

Report on the 43rd SAM35 AGM, held at the BMFA Visitor Centre, Buckminster, 12th October 2024

As with previous years, here is a synopsis of this meeting which was held in the Events Building at the BMFA Visitor Centre, Buckminster. Committee members present were Andy Brough (President), Kevin Richards, Andrew Housden, Steve Betney, Bill Longley, Colin Hutchinson, Mark Robinson, Doug Hunt, Alex Phin, and 25 Members. Apologies were received from Ian Lever, Brian Lever and Trevor Tennant. The minutes of the 42st AGM were approved, and there were no matters arising from them. Reports were received from the Chairman, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, CL Secretary, Editor, and RC Secretary:

- 1) *The Chairman* It was explained that due to health issues which at the moment prevented Ian Lever from driving and therefore attending meetings, he had nevertheless prepared a report relating to the prior twelve months rather than the year ending December 2023. This was read out by Andy Brough. In it, Ian commented that his first report as SAM35 Chairman was in 2008. It identified the challenges facing the Society and each of these had been addressed in subsequent reports. Basically, these are:

- Access to flying sites
- Age profile of the membership
- The difficulty in recruiting committee members and event planners

Also, The CAA overview of model flying activities appeared to have settled down but recent consultation by the them on all aspects of UAVs raises concerns that we may be faced with more hurdles and bureaucracy, or if things go well possibly less for members of recognised bodies like the BMFA.

Access to Flying sites

A continuing problem. Modelair under new management ran Mayfly and Scale Events in July and the festival of flight in September at Old Warden and we were able to run events in April, June and the event in October at Buckminster. It seems however that there is uncertainty about whether Old Warden events will run in 2025. SAM35 have again been involved in controlling access to the Free Flight/ Radio Trimmed model flying area, and Paul Eggleton deserves our thanks for spending hours sitting at the gate to the airfield checking that the rules are being complied with. He does however require support and we need to ensure that reliable volunteers are in place to share the load. Our Buckminster dates for 2025 have been confirmed. In addition, we have had the very successful Bucky Power Strugglers events at Buckminster which attract an increasing band of enthusiastic sports flyers and now have additional dates for 2025. Your President is to be commended for his enthusiastic promotion of these activities. The tethered car track at Buckminster continues to grow in popularity and has been much used this year. We are now in the fortunate position of having Nigel Bathe as our Tethered Car Secretary he has given increased momentum to these activities. The unavailability yet again of Barkston Heath for the Free Flight and Power Nationals was a disappointment. Although events were run elsewhere to compensate, they were unable to replicate the scale of a Barkston Heath event.

The Age Profile of the Membership

Kevin's report shows that membership has shown a further slight decline now at 500 with the rate of losing members exceeding the number of new recruits. The underlying trend however is clear and without an increase in new members the Society will continue a gradual decline.

Finance

Our Treasurer's report shows that we continue to be financially stable, although there is another deficit for the year. Ian thanked Kevin for his work in keeping the society on a firm financial footing. Kevin, through his sales of SAM branded Redfin engines, the 35, 50,75 and most recently the very practical 125 and this year the 250 and 100, has managed to secure useful additional revenue for the society which has lessened the impact of reduced revenue from membership.

Recruiting People to Run the Society and Events

We have an excellent committee working on your behalf. All our activities would not happen without them. I have been keen to talk to anybody who would like to be involved in helping to run the Society and its events. I was particularly pleased to be able to have a candidate, Doug Hunt ready for your approval today and that Andrew Housden has agreed to continue as Secretary until such time as we are able to find a replacement.

Andy Brough agreed to take over as President last year and he has applied his usual enthusiasm to the role, in particular promoting the Bucky Power Strugglers meetings and the associated What's App group. I have been warning of the dire consequences there would be if we had technical problems with the Web Site. This year it happened and for a time the web site was down whilst I had to me incomprehensible conversations with our Web Host. I was very relieved when Mike May volunteered to try and sort it out, which he did very quickly and then delighted when he offered to take over as Webmaster. In addition to keeping it going Mike has made improvements to the site. We have also been fortunate in having Mark Robinson promoting our activities on Facebook and encouraging real aeromodelling in his You Tube videos. We also have a new C/L Secretary in Trevor Tennant who is making his presence felt in "Speaks". We still however need people to fill the vacant positions as Free Flight Secretary and Public Relations Officer, the latter being critical to maintaining our profile and attracting new members.

Conclusion

The challenges from slowly declining membership remain. This is having a slight impact on both our finances and our ability to manage ourselves effectively. The continued unavailability of Barkston Heath and uncertainty over Old Warden are offset by the relationship built with the BMFA. In my time as Chairman our recognition as a BMFA Specialist Body and our regular use of the National Flying Site here at Buckminster have been positive developments.

