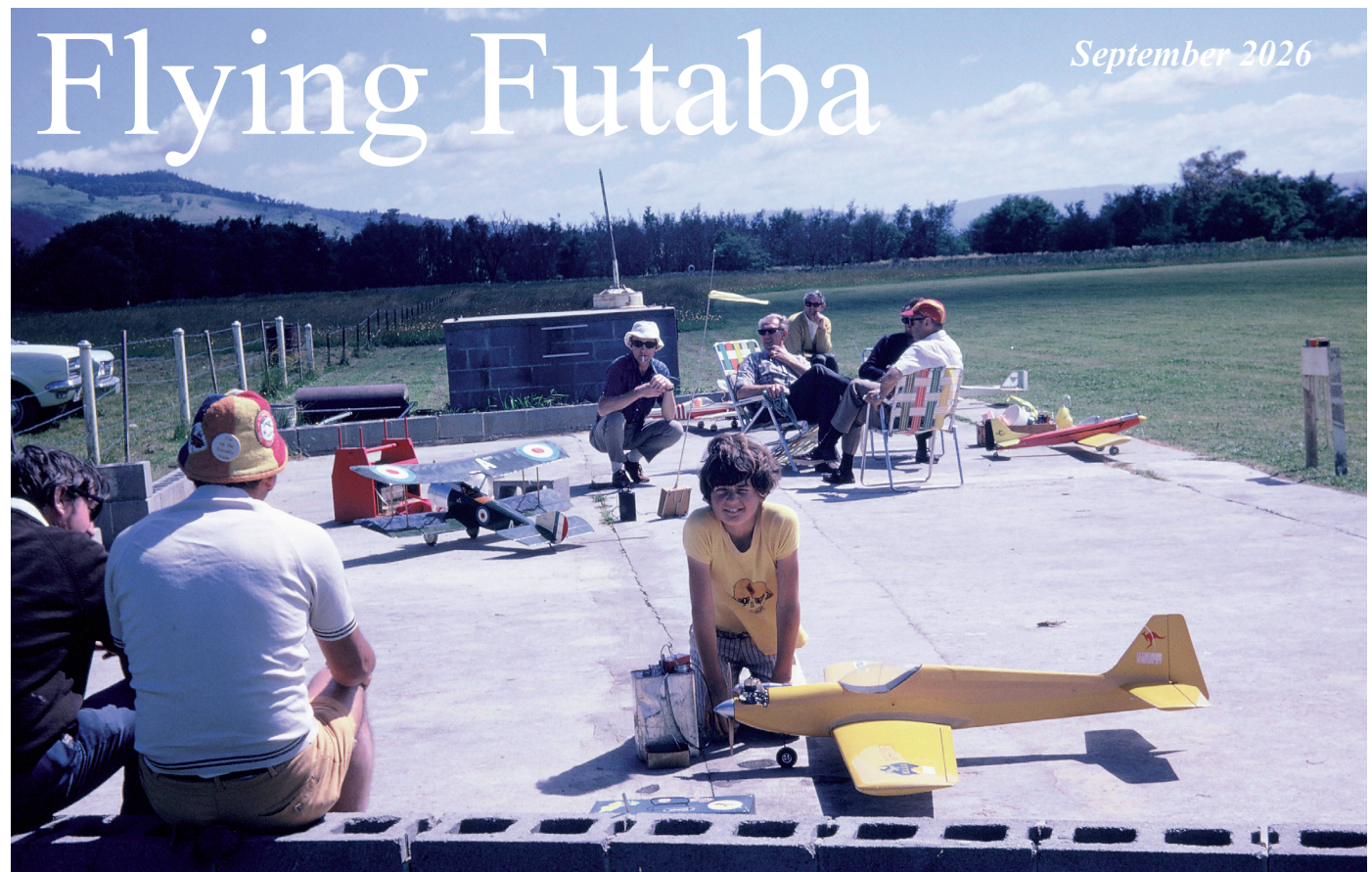


It's been two years since my father died and some time back I began to ponder how much good time I had left. Six months ago I decided to finish my working life with something to do with aeroplanes. To get my Futaba stock moving really required attending club fields and events. The amount of effort required changed my mind. Watching how Col Taylor did business at the Shepparton Mammoth all those years ago struck me as a really hard way to make a quid. Col's products were always well priced yet modelers couldn't help themselves screwing him for a better deal. When Col got out and Terry Griffiths bought the stock I think he did one Shepparton event and gave it the arse.

