



Left: line-up at the BRCHA Taunton meeting, hosted by the Blackdown Radio Control Flying Club. Author, Jim Morley, is fifth from left.

HOVERING ABOUT

JIM MORLEY

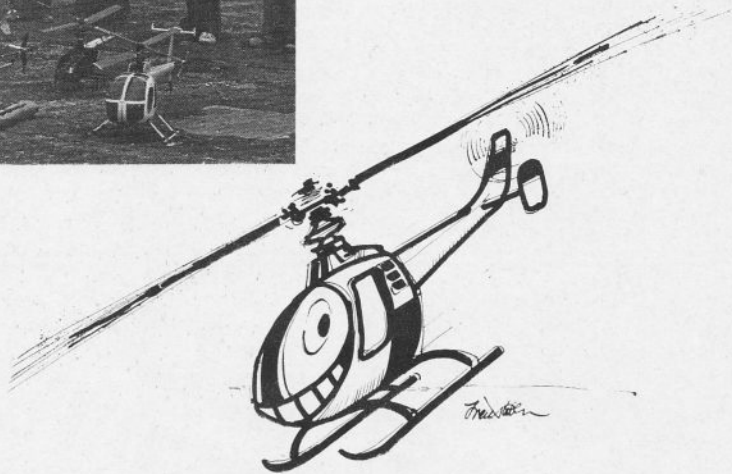
PROVIDES FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR HELICOPTER FANS AND INVITES THEIR OPINIONS AND IDEAS FOR THIS BI-MONTHLY COLUMN

A LOT of air has flowed under the rotors since I wrote about my MK11B helicopter back in 1973. That couple of pages had a dramatic effect on my life and subsequently on that of a lot of others.

Rather to my surprise, in those early days I received several letters from modellers telling me that they had just about read the print off the paper trying to figure out how to make a helicopter for themselves, and could I help with this or that. Now, having done just that to considerable effect, I feel that the time is ripe to add broader comments, namely that helicopters are going the wrong way and that there is a distinct lack of coverage in the magazine.

My intention is to provoke some reaction; I like scale models and to see

Below: Andy Hopkins who prompted the Blackdown Club into holding their helicopter meeting seen here flying his Morley 2c mentioned in the text.



all the competitive enthusiasm centred on rotary winged aerobatics seems rather a shame. No doubt the fantastic degree of skill and technical achievement demanded by aerobatics deserves a competition, but in order to school sufficient helicopter pilots so that the few who fancy that form of competition can have one, there must be a lot of non model bending activity. Many are put off by the time, effort and expense necessary to compete in an aerobatic competition.

On the occasions that there is reasonable pre-publicity a very interested crowd turns up at helicopter fly-ins. Several such meetings have been organised this year by the BRCHA (British Radio Controlled Helicopter Association) and an earlier one at RAF Odiham by the SMAE. To improve support though, with only modest and countryside spread of membership, these organisations might do well to advertise that non-members would be welcome with their models (day membership perhaps?) and show what is in store for prospective members before expecting annual membership fees.

Many helicopter modellers tend to be loners, possibly because the demands of the model make full concentration desirable or because with a helicopter once can slink away to some unobtrusive and unlikely flying site and amuse oneself for hours — a form of escape without the need for runways and vast open spaces. Nevertheless it very quickly becomes apparent that a little guidance would be a big help and the specialist meetings can provide this.

There shouldn't be any need for all that many specialist meetings, helicopters have reached the degree of reliability to compete with fixed wing aircraft models at club events, particularly in scale classes although for Clas II events the wing loading rule must be accepted to mean "disc area" as opposed to "blade area", and then the potential is enormous.

Hybrids are being built from the numerous sets of helicopter mechanics stored by the faint-hearted and purchased from them by pioneers, perhaps next summer may see more custom built helicopters. *Whirlwind, Wessex, Wasp, Scout, Sea King, Skycrane, Seasprite, Super Frelon, Lark, Hook, Hip* and countless ones with only type numbers, before you consider the difficult ones, *Chinook, Cheyenne, Airhorse, Vertol, Husky*, etc., which will come one day. Don't be more ambitious than kit model for a first experience however.

Choice from the many kits available is often governed solely by means; helicopters have been about long enough now for most model shops to advise and there is always mail order. A good spares back-up is essential as well as the availability of the kit. Cost of these is worth bearing in mind at the choosing stage. But I am digressing, that subject could be an article on its own and my intention is to provoke discussion on the directions that helicopter modellers might follow.

The recent American NRCHA championships took place with the whole competition below about two feet. Slalom between balsa posts, knocking bottles over, bursting balloons with pins on the skids, lowering pendulums into pots of decreasing sizes, etc., all with a time limit of two minutes and consequently only requiring a score keeper instead of a judge.

That sounds like the right idea to me, coupled with the inbuilt fascination of the peculiarities of helicopters this type of contest must be a growing branch of the sport of model flying. As for coverage in the magazine, we'll have to see what happens but let's not forget that helicopters should behave like helicopters. Any comments?

Somerset fly-in

Blackdown Radio Control Flying Club hosted a very pleasant helicopter meeting near Taunton for the BRCHA on August 13th, and provided excellent facilities for this gathering. It was perhaps too far from centres of population for vast numbers to attend but a few made a holiday of it by arriving the night before to camp in caravans and tents. Absolutely super weather should have prompted a good competition but in the usual absorbing chat and demonstrations nobody got around to organise one! A number of people saw their helicopters fly properly for the first time, having guidance at hand, and the meeting justified good coverage on Westward TV, even if it did comment that the models cost around £500 whilst showing a *Morley 2c* and 1/7 scale *Bell 47g* which were only of the £80 airframe type.

Hovertips

If you have read this far you must be hooked to some extent on choppers and a few haphazard comments may be of interest. Any contributions or questions?

Puzzling problems occur frequently; I have often been asked why control response appears slower from one day to the next. Of course it could be the pilot, or an oversight that has allowed the Rx batteries to go

too low with a corresponding slowing of servos, or this altering response can happen for other reasons and obviously it *could* be the helicopter. More likely it is due to denser air, either cooler or damper, providing more lift so that take-off happens at lower rotor revs, this can result in slower response and less stability.

It isn't even that easy. It may be that it is now hotter than on the day when you were most at one with the model, if so better response might be expected. The answer there is possibly that your model was set at its optimum for the given rotor sizes and an increase in revs for take-off in thinner air means too much gyro stability. This is when a collective pitch head, allowing you to adjust lift-off, comes into its own.

Fly-bar-less heads are all the rage all the rage these days. There is no doubt upon their effect on aerobatics although they are not essential for this. I am very dubious of their advisability however, again except for scale. My reason? All the ones so far have weights in the tips which to my mind renders them similar to pulse jets on control lines. A few simple calculations provide frightening results. It is absolutely essential to install these weights properly and take no risks on damage or maintenance.

Hovering About has discovered that R.C.M. & E. Editor, Bill Burkinshaw, is learning to fly a helicopter and apparently the new Micro-Mold Lark 2.25 is in for a busy fortnight with a training session every day. Good luck and more news of this in two months, possibly with a description of a revolutionary new training aid devised by *Hovering About* — if it works on the Editor!
