

Getting Started!

When I first embarked in getting involved with Model Flying fraternity the decision as to what to fly was simple, an IC trainer (either made from a kit or a 2nd hand plane), 40 two stroke engine, 35 MHz transmitter and away you went.

Nowadays it is very confusing for someone new to the hobby, when the means to fly has expanded from IC to electric powered planes, planes made from foam, ARTF planes, kits to build, plan built planes, Helicopters both IC and electric, quad copters with all their assortment of gismo's. Transmitters with all manner of included facilities, either 35 MHz or 2.4 GHz are available.

I initially found it difficult to find a club who had members prepared to train, and moved clubs several times, until I found one where I was successfully trained. There was no buddy boxing available and the transmitter was passed between each other like a grenade with the pin pulled out! Needless to say the life of a training plane was severely limited. I also recognised that by having an instructor I was able to integrate into the club far easier.

So you have decided to enter the world of model flying, and now you have to learn, and decide which medium of flying you wish to enjoy. As a club we have recognised the need to introduce a training regime and aim to offer both week day, and Saturday morning training, but to also provide onward assistance to gaining the BMFA 'A' certificate. Having a training scheme assists the new members' introduction to the hobby, and our club, and its' members. They are all generally very happy to give appropriate advice as best as they can but it is extremely unlikely that is not a knowledgeable person who can provide the correct advice on a given aspect of modelling. It is recognised that nowadays the learning curve can be quite steep, but can be made easier by talking with others.

Initially we intend to give the new member hands-on flying as soon as we can, so that they can experience the manipulation of a model airplane via their thumbs and eyesight and achieve an understanding of how a plane fly's. There are some very good computer training programmes that aid model flying, but please ask about them.

As the new members training progress develops, the trainee's decision process will develop, and it will become clearer as to what they want to fly. It is important that trainees' maximise the learning process and fly at every opportunity and it is accepted that they are not contained to fly with the same instructor. Information can also be obtained by just turning up on a flying day, talking to members and just watching how the planes are been flown in different wind speed/directions. It is beneficial for the trainee to some reading on the subject and the BMFA "A Flying Start" is a good document for fixed wing flying and there similar ones for Helicopters etc. The other useful document (as with all BMFA documents) is the BMFA handbook which you receive on joining the club. If you prepare yourself by reading it will make life for the instructor easier and for yourself.

So at the moment our training planes are generally IC 40 size engines (back to where we started!) and as new members learn to fly them and complete their initial decision process, they will buy their own trainer type plane and the training will continue using it.

Consideration Process.

IC or electric? Have to admit there is not much in it, IC requires a fair bit of associated kit, fuel, starter's, tool box of bits but once equipped it is matter of either buying fuel, the business of starting an IC engine can be a art in itself. Electric flying is almost switch on and fly, but flight times will generally be shorter due to battery charge life. Different size electric planes require different size batteries!

New planes can be a foamy or conventional constructed ARTF, and with a limited amount of assembly can be made to fly very quickly, they are generally a very good flying model but are of a lighter construction and do not survive collisions with trees or mother earth very well, but on the plus side spare parts are generally available.

Build from a kit, takes time/skill and needs room to do it, but you end up with a stronger model and you have a plan to which you reconstruct the plane from should it suffer an incident. Building your own plane either from a kit or a plan is regarded by many as the other enjoyable facet of enjoying this hobby.

Alternatively you can investigate the 2nd hand market, all manner of planes, equipment, engines, and transmitters can be bought very cheaply, and this can reduce the initial cost upon entry to the hobby, and whilst you are deciding if the hobby is or you. It is a good avenue to use should you need to replace a model (crash!), and to upgrade at a minimal cost as you knowledge, skill, develops and improves. There is a very good article in the August RMCE, which highlights the benefits and pitfalls of buying 2nd hand, generally there are more benefits.

Sources for the 2nd hand markets are wide and various:-

E-Bay, BMFA Second hand element of their Web site, Magazines adverts, Bring and Buy markets which are listed in RMCE, and air shows where there is generally a Bring and Buy.

Pegasus Models in Norwich has a large selection of second hand planes and equipment available.

Remember always HAGGLE!!!!

If you are considering buying from Hobby King, please seek advice about using their web site, before buying.

As your experience and knowledge increases, flying preference becomes established; the understanding of value for money will improve.

Safety

It is also important that you as a member take due regard of your safety, the manner in which operate your aircraft both in the air and on the ground, but more importantly responding and acting safely towards other members. As before the BMFA literature will guide you how to operate safely.

Finally the Committee wishes and intends that every new experienced/learning member are made welcome to the club, by providing knowledge, assistance, advice, in order to allow them to enjoy this hobby/sport in every way. However to that end the club endeavours to contact a new member to identify their needs and if need be appoint an instructor to assist with their training, as it's the clubs wish that their entry to club is made easy as possible. Should a new member need help they should not feel restricted in making contact with the membership secretary who will guide them in the solution to the problem.(i.e. Don't be afraid/hindered of making that phone call, we do not wish anyone to feel isolated)