



## White Horse MC sponsors FROGs in Romania

By Martin Spackman

**I**N August 2005 White Horse Model Club members Sam Burford and myself, together with 13 other members of Faringdon Baptist Church travelled to Dezna, Romania, to help run a Christian camp for some 50 local young people.

Each of us was asked to employ our own skills in their choice of activities to share with the young people, so Sam and I elected to do some model building. I had previously built the BMFA 'Dart' with junior school aged children, but the age range at the camp was from 13 – 25 years. Clearly a greater challenge than the 'Dart' was needed.

Most of you will know that the BMFA education programme has four main models, with the 'Dart' as a second stage, and the 'Gimnie Cricket' and the 'FROG' as progressively more challenging models to build and fly. The budget was tight, and I had in mind something like the old KeilKraft 'Nomad' or a rubber-driven flying-scale model

of the ilk that I built as a youngster back in the '60s, but there seemed nothing available in the £3-£4 bracket.

In the end I elected to go for the BMFA 'FROG', but Mike Colling, Fellow designer and supplier of the kit to the BMFA, was not sure about this choice of model, specifically because this was the first modelling project that the young people would be undertaking. His concern at my choice of model did give me a few sleepless nights as the camp date approached, but I was pleased we stuck with the 'FROG'.

For those of you unfamiliar with the 'FROG' (Federation Rise Off Ground), it is an indoor rubber-powered design calling for built-up wing and tail feathers, mounted on a fabricated balsa motor stick. The flying surfaces have a curved-plate airfoil with tissue covering.

Funded by a generous donation from the BMFA-affiliated White Horse Model Club, we were able to take 30 kits with us, together with triple-skin

corrugated cardboard building boards (18inches x 12inches) and sets of all the tools and adhesives needed to build the kit. At the camp 15 models were started, 12 were finished and flew, and each participant was given a second kit and set of tools to build another model at home. We had four by three hour activity sessions through the week. We built the models in the first three sessions, and had a fly-in competition in the fourth.

With Sam and I overseeing/guiding, fifteen models under construction was about the limit we could manage. The enthusiasm of the youngsters was fantastic, particularly as I had been able to demonstrate the finished model that I had built and taken out with me. We had both girls and boys participating, and they handled the rather delicate build (mainly from 2mm square strip balsa) and covering very well, much better than I had dared hope following Mike's warning that this was not a beginner's project. Incidentally, I was very impressed with the

quality of the strip wood and components in the kits – well done Mike! The illustrated instructions that accompany the kit helped overcome the language problems!

The 'FROG' is designed for indoor flying, but we had no indoor facility at the camp and so we held our fly-in outside on the camp football pitch in reasonably calm conditions. We flew three rounds, with the aggregate duration to establish the winner. The best time across the three rounds was 84 seconds, which I reckon was pretty good for first-time builds (it's surprising how high and far a model can travel in 30 seconds!). The top five all had aggregate times in excess of 60 seconds and, yes, the ladies came first and second!

All in all, it was a great camp, and there was no doubt that the model building was extremely popular. There were 'FROGs' in the air all over the camp by the end of the week! We now have the difficult choice of selecting another project for our planned 2006 camp – any ideas chaps?

