

BUCKMINSTER TETHERED CAR TRACK PROGRESS & APPEAL.

The phenomenal and long awaited news is that digging work started on the construction of the tethered car track at the BMFA National Flying Centre at Buckminster on 12th September. Since my articles on the subject in the Nov 2018 and Jan 2019 issue of SAM35 Speaks there have been many positive developments on this project, and the commencement of the digging works for the excavation of the trenches for the circular car track annulus and centre at the chosen site to the SE of and alongside the events building is a long awaited milestone. The image here, lifted from the BMFA's latest Buckminster NFC's blog which also contains some further images, shows the results of the initial digging works. We have identified a contractor to next lay the foundations and pour the concrete to get the basic track constructed and maturing, hopefully before any hard winter frosts set in. The cash donations to date of just over £5100 from a relatively small number of individuals from the tethered car interested community (most within SAM 35 to date) are anticipated to cover equipment hire and the contractor's quoted charges, enabling work to commence. Any of those who doubted that this project would ever happens can start to believe now.



Since Dick Roberts and I made the initial contacts with very receptive and helpful BMFA representatives some 3 years ago, much planning and design work has been done, but activity has really accelerated since May 2019 when we were offered a suitably sized piece of land on which the track could be sited, uncoupled and separate from the intended control line hard circle project which is now to be to the NE end of the site.



Oliver Monk and I have been working the design and project planning activities for the car circle, recently joined by a very proactive Alex Phinn and also abetted by Kevin Richards, so your SAM 35 Committee are very well represented. The image here shows a line up of the usual villains, at the very epicentre of the plot, marked by the white stake in the ground, shortly before digging works started.

Manny Williamson, BMFA Buckminster's Development Official, and the Buckminster volunteers lead by Richard Phillips are most actively involved. Indeed, Manny operated the digger himself between his myriad other duties to do the circle site preparation work, and Richard and the volunteers will be continuing their stalwart works at the Centre to help with the construction phases. It is amazing what they have achieved on the various building development projects there so

far, which is very much to be applauded.

Now, to the nub of it, this is the time for a hopefully final appeal for donations towards the tethered car circle fund, to ensure that we have a well appointed circle available and in active use for the 2020 season. As mentioned, we can probably complete build of the basic track with the funds raised to date, but to have a facility that we can all be really proud of and use for many years to come, we need to raise further money to cover the cost of some or hopefully all of the following features:

- A custom built centre pylon with horsing platform.
- Proper landscaping and grassing of the track surrounding and pit area and raised spectator viewing area (a flat topped bund to be constructed from the spoil from the excavations).
- Hire of concrete surface grinding equipment to ensure a suitably flat and level running surface for the track, if necessary.
- Paving, or at least stepping stones, from the track entrance to the centre circle.
- If drainage of the track area proves to be necessary, two straight drainage runs may need to be excavated at either end of the track into the existing ditch to the south.

- A concrete starting platform area about 8 feet long by 5 feet wide butting up to the outer track edge and level with it, and an overlapping safety fence around this are very desirable for ease and safety of operation.
 - 360 degree safety chain link fencing around the circle, not just partial.
 - Extra safety fencing to separate the pits area from the spectator area on the bund.
 - Ideally, instead of a grassed area between the track and the circle centre, a low maintenance surface of Astroturf/Lazy Lawn can be laid.
 - An electronic timing device with preferably a large digital display for track times and speeds, ideally viewable for spectators. Otherwise, get your stopwatches out.....
 - A Timing Station (solidly built or stout wooden hut, with hinged front for the timer and/or event CD to operate from. This could also be used for safe storage of timing, pylon and other equipment if secure enough.
 - Sets of made-up tether wires for organised event/competition use.
 - Awards/BMFA Trophies for car event winners/class record holders at the Buckminster track.
 - Display car models in cases for the main site exhibit/office area.
- Please support SAM 35 and the BMFA in this appeal if you possibly can, and you can help resurrect the relatively dormant interest in tethered car modelling in the UK, compared with its heyday back in the 1940s up to the mid-1950s, and then have great fun watching or participating in the running and racing of our vintage and sports style cars on our national modelling site. Many of us (me included) are no longer able to participate in our beloved aeromodelling activities in the way that we would wish but can still really enjoy building and then the running of our cars on a tether wire on a track which is much less physically demanding, and being ground-based rather than airborne, will still be possible under any currently foreseen restrictions from CAP1775 drone-driven legislation (like our beloved control line aircraft if the latest news from the BMFA's Dave Phipps is agreed, see the BMFA's main website latest news section).

