

Newsletter

October 2013

You will all know by now that I have enjoyed building and flying indoor models. I have found it to be very challenging but oh so satisfying when it all goes right. Cutting out these models does require some skill but I recently bought a plan for a Depron model which, because of its shape, would make neat cutting something beyond my capabilities. When you try to achieve the sort of curves shown by this design, I think you'd be more likely to produce a jagged edge - certainly not a smooth cut.

So, I spoke to Mr Higgins who has in the past given me much valued advice and discussed the possibilities open to me. His suggestion was for a hot knife - these are available but quite expensive. I pressed my soldering station into service, fitting a thin tip and playing with the temperature control till I could get a slow controlled cut. It works very well most of the time but difficult to achieve a completely vertical cut on the edge especially when you get to the tricky bits.

I then decided on a hot wire cutter but fitted with a thermostatic control. Proxxon make the ideal thing for about £95 new. These are hard times so I cast around for a 2nd hand one on EBay. I checked out through their advanced search that they generally sell just below the £40 mark. I found one for sale, waited to the last 10 seconds before confirming my bid of £58. I was somewhat surprised to find that I was immediately outbid - some guy bought this thing for £60!

Just one week later and one came up brand new, never opened but it was fitted with the European 2 pin plug. The auction had 6 more days to run so I contacted the seller and asked him to consider a 'buy it now'. The deal was struck for just £50 so, tomorrow, I

expect to hear a knock on the door to receive my brand new Proxxon Thermocut 230/E.



I've cut ply templates for the Beta and this Tension 3D Biplane. I'll be producing templates for the Shockie and the other Double Fun Biplane.

I am looking forward to see how much this set up will improve these models. It'll certainly make it easier!

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By John Higgins

Hanging by a Thread

It is said that a drowning man has his whole life flash before his eyes before he succumbs to his watery fate. I had a similar cathartic moment at the recent club scale day; let me explain. The first event was to be the “aeroshow” competition, the aim of which was to display the model in the way



I took this just before it's maiden flight back in February.

the full-size aeroplane would display at a full-size airshow. I had my SebArt Sbach in mind for this event and a nice little routine worked out that I hoped would impress the judges. The aeroplane had been checked out at home and again when it was assembled in the pits; all was well, everything worked as it should and the transmitter was telling me that all its vital functions were just fine; I turned off the aircraft systems and powered down the transmitter.

When the call came for the first competitor to fly, everyone seemed to take two paces backwards or pretend that they were carrying out vital adjustments to their models. I thus found myself in the position of opening bat! Having pushed the model out to the flight line I then proceeded to impress the judges when nothing worked on the model. Once I had turned the model's systems on I was able to taxi out to the take-off strip. “Line up and hold”, a final glance at the transmitter's knobs and switches and” “take-off”.

My intention had been to execute a shallow, scale-like take-off and climb out before pulling to the vertical, putting in one full vertical roll, then holding the line before pulling to horizontal with one and a half negative flick rolls to leave me heading straight and level down wind... The reality, however, did not match the intention. The model did a tight half-loop, all on its own, with no help from me! I



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managed to half-roll out and get the model back into wind. My first thought was of a “Katana moment” (if you don’t know what I’m referring you will have to browse your back issues of “The Flyer”, perhaps on our always-up-to-date website), my second thought was that I was flying a very tail-heavy model – it was just wallowing around with its nose in the air. Had the battery somehow slipped rearwards? Even full down-stick had no effect. I declared an emergency landing. To mitigate against a tip-stall, I selected landing configuration (this raises both ailerons a few millimetres and renders the model virtually tip-stall proof) and gritted my teeth. I now had the model lined up into wind, with wings level, performing a series of gentle stalls followed by gentle swoops. I could just manage to lift the nose during a swoop with a whiff of throttle but could do nothing to tame the stalls, since the elevator was refusing to respond to the transmitter’s urgings. As luck would have it, I managed a sort of “harrier” landing and the model sustained no damage.



Back in the pits, with teeth now un-gritted, the cause of the near disaster became clear; I had an intermittent elevator which, during flight, had stuck with more than a bit of “up”.

