

AFFS Champs 2003
by Malcolm Campbell

My first visit to the Narrandera field and all that I'd heard about this great flat treeless expanse was true. Only the weather was better than expected.

Nine BFFS members came down from Queensland, to enjoy one of the best modelling holidays one could ever hope for. Accommodation was very good, the town friendly and event organization spot on. Col's Camry wagon swallowed 30 models, 3 people and food and clothing for 9 days - no mean feat in itself. Phil Mitchell reckons we must know what sardines feel like!

During the second day of competition, Vin Morgan asked if I would write a story of each days flying. This proved a challenge as I had 11 events to fly in five days, and I hadn't written up any events in over two years. So here goes. I write this story during our 1,300 klm journey home to Brisbane.

FRIDAY - Combined Open Percentage

A little breeze, but not for such a big field, good air, no fences, clear skies and a good dunny - what more could one ask for? As usual, Combined % was the testing ground for coming events with 17 entrants. Many 0 - 0 models were to go straight up and straight down in the next few days, with Des Slattery and Stan Hinds starting the trend. Roy Summersby was getting great height with his sleek F1J, as was Phil Mitchell with his bunting F1A. Queenslander Mark Armour's F1H also maxed out with Roy and Phil, taking third in the flyoff with Roy the winner. Dave Lacey was unlucky to lose his F1A in the final round after 3 straight maxes. His model remains at large, a great pity.

Scale

Dave Hegarty, who bravely slept at the field each night, had his ABC Robin and little yellow Fike flying well. Gary Odgers Corban Super Ace improved with each flight and Stan Hinds magnificent electric powered Grumman Tracker twin had the audience wrapt with its silent flight.

Scramble

The start was delayed due to my flyaway during testing. Never fill a 3-minute tank and forget to set the DT - even scramble models go a long way in good air. CD Roy Summersby wisely reduced the time to 45 minutes, to ensure we all packed up in daylight. Soon carpets and conventional craft filled the sky. Van Richard-Smith was the first to exit after a collision with Phil Mitchell. Meanwhile, the flying carpets of Tahn Stowe and Andrew Heath were racking up the seconds. Phil looked promising with eager son Brett retrieving but their run ended at the 30-minute mark, with a broken fuselage - probably weakened by the earlier mid-air collision. My own Scooter loafed around in large circles, flying low over the Thomas/ Summersby camp on each launch, to pick up 3rd place with Andrew Heath 1st, just 1 second clear of Tahn Stowe.

SATURDAY - F1A, Open Rubber, Open Power and P30

US visitor Brian Van Nest and Phil Mitchell gained enormous height on launch with beautifully executed bunts, with Phil missing a flyoff when he dropped 3 secs in R4. Ben Lewis unfortunately damaged his bunter, dropping back to his reliable zoom model, but just never caught up again. Vera Lacey sprinted up the field in her usual spirited manner for each of her launches. The straight tow non-carbon models of Jan Thomas, Malcolm Campbell, Van Richard-Smith and Mark Armour followed up the rear.

My Pink Elephant really only came south to compete against Jan Thomas's red/yellow model and, in fact, we synched our scores exactly in R2. But I forged ahead with 5 straight maxes after that - my best performance ever in competition.

Air in the middle of the day proved tricky, with Brian van Nest towing for 40 minutes before using my high circling Pinkey as a marker. He bunted over the top of it into great lift. Brett Mitchell continues to improve, under the watchful eye of Dad, Phil. Vin Morgan only dropped one round to finish 3rd ahead of Jeremy Woolley who sub-maxed rounds 5 and 7. Tahn Stowe, with 3 maxes, fell back to 9th place, when he badly dropped the final round.

Open Rubber

With 14 entries, the day was perfect for big models with lots of rubber. "Dens Sparker" thoroughly enjoyed his flights and both he and Col Collyer vied for the altitude record. My own "broomstick" occasionally looked the goods with one magnificent flight where it soared at 1,000 feet, in unison with a half dozen Pelicans in close proximity. Paul Rossiter missed the flyoff by 3 secs and I missed it by 6 secs - Open Rubber is so often a fly-off event. Dave Hegarty, Garry Odgers and Ted Woolley were also to get two maxes in this hotly contested event. Graham Maynard used the prop hangers of his model to perform minor surgery on his hand when the prop assembly failed - luckily, he's a (retired) doctor. The model thrashed itself to death and Graham painfully repaired his hand. Peter Sikora's conventional F1B continued to max out and he joined Dennis and Col for the 5pm flyoff. Dennis launched first but Col had hired some pretty experienced Victorian lift pickers as timers and he went on to win, with Peter third.

