

"Mayfly" 4 oz Wakefield by C.S.Rushbrooke (Rushy) 1935/6.



I built this model in 1987 and until recently it had generally been a low to medium performer, partly due to weight, because it is built like a brick outhouse. Notwithstanding it has been ubiquitous for the best part of twenty years at many traditional Sam35 UK venues such as Old Warden, Middle Wallop, Barkston, Odiham, Woodbury and Chobham, simply because it's an absolute delight to fly and always attracts admirers.

Its straight dihedral, narrow chorded tapering wings with necessarily larger than average span at 51" are the prettiest in the business and on their day extremely functional. Trouble is, after the power run, there is a tendency to tip-stall depending upon the damp sensitive warp tendency and the low chord at the tips. Indeed, unpredictability on the glide used to be the main issue but no longer. (More later!)



Rushy designed this model to be rugged in nature, but with inherent soaring capabilities to capitalize on the typically rough but thermally English conditions. If it doesn't get into lift it's a hound, but when it gets away it's a soaring phenomenon. Having said all that, it has never shown any vices whilst under power, except, perhaps, sensitivity to too much right side thrust by dropping its right wing, which is only a trimming issue anyway. Consequently then, due to the occasional unreliable glide and excess avoirdupois, it was never really competitive and was generally used for sport and show.



Nevertheless, whenever I bring this model out it attracts photo artists from all over the field and hardly a flight goes by without someone collaring me on my way back from the retrieve offering compliments on a lovely flight. It's not the performance that attracts such complimentary observation simply the sheer majesty in motion that impresses onlookers so much.

Then around 2003/4 I had some problems with my other 4oz Wakes ("Northern Arrow" - both) and turned to the "Mayfly" for a competitive, flyable solution. In recognition that air-picking had as great an influence on a rubber model's performance than does raw power, I re-corded an 88 gram motor to only 10 strands and found I could pile on 1500 to 1600 turns. This gave a motor run of about 2 mins 15 secs and providing it was not launched into "sink" it would paddle its way sedately to considerable heights and virtually "max" at will. In positive "lift" the heights are prodigious. At the same time if I added just a few more turns there was enough torque on the burst to ROG in most circumstances.

So successful was this approach that in 2005 it won the inaugural Wakefield League here in the UK by a considerable margin. Just a word of caution however. Launch into sink and it records less than two minutes, landing with lots of turns still on the motor. Furthermore, in it's latest mode of very long motor run, watchers seem constantly confused by the fact the "motor still seems to be running" with "Mayfly" paddling away long after nearly all the other 4oz Wakes on the field have since converted to their glide pattern and changed their flight behavior accordingly.

Over the years this model has had a charmed life. I have tree'd it more often than any other plane and it has courted death on roads, in pig sty's, plantation forests and hanger roofs, so many times, yet still it comes back for more. But it never ever got trashed until this year (2006), when at the Croydon Wakefield Gala, in atrocious conditions at MW; it simply could not handle the wild turbulence and verticated under full power into very firm terra. Bits flew everywhere and it looked, for all one could tell, to be a write-off. Yet the wings were totally undamaged, as was the stab. However the motor had slipped the front hook and made a mess of the fin after 1500



writhing turns had broken out of the rear fuselage. And of course the fuselage was chaos but the silk covering had mostly held the critical bits together and, as it turned out, repairable, if not with some difficulty. A new prop and shaft was de rigueur.

So "Mayfly" is alive and well and has since placed third in the 4oz Nationals run by Sam35, dropping only 14 seconds to an uncharacteristic stall. Probably a bunch?



The skeletal details show just how heavy it might turn out, hence my need for an 88 gram motor. Rushbrooke clearly had his aesthetic juices flowing when he conceived the shape and style of this design. More so, because his contemporaries were producing models of more conventional shape all with the deep bellies, of course, but so similar in their wing planform of 5" parallel chord 40" inch spans, e.g. Copland, Ying, Jeffery, Lanzo and Verdier, that this design was a unique standout. Although perhaps not quite unique, because the "Judge" 1936 world champion also had a tapered wing. "Mayfly" is a truly favorite

Wakefield and deserves to be in retirement. It and me both!! Tee Hee!! If you love Vintage Wakefields you will definitely love this one.

Ramon

Website: <http://www.vintagemodelairplane.com>

Blog: <http://uk.blog.360.yahoo.com/ramon9712>