

In the beginning

Not many people can claim sixty years of unbroken membership of a hobbies club – but Impington Village College Model Aeroplane Club can boast of a number of members who have been around since the beginning. One of those members is Terry King who was among Ray Malmström's art pupils when the Model Air Squadron was formed by "Commanding Officer" Ray in 1946. Terry tells us what it was like building and flying models in those far-away days.

I was 11-years old when I started my secondary school career at Impington Village College during September 1945 – the same day that Ray began his 40 year association with the building as an art teacher.

I was not aware of Ray's interest in aeromodelling until that fateful day when I was seen reading a copy of the *Aeromodeller* magazine in one of his art classes. Ray challenged me for not paying attention and asked in his booming voice, "What have you got there boy?" Shyly I admitted that it was the latest copy of the magazine. With a nod of approval, Ray just said, "Carry on reading lad, it will do you some good".

My interest in aeromodelling was kindled the previous year when I

had watched models being flown on fields behind my house. It soon all became clear to me why Ray disappeared from time to time into a store room at the back of the art class after setting us a task that would take half an hour or so. One day on some pretext or another I walked into the store room and saw Ray carving a balsa propeller. This encounter was to be the start of a long friendship.

In early 1946 Ray invited all those interested in starting a model club at the college to a meeting after school in the art room. At this meeting the Club was formed and is still going strong.

First ever one minute

I remember when one of Ray's rubber models did his first ever one minute flight. It occurred in a field behind the caravan at Histon which was his temporary home. I held the model while he piled on the turns of the rubber motor. His delight was very vocal. As with all his modelling he had a passion and enthusiasm which he passed on to us young brood of aeromodellers.

From Histon, he moved his caravan to a site at Barton. His encouragement and help was always at hand. I cycled frequently to Barton with my latest creation under my arm and always I received the warmest of welcomes.

On a number of occasions I helped Ray with his test flying. I remember the day he test flew his Mimi biplane. The ED Baby motor was started up and away the model went spiralling ever higher on a full tank of fuel. Ray realised he could



Ray holds his out of this world looking Voltam design while Terry King holds Long John and an own design on the steeply sloping hill at Harlton.



The 'Commanding Officer' stands by his caravan, named Vagabond at Dales Barn, Barton, where many early models were built.

lose his new creation, so away we went across the fields in hot pursuit. We eventually found Mimi, which was to become one of Ray's most successful designs, sitting among sugar beet. Whenever I see a Mimi flying at a meeting, the sight always brings back memories of that early adventure.

The Club was often invited to give flying demonstrations at village fetes where we flew rubber, glider and the odd Jetex thrown in. Ray took great pleasure in arranging these events and the sight of models flying out of the fields and into the trees always caused amusement among the spectators. They were such carefree days with no noise, health and safety or insurance worries. Happy memories!

How about joining the R.A.F. – Ray’s air force



When the young Ray Malmström arrived at Impington Village College in September 1945 and suggested starting a model aircraft flying club he received sceptical looks from senior teachers. They told him not to waste his time because the idea had been tried before and had flopped. But Ray pressed on and started not a model flying club but a Model Air Squadron! Not only did the squadron thrive it developed into one of the best known model flying clubs in the country. Sixty years later it is still going strong – although under a rather less military regime!

Imagine today turning up to a club meeting and greeting the Chairman as the Commanding Officer and then going around referring to the

