



Kriss Best the CD – sits it out patiently at control with everything she needs including the most essential commodity of all – a sense of humour! Photo by Sue Hipperson.

La Grande Coupe de Birmingham

Martin Dilly reports on this late season duration event with a touch of pre-Christmas bonhomme.

With additional contributions by Dave and Sue Hipperson.

In the absence of Middle Wallop for the traditional early December date for the Coupe Europa, the Croydon Club who usually run the event were grateful when Gavin Manion of the Birmingham Club offered to organise it at North Luffenham on December 7th. The forecast was for 12 kts, gusting to 30 and that's pretty much what the competitors found, with some rain in the morning to ensure that dust wasn't a problem, but this kept the entries lower than usual. The max was set at 1:30 and a line of trees a few hundred yards upwind made turbulence a difficulty, with several flights that looked promising for the first few seconds of the climb soon succumbing to its effects.

The events were F1G for the AeroModeller Trophy and Vintage Coupe d'Hiver for the

Bernard Boutillier Cup. The latter saw the ever-popular Etienvre predominate, with a Fuit or two in the mix, but F1G attracted the most entries with many deciding that a blustery day in Rutland was preferable to a nice snug day at home, building next year's winning model.

The central venue allowed more from the North to attend and apart from a couple of notable exceptions such as Peter Hall (5 times winner), most of the usual protagonists were on hand to do battle. F1G also saw a welcome French entrant, Didier Chevenard, who looked in a strong position till the penultimate round, when an energetic launch removed the outer panel of his six-panel wing. He had used some Gorban parts, including the motor tube, but when building the wing he had used a 1mm fibreglass dihedral brace



Phil Ball with his F1G winning model. When the class was new in the UK most models were not much bigger than the tail plane on Phil's model! Photo by Sue Hipperson.

Right: Pete Brown was flying this very modern model. Note spectacular carbon blades - the fine bent wire is the tracker aerial. Carbon boom fitted to motor tube by very neat aluminium turning.



Far right: Later in the day Pete Brown was brave enough to expose his knees as the weather improved slightly. Conjecture was that they were thermal detecting aids! Photo by Dave Hipperson.



Michael Marshall has a fine model but was not picking the right air on the day.

Gerry Ferer flew his Bagatelle to the top spot in Vintage Coupe d'Hiver.



Dennis Davitt flew his Jump in Vintage, and made sure it was well protected from the weather with his 'stooge' set up in the back of the car.



Didier Chevenard made the trip to North Luffenham from France.



Scale columnist Bill Dennis had a good day in F1G and narrowly missed the top 3 placings.



Pete Brown was cheerful whether winning or losing!



David Hipperson presented the Boutillier Cup to Gerry Ferer.



which couldn't take the strain. His winding technique was interesting - he used a fitting that located on the tailgate latch, with a pin to hold the tubular rear motor peg to it; he then wound the motor 'in mid air', before locating it in a Stefanchuk-type half tube and loading it into the model, via the bayonet rear fixing.

FIG winner Phil Ball did well to score four maxes in the tricky conditions, after dropping his first flight; he used a Mylar-covered carbon structure model of his own design,

made more visible by a light dusting of orange Dayglo. In third place was Peter Brown, flying a model with extensive Textreme spread-tow carbon in the structure and on the prop blades. For once Peter's trademark knees were covered, at least for the first part of the day, but later appeared as normal, maybe as a thermal detection aid?

In the Vintage event for the Boutillier Cup, Michel Etienvre's design was a popular choice, Don Thomson, Ray Elliott and

Gordon Warburton making good flights with it. Dennis Davitt used a Jump which due to its nice tight spiral climb handled the very tricky turbulence near the launch point very well up until his last flight. On that occasion it appeared the tail was up on a key and the model was ever tighter and more over elevated than it could handle and despite being in reasonable air failed to max by quite a margin. Gerry Ferer with a Bagatelle plugged away very consistently, just losing a

little time on his second flight. The Boutillier Cup which had lain dormant for some years was originally being awarded to the winner of the 100 gram ROG class (now defunct) and more recently was awarded for Vintage. As it all turned out, Gerry's efforts were rewarded by being able to take the trophy back home with him as his total including two maxes comfortably topped the Vintage list.

It should be pointed out that throughout the day a strong contingent of the Birmingham Club were on standby to assist CD Kriss Best and generally disseminate information and often amusement - mid-afternoon there was plenty of amiable joshing around the rules, trying to find something to protest over just for the hell of it but failing!

The day was made more worthwhile by the excellently organised prize presentation in the club house where the two main trophies were awarded - the editor himself being on hand to give away the famous Perspex one. There were a number of other small touches like the bottle of Champagne given to the contestant with the highest aggregate score from both

Vintage and 80gram - in this case Pete Tolhurst. All very much in the spirit of those early days of this contest - Ron Moulton would have very much approved. Next year is its 40th anniversary and we were pleased to learn that the Birmingham Club have volunteered to do the same again and keep the tradition of this December date alive. We will look forward to it.

(If you fancy a go at Vintage Coupe d'Hiver, Michel Etienvre's design will be a free plan in a future issue of AeroModeller - Editor) ●

Results

F1G for AeroModeller Trophy

- 1st Phil Ball 1.14, 1.30, 1.30, 1.30, 1.30, 7.14
- 2nd Ian Davitt 1.30, 1.30, 0.51, 1.30, 1.30, 6.51
- 3rd Pete Brown 1.25, 1.30, 0.57, 1.27, 1.30, 6.49

Vintage Coupe d'Hiver for The Boutillier Trophy

- 1st Gerry Ferer 1.30, 1.10, 1.30, 4.10
- 2nd Don Thomson 1.11, 1.07, 1.30, 3.48
- 3rd Pete Tolhurst 0.59, 1.30, 1.01, 3.30



Phil Ball receives the AeroModeller Trophy from your editor Andrew Boddington.