

GMAA Newsletter



MAY 2011



Shane's turbine.

Who needs pictures from the internet when we've got models like this in the club. Next time I'll try and find some onlookers who can smile. Come on boys, what is there not to like about it? Could it be jealousy?

BBQ Sat 21 May 12 Noon, Dog Rocks. No meeting.

From the Editor

I've heard a few comments lately about how good the club is going and how happy people are at the club. The ambiance is good, as one member put it, and I think that is how most members feel, including me. This, however, is not the case in every case, and there may be more to say about that later on. The point I want to make is that we are a team, whether we like it or not. We all use the same small area and the same facilities. Being a helicopter flier I have been involved in many losing arguments, so I feel qualified to comment. Everyone's needs should be accommodated where possible. Every incident should be looked at with the team in mind. Using safety as a weapon, and applying rules to the letter rather than the intent are methods of harassment and don't help the team.

I'm being vague because I'd rather make people think than take sides. It's hard or maybe impossible to keep everyone totally happy, but we should be trying. Witness the Belmont Common fliers. A recent count came to 60. That's nearly as many as the GMAA members. We may not want them all to join us, but it started with a group of people who became disgruntled.

If you don't agree, send me an email. It is important that all views be heard.

Don't forget you can put a for sale ad in this newsletter. No charge, nothing to lose and dollars to be gained. All contributions to the newsletter are very welcome. Take a few photos at the field and email them to me. People, planes, crashes and flying aircraft make interesting photos. Keep your camera in the car just in case, or if you haven't got your camera with you, the mobile phone is a good stand-in.

The new mower is up and running, just in case you've been hiding under a rock.

Stephen Henderson came good on his promise and compiled the "Building From Plans" articles on to a CD. He has left 2 CDs in the shed for people to copy and bring back. With human nature what it is, the bring back part is sometimes difficult. Do what you can anyway.

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Mal Anderson

I visited Bates in Shannon Avenue a couple of weeks ago to buy the heli oil for the fuel I make up. That's about the only thing I buy from Bates, so I thought it would be worth investigating further to see if I was missing out on anything. I've heard a lot of comments over the years about Bates, and it seems to me people are divided into the ones that shop there regularly and the ones that say they don't go there because they are too expensive. I should declare that I come from a business background and sympathize with challenges this business is facing, and admire how they are changing to operate in a competitive online world.

I spoke to Eddie Edwards, the owner, and briefly to Ronnie Terbeek about the products and how the business is running. Basically things are competitive and prices are reducing. I was surprised to see how many new products there were. For instance, I use a Futaba radio but hardly ever see another one at the club. Bates have a good range of Futaba transmitters and servos. There is a stack of small electric helicopters. They even have a Raptor 50 Titan in stock. I have two of these glo helis and am a great fan. Of all the 50 size helis, they are the simplest design, the easiest to set up and have the cheapest parts. You miss out on glamor and they are old fashioned, but they will do anything. This one is \$400.00 for the basic ARF kit, which is a very good price. Check this site for a review.

<http://www.littlerotors.com/articles/titan-110607/index.aspx>

Last time I looked at Bates website it was rubbish. Things have certainly changed since then. Ronnie has been working on it full time and it is now world standard. Bates have over 7000 items in stock in Geelong. As soon as a delivery comes in, the items go straight on the web site. The great thing is if you live in Geelong you can just go in and pick them up. Ronnie is going through and reducing prices to reflect the higher Australian dollar and the competition from Australian and international web sites. Bates web address is: <http://www.rcworld.com.au/>

Bates biggest sellers from the shop are accessories, batteries, glues, propellers, engines, and Coolpower fuel. Also engines (YS, Magnum, OS, DLA China) foam planes and small helis.

The radio gear sold is JR/Spektrum, Futaba and Hitec. I don't know much about model aeroplanes. You would need to take a look yourself. A few brands they sell are Krill from Czechoslovakia, Modeltech fixed wing balsa ARF, Sapac foam ARF, Emax brushless motors and speed controllers, Mercury glues and APC and Xoar propellers.

About 50% of Bates business is toys and 50% is the hobby side. Radio controlled cars are big sellers. Those big 4WD rock hopping arrangements look really good. If only I had more time. Bates are Australian importers for many brands, including Cool Power fuels. We are lucky to have this business in Geelong and should support it where the price is right.



Eddie may be the only Tates member of GMAA, but most would remember Ronnie (pictured) and Luke Penna. I have got some more information about Eddie's modelling career, but I'll save that for next month.

Events Calendar

Events can be found on the VMAA Website.

www.vmaa.com.au

Lithium Polymer Batteries

You may have seen the article in the latest VMAA magazine "Fun Fly", entitled "Cargo from Hell". This give a summary of a more complete article on the VMAA website and covers the dangers of transporting LiPo batteries. These are always transported with some charge, as these batteries should never be fully discharged. A full discharge dramatically reduces the battery life.

