

Nostalgia – not what it used to be! By Clifford Ashby

I was a member of NMAC way back in the early 1960s. Having just shown my face again after nearly 50 years of another life I've been asked to jot down a few memories of the club. Well I can remember my old SMAE number (00136) but not what I did this morning.

Where?

- Christmas Cup – Racecourse
- Control line – Midsummer Meadow
- Free flight and RC – 1 mile SSE from Holdenby
- Club house – A cellar in Thornton House, Thornton Park – along with the model engineers and the slot car racers

When?

- Club night – Friday
- Control line – Sunday mornings
- Free flight – Sunday afternoons

Very little radio control flying. Single channel. Rudder only. No proportional. Too expensive for most.

Who?

- The eccentric Howard Boys of course with his ratty old Austin 7 and long brown mac. He would be well documented and known as one of the RC pioneers.
- Prof Payne and Ed Varley of course with trips in Profs side valve moggy minor -valves bouncing as the nuts were thrashed off it at 55mph max. Especially Prof's immaculate free flight screamers with shrieking ETAS. Wasn't Ed the tree climbing specialist? Ed's lovely Peacemakers and pressurised OS Max
- John???? with the souped up Standard Pennant, string-back gloves and Silverstone mentality
- Noel from Junction Road.
- Martyn Cowley – always immaculate c/l and f/f models with imaginative names eg "Olaf the Lofty" and a red mini. I think he went on to big things in man powered cross channel flight and then flight development and marketing in the USA with AeroVironment. A great party finder! We were great pals but we lost touch – as you do.
- Dave Brawn the wheeler dealer and inventor /seller of betting systems that didn't work and who often came seeking sanctuary at my house because irate customers would be waiting for him outside his house. He managed to sell me several Frog engines that never worked. Best man at my wedding
- The C/L guy with the Triumph Tiger Cub and attractive Bonita (Bonn) girlfriend.
- Dale Riley
- The combat crew from Weston on the Green – Fred Ford, John Shaw and Gerald with the bowler hat
- My brother Bob Ashby who seemed to demolish what he built at a great rate
- The Whitehills gang – Fred Pateman and his dad

What else?

- The ferocious RTP models (Round The Pole – do they still do that??) in the basement of Thornton House, especially the big Jetex powered ones with all cowering behind doors as the invisible model violently rocked the pole, and the sense of relief as it expired.
- The exploding of rubber motors into each others hair as a merry jape.
- The bike trailer coffins.
- Superball table tennis in Thornton House.
- Control line "Combat" competitions and the wreckage that went in the bin
- Going back to the Holdenby field on my bike in the middle of the night to see if the wind had blown my glider out of a tree. Very dark, very wet and very very scary. The cows chased me through a hedge, and the farmer put a shotgun up my nose - but I got most of the plane back.

Cliff R Ashby AKA "Crash" (I wonder why?)