

The Crazy Rubber Band at the SAM1066 Eurochamps, or 3 Days in the Life of a B12 Junkie

This is more a personal experience of events than a comprehensive report of all the competitions that took place at the SAM1066 2005 Eurobash. To put things into context, your scribe has a new body. The bottom line was diagnosis of Pernicious Anaemia early in 2005 and the cure for that deadly condition is regular injections of vitamin B12 directly into the butt. It's like a massive fix. Much of the spiteful symptoms of fatigue and depression caused by un-oxygenated blood and a damaged nervous system fled away by virtue of injections every second day for four weeks, continuing at increasing intervals it has gotten me out to quarterly fixes – the recommended protocol. The change in metabolic rate is dramatic and has allowed me to get my head around a meaningful diet and hard exercise on the basis that it really will help me to feel better.

Not the same as visiting quacks for over five years dreading to hear the same words repeated, “If you would only lose some weight Mr. A. you would feel a lot better”. Well I tried, and sometimes I did succeed, but it didn't work. It was a con designed to prevent them looking past this sad fat old bloke who really ought to get a grip of his gluttony. I kept telling them that “Something else was going on” and not dissimilar to Spike Milligan who had the words “I told them I was ill” carved on his headstone, so then shall I presume my assertion to the medical profession as my epitaph. Then this new GP had a brainstorm, did some more tests and declared that he could get me well again. The result was a born again Crazy Rubberbander. The photo is pre-diagnosis.



Through the first half of 2005, the avoirdupois simply rolled off this vintage body which shed 70 lbs in six months. That's 35 bags of sugar or the best part of a council paving slab not strapped to my back. Free-flight vintage aeromodelling is once again a real pleasure instead of a walking nightmare. Trouble is, it is all about walking and it can take up to 2 years for a nervous system to regenerate and make things easier, so biking still rules for the majority of my retrieves.

Thus my 2005 Aeromodelling odyssey has taken me to a few of our usual haunts, including The Croydon Wake day at MW, Old Warden, Odiham, The Nats, Luffenham, The new Ancaster Lodge Farm site and, of course, just gone, the SAM1066 2005 Eurobash at MW. Metcheck said, no question, the weather would be better than 2004 when the middle day was a windy washout and the last day blew almost everyone away.

Mike Parker had picked up the baton from a seriously ill Dave Baker and rallied a formidable array of participating CD's to oversee the 20 plus events. It fell to me to be available for consultation for the Large Rubber competition, and the likes of Strachan, Beales, Kimber, Michel, Bennett, Challis and Pressnell would oversee the remaining array of mainstream Rubber events. This arrangement worked a treat, whilst allowing the consulting CD's to participate in their own events if they wished.

So, with great anticipation and (sans Rover) driving my newly acquired Chelsea Tractor and 25 year old caravan down from Bedford, I fetched up at the MW campsite shortly after 2.00pm on Day Zero. Good mates Barbara and John Knight were already pegging out their awning and pair of Challis' were to arrive soon after. Guess what? It rained! Nothing serious, but just enough to settle

the dust for a long, hot weekend to follow. Naturally we repaired to the local pub to stoke the depleted boilers and exchange our latest vintage escapades.

Of particular interest to me was John's tale of a flyaway from Woodbury (shades of my Challenger sleeping with the fishes somewhere north of Brixham, years earlier) that landed south of Dawlish and defied GPS/Radio searches by several folks including the amazing Hippo, until a farmer phoned to report a lost soul found, then duly announced he had a guest who would bring the model all the way to John's house because he lived in the next village. Small world or what?

Thus, Day 1 dawned still and bright and the heavenly gates were open at last. Modellers flooded thro' and staked out personal upwind patches with their tools of the trade. Members of The Crazy Rubberband were true to their gregarious nature and the resulting group included the venerable(s) Kimber, Michel, Beales, the younger Fryer and nearby, the sage, O'Donnell, was purveying aeromobillia from the boot of his estate whilst preparing to do battle in Small Vintage Rubber. The Knight's and Challis' were also parked up in the vicinity but sadly missing from the fray was Billy-Boy Cox and his child bride, Jean, who were dealing with more important issues at home. Flight Cup and Pre 4oz Wake events were also on the agenda for our motley group, this day.