I have read on the internet many horror stories about fires caused by LiPo batteries. None of these involve new batteries in transport. These stories involved used batteries being charged, usually at home. One guy arrived home to see smoke coming out of an upstairs window. He had left a LiPo battery charging in his bedroom and gone out for a short time. The fire was contained in the bedroom, but if he had been out for longer it would have been the house.

Just recently I read about Curtis Youngblood and the accident he had with a LiPo battery. This is a man whose whole life is model helicopters. He designed and sells the Rave brand which Tates are the Australian agent for. He knows about LiPo batteries and still had this problem with a fire and a badly burnt hand. I have directly copied his story below.

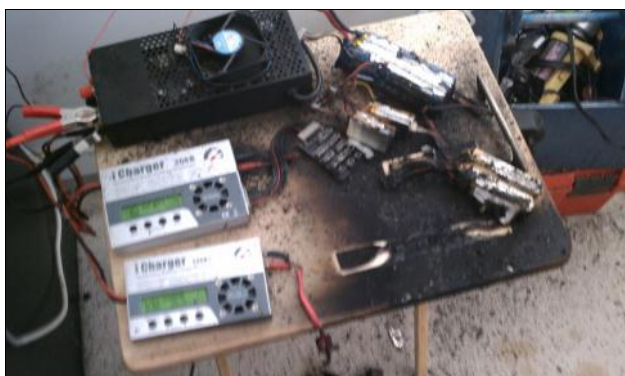
I have only been flying with LiPo batteries for 12 months and don't consider myself an expert, but here are my basic rules for managing LiPo batteries. Breaking rules 1, 3 or 8 will seriously reduce the battery life.

Hobby King voltmeter.

http://www.hobbyking.com/hobbyking/store/uh_viewItem.asp?idProduct=8927

See the complete guide to LiPo batteries here. The links to accidents are sobering.

<http://www.rcgroups.com/forums/showthread.php?t=209187>



1. **Don't over discharge.** Always have a volt meter handy to keep an eye on the voltage. Hobby King sell a good one for \$11.56. See link above. Minimum discharge voltage will be about 3.3V (unloaded), although some people say that 3V is OK. Check all the cells to make sure one is not dying. Waiting for the power to disappear is not OK. Don't leave batteries plugged into a regulator, as this will eventually over discharge the battery.

2. **Time your flight.** This allows you to obey rule 1. The alternative is to set a low voltage cut-off in the ESC.

3. **Charge at the recommended rate.** Usually 2C, but may be much higher for better batteries. Check manufacturer's recommendation. For 2C a 2000 mAh battery can be charged at 4A

4. **Rest the battery on a non flammable surface for charging.** That means not inside the model. It means a place where a fire won't cause damage. If you break this rule, make sure you are on the spot to save the situation. A ceramic pot is a good option, as is good ventilation to remove the smoke and fumes of a fire.

5. **If the battery is puffed or physically damaged, you are on borrowed time.** It is better to soak it for a week in water with salt added. This fully discharges it and you can throw it in the bin. Don't put it in a fire. It will produce toxic fumes.

6. **After charging, disconnect the battery lead before taking the charge leads out of the charger.** If you have melted banana plugs by letting charge leads dangle from the battery you will understand that you can weld with a LiPo battery. And light fires. Also don't reverse the terminals.

7. **For extended storage, the voltage should be 3.85V.**

8. **Use a proper charger with a balance lead.** This will prevent over charging.

9. **Don't get batteries wet.**

10. **Don't let batteries overheat.** They can overheat when discharged too quickly, or when left in a hot car.

Quote from Curtis Youngblood

Today was a very interesting day. I started out working on the fuse at the farm along with Brian. I then left Brian working on the fuse while i went out to do some FAI flying.

Since it was a windy day I felt it would be a good day to work some on the FAI setup. There are quite a few people around the world flying and tweaking the ENV for FAI flying right now and they are passing along ideas on getting the most out of the machine.

So i decided to give some of their suggestions a test for myself and see how it works. The main thing I tried today was a longer flybar just to see how it does. For me, I preferred the stock flybar. On my setup the stock flybar just sat a little better in the rough air.

I was just setting the machine down on a table inside the building when in heard a kind of popping sound. I turned around to see a battery pack swelling and opening up like a fan. I ran over and started unplugging it as fast as i could. I grabbed the pack and started to throw it out the door when I saw the balance leads were still hooked up. So i raced to unplug those as well otherwise it would have pulled the rest of the chargers and batteries with it and likely would have not made it out the door. Once I had them unplugged I grabbed the pack to throw it out. At that moment it exploded into flames in my hand. I continued my throwing motion getting it out of the building.

