

microlight

September 2024 • PUBLISHED BY THE BMAA • bmaa.org

FLYING



BUMPER WORLD MICROLIGHT CHAMPIONSHIPS EDITION

INSIDE

12-page WMC
pull-out special

Also...

Geoff Hall in a T-28
Trojan & Avro Anson

BRITS WIN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
AS BOUNCING CZECHS FAIL TO CASH IN

Glory for Team GB



Rob Grimwood and son William, who took gold in the flexwing two-seat class (photo: Kevin Hoare)

Words: **Geoff Hill** • Photos: **Brendan Digney**

IN spite of the sudden rain, it was the best Saturday morning ever at Deenehorpe Aerodrome.

For in spite of everyone predicting that the young Czech team, which is sponsored by the government, provided with planes and fuel and trains every two weeks, was a sure-fire winner, Team GB beat them into second place in a fabulous week of flying which saw some splendid individual performances, including several which proved you don't need a hotship to be a champion.

It was the second British home victory in a row, after Popham hosted WMC in 2016; and naturally, when the news broke in the Team GB marquee on the final morning, they celebrated by cracking open the chocolate Hobnobs.

As Competition Director Owain Johns said at the closing ceremony and medal presentation later, under sunny skies, the

event had had three aims: safety, community and skill.

"I'm pleased to say we have had no incidents, no accidents, no ambulances and no casualties, so thank you all for flying safely," he said.

"The second aim was to form a community, and that sense of community has been very strong throughout the whole championships, and a number of friendships and collaborations and partnerships have been formed.

"And the third aim was to reward and recognise piloting skill, ability and progress."

He also paid tribute to everyone behind the scenes, from Mick Hyde and Kevin Bradley, who run the airfield, to the catering and cleaning teams.

Rather wonderfully, as he was talking, a sparrowhawk circled overhead, looking down and wondering what all the fuss was about flying.



ROTAX

POOLEY'S
FLIGHT EQUIPMENT

TRIG

PilotAware

ECMS

SkyDemon

FLYLIGHT

GS Aviation

Hand Airport
OUTLOOKS

Fly About Aviation

AVIATION

visicover

Micro
Maintenance

FAI

AIR COURTYAGE

WY

FIRST AID
New First Aid

Seventh heaven

The British roll of honour was topped by father-and-son team Rob and William Grimwood, who took the gold in the flexwing two-seat class in their DeltaJet 500.

"This year's Open Series was our first season flying together, and my first go at competing in a trike since 2010, at the European Championships in Sywell," said Rob.

"Then I organised WMC at 2016 at Popham, so didn't compete in that, and in Hungary in 2017, a trike next to us blew away in a storm and damaged our aircraft.

"So seven years was quite a while not to do anything at all, but after a bit of training this year, it was all good, so we're very, very happy.

"We did three different kinds of precision landings, and scored a maximum in all three of them, so I was very pleased to do that.

"We won both of the economy tasks, so that proves that the DeltaJet is great on economy and performance and everything else, so that was excellent. And the navigation was pretty good.

"I was doing the nav, but William was doing really well spotting the photos. He definitely picked up a few that I would have missed, some of which, certainly one, was a pivotal photo that, had we missed it, we'd have done badly and wouldn't have got the gold medal.

"After me not competing for so long, the driving factor to do it was because William wanted to do it, so it was a great time to spend some time together.

"I was unsure whether it would reignite my passion for doing competitions, but it definitely has, so there'll be more to come in the future."

Next best was a silver in the fixed-wing single-seat class for Rees Keene in a Rans 6, followed by fourth place in the same ▶



Adrian Jones and Deepak Mahajan in the Pipistrel Alpha

▷ class for Paul Welsh in his homebuilt Lake District Cruiser, and for Laurie Hurman in flexwing single-seat flying his Quik.

“As a British team we’ve done really well, so we’re very pleased,” said Rees.

“The lowest point for me was probably at the beginning, where I dropped short of the spot landing box, so that was very frustrating, because I know how tight it can be at the end of the week, but the high was probably a really good score in the navigation task on the way back from Preston Capes.”

A fabulous first

Andy Fell, competing in his first WMC, was delighted at a fifth in solo flexwing in his Quik GTR, not to mention winning the Best Newcomer award.

“I knew this was going to be a fantastic thing to take part in, and it was. To prepare, I entered a few of the Open Series events and practised some tasks on my home patch. Fifth was quite unexpected, because I was expecting to come here and struggle, and it was really hard, so this award as well is brilliant,” he said.

Paul Dewhurst and son Tom were sixth in fixed-wing two-seat in the Flylight Nynja, as were Rob Keene and nephew William in flexwing two-seat in their Pegasus GTR.

“We’re happy with that, and we’ll see if we can build on it by doing more stuff together,” said Paul Dewhurst.