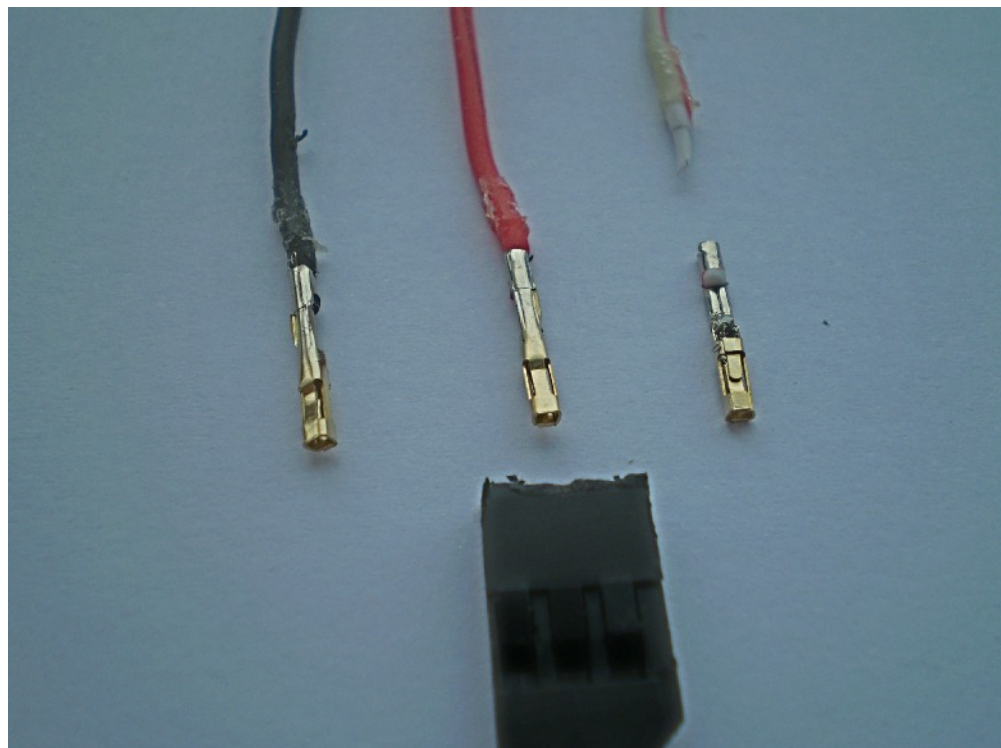
Paul Cusworth, bringing his years of technical experience into play, poked the leads coming out of the end of the receiver with his finger; the elevator jumped and wriggled in response like a filly tickled with a feather! The source of the problem had been identified but not the cause.

Two days later, back in the hanger, the forensic investigation began. I disconnected all the leads going into the receiver with the exception of the elevator. Sure enough, when prodded, the elevator jumped about but was otherwise working normally. The fault was thus either with the plug/lead or with the receiver’s terminal block. I then removed the elevator extension lead, inserted a short extension lead into the receiver and connected the elevator extension lead to this. When the end of the elevator extension lead was wiggled the elevator glitched, when the receiver terminal block was poked nothing untoward happened. I had my hidden assassin!

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With care, Futaba plugs can be taken apart – one just lifts the tiny plastic tabs with a jeweller's screwdriver, and the wire with its little, gold-plated socket is instantly free of its plastic prison. Now, these small connectors are crimped to the ends of the wires by some machine in far-off Cathay and can usually be relied upon to give trouble-free service. I proved to be the unlucky owner of the exception that proves the rule. The red and black wires were soundly crimped to their connectors... The white (signal) wire, however, was broken and was only making an electrical connection by the most tenuous of mechanical means. The sort of tenuous link that could be easily severed by a jolt on the take-off run! We, as modellers, try to make our models as safe as possible; we have such things as dual power supplies, parallel switches, to reduce the chance of a switch failure, and low battery warning devices to give us peace of mind but in reality the fate of our models hangs by just a thread – and that thread is made of copper. If you have a simple, four-function model, where all the servos plug in to the receiver, you have twelve of these potential model-killers to worry about; if you have a complicated model with eight or ten servos and lots of extension leads your killer-count could be fifty or more... Sleep well.

John Higgins



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Aero Quality Depron No Longer Available

According to the Steve Webb Models site, the U.K Importer & Distributor of Original Depron that they will not be re ordering any Aero Depron because of the quantities required. This means that for the moment this superb product is not available and may not be available for sometime. They go on to suggest that we use standard Depron which is 15 - 20% heavier than the 'aero' quality. Standard Depron is stiffer and does not show the finer surface finish that 'aero' Depron has.

A View from the Hedge (By Will Sparrow)



There was great excitement in the hedge one Sunday towards the very end of September. What was the cause of this excitement, I hear you ask? You modellers were to be running a competition for scale models! I remember granddad sparrow telling me, when I was but a fledgling, how, in distant days, model flying competitions used to be a regular feature of club life. Alas, this seems not to be the case these days so you can understand why we feathered folk were looking forward to a change from the usual Sunday diet of swooping and zooming.