P-30

To be competitive here, early flights in ideal air were essential, and there were 15 entries. Some who were over-committed had to leave it till the afternoon when the conditions deteriorated for the really L/Wgt P-30s. The two Morgan P-30s gained very good height and appeared very well trimmed, and Susan Hegarty's "old time" stick & tissue model put in some marvellous flights. Karen Kenmir, flying a Bond P30, also maxed out as did Roy's decidedly old looking Supa Dupa. As I flew late in the day, my own L/Wgt P-30 got hammered into the ground and I switched to my 3/16" rubber model and maxed only one round, coming last. Vin Morgan, George Car, Mark Armour, Sergio Montes, Paul Rossiter and Dianne Richard-Smith were all to record 2 maxes, to take places 6 through 12. The flyoff was an "All Girl" affair. Well, almost; Terry and Roy spoiled it, and didn't they receive some stick on the flight line! Living up to his chauvinistic approach, Terry launched first and won. Roy gallantly launched later and lost, with the three girls in the middle. Sue was the best with Leigh and Karen close behind. A really good event, and great to see all the women in the flyoff.

Open Power

Isn't this the way - you test for days on your home ground, execute two perfect test flights and then wreck it on your first official! Well, that's what Des Slattery did at Narrandera. Col Collyer's model, resplendent in dark blue and aggressive D-Day stripes, was well sorted after the Springhurst Nats, and it sounded and looked magnificent as it climbed to good height. Roy's reliable ground-shaking 40 mother maxed out without once strafing the field, and Stan Hinds F1C simply delivered the goods for a 3-way flyoff. Col Somers OS10 powered Stomper tested well, but needs more run-in time. The flyoff was an anti-climax, at least for Roy, who DT'ed off the top of a superb climb, leaving the win to Col Collyer, with Stan Hinds in second place.

SUNDAY - Vintage Glider, Vintage Rubber, Vintage Power, F1B, F1C and Oz Diesel

Vintage Glider

Brett and Phil Mitchell's Nebulas made the most of the early good air to rake up a full house of maxes. My Seraph (dreadful aircraft, says Vin) also easily maxed out twice in perfect 100m towing conditions. I was going for my third max, but confusion at launch, light air and a lack of understanding of rules on what an

attempt is saw me deliberately tow in, ruining what was a very good chance for a 3-way flyoff. Jan Thomas faithfully attended to Dave's F1C needs, before returning later to the glider battle with her reliable Corsair, but the air was not so kind. Dave had to leave his Chief in the box. Des Slattery towed well all day, putting his Oderman into third place. Col Somers' Quickie, with home-built digital timer, came in 4th. It behaved like an R/C model, turning 90° left and right at will - most unusual, until I saw Col Collyer's identical model do the same during testing 2 days later. The giant Collyer Mantis soared gracefully above but seemed to lack the urge to climb higher, and the DT'ed landing close to the cars was spectacular. Vin's Seraph seemed to fly in the way that he regularly describes this model. Eventually the 2-way flyoff between the old and young Mitchells took place amid much encouragement for the youngster. Brett towed up first amongst cries of Run! Stop! Run again! Run left! Run right! Yes! No! Nonetheless, he did well, although Phil got the greater height and won.

Vintage Power

Two models were outstanding in this event. Roy's Fifteen went up beautifully every time and Steve Rothwell, flying Roy's Swayback with a hot Oliver Tiger flew very consistently in breezy conditions. These were the two to watch. Des Slattery did well with his Stomper, once he got the cranky Elfin 149 started, and produced one glorious max, which he caught, on DT, single handed, at the flight line. They don't get much better than that. Jan Thomas must be trying to get fit. Dave put his Eliminator into the "lift of the day" recording a 14-minute flight, winning the "height of the day award". Dennis Parker and George Car, both flying Stompers, did not have such a good day.

Vintage Rubber

Col Somer's Gee Bee acted as a great thermal indicator, initiating a mass launch, as all the F1B/F1C brigade launched as one. Models filled the air, with max after max, with the longest retrieve of perhaps 100 metres. Mark Armour's Fullarton Floater maxed out in what were ideal conditions for this type of model. He didn't even get a sweat up on the retrieves. Jim Christie kept his lethal Floater under wraps, electing to fly his Korda Stickler instead - bad choice under the conditions. While Mark maxed out, 5 of the 9 entrants maxed two rounds and Dianne Richard-Smith was unlucky to lose her 1946 Ascender on its second max, when it lived up to its name, being found a week after the competition. George Car came in second from Dave Hegarty's Gollywock, just one second ahead of Jim Christie.

F1C

This was a 3-horse race between Dave, Stan and Roy. Dave maxed out in fine form, and poor Roy did "significant damage" to one of his best models. Thankfully, he has a great choice of models and selected another, only to drop out after R5. Stan Hinds dropped two maxes to finish 2nd.

F1B

This was the premier event of the meet, attracting 14 entrants, with the Blackams, USA's Brian van Nest, Leigh Morgan, Terry Bond and Peter Sikora all looking for first place. Queensland's own John Lewis was happily received back into this top-order pack, flying his own Andrikov inspired model. Bad luck yet again followed Graham Maynard, who pulled his impressive model off the stooge, doing irreparable damage to the Russian boom. WA's Guy Batemen, SA's Bill Pudney, Mark Armour and Van Richard-Smith made up one of the biggest entries of the weekend.