And in a world exclusive comment on how he enjoyed the event, Tom won the WMC understatement of the year award with: “Fine.”

Well, he is 17.

Mat Burnham was seventh in solo fixed-wing in his Skyranger Classic, as was Graham Daniel in solo flexwing in his QuikR.

Chris Saysell was 10th in solo flexwing in his QuikR, and in fixed-wing two-seat, Deepak Mahajan and Adrian Jones were 12th in the Pipistrel Alpha, Chris and Claire Wills were 13th in their Reality Escapade, and Jeremy Hucker and Spencer Harvey were 15th in their Skyranger Swift.

A candle of hope

For multiple World Champion Yuriy Yakovlyev, who founded Aeroprakt in 1991 with Oleg Litovchenko, winning the two-seat fixed-wing class was a candle of hope in what had been a very dark year and a half for the Ukrainian company after the Russian invasion of his country.

Particularly since he was flying with his son Tymofii, a soldier in the Ukrainian army, whose commander only released him a few days before the championships to take part with his father.

The two have been competing together since 2012.

As we reported in April 2022 *MF*, after the Russians invaded, Aeroprakt temporarily stopped production of Foxbats and Vixxens in its Kyiv factory for safety reasons and moved production of to its factory in Poland, although the Kyiv plant was still intact and being watched by employees.



And they're off!



A wonderful sight at Deenethorpe

WORLD MICROLIGHT CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024

Overall team results and points

1	GBR	54530	7	LTU	9479
2	CZE	47940	8	ESP	8189
3	POL	28490	9	GER	7226
4	FRA	28425	10	UKR	6537
5	HUN	14578	11	HRV	3342
6	SVK	9638	12	IND	914

Fixed-wing single-seat

1	Marek Velát	CZE	Ekolot Junior JK
2=	Rees Keene	GBR	Rans S6
2=	Václav Puža	CZE	Spacek SD1 Minisport
4	Paul Welsh	GBR	W-Planes W-1
7	Mat Burnham	GBR	Flylight Skyranger Classic

Fixed-wing two-seat

1	Yuriy Yakovlyev, Tymofii Iakovliev	UKR	Aeroprakt A40
2	Lukáš Kučera, Jan Pařez	CZE	Ekolot Junior JK 05L
3	Lukáš Běhounek, Kryštof Bobek	CZE	Ekolot Junior JK 05L
6	Paul Dewhurst, Tom Dewhurst	GBR	Flylight Nynja
12	Deepak Mahajan, Adrian Jones	GBR	Pipistrel Alpha
13	Chris Wills, Claire Wills	GBR	Reality Escapade
15	Jeremy Hucker, Spencer Harvey	GBR	Skyranger Swift

Flexwing single-seat

1	Maksim Urasov	LTU	Aerial Arts Chaser 5
2	Blažej Piech	POL	UL Trike Hazzard 12
3	Guilhem Rolland	FRA	Air Création Ifun13 Racer
4	Laurie Hurman	GBR	Pegasus Quik
5	Andy Fell	GBR	P&M Quik GTR
7	Graham Daniel	GBR	P&M Quik R
10	Chris Saysell	GBR	DeltaJet Stingray 500

Flexwing two-seat

1	Rob Grimwood, William Grimwood	GBR	DeltaJet Stingray 500
2	Matouš Adam, Ladislav Teplý	CZE	Tanarg NEO Bionix2-13
3	Patricia Bé, Emilie Paperin	FRA	Air Création Bionix2 13 Skypper
6	Rob Keene, William Keene	GBR	Pegasus GTR

• Full results are available at <https://www.wmc2024.com/results>



All the teams at the closing ceremony

“Their airfield on the outskirts of Kyiv has been virtually destroyed by Russian soldiers who just want to inflict damage,” said UK importer Ray Everitt in May 2022 *MF*, by which time the Kyiv factory was up and running, although at a third of pre-invasion capacity.

The Russians also wrecked Yuriy’s family home for the same reason – or lack of it.

Then after Ukraine started using remotely-controlled Foxbats loaded with explosives for stealth strikes inside Russia earlier this year, the Russians responded with a missile strike which obliterated the Aeroprakt airfield completely.

And although it missed the factory, it damaged Yuriy’s aircraft and trailer, so he had to repair both before making his way to the WMC.

“It’s definitely a difficult time for our country, but our country is fighting, defending our freedom,” he said.

“And we defend our freedom of flying as well, because the level of private flying is a sign of democracy.

“Back at home, we are making nine aircraft a month, and of course we have our branch company and aerodrome in Poland, so we will be able to supply our customers.”

Onwards to the future

As well as the traditional awards, two new trophies this year were the Best Newcomer Award and the Jonáš Futera Young Achievement Award for pilots under 26.

Best Newcomer was Team GB’s Andy Fell, as above.