Ian commented that despite the difficulties mentioned the Society is in good health but a watchful eye needs to be kept on its finances and membership. In particular the esteem in which SAM35 Speaks is held not just by our members but by others in the Aeromodelling press is encouraging; it continues to be the glue that holds the Society together and thanks must go to all the contributors and especially Colin for the excellent job he does of pulling all those contributions together every month.

- 2) Treasurers Summary Kevin Richards circulated the accounts/membership report as of 31st December 2022. He commented that the year's accounting period showed a deficit of income versus expenditure of £1,927 compared to the last accounting period which showed a deficit of £260. Whilst this is disappointing it is, non the less, a figure that, as Treasurer he thought to be acceptable in the circumstances.

The reasons for these figures are as follows: although overall income was down by £4,995 at £18,625, the overall expenditure was also down by £258 at £25,747. Subscriptions were higher than the previous accounting period partly due to the rise in subscription fees compared to the year before as some subscription fees for F/Y 2024 were received before the end of F/Y 2023 (£30 compared to £27.50 for F/Y 2022) . Engine sales were lower by £8,240 at £4,103, although thankfully the return from selling the engines was still profitable at £723, and had it not been for that we would have experienced a still higher deficit. Again, there was no income from any events held. On the expenditure side, magazine printing and posting costs remained virtually the same. Most other costs were broadly in line with the year before, except for £750 included against magazine expenses to enable the Editor to upgrade his computer.

Overall, Kevin was reasonably satisfied with the performance in what was a poor financial year for most organisations, and asked for a formal adoption of the accounts. A copy of the accounts for the period ending 31st December 2023 will be published in SAM Speaks.

- 3) Membership Total membership at the end of the year 2023 was 521 UK and overseas members; this figure does include life members, committee members who don't pay and those organisations and overseas members who receive free copies of the magazine which amounts to 18 non-paying members. The total membership figure is down on the previous year when we ended with 569 UK and overseas members, so we ended the year with 48 less members than we started. We only recruited 17 new members during 2023 and 13 members re-joined after a lapse, also 8 members died and the other lost members failed to renew. The downward trend has continued into the current year 2024, we are currently at a total of 499, including 12 overseas members. So far in 2024,43 new members have joined including 4 who have re-joined after a lapse. The work done by the Bucky Power Strugglers group and the SAM 35 Tether Car enthusiasts are largely responsible for the considerable increase in new memberships so far this current year, but we really do need to continue to push for new members.

On a more positive note, it was encouraging to see that more members took the opportunity provided to pay their subscriptions by bank transfer.

- 4) The Editor Colin Hutchinson reported on another year, another 12 issues of Speaks, in which the assembling of articles does did get any easier. With the change of contributors that has happened this year readers will have noticed the change of emphasis, possibly even a slight change of direction. He was pleased that we have been able to include more copy about indoor flying, but would still like to expand this area to include the fun flying side, and it is hoped that we can encourage contributions to cover this very large subject. Finally, Colin mentioned Andrew Longhurst. In the October issue he will have reached a significant milestone - his 500th column. This is a remarkable achievement, and it is hoped that many will write to congratulate him. The committee will be marking this with a small gift.

5) The R/C Secretary, Bill Longley commented that the year has been beset with adverse weather. The intended 6 VPD scheduled meetings were only flyable on site at 3; Old Warden is now reduced to only 2 meetings, but did have reasonable turn out flying Class A only. It is intended to have some revision of rules in VPD in order to make the smaller classes able to compete with the very large Class C models, first order being to reduce power to maximum of 500 watts, also motor run timings to be increased for Sports Class models. For the VPD Wednesday evening decentralized competitions, use is still being made of the format of scores being achieved from the best flights in each calendar month, but for 2024 it was decided that the 4th, fly – off flight could be with no maximum time. 2025 will revert back to 10 minute maximum. KK 60 Pylon Racing was held at each meeting, Colin Hutchinson winning the Ernie Webster Shield at the meeting held at RNAS Merryfield, but there has been dwindle of entries. For 2025 rules are being formulated for a new class based on the very successful Tomboy competitions but now with 100-watt electric replacing the Mills 0.75. Motor run time and defined power train are being evaluated to give comparative performance in VPD Class A, as well as ability to run as its own class, especially at Old Warden.

Andy Brough reported a great year for the Power Strugglers meetings at Buckminster, all deriving great pleasure in flying vintage models in a noncompetitive environment, particularly in the evenings. Also, Wes Denton has run the Single Channel Spot and Precision at all meetings where weather made it possible, several of the scheduled events being curtailed.

