

# Lowveld Model Aircraft Club (LOMAC) airshow

By Athol Franz

Over the first weekend of August, my fiancée Christine Brits and I were invited to attend the LOMAC airshow as guests and my eyes were opened very wide. Not only was this show a huge success, but I met with so many very interesting pilots who are absolutely passionate about the model aircraft they build and fly.



The LOMAC airstrip is situated between Nelspruit and White River and on Saturday 1 August the club presented a very well attended airshow with great entertainment for the whole family. The club's facilities include a tarred runway, club buildings including shaded viewing areas, permanent crowd barriers and ample parking for guests' cars. For this significant event the Lowveld club organised additional toilets and areas where vendors could set up their show stands. Attention to detail was even better than many full size airshows with a spotless airfield, very child friendly, excellent food and overall catering, organised parking and most of all a wonderful atmosphere. I was impressed that Pieter Rabie, one of the members, organised for several children from a home for abused children to attend the day. In addition Radio Jacaranda and SABC Television were present to broadcast and record some of the events of the day. The sound system with good background music was outstanding, whilst two club members Bobby Rowe and Lemi Dolozol kept the spectators informed about what was happening all day.

The entry fee was only R50 for adults and R30 for children. The highlights of the day were as follows. There were free horse rides, a model bus for rides, jumping castles and tram rides available for the children all day. The catering was excellent in the beautifully decorated VIP hospitality centre. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were provided at a reasonable cost and the lamb on the spit for dinner was delicious. The idea of dropping sweets from an aircraft and a remotely piloted air vehicle for the children to pick up was well supported so every child received his/her sugar rush for the day! Everyone was invited to purchase a paper plate at R20 each, write their names and cell phone numbers on the plate and then place the plate in a specific area. A model aircraft then dropped eggs one at a time and the person, whose plate was the closest to the broken egg, won a significant prize. There were a variety of on airfield food vendors where the prices were reasonable as well as a main bar where tickets to purchase were required. Due to the fact that the organisers had placed many cardboard litter bins all over the





area, there was almost no litter. Clearly Chairman Phillip Lewis, his friendly committee and approximately 50 members had looked at all eventualities to ensure the overall success of the day.

It was also great to meet up with so many pilots who fly full size aircraft including one senior SAA captain Davon Lambrecht who has built an immaculate model of a Saudi Arabian MB339, similar to ex-SAAF Impalas. Davon explained that this beautiful model had taken him eight months to build and then a further two months to create the genuine markings including weathering of the airframe so as to make his model completely authentic. The detail is so good that even the two pilots' heads moved independently. The MB339 is powered by an 18Kg turbine and burns in the region of 700ml / hour of jet fuel and has a wingspan and length of 2.7 metres. In his spare time Davon has built and sold many jets and right now he is busy with other projects including building an A10, F15E and a Firebird.

Dean Grobbelaar of North Eastern Radio Flyers has been flying radio controlled (RC) model aircraft for 35 years and at LOMAC he displayed his 17 Kg turbine Ultra Lightning jet complete with trailing link undercarriage that is capable of speeds just under 400 Km/hr. This high tech composite kit costs in the region of R140 000. Dean owns what he describes as the 'largest model aircraft shop in the world', situated in the Kelvin region of Sandton.

Hein Benadie displayed his 46% scratch built Super Decathlon fitted with a smoke system that is so realistic that in the air one needs to look twice to see that this is not the full size aircraft. Two RC models had model skydivers strapped to the underside of the wings so that the pilots could take them aloft, before releasing the radio controlled skydivers back to the airfield. This was accomplished complete with the pull down of the risers to allow for the gentle



touchdown of the four model jumpers. This means that a team of six radio control pilots would be in action: one for each of the aircraft and four for the skydivers. Dieter Lettan who is in the motor trade displayed his personally built Pitts Bulldog, which he calls the 'Beast' from a kit over a two year period. Dieter has been flying RC models since 1980 when he was a SAAF technician working at AFB Hoedspruit. Presently Dieter is a member of the Pretoria East club known as Cors-Air that has about 100 members. Dieter is also building a blue MB339 jet, P51 Mustang with a 2.2 metre wingspan and a Viper Jet with a two metre wingspan.

Apart from the very high performance jets nearly all the RC aircraft were flown in pairs or with three in the air at times. However, there were several banner towing RC aircraft pulling banners showing the various sponsors of this show and at one time there were six models in the air at the same time. The sponsors behind this very successful day were: Steval Engineering, Supply Tech, Low Coat, Rentech, Diesel Electric and Volkswagen Nelspruit.

Although unusual for me to become involved with Aero modelling, I was pleasantly surprised at how well the Aero Modelling sport in South Africa is managed, with almost all the modelling disciplines represented, from hand line flying, RC gliders, jets, aerobatics, amusing RC types including a flying STOP sign, flying carpet and a 'Liever Hexie'. A scale DC-3 caught my eye as well as a scale version of Mustang Sally, J-3 Cub, Decathlon, parachute jumpers and several jet powered aircraft. African Pilot would like to wish LOMAC every success with the planning of the 2016 airshow, because it can only get better with this enthusiastic team at the helm. 🛩️

For more information please contact club Chairman:  
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*Standing: Jacques Alberts, Alec Groenewald (LOMAC Treasurer), Hein Benadie, Phillip Lewis (LOMAC Chairman), Boet Denysschen, Richard Castignani, Thinus Malan, Dieter Lettau  
Seated L-R: Davon Lambrechts, Russel vd Westhuizen*



*Pieter Rabie, Phillip Lewis, Marthinus Potgieter (SAMA Chairman), Alec Groenewald*