

The Basic Carrier Deck contest of the Manchester Weekend Workshop at the Barton BASH on 9th-10th May 2015

by Andy Housden

There was a good turnout of Carrier flyers for this year's BASH, despite a forecast - accurate as it turned out - for wet and windy on Saturday morning, changing during the afternoon to dry, sunny and calmer, and dry but breezy throughout Sunday. Unsurprisingly, the major challenge on both days turned out to be the wind during slow flight. On Saturday it was a South Westerly, rolling over the tall hedge on the edge of the Carrier circle and sometimes creating unpredictable upwind turbulence. On Sunday, as it had backed round to a southerly direction from behind the rather more distant buildings near the adjacent airport's helicopter hangers, we all thought this would make slow flying a bit easier. Wrong! Despite the distance of the buildings, the turbulence was measurably more unpredictable and occasionally quite unpleasant, so, in consequence, most of the flyers' best flights and all the top scores were achieved during the Saturday afternoon - which, perhaps somewhat ironically, also ended in absolutely delightful conditions that were quite good enough for even small free flight models, as shown here on the right with Nick Ford's Sea Hurricane posed against the evening sun.



Barton MFC's flying site is entirely on peat and although the club have put in a lot of ground drainage, heavy rainfall can still produce a lot of standing water, seen here on the left. On several past wet-weather BASHes, various waterfowl have had to be chased off puddles around the Carrier circle prior to flight operations! Fortunately, despite some extended downpours prior to this year's BASH, the club had constructed a new concrete centre in the area used for the Carrier circle, as seen right with George Ford during a fast run, and this just happened to match Basic Carrier Deck's three

metre diameter Pilot's Circle, ensuring wellie-free flying for everyone who flew on sixty foot lines (though maybe not entirely immersion-free flying for some models!)



In order to get the weekend's major cockup out of the way as early as possible, **Andy Housden** flew his Short Seamew first. Surprisingly, he didn't break it... Having been kindly refurbished by original owner Trevor Tabor at the end of the 2014 season when it was clearly looking even more dodgy than usual, the airframe behaved faultlessly; unhappily the motor continued to misbehave in the same way as it had during 2014's final competitions. Whatever the fault was, the aged OS 40 was fine when ground tested and even kept going during all the fast runs, but shortly after being throttled down, started misfiring and eventually died before any slow run could start. Despite pulling the plumbing to pieces to check for leaks and refitting the tank's clunk which had fallen off, the fault stubbornly remained - so Andy accepted tenth and last place was his inevitable lot and retired to his sandwich box in an attempt to achieve satisfaction by other means.

By contrast, **Fred Skinner** had *much* greater success with his Bluebird 46-powered Martin MO-1, even though he was uncomfortable with the wind on both days and kept as low to avoid turbulence. Fred's first Saturday flight was a little cautious, with a fairly fast slow run followed by four overshoots before hooking up, but he reduced tailweight for his second flight which gave him his weekend's fastest fast run, slowest slow run and, with a split-arise landing that came straight in onto the Nos 3 and 4 wires at exactly the right height, as shown on the right, got 203.1 points and eventual third place.





Unfortunately for the MO-1, seen on the left, its single Sunday flight ended abruptly when it grazed the briny just after the end of the high speed run, breaking in two and showering the deck (and the Contest Director!) with excavated peat. The AAIB*, seen on the right around the model some fifty feet on from the impact point, immediately convened, since there's always something to be learned from every prang, full size or even just model-sized. In the air, the engine wouldn't slow

down, so Fred had briefly glanced down at his handle to check that there wasn't an obvious problem with the throttle lever. At high speed, this attention shift away from keeping the model on a level flight path, though only momentary, was enough to produce the result shown. The carburettor barrel was found to be jammed wide open, and Fred then remembered that there had been some earlier warnings the day before where throttle response was unusually slow as the servo (presumably) struggled to shift the stiffening barrel. And the moral is that if there's anything unusual about your model's behaviour, try to find out what's going on because if it's a problem, there might just be unpleasant secondary consequences... Fortunately, the model was workshop-repairable, although Fred subsequently made a decision to use only servos with metal gears in the future.

* Air Accident Investigation Board, of course!