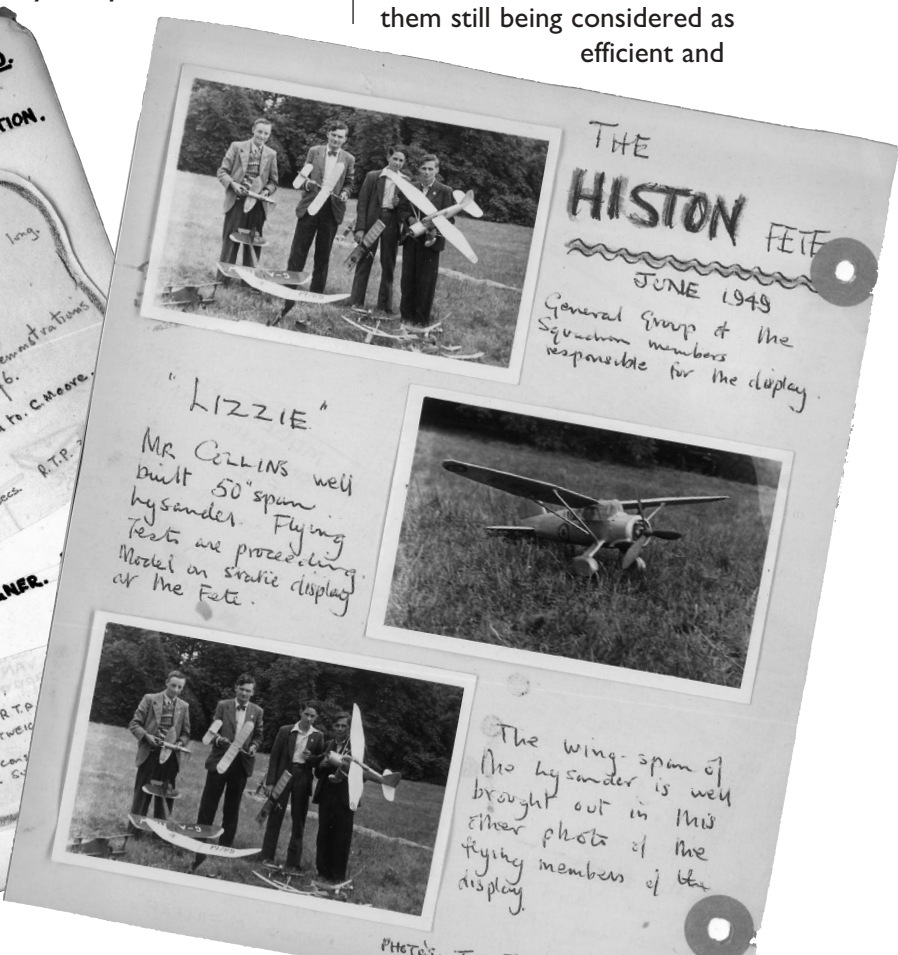
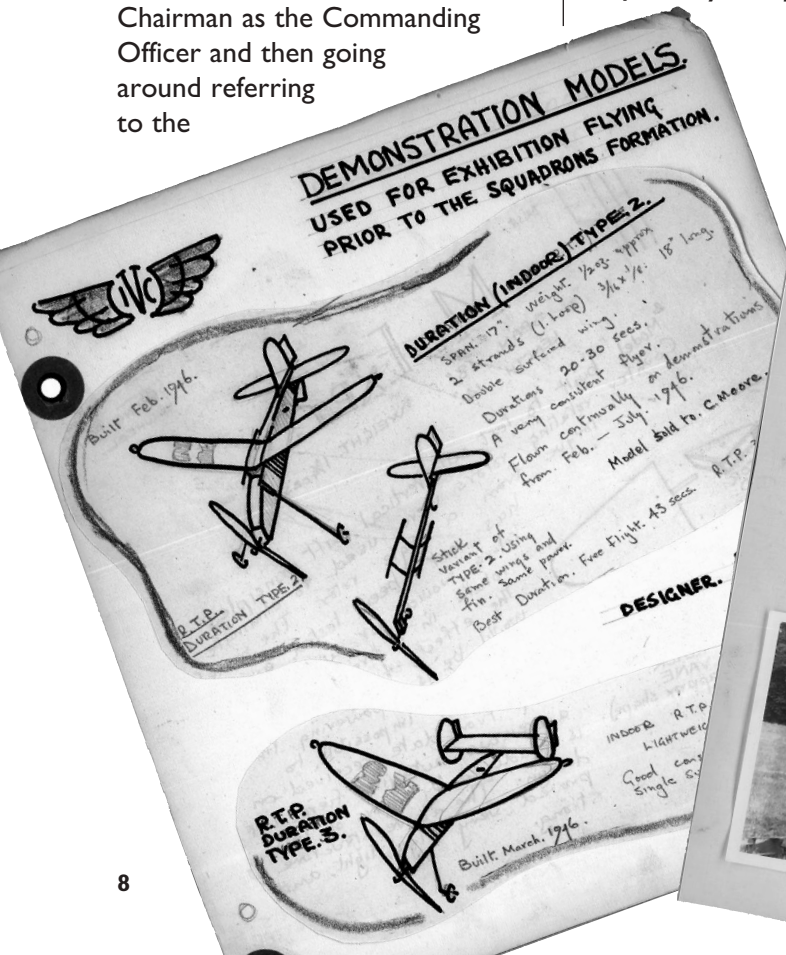
members as Senior Aircraftsman, Flight Leader, Wing Officer or Squadron Officer! That's the way Ray thought he would organise the club when he drew up an action plan to get the Squadron off the ground. Ray was notorious for not keeping notes or much paper work. But remarkably a scrap book going back 60 years containing an outline of the way the Model Air Squadron should be set up has survived intact – thanks to Ray's daughter Elizabeth who found the papers among Ray's possessions after he died. Remarkable too is the pristine way Ray's original hand written notes have weathered the years.