The campsite village

The Young Achievement Award, named in memory of Czech pilot Jonáš Futera, who finished second in the 2023 Grande Open at Deenethorpe with Matouš Adam in their Air Création flexwing before his death, was won by Filip Vita and Tomáš Procházka from the Czech team.

The men behind the trophies

As we reported in April *MF*, the WMC logo was designed by Flylight legend Ben Ashman and Over Farm pilot Andy Bill.

For the trophies, the logo was given to Simon Worthington from Ecclestone Aviation last year to laser-etch onto the top of Rotax 912 pistons, which were then mounted on English oak bases by Oxfordshire joiner Alex Griffin.

Last words

Wolfgang Lintl, in his last year as President of CIMA, the microlight division of the FAI, said: “In addition to the sporting part, there was also exactly what I asked for at the opening ceremony: reinforced friendship between nations.”

And the final word went to BMAA CEO Rob Hughes, who said: “It’s been a simply fantastic two weeks.

“It took 18 months of preparation, but it was all worth it, because it made for one of the best championships I’ve attended, and I’ve attended quite a few.

“So my heartfelt congratulations go to all of the organising team, especially Owain Johns, Angela Cox, Colin Johnson and Tim Burrow.” □

Citius, Altius, Spotius

It was just like the Olympics, except with more fun and beer, says **Geoff Hill**.

Photos by **Brendan Digney**

IN the Olympics, the altitude ranges from 20ft AGL for pole vaulters to about -10ft BWL (Below Water Level) for the divers.

However, in the World Microlight Championships, it ranged from 2000ft in the navigation tasks to ground level in the spot landings.

Anyone scoring minus 10ft in a spot landing was immediately fined for denting the Deenethorpe runway, then disqualified and carted off to Murphy's Rehabilitation Home for Battered Flugellers in Corby, which has been run by Bridget Murphy since 1945, when her husband Seamus, a keen Flying Flea pilot before the war who failed to get into the RAF because of a dodgy ticker, was tragically killed in the last charge of Slatery's Mounted Foot against a bunch of doomed teenage stormtroopers guarding Hitler's bunker.

Arriving in stealth mode

Anyway, where was I? Ah yes: arriving at the airfield on the Thursday with Deepak Mahajan and Adrian Jones, the Anglo-Indian dream team, in Adrian's rather swish Tesla, even though we know how much he hates electric propulsion.

"Ha! Very good. Just watch this for acceleration," he said, pressing the throttle and zooming us silently towards a startled pigeon at just below Mach One.

"Astonishing. Anyway, how are you guys doing so far?"

"Well, we're not last," said Deepak.

Which wasn't too bad, considering that



Queue waiting to depart on a task

they're handicapped: because Adrian only weighs 5kg, they have to carry four bags of spuds in the cockpit from Murphy's Fruit & Veg of Corby (no relation to Bridget), surprisingly.

We arrived at the huge campsite for the 55 teams from 12 nations, in which everyone was in random tents except the Czechs, who all had matching ones.

"They actually get sponsored by the Czech government, with tents, some planes, fuel and training every fortnight," said Adrian.

"Which makes it ironic that they use Polish planes. We won WMC at Popham in 2016, but they've got a lot better since,

thanks to all that government support and having a very young team," said Paul Dewhurst, who then went off to join the fuel queue behind QuikR competitor Graham Daniel and fellow flexwing pilot Allan Lindsay from Northern Ireland.

"How you going, Graham?" said Allan.

"Not so good. I lost my way at Preston Capes," said Graham, sounding as doleful as if he'd lost his heart in San Francisco, at which point Allan launched into a story about being the first Irish pilot to fly a microlight across the Channel, then another one about landing on an English village green due to poor vis; after which a local proved the cliché of English politeness by wandering across and inviting in him for a nice cup of tea until it cleared up.



Paul Dewhurst and son Tom were sixth in fixed-wing two-seat in the Flylight Nynja



A flurry of national flags at the closing ceremony



Deepak Mahajan and Adrian Jones, aka the Anglo-Indian Dream Team

Behind them in the queue was Georges Monier of the French team, which was here as preparation for hosting WMC next year.

“We’ve been out of international competitions for seven years, so we’re a team in building, here with a mix of experienced pilots and new guys to get accustomed to the international level required. We don’t really expect a podium this year, but are hoping to do very well at home next year,” he said.

Back at the GB tent, the grass was shimmering in the astonishing heat outside, the chicken casserole for supper was simmering on the hob at a more reasonable temperature, and Deepak was having a traditional Indian-Spanish siesta before the spot landing competition in the afternoon.

This involved climbing to 500ft, reducing the power to idle rather than the more extreme method of switching the engine off completely, then aiming to land in the target box on the runway.

