



## The News Letter of the Burlington Radio Control Modelers Club

Box 85174 Brant Plaza, Burlington, Ontario, L7R 4K4

### Editorial



In this edition it is my pleasure to present a profile of **John West**. I found his story to be quite fascinating and I can but hope that I have done justice to the story in this presentation. Only you can be the judge of that.

Last month, I had a reasonably rich field of material. This month is a different story so, as usual, I am looking for input from you, the members of BRCM. Let me have your pictures, articles, anecdotes, or whatever and send them to me at [Binker@Sympatico.ca](mailto:Binker@Sympatico.ca)

*Cheers, Lawrence*

### This Month's Meeting

*Among those expected to present their speciality within our hobby are:*

**Roy Burke** for SAM 54 - the Society of Antique Modelers. *(You can read that any way you like!)*

**Ted Toth** for squadron 40 of the Flying Aces rubber powered outdoor flying group.

**Sam Burke** for squadron 40 of the Flying Aces indoor group.

**Stan Shaw & Bill Woodward** for SOGGI - The Southern Ontario Glider Group Inc. Bill Woodward will talk about scale aerotow techniques.

### A Hawker Hart?



Nope! This glorious model of a 1936 Fairey Fantome at the Flying Dutchmen's scale rally had everyone fooled. The builder tired of all the questions and prepared a crude tombstone which identified it and announced that only 6 were built (now 7).

## Thursday, October 23rd A display and presentation of "Other Disciplines"

### Your Editor's Season

*Yep, that's me, Lawrence aka 'Ed' and I thought I would write a little about my season. Hint: how about you writing about yours?*

I seem to have spent most of the season trying to come to terms with my Aeroworks Edge 540T. I simply could not land the beast and I have lost count of how many times I broke the landing gear. I simply could not slow it down enough to get a decent landing within the field. Ultimately, with some useful hints from various club members - Norm Harris in particular - I learned how to do it. Now, of course, I wonder what all the fuss was about; landings are routinely good - even with no wind - and dead stick landings are handled with no problem.

Back a while, I thought I would take some IMAC instruction with the Oakville club. This effort ended abruptly when the engine on my GP Extra quit shortly after take off and I couldn't get it back on the field. That wrote off the wing. I have built a replacement wing and flown it and was surprised to find it very much faster than the Edge (same Saito 91 engine and prop). It's a very nice aircraft with no evil characteristics.

The third and last (I hope) of my misadventures was to completely destroy one of my Sig SEs. I mishandled it when it was inverted and flew it into the ground and converted that four year old model to a collection of balsa bits.

Much to my surprise, the weather allowed me to fly my other Edge - the one with an OS 90. Wow! That's more like it. Buckets of power makes the aircraft a real joy to fly. Being a mid-wing, symmetrical configuration, the Edge doesn't care which way is up; just point it and that's where it goes. Yummy!

And so I am nearly at the end of my sixth year in the hobby. I have learned a lot and have lots more to look forward to. I have a GP Super Skybolt slowly coming together. With a nifty OS 120 Surpass III installed, it weighs 8 lbs. It's just about ready for finishing. That should give me something to think about next season!



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## Profile: John West

*This is another in a series of profiles of club members. With Art Titmarsh, I interviewed John West and recorded his story. This*



*was an enjoyable session but I have too much material to present in one edition so here is part 1 of 2. Even so, I have had to condense his story which is a delight to listen to on the tape. I'll present John's modelling career in part 2.*

### The war years:

John started flying full size aircraft when he joined the 111 auxiliary squadron near Vancouver and took training as an airframe rigger. He used to bicycle about 12 miles to the field and he washed aircraft to earn some flying time. As a reward, he got to fly for 65¢ - which was all he had. Later, when he started to earn some money, John took private flying lessons at the ferocious cost of \$7.50 per hour.

John was called to the 111 squadron at the outbreak of WWII and was promptly inducted into the RCAF. That seemed to precipitate a peripatetic career all over Canada. Taking ground school in Toronto, elementary training in Hamilton and military training (Harvards) in Saskatoon - 'In the middle of winter!



