

MODEL AERONAUTICAL
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.
N e w s l e t t e r
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Safety

In my position I see all the incident reports on their way to the insurance company. I also have the opportunity to read the details and accompanying witness statements. I am amazed at the number of "fingers mashed by propellers" type incidents. You will note that I do not refer to these as accidents as I believe that the vast majority of them are preventable. Often the story is the same, person starts up aircraft overbalances and inadvertently hits the throttle, usually to maximum, the unrestrained aircraft lunges forward towards the person who then tries to fend of the aircraft with their hand. Naturally the propeller wins.

In the major incidents this year, a member had a large portion of his finger amputated, firstly by the propeller, then further trimming by the surgeon. Another had several fingers badly lacerated and required micro surgery with little hope of a full recovery. I believe that I am only hearing the major incidents and there are probably many that are not reported.

The one common thread that runs through these incidents is the lack of mechanical restraint for the aircraft when being started. I fail to understand why the use of mechanical aircraft restraints is not more widely adopted. A mechanical restraint is any piece of equipment that will restrain the aircraft with the motor running. I used two metal stakes, pointed at one end with insulation rubber tubing around the upper parts

that bear against the wing of the aircraft. The stakes are driven into the ground and the aircraft resting against it during the starting sequence. It is important to have the aircraft hard against the restraint so that when the engine is started it does not move further forward.

Some other ideas have been a little more fancy, such as a foam insulated broom handles into a wooden planks which are then fixed to the ground with tent pegs, with others using two large screw drivers driven into the ground and the foam insulation added after they are driven in. Whatever the design, as long as it can restrain an aircraft at full throttle it is going to prevent an injury.

Naturally, I also like to have another person holding the aircraft during starting to remove the necessity to reach over the propeller to hold the aircraft. This is particularly important with large aircraft, a Super Tiger 4500 or any of the big Zenoh's can do a awful lot of damage in a very short time. Why not just ask your flying mates to help, I am sure they will not mind and you can return the favour. Why not bring up the use of mechanical restraints at your next club meeting with the view to making them a requirement. My club is currently investigating making the use of mechanical restraints mandatory. It will not affect a lot of us as the majority already use them, and we still have our fingers.

The practice of reaching over the propeller to make engine adjustments is a receipt for mashed fingers at some time. To make engine adjustments, move around to the rear of the aircraft and minimise the chances of getting your hand mashed.

Lets make our great sport even safer. Think safety at all times.

World Championships.

During this year M.A.A.A. has had teams represent Australia at five world championships. These being, F3D Pylon (Bundaberg), F3B Gliding (Czech Republic), F3C Helicopter (USA), F3A Aerobatics (Ireland) and F1A, B & C Free Flight (USA).

Our members represented us very well with some excellent results. Chris and Kevin Callow, a father and son combination from Queensland, won the world F3D pylon championship as well as setting a new world record. I was privileged to attend the championships and it was great to witness the excitement generated when Chris crossed the line to cement the title. What a great sport is model aviation, how many sports offers a chance for a father and son team to win a world championship. I am sure that the thrill of that day will stay with Chris and Kevin for a life time.

The Australian team was also very successful and came third. It was a great effort from the team and supporters. It was also a great effort by the organising committee and the Bundaberg club with the event going off without a hitch. Well done guys.

Our International guests were taken with the kangaroos grazing on the flying field every morning prior to the competition starting. I am sure they all returned home with great stories about Australia.

Our F3B gliding team did also did well with Gregg Voak coming 13th in a star studded field of 67. A great effort. The other team members also did well, Carl Strautins coming 18th and Steve Keep 30th.

I have just heard on the grapevine that Richard Blackam came third in Free Flight Wakefield, missing second place by only 4 seconds. Another great effort. I have not yet received results of the other championships but from all accounts our team members did well.

The Jet Aerosport Association of Australia, is sending a team of six pilots plus manager to the World Jet Masters in Thailand later in the year. I am sure they will acquit themselves well. The jet movement is certainly taking off and the sight of turbine powered models is now becoming relatively common place. They certainly sound the part and are real crowd pleasers.

2001 Avalon Airshow

I realise it is some time since this event but it should be noted what a great job the V.M.A.A. team did with the model display at this prestigious airshow. The model helicopters proved a big hit at the night show.

On both days of the event, the models were allocated a ten minute slot on the main runway to do their thing. It should be noted that the full size F18 & F15s also only get 10 minutes. Three model flight lines were spread evenly along the 2 kilometre long crowd line with each having a selection of helicopters, large scale aerobatic, large scale and turbine powered models displayed. The crowd reaction was extremely positive and the V.M.A.A. and the airshow team are to be congratulated on the fine job they do each Avalon in promoting aeromodelling.

I was again the commentator during the display, and after my stint at the microphone I was cornered by a couple of full size aviation journalists who expressed their amazement at the technology of the models. Yes, we should be proud of our great sport and the skills that we all tend to take for granted.

FAI Air Sports Medal.

It was extremely pleasing to learn that my predecessor, Chris Greenwood, has been awarded the FAI Air Sports Medal for services to aeromodelling both in Australia and the world. Many would not have known that Chris was the CIAM (the FAI aeromodelling Bureau) Secretary for many years. Chris took on this arduous task as well as his duties as M.A.A.A. Secretary. Having been in the M.A.A.A. job for some six months, I honestly do not know how he managed to fit both jobs in.

Chris is aviation through and through. He is an aeronautical engineer and served with the RAAF working on Lincolns, Canberra's and F111 before retiring to take on the M.A.A.A. Secretary's job which he held for some 15 years.

I am sure that all M.A.A.A. members will join with me and extend out congratulations to Chris for a job well done and for being honoured with the FAI Air Sports Medal.

2002 National

The 2002 National Championships are to be held in the twin cities of Albury Wodonga starting on January 1st. Why not get involved and participate at our championships. A great time is assure for all those that attend.

Entry forms can be obtained from the Nationals Registrar Peter Harris at 132 Nepean Hwy Seaford Vic 3198, (03) 9786 1330(w) or by e-mail at maaatec@ozemail.com.au

Membership

Our membership numbers appear to be slightly in decline. The one thing we need for a successful association is members. We seem to loose, and gain, about 20% each year. If we could just keep those that leave it would be great. Why not call a club member that has not rejoined this year and try to talk them into getting back into model aviation.

A method I have used for some time to spread the word about model aviation is to leave my old modelling magazines in doctors and dentists waiting rooms. Maybe your club could produce a sticker with details such as, location of the flying field and phone numbers etc, and stick these on the back page of the magazines then organise to distribute them to as many waiting rooms as possible. I believe it is a cheap way to spread the news about your club and attract members. Why not try it for your club.