At least that has some spectator interest, as did the short landing over a tape exercise which provided thrills at the last WMC at Popham but has been dropped, unlike the navigation and fuel economy exercises which are great tests for pilots, but completely dull for spectators, since all it involves is counting them all out, then counting them all back some time later, to paraphrase Brian Hanrahan’s famous quote from the Falklands War, when he wasn’t allowed to say if any of our chaps were missing.

Even more sadly, the pylon racing which thrilled spectators and produced

some stunning video at the World Air Games in Dubai in 2015 hasn’t been since then, thanks to a fatal gyro crash at that event; even though the microlight event went off flawlessly.

And so to the spot landing, in which there was everything from hotships to Paul Welsh’s homebuilt Lake District Cruiser, powered by two Vittorazi Moster 185s.

“I call it that because it lets me cruise around the Lake District at 50mph and admire the view – and without getting wet, because it’ll run on one engine if needed,” he said.

“It’s not a competition aircraft, to be honest, but it’s brilliant fun.”

And in spite of Deepak’s misgivings, he and Adrian nailed a 250 in the spot landing in the Pipistrel Alpha. ▶



Rob and William Grimwood in the DeltaJet 500



The planning often went on into the wee small hours of the night



The opening ceremony (photo: Steve Uzochukwu)

▷ “It’s only because Adrian was remote-controlling me and going slower, slower, slower. Now I know how my students feel,” said Deepak.

“Spot landings? Don’t talk to me about spot landings. I’ve been doing them for 20 years, and I still only get them right when nobody’s looking,” said Chris Wills, who as always was with his wife Claire in their Reality Escapade.

Still, they must have hit they hit the spot when they married, since they’re still going strong 50 years later.

And at least we all got some schadenfreude when the gyro pilots, in spite of landing at walking pace, managed one-by-one to miss the spot.

Scramble! Or fried, if you like

We rose at dawn, and gathered in the Team GB marquee like Spitfire pilots waiting for the scramble.

Or possibly scrambled eggs, which were rustled up the fabulous catering team of Dawn Dewhurst, Val Harvey and Cheryl Pasztor, who before you accuse the squad or nepotism, are no relation to Paul, Spencer and John apart from being their wives.



Flexwing dual gold medal winners Rob Grimwood and son William, Czech silver medallists Matouš Adam and Ladislav Teplý and French bronze medallists Patricia Bé and Emilie Paperin



Team GB’s Andy Fell with his Best Newcomer award after finishing fifth in solo flexwing in his Quik GTR



Phil Evans, winner of the Best Marshall award

Deepak was handed a map of the prohibited areas he and Adrian weren’t allowed to fly through on the out-and-back task, where the team has to estimate how many kg of fuel they’ll have left on their return, not including a four-litre reserve.

“Bloody hell, they’re all prohibited,” he said.

“Could be worse, Deepak. You could be in a Lancaster over Germany at night,” I said.

“I think that might be easier,” he muttered.

“And we haven’t even got two spotlights to show our altitude,” said Adrian.

“You know, things like this, especially the nav tests, have made me realise just what a bad pilot I am.

“I mean, I only read the Alpha pilots’ operating handbook this morning to remind myself of the best glide angle for this next bit,” said Deepak.

“It’s just because I’m never actually flying, just talking to students; and having to read the map in detail in perfect conditions makes you appreciate people who do it for real, like the Women’s Auxiliary who just read the pilot’s notes, jumped into a Spitfire in Lancaster, and delivered them in appalling weather.”

Talking of weather, the word from WMC HQ was that the cloudbase was about 6ft, which at least explained why I went blind every time I stood up. So we all finished breakfast, settled down to wait, and Paul Dewhurst got onto his phone to scroll through the state of the results so far.

“What position are you in?” said Spencer Harvey.

“Don’t know. Haven’t got to the bottom yet,” said Paul, who’d sacrificed the chance of rekindling his former glory as a multiple World Champion just for the fun of competing with his son Tom.

“I see there’s a row about that boxer in the Olympics winning so much in the women’s event,” said Spencer, scrolling through the news on his phone.

“I know how they feel. In my first competition, the 1988 BMAA Nationals, they listed me as Paula Dewhurst,” said Paul as HQ rang the scramble bell and they all trekked off to forge the glittering sword of their destiny in the burning crucible of the sky. Or something like that.

Watching them on climbout one-by-one was a bit like watching Lancasters head off to bomb the dams, except that this time they were all likely to come back. As indeed they did, comparing how accurate they’d been in guessing how much fuel they had when landing; everything from 0.06kg to 0.7kg.

I salute them. I’d have trouble guessing to the nearest 450kg, including the aircraft.

And even better, I salute the Anglo-Indian dream team of Deepak and Adrian, who won the task after the longest flight in the super-slippery Pipistrel Alpha, ahead of Yuriy Yakovlyev.

