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Acknowledgements: Thanks to all contributors. All photos by Neil Carver except p3 (Anon), p4 (Anon), pp10-12 (Brian Clamp), pp13-14 (Phil Barrett), pp15-17 (Geoff Pratley), pp 19-20 small images (Alfa Models.)
Cover Photo: YF16 at Shillitoe flown by Robert Thresh

Editorial

I’m never been certain what ‘derring’ actually was, but in this issue we both do it and don’t do it and the heck with it. Ex club member Geoff Pratley gives us the lowdown on his activities in Devon and does it. He is also featured opposite with a Spitfire given to him by Charlie. It never got to fly in Sheffield but it did in Devon, and like all of Charlie’s models, it flies very well indeed. Elsewhere we hear a tale of derring-don’t and the life and times of one Flight Lieutenant Percival Lane. Somehow he looks familiar but I can’t quite put my finger on it.

Phil doesn’t tell us if Lane’s efforts in the war are celebrated at the National Memorial Arboretum but his article gives food for thought and inspires a visit to this special place. We also, in minor ways celebrate sheds, Shillitoe, and 2 kits from the East, one of which flies and floats. Oh and someone won the competition from last issue. I’m not telling you who though. You can amuse yourself for two seconds by betting with
yourself that you can guess the winner correctly; then turn to page 24. Enjoy or weep: the choice is yours.

Hang on... this is Devon... shouldn’t it be raining?
Flight Lieutenant Percival Lane had a distinguished flying career, originally with the RFC and then later, the RAF. The son of Arthur, a rarely employed music hall magician, and his fishnet and feathers assistant, Penny, Percival spent much of his childhood living out of a suitcase in New Street Birmingham railway station left luggage office.

And it was there, early in 1915 that he first heard the call to arms. He had been sitting in the suitcase, eating a Brylcreem stained bowler hat a cleaner had found on the 16:15 from
Chinley, when he became aware of a flyer, stuffed into a waste paper bin. The flyer's name was Montgomery Smutt (two T's) who had been stripped naked and pushed into the bin by his 'mates' after his stag night.

Smutt thanked Percy for helping him out of the bin and gave him an IOU for half a crown for his trouble. He also gave him some advice: 'Son', he said, 'leave that old suitcase behind and sign up. Three square meals a day and more action than you can handle.'

Percy's understanding of 'action' came from what he'd heard and seen behind the stage doors of several variety theatres, so completely enthralled at the prospect of, not only food, but nookey, he joined the Royal Flying Corps. Training was rudimentary. He was shown a plane and the sky, told how the two seemed made for each other, and given his own kite.

He flew that kite for four years until the string broke and it blew away over Ypres. However, during all that time, he never gave up hope of finding the action and was repeatedly tested (and found wanting) for his 'wings'. Then, at eleven o'clock on 11 November 1918, he heard the words he had been hoping for. 'OK, laddie, I'm sick of the sight of you. Take this badge and log book and if I ever see you again, I'll...' The rest of the words were lost to view as the examiner flew off in a cloud of smoke, a Gypsy Moth and a lighter humour.

Too late to inflict any harm on the real enemy, he adopted a German shepherd from Battersea Dog's home and spent the next ten years mistreating
him. The shepherd, a huge black chap called Gunther Kinte, never complained. Working as a kennel maid at the dog's home had been the only job he could get when war had broken out, because no-one wanted to entrust their sheep to a 'Hun'. But he longed to get back to those Alsatian pastures and he was putting aside two bob a week from his allowance from Percy, saving up to buy a ticket home.

And so it was that after the ten years, he took his £52, told Percy he was going back to his roots, and left. Percy was initially glad to see him go. He'd never managed to house train him and so he was barred from all the local B&Bs and guest houses. For the last two years he had been back in the suitcase at New Street with Gunther living in a briefcase attached to the handle of the suitcase with string, to stop him escaping.

Percy eventually saw this opportunity for what it was. A disaster. He had been scraping a living begging on the streets of Birmingham and had found that, if he threw a bucket of water over Gunther at the start of the day, he made more money from the soft-hearted brummies. With no pathetic, damp companion, he was again unemployed.

Then fate, as it so often does, threw him a life-line. Having found two pieces of newspaper and an old flat cap, he was making himself a sandwich when he happened to read an advert in the paper.

