

Report on the 41st SAM35 AGM, held at the BMFA Visitor Centre, Buckminster, 15th October 2022

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 Brian Lever (President), Ian Lever (Chairman), Kevin Richards, Andrew Housden, Andy Brough, Steve Betney, Bill Longley, Colin Hutchinson and Mike May plus 16 Members. Apologies were received David Brown, Tony Goodger and Alex Phin. The minutes of the 40th AGM were approved, and there were no matters arising from them. Reports were received from the Chairman, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, CL Secretary, FF Secretary, Editor and RC Secretary:

1) The Chairman, Ian Lever explained that although for historical and accounting reasons the financial reports cover the period to 31 December 2021 his report relates to the 12 months to date. He commented that three major challenges face aeromodellers and SAM35:

- Access to flying sites
- Age profile of the membership
- Difficulty in recruiting committee members and people to run events

Also, CAA Registration was an irritant, and COVID 19 remains a threat for the age group of the majority of our members although the latter has reduced with the high take up of vaccination. As a result, we have been able to run a well-attended programme of events this year.

Access to flying sites is a continuing problem. Modelair ran Mayfly and Scale Events in September at Old Warden and SAM35 was able to run events in April, June and the event in October at Buckminster. The Modelair events will continue next year under new management. Ken and Sheila Shepard were made a presentation by SAM at their final event to recognise their efforts organising the Old Warden meetings. The more restrictive regime at Old Warden controlling both models and access to the flying area has been the subject of comment and debate. SAM35 have been involved in controlling access to the Free Flight/ Radio Trimmed Model flying area to ensure that the rules about model weight, engine size and insurance are complied with. We hope that next year will bring some reduction in the bureaucracy. The tethered car track at Buckminster continues to grow in popularity and has been much used this year regardless of weather conditions which have curtailed flying activities. The unavailability of Barkston Heath this year 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 Barkston. There have been a number of smaller events run at other locations such as Cocklebarrow and Popham. The introduction and promotion by Andy Brough of a number of "Power Strugglers" Monday/Tuesday events at Buckminster aimed at fun traditional sport flying has been well supported. We will have three weekend events at Buckminster next year and there will be an increased number of Power Struggler events.

Ian stated that membership has shown a further slight decline (now at 568), with the rate of losing members exceeding the number of new recruits. The pandemic may have depressed renewals slightly. The loss of this year's BMFA Nats. meant we were unable to recruit new members; the underlying trend, however, is clear.

Turning to the third point, we have an excellent committee working on your behalf. All our activities would not happen without them and we are always keen to talk to anybody who would like to be involved in helping to run the Society and its events. This year we have more significant roles to fill: John Ashmole has been our Free Flight Secretary for far longer than he agreed when he took over the role. In his time he has rejuvenated our free flight activities by inventing new events and competitions, and maintaining traditional ones which he then promoted with great enthusiasm, as well as managing them on the field with grit and humour. I would like to thank John for his service to SAM35. We are looking for a replacement.

Brian Lever has been President of SAM35 for many years. In that time, he has been a steadying force within Society and a source of inspiration, promotion and sometimes sage advice to the committee. He has decided it is time for him to step down from his position but will remain on the committee. We are fortunate that we have a replacement in Andy Brough who has agreed to take over as President.

We have contacted a number of commercial organisations with a view to them providing Web Site Support. Many did not respond. Those that did were not interested in maintaining our site but were keen to redesign our site completely at significant cost and then maintain it for even more significant cost. I remain the webmaster but we lack the technical expertise needed if we had a major problem with our web site; consequently, a safer long-term solution is still sought.

2) The Treasurer, Kevin Richards circulated the accounts for 2021 together with budget predictions for 2023. He reported that the year's accounting period shows a deficit of £721 as compared to 2020 where there was surplus of £1,853. There are reasons for these figures: overall income was down by £9,208 but the overall expenditure was also down by over £6,634. Subscriptions are down from the previous accounting period due to a fall in total membership compared to the year before, as well as a higher number of members paying subs before 31st December in the previous year (2020). Engine sales were also considerably down. On the expenditure side, magazine printing and posting costs remained virtually the same. Event costs were higher with no return on expenditure, due to poor attendances and circumstances outside our control. Most other costs were broadly in line with the year before.