“It was all thanks to Adrian. I just moved the stick. But we beat the World Champion, so time for a beer,” said Deepak, which made complete sense. Especially the last bit. □

So easy, even a genius could do it

Brendan Digney's beginners' guide to flying in the World Championships

AT Deenethorpe, pilots from around the world have been jostling for position and points in search of a coveted WMC gold medal.

But for many pilots, this might be the first time they've seen or heard of competition flying. So, what is it? What does a world championship consist of? And how do the best of the best win that gold?

Aircraft

Competition flying requires no special aircraft; however, those which offer great visibility and slower speeds have an inherent advantage. It's not a race, and first past the finish line doesn't necessarily mean gold.

Walking the flightline in Deenethorpe, you'd have seen an eclectic mix of aircraft which, thanks to the international participation, included types not normally seen in the UK. Categories exist for different breeds of machine, eg single-seat flex, single-seat fixed, two-seat flex or fixed, and gyrocopters.

Before any task, the aircraft are held in quarantine, monitored by officials. There are very strict rules over what can and can't be done in this area. If the task involves a fuel limitation, this is where fuel will be filled and tanks sealed by officials.



Spot landing with judge

Gadgets

If you think the navigation task is as simple as following the magenta line on your favourite navigation software, think again. Electronic gadgets are banned from the cockpit.

A phone may be carried in a pouch which is sealed and unsealed by the scrutineers, only to be opened in an emergency – if it's opened, points are

forfeited. Every aircraft carries GPS trackers, which are used in the calculation of scores by officials.

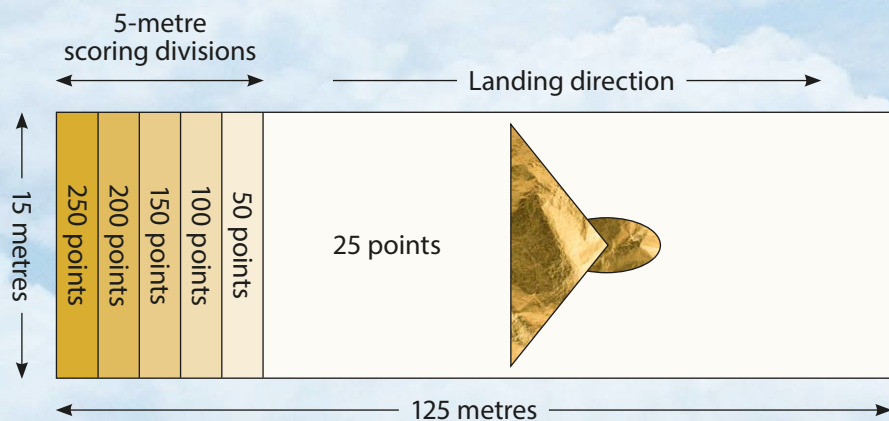
Navigation

Navigation is done on standard maps, just like you were taught! It'll be an unknown route, with 45 minutes of prep time before a task flight.

Routes will be provided, often as pictures of landmarks (such as a hedge or gateway) which must be identified and passed along the route. The tolerance on these "gates" will be in the low hundreds of meters, so you'd better be accurate. Officials will assess the pilots for passing through these and other hidden "gates" which will indicate the accuracy of their route, and be used for scoring.

In the air, many competitors attach their maps to homemade kneeboards which allow rotation of the chart, holding of reference images and other useful features to conduct a flight.

There are many more rules within the navigation tasks which are often task-specific – such as turns which can and cannot be made, starting points and what to do in the event of getting lost. Of course, with trackers on board, indiscre-



Spot landing diagram



Images to plan a route



Competitor's chart

ptions are reflected in the points.

Navigation is also often attached to fuel-limited taskings: in these a pilot will be asked to plan a route and fly it on a set amount of fuel, or arrive back at a set time \pm seconds.

Tasks

The tasks given to competitors in WMC were varied and challenging, testing pilots across their skillset, from navigation to planning and precision. To give a flavour of some of their tasks:

Timed circuit: Pilots must declare a time to complete a single circuit in advance of their departure. They must then take off and fly a circuit, obeying the circuit pattern and any no-fly areas. To score maximum points, the pilot must land within ± 5 seconds of their declared time. Points are deducted for every second outside of ± 5 s.

Precision landing: Coming at the end of the timed circuit, the precision landing (also known as a spot landing) requires the pilot to land within a 125m box on the runway, and come to a full stop. They must touch down in the first 5m of this for 250 points. Subsequent 5m intervals are scored 200, 150 etc... Land early, it's 0 points. Fail to stop within the 125m, it's also 0 points.

Navigation: Presented with 20 aerial images of hedgerows, roads, junctions and other features, pilots must plot a route on paper maps, then fly it.

Pilots are released in timed intervals, so no follow the leader! In one task, this route brought them in a "COG" shaped pattern, returning to Deenethorpe; on

another task, to Preston Capes for a well-deserved lunch (and a picnic for those who elected to land elsewhere). They must pass within a few hundred meters of the feature to have cleared the "gate" and scored points.