Johnathon Crabtree, without doubt one of the best Carrier pilots in the UK, is known to "like a bit of a breeze" since the higher the wind speed, the greater the potential for kiting his model into wind for the longest possible slow flight time. Johnathon is also a very organised flyer and is seen on the left testing the conditions at all points around the flight circle before signalling for the slow run. Sunday's wind conditions generally produced lower scores for everyone than did Saturday's; John was no different, with a surprise gust before he could signal the start of his slow

run that simply rolled the model into the circle and pancaked it, luckily with no damage. His next flight was undoubtedly the most heroic of the contest, carried out during a period when the wind decided to be particularly unpleasant and line tension during low speed flight was lost on several occasions. Johnathon's slow run nerves

are, however, iron shod and he simply held on, even without once breaking the 30 degree maximum attitude rule. Even then, the wind made the landing unusually difficult, causing Johnathon to overshoot as the model repeatedly ballooned over the wires. A successful but very hairy landing onto No.3 wire was eventually achieved but only by floating the model down onto the deck at nearly zero forward speed. Whilst this flight didn't give him his best score, it

was definitely the weekend's best demonstration of flying competence! In fact, Johnathon actually produced his best score with his very first flight on Saturday while wind speed was at its highest but (relatively speaking) less vicious than Sunday. Even then, the hedge-generated turbulence was enough to produce (unusually for John) a fairly irregular flight path, but, rounding a very impressive flight off by taking the No.1 and No.2 wires together, as shown above right, he achieved a score of 239.5 points, and, ultimately, a well deserved first place!



George Ford's Fairey Barracuda is a *mighty* beast! A heavy model, it has nevertheless been trimmed very carefully by George and is normally able to achieve a fairly consistent 30 degree attitude during slow flight. The Barracuda's weight, however, means that it can struggle to get off the deck. On the model's off-days, it



sometimes needs either a bit of a push or the facility of a Harrier-style deck-end ski-jump usually achieved by propping HMS Basher's bows up on top of a model box! On the left is a shot of the Barracuda during a more conventional take off, but with full up elevator and the main wheels clear of the deck edge but possibly lower than deck level! Though its weight makes it a particularly good windy weather model, even the Barracuda took a dislike to the BASH turbulence on both days and couldn't achieve the scores of which it is normally capable. The unpredictable eddies and vortices continually upset George's attempts to get it up to the 30 degree limit and engine setting problems unfortunately meant that it

ditched short of the landing on his single Saturday flight and just after the fast run on Sunday's second flight. Sunday's third flight also terminated in a ditch when a particularly nasty gust hit the model during the into-wind leg of Lap 6 of its slow run - but the gust was from *behind* the model (sneaky, or what?), reducing its airspeed suddenly to not-very-much-at-all and giving it another unwanted wetting.

Fortunately, George's first Sunday flight (see right) was undertaken very cautiously due to the conditions and, with the flight unscathed right up to the landing approach (which, being exactly right for height, descent angle and airspeed), he was able to drop right onto the wires, picking up Nos 1, 2 and 3 just to be on the safe side - 161.2 points for seventh place.



Able to attend only on the Saturday, **Paul Stubbs** nevertheless brought along his brand new, very smart but unflown Douglas AD Skyraider as shown here on the left - but saw the problems others were having with the wind and elected to use his tried-and-tested Grumman F6F Hellcat for all flights. The Hellcat design produces a very stable model and although it can be persuaded to sit up at 30 degrees during slow flight, Saturday's unpredictable wind conditions made this very difficult and therefore gave Paul scores lower than he would otherwise have achieved. Nevertheless, he used the flights to practise other slow flying

techniques, getting some useful experience of piloting the model by walking round the very edge of the pilot's circle with his arm stretched out as far as possible. Compared with flying from the centre of the circle, this can lengthen flight radius by up to another 8 feet and, on 60ft lines, can increase the slow run time by up to 13% or so - well worth the bother if you can get used to walking round the circle edge without using up too much concentration thinking about it! Paul's first flight was cautious with a low landing approach that saw the Hellcat bounce off the ramp and slither along the deck upside down; but his second flight was executed with more confidence and whilst the model clipped the ramp again, it stayed the right way up, caught the very first wire and stopped in less than its own length as shown by the sequence of (slightly grainy) pictures below!



Although the third and fourth flight landings were technically better - the third flight approach was more accurate; the fourth flight landing ended up smack bang between Nos. 3 and 4 wires (though the hook failed to engage due to plain bad luck) - he'd obviously taken more risks during the slow run of the second flight and this turned out to produce his best score of 171.8 points. Very respectable - and sixth place to boot!