The images on this and following pages are from Ray's scrap book.

They had to pass a test

Ray's original plan was to limit the Squadron to 30 members – each member having to pass an entrance test! He suggested that prospective entrants should either: "Build a small duration model capable of flying for ten seconds; build a non-flying scale model of any type of aircraft; or build a small glider capable of flying for eight seconds from a hand launch".

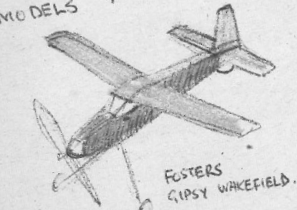
Ray's notes continue, "Satisfying any one of the above the boy or girl to be enrolled as a member, given a certificate of membership (a badge when available) and the commencing rank Junior Aircraftsman. All ranks are held subject to the member holding them still being considered as efficient and



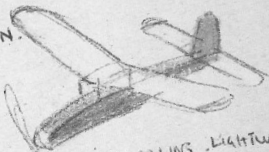
STARTING

1950

MODELS FOR THE COMING SEASON.



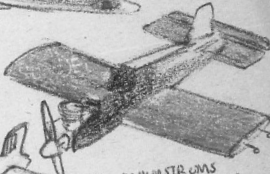
FOSTERS GIPSY WAKEFIELD.



MR COLLINS LIGHTWEIGHT AND EMPIRE (2000S)



MR MAHASTRONS CYCLONE (E.D. BEE)



BUILT JAN. 1950

FLIGHT OF NINE DELTA'S (JOTEX, SU) Belonging to
2. MALMASTRON
T. JOHANSEN
J. SMITH
J. DIVER.

Designed. MARCH 1949



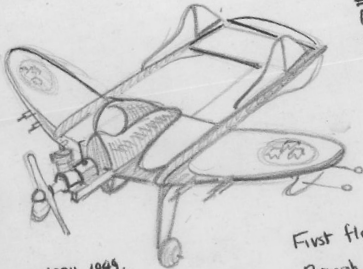
First public appearance in the College Hall during the Air Squadron Demonstration March 28. 1949.

THE MOONSTREAK

Designed for High Speed Flying round-the-pole. Proved to be an exciting model in free flight. Has done a perfect barrel-roll. ~~is~~ Tabs added to wing tips for added stability in free flight.

THE MAJOR

POWER. F.D. BEE
AIRSCREW. FROG
7" Dia
and KK TR
Fuel. ED. V



DESIGNED: APRIL 1949.
SPAN. 20"
ALL-UPWEIGHT. 8.75ozs.
Fitted with M.S. 1 3/4 AIRWHEELS.

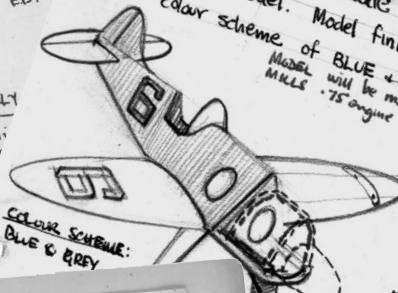
EARLY
First flown. Mi W
Through deep playground. ended with cursing and drift
Time 2nd. Two

COLOR SCHEME: BLUE & GREY



THE MAJORS

4 seater semi-scale control line model. Model finished in new color scheme of BLUE & GREY. Model will be modified to take the Mills .75 engine for 1951 summer flying.