'Montgomery Smutt (two T's) - Ventriloquist and pick-pocket' was topping the bill at the Gaiety Theatre, so putting his trust in serendipity, Percy found an old bicycle wheel and a stick and propelled his way round to the Mecca of enter-
tainment. There the stage door bouncer threw him out telling him the Gaiety was two doors down. Montgomery recognised Percy immediately and, worried that he'd come to collect on the IOU, hid in the suitcase with Top Hat Harry, his dummy and lifelong 'partner'.

Percy, who had traded the IOU for two Woodbines in 1916, explained through the lock on the case that it was not the case and eventually coaxed Montgomery out. In his haste to get into the case, Montgomery had broken the movable jaw off Harry and as this had only been held on with spit and good luck since the day Monty had drunkenly tried for a blow-job from his 'partner', that seemed to be the end of his career too.

With an hour to go before his top of the bill appearance (Monty believed that top of the bill meant going on first) there was only one thing for it. Percy was squeezed into Harry's tuxedo and with Monty's hand pulling the hairs on his back, learned very quickly the art of ventriloquism.

For the first time in his life, Monty was a success. He walked unaided off the stage to a murmur of apathy and desultory applause. It was a turning point, and for the next few years he and Percy went on to top the bill (properly) all over the country. Then Hitler invaded Poland.

Not personally - he sent in some chaps to do it for him, but the result was the same. England was once again at war with Germany. Monty immediately joined up and as his hand was still up the back of Percy, so did he. Sadly Monty was killed on his second day in the
air when he was shot through and through by a large black shepherd in a Messerschmitt called Gunther. The shepherd was called Gunther, not the Messerschmitt. The Messerschmitt was called Pauline. Percy was assigned to a Spitfire squadron flying from Biggin Hill. He still had his badge and his log book and was welcomed into the camp by two poles and a crossbar. The lads were playing football while waiting for the call to scramble.

In September of 1940 the local photographer turned up to capture the images of the brave pilots. Not so much a patriotic gesture as a device to sell 10x8 glossies at 7/6d a time. Percy was 29th on the list to be photographed and the shout went up just as his turn was called. The photographer hastily snapped a smiling Percy in the cockpit before being unceremoniously hustled off the airfield.

Of the 29 who took off that day, five did not return. Sadly Percy wasn't one of them and he celebrated his good fortune by getting completely rat-arsed that night and having his way with Brenda from the local chippy. By March of 1941, Percy was married. By the end of June he was a father and by the end of August he was dead.

Percy had always been convinced that the way to victory was via technology. In between sorties he had been working on a secret weapon to confound the Luftwaffe. His hand to mouth existence so far had equipped him with an inventor's mind; his time on the road with Monty had taught his fingers pocket-picking dexterity; and his years in the music hall had given him a extensive repertoire of put-downs.
He demonstrated The Airman's Repulsive And Nasty Insult System or TARANIS to the Air Ministry at the end of July. They were initially sceptical that teaching the British pilots to shout rude things at the enemy fighters would swing the war the allies' way, but agreed to reserve judgement until they had seen it in action. So it was, that on 31 August 1941, Flight Lieutenant P.Lane took off, quickly climbing to 10,000 feet, eyes searching the heavens for a target.

There it was. A lone Junkers JU88 heading home after unloading its deadly diarrhoea on unoccupied areas of the home counties. Its crew tired, but happy to seemingly have survived one more mission. Diving out of the sun, Percy swooped up from below and behind the German. As he pulled alongside he pushed back his canopy and motioned for the German pilot to open his window. The German pilot, not understanding, waved cordially.

Incensed, Percy let rip with the entire script of insults, but as he still had his mask on in order that the radio could be picked up by the observers below, the tirade was amplified back into his earphones. And as he'd come up with the insults in the first place and so knew exactly what they all meant in German, he died instantly. The War Ministry consigned TARANIS to the bin.

During his life he had seen the world at its worst and its best. He had lived the life of a pauper, a celebrity and, as one of the few, a hero. He had seen lots of action, but only had sex once. However his legacy, his tenacity, his willing spirit lives on in the child he left behind - Lois.
A Korean Cosy: Brian Clamp

Having recently moved it wasn’t long before it was necessary to initiate my new purpose built 'Man Cave', even before it had power and light.

The project chosen was my Xmas present. The kit of a model I first saw at Colwick Park, last September ; a Cosy White seaplane. This is one of those models that has escaped a great deal of internet coverage but I succeeded in finding the details from the BWA members and ordered it from S Korea.