The BASH saw the maiden contest flight for **Dave Cowburn**'s sleek new Vickers Supermarine Seafang, powered by an Irvine 36. This motor, like its stablemate the Irvine 39, has been out of production for some

time but is still one of the most lightest and powerful 'ordinary' engines of its size. The Seafang was built, as are all Dave's models, to a very high standard, as shown on the right, but, in view of the wind and the untried nature of the model, Dave chose not to take any chances during any of the slow runs and this meant that his flight scores were lower than they might have been. An experienced aerobatics flyer, Dave's Carrier landings are extremely precise and, as they're usually executed nearly horizontally and at frighteningly high speeds, can be quite spectacular, but the prevailing conditions at the BASH threw the model around somewhat and often spoilt his approaches at the last second. On Saturday's first flight landing, the Seafang rocketed down right onto the No.4 wire and this would have been a 100-pointer, *except* that Dave



pulled back on the lines during the landing roll - something all pilots do from time to time - and dragged the model over the inboard edge of the deck. Saturday's second flight looked even better and the landing approach equally good, except that the model was travelling even faster and had to be slammed down quickly to avoid missing the wires, with the result that the tail pitched up, lifting the hook clear of the wires and leaving the Seafang to slide right to the end of the deck on its main wheels and spinner, as on the left. Sunday's first flight terminated abruptly after the fast run with an over-lean throttle, and although the remaining three flights had progressively improving mixture settings and successful (though cautious) slow runs, the even-windier conditions meant that Dave's landings were all rather fast and the model never managed to pick up a wire. That left him with his second Saturday flight score of 74.1 points and ninth place (...but he was still in front of Andy Housden!).

Arriving relatively late on Saturday rather than at the start due to hours of traffic jams, **Chris Howell**'s patience had been sorely tried, and his first two flights with his Grumman AF Guardian couldn't have improved his temper. Though the model rocketed round during the fast run of the initial flight, courtesy of the substantial urge from its J'En 37, and downwind lap 2 of the slow run saw the tail drop, clearly indicating that Chris was determined to have a go at maximum attitude flight despite the wind conditions, the tail unfortunately continued to descend and the model rotated until it was going backwards, resulting in a disqualification. However, Chris's recovery of his upside down model in the upwind sector of the circle, something that could otherwise easily have resulted in a pile of wreckage, was extremely competent - though he might not have been in quite the right mood to appreciate his own skill at that point! The second flight had a similar start, but again he tried too hard during the slow run and the model stalled out in lap 3 before he could recover it. Nevertheless, he was achieving about 18 seconds per lap, so the potential of pilot and model was already obvious. Finally, his last flight on Saturday delivered the goods! After another scorching fast run, Chris threw caution to the winds (if he had any left by that time, of course!) and pulled out all the stops for slow flight, collecting two warnings during the process but achieving the slowest slow run he's ever flown. The landing (below) was unfussy yet quite accurate, picking up all the wires except No.4, and giving him a brand new personal best score of 216.0 points!



On Sunday, the wind refused to allow any of his flights to progress beyond the slow run, his models either being blown downwards into the water, given a savage gust up the tail as per George Ford's last Sunday flight described above, or simply blown into the circle whilst upwind, Chris remained delighted with his new personal

best score. But when this turned out to be good enough for *second* place overall, the highest position he's yet achieved in a contest, it must have made his dreadful journey up to Barton worthwhile. *Well done* that man! Grandfather of the Crabtree Carrier dynasty (himself, son Johnathon above and grandson Max who's done some Carrier flying and whom we're trying to persuade to do more), **Nigel Crabtree** has, in this last year or so, changed his 'signature' all-blue Grumman AF Guardian for the Fairey Spearfish design originated by Johnathon. Nigel's first Saturday flight was one of extremes - the wind was strong, the Spearfish was repeatedly pushed to the 30 degree attitude limit during the slow run even though the turbulence kept flicking it back to the horizontal (or below!), the throttle was used in fistfuls of on-off bursts and the model's flight path was a series of quite severe switchbacks. Despite this, Nigel avoided any warnings for maximum attitude exceedance and the model avoided any contact with the hard stuff! The landing was typical Nigel: it was signalled (quite legally) mere feet before the model reached the Carrier and this turned out to be an excellent decision, as the engine died over the ramp and the model just made the No.1 wire. If ever a model aviation definition of Split-Arse is required, here it is! Nigel's second Saturday flight was a carbon copy of the first, right up to the point where the ground finally intersected the Spearfish's slow run flight path, resulting in sufficient damage, although workshop-repairable, to prevent any further flights. Nigel's first flight score of 190.4 points, no more than something of a warm-up on his part, therefore stood as his best and still proved to be good enough for eventual fourth place!



