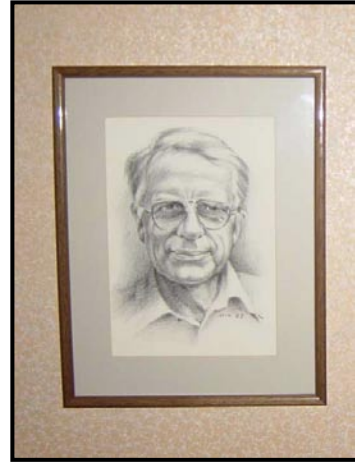


## The Dispersal of David Baker's Vintage Model Airplanes - 4<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

These two Mik Mickelson portraits of David and Hilda Baker are apt reminders that the majority of model airplane enthusiasts in Great Britain will have heard of David and in the world of vintage aero modelling, I expect there to be a much larger proportion still. As for vintage free flight, mostly all modeller's, world-wide, would know of him, unless they are beyond the gravity of our particular universe or only very recently attracted towards its centre.



Whichever, they surely know of his thriving legacies, SAM35, SAM1066 and the 1066 Middle Wallop Vintage Free Flight European Championships. Unsurprisingly then, after a long illness, bravely borne, when David passed through his last earthly portal, an air of universal sadness descended upon fellow hobbyists on New Year's Day 2009 but found solace in the thought that he was reunited with the beloved Hilda.



Inexorably, time passes, and practicality signalled its urgent demand on the space occupied by the vast array of flying models residing at 24 Pine Trees. What to do? Well, the family decided all airframes must be given to fellow enthusiasts except those that found a temporary home with David, in which case every effort would be made to return them to their original owners.



First, a sea of red and black parts must be sorted into the most likely matchings of fuselage, wing and tail-plane. Some



were easy, others not, and where there were insufficient parts, somewhat frustrating, not knowing if missing bits even existed in some remote crook or nanny of the maestro's den. An agreeable puzzle, none-the-less!

Thus, under direction of son-in-law, Brian Yearley, a date for perusal and collection of air-frames (sans engines) was set, notices prepared and published, messages taken from owners wishing reunion with borrowed models, and others requesting specific models, arrangements made, diaries adjusted and kettle filled to greet visitors to David's Weston Favell home. No prices were set but donations would be accepted for Cancer Research.

David had previously expressed a wish that Ron Warring's original '52 Wakefield and a superb Valkyrie be kept flying if possible, so the Warring Wake was given to Martyn Pressnell, who had previously drafted and restored it and the Valkyrie went to John Thomson. Both very apt choices!



A four engine scale control line model of a Vickers Viscount was re-homed with Mike Parry by John Hemmings who had previously given it to David.



One of two Leprechauns was returned to the Bristow family following the discovery of a 1999 letter that David had somehow overlooked. The other Leprechaun went to a person who always wanted one but never got around to building his own, along with a Goldberg Sailplane airframe for restoration and completion, for which a very generous donation was received. Many thanks!

Peter Tomlinson, long time friend of SAM1066, now has the Nemith Tri-wing and Civy Boy 74 along with another model, unspecified.



David's grandchildren, Emma and David now have three models including a Civy Girl. A Dixielander was returned to George Fuller as was a CO2 Tomboy and a Jaguar, Wakefield, likewise returned to Peter Rolfe.

An Ehling Stick power model has been selected for Ian Russell, as were other models for John Hook, Martin Ambrose, Tim Westcott and John Taylor.



A Capon Krusader belonging to George Hollingdale was happily reunited with its owner and Mike Beech now has the airframe of a Scale HP42 in need of some TLC.

The Hardwicks, Dick, Alan and David, all dear colleagues from the beginning of time, secured several airframes including a Mousetrap power model and, amazingly, the Feinberg Wakefield Model, previously lost!



Knowing this, Alan had requested any Baker-built Wakefield, only to be surprised and delighted to receive the Feinberg he thought had long since gone. Alan and David are pictured with the model on the cover of Feb '09 Speaks.

Helping Brian throughout and on the day were long time friends, Don Knight and Roger Newman. Brian Lee was first to arrive at 10.30 a.m. and as the doors were closing at 3.30 p.m., in puffed Chris Metcalf, who was seemingly lost en-route having been rescued by telephone and search party.

Among the thirty or so visitors on the day were Jack Law, The Radfords (Mike Ann and Tony), John Webb, Art Bradley, Diane (nee) Humphreys, Tony Overton and many others whose names seem to have escaped being recorded or remembered.

So the day's visitors came and went and most seemed happy with their acquisitions but inevitably there were a few disappointments for which Brian offers his apologies. Never-the-less, Cancer Research benefitted from the generous donations for which the family are very grateful.



Very special thanks, of course, go to Don Knight and to Roger Newman for their untiring help and very special good wishes to Roger for his dedicated and ongoing efforts to establish "The SAM1066 David Baker Heritage Library", details of which are appearing in recent and future issues of the SAM1066 New Clarion (See some additional notes below): Brian also specifically thanks Mike Parker and yours truly for their efforts in publicising the event on the web.

A collection of worthy models remaining at the end of the day were taken away by Roger to be temporarily stored before being offered up for new homes at future Middle Wallop flying meetings.

A smaller quantity of un-attributed bits and pieces and some unusable components were placed on a sacrificial pyre from where the flaking ashes are still thermalling above 24 Pine Trees, a fitting tribute to their creator and our constant friend.



An interesting discovery occurred directly after the event when Brian unearthed a box labelled "Howard Boy's Radio" which has since been given to Howard's son, Jim, who was delighted to acquire it and subsequently asked for any further information that can be supplied by readers about his father's radio exploits. (jim.boys@ukonline.co.uk). David's engines, kits and other hardware will be auctioned on Ebay.

Regarding the Heritage Library being established by Roger Newman! David had assembled a unique collection of plans, magazines and books covering many aspects of our hobby. Before he died the possibility of setting up a library composed from this collection was discussed with him. He was in full agreement, as were his daughters Julie and Alison, so the concept was put to the SAM1066 committee who have agreed that it will be called "The SAM1066 David Baker Heritage Library".



Sufficient space has been located to get it started and the first loads of material have been collected from 24 Pine Trees. Once assembled, the intent is to catalogue all items that can be put into the library and place an index to the catalogue on the SAM1066 website, such that members can request copies or loans of whatever, via web access.

This will take a few months! Nevertheless the goal is to get it up and running later in '09 on the basis of covering costs only: i.e. non profit making. Updates on progress have already appeared in the Feb/April '09, and ongoing future editions of the New Clarion.

My personal reflection on the proceedings related here is that, given the quality of the models and the character and dedication to our hobby of the various recipients, all these creations will be cherished by their new owners who might surely wish to use them for the purpose for which they were originally produced. The perfect tribute!

Don't be surprised therefore, if, on a balmy summer's day on a flying field somewhere in Southern England, a shadow is thrown to the ground by a red and black model airplane with the distinctive **db** logo displayed proudly on its fin. And when that happens, watch the model alight, observe who retrieves it and seek out the new owner to shake him/her by the hand for playing their small part in the preservation of David Baker's prodigious and significant collection of vintage free flight model airplanes.

It's been a privilege to put these notes together for Brian and the family but readers might have guessed I was not actually in attendance due to pending surgery, so I apologise for any poetic license or inaccuracies that may have crept in. All the images from the day are courtesy of Roger Newman and can also be seen in a larger format and higher definition in an accompanying PDF, as well as on my own web pages.

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