



HMAC Flyer

December, 2013

The history of the Hobart Model Aero Club as recalled by Garth Wilmot.

I will start with the story of my early involvement in HMAC as I recall it. After meddling with solid scale models and some rubber powered model with limited success I was introduced to control-line models in 1948 by a work colleague, the late Lawrie Baxter.

I did actually buy a model from him with an ED Mk III power plant. (I use that term very loosely.)



I joined the HMAC and attended a public control-line flying demonstration at the South Hobart Soccer Field at South Hobart which featured modellers from Hobart and Launceston. There was a group photograph (previous page) and I declined to join in for some reason, probably because I didn't have a model at that stage.

Unfortunately most of the modellers attending are no longer with us. David Christian and Geoff Leverton are the only current members in the photo, with Alan Rough, Myles Maguiness, Gerald Haley and the late Bruce Synott being recent members.



2.

Even before the formation of HMAC there was a group of young modellers from the West Hobart area building and flying gliders and rubber powered models. The group was known as WHAMA. which I would assume stood for West Hobart Aeromodellers Association. Among them were David Reynolds, Royce Wheeler and well known Hobart photographer Don Stephens. David and Royce went on to become members of HMAC.

Several HMAC members were also members of the Hobart Society of Model Engineers and were involved in the very popular exhibitions at the Hobart City Hall. I now shudder to think of the danger in flying quite large control-line models and the demonstration of tethered speed cars.

I was really hooked on the hobby and did most of my early model building in David Reynolds' workshop and he spent a lot of time helping me to achieve some level of skill.

I seem to recall that further flying demonstrations were held at Clare Street Oval in 1950 and 1951, but I wouldn't guarantee the actual dates. I know that I put up many flights with an Amco 3.5 model at the first one, but I didn't attend the second as I was absent interstate for a couple of years from September 1950. I know that I was secretary of HMAC in 1950.

In the early post-war years it was difficult to purchase much in the way of engines in Australia. The Hearn brothers did produce a copy of the American McCoy 60 with somewhat mixed results—it certainly lacked the power of the McCoy.

At the time it was very difficult to import items from other than British Empire countries, however Gerald Haley had an aunt in the US and managed to secure a McCoy which he used on spark ignition. What a brute—can you imagine hand starting a racing motor such as that? I remember him wearing a finger stall and taking it off to empty the blood out!

Apparently the same import restrictions did not apply in South Africa so the more affluent members bought Olsen 60s from that source.



Tempest 60 shown with spark ignition— most were used on glow.



3.

A friendly P.M.G. worker helped to get these items through customs by turning a blind eye when he could.

On my return to Tasmania I found that things had changed with Anderson Spitfires and Atwood Glo-devils all the rage. I did obtain an Atwood and later an Anderson which I never got to use.

The lure of motor cycles and motor cycle racing took over and I did not do a lot of modelling for a while. I sold the Anderson to help fund a new bike! Tommy D'Alton, who was the MHR for the West Coast sponsored the trip to Queenstown and Zeehan for Zeehan's Jubilee. There were four in the group, one being from the Model Engineers who took a tether car. The Model Engineer Exhibitions were still being held to raise funds for a model park and I do remember flying with three in the circle—I think I was using a borrowed Elphin 1.5 cc diesel. The other two crashed and as I continued to rotate, the crashed models lines wound around my legs and I fell over.

I also remember Len Quinn flying a Lockheed Constellation powered by four Frog 500s in that restricted space— madness!

After raising a fair bit of money from exhibitions the Model Engineers were granted land at what is now a sewerage treatment plant at Berriedale. The site was graded into two levels and fenced with the lower area to be used for model flying and the upper one for tethered cars and steam trains. 'The area was fenced and an expensive car track and small clubhouse constructed and this great concept appeared to be really on the go.

Unfortunately the older predominating model engineering fraternity decided that they no longer wanted aero modelling as part of their activities and excluded this type of membership.

Subsequently the whole project collapsed and most of the money gained from exhibitions was wasted and a visionary concept lost.



Control-line at Queenstown. David Reynolds, Gerald Haley and Bert Leverton

.....To be continued in January. Thank you Garth!

Overflying Boundaries.
Please be aware of our neighbours. Take care not to fly over our boundaries. Club rules stipulated we can overfly to the east when landing on the cross strip, apart from that please do not overfly. Particular care to the North please.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH.

Last Sunday, the 1st of December club members and their families enjoyed a wonderful Christmas lunch once again conjured up by our tireless caterer, Colleen Tonks and ably assisted by a willing group of ladies and support staff (Thanks Jack).

The room was tastefully decorated and we were treated to a selection of excellent festive meats, vegies and salads and of course finished off with old favourites, Christmas Pudding and Meringue.

Tomboys were scheduled but although it was a beautiful day the wind was again too strong to risk the delicate models. Some flyers did however get into the air, Bill Gregory showing that a Wildwing can handle anything, even if it has to be landed on full throttle!

Our annual Buy & Sell again threw up some bargains, I think it gets bigger each year, what does that say about our impulsive buying throughout the year? Mmmm oh well all adds to the atmosphere!

The club made \$100 from the sale of donated items.



Wishing you and yours a safe
and Merry Christmas