At the conclusion of the report by Bill Longley, the following presentations were made:

- Tasuma Trophy for winner this year with Carafe: Jeff Fellows
- VPD Shield for winner this year of Wednesday evenings with Coffee Latte Glass: Colin Hutchinson
- Old Warden Class A winner Carafe: Colin Hutchinson
- Old Warden runner up Hiball Glass: Barry Hood
- VPD top Sports Class Carafe: Wes Denton
- VPD top I/C model Hiball Glass: Wes Denton
- VPD Most improved flyer Hiball Glass
- Fastest KK60 time winners Hiball Glass Colin Hutchinson
- VPD Model of the year Carafe VECTOR DIRECTOR: John Taylor
- Mini Scale glider Carafe: Barry Hood
- WD Spot Landing: Paul Jeffries
- Texaco Trophy, for WD Precision event: To be decided

The Belair Trophy was not awarded as the SAM Retrofest event had adverse weather. Also, Wesley Denton said that Mike Parker will be sponsoring the spot landing competitions

6) The CL Secretary, Mike May did not file a report relating to activities in 2023, but as Trevor Tenant had taken over from him in April this year the latter submitted a few notes and, in his absence, the gist of them were read to the Members by Andrew Housden. He said that writing "Wind in the Wires" has reignited his building and flying immensely. The weather generally has been a real challenge this last two years. To many they will tend to think that he was a model car racing person, but what is not generally known that in the first place he started flying control line models in mid-1962. Trevor was a member of the Leamington Spa Club "The Vultures" for some years but lack of finance really hampered much progress and he found slot car racing a cheaper alternative. As the money became easier, he resumed building control line models in the 1970s building a Nobler and enjoyed that greatly, keeping his interest by buying magazines until 1990s. It was at an Old Warden meeting that interest in control line was reignited. He joined the South Birmingham club around 2010 and stated build many stunt models and for the last 3 years he has been a member of the Nuneaton Model Flying Club. Trevor then went on to remark that people keep saying Control Line is dead. In his opinion, that is far from true, although the age of most of the participants is too high and attracting youngsters is very difficult. He has found the wealth of knowledge people are prepared to pass on very gratifying. Several new classes of activity have emerged. Stunt racing seems to be quite popular. The Voetsak class has seen numbers increase since the smaller version replaced fickle spark ignition original. In the new year weather permitting it is hoped to hold both the "Hewitt shield" for vintage control line stunt at the Campell field at Nuneaton, and later in the year there will be another attempt at running the "Absent Friends Trophy" at Buckminster during the midland area flying day. This event is for pre 1965 models with a restriction of engines allowed to be used

7) Membership Subscriptions It was recommended by the Committee that subscriptions remain at £30.00 for 2025.

8) Election of Examiner of Accounts It was proposed that Lyon & Co continue as Examiner. The proposal was supported unanimously.

9) Election of Officers Andrew Housden briefly reiterated the three-year rule for tenure of a committee member. Under this rule, Kevin Richards, Colin Hutchinson and Andrew Housden are eligible for re-election. All have agreed to continue, but Andrew has said that he will only continue in office until a replacement is found having wished to retire at this AGM. The appointments were unanimously ratified by the members present. Additionally, with the resignation of Ian Lever it is necessary to elect a new Chairman, a position which Doug Hunt has agreed to fill. Accordingly, his nomination was proposed by Roger Gedge and seconded by John Ashby. There were no applicants for the position of PRO or FF Secretary, but during the Committee meeting it was pointed out that a need exists for a liaison contact at every meeting who can coordinate what is happening where and when. To this end, Doug Hunt volunteered to deal with FF/RC assist (including scale), and the CL Secretary will be asked to do the same with CL competitions. Andy Brough will act as coordinator for all other events. In terms of a PRO, Mark Robinson explained that SAM35 now had 1200 followers on Facebook with the most popular posts seen by 30,000 people, half of which are in the UK. Facebook had also resulted in the recruitment of several new overseas members. In view of this, Doug Hunt had opined that Facebook was doing the job of PRO and

therefore it might be appropriate for Mark to act as PRO; this he has agreed to do. Continuing this theme, Doug has agreed to be FF Secretary; both positions were confirmed by the Committee and unanimously ratified by the members present

10) Life Membership Andy Brough suggested that Ian Lever be made a Life Member as a reward for his sterling service as Chairman. This had been unanimously agreed by the Committee.

11) Date and Venue for the 44rd AGM. To be advised, but most probably at BMFA Buckminster October, 2025.