I have been told that in days of yore (granddads are a mine of information – and, if you have one, you should get as much information from them whilst you still can) scale models were lovingly hand-built by the modeller and then had to be flown, in a realistic manner, mimicking the full-size as closely as possible, by the same modeller. In these days of ARTF, this ideal would be a non-starter, certainly at club level, and any form of static judging would boil down to who could afford the best Chinaman to build his model! With this in mind the competition was focused not on the quality of the model but on the flying and presentation. (We had great fun, sitting on our twigs and trying to guess what the models were meant to represent! One had no pilot; Jim Sparrow explained that such full-size aircraft were called drones and that what we were seeing was a model drone.)



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A View from the Hedge continued.....

Ten o'clock arrived and with it maybe half a dozen worthy souls, some of whom intended to fly scale models! Fortunately, by the time proceedings got under way, the ranks of participants had swelled slightly and many a brave soul was steeling him to confront the strong cross-wind and tricky turbulence over the landing area. An electric model was first to go and nearly came to grief as soon as it took off – the elevator had apparently stopped working properly, despite functioning perfectly minutes earlier in the pits. The little plastic man in the cockpit managed to get the model down in one piece, and with no damage, but he did have a very fixed expression on his face as the model was carried in! The wind conditions did not improve as the day progressed but the competitors continued to do battle and seemed to be enjoying themselves, which, after all, was the aim of the event.

Scale judging is very subjective, but for me the best model of the day never took to the sky. I refer to a large-scale WW2 fighter with a frightening “shark’s mouth” adorning its nose. The owner did a few fast taxi runs, just to get the feel of the model, and we could tell that the urge to see air under its wheels burned bright in the proud modeller’s breast. Self-discipline prevailed, however, and the model was returned to the pits. I do hope that I’m around when this model finally makes it into its natural element.

Since the passing of the equinox, the weather has not, on the whole, been very good. Gales and rain would be the best summary. You can imagine my surprise when one Tuesday in mid-October delivered up a perfect flying opportunity. Being a Tuesday, only the leisured classes (he means retirees and slopers-off – JS) were able to take full advantage of the light winds and balmy airs. I counted at least eight of them! I had seen most of the models present perform before, but one I hadn’t seen before was a newly-finished fighter of post WW2 vintage; very smart it looked too, resplendent in a blue colour scheme with lots of white lettering and sporting strange roundels depicting an animal which looked like a cross between a rat and a rabbit – but without the ears! I have since been told that the animal in question is called a can-gerr-do, or something very similar, and that such beasts live far away to the south, way beyond Preston. Be that as it may, the model was successfully first-flighted and looked nice in the air, contrasting as it did, with the pale blue and white sky. Teething problems always accompany new models and this one suffered from a couple of undercarriage legs that



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A View from the Hedge continued.....

persisted in dangling a little and a tendency to nose over on landing. I look forward to seeing this model again when it is fully sorted.

This flying session was also accompanied by lots of photography; I counted three of these shutter-bugs snapping away as if there was no tomorrow. I believe the modern way is to take hundreds of photographs and then delete all but those nearest to perfection. (The wise old owl later told me that this process was akin to natural selection in nature and this was how owls came to be and was why sparrows still had some way to go; I'd swear that he was giggling as I left him on his twig). One of the snappers, a large modeller, whom I've often seen before, seemed to be being tutored as to which end of his picture-taking device he should look through, which buttons he should press and which knobs it was better not to twiddle! He seemed to get the hang of things, however.

We are now well into autumn and, although many flying opportunities may still present themselves, the climate is very fickle and the weather gods can play havoc with our weekend flying plans. I was once asked (by a tit – blue, I think) if sparrows had any kind of spiritual dimension. I had to admit that we didn't, although, like many wild and un-sophisticated creatures, we have a longing for belief in the Gaia hypothesis and the power of Mother Nature. Ah yes, the Earth Mother, with all her contrasting mood swings; sunshine and light breezes one day, gales and rain the next. Still, what can one expect? After all she is bi-polar!

WS

Abingdon Road Market Modelling Bits

Peter

Had a phone call from Gerry Shakespeare today. He informed me that there was a new stall on the Abingdon road market in Blackpool who sells modelling goods. The guy also offers to order items for modellers. He suggested that we mention this in the "Flyer".

Regards
Phil Leech

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John's New Model

John brought his new PA Bandit to a recent social evening at the Tennis Club. Precision Aerobatics make some pretty unusual aircraft. I've only seen the PA Addiction X and it's flight performance seems well impressive. When John bought his Bandit, he invited me over to see the build.