The box of bits duly arrived with minimal and I mean MINIMAL instructions: a simple kit but not a beginners model. I did not start it until the next Colwick (water) meet was imminent. Radio gear and servos were installed during the build, sealing everything in to ensure it was watertight.

I anticipated trying the model from grass eventually so I strengthened the underside of the floats with nylon reinforced clear tape. The colour scheme was produced using Solar Trim, having primed the area with PVA
prior to ironing it on. Tail artwork is based on a British Airways design.

The maiden flight was actually made from grass by Adrian Lant, 3 days before the Colwick meeting. It 'flew straight from the box'. The subsequent maiden from water was an equal success (see over page).

As mentioned there is little info on the internet about this plane but there are 2 videos on YouTube. They both show completely unproblematic maiden flights. Mine flew just as well.

The American video shows the plane with a rudder on one float and a bigger motor and 3 blade prop. With regard to these modifications I think it would benefit from a water rudder as it does weathercock a lot, but this would get in the way when taking off from grass.

As for the power it does not need any more than I have. I use a 3 cell 2200 battery and it goes like the clappers with a 2 blade prop.
The Korean video calls the plane a Cozy and shows the plane effortlessly looping, rolling and in inverted flight. It also features some impressive rain, nice flowers and a Cosy/Cozy scaring a fish. This is also accompanied by a wonderfully cheesy soundtrack.

No doubt someone somewhere is attempting to stamp out water flying as it damages aquatic life.

The videos may be found at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_9ckOQHFgg
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xr97yyhhIqQ
The National Memorial Arboretum opened in May 2001, although preparation and the planting of 30,000 trees had first started in 1997. The site was original gravel workings, and covers some 150 acres. The cost of the project was funded partly by the National Lottery, and partly by private donations.

The objective was to create a year round centre of Remembrance for those who had given their lives for this country. As well as the armed services, the emergency services of police, fire and ambulance are also represented.

The site is well signposted just off the A38, just a few miles north of Lichfield. There is a visitor centre complete with cafeteria and shop. Entrance is free, although donations to support the ongoing costs are welcomed.

We visited in late July, and were so impressed by the scale of the project and the thought that had gone into it. It is managed on a day by day basis by the British Legion. There are over 300 individual memorials spread
through the grounds, ranging from small plaques to the impressive centre piece. This includes all the names of servicemen killed in action since 1945.

As you can see, the approach to this memorial is very impressive. The RAF memorial is shown below:

The most important feature of the Arboretum is the feeling of peacefulness. The grounds are beautifully kept, and it is a pleasure to wander through and come across one fascinating memorial after another. It is clear that some of the best artists, sculptors and architects have been used to produce the end result. We were very impressed by the National Memorial Arboretum. It only took around 90 minutes from Sheffield, and was well worth the journey.
It's now a year since I left the cold northern skies for the sunny climes of the South West. After a couple of months settling in, I decided to get back into flying again. My first decision was which club to choose: East Devon Flying Club or Okehampton Model Flying Club (OMFC). After much deliberation I decided on the Okehampton club, mainly because it had indoor flying every two weeks on Sunday afternoons in winter.

Never having flown indoors before I was a little apprehensive and went along to the venue with my shiny new Horizon Space Walker (recommended by Tim the year before). I was immediately welcomed by the dozen or so members present, who were flying a mixture of beginners’ models, 3D, helicopters, drones and rubber powered models – amazingly ALL AT THE SAME TIME. A bit of a free for all and some chaotic moments but it demonstrated a really nice group of people, with plenty of give and take and respect for each others’ flying.

The 2nd of this issue's sheds. Not so cosy as shed no1 but it's a nice mower.
In Spring, the farmer who allowed us to fly on his land, decided to take the field back for his own use and after many weeks of searching, the committee found a new 18 acre field and work started on preparing a strip. A local grant paid for a brand new 'sit on' lawn mower and the club paid for a lock up shed to house it on site.

We are a small club with only around 25 members, but the committee are very active in promoting and encouraging model flying. Once a month in the summer we have a 'fun fly day', where club members are invited to come along and enjoy each other's company and to take part in two competitive events. The first is pylon racing. To compete, all participating members need to have an 'Oke Stik' which is a small depron, four channel model - a club design based on the larger Stik.