Geez was it cold! The Harvards had beautiful heating devices; it was getting in them with the engine running that was the problem!' Anyway, that's where he earned

his RCAF wings.

As a "penalty" for being first in the course, John was sent to Trenton to become an instructor thereafter to Dunnville to instruct there for about a year and half. The Dunnville students were flying Harvards and then went on to fly single engined fighter aircraft. He said: 'some of them were so talented that I didn't even show them how to take off. I always believed in letting them show me what they *didn't* know. I still have two letters from a Spitfire pilot who was my first student in Dunnville. The letters have been censored by cutting out sensitive information as was the custom during WWII.'

It was decided that John would make a good supervisory officer and he was sent to High River, Alberta where 'they used an anvil to anchor the Tigers in the prairie winds. No kidding, you could take off and fly backwards.' The winds in the prairies are very steady and predictable - so much so that they could accurately predict the time of arrival of a cold front with the consequent white out. When he was about to take off in a Tiger Moth they said: 'oh by the way, be back by 2:35.' 'And I said: why sir?' and he said: 'well, at 2:35 we'll have a cold front go

through here.' 'I thought that was \*\*\* but I got back just in time! Everything just whited right out!'

In Calgary, he flew Cessna Cranes - known as a Bobcat in the U.S. John was the flight commander using the Crane to instruct students in multi-engine techniques.

In preparation for operations in coastal command, John went to Summerside, PEI to take a general reconnaissance course which he describes as a two year university course jammed into three months. Flying Ansons, the course included astral navigation and Morse by radio and Aldis light. They also had to learn the profiles of all the ships in the Lloyds registry! At the conclusion of the course, he elected to go to coastal command in Ceylon and was sent to Nassau! There he flew B25s with a crew of six. On one flight the aircraft lost all of its hydraulic fluid - hence no way to get the gear down. So, he 'wirelessly our predicament back to the base and the CFI got into his B25 and flew underneath us and asked us to actuate the under carriage. Nothing happened.' The CFI said 'well old man, I think the best thing to do is to fly out [somewhere] and bail out. Cheerio!' After consulting with his crew, they flew back to the airport 'and quietly announced that they were bringing this bird in whether they liked it or not.' The crew managed to get one leg and the nose wheel down. They blew the top off the hatch - 'Geesh did that thing ever blow' - and that's how they landed doing only minimal damage in the process - 'she just settled down like a bird. We had a small escape hatch midships and my little top gunner was out of that like a shot while Hugh and I went out through the top and walked walked down the wing.' John said he was terribly sensitive to under carriages after that for quite a while.

On another occasion, John was flying a B25 at night when it became evident that the batteries were not being charged. Ultimately, the aircraft lost all of its lighting. However, it was a moonlit night and he had no trouble finding his way back to Nassau where there was a flare at each end of the runway. The approach was a problem but the landing was accomplished "the Canadian way" without landing lights and passing over the governor's mansion at about 50'. The RAF were duly impressed since they always used landing lights and had never before witnessed an aircraft landing in total darkness.

They left the B25 and started to fly the Lib' - the B24. Much later, when the U-Boats started to attack shipping in the Caribbean, they went out on 'ops' to see what they could find - to no avail of course. From this same base and a little later, they took a radar equipped B24 into a hurricane to find and assist two Canadian frigates, which had been lost for ten days, and tell them where they were. They saw them on radar some 150 miles out. They climbed up to about 20,000 ft and flew over the top of the hurricane and went down into the 'eye' and found them! While they flew around the ships, the sailors were running from side to side so that they could keep the Aldis light in sight. The ships sent two messages: 'will you drop a depth charge somewhere where we can see it [so they could get some sonar experience] and merry christmas.' 'So I tracked right down in between them and pulled the thing and about two minutes later there was the biggest explosion you ever heard. We were about 200' when I dropped it but it didn't shake us any. But I *heard* about it afterwards!' John then took the B24 straight out through the hurricane with the

water coming up and spraying the airplane. When they landed, the aircraft was all white from all the salt. Many months later, after the war, he met some of the crew from the frigates and was told about the broken crockery and general panic caused by the explosion.

