



"STICKY FINGERS"

Magazine

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Issue 62 August 2009



A great head on shot of a Spitfire Mk.XIX for those that are tempted to buy the new Airfix kit

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Peters Prattling

Next month – 3rd round of the competition. Let's see how many more models we can get on the tables in one evening?

Last Months Talk

I thought the talk and demonstration given to us by Kathy on her Sci-Fi figure modelling went very well. There were a lot of questions asked and it seemed a lot of interest was taken. I have emailed to thank her on behalf of the club for coming along and given her an open invitation to attend the club again as a regular member as she lives locally.

Home Life

As is us normal in the Bagshaw household life mostly consists of going to work, then trying to relax as much as possible over the weekend unless other domestic or family commitments arise. Thankfully next week I have the more envious task of trying to think of somewhere I would like to go for the day on my birthday. We have a "tradition" of taking our respective birthdays as holiday if they fall on a working day and trying to go out and do something other than work. Obviously my choices tend to be more of a military interest, I must admit to being tempted to go back to the RAF Museum at Hendon to see the changes they've made to the Battle of Britain Hall. It has had a new "picture" window added to the end where the Sunderland is stored and new lighting that gives off no UV light to harm the paint – apparently. So that's certainly a possibility, do you have any other suggestions, that are perhaps no more than about an hour and half's drive from Essex?

Well earlier on when I wrote down going to work, I almost stopped and wrote something else. Has any one else been affected by the wonderful train drivers going on strike for more pay, a 4 week and an increase in the



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number of drivers employed? Thankfully I've been able to drag home some extra computers and use my broadband connection to connect back to my office and work from home but that's not something everyone could do. Roll on retirement is all I can say, other than wonder what planet the drivers are on thinking their demands are in any way reasonable. I'll step off the soap box now.

Luftwaffe Wellington

Did this Luftwaffe marked Wellington in the last competition belong to you? If so please let me know as we have incorrectly attributed it to Brian Breeze.



Forthcoming Shows in 2009/2010

Shows with highlight have been booked for us to attend. If you wish to attend any of the shows with the club stand please let me know so I can attempt to book space for the club.

2009	
23 rd August (Sunday)	IPMS Avon
5 th September (Saturday)	IPMS West Cornwall
20 th September (Sunday)	IPMS Fenland. Spalding Grammar School, Priory Road, Spalding PE11 2XH Sutton Coldfield show
27 th September (Sunday)	IPMS Brampton – I've requested 2 tables
4 th October (Sunday)	East Anglian Model Show, Ipswich Town FC. – we have 2 tables allocated
7 th & 8 th November (Saturday & Sunday)	Scale Modelworld ("The Nationals"), International Centre, Telford, Shropshire TF3 4JH
2010	
20 th & 21 st March (Saturday & Sunday)	Southern Expo
23 rd May (Sunday)	IPMS Barnet, RAF Museum Hendon

Peter



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Robins Ruminations

Well I'm back from my summer holiday, it already seems absolute ages ago instead of the two weeks it really is. The weather was typically "British", a mixture of hot, cold, and wet, dry, windy and still, but it was lovely being away from the daily grind. Two weeks of total relaxation, looking out over green fields, reading books, going out for days visiting places, cream teas, pub lunches, a bit of clay pigeon shooting and of course, a little bit of modelling. Still I guess it's time to get back to work and start to save for the next holiday, well, you've got to have something to look forward to haven't you?

On my return from holiday I found a very worrying situation at home, the house was tidy, washing-up done, rooms vacuumed, clothes washing done and milk and bread ready for Adele & me to come in to. Even more worrying is that my Son had watered all the plants and kept everything in the garden tidy. Think about it, twenty year old Son, home alone for two weeks and this is what I walked into, I'm deeply suspicious and not a little worried! All I had to do was mow the lawn and start picking the ripe strawberries and tomatoes.

