

Flypaper



Gangster 63 Lite

Grahame Pearson builds the Mick Reeves classic – see page 32

Warbirds Fly-in

Our first theme event of 2026 – report, page 20

Vintage & Biplanes
Fly-in & Barbecue, 4th July, page 12



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Cover: Grahame Pearson with his Mick Reeves Gangster 63 Lite at Coombes, 19th April. Wingspan is 63" (obviously!), engine is an OS FS-52 4-stroke turning a 12x6" prop. Photo: Jaime Brazier

Contact

Grahame Pearson, *Editor*

Email: grahame.pearson.srfc@gmail.com

FlyPaper is published at the beginning of January, April, July and October.

Submissions for the October issue must be submitted by 15th September.

Text for articles should either be in a Word document attachment or simply as plain text within the email message. Photos should be high-resolution JPGs.

FlyPaper back-issues may be downloaded from the SRFC website: srfc.bmfa.org

If you would prefer your name not to be in the website version please notify the Editor when submitting your article.

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SRFC summer collection

Check out our Regalia shop on the Logo That Polo website

New members may be unaware we offer a branded regalia service to members. Regalia simply means clothing and other items embroidered (clothing, etc) or printed (mugs, etc) with a club's logo. I am sure most of us already own branded items, with the logo of a football club, charity or other club or organisation we belong to.

Traditionally, clubs would have to stock such items in a variety of colours and sizes which required storage space and tied up club funds. Logo That Polo is an online company with a difference. Club members order direct from LTP via our page on their website, items are then embroidered or printed to order and posted to the club member. Prices are very reasonable and best of all, 12.5% of every sale goes to SRFC so by buying from LTP you are supporting SRFC!

Have a look at the SRFC shop (clickable link below) for the full range of items available. If you have suggestions for new items just let Grahame Pearson (*FlyPaper* Editor) know. Grahame is SRFC's LTP contact. grahame.pearson.srfc@gmail.com

<https://logothatpolo.co.uk/store/SRFC>

Below are a few of the summer items available.

Check out the website to see all items.

All have the SRFC logo in blue or white.

Prices shown are correct at July 2026



Baseball Cap
£15



T Shirt
£18



Rugby Shirt
£25.99



Bucket Hat
£16



Drill Shirt
£35



Polo Shirt
£21



Mug
£10



Enamel Mug
£12

Chairman's Chatter

David King looks forward to the summer



It may have been a frustrating start to the season for you, with fine flying weather alternating with strong breezes and rain. However, I have seen many people on the patch making the most of it – perhaps starting early in the morning when conditions were calmer.

Several events do stand out this spring...

On behalf of the club, I would like to thank Jim Leach and Kenton 'Ken' Hamer for their time in the design and construction of the new mower storage boxes. I was there at the installation, and it was clear that a great deal of time and effort had gone into the design, preparation and build.

I must mention others who provided support: Derek Woodley, John Ivory, Colin Lucas, Chris Foss and anyone else involved. Thank you all who sent in ideas for the upgrade. The final low-key solution was strongly influenced by the requirements of the site and farmer.

Next was the interesting and well attended May 'Warbirds' theme fly-in and barbecue. There was much to see thanks to those who brought along their 'pride and joy' models. I would especially like to thank those involved with the excellent barbecue and in particular Ken, who made it happen. Jakob, Izzy, Mike and Paul supported him on the day. A feature on the event is on page 20.



The new storage boxes at Coombes.
Photo: Grahame Pearson

Safe flying!

There might be some surprise that a 'newcomer' like myself should be reminding everyone that safe flying is essential if we are to continue our hobby. However, the several worrying reports that I received were all from flyers with 50 years or more of experience and any novice can see that we must remind ourselves of good operating practice if we are not to have a serious incident resulting in injury.

Please read through your handbooks again and think how extra care might be needed with battery-powered models. Key points are:

- Don't connect the battery near the cars. Take your stand out to the pits area if you need to conduct static tests comfortably.
- In the pits area, once the battery is connected, the plane is 'armed' and it must be secured.
- All aircraft must be launched beyond the 7-metre line on the airstrip. Never from the pits or flight line. Ask a helper to hand launch for you if you are not comfortable walking back to the flight line while flying.