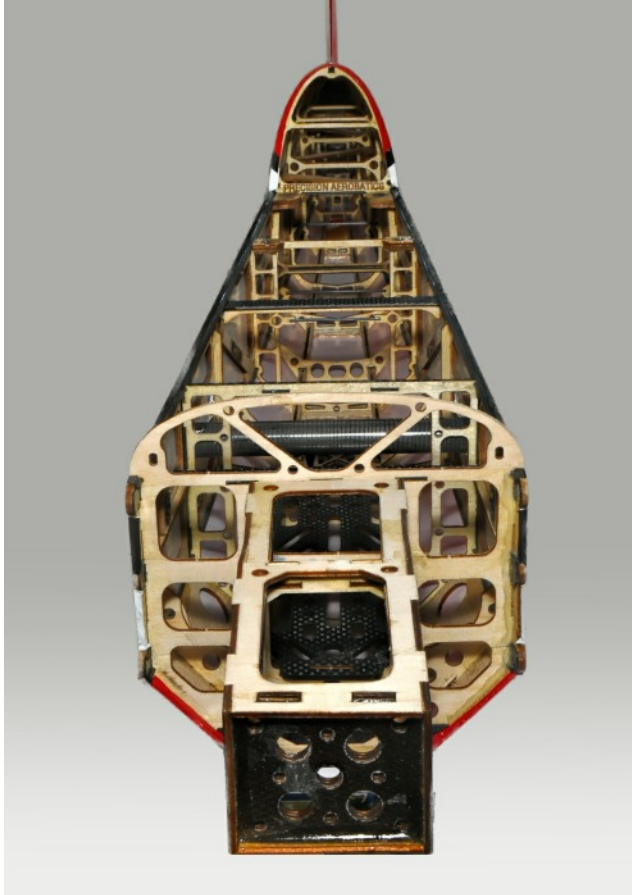
The model is impressively light and everything seems to state of the art technology. It certainly comes into the category of built to fly - it certainly isn't robust. I did see a lot of carbon fibre in lots of places throughout it's complex construction so presumably, someone has done their homework to enable the model to tolerate the rigours of flying from a club field.

It has to be said that it is a stunning design - just look at that cowl - it's a work of art.



John has fitted vortex generators to the wings. It is a 50" span and should have a flying weight of 42 ozs. They describe it as a 3D racer. It has a wing area of 537 sq.inches. This equates to a wing loading of 11.26 ozs per sq.foot. I didn't see the maiden flight but I did see some it's early flights. John had to do a lot of tweaks to get it to fly in a convincing manner. I think it's definitely a model for the expert - not for me then!

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The PA Bandit fuselage

Another shot showing the construction of what PA call their fibre fusion method. They claim that it gives the airframe so much stiffness that it can withstand the most violent manoeuvres.

The WW1 Bristol Fighter

I bought on EBay the plans for a Depron 36" span Bristol fighter. This will be my project over the winter months. It will be one of these fair weather models - too big to fly indoors but with all the rigging and fiddly little struts etc it should keep me amused for several hopefully rewarding hours. A lot of the construction is in 6mm Depron so it should be reasonably robust.



The above picture shows one that they have at Duxford.

NORTH-WEST OF ENGLAND'S NEWEST INDOOR VE FREE-FLIGHT & RC ELECTRIC PLANES & HELICOPT

1. Slow Flyers 2. Free Flight 3. Shock Flyers
4. Helis & Multicopters

ed wing models up to 33" max and 225gms -
icopters & Multirotors max 400gms

FA insurance necessary (but can be arranged
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ificates to fly.

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In Conclusion

Gentlemen, this is rather a shorter newsletter than usual. I've been laid low for a lot of the month forcing me to make a reluctant visit to the doctor. All sorted now and I feel better than I have for ages.

Unfortunately, the indoor venue has been cancelled this month - they actually want to use it to play tennis so we are temporarily without a place to fly. I really do miss it. I have for some time been going on about the Teranis FR Sky transmitter but have been unable to find anyone who actually owned one. Well, at last I know someone who is expecting delivery very soon - it will be interesting to hear from him just how good it is. Unfortunately, he is down in Cornwall so I won't be able to actually see it physically.

I am once more appealing to you for more contributions to the newsletter. You don't even have to write the stuff. Do you have any interesting projects on over the winter. I'm sure many of you must have?? Thanks to John Higgins and Will Sparrow for your articles and thanks to John P for letting me get pictures of his Bandit. Thanks Phil for your Email concerning the stall at the Abingdon Road Market.

I leave you with a photo of Jason's lovely Stearman. Good flying.