THE MINOR

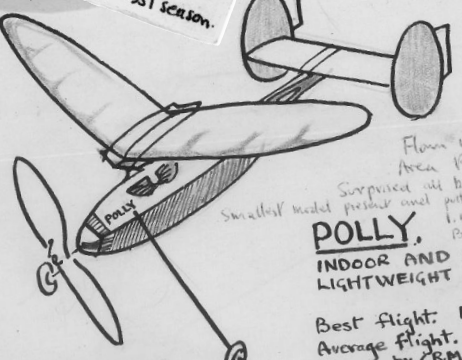
Designed as a control line trainer rather in the nature of a challenge to the rather complicated and more difficult to build commercially produced PHANTOM MITE.

75 MILLS for flight testing during 1951 season.



SKETCH SHOWING SIMPLE TRIANGULATED FUSelage.

HOLDER OF SQUADRON DURATION RECORD. 1mn. 30.secs. 0.0.5. 1947



Flown in Area Rall
Surpassed all by
Smallest model produced and putting
1.12
1.12
1.12
Best flight. 1.3
Average flight. 1
Flown by R.M.
Parker
Tollid
Moore

MOONCREST

JET BIPLANE powered with the JETEX 100. unit.

PHOTO. A.J. PARR.

THE MAMBA

(RIGHT) Details of the Control Cockpit, situated on the tail plane.

(BELOW) The MAMBA takes-off after being hand launched on the College Playing Field.



DESIGNED AND BUILT. AUG. - SEPT 1950.

NOTES Cellular

Tests made Sept. 1950
Engine 8000 Rev. Lines
1st flight. Take off unassisted
Stable attitude, but for landing elevator with plank down engine out. A spin to control
2nd fl. Better take off. 1st climb to 12-15 ft. max. nice to handle for sport. Stability of model. 1st flight. 1st flight. 1st flight.

TEST REPORT after first flight tests

Model designed to carry 4 small puppets in the nose easily removable. Held with two small dowels. Scheme worked well in flight.

PROJECTED D Full scale plan to Squadron me

ANOTHER CONTROL-LINER.

Proved light on the lines. Control was poor and model climbed too well.



Designed and Built JULY-AUG. 1948.

The MENTOR

CONTROL LINE PRIMA
AMCO: '87 ENGINE. Well



MODEL SOLD TO JOHN JONES
CONVERTED TO LOW WING CONTROL LINE TYPE BY PET STOREY JAN 1949

THE MOWBRAY

1. JETEX. 100 UNIT.

Semi-scale Jet model. Complete with detailed pilot and cockpit. Test flown at Barton, Sept. 48. Flown at Eaton Bray. Very stable and a pleasure model in every way to handle and fly.

Designed and Built AUG-SEPT. 1948.

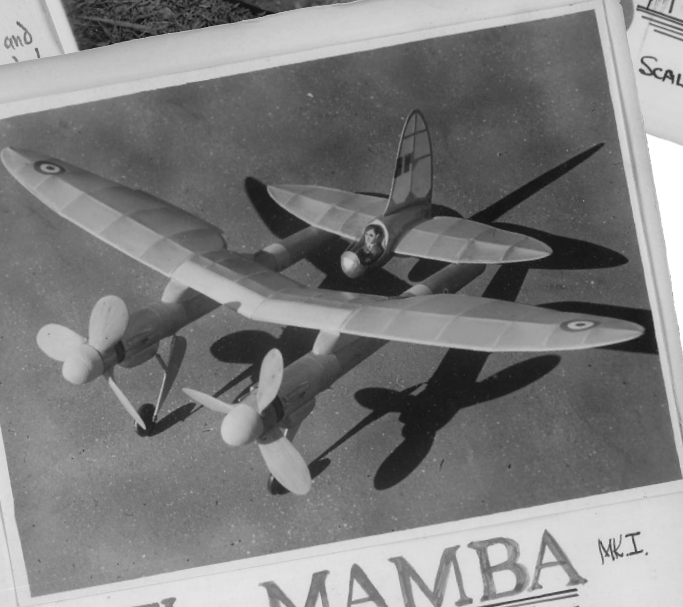


DEC 1950 STOREY built MOWBRAY and has been perfect flight R.T.P. in the Hall at Britishham V.C.