Fuel limited task: Each aircraft is allocated a small amount of fuel. The pilot must plan a route which brings them as far away from the starting point as possible, cognisant of that day's winds, weather and airspace restrictions, before returning and making a landing, after which they must taxi a set distance under their own power.

To maximise available fuel, many opted to push their aircraft to the takeoff point, and complete their approach with engines off before restarting to taxi under power... every ml of fuel when finishing counts.

Pilots can carry a reserve to avoid an

outlanding, but if the reserve is eaten into, then the pilot is judged to have landed out.

Prizes are awarded for each aircraft category, in the typical Gold, Silver, Bronze format. A team prize is also awarded for the highest scoring team in the competition, found through a formula which looks at the three highest-scoring pilots in each team, in each task.

The winning pilots were those who demonstrated the most impressive flying skills – from their ability to plan fuel burn to the minutiae, to those with an inherent skill for recognising hedgerows.

The precision landings, while providing great entertainment to onlookers, showcased pilots and aircraft working in perfect harmony, while the tactics and sportsmanship required to win proved any winner to be a worthy world champion.



Aircraft in quarantine with fuel drums set out

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

COMPETITION director Owain Johns should give up the day job and take up stand-up comedy.

For he brought the house down on the night before the official awards ceremony with the alternative version, as decided by Deputy Competitions Director Colin Johnson.

The winners got a year's subscription to SkyDemon.

Second longest distance flown: Robert Tomlins, Team GB, Fantasy Air Allegro

"It's no coincidence that these furthest flights took place on the return back from Preston Capes, so maybe Bob has a girlfriend there," said Owain.

"This was a comparatively short task, of 110km, but Bob maxed it out at 193km."

Longest: Błażej Piech, Poland, UL Trike Hazzard 12

"Now, Bob Tomlins did 193km, but this gentleman's track was just sheer endurance, bloody-mindedness and determination not to go anywhere near the track, and he mistook it for a duration task as well, for he was up for two hours and 29 minutes," said Owain.

Longest flight by time: Lison Rebouillat, France, La Mouette Samson 12

"Lison flew 173km in two hours and 38 minutes, which is quite an achievement," said Owain.

Nav heroes

Keith Vinning of PilotAware also donated a special award for the best navigation of the competition, which was won by Polish flexwing duo Łukasz Hałasa and Rafał Klęk.

Go fourth and conquer

There were also awards for those who came fourth, missing out on a podium spot: Laurie Hurman and Paul Welsh of Team GB, Saúl Sellés of Spain, Czech pilot Oldřich Štumbauer and Polish crew Łukasz Hałasa and Rafał Klęk.

Road to success

Sole Indian competitor Shiv Yadav's highlight of the week was scoring a perfect 250 in the spot landing task, and at the other end, he became temporarily unsure of his position and landed at a construction site on a brand-new bit of tarmac road.

Still, good choice, since it was the perfect runway, and he was presented with a safety hat, a high vis jacket and a stop sign (see right).

Marshal law declared

"Tim Burrow and I decided that our standout marshal was Phil Evans, who stood out on the runway every day at the start in 35°C heat with only the odd bottle of water, and waved everyone off with a smile," said Owain. □



Polish flexwing duo Łukasz Hałasa and Rafał Klęk, who won the PilotAware Award for best navigation



Shiv Yadav with his alternative prize for landing on a construction site

Phew, what a scorcher

Being a WMC marshal meant long, hot days in the sun, but was brilliant, says **Justin Parsons**

IT was all very exciting, arriving the day before the event, picking up my marshal ID, event T-shirts and hi-vis vest, meeting Chief Marshal Tim Burrow and Competition Director Owain Johns, then setting up camp and meeting friends old and new.

After a 9am briefing on the Saturday, it was opening speeches from Owain and BMAA CEO Rob Hughes, then Wolfgang Lintl, the President of CIMA, the FAI's micro-light wing, followed by a *very* loud gun salute and a display from a jet-powered model aircraft.

And then it was straight to work. I did five full days, and full they were, what with keeping each competitor in the boxes, answering any questions, making sure competitors didn't talk to each other or bring in contraband, then logging engine on and off times. It was a huge, tiring task for us to keep going all day, often from 7.45am to 7pm. The weather was perfect, but the intense heat was often too much. One day, we had a reading of 42.3°C shimmering off the tarmac runway.

The vibe in the camp villages between all the different nations was buzzing: everybody made everyone else welcome, and language was only an issue for a few, but translators made that easier. The foreign competitors often thanked us marshals for our outstanding work all day long, which kept us smiling.

Mixing with the British team of an evening was great. In the middle of the week, they put on a party in the Team GB tent, other nations joined in, and a brilliant evening was had by all – well, except for the French team, who were banned from drinking until the end of the event. Very un-French.