As I related in my article last month, I was being "encouraged" by my Wife to plan a trip to Ypres to visit her Great-Uncles grave. The visit was duly planned to fall in with our holiday dates to make it more convenient for all of us. As we were holidaying in Sussex, it was no problem to come home one evening and set off early the next day with the Mother-in-Law. The drive to the Eurotunnel was fast and uneventful and after booking in, we caught the first available train. Thirty five minutes later, I drove off the train straight onto the A16 motorway heading for the Belgium border. After crossing into Belgium, not that you notice the border nowadays, I turned inland, following the signs for Ypres/Ilper. While driving down the long straight road I had the surreal feeling that I had seen the sight that confronted me many times before on the television and film. There was an almost constant stream of bumper to bumper traffic heading away from Ypres towards the coast and France and almost nothing going the other way. It was so reminiscent of the images of refugees fleeing the fighting; the horse and carts had just given way to shiny cars. I even asked the Mother-in-Law "Err, the Germans not playing up again are they?" This sight seemed to make the reason we were going even more poignant, wondering if my Wife's Great-Uncle had seen the same sights along this very road while moving up to the front.

The reason for the "refugees" became apparent on parking in the main square in Ypres, it was some sort of public holiday and it was all the locals off to the coast for the day. We visited the tourist information centre, conveniently situated in the main square itself, picked up a town map and a few other bits and bobs to remind us of the visit. We wandered around the market, town square and cathedral before deciding to have lunch in one of the many roadside café's. We decided to have a light lunch of chicken and chips with a side salad, simple, but of course nothing goes quite according to plan. What we ended up with was a small chicken each with a salad and a large serving tureen full of chips between the three of us, all well presented, piping hot and very tasty. Good thing we didn't go for a large lunch!

Next on the agenda was the very short walk from the café to the Mennen Gate. Nothing can quite prepare you for the sight of this monument, panel upon panel of names, in their units, of "the missing" from all over the Empire that fought and fell in the Ypres salient. There are 54,896 names inscribed on the panels, and yet it didn't seem sombre to me at all. I felt a mixture of emotions, from a sense of the waste of so many young lives and at the same time a feeling that these young men came together for something larger than themselves, all very strange. The one thing I did notice was how quiet it was inside the monument. People seemed to be chatting away normally and yet on walking through the gate, fell silent and just gazed up at the panels, very much the same as walking into a cathedral. After a while we left the Mennen gate and returned to the car for the short drive to Bedford House Cemetery, the main reason for our visit.



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The Mennen Gate



This was easier said than done as some of the roads had been closed for the holiday market, but we finally exited Ypres on the main road to Lille. The road signs to the war cemeteries are in green, making it easy to find them. Reading the signs going along the road was like reading a book of the battlefields of WW1. However, no sign to Bedford House. Luckily, my Wife spotted the large cross that stands in the centre of the cemetery behind us. Of course, because I was looking for it, it didn't have a green sign-post and sits slightly down off of the road and was hidden by trees from the direction of Ypres. I turned the car around and we finally drove through the narrow white gateway into the cemetery.

The cemetery is surrounded by a dry stone wall, set amongst wheat fields and a small area of trees by the roadside. Inside was beautifully laid out, with a lawn that would have put some bowling greens to shame and the planting around the headstones was more like being at a flower show than a cemetery. I can only describe the feeling within the cemetery's walls being one of an oasis of calm. After a few tense minutes of searching we located the grave of Stephen Mills, finally found after the family not knowing where he lay for 92 years. At that moment a thunderstorm that had been threatening, finally broke a few miles further down the road. Huge black clouds with thunder and lightning, but we were luckily left in warm sunshine with not a drop of rain. It almost seemed a little theatrical, standing in the cemetery with the constant rumble of the thunder in the background. After about an hour at Bedford House Cemetery, we left after leaving a small cross with a poppy on it on Stephens's grave.



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Bedford House Cemetery



The run home was again very straightforward and fast, head north and turn left onto the A16 to Calais and then straight to the Eurotunnel terminal. We arrived back to my Mother-in-Laws house just after 9pm after a very enjoyable and fulfilling day out. My only regret of the day was that we couldn't stay to hear the last post played in the Mennen Gate at 8pm local time, but consideration for my Mother-in-Laws age / health had to take precedence. My Mother-in-Laws only regret is that there are no surviving members of her generation in the family that she could share her information with. Given that the trip to Ypres was so simple and fast, I think that we will go back there at some point in the future for another visit, perhaps this time to include the last post at the Mennen Gate.

The one thing that did surprise me were the number of bunches of flowers, wreathes, poppies and small crosses with personal messages on them from all over the world at both the Mennen Gate and Bedford House Cemetery from relatives. Given the passage of time since WW1, I had thought that other than official bodies and a very small number of relatives; few "average" people would be making the journey to see a relative's grave or their name on one of the memorials. It seems that I was very wrong; people must still feel a strong link with the past and feel a need to go and visit these places, let's face it, my Wife and her Mother did. Given that Bedford House Cemetery is fairly small, hidden away and that it was a weekday, there were still five other people visiting in the hour that we were there.