Total membership at the end of 2021 was 615 UK members and 21 overseas - 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 16 non-paying members. The total membership figure is down on the previous year when we had 670 UK members and 25 overseas, so we ended the year with 59 less members than we started. We only recruited 16 new members during 2021 and 7 members re-joined after a lapse; also at least 9 members died and the other lost members failed to renew. The downward trend has continued into the current year 2022, we are currently at a total of 568 members and this includes 18

new members and 8 who have re-joined after a lapse. Also, a good number of members took the opportunity provided to pay their subscriptions by bank transfer.

3) *The Editor*, thanked all the contributors for their efforts and said he was amazed at the ability of them to write continuously, entertainingly, and amusingly. Colin said that this was his 8th year in the job, and during that time the membership has dwindled somewhat - not an unexpected situation given the age profile of our membership, but one that affects us all. Consequently, we do need more subscribers.

4) *The Control Line Secretary*, Mike May, commented that the period in question (2021) covered the final six months of lockdown in the UK. This had a huge impact upon flying and building with none of the former and probably far too much of the latter. To add insult to injury, in January we were reminded by the BMFA that even when we were allowed to fly, the new CAA regulations required C/L aviators to register if they intended to fly any model weighing more than 2.2lb, (thankfully this was later relaxed in 2022). In February we predicted that SAM35 and UK Carrier-Deck activities would probably coincide at the few meetings that might take place in the year, especially at Buckminster and Old Warden; this proved to be the case, to the benefit of all those C/L pilots who fly in both disciplines. The Voetsak Tribute class shone as a light in the wilderness, with many kits purchased (but rather fewer eventually flown!) The search for legal AM25 spinners provided a challenge or frustration depending upon whether fliers knew someone with machine tools to make one, while the scarcity of balsa wood and piano wire was hampering those who wanted to build off-plan, as indeed was the closure of many model supplies outlets. However, by April Dave Cowburn had started to plan competitions (although nothing was likely to be allowed before June), including 'one-up' Voetsak Tribute sprints, 'Bring & Fly' social events for models built to vintage KK, Veron, Frog etc designs, and Vintage Stunt. Dave is to be congratulated on his never-failing positivity in planning, organising and (later) running C/L activities at Buckminster, Old Warden and Pontefract - without him C/L would have been in a very difficult place! The same must be said, of course, for Tony Goodger for C/L Speed competitions. Instead of actual flying, the BMFA 'In the Air Tonight' series of Webinars provided a good alternative learning experience, with C/L Speed and Carrier featuring amongst other disciplines. In May, George Saydell offered his totally original 1950s-built Ranger Mk1 T/R model to the membership for someone to refurbish and fly it again. Ultimately Roger Cooper took on the task and made a superb job of it, with the Ranger feeling air under its wings again in 2022. June saw the Buckminster hard circle tarmac laid, with this exciting project moving close to completion in the following year, and the South Bristol club held the first C/L meeting for a long time. However, bad news arrived with the cancellation of the Barkston Nats again, leaving the various C/L disciplines to arrange their own localised events.

Member James Hammond introduced his high-tech glass/carbon fibre Weatherman fuselage for classes 5 & 6 and generously offered the technology for commercial exploitation.

June saw the SAM35 Retro-fest take place for the first time in a long while, while Open Speed resumed at Barton, with things beginning to return even closer to normal by September with the usual OW event featuring Voetsak Tribute and other disciplines, and the vintage speed Nats taking place at Buckminster followed by the

Oktoberfest. Did C/L recover from its exposure to Covid? The signs that it might were there back in late-2021, although there's still been a continuing reduction in numbers and more cancellations of meetings, but knowing as we do what 2022 had to offer, we will have to work hard to counter a downward spiral in confidence and build back better!

Finally, Mike commented that the Wind in the Wires team (the Quality Inspector, Wally and I) has done its best to entertain and inform its readers, and hope that they have succeeded in some small way.