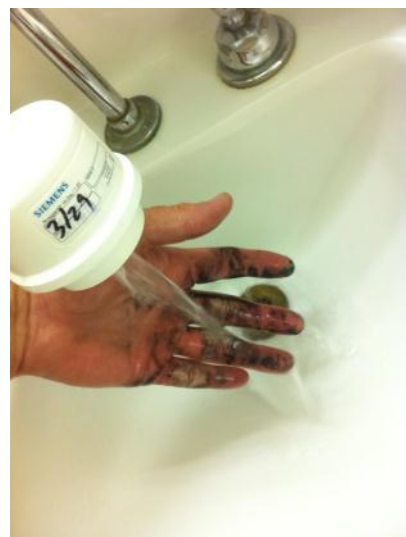
It landed in the field and continued to burn up. It also caught the grass on fire and I ran around stomping out the fire. I also called Brian and asked him to run me down a bag of ice I knew was in the freezer down at the building. I had to stay down at the field to make sure the field did not catch on fire again as we have not had rain in a long time and it is very easy to cause a big grass fire. Before Brian got down to me, I stuck my hand in the freezer of the small fridge we have at the small flying building.

Once he got to the building with the ice I put my hand on the ice and drove the 30 minutes to the emergency room. Making the long story short, I have ended up going to the Burn Center in Galveston TX. I have second and possibly third degree burns on my left hand. It is possible I might need surgery to repair some of the damage. But we will not really know until tomorrow.

I made several mistakes that lead to this. One I started using some of my old packs again so I could get more flights in a row without stopping. When I get home I will order more of the TP 65C packs so I can use all new packs. I also was not charging the batteries in a BBQ pit like I recommend. If I had been charging them in the BBQ pit I could have just closed the lid and let them burn out. From now on they will be in a pit or on concrete period.

One of the things I was thinking about during all this was that I only had 18 days left in my Daily Rave and it looks like I might miss a day because of this. I know in the end that is a minor issue. I will make sure my hand is fixed first, but just one of those things.

The other is I will likely miss Mayday this weekend. There is some small chance I can make it but it is not likely. And actually, I think I missed last years Mayday because I had a tooth break or something like that last year. So it seems that planning on attending Mayday has been hazardous to my health. If I do not make it, sorry to all the guys going to the event.



This information came from Paul Shadbolt, who received it from a friend of his in the US. Have you ever listened to Paul talking about aircraft? He knows a thing or two.

This brings back a lot of memories!

Message from ladd-

Hope some of you find this project interesting.

A retired engineer friend, Ed, has been working on a giant scale TWA Connie for the past three years. I am fortunate enough to be the chief technical adviser and nit picker(I have not the skills to actually fabricate any of this masterpiece). When the plane finally does leave the nest >to actually fly I will have the privelege of being "Wrangler in Chief."

The builder will be the test pilot--who else would dare fly it?



> The Connie is a dead accurate rendition of the Save-a-Connie operated by the museum in Kansas City . I mean every detail is there. Wingspan: 12 ft. (3.7 m) Takeoff weight: 54lbs. (24.4 kg.) Power is electric and endurance is 10 minutes with enough reserve to go around. Construction is conventional wood, balsa sheeting, and fibreglas finish. Custom decals are computer cut vinyl. Landing gear is custom made aluminum/steel and is scale. All landing gear doors are present and synchronized to operate during retraction/extension. Other features include landing lights, rotating beacon, ice detect lights, and a sound system to be installed later.



> Cowl flaps are fixed in open position to allow for cooling of the brushless electric motor.



Fowler flaps track out as they deflect downward just like the real thing.



> Yes there are two pilots behind the cockpit windows dressed in appropriate TWA uniforms.



> Left side view may look odd due to lack of windows upfront and the large cargo door. That's because the museum Connie this was modeled after was really a Lockheed 1049H. It's just painted up to look like a G Model. Behind the operating cargo door is the control panel for powering up the systems for the scale model.

There are no printed plans for this model. The commercially available plans were all sadly lacking in detail and were not faithful to scale. The builder essentially took a "clean sheet" approach to this bird. Of all of the giant scale airliners we studied none come close to rivaling this Connie for accuracy. The airline museum in K.C. did provide about 100 close up photos of the real thing to assist in getting everything correct.

Ground testing is almost complete. First flight will hopefully be within the next month.

Someday the builder hopes to join up with the Save-a-Connie group at an airshow to display both aircraft side-by-side. If the model survives its flying career it will most likely and hopefully be donated to the museum in K.C. It is not for sale at any price.

Being a collector of big airliner display models I look at this Connie as the ultimate display model. Ed, the builder, made her to fly and fly she will. I just hope the skies are kind to her.

Ladd

BBQs are held each month.
The Venue -
Dog Rocks Flying Field
Dog Rocks Road
Fyansford
Next bbq at 12.00 midday Sat 21 May
No meeting this month.

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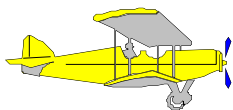
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Newsletter Contributions Always Welcome

DEADLINE SECOND SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH
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Our Flying Field