On a purely personal note, I think that today's senior politicians should be taken to the Mennen Gate and forced to read every name on the panels. That way they might have a better idea of the true cost of the failures of past politician's to make the right decisions and take the correct actions. Then when they are deciding if it is worth giving our troops in Afghanistan more helicopters or better road transport, they might make better decisions themselves.

My Official hat is now on.....

Not a lot to report on the official front as far as I am concerned, a gentle reminder of next months up and coming club competition is all really. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for another excellent display of models. The club attended the local MAFVA show at Marshalls Park School in Romford last Saturday, but of course you'll have to wait until next months Sticky Fingers for a report.

Tonight's meeting is "work in progress", something that I have much more of than "work completed" unfortunately. Still I will have, unless I've forgotten to pick them up, an Eduard Fokker Dr.1 and a HobbyBoss F-84 Thunderjet on the table.

Robin



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Wrighty's References - "A Childs' War Diary" Part 1

Following on from my earliest memories item, re the bombing of the houses at the bottom of our garden in 1941 (May 2009 issue) I thought it might be a good idea to make up a "Childs' War Diary" of the time events I can remember. Here are a few of them:-

1942 Summer – My father was a railway man and took the family to Bishop Stortford by train one summers day, I was absolutely fascinated by trains, from Stratford the journey to Bishop Stortford was great, we then got a bus to (?), a large open field with a small flat strip of green bounded by trees on both sides. At the end of the strip, 3 Lysander aircraft in green and dark earth camouflage. Although I was only 5 all wartime aircraft were well known to us youngsters. The day watching them take off & land, pick up messages, even drop a crew member by parachute, ground crew fussing around when the planes were on the ground, endeared the scene to my memory of a great days outing.

Years later, research showed this to be No.2 RAF Squadron (Army Cooperation Unit) based at Sawbridgeworth (only a few miles from Bishop Stortford) who were about to relinquish their Lysanders for Mk.1 Mustangs in the Tactical Reconnaissance role. It was also stated in the No.2 Sqd history that they used adjacent landing strips to the main airfield for training.

1943 Autumn – Dad had taken me and my mum on holiday to Bournemouth; we stayed in a room above a café near Central Park, just behind the pier. Simple enough you might think, but in those days Bournemouth was a closed town, that meant you had to get special passes, and railway access to stay there. I don't know how dad did this but possibly the railway connection helped.

The reason Bournemouth was closed was because it was used for a massive build up of troops (especially US G.I.s) for the forthcoming invasion of Europe (D-Day). This was where I encountered US troops for the first time and the well known phrase "got any gum chum?". They were really friendly and the whole area was like some paradise from dreary bomb battered smoky London.

I remembered swimming in the sea with my dad, watching the Yanks play baseball on the beach. "Yanks", so that's what they were called these happy go lucky groups in their smart uniforms. Their super "Jitterbug" music and a guy called Glen Miller, seemed a world apart from the Home Guard and Air Raid Wardens we saw in London. One thing about the beach, it had concrete tank traps all the way along it and the tubular anti landing obstacles about 50 meters from the shoreline, stretching as far as the eye could see in both directions.

Back at the café, a soldier gave me a pack of U.S. Army playing cards, another, bars of chocolate (a real treat in those days). A USAAF officer gave me the Wrigleys gum, a whole packet with 36 strips wrapped in silver paper and a white outer wrapper with dark green and red writing on it. What a treat and it didn't end there, that evening down in the café was a small dance floor, I think the music came from an amplified radio. We sat and watched as 2 US Nurses danced the jitterbug with the troops to Glen Millers "In the mood" and other hits of the day, wow nothing like this on the BBC (although around 1944 Miller did have his own show on the BBC via American Forces Network, probably another part of Lend/Lease to the cash strapped BBC, nothing new there then!). Central Park was very smart even in wartime, it had an artificial stream running all the way around it, I was bought a wooden ship to sail on the stream. While on holiday last year I went to the park, it was still great, the old artificial stream still exists but modern fairground type things, plus an open air art exhibition have improved it over the last 60 years, but it didn't have the same buzz about it that it did in 1943.