### **A trip to India:**

John took instrument training in Montreal - concentrating on blind landing through the only technology available at that time - dual beams that merged into a continuous tone when you were on track.

They took off in a B24 on a cold winter morning in November on route to Gander. But, soon after take off, one engine quit and they returned to Dorval where it was found that a turbo charger had fallen off and almost clobbered the base commander who was crossing the field at the wrong moment. They took off the next morning and landed at Gander. After an over night stay, they set out for the Azores in mid-atlantic (28W) and then on to Port Lyautey just north of Casablanca on the NW coast of Africa. From Port Lyautey, they flew to Casa Bonito, (*I can't find that. Ed.*) 'it was full of wrecked aircraft.' From there, they picked up two English nurses, an American colonel and some others and gave them a ride to Cairo. John said: 'going over the dessert was just fantastic. There was nothing but traffic tracks; tank tracks, car tracks, burned out tanks.'

They were in Cairo for about two weeks while the engines were inspected and dust filters changed or cleaned. Then they flew to Habbaniya - about 40 miles west of Baghdad, Iraq. There, John had his very first taste of curry. 'We ate curry and I thought my mouth was going to fall off! The waiter came round with a couple of bananas and said eat these.'

In Habbaniya, they assigned one or two men to sleep on the aircraft. 'About 10 o'clock, one of the boys came to me and said: 'Sir, somebody has robbed us.' At the aircraft, every dunnage bag had been ripped open and valuables stolen. Everybody was missing something. About that time, the security officer came around and we told him. He asked: 'how many men have you got?' I said: 'eleven.' 'Are you fully armed?' he asked, and I said 'yes.' He led us over to a barrack block where the 40 men who were around our aircraft were sleeping. He said: 'I want you to come with me, I'm going to turn the lights on and if any one of them tries to run away, shoot him.' They were all arrested (by this time he had other troops with him) and they sorted through all their stuff and found all of the stolen items. I asked what will happen to them?' and he said: 'they'll be sent back to Baghdad and they'll probably all be shot.'

They took off the next day heading for Karachi, India (now Pakistan). This took them over the Persian gulf where the Royal Navy took pot shots at them. 'We cursed them quite a bit but they weren't close, they were just having gunnery practice.' Remember, they were on their way to Ceylon but, in Karachi, they were told there was no room for coastal command men in Ceylon and they were sent to a transit camp in the desert. This camp was full of women and children. 'Well, they used to have dances ..... my navigator disappeared for a week.' (Art Titmarsh says he would like to hear the navigator's story!)

From Karachi, they went right across India by train to

Calcutta. 'There were three thousand men on that train and if you want to see something really interesting, stop, wait, and watch at a relief period!'

Then on to 159 squadron at Digri, 150 miles N. of Calcutta where John rounded up some decent food from the local villages and learned something about bombs - particularly that some fuses, once screwed in, could not be unscrewed. Any attempt to remove the fuse would trigger the bomb. They were given "Goofy" which was their aircraft exclusively from then on.



Squadron Leader John West and his navigator with "Goofy" in the background. Digri, India, 1943

### **Operations from India**

His first op' was to Rangoon, Burma and was the most dangerous with lots of anti aircraft guns. After their first run at the target, the bomb aimer reported that he had forgotten to release the bombs! So, they went around again and the enemy was waiting for them and caught them in search lights. They let go of the bombs and dived from about 20,000 ft. to about 3,000 ft. and the B24 reached a speed of 330 m.p.h. - too fast for a Liberator. By the time they pulled out, they only had two engines running - both on one side. They were able to hold altitude and headed towards the nearest airport at Chittagong only to find it under a thunderstorm. They flew around in circles for about two hours, gaining about 3,000 ft. in the process, waiting for the storm to abate. They hand cranked the gear down and brought it down successfully. Sadly, the rear gunner was killed on this trip. Something 'exciting' happened on every trip they went on - but nothing like that first trip.

John retains fond memories of the B24 Liberator for it always got him home after being shot up. 'It was a nice aeroplane to fly; a bit heavy because there was no hydraulic assist to the control surfaces but it tended to stay on course with little effort. It's turbo charged engines would take it up to 22,000ft.'

