

**HAMFC Pilot Profile** - This month, we're delighted to have an interview with one of our club members, Doug West, our membership secretary. Over to you Doug...

### **What got you interested in model Aviation?**

I've always been interested in Aviation from a young age, in fact it was also due to my younger brother who was and still is, the 'model maker', well in terms of airfix models that is! He would spend hours gluing and painting them in the bedroom we shared, while I messed around with a soldering iron and building simple electronic circuits and getting into Amateur radio & CB.

When he built small toy balsa aircraft, and when mum was out, we used to climb up onto a flat roof and chuck them off into our garden below, so I guess that's what got me started. Then in my teens, I used to ride my bike over to Heathrow and log the aircraft numbers and crossing their code number off in a book that listed them all, I would have loved to have seen that book again but it has long since been lost!



### **When did you start flying?**

When I was 40, my nan died and left me some money, so I brought my first RC 6 channel electric helicopter and was practicing hovering it with the ping-pong balls on cross sticks, (to stop in turning over when taking off and landing), at a local park, when a Kempton Park member told me I was more than ready to take the training balls off, and to join the club, for which then, I got my first engine powered model in that of a Raptor 50 heli for which I then passed my rotor wing A test on.

The Raptor: notice the longer aerial for 35mhz !

### **What's the buzz?**

I was absolutely hooked when I got the electric heli to hover in front of me, I could not wait to do it again!



### **What stage are you at?**

Being a member of a club helped tremendously in learning about all aspects of RC model flying, and the transition into fixed wing flying, for which my first was a foamy Wilga model which 'clapped it's hands' one day when I was up high and trying something out, which taught me about knowing what the capabilities of a model were !

These days, some 20 years after flying RC for the first time, I am happy flying all kinds of models (albeit intermittently these days – as am still working full time), from Helis, fixed wing, paramotors, to gliders and more recent drones for my aerial photos interest and

have passed my A test too, for fixed wing flying, I must get around to my B test one day.....if only I had more spare time!

### **What are your goals?**

B Test, at some time in the future, and to get more regular flying in when being a grandad and (as Dean would say) - my Mrs. allows! (I keep telling you Dean, I wear trousers!)

### **Do you remember any significant moments?**

Well maybe not quite significant moments as such, but I can recall a few big crashes....like getting my 10ft wingspan 38cc Cessna stuck in a tree at Kempton park, hitting those infamous moving rugby posts with a Edge 50cc at Hanworth, and more recently writing off a lovely electric warbird when someone did a radio check but did not notice the ailerons were reversed !

More significantly, I remember teaching a Kempton member to fly to solo level, for which I was rewarded in joining him in a real Archer flight for an hour, for which I flew it for around 30 mins or so!



### **What do you do when you're not flying?**

In the last few years, I have spent a lot of time in simulator world of flying on the PC, I have a 3-screen setup, with a decent yoke, rudder pedals and radio panels amongst other flying aides like a separate navigation screen and talking with live human ATC for the sim.

### **Do you have any advice for our readers?**

Don't be afraid of asking for help, do your safety checks, and know when not to fly!