

PMP Spring Newsletter 2017

Welcome

How do I start. Another year, another winter ebbing away, evenings getting lighter. I no longer have to walk home from work in the dark with less fear of getting mugged along the way (I walk along a cycle path at the back of Newton Abbot racecourse). Thermals are beginning to billow in a sunny sky? A lot has happened since writing the last newsletter, three distributors have left our shores or are in the process of doing so and we have added another two models to our range if you count the electric version of Snowy as a second new model. But more about this later. I must add a proviso that any views expressed in this newsletter are my personal assessment of the current situation and are not intended to harm or offend anyone or any business.

Snowy

As part of our 'Build for Pleasure, Fly for Fun' program we have added another two Models to our range. Snowy and Snowy-E. Snowy and Snowy-E (electric version) are attractive / stylish 63in (1600mm) span Rudder Elevator soarers that are both a pleasure to build and fun to fly. The sort of model you would take out on a balmy day and relax with. Like the previous new model the Pepperpot, I have really enjoyed development of the Snowys and am very pleased with the end result. Developing both models in parallel means that design amendments can be incorporated in the second. Test flying was again a real pleasure. On a bright sunny day I took Snowy to St Agnes to take static photographs. I had no intention of flying as the wind was supposedly due south and not due north. After taking the photographs I noticed a breeze coming off the sea. Despite the Coastguard flag hanging motionless on its pole. After carrying out pre-flight checks decided if I gave Snowy a good throw I could at least get a circuit in to check the trim etc. However, on the third javelin throw I managed to stay airborne long enough for my hands to get unbearably cold and wife loose interest in operating the camera. Subsequent test flights in more suitable conditions were equally as pleasing. Controls were responsive without being snappy or spongy. For this type of model Snowy had a good turn of speed and stayed airborne in the lightest of lift. Snowy-E performed equally as well during test flying. The Overlander 2836/08 brushless motor proved to be the ideal power-plant with a 70-80 degree full power climb.

Emergency 2.4Ghz Rx Aerial Repair.

This tip was passed on by a customer and one that I have not tried myself. The working part of a 2.4Ghz receiver aerial is the exposed last 30mm of a co-axial cable. If this is broken off goodbye aerial. In this situation carefully remove the cable screening to expose another 30mm of aerial. Once you done this please do a range check. The reason the 2.4Ghz aerials are so short is due to the wavelength of the signal. This is a product the speed of light (186,000 miles/sec. / 3×10^8 m/S) and is only 12.5cm or 5ins. Aerial length is reduced to a quarter of this by internal circuitry in the Rx. We

recommend at the first opportunity the aerial is replaced. We stock spare aerials of varying lengths and makes.

Our Website

We had an incident a few weeks ago when some miscreants managed to hack into our website host (not our secure server via which online transactions are channelled) and amend our index page diverting you outside our site to an unrelated site. Fortunately a local customer alerted us the problem and it was quickly sorted out. The reason for mentioning this is three quarters of our business is via our website and if it is compromised then as a business we are invisible to our customers so if you do unfortunately have a problem with our site please tell us. Thankyou.

Our Industry

Over the last few months there have been changes in the distribution side of our hobby / industry. Three companies have pulled out of the UK (Graupner, Hobbico and Horizon). Graupner sadly took the agency away from Logic RC, who did an excellent job, and now operate out of Germany with a UK sales rep. Hobbico have withdrawn from Europe but given the Hobbico agency to Logic RC which pleases us as Log RC provides an excellent after sales service. The downside however is that there has been some significant price increases on a number of items. At the time of writing Horizon Hobbies is in the process of withdrawing from the UK at the end of March and handing the business over to their German subsidiary Staufenbiel (trading as Horizon Hobby GmbH) who retail and distribute to the trade. Other than the UK being serviced from Germany we are unaware of what sales and after sales service facilities there will in the UK. Current information is NONE. All this is bad news for both retailer and customer. We are concerned that we will not be able to provide the same level of after sales support we like to give and you the customer deserves. With Staufenbiel there is also a conflict of interest. In our experience when a company is both distributor and retailer there is an incentive to sell direct to the public for the extra profit rather than service the trade. The net result is their products are seen in fewer and fewer shops making it more difficult for customers to access support when needed. There are examples of this in the UK where certain sole distributors, who are also retailers, have cut trade margins to protect their retail sales. As a result of these developments we are left with only two/three leading brands of radio being distributed in the UK by UK companies able to offer a full after-sales service. These are Futaba (Ripmax) and Hitec/Multiplex (J Perkins). JR sets distributed by Macgregor Industries (Model Plastics) is currently unavailable. We will be dropping Graupner after we have sold our stock the reasons being a reduced trade margin, increased costs and lack of confidence in both sales and after-sales support.

Multiplex Radio

Multiplex radios have been around longer than any other leading UK distributed brands. I remember when converting from 27mHz to 35Mhz in the

early 80s when the Multiplex Europa on 35Mhz was the leading set. Multiplex has always enjoyed an enviable reputation for quality and reliability. Until recently it boasted that sets manufactured in the 80s could be upgraded to the current spec. which is why they are still large numbers of 3030 Tx's in use. It also had a reputation for being a tad expensive and a bit specialist. Our sales of Multiplex radios has fluctuated widely over the years but with the departure from the UK of Graupner and Horizon (Spektrum) specialist service departments there is a large gap in the market for Multiplex to jump into. Recognising this, Multiplex, have reviewed the pricing of their R/C products to make them more competitive unfortunately at the expense of retailer margins. Consequently, over the next few weeks we will be increasing our stocks of MPX R/C items to better service our customers and take advantage of the situation!!