My interest lay only in Small Vintage Rubber and it fell to my 17 year old Eager Beaver to do its



stuff. My newly tried low (no) torque approach (more later) has spread to small rubber too and the Beaver now apologises just eight strands of 3/16 Tan II from 36 grams. You can always tell when flying this method because more than half the motor hangs out front before winding commences. Piling on 14/1500 turns takes an age but the prop paddles away for about 100 secs so the trick is to get at least a bit of lift to make today's 2 ½ minute max a possibility. The downside, of course, is if

one misses out on lift picking the Beaver will land with turns still on the motor

As it happened, no cock-ups occurred and the Beav' batted away to three impressive maxes and was amongst only eight (surprisingly) full houses from the near fifty strong field. Even with good lift occurring during the day many well known names found the max rather a trial. Not least, the mentioned "sage" who dropped his first and then again the second upon his re-entry with his otherwise very competitive Eager Beaver. Michel also missed the big-time when his Jack North Diamond surprisingly dropped 18 seconds with a tired looking flight. However the feminine Challis' Hepcat rewarded her with 6.26, a grand effort for a new kid on the block. Watch out Lads!



Forgive a technical word about my Eager Beaver. Try as I might I could never get the right balance of side thrust, starboard wing wash-in and fin trim tab to handle the initial motor burst, make a sensible cruise and give a reasonable left/right glide. So I reverted to that well known modern technique, the variable geometry wing. What? I hear you say. Sacrilege, no less! Worse even, than up-thrust! Well, not really. Here is how it works. With the fuse lit and a thermal building, I put on an extra few hand turns to maximise the burst and immediately twist and hold the starboard inner wing panel down (see photo) to induce a significant but temporary wash-in for the model to lean on as it tries to go right after launching into a thermally gust. Instead it verticates, but within 15 secs the temporary warp has gone and the Beaver cruises normally then locks into a positive glide. A fudge, but it works a treat.

The wind shifted all over the place during the day but the strength was always less than moderate and there were lulls-a-plenty to lure (and fool) the thermal hunters. The difficult bomb dump came into play for anyone getting too high in lift and there were lots of fly-aways, even with DT fully deployed such was the power of some hot spots.

The joint fly-offs at 4.30 pm demanded that most participants decamp towards the North West to make the most of the field. I had the help of Beales Snr to hold the Beav' whilst I squeezed out 1570 turns onto a well run-in piece of Tan II. Sadly the lift was only slight when I chose to go but the pattern was exquisite, the prop paddled away for 1 3/4 minutes and the Beaver rewarded me with 3.59, a really good score for that model and good enough to tie for third place with Fryer's Senator, just behind Pressnell's Raff V with 4.12, itself well behind a 6.52 winner from Foster's Hep Cat. Strangely, Martin P and I launched from the same spot and our two models landed only 20 feet apart. Perhaps the Raff V and Eager Beaver are psychologically as well as physically similar.

The Flight Cup for models larger than 36" span but smaller than Wakefield saw Minishull's Mick Farthing and Hollomby's Worcraft Mercury sent to oblivion by John Wingate's magnificent 10.24 with his Bell. In Pre 4oz Wake, no fly-off was needed for Tiller's very well organised Gordon Light to be a minute ahead of Ellison's Northern Star and Northrop's Feinberg.

So the flying ended and after collapsing on my caravan bed for an hour I joined Michel, Beales, Strachan and a pair of Farley's at The (Stockbridge) Vine to satisfy the inner man (and woman). Halfway thro', a brace of Barr's alighted to illuminate our candle lit table. With such an array of aeromodelling talent the conversation turned to philosophy and the M25. Weird or What?

A promise of even better weather for Day 2 led the Rubberband CD's to set a 3 minute max for 8 oz Wake and Large Rubber. ROG was also specified for Wakes. This combination kept full house numbers very low indeed, just 3 from 32, and 2 from 8 respectively. For Wakefield, this became a triple-edged sword. It did serve to keep models from the mostly non existent crops and it obviously limited the silly mass fly-off situation oft seen with Open Rubber, but for many people just reaching a fly-off can be their own personal cup final and thus some will have made good scores and still have been disappointed. Because ROG was also specified and with the peri-track being practically out of bounds due to the mass of vehicles, ROG from smallish take-off boards hastily cobbled together over uncut grass had its own natural hazards. I'm not carping that the decisions were wrong but they did provide a stiff challenge for all flyers as the numbers showed.