5) *The R/C Secretary*, Bill Longley reported that Wes Denton had run his series of Single Channel and Precision events at all the Buckminster meetings, Old Warden and PANDAS at Pontefract except where the weather intervened, so the League trophy was not presented this year. Andy Brough instigated the Power Strugglers, 2 days at the beginning of each month, at Buckminster for all vintage flyers, and these these meetings had been very well attended. VPD and KK 60 Pylon racing were run at all the Buckminster meetings, 2 at Sparkford and VPD Class A only at Old Warden. Additionally, VPD Wednesday evening decentralise events were run to slightly different format, scoring being the best flight each month and points against the clock. The SAM R/C Shield winner was Jeff Fellowes, who scored 83 points from maximum possible 84; also, the Tasuma Trophy (best 6 scores from 8 schedule events) was again won by Jeff Fellowes. Barry Hood achieved time of just under 40 minutes in All Up Last Down, thus he won the Belair Trophy, and the Inaugural Class A Division was won by Wes Denton. For KK 60 Pylon Racing, best time of the year at 52 seconds, was won by Barry Hood. Next year, to encourage participation in the VPD Class B, the Tasuma trophy will be awarded to Class B instead of overall, separate trophies being awarded to Classes A & C Finally, Light Scale suffered from lack of entries, but still has prospects.

At the conclusion of the report by Bill Longley, Jeff Fellowes was presented with the RC League Championship Shield and Tasuma Trophy by Brian Lever who also gave the VPD Class A Cup to Wes Denton, while Barry Hood won the Belair Trophy and the KK 60 fastest time award as noted above, both taken on his behalf by Colin Hutchinson.

Membership Subscriptions The Treasurer proposed that the membership subscription rates for the year beginning 1st January 2023 remain at £27.50 (£29.00 if paying by Paypal) for UK members and £48.50 for those abroad. This suggestion was agreed unanimously.

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

Election of Officers Andrew Housden briefly reiterated the three-year rule for tenure of a committee member. Alex Phin, Roger Brown and John Ashmole are eligible for re-election; however, the latter two have retired from the Committee, but Alex has agreed to continue in office. Also, Brian Lever has asked to step back from the position of President and nominated Andy Brough as his worthy successor in view of his wide experience; this is unanimously supported by the Committee. The appointments were agreed by the members present.

Tethered Car Secretary Steve Betney had suggested that a tethered car Secretary be found. The committee agreed that such a position be created in view of our involvement with the Buckminster facility, and the position was ratified at the 2021 AGM with a request for nominees; this has proved successful with Nigel Bathe taking up the role.

Website Ian Lever reported that he was now running the website on a limited basis as Andy Green had effectively stood down as webmaster but continued to provide limited support. He raised the question as to whether SAM35 should seek professional help with the technical side of web management in relation to maintenance and updates which are driven by security concerns. Ian had agreed to investigate such costs and reported that few organisations were willing to undertake the task without re-designing the website at significant cost and charging large sums for its upkeep. In view of this, Ian will remain as webmaster but the search for technical support continues.

Life Membership There are currently three vacancies for life membership. Andrew Longhurst and John Ashmole were suggested in view of their long and meritorious service to the Society. These nominations have been unanimously agreed by the Committee, and the proposal was ratified by the members present.

SAM Transfers Brian Lever reported on his endeavours with these. The BMFA have now abandoned waterslide transfers because they are becoming very expensive and only offer peelable vinyl decals. After some discussion the Committee agreed that we should no longer offer transfers/stickers, but an article should be written for publication in SPEAKS as to how members can make their own using modern waterslide paper and a laser or inkjet printer.

Any Other Business At the end of the discussions, a presentation was made by Steve Betney of the Voetsak Tribute Event awards:

- 3rd Steve Betney
- 2nd Brian Lever and Brian Waterland
- 1st Yan Hunning and Simon Temperly

Date and Venue for the 42st AGM. To be advised, but most probably at BMFA Buckminster in June 2023.