Oracover / Monokote

We have added May Green Oracover to our range. Green is not normally a colour of choice for model but it is mentioned because May Green is an attractive colour and almost a match for the green of the Italian flag.

Monokote gets a mention because at the moment it is approximately 20% cheaper than Oracover and equally as good. Customers who have bought some from us and used it have invariably passed favourable comments so if you have a new model to cover try it out and save approximately £7.00 on a couple of rolls in the process. Our price is currently £11.95 a roll for 27in x 6ft roll (695 x 1828mm).

Brushless Motor Shafts

When building the electric version of Snowy we encountered a problem reversing the motor shaft. One we had not encountered before as all previously reversed mounted motors had fix blade propellers whereas Snowy-E is fitted with an Aeronaut folding propeller. For the fixed blade propeller the prop adapter supplied with the motor is used but to use a folding propeller and the reverse mounting kit the motor shaft has to be tapped forward to accept a collet. Two problems. The first leading to the second. To tap the shaft forward first the Allen grub screw fixing the shaft to the rotating case must be slackened and secondly the circlip hold the motor together must be removed along with the washer bearing. In removing the circlip it either gets lost or damaged and who has spares? No problem it can be replaced with a collet. However, on examining the shaft I found there was no circlip recess in the end in the of the shaft to fit the circlip even if I had a spare. However not all the shaft is tapped through to the front as approximately 5mm was required to fit a collet on the end of the shaft to stop the motor pulling itself apart when running. The propeller end of the shaft is now 5mm shorter and not long enough to pass through a cowling and properly fit the propeller collet. Unfortunately the reverse mounting kit supplied with the motor no longer comes with a collet. It is available however if you buy a reverse mounting kit!! Don't motor buyers fly models with reverse mounted motors fitted with folding props!! Or is it a ploy to sell more reverse mounting kits? I do wish importers

would check their products meet market requirements before releasing them. To alleviate the problem we have now added silver steel rod in various diameters to our product range for the manufacture of replacement shafts. along with matching collets.

Star Value Servos

Modellers, like most people are to some degree creatures of habit. I know I fall into this category. Once they have found a product that 'works for them' they are reluctant to change. Why should they without good reason. This applies to modelling goods, servos in particular. Over the years we have tried to add different servo brands to our inventory with not a lot of success. For us Hitec quality is the benchmark but Hitec of late has started to become a bit pricy due to the devaluation of the pound so we have been looking for better value alternatives of at least equal quality. As a modeller and the owner of a predominately mail order business there are two situations I want to avoid, one models crashing as a result of an item bought from us and secondly customer returns. One troubles my conscience and the other damages the bottom line and inconveniences customers so we are choosy as to what items we stock. In an effort to highlight non-brand leader servos we consider to offer excellent value for money and meet our criteria for quality, performance and reliability we have added a Star Value Servo section. Featured, are a selection of KST servos, the Tactic TS40 /45 and the recently acquired HD-1711MG. We have sold over a thousand KST servos with a 0.1% return rate with zero returns on Tactics. The TS40/45 are more than a match for the Hitec HS625/45Mg and considerably cheaper. The recently acquired HD-1711MG servos were bought as a more cost effective alternative to the Hitec HS82MG. They also fit our HS81/HS82MG ply mounts. On paper a slightly higher spec. in that they are ball-raced with brass gears. The HS82MG has aluminium alloy gears.

Fuel No-Return Valve

Another tip passed onto us by a customer. Thankyou Kelvin. The fuel system in Kelvin's model was in need of a valve to limit fuel flow to one direction. Non-return valves for model fuel systems are available commercially but a tad on the expensive side. Kelvin's solution was to fit a ball bearing inside a two part gauze filter (our ref FA009). The outlet from the filter at the large end is tapered so a suitably sized ball bearing will block the hole if fuel tries to pass in that direction. In the opposite direction the ball bearing will be press against the gauze and the fuel will flow around it. For it to work efficiently the filter may have to be mounted vertically so the ball bearing is pushed off its seat for the fuel to flow.

Hot off the Building Board

Cheerie – built but not flown! Waiting for the weather and opportunity. It is an 80% Wallaby which incidentally was designed in 1981 so any similarity to any current designs is coincidental. Should be a lot of fun. 38in span (965mm) just over 26ozs (765g). 1600mA 3S

. Incidentally Cheerie was the name of my pet pigeon when I was a lad!

Signing Off

Well, if you have got this far without skipping to the end thank you for taking time to read my ramblings. There are a lot of changes taking place in modelling and the world at large. Developments in the technical side of our hobby is progressing at a pace. So much so it is difficult to keep up. Sometimes I think we are loosing control of the situation, certainly in regards to UAV development and the easy access to very sophisticated machines. Please spend some time browsing our website (www.phoenixmp.com), new items are being added each month. Back to Cheerie, the next new kit!

Happy Landings

Stan & Sheila

Stop Press: We have just learnt that Horizon Hobby has restricted the number of their UK accounts to a handful of shops. We are not one! Goods are also being supplied direct from Germany by Staufenbeil. and can also be ordered direct from Germany, post free via Maplins in the UK.

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Pictures

Snowy





Snowy-E



Cheerie