After the war, John worked for American Can for 39 years. With them, he designed the first beer canning line for Labatts; the second for Molsons. He did a lot of the oil canning lines getting up to 350 quart oil cans per minute. They got up to 1000 cans per minute of baby food.

Post war, John flew Chipmunks out of Hamilton including some of the air shows. He did this for about three years.

*This concludes part 1 of John West's profile. I'll write about his modelling efforts in the next edition and include some pictures of his models. Ed.*

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## Computers and Cars

For all of us who feel only the deepest love and affection for the way computers have enhanced our lives, read on.

At a recent computer expo (COMDEX), Bill Gates reportedly compared the computer industry with the auto industry and stated, "If GM had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving \$25.00 cars that got 1,000 miles to the gallon".

In response to Bill's comments, General Motors issued a press release stating: If GM had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics:

1. For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash twice a day.
2. Every time they repainted the lines in the road, you would have to buy a new car.
3. Occasionally your car would die on the freeway for no reason. You would have to pull over to the side of the road, close all of the windows, shut off the car, restart it, and reopen the windows before you could continue. For some reason you would simply accept this.

4. Occasionally, executing a maneuver such as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.

5. Macintosh would make a car that was powered by the sun, was reliable, five times as fast and twice as easy to drive - but would run on only five percent of the roads.

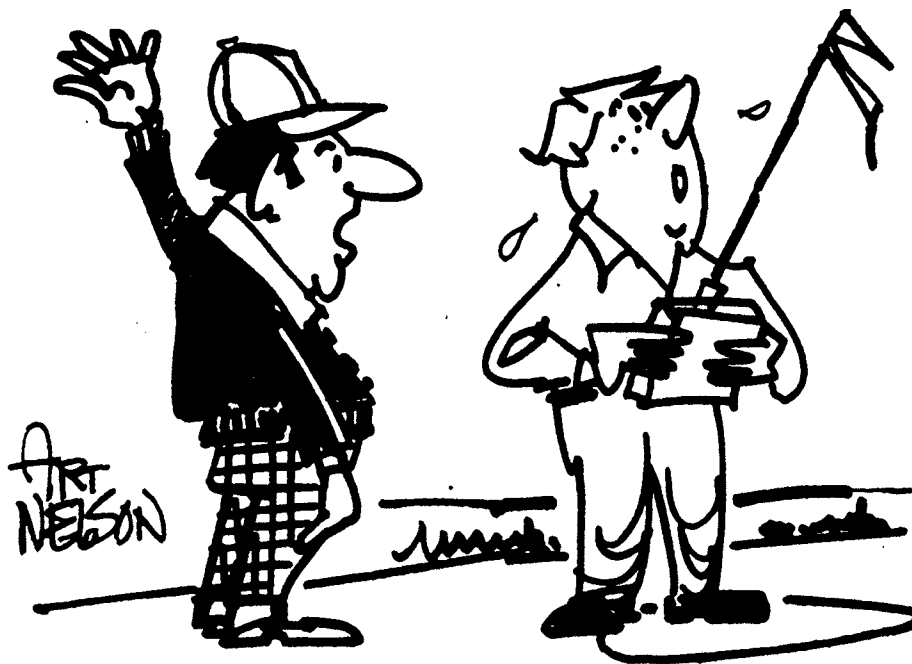
6. The oil, water temperature, and alternator warning lights would all be replaced by a single "This Car Has Performed An Illegal Operation" warning light.

7. The airbag system would ask "Are you sure?" before deploying.

8. Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio antenna.

9. Every time a new car was introduced car buyers would have to learn how to drive all over again because none of the controls would operate in the same manner as the old car.

10. You'd have to press the "Start" button to turn the engine off.



**Don't fly over the spectators, or the pits . . . or the cars, and stay north of the apartments, don't fly near the playground, or the hospital, or the school . . . stay this side of the road, half throttle by the golf course, and make your approach from the north end only! Stand in your frequency circle, fly only counter clockwise, stay under 200 feet . . . and your five minutes are up, there are 3 guys waiting!**