BMFA Safety Review Results

A recent report from the BMFA accident logging system showed that most fly-aways or crashes were caused by losing sight of the model by either flying too far away, flying across the sun or flying in hazy conditions. If you do lose sight of a model and there is no prospect of recovery, turn off the transmitter to ensure the failsafe is activated. This of course assumes you have set the fail safe in the first place, a vital step before flying. For more on this please see Derek Woodley's excellent article in *FlyPaper*, January 2026 (available via the website).

Competitions

Power and gliding competitions are now in full swing. It is not too late to try a few rounds. No matter if you can't do them all, you will find them a fun challenge.

I will be travelling down to slope soar on White Sheet in July and to watch the Sunday scale gliding event there. In August I shall take my granddaughter to the Eastbourne Airshow. Perhaps she will catch the flying bug!

Enjoy your flying this summer.



Diary dates

Indoor Meetings

At The John Seldon, Half Moon Lane, Worthing, BN13 2EN

Friday 2nd October Autumn Auction

7.30-9.30pm

Sell unwanted models or bits and bobs and grab a bargain.

Themed barbie & fly at Coombes

Spring/summer Saturday afternoon/evenings from 3pm, first Saturday of the month

4th July

Vintage & Biplanes

1st August

Gliders & Jets (includes static jets concours)

5th September

Anything that flies

Bring something to fly and enjoy the company of other club members.

Families welcome.

The barbecue will be fired up at some stage and tea and coffee will be available, please bring your own mug if possible.

Donations towards the cost of the food always welcome.



Photo: Robin Strange

Glider Competitions

Glider, mid-week competition

Coombes, on the following Thursdays starting at 1pm

9th July, 23rd July, 13th August, 27th August, 10th September and 24th September

For up to 2.5m span electrically launched gliders, at Coombes, twice a month on Thursdays at 1pm for around an hour, until September. A simple height limiter is required. The club has spares available and they are easily fitted on the day.

Contest Director: John Ivory.

Glider RES competition

Ashurst, on the following Sundays starting at 1pm

26th July, 30th August and 27th September

For up to 2m span electrically launched RES gliders monthly on Sundays at 1pm for around an hour, until September. Rudder, Elevator & Spoiler controls only. A simple height limiter is required. The club has spares available and they are easily fitted on the day.

Contest Director: John Ivory.

Power competitions

Coombes, on the following Thursdays starting at 1pm

16th July, 20th August and 17th September

Following previous years' styles, these will be simple competitions aimed to appeal to all flyers and not just 'Fun Fly' types. This will include such tasks as touch and goes, number of rolls or loops, climb/glide spot landings, etc, mostly in a set time, typically two minutes. The manouevres should be achievable by anyone who has passed the club Solo test, these are a great opportunity to hone your skills while having great fun too! We hope to see as many as possible.

Contest Director: Paul Shrubbs.

Wot a Day!

Robin Strange reports on SRFC's Chris Foss Models Fly-in and Barbecue event at Coombes on 13th June

The Chris Foss theme day had been postponed to Saturday 13th June due to bad weather on the 6th; the 13th turned out to be much better though it was still quite blustery at Coombes but at least it was dry.

Ken Hamer and Jakob Walker manned the barbecue and did a great job in feeding one and all so a big thank you to them and also a thank you to the guys that gave a helping hand getting the barbecue equipment out and over to the west side of the site. Jakob also brought his camera along so thanks again to him for taking some of the shots.

A good number of people turned up, I counted 20 cars at one time though there was a certain amount of coming and going during the event so there were more than 20 attendees. It was good to see Ivan Thomas at the field for quite a lot of time thanks to his daughter Amanda for bringing him to Coombes. Ivan is well known to many long-standing members. Following a stroke in 2023 he can no longer fly but enjoys attending our social events.

There were plenty of Wots around as shown in the group photo taken towards the end of the afternoon and a couple of slope soarers too (Phase 5 & 6) all from the Foss stable. As reported in *FlyPaper*, January, Chris Foss Designs celebrates 50 years of trading in 2026. I wonder how many Wot 4s have been sold!

