

The Leading Edge

I recently broke the blade on my Dremel scroll saw and went off to the nearest tool store where they always carry a full range of Dremel bits to buy a replacement. Sorry we don't stock those any more was the bad news. When asked why, the salesman explained that since that large retail hardware chain was selling Dremel they couldn't complete on price and so they dropped the line. So it was off to the chain store to buy a blade. After an explanation of what I wanted, don't carry that one was the response, go to the special parts counter and they will order it for you. Of course the special parts counter didn't know what I was talking about and they didn't have a catalogue to get the part number from. Then the craziness started. Do you want to order one. Yes please, how much is it? Can't tell you that till we check and get a price. Can't you ring now and get a price? No, it has to be done through central ordering, then they will tell us the price. You leave your phone number and we will call you when we get a price. Then you come and pay for it, we will place the order and when it arrives we will phone you to collect it. Three ninety kilometre round trips to buy a blade. Unbelievable.

And of course that large chain store does not carry the complete range of Dremel Moto Tool bits and pieces, probably only the faster selling ones.

Fortunately for us, Proxxon Tools Australia is an owner operated business and Stan carries a very comprehensive range of cutters, ect. To suit both Dremel and Proxxon so I know where I will be ordering my bits from, a phone call with a credit card number and its in the mail.

But that experience is typical of today's retailing of many products, where low price and volume is everything and quality does just not sell and therefore is not stocked. I'm sure there are retailers who specialise in selling quality products but finding them is pretty difficult. Paying a few dollars for a power tool is great if you want it for a one off, but if you want one that lasts, start searching for the smaller operator.

My CmPro Giles 202 powered by the OS160FX is going really well and has competed in a couple of recent ARF Scale events. Feeling pretty flushed with some success I thought I might give the Australian Masters Aerobatic event in April at Shepparton a go. I logged onto the APA web site to have a look at the Expert flight schedule which I assumed I would have to fly and got quite a surprise as it is pretty difficult and would require a lot of practise to avoid making a goose of oneself. So I had a look at the Sportsman entry level schedule and came to the conclusion that for a newcomer to aerobatics that was a pretty hard one as well. It set me thinking as to what exists for a beginner to IC power competition using a typical ARF model. The Australian Scale Aerobatic Association has an entry level schedule but like the APA one, that too requires a lot of practise to become reasonably proficient. Although anyone who does compete in these events will get a lot of help and assistance and be joining an elite group.

As mentioned, I have been competing in ARF Scale and enticed some non competitive flyers to come along and have a go. Well they had a ball and also did pretty well to boot, bumping me down to third at the last one. The scale flight schedule while reasonably simple, is hard to do well with five fixed and five optional manoeuvres. And you can choose those five optional ones from a list. So if you're not too happy with a roll, simply don't add it to your flight schedule, choose something else. With the proliferation of suitable scale ARF models on the market coupled to a easy to do but harder to do well, flight schedule,

COVER PIC

VALE IAN WATTS

As one wanders along the road of life, one is indeed fortunate to meet and befriend one who gives and asks for nothing in return. In the time I have been involved in aeromodelling, such a person was Ian Watts who left us recently. It was not only in aeromodelling that Ian provided inspiration and leadership but in the community as well, being prominent in both Rotary and Probus groups.

It would fill many pages of this magazine to detail the many aeromodelling contributions Ian has made, founding member of the MARCS club, founding member of the VPA later to become the Australian Pattern Association, Life member of the Victorian Flying Scale Association, driving force in the Valley Radio Flyers, the list just goes on.

In the early days of Radio Control Competition, the single channel programme comprised some simple by today's standard, maneuvers. Towards the end of the pattern, was a three turn spiral dive and I always used to crash when doing this manoeuvre. When this happened for the third time, Ian gave me a hand to collect the wreckage and on the long walk back, I was complaining "why me!" Ian asked, "what brand of escapment are you using?" A Japanese Hinode was my reply. "Ah," said Ian, you need to get a Bonner escapement. He then explained the reason why the Bonner was so much better. That is the Ian I will remember, always ready to help.

Just prior to his passing, Ian saw the fruition of the project to get a permanent water supply to the VRF flying field. Despite several rejections by the authority he just kept at, setting a goal and going for it was Ian's way.



And a fitting tribute to Ian was the naming of the Valley Radio Flyers field, the Ian Watts Flying Field.

Ian's infectious humour and drive will be greatly missed.

scale ARF competition has a bright future. And there is no static judging so the event moves along. At the present time events are held in NSW and Victoria, log onto magnumengines.com.au for the rules and the next event in NSW at Werrington on May 28th, or www.vfsaa.cjb.net in Victoria for the rules and event dates. Next in Victoria is April 30th at Ballarat. Grab a mate and go along, I'll be very surprised if you don't enjoy yourself.

As for me, its back to the workshop and Panthering, but I can see light at the end of the tunnel.

Brian Green