

Horsham & District Radio Control Model Club

Learning to fly a radio controlled model aircraft

Part one - Initial thoughts

Having decided that you want to learn to fly a radio controlled model aircraft, the next hurdle is what is the best (easiest, least expensive, or quickest) way to go about it? Those of us who have managed to 'get our wings' all have our own ideas on this, none of which can be said to be foolproof, so these are purely my own thoughts.

The first thing is to get advice from your local model club. Find out who they are, where and when they meet and the facilities they have available. Most clubs have experienced flyers that have a wealth of experience and are more than willing to pass this on to new members.

Visit their flying site and get to know some of the people. Make sure the site is suitable for learning to fly on. A large open space away from houses, power lines and any other hazards such as roads, railway lines, etc. Some are bound to have the odd tree, but you'll have to learn to avoid those!

Having decided that this club is for you, and that it is affiliated to the BMFA, join up. Even if you haven't decided what plane to build yet. Listen to the advice given and decided on which trainer to build.

Model aircraft come in a large variety of shapes and sizes. Helicopters, Gliders, Electric power are for some people, but this sheet concentrates on learning to fly an I/C power aircraft.

Remember if you successfully learn to fly this model, then the equipment you purchase will probably last you many years. Buy equipment that you'll be happy with in 5 -10 years time.

Most people will probably buy new equipment, unless something is being offered second-hand which meets their needs. If you buy second hand, get advice from an experienced modeller you can trust.

Briefly then, buy a 4-channel radio set with rechargeable ni-cads. You won't need a top of the range radio set, but remember it should last you many years if you look after it. So buy a reputable make, with all the functions you think you're going to need in the next 5 years.

Then decide on a suitable trainer aircraft. If you intend to move onto scale of aerobatic models later, then choose an aileron trainer. If you learn to fly on a rudder / elevator trainer, you'll need to get experience on ailerons at a later stage.

Next you'll need to purchase a suitable motor for the model. Most trainers use 2-stroke engines in the .15 -.40 range. Check the model instructions and buy an engine that suits, bearing in mind that you'll probably want to swap it into another aircraft at a later date.

A model box, starter, fuel, glow battery and various tools are also items you'll probably need, but these can be purchased later.

So you're now ready to build the model. See the separate sheet on this, installing the radio gear, and the first flight. Hopefully they will give you a helping hand in the right direction.