We all have to use the same motor and prop. A triangle of poles is set out on the field and we all launch our models at the same time. Carnage, but oh what fun! Five laps round the pole and the first past the post is the
Last man down’ is our second regular event. This is for electric powered gliders. Again we all launch at the same time and gain as much altitude as we can in 30 seconds. A signal is given and we all shut off power. The winner is the person who can stay airborne for the longest time and successfully land on the runway.

There is a lot of interaction between clubs in the South West. Over the
summer members of our club have been invited to jin events at other Devon clubs as well as hosting the SWSSA (South West Scale Soaring Association) aero tow event. This is a really enjoyable weekend activity with many impressive gliders on show, not to mention the tugs and expertise of the pilots.

Slope soaring is more challenging with the lighter winds we get here. From what I gather, it’s a drive to the coast if you want to get good lift and then your heart’s in your mouth as you launch over the cliff edge! I’ve yet to experience this. What I enjoy is going to a NW facing slope on the edge of Dartmoor and using some lift from the slope, some electric power and on good days, plenty of thermal lift. There’s a good landing area and no posts to contend with!

All in all I’m enjoying flying down here. I suspect things could be improved a bit on the safety front but then again everything seems laid back here! There also doesn’t seem to be the drive to gain A certs. It does make me think of the high standards set by the SSA, which are a credit to the committee. Long may it continue? (It cost £20 and 2 servos to get Geoff to write that! Ed)

A Czech Wildcat: Ed

The Grumman Wildcat has always been a firm favourite of mine as a plane. Although slower and less manoeuvrable than its main fighter opponent in the Pacific, the Mitsubishi A6M Zero the Wildcat held its own. The Fleet Air Arm recognised the potential of the stubby little fighter early on in the war and, known as the Martlet it served the UK very well.

I had come across Alfa models on the net but never seen one, until last year at Elvington where I spotted a couple on sale with a spare power train thrown in for a fiver. Alfa models are a Czech company and they specialise in smallish near scale-models. The words ‘small’ and ‘scale’ only make sense of course if combined with the word ‘light’ and their
models are indeed light. The Wildcat (sans battery) come in at just over 10oz with a wingspan of 32 and 3/4 inches. A max weight of 15.2 oz is suggested by Alfa. Most models are aileron / elevator but some have retracts too. Their website suggests a range of power trains and the instruction booklets specify require servo sizes. Short Kits (often smaller) are available for those wishing to decorate their own model but

This real Wildcat/ Martlet lives at Duxford

their larger range comes prepainted. Their choice of models is interesting. Prop driven craft include a WW1 Albatross (below) and some 18 WW2 planes including a Beaufighter and a Lavochkin La-7 (below).
Ducted fan models include the experimental FW Ta 183 (above left) and a Skyhawk. They sell at around 1,300 CZK (about £48). Just add mini-servos/motor/esc/receiver and battery and you are away. You can look at videos and instruction manuals before you purchase. There is little to do in terms of building as the wings are in one piece and tail surfaces and fuselage are completed. There are some fiddly bits to the construction and you have to think a bit to feed servo wires through but the instruction sheet is fairly comprehensive. Tim set me right on the location of some of the internal elements.
I couldn’t get rid of the flash round the waterslide decals but to be fair I didn’t look that hard for a solution. Several sets of decals are provided.

...and hatch on.

The sales pitch on the Alfa models website is refreshingly honest and after describing the good points of their models they actually say:

“The (semi) monocoque models of extruded polystyrene have also some disadvantages:

1. Their manufacture to precise shape requires a larger number of tools and jigs/moulds, while the actual production time is substantially longer than with the models made of expanded polystyrene. This tells on the somewhat higher price of our monocoque models.
2. It is a matter of chance what damage would a model suffer during a crash and how demanding would be its repair. It applies universally, however, that the repair of monocoque models is generally more demanding that of the solid-foam (expanded polystyrene) ones.
3. If you are a modelling beginner or just an occasional model flyer, the models made by the expanded polystyrene technology may suit you better for their price and simpler repairs.”

So does it fly? Oh yes. A straightforward hand launch at 3/4 power had
the model climbing away very well. You do have to watch the torque though. It didn’t take long to discover no trimming was required at all and after a couple of circuits I could take my hands off the sticks. At half throttle it flew straight and level at a very pleasing scale speed.

A major bugbear of mine is watching scale WW2 fighters at shows being flown absurdly fast. The light weight of Alfa models though makes flying at scale speed easy; without dropping from the sky. In fact I couldn’t really get the damn thing to stall. It just flew slower and slower until the nose dropped. I also had worries about tip stalling and the potential for over responsive elevator effects but they were unfounded. The Wildcat was in no way twitchy and really did feel like a larger model, and a well balanced one at that.