(SEPT. 1949. FLOWN IN JETEX 'FINALS', FAIRLOP AER



THE AIR STRAL. MK.2. Paired and



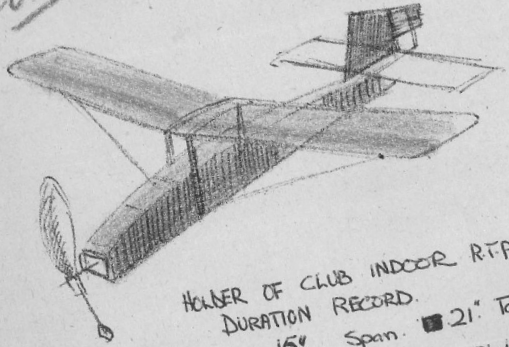
The MAMBA MK.I

SPAN. 34" LENGTH. WEIGHT. 5ozs.

TWIN MOTOR FIGHTER-BOMBER. Features of the design include. Free-wheels completely enclosed in large diameter spinners. Fully detailed cabin cupola, including pilot. High-lift wing flaps. Detachable wings and tail-plane unit. POWER. 6 strands 17" long. 3/16 & 1/30 Strip. (each motor) A most successful flyer both in free flight and R.T.P.

New Record

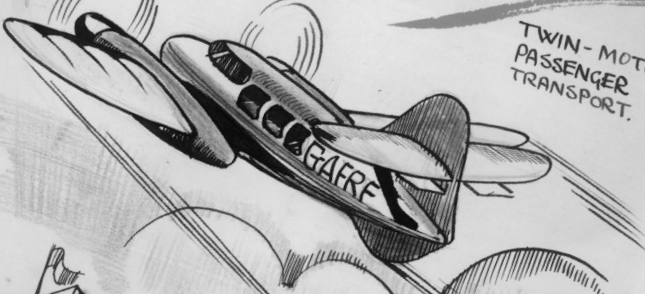
JAN 27, 1950. ART ROOM.



HOLDER OF CLUB INDOOR R.T.P. DURATION RECORD.
Length. 15" Span. 21" Tailplane. 10 1/2"
Tail Chord 3/4". Prop. Diameter. 13" (Single Blade) Chord. 3"
Power: 4 strands 3/16. 36-42" long

BUILT AND FLOWN BY MR. COLLINS.
DURATION. 1 min. 20 secs.

THE ATHENE



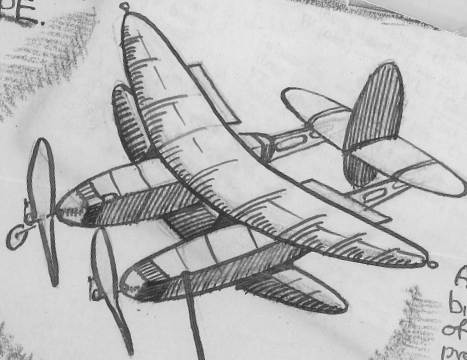
TWIN-MOTOR PASSENGER TRANSPORT.



DORLAND HALL

A MODEL OF THE ATHENE BUILT BY AN AEROMODELLER. READER WAS ON EXHIBITION AT DORLAND HALL DECEMBER-JAN. 1946-47. SCALE PLANS PUBLISHED IN THE AEROMODELLER. OCT. 1946.

ANOTHER TYPE.



THE WANDERER. TWIN MOTOR R.T.P. DURATION. TYPE.

A successful twin-motor biplane, on the lines of two well-known predecessors - THE HORUS and THE POLLY.

Model built and flown by MR. A.T. STOREY.

STOREY HAS also been flying THE EAGLET. which has flown very well. R.T.P.

JB
ful workmanship of new types, the consistently good and flying model has been the most interesting has been the testing of engines by Cliff and their noise as considerably enlivened for it's photograph on a Papworth's "Kestrel" and a really fine performing Squadron members fact that the comparative line flying with all d thrills is scheduled to activities of the Squadron

enthusiastic one month after promotion”.

Members could gain promotion through the ranks of Senior Aircraftsman, Flight Leader, Flight Officer, Wing Officer and eventually reaching the dizzy heights of Squadron Officer.