My primary interest was to defend the Large Rubber Trophy from 2004 and the Challenger has been getting into more fly-offs hitherto. This is probably due to my regeneration but the model has



also become well organised this year. It is not fussy regarding motor weight and seems quite happy with anything between 100 and 120 grams and any cross-section from 12 to 16 strands. Today however, I chose grunt, 115 grams of Tan II into 16 strands. I also think my lift picking has improved since taking advice from Mo (wife) who observed that results always seem better when I "Go on the Gust". The model is also very forgiving of javelin launches at about 60 degrees, just to the right of the drift, and it always seems to manage to turn off the top of what seems like a certain power stall. Brute force

obviously has its place but it will catch me out eventually, I'm sure!

Thus, two Challengers made it to the fly-off. I did not see Ferer's model but I'm told it made several low level circuits before getting away for a worthy 4.00 under the circumstances. I was much luckier. An immaculate pattern was topped with some decent lift which a Farley(Carol) /Beales timekeeping combo saw down to below the horizon for 8.00 dead. Foster's Lanzo Stick ran in third but Kimber was unlucky not to retrieve from his 2 nd flight and so missed the opportunity to put in a final max and steal a possible place. Palmer's Golden Eagle was the prettiest by a street.

8 oz Wake was won with a faultless show of competitive flying from Michel who had his Horry performing absolutely on rails all day. This model simply leaped from the ground at astonishing rates and outperformed everything else on the planet. Even without lift, Pete has to wait ages for his model to descend on DT and he suffered foot blisters from just too much walking this day. Even so, he was landing on the field every time, but only just, the Michel aeromodelling master-class version of target golf. The other two full houses registered zero scores. They came from Richard Allen's Contestor, but it failed to avoid the wispy grass at fly-off time and Knight's Knight (OD) which was treed and his reserve could not be retrieved before the deadline.

Here-in lays a tale, so I digress. With his first model treed 50 ft up, in Knock's Wood, the reserve model got away to the road at the bottom of the bomb dump but was lost due to a long delay caused by two radio retrieval bugs talking confusion to him, one in a tree and the other on (or near) the road. Eventually the second signal disappeared and the model was presumed stolen. Later that evening John called a family member to interrogate their home phone and a 1571 revealed a teenage voice taunting the recording machine about a broken model plane (indeed very broken) and if he wants it back then John was to phone the kid. No return number was given. Cheeky b****y thieves, I say! Subsequently a yagi search thro' local villages/estates revealed a signal from the military married quarters near the officers mess off the Andover road. The bug (and model?) was in a private residence but the occupiers were not home. Negotiations have yet to reveal a satisfactory outcome. Oh yes, I forgot! The fire brigade blasted the treed model from its lofty perch with their hoses.

Of other hopeful's in this class, Beales had his Flying Minutes performing on rails under power and gliding like a bag of hammers. O'Donnell's stunning New Look stalled in on one flight. His



apparent cure for this problem is still seemingly unreliable. My own New Look could not repeat a spectacular early max and gave up about 40 seconds in each of the next two rounds. Not surprising, due to an avoirdupois issue. It's a tough old boot but carting around an extra 5.5 oz makes things totally dependent upon lift picking and one flight unusually stalled in from a good height, probably due to a bunch. My own hitherto long term cure for this problem is rooted in LR pattern, nil warps and forward shifted CG.

As a point of interest, the retrieve of my flyaway Challenger was mainly by GPS and only 110 feet off line at 2 miles distance. That is hellishly accurate! It's a deadly technique that deserves more exposure, even (and particularly) amongst sports flyers who might fairly object to spending several hundred quid on a radio tracking system with its attendant risk of bug loss, yet owning and using GPS has much less start-up cost, zero risk of expensive bug loss and needs only replacement batteries from time to time. My web-site carries an explanation of how it all works.

Thus Day 2 ended on a high note, with no collateral losses and being only tired, not knackered. All of a sudden, free flight is getting easier again, until the next time.

And the next time duly came on Day 3, with the inappropriate prospect of persuading my lo-torque Rushbrooke Mayfly to ROG in 4 oz Wake from the same grassy terrain that caused some difficulty for even the leaping 8 oz ships on Day 2. Also on the agenda were Vintage Coupe, Club Classic and Small (25") Rubber.

