

The Clodbuster's

Early in 1939 a group of teenaged model airplane enthusiasts from Royal Oak, Michigan gathered at the hobby shop of Jack Willett and under his sponsorship formed the Royal Oak Thermites Club. Meetings were held on a regular basis at Willett's store, but the records of these activities have been lost through the years. Club members were, for the most part, involved in Free Flight models which included rubber and gasoline engine power model airplanes of the scale and endurance type. Radio Control and Control Line models were still in development at the hands of experimenters during this period.

The favorite flying site for weekend contests was the huge vacant area at 9 Mile Rd. and Northwestern Hwy, now the city of Southfield. This was also the home field for the Sky Guys Model Airplane Club of Detroit.

The years immediately following Americas entry into World War II would see membership drop off due to older Thermites joining various branches of military service. This resulted in a consolidation of the Royal Oak Thermites with other clubs from Warren, East Detroit and Fraser, Michigan and insured a continuing membership.

In 1944 the Thermites name was dropped in favor of the Clodbusters and the name has endured to the present.

The club grew in the post war period as former members returned from service and once again were free to pursue the model airplane hobby. Control Line flying was by now an established modeling discipline and was popular with members of the revitalized Clodbusters Club. Most of the Control Line flying took place in Royal Oak between Normandy Road and 13 Mile Road, then an open field.

The Plymouth Motor Car Corporation sponsored a large contest known as the Plymouth International Meet. This well attended contest was once held at the Clodbusters flying field.

From 1946 to 1948 the Clodbusters had no regular home and meetings were held at the home of various members. For a short time they met at Dunn's Hobby Shop in Royal Oak. In 1948 Jake Drake started a business known as the Hobby Hanger in Royal Oak. This provided the club with a stable meeting place until 1957 when the business was closed.

Clodbusters met at various locations through the year, the most stable was the Christ Memorial Presbyterian Church in Royal Oak. In 2009 when our last meeting place closed its doors we found a new site to hold our meetings. We now meet at the Ultimate Soccer Arena Complex in Pontiac MI, a site that is very friendly to modelers on all modeling disciplines.

In 1965 the Clodbusters were incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan. A Constitution and set of Bylaws were adopted to give the club its direction. The club closely follows the principals as outlined in article II of its Constitution "This club will be organized for the purpose of promoting Model Aviation, to procure and disseminate information of pertinent natures to its members; and to indulge in all activities necessary to its existence."

Although individual members had belonged to the Academy of Model Aviation (AMA) through the years, it wasn't until September 1982 that the club applied for charter status in the national organization. Clodbusters now operate under Charter number 1911 issued in March of 1983.

The passage of time has brought with it the inevitable change in personnel. A very few of the original members are still with us however most have gone west to the big flying field in the sky.

The club still thrives on competition in Free Flight and Control Line events and boasts many of this countries premier modelers and fliers as members.

Today the Clodbusters have a membership of 125 plus and are one of the few non RC clubs that can boast that. We have members who fly Free Flight, Control Line and Radio Control along with many others who just like aviation and airplanes. Clodbusters currently sponsor two of the larger model contests in the USA, the "Indoor Fling" in May and the "FAC Outdoor Championships" in September.

The spirit and dreams of the clubs founders back in 1939 still remain today and are being cared for by the present membership.

Mike Welshans – Clodbusters President 2015.