All flying was controlled expertly in and around the airfield, although conditions were often very thermic, and pilots often came back saying how hard it was to spot waypoints from the photographs.

I would like to thank Owain and Tim for the outstanding hard work they put into organising WMC24, to all the others behind the scenes, often working very late to sort scores, issues etc, and to Deenethorpe for hosting the event.

All the other marshals, like me, gave up free time to help and meet new friends, and spent very long hours out in the sun, but I had the most amazing time, and the memory of WMC24 will be with me for a very long time. □



Justin Parsons in his cunning stealth marshalling outfit

The land of the rising son

BMAA members always say that the association is a big family, but Team GB was even more so, with Paul Dewhurst and son Tom, Rob Grimwood and son William, and Rob Keene and nephew William all competing as teams.

"I hadn't competed since 2017, mainly because the kids were young and there wasn't enough time to do family things and competition things," said Rob Grimwood.

"Then this year, Will's just turned 15, so he's old enough to compete, and he loves flying and wanted to do the competition.

"It was a great way that we could spend some time together over the summer and do some flying, so we decided to give it a go, and did the rounds of the Open Series this year for training."

Naturally, their aircraft of choice was the DeltaJet 500 produced by Rob and John Waite's Exodus Airsports.

Paul Dewhurst hadn't competed for even longer, since the World Championships at Popham in 2016, but was persuaded to by his son Tom, who's now 17 and a keen contributor to the *MF* photo comp.

"It was his idea, about this time last year, although he may be regretting it now," laughed Paul.

"Deenethorpe is only 10 minutes down the road from Sywell, where Flylight is based, so I thought, yeah, why not, otherwise I'd be sitting there thinking I was missing out on the fun.

"And it is fun. It's actually given me the thought of maybe going to the next one in France next year.

"I had all sorts of plans for the Nynja for this one: putting longer wings on it, making a special version and nosewheel brakes and things, but then I just didn't do any of that. The best-laid plans, and all that."

Rob Keene, meanwhile, lived up to his surname by coming back from his base in France, where he instructs on a GT450 and a Quantum, to compete in a Quik GTR with his nephew William, who's currently training for his flexwing licence.

"I thought it would be fun to come back and have a go, and catch up with pals. So I asked William, and he was really keen to do it," he said.

"He's so keen in aviation, and he wants to do aeronautical engineering, so I thought this would be a great opportunity for him.

"And not only has he really enjoyed it, he's been a big asset, because I'm 64 next week, and I forget things. And we were doing OK until we got lost on a task and missed loads of pictures.

"But I didn't really come expecting to do well. I'm just doing as best we can, and giving him the experience. That's the main thing.

"I want to see younger people coming in, and Paul's got his son here, Rob's got his son, and they're all similar ages, so I thought that would be fun, because they're like-minded and they'll have someone to talk to other than old buggers like us."



Yuriy Yakovlyev and son Tymofii celebrating their win in the fixed-wing dual class

Poles, but not apart

And it wasn't just on the British team: multiple World Champion Yuriy Yakovlyev won the two-seat fixed-wing class with his son Tymofii, who'd only been released from duty with the Ukrainian Army a few days before the championships, to take part. Polish gyro pilot Piotr Gajewski was also competing with his son, Marcin, 20. Piotr, an air traffic controller back home, started on gliders then switched to gyros, got his licence six years ago, and started competing only a year later.

"Friends of mine are in the national team, so they taught me to fly, then persuaded me to start competing and become an instructor," he said.

"Marcin started flying when he was 16, and is training to be a commercial pilot, but he's 350km away, so getting time together to train was difficult, and in our first competition, last year's Polish Championships, we didn't do so well. Because he knew nothing about the tasks, during the flights, I needed to show him how to read the charts and follow the route."

And it's not just pilots

It wasn't only pilots and navigators who

made up family teams: among the up to 25 marshals at WMC were mother-and-son duo Cath Spence, aka BMAA Deputy Chairman, and her son Mark.

So the \$64M question is: Did he fall, or was he pushed?

"Oh, he was definitely pushed," said Cath. "On the council, I'd been sitting listening to all the preparations, and having flown in the Open Series, I thought, actually, this sounds like good fun."

Originally, her husband Cameron had also volunteered, but then had to go to Singapore to watch their second son Sam graduate, so number one son Mark, 25, found himself volunteered.

"Yeah, whatever," was his enthusiastic response, but he's actually enjoyed it, since he's interested in flying anyway, and is currently on the lookout for an aviation engineering apprenticeship.

"It's a lot of work, isn't it? I'm mainly on lunch runs, and doing all the tech, and the pilots are really nice, and all chill," he said.

"It's kind of like we've extended the family by about 98, and he's made good friends with one or two of the other marshals," said Cath.