To gain promotion there were various tasks to be completed. These included making a model not of their own design fly for 30 seconds; building a solid model with cockpit details and retracting under-carriage; flying a free flight or round-the-pole model for a minute; and to gain top rank of Squadron Officer, “Flying an outdoor model of the members own design and construction for a duration, hand launched of one minute, or rise-off-ground, of 50 seconds”.

Sunshine and blue skies

Meetings of the Air Squadron were held in the college art room – a venue which continued for years – with flying sessions being held on the sports field on Saturday afternoon. Looking through the surviving notes evokes memories of the lazy days of summer when the sun always shone and blue skies were dotted with cu-nim clouds each indicating the home of a good few thermals. The wind never seemed to blow in those days. Yes it really was like that.

Ray’s notes refer to a small rubber-powered duration model called “Polly”. This apparently was the 1947 holder of the squadron’s duration record with a time of 1 minute and 30 seconds. The model went further afield it seems, to the Eastern area rally held on July 3 1948 – but with no reference to where the event was held. The notes point out, “Surprised all by being the smallest model present and putting up a flight of 1.12 seconds, flown by Billy Parker.”

Another reference is to “Diesels in the Model Air Squadron”.

It continues, “Introduced to an enthusiastic and inquiring audience

by Matt Wynn and Cliff Allen at the beginning of October 1947. Engines are the Mills 1.3 diesel and are fitted to two Rover aircraft. Both models have been successfully ‘hopped’ and the engines on test in the art room showed that they were easy to start and were real handfuls of power”.

Popular demonstrations

Control line flying, then in its infancy in this country, was dabbled in by the Squadron. One was designed and flown by Ray on July 16 on the college playgrounds. It was a low wing cabin model powered by a Kemp Hawk engine of only .2cc. Its performance is noted as “Flew reasonably well, was very sensitive on the controls, but to get a real performance needs a .4cc or .5cc motor”. It must have been one of the most underpowered controliners ever with that tiny Hawk engine up front.

Model flying demonstrations at village fetes, garden parties and so on were very popular events in those far off days. Nobody ever complained about noise, hazard assessment risks were unheard of and apparently everybody enjoyed watching the models. Typical of these visits was the “second public appearance” of the Squadron at the County Youth Exhibition at Sawston on Saturday June 13 1947. “All models in excellent trim before an audience of 40 people in Sawston Village College Hall. Flying commenced after a brief introduction concerning the values of mathematics, science and craftsmanship of the hobby. All models flew well, with some of them missing the lamps by a few inches. Mr Bentinck actually touched one of the lamps with the wing of his Polly without any effects, save to dislodge several years accumulation of dust, to afford the spectators a thrill. The audience thoroughly enjoyed all the flights”.

The Squadron had a busy life according to the records, visiting rallies (now called meetings) around the country during the summer and intensive indoor flying during the winter.

Mr Foster – a busy man

One page of the records states, “Ivan Foster did most valuable work as time-keeper, checking each of the dozens of flights which were made”. That same Mr. Foster is still a club member and is still known to do a bit of time keeping!

It is obvious that the Squadron members did their utmost to get in as much flying as possible not only during daylight hours, but also at night! “Mr Storey’s Minx control-line model was flown by Cliff Allan by the light of a car’s headlamps and the glow from the college hall. Cliff also flew Mr. Storey’s modified Slicker 50 by the same illumination. Pat Large’s Frog Radius was flown by the light of the hall, on the playing field”.

It must have been quite a sight to see the Slicker on lines – because it was one of the best free-flight models of the 40’s and 50’s with a rocket-like climb. Perhaps it was flown on hundreds of feet of wire control lines.

An intriguing little mystery comes to light on a close look at the records. Tucked away on the bottom of a page is a short reference to a small Jetex powered model called The Moonjet Mk I. Under the heading of “performance” the text reads, “A good and steady performer round-the-pole. Difficult to control as a control-liner”. Now does that mean what it says – a Jetex powered control-liner? If so it must have been a world’s first and probably last – but what a sight.

Taking into account the genius of Ray Malmström and his decision to found the Air Squadron, it is distinctly possible that he did fly a Jetex powered control-liner. Ray the Master would have accepted nothing less than a world’s first.