

Balsa Beavers Model Flying Club

The Balsa Beavers Model Flying Club was formed in the fall of 1957 and is the oldest active Control Line flying club in Ontario. The club is host to a diverse range of modeling interests including: stunt, racing, scale, and combat. Some of the members also fly Radio Controlled (R/C) at dedicated sites belonging to other model airplane clubs.

From first time flyer to a seasoned national or international competitor, all persons regardless of previous experience are involved in all aspects of club activity and no one sits on the sidelines while the "Pros" fly.



Bill Logan's majestic DH-10

Some interesting facts about the Balsa Beavers:

- The club was organized October 6, 1957 under the name Earlybird Model Flying Club. A full size aircraft club from Hamilton objected strongly to this as they already had the rights to that name, and had used it for years. On January 22, 1958 the name was changed to Balsa Beavers.
- November, 1957: Fox 29 or 35 retailed for \$22.35. Club members were able to buy one for \$13.41.
- In November, 1957 the club had 26 members. The club meetings took place in Ross Melhuish's basement, in Etobicoke.
- May 1960: The club held its first Marathon Rat Race consisting of 1,000 laps and a minimum of 20 pit-stops. Ross flew 3 aircraft in this event, Bill Poole flew 1 event barefoot and was extremely sorry that he did.
- June 7 and 26, 1960: The Toronto and District (T&D) contest was held at Woodbine Racetrack. The horses became skittish so the race was held there only twice.
- August, 1966: By this time the club was sending out approximately 240 copies of the *Airfoil*, a club publication produced with a hand crank printer by Bill Poole. It was collated by hand, individually addressed and stamped by Ross on his basement pool table. A true labour of love.
- July 1 & 2, 1967: The club held its T&D (Control Line and Free Flight) at RCAF Station Downsview. The entry fee was \$1.50 for the 1st event and 50 cents for additional events to a maximum of \$3.00.
- May 1968: Permission was granted to fly model aircraft in Marie Curtis Park, Etobicoke.
- October 2, 1968: The first Fall Combat Bash was held at Centennial Park.
- June 2, 1969: This was the official opening of Centennial Park.
- February 14, 1970: Two hundred model airplane kits were given out at a free contest for boys under 15. Models were built and flown on the contest day. The contest was held at Canadian Forces Base 1107, on Avenue Rd. Toronto.



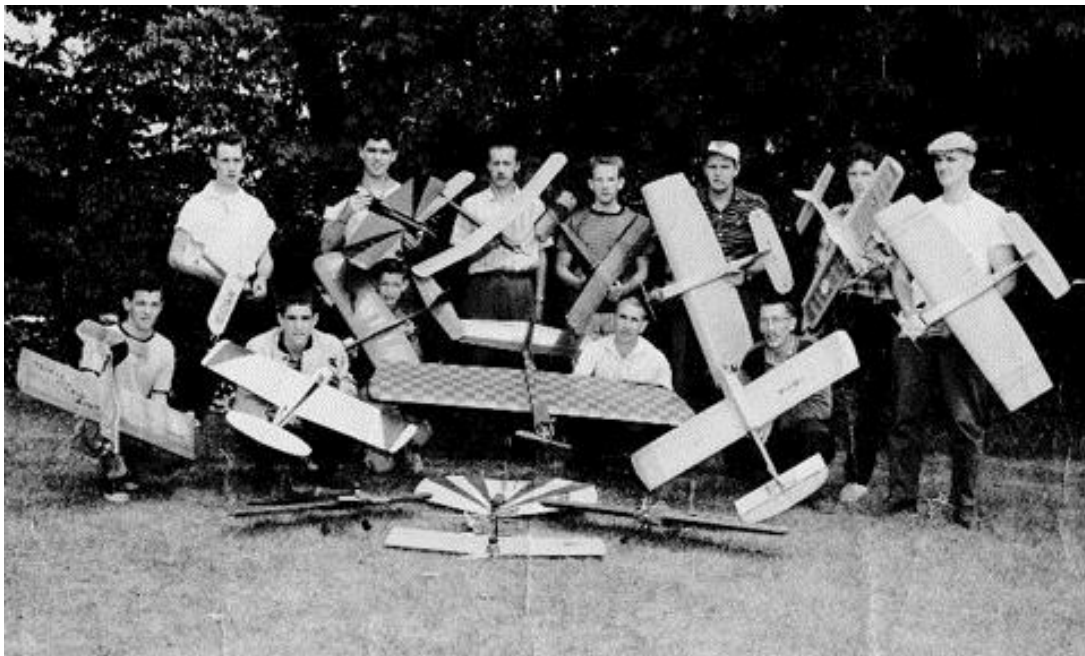
2004 picture of Beavers founding member and original President Ross Melhuish at the 44th annual Toronto & District Championships. Also known as **Ruthless Ross** in the Combat circles.



2014 picture of Ross Melhuish displaying his Balsa Beavers award for pass service.



John Easton (left) at First Goodyear Race - Keelsdale Park (Keele & Eglinton) July 1950



Balsa Beavers at Orenda Park 1958. (Photo sent by Bill McElroy).
Back row: 2nd from right - Bill McElroy, 3d from right - Ron Burke.
Front Row: Far right - Jack Grant, 2nd from right - Bill Bell, at far left kneeling is Ken Graham.



Balsa Beavers Model Flying Club - Circa 1960

Top row: 1st left - Don Miller, 3d from left - Bill Bell, 4th from left - John Easton

Bottom row: 1st from left - Ross Melhuish, Far right - Jack Humphries



Jim Bisson (left), Ken Sandham (centre), Ex-Beavers President Ross Melhuish (left) surround a rather large award in May, 1963 because of their outstanding performance at the T&D Championships.



Bill Bell & John Easton





Sarge Ranta's photo of Kenny Parent, Dave Kelly, Bill Patton, and John Easton at the FAI World Championships, Swinderby (England) in about 1967.



Gord Hocking (right) holds DeBolt Speedwagon



Finn Reynolds (#3796) with record setting Nordic A-2 Sept 6, 1964



1942 Eaton model aircraft contest trophy



Clarke Sheppard, MAAC # 31173 in 2010 with the last museum model. It is a 1/24th scale Harvard Mark II which resides at Moncton International alongside a 1/24th Avro Anson. Both are scratch built.



Balsa Beavers crest from Ed Peacock's archives. 8" x 8" Screened texture print on fabric. Designed by Graham Ireland circa 1957 when he was a junior engineer working on the Avro Arrow project.



Balsa Beavers Logo Crest - Circa 1970?



Three generations of Irelands, father's day 2005.