"And when one of the Czech team

came over on the last night and asked if anyone wanted to go flying, I've never seen him move so fast. He loved it."

Pole position

Another family team, this time combining flying and marshalling, was Polish flexwing pilot Błażej Piech, who won the World Championships in Hungary in 2008, and his daughter Amelia, who's just finished a biotechnology degree at Leeds University.

"My father's taken me flying since I was 11, so I wanted to come here and help out, as well as supporting him and the Polish team," she said.

"The people are very nice here, and I've been enjoying it. It's a unique experience, because I've never been a volunteer at any competition.

"But it is very hard work. Last night I got to bed at 1am after doing the spot landing videos, in case someone lodged a complaint and the jury needed to analyse them.

"And I hope to learn to fly myself, although I suffer from motion sickness."

"Not a problem," said *MF*'s Brendan Digney, who was our photographer at WMC. "I did too, and now I fly a Eurostar." □



Marshals Cath Spence (BMAA Deputy Chairman), and son Mark



Polish flexwing pilot Błażej Piech and his daughter Amelia, who was marshalling at the event



Polish gyro pilot Piotr Gajewski was competing with his son Marcin

Shiv Yadav:
first Indian WMC
competitor
since 1994



ACROSS THE WORLD FOR SOME FUN

SHIV Yadav was the first Indian competitor in WMC since 1994.

He'd planned to compete with fellow countryman Achal Agar, until Achal, a young entrepreneur who owns a pharmaceutical company, had to return to India unexpectedly at the start of the event, after which Shiv competed alone.

Indian Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh was initially also part of the team, but had to pull out due to the small matter of helping to run the country.

Shiv was an Indian Air Force engineer, maintaining Jaguar, then Hawk aircraft, and as part of the air force's adventure programme, tried skydiving, paragliding, paramotoring and motorgliding, then settled on flexwing microlights because they were more fun.

And not only had he and Achal come to the UK just to take part in WMC, they'd bought their own aircraft because they couldn't rent one: a La Mouette with the smaller Samson 12 wing.

"We'd never flown this particular machine before, and we came here on 22 June to rig it and get some practice, especially the navigation task, but we never did," said Shiv.

"The weather was not good, so we could only do three short circuits just before the championships. So I wasn't sure about the machine performance, the fuel performance or the type of map which you provide in the UK.

"I wasn't able to find roads, and especially rivers, so it was quite a learning experience, but I'm still glad I came, and I enjoyed it."

Rather weirdly, coming from India, he struggled with an English heatwave.

"It's hotter than this in India, of course, but there, we're normally flying during either early hours or late evening, not in the middle of the day," said Shiv.

"But it's been a nice experience, and hopefully, we'll be at the next one next year in France."

A grand adventure

If you're not looking forward to the usual British winter weather, Shiv is organising a 1000-mile flying expedition around the tourist highlights of central India in November.

"We'll arrange everything: logistics, stay, food, everything. You just need to pack your aircraft and send it via our logistics guy. We'll arrange export, import, and then re-export.

"We'll fly in the mornings, rest in the afternoons, then visit tourist sites in the cool of the evening. Anyone interested can contact me at shiv@macsenaviation.com." □

WMC: the logistics

BMAA Chairman **Tim Burrow** on the years of planning which went into the event

AN event like this isn't just our usual business of waking up, looking out of the window and driving to the airfield.

It takes years of planning, dozens of people, thousands of emails and phone calls, and in the end a few prayers for decent weather, which were obviously answered, God being a fully paid-up BMAA member.

The timing

Owain Johns started preparing the bid two years ago, and we won six months later, then a year ago, we started planning in earnest.

We spent the whole winter on procedures, background, infrastructure and everything like that, then in February, we started task design.

The people

We had four principal directors: Owain Johns as Competition Director, Colin Johnson as Deputy Competition Director, Angela Cox as Chief Scorer and myself as Chief Marshal, and in the winter, we increased that to seven. On top of that, we've had up to 25 marshals.

The work

Since last October, we've all been working every evening, had Zoom calls every three or four weeks, countless emails and phone calls, and from March on, site visits at Deenethorpe once a month.

The cost

It costs about £40,000 to put this on, by the time you've paid FAI sanction fees, bought the FAI medals and certificates, paid for the three jury members to come from Germany, Hungary and France and got them accommodation and hire cars.

At Deenethorpe, there are fees for using the airfield, and the cost of putting in toilets, showers, electric, Starlink internet and all the infrastructure that wasn't here two weeks ago. We've also paid for the marshals' food.

The income against that comes from sponsors, and the fact that not one of us organisers has drawn a single penny apart from having our expenses covered.

We worked out that the event would wash its face if we had 40 competitors, and when we got to 58, we could breathe. In the end, we had a couple of last-minute withdrawals, so we ended up with 55 from 12 countries, and should have a slight surplus. □