HOW TO DONATE.

Preferably, make out your cheque to the BMFA and write "BMFA Buckminster Tethered Car Track" on the back, and either send it to me at 20 Fairfax Road, London NW6 4HA) for batching up to transmit to their finance department, or if you prefer, directly to Sian Sargeant at BMFA Chacksfield House, 31 St Andrews Road, Leicester LE2 8RE. If you wish to donate by means other than by cheque, please contact Sian at this address or by email at sian@bmfa.org for banking details.

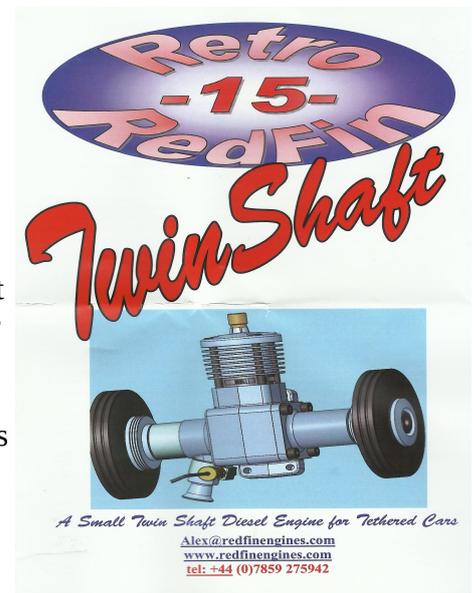
Background Information/Reminders.

You will need to be a paid up BMFA member with current standard flying insurance to use the track at Buckminster; this standard insurance covers our activities.

You do not need to be a SAM 35 member, but you really should be you know.

The Buckminster track will only be suitable for the operation of vintage and sports style cars, not FEMA style racing cars, for which very specialised tracks are necessary.

ADVERTISEMENT! Alex Phinn has rather cooperatively, and not entirely by coincidence, very recently released the Retro 15 Twinshaft 2.5cc engine illustrated in support of the tethered car modelling revival, the only commercial, currently available car engine of this type. It is a top quality unit and at a very competitive price, so contact him for availability as it is made in batches in the Ukraine. Later this year, there will also be a cast aluminium base pan available to suit this engine, together with drive wheels and front wheels with a sprung suspension axle, and also a fuel tank and cut out, all suitable for making a tethered car at around 1/12 scale. More details will follow when these parts become available, but this will be a simple way for those who do not have or want to use model engineering workshop equipment to build cars, as it will be largely just a careful screwdriver and spanner assembly and paint job to get a very attractive, effective and rather fast rolling chassis on which to build a body of your choice (1950s F1 vintage types are ideal!). Information on how to do design and make bodies within the capabilities of any aeromodeller worth his salt will be published in SAM 35 Speaks in due course. It is likely that special single class events at the Buckminster track will be organised for cars built on this specific rolling chassis, watch this space.



In case you have never encountered Hugh & Lynn Blowers' excellent website covering tethered car (and also hydroplane) activity, spend some happy web browsing time visiting www.onthewire.co.uk to see the history and background to this hobby, particularly the Builds and Restorations and the Retro Racing Club meetings coverage, and the From the Pylon narrative update, published around the 1st day of each month. You should get lots of ideas, information and inspiration here. Delve back into your latest SAM 35 Yearbook Number 15 for the two tethered car articles it contains, essential and entertaining reading!

Just to get your imagination racing regarding possible car projects you might wish to put on your project dreams' list to construct to run on the track, here are some thumbnail images of cars I have built over the past few years to give you some ideas:



