national standing are now joining us: even more pleasing that they do not always win!

To provide some cachet for each event, I am trying to provide a specific name for each of the non-Nationals contests, as that has the effect of attracting serious and hopefully long-term interest. I am dropping some of the lesser precision contests, and I may hand the Earl Stahl scale contest back to SAM 1066 now that they can fly at Middle Wallop as most interest in that class seems to come from that area.

This, however, is probably about as far as “Shallow End” Free Flight can be developed, giving the limited number of actual competitors available. A few new folk are joining us, and I am getting good responses from magazine articles in BMFA News, Aeromodeller and of course Speaks, but there are limits. I would not be pleased if, on a day of good weather, entries fell below a dozen. Please note that, unlike many politicians, I am not making promises about what I *may* do in future, but am describing what I have already done.

Future:

On a wet and windy day on Barkston, (and there have been many) I made a promise to Ian Lever that I would do this job for five years. That would really be almost six, since I

had done some preparation prior to joining this committee. Now, subject to members' approval at the appropriate time, I have two years to go. This would be greatly aided, *and perhaps significantly extended*, if members of the club would be willing to assist by directing some of the contests themselves. Better still, if some folk would take over a particular event and become its "owner." I can supply publicity, paperwork, prizes and anything else that is required, the only stipulation being that I do not always have to be present. Or if present, I could just concentrate on trying to win one of our excellent trophies.

It may be an overstatement, but maybe we are offering a lifeline to many genuine free flieders whose futures are being affected by the increasing performance of contemporary models and the progressive limitations on space, one of the reasons why the 2016 Conference took place. We offer a balance of vintage and modern classes, of duration and precision contests, and, although I mention it only at the end, **we wholeheartedly welcome sports flyers at all of our events.**

I hope that my talk at the next AGM will focus on those people who are going to carry this work forward. **Please spread the word about this need for assistance now that the F/F Calendar has grown**, then it will be secure for the next few years..