Selling quality for a fair price is harder than selling cheap. That has never changed. Modellers justifying that a crash didn't really matter because the gear was cheap isn't new either.

Back when I started flying you had to apply for a license to operate a radio control set for flying model aircraft. Now you don't. Regulations in most avenues of endeavour have changed to the point where policing seems to become involved, after the fact. Dark windows in cars is one example. Being able to see the car driver is an important factor for a motorcyclist. Today almost every car I see with tinted windows are using a tint value that is supposed to be available only for ambulances and the like. Who is policing that? Virtually no one. In the event of a stack, illegal tint gives the insurance company the ability to deny a claim.

No doubt the clause in the scale racing rules that an entry will not be accepted unless the transmitter has the ACMA C-Tick or RCM label will piss a few aeromodellers off. Supporting the companies that do comply is the right thing to do.



Yours truly at the Lilydale Club in 1972

I don't have a problem with the new brands of gear per-sea. Marketing based on World Championship winning credentials still works and you never know what the next big thing is, but recently, I just shook my head watching individuals and clubs feign over the FR Sky fella.

When the people selling the gear in this country that don't stump up the dosh to pay for the compliance label, why should I bother supporting them? ACMA raided Brian Simpson's Futaba agency a number of times and I've yet to hear of the regulator ever bothering with small garage businesses that don't comply. Like most things, it will take a catastrophic accident. Then the shit will hit

the fan. Watch everyone will duck for cover. I'm just not willing to expose myself to that potential financial risk.

My father often used to say "if people are stupid enough to use to cheap gear, well good luck". I always reckoned that was a bit harsh. Not everyone can afford the top level gear and Kraft radios were expensive back then. The landed cost of a Futaba set in the 1970s was half that of a Kraft. Now it seems Chinese product has a similar advantage. Having inside knowledge of what happened to Kraft, when it failed to compete

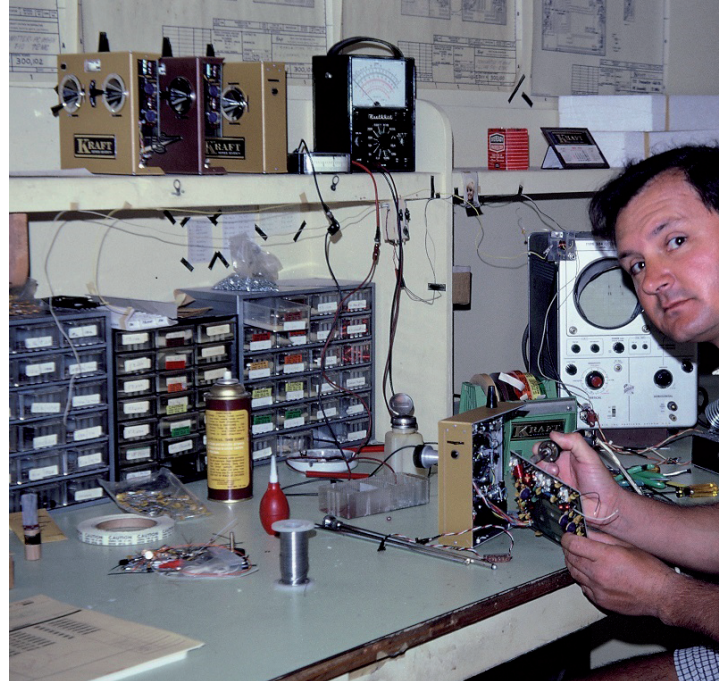


Digitaire Services 1969

with Futaba, one wonders what the leading radio manufacturer will be ten years from now. Sure, on some levels Futaba is slow to compete but it is the best product, with a very wide range for the overwhelming majority of applications. The two photographs, top left, also show something that has changed. Repairing is hardly needed today.

Quite a number of retailers, including myself, didn't get even get the courtesy of a phone call or an email from the new people when the agency changed hands. If that is any guide as to their expertise, they have a lot to learn about the RC aeroplane market. I'm out of it now and don't have to deal with the new Fokkers.

It's very handy being able to pull stuff off the wall when you need it. I've kept enough to gear up what I want for the next few years. S.J.G.



Kraft USA 1971



When Kraft was king



My last retail Futaba sale on its way