I didn’t really try to push the envelope re speed and manoeuvrability as I was more interested in it’s scale flying abilities but it loops and rolls with ease and as Jim said: it looked the part. Can’t say fairer than that.

Given the lack of undercarriage I chose to use a bit of slightly longer grass as a landing strip and landing presented no problem. 3 flights later I had still forgot to set the timer but I was getting roughly 6 minute flights for less than 50% of the batteries life. There’s no two ways about though: it needs a gentle hand carrying it, loading it in the car and putting it to bed. I stupidly damaged the foam around the canopy through inattention. I believe Alfa models about the impact of crashes too, but for now the Wildcat is in the right number of pieces and I hope it stays that way for some time.

There is one problem with acquiring anything made by Alfa models though. They seem to have lost their UK agent and British shops seem to have exhausted their supply. I have seen good reports of the service the company gives so the next article will hopefully report on ordering directly from them.

Alfa Models can be found at: https://www.alfamodel.cz/

(The website can be viewed in English, German and Czech.)
Out at Shillitoe Jim flies a Majestic Major (which is a 150% scale Junior 60). Apparently this, and the FlyBaby flown by John (over) are powered by some new non-electric power source possibly unfamiliar to Gladys readers.

I am told that the engine in the Major is a Laser. 70 four stroke. This picture clearly shows Jim giving the engine its forth stroke and ...away it goes.

All other details of this power source are classified.

It’s the attention to detail that counts in aero modelling. Here the club’s interior design consultant Malcolm, puts out a tablecloth that has been carefully chosen to match the windsock. If only he had removed the crusts from the sandwiches.
Above two of the clubs’ hitmen attempt to get the body of a very-ex-club member into a car boot.

He had apparently attempted to sell the secret of the new power source to North Korea.

Finally, John’s FlyBaby does what a FlyBaby does best; fly.

It has to be said though; I have no idea how many times you stroke this one.
Well, it’s happened. Martyn Aspinall has, yet again, won the Gladys Competition. Congratulations to him. It might just be easier in the future to set up a direct debit from the club to Martyn and save all this hassle. While Martyn opens another account in Switzerland you can read his suggested captions to the photos of our Treasurer below.

**Man:** “So .... you came all the way from Russia in **THAT**?”

**Tim:** “Yes! I eased my svelte figure into this tiny cockpit here .......”

**Tim (continues):** “...and here’s my shrink activator button on my jacket .... **DON’T TOUCH!!!**” .......(too late!)
Tim (continues):

“STAND BACK! I’m off back to rejoin the Bolshies .... (adopts pose to jump into the cockpit as he waits for the shrink rays take effect and his tormentors run for cover).

Postscript:
Tim was not seen on the slope (or in ‘normal life’) for a while after this episode, but was apparently able to receive visitors.

... and Stranger Still: Ed.

After I ( Ed ) received Mr Aspinall’s entry as an email, a mysterious package was shoved under my door. The anonymous letter, which wasn’t from Martyn Aspinall, claimed to reveal what was actually said in the encounter between this poor family and Tim. Although it wasn’t written by Martyn Aspinall the account has a ring of truth, as Tim did recently retire as a teacher.

Man: “My son said we’d find you here. You taught him Design and Tech. and he got a grade ‘U’. He says all you talked about was model planes!”

Tim: “Well he was pretty dumb ....”
(Family close in around Tim)

**Man:** “He got an ‘A’ in everything else! ... take this ...!” (‘Crunch’ sound)

**Tim:** “Urghh” *(Displays ‘crushed nut stance’)*

**Man (walking away with family):** “Well Prunella, we didn’t need hard hats to deal with that softy”.

**Prunella:** “I only suggested the hard hats because I’d heard he is a naff pilot!”

**Postscript**

This is believed to be the true version of the encounter which was also responsible for Tim’s change in employment status and voice tone. It wasn’t written by Martyn Aspinall.

**Note From Ed:** *Just to highlight that Martyn Aspinall did not write the above.*
Above: At an airshow in May Gordon realises he ate too much garlic the night before. Below: John practices counting to 100 before participating in the World Hide and Seek competition.

Fly safe, and consider writing something for Gladys. Contact the Editor at: neilcarver32@btinternet.com