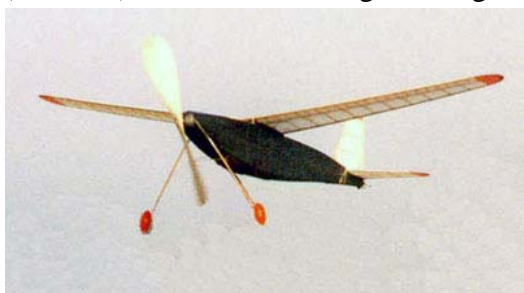
Club Classic has become a huge success for the Bournemouth members and half the 18 strong field made mincemeat of the 3.00 max. Effectively these are period open rubber models which are mostly being flown by a very competent field of period experts too. However, youngster Longhurst's Flip Flop beat them all with 9.40 in the fly-off, 3 minutes ahead of Barr's Tripstick and a further 2 ½ minutes in front of Minishull's Boxall. 3 Urchins, 3 Boxalls and 5 Last Resorts figured in the event, the best of the latter flown by GNK1, was squeezed into 4th by only 3 seconds.

The 25" class attracted even more entrants (19) and with its 1.30 max and unlimited last flight rule, a fly-off is only a remote possibility. Thus Jeffreys' Skylark put in a final flight of over 9 minutes (total 12.12) to marmalise the field. Tiller's and Foster's Fledgling's took the remaining podium places with totals of 8.56 and 5.53 respectively.



I flew a Fuit in Vintage Coupe and after a good first max plus a nailed-on six minute second flight, way out into the boonies (four on DT); GPS made the retrieve a tiring formality and I found myself running out of time for a full house. Breaking five motors in preparation for the last flight set the nerves jangling somewhat but the little jigger finally got away with nothing to spare on some duff Tan I (one) and dropped 37 secs. Only Tyson's Jump Bis and Oldridge's Bagatelle made the fly-off and the former won by 24 seconds with 1.50. Of the 17 participants, Jump Bis, Fuit and Etienvre were equally popular so Rex's minority Bagatelle did well to hold off a very strong field.

In 4 oz Wakefield, ROG was matched with a 2.30 max. Strachan's '36 Copland was seen for 21.32 and was heard on the tracking bug for over 80 minutes, 'nuff said. John Wingate's very well organised Northern Arrow held off a pair of Lanzo Duplex's (Duplii??) with 4.06 to take second spot in a four-way fly-off. Evans took third with 2.08. Five more Duplii filled out the field and my lone Mayfly paddled away for 2.10 (yes!) under power for all three flights but inexplicably (bunch??) stalled in from a good height on the second flight to drop seven seconds. The third never



really got away and dropped another nine. The 88 gram 10 strand of 1/4 Tan II motors were taking well over 1300 turns and none seemed unduly stressed afterwards.

Once again my heavier than average model demanded some reasonable lift picking and there were a few streamers dotted about the field which one watched for clues. It's been traditional for thermal aids and bug hunters etc, to be persona-non-grata at past SAM1066 galas, but with the field so spread out and no thermal hunting guidelines given; it was inevitably a mixed situation. In future it would probably be best to redefine the guidelines or perhaps even allow the full array of aids and then not worry about any perceived advantage which might be gained from their use.

All the presentations were made at the end of Day 3 and such was the enthusiasm and kindness of the weather that there were surprisingly few absentee prize-winners from the earlier events. David Baker was on hand to oversee proceedings and the ceremony certainly had his applied touch. One felt that his continuing recovery from illness had lifted the spirits of everyone present. Mike Parker

was warmly congratulated by the audience for his stand-out organisation and control of the three days from camp-site to prize-giving and everything in between. He too, is a star.

And what of these prosaic reflections from a born again free-flighter and vitamin B12 junkie? One of the problems when a person concentrates on their own events is that it is very difficult (even impossible) to capture mindful images of much that occurs outside ones immediate vicinity, thus this essay became a purely personal story fortified by an early sight of the results listing and some telephone confirmation for a couple of the anecdotes. For that, I apologise, but hope my thoughts do convey to the reader what happens amongst members of the Crazy Rubberband when their world coincides with the SAM 1066 Eurobash.

Ramon

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