It was a little surprising that **Nick Ford**, piloting in umpteen racing events on the other side of the BASH site, could find enough energy to fly Carrier - but he is one of the few Control Liners who has youth on his side... Whilst his Hawker Sea Hurricane is similarly sized to his dad George's big Fairey Barracuda, it's a bit lighter - which helps! All three of Nick's flights on Saturday suffered from an over-rich engine setting, though this was gradually sorted out with each flight. The first flight saw Nick ditch during the slow run, either due to trying too hard or to the engine's over-rich setting - or possibly to both at the same time. The second flight had a good slow run and the landing approach looked right, but the Sea Hurricane touched down just the wrong side of the last wire and ran off the end of the deck. Nick's third flight was the best of the three, though he unfortunately overcompensated too much due the previously slightly high approach, hit the ramp and bounced over the wires, again missing them all. Sunday didn't start off terribly well, either. Nick's Sea Hurricane had no hook latch and Team Ford had fitted a *very* strong deployment elastic band indeed - so strong that once the model left the launcher's hands as shown on the right, the tail was



forced up by the hook, the prop pecked the deck all the way to the bows and the model dived straight into the drink. Oops! The turbulence present during Nick's second flight was such that he simply had to keep the model at a safe speed, and this prevented him attempting to fly at the 30 degree maximum attitude; the wind also threw the model about and caused Nick to collide with the deck before he had given his landing signal. Fortunately, things finally got better for his last flight, and despite a rich fast run and an unkind wind for the first half of the slow run, Nick finally managed to get the Sea Hurricane up to 30 degrees for most of the remaining laps, shown left, when the turbulence unaccountable died. It was only temporary, though! Exactly on cue, the gusts reappeared for the landing and choosing the lap to land



became a lottery. As it happened, Nick signalled, the wind dropped, the Sea Hurricane bored in straight onto Nos 1 and 2 wires and, finally, Nick had achieved a full score: 177.8 points - and fifth place. Whew!



David Goddard could only attend on a single day and home commitments meant that this was the Sunday. Flying his very smart Fairey Barracuda, no sooner had launcher Fred Skinner released it for the first flight (left), than the engine died just after take off. The needle setting was (correctly) diagnosed as being too lean and adjusted appropriately so that, like everyone else, his remaining flights merely suffered from a wind that was far more turbulent than it had a reasonable right to be! In fact, the rough air put him into the ground directly after take off on his third flight and, in exactly the same fashion as had been inflicted on George Ford and Chris Howell earlier in the day, a sudden tailwind gust whilst flying into wind robbed the model of all airspeed, the model rotating backwards and ditching upside down, very fortunately without any damage. David's second flight, though, was his most successful but

undoubtedly the most nerve-wracking of all!

A sudden violent upwind gust blew the model in during the second *fast* run lap and the model went free flight in the worst possible way: engine at full throttle, lines hanging in a big loop, entirely the wrong flight attitude, the appearance of a real bin-liner job - but, somehow or other, David recovered the dire situation and simply went on to finish the run with gritted teeth! The following slow flight was understandably cautious, ie: rather faster than normal, as can be seen on the right, and to get down out of the horrible air, David didn't hang around for a second longer than he had to, signalling almost immediately at the end of his slow run and diving straight for the safety of the deck - thump, No.2 wire, 141.5 points, 8th place!



Final contest positions

Pos.	Name	Club or location	Model	Engine	Score
1st	Johnathon Crabtree	Sheffield	Fairey Spearfish	J'En 37	239.5
2nd	Chris Howell	Langley Model Squadron	Grumman AF Guardian	J'En 37	216.0
3rd	Fred Skinner	Barton MFC	Martin MO-1	Bluebird 46	203.1
4th	Nigel Crabtree	Sheffield	Fairey Spearfish	J'En 37	190.4
5th	Nick Ford	South Bristol MAC	Hawker Sea Hurricane	Irvine 40	177.8
6th	Paul Stubbs	Cheshire Heli Addicts	Grumman F6F Hellcat	Enya 40	171.8
7th	George Ford	Cotswold RCS	Fairey Barracuda	Thunder Tiger 46	161.2
8th	David Goddard	Barton MFC	Fairey Barracuda	Enya 40	141.5
9th	Dave Cowburn	PANDAS	Supermarine Seafang	Irvine 36	74.1
10th	Andy Housden	Three Kings Aeromodellers	Short Seamew	OS 40	DQs

(remainder of contest details continued on next page)

