



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of MICHAEL DALE



Written by AMA staff (013); Added to HP files by JS (11/2013)

The following was published in the November 2013 issue of Model Aviation magazine, in the "I Am the AMA" section.

I Am the AMA

Michael Dale, Former president of Jaguar Cars North America and former RAF pilot

JS: How did you get involved with model aviation?

MD: I grew up in the industrial center of England – Birmingham – during World War II and the air was full of aircraft and this lit a passion for flight. Constructing and flying models was an outlet for this passion, but it was limited because, even after the war, kits and construction materials were expensive.

Building some of the same kits I lusted after in my teens has been a great pleasure in my later years. Long live the Keil Kraft Senator!

JS: How has model aviation impacted your life and/or career?

MD: Bill Winter, in his column "Just for the Fun of It," brought me back in later years. I could read his column when I was jet lagged and weary from constant work-related travel, sometimes halfway across the Atlantic, and it would rekindle the urge to build. He kept reminding me there were other things in life to which I could return. That kept me balanced in some trying times.

Through John Hunton, one of Bill's closest friends, I've had the great pleasure of flying some of his aircraft. They are a joy to fly and everything he ever wrote is true.

JS: What disciplines of modeling do you currently participate in?

MD: RC and the odd rubber-powered model. Having some highly talented people around me has led to participation in projects I could not have conceived myself. Our teams have built several Giants including a Hawker Hurricane, a Handley Page H.P.42, and a Halifax from the same company.

Old-timers, electrically powered, that I can fly while relaxing in a chair, suit me wonderfully. Ben Buckle aircraft look so beautiful sailing by that I wish I could live long enough to build them all!

Don Srull has lured me into dabbling with rubber-powered aircraft – the ultimate challenge in our hobby.

JS: What are your other hobbies?

MD: In the past, sailing, an intense pursuit of motor racing, and gliding. I still fly my full-scale Percival Provost, the type of aircraft in which I went solo 60 years ago in the RAF [Royal Air Force]. It was the Reserve Grand Champion Warbird at Oshkosh [Wisconsin] in 1998.

I and two modeling friends are also building a full-size Nieuport 28 replica.

I am the air show chairman for the Culpeper air show which has grown exponentially since its inception roughly 10 years ago. I also partner with another retired businessman in running a business training competition in the local high schools called E Squared.

We have a monthly fly-in for the Washington DC Maxcutters that brings several AMA Hall of Famers who improve my education every time they come – wonderful people.

JS: Who (or what) has influenced you the most?

MD: The greatest positive influence in my life has been my wife, Mary. She has supported and encouraged me in everything I have done. I am a fortunate man.

In modeling, I have also been incredibly fortunate. John Hunton lives a few miles away and has taken me under his wing. He is extremely inventive, even courageous, in the models he builds and flies and he has gotten me over several bumps in the building road where I might have lost interest if it weren't for his practical, common-sense advice and help.

Jaroslav Sodek was the tough, war-experienced pilot who taught me to fly full-scale aircraft in the RAF. He managed me through problems as a young man that changed my life in a most positive manner. He is a great hero and a superb pilot.

JS: Looking back on your time with Jaguar, what are you most proud of?

MD: Being a member of the management that brought Jaguar back from extinction in the 1990s. [They are] a great group of people and a marque that should live forever.

This PDF is property of the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Permission must be granted by the AMA History Project for any reprint or duplication for public use.

AMA History Project
National Model Aviation Museum
5151 E. Memorial Dr.
Muncie IN 47302
(765) 287-1256, ext. 511
historyproject@modelaircraft.org