Round 1 had models drifting into the distant haze with John Lewis unfortunately missing a max when his model disappeared downwind at 2:44. Dust on the day proved a problem for some, with Karen's model demonstrating its DPR (Didn't Prop Release). Richard and Don were "head to head" all day and, at the other end of the flight line, Leigh Morgan and Peter Sikora also continued to max out. Mark

Armour put the ex-John Lewis Wake to good use, returning a creditable "first outing" performance, and Van Richard-Smith used the day to sort out his improving W-Hobby Musius. US ironman, Brian van Nest continued his form, putting in another strong performance. Bad luck continued for John Lewis, when he forgot to set the timer and was down in 49 seconds. Modern day Wake's do a lot with the timer and I guess John's been flying a few too many "No Frills" Wakefield events in Queensland to remember all the settings for each launch! Don, Richard, Leigh and Brian all maxed out into the late evening flyoff, with the unlucky Peter Sikora just one second away. Terry Bond, Bill Pudney, Paul Rossiter and Dave Lacey also recorded 6 maxes, but each added a horror flight to drop out of contention, and all bar one competitor recorded more than 1,000 secs over 7 rounds. The first flyoff dispensed with Brian van Nest. And the second flyoff, incidentally the first 7 minute round that Leigh Morgan has ever contested, saw Richard launch first with Leigh going soon after. Wiley Don waited till late in the window to record a winning 420 second, from Richard on 345 and Leigh on 260.

Oz Diesel

Some close competition developed here with 9 entrants. Roy's own-design, sporting an Elfin driving an electric-model type prop, Col Somer's Dixie Boy (Taipan) and Des Slattery's own design (Taipan) provided the best and most consistent flights to finish in that order on the day. My own Dixielander climbed impressively, considering its modest PAW power, but failed to find any lift on all 5 flights - perhaps I flew too many events? Steve Rothwell started well but dropped 3rd place by just 1 second to Des Slattery. Col Collyer got two maxes but three ordinary flights saw him out of it. Van Richard-Smith provided the entertainment for the day, when he found he had just 20 minutes to record 5 flights. Ably assisted by Dianne, he only just made it. Dennis Parker flew at the other end of the line and Terry Bond trotted out his "See Through" Stomper variant that showed promise, although he flew late, due to F1B commitments.

MONDAY F1G, F1H, F1J, HLG and Catapult

F1G

The day started with light airs for the 2 minute max classes - not so good for the gliders but perfect for F1G. Seven maxed in rounds 1 and 2, promising a stiff competition. I dropped out of the event in R2 when my Tumbleweed 2 disappeared from view at nearly 10 minutes, Thanks to a heavy hand on the Button Timer! Mark Armour missed the flyoff with a couple of short flights and Noel McMillan dropped only one round to finish 6th. By the end of the event, Jim Christie, Terry Bond, Paul Rossiter and John Lewis were in the following morning's flyoff - which was the order in which they finished, with "showoff" Jim DT'ing down and still winning!

F1H

Des Slattery's Lil Hinney racked up 4 maxes in F1H, to lead Jan Thomas in the "Hinney grudge match". But they only came 6th and 8th. Jeremy Woolley and Tahn Stowe acted as lift spotters with their circle tow models, with Tahn having the misfortune to lose his model in the final round, after 60 minutes in the air! Mark Armour's high aspect own design model also flew consistently in all rounds, missing a flyoff by only 9 seconds. Ben Lewis also maxed 4 rounds but 106 secs in R1 placed him 3rd. With 4 maxes apiece, Jeremy Wolley, Tahn Stowe and Des Slattery managed only 4th through 6th places. Phil Mitchell, flying his all-electronic, inertial hook model got fantastic height on all launches and never looked like missing a max for 1st.

F1J

Roy Summersby was always the threat in F1J, with his "full house mini F1C". Stan Hinds maxed out in fine form, with Col Somers on 4 maxes (missed the first round) and Des Slattery on three. Graham Maynard used this event to continue to trim his Satellite 320 model, finally mastering a cantankerous motor. The

flyoff, between Roy and Stan was a sad affair, with Roy launching badly (and winning with 163 secs) as Stan's model went straight up - and straight down. I think that was No. 2 for the unlucky Stan.

HLG

There were not too many left standing for this event, but I know Phil Mitchell won it and son Brett was third, sandwiching Martin Williams in second place.

Catapult HLG

Four entries here saw the girls shine (again!) with Leigh Morgan continuing in winning form with a Len Surtee's Sting 21, from Susan Hegarty, 7secs behind and Junior, Nicholas Kuilder in third place.

Champ of Champs was ROY SUMMERSBY - well done!