Detailed contest scores

Pos.	Name	Model	Engine	Day	Fast time (secs)		Slow time (secs)	Warn-ings	Time points		Landing points	Deduct points	Scale points	Colour points	Final score
1st	Johnathon Crabtree	Fairey Spearfish	J'En 37	Sat	27.1		146.6	0	119.5		100	0	10	10	239.5
		Fairey Spearfish	J'En 37	Sat	26.8		141.0	0	114.2		100	0	10	10	234.2
		Fairey Spearfish	J'En 37	Sat	30.3		137.2	0	106.9		100	0	10	10	226.9
		Fairey Spearfish	J'En 37	Sun	28.5	D	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	A
		Fairey Spearfish	J'En 37	Sun	27.6		121.6	0	94.0		100	10	10	10	204.0
2nd	Chris Howell	Grumman AF Guardian	J'En 37	Sat	27.4		DQ	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
		Grumman AF Guardian	J'En 37	Sat	27.6		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
		Grumman AF Guardian	J'En 37	Sat	26.9		122.9	2	96.0		100	0	10	10	216.0
		Grumman AF Guardian	J'En 37	Sun	29.3	D	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	A
		Grumman AF Guardian	J'En 37	Sun	27.5		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
		Grumman AF Guardian	J'En 37	Sun	28.0		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
		Boulton Paul Sea Balliol	Leo 46	Sun	26.8		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
3rd	Fred Skinner	Martin MO-1	Bluebird 46	Sat	31.2		86.6	0	55.4		100	20	10	10	155.4
		Martin MO-1	Bluebird 46	Sat	28.6		111.7	0	83.1		100	0	10	10	203.1
		Martin MO-1	Bluebird 46	Sun	28.8	D	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	A
4th	Nigel Crabtree	Fairey Spearfish	J'En 37	Sat	30.3		100.7	0	70.4		100	0	10	10	190.4
		Fairey Spearfish	J'En 37	Sat	30.9		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
5th	Nick Ford	Hawker Sea Hurricane	Irvine 40	Sat	48.7		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
		Hawker Sea Hurricane	Irvine 40	Sat	43.8		104.4	0	60.6		0	0	10	10	80.6
		Hawker Sea Hurricane	Irvine 40	Sat	39.5		116.4	0	76.9		0	0	10	10	96.9
		Hawker Sea Hurricane	Irvine 40	Sun	D		-	-	-		-	-	-	-	A
		Hawker Sea Hurricane	Irvine 40	Sun	39.6		91.3	0	51.7	D	-	-	-	-	DQ
		Hawker Sea Hurricane	Irvine 40	Sun	41.6		99.4	0	57.8		100	0	10	10	177.8
6th	Paul Stubbs	Grumman F6F Hellcat	Enya 40	Sat	36.6		80.5	0	43.9		20	0	10	10	83.9
		Grumman F6F Hellcat	Enya 40	Sat	35.7		87.5	0	51.8		100	0	10	10	171.8
		Grumman F6F Hellcat	Enya 40	Sat	38.4		79.7	0	41.3		100	5	10	10	156.3
		Grumman F6F Hellcat	Enya 40	Sat	38.1		81.6	0	43.5		0	0	10	10	63.5
7th	George Ford	Fairey Barracuda	Thunder Tiger 46	Sat	37.4		80.2	0	42.8	D	-	-	-	-	DQ
		Fairey Barracuda	Thunder Tiger 46	Sun	37.1		78.3	0	41.2		100	0	10	10	161.2
		Fairey Barracuda	Thunder Tiger 46	Sun	36.2	D	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	A
		Fairey Barracuda	Thunder Tiger 46	Sun	37.3		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
8th	David Goddard	Fairey Barracuda	Enya 40	Sun	D		-	-	-		-	-	-	-	A
		Fairey Barracuda	Enya 40	Sun	36.2		57.7	0	21.5		100	0	10	10	141.5
		Fairey Barracuda	Enya 40	Sun	D		-	-	-		-	-	-	-	A
		Fairey Barracuda	Enya 40	Sun	32.9		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
9th	Dave Cowburn	Supermarine Seafang	Irvine 36	Sat	26.5		53.4	0	26.9		0	0	10	10	46.9
		Supermarine Seafang	Irvine 36	Sat	26.1		60.2	0	34.1		20	0	10	10	74.1
		Supermarine Seafang	Irvine 36	Sun	27.9	D	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	A
		Supermarine Seafang	Irvine 36	Sun	28.2		49.6	0	21.4		0	0	10	10	41.4
		Supermarine Seafang	Irvine 36	Sun	27.6		61.9	0	34.3		0	0	10	10	54.3
		Supermarine Seafang	Irvine 36	Sun	28.7		51.8	0	23.1		0	0	10	10	43.1
10th	Andy Housden	Short Seamew	OS 40	Sat	33.7		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
		Short Seamew	OS 40	Sat	31.5	D	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	A
		Short Seamew	OS 40	Sat	30.9		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ
		Short Seamew	OS 40	Sat	31.7		D	0	-		-	-	-	-	DQ