A good afternoon after all the horrible weather we have been having and it was good to see so many hardy soles up at the field.



There were plenty of Wots around as shown in the group photo taken towards the end of the afternoon and a couple of slope soarers too (Phase 5 & 6) all from the Foss stable. As reported in *FlyPaper*, January, Chris Foss Designs celebrates 50 years of trading in 2026. I wonder how many Wot 4s have been sold!



Wot a Lot of Wots!
Photo: Jakob Walker.
Above: Chris with his Wot 4.
Photo: Robin Strange

Chris Foss's Wot 4 on the ground...
Photo: Robin Strange



...and in the air.
Photo: Jakob Walker



Andy Ide's gorgeous Extra Wot,
Laser 155 4-stroke, on the ground...
Photo: Robin Strange



...and in the air.
Photo: Jakob Walker



Les Crane inspects the Wots.
Photo: Robin Strange



Alex Blok's collection on the day included a Uno Wot.
Photo: Robin Strange



Ivan Thomas (centre) with daughter Amanda and John Wase.
Photo: Robin Strange



As ever, non-theme models always welcome: Alex Blok's PT-19.
Photo: Robin Strange

Power Competitions

Paul Shrubbs reports on the first two rounds of this year's Power Competition

Round 1, 24th April

Round 1 consisted of two challenges. The first was a Spot Landing challenge where competitors had to land as close as possible to a marker placed on the field. Colin Lucas won this with a distance of 1.1 metres from the marker.

For the second challenge, competitors were given a random flight time. They were required to fly their model for the allotted time without the aid of a timer. During the flight, they had to perform a Figure of Eight manoeuvre and while being distracted by this, to land when they felt the allotted time was up – not too soon, not too late. Dave Knott won this with an allotted time of three minutes and five seconds and an actual flight time of three minutes and eight seconds, just three seconds over.

Unfortunately, the event had to be moved to Friday as Thursday's wind speeds were not ideal for the competition and also work was being carried out on the new Field Boxes*. This resulted in some people being unable to attend. I'm sure, however, that as the competition progresses, they will be able to catch up.

Round 2, 21st May

Round 2 saw ten club members taking part. I must thank Paul Gladstone, who kindly offered to help with the timekeeping and scoresheets, etc. His assistance was greatly appreciated. The score sheet is reproduced opposite, for interest.

The first challenge was a Deadstick Landing. Competitors flew a steadying circuit before being told to cut the motor and glide to a landing as close as possible to a marker positioned on the patch. Colin Lucas landed 2.4 metres from the marker. However, John Ivory was looking as if he would overshoot but dived in at the last minute, coming to rest a mere 2.3 metres from the marker, winning the task but at the expense of his model's undercarriage. Also of note was Chris Foss who mistakenly started a perfect approach during his steadying circuit, so had to go around and begin his approach again. His Wot 4 came to rest 6.5 metres from the marker. Robin Strange landed OK but noticed the incidence of the wing looked odd. On inspection he found the front wing locator to have partially broken, which would have been very nasty in the air if it had totally failed.

The second challenge was to perform as many Touch and Gos in two minutes as possible. Chris Foss won the task with 15 within the time, many of them 'one wheel' touches, perfectly legitimate. Colin Lucas was second with 14. Robin's jury-rigged wing, thanks to big rubber bands, survived the event scoring 10. John's repaired undercarriage, however, did not, achieving one Touch, but no Go!

***Please note that any last-minute rescheduling is always posted on the Coombes Flyers WhatsApp group. To join just e-mail the Secretary, Robin**

Strange, with your mobile number: srfcsec.srfc@gmail.com and he will add you to the group.

Tempted? You should be, the competition is a lot of fun. Don't worry that you have missed the first rounds, it's all about fun. It will also improve your flying. While occasionally some damage may occur, this is usually just to undercarriages and easily repaired, so don't let that put you off. Most people compete with Wot 4 foamies which are highly competitive and a lot more forgiving than balsa built-up structures.

So why not come along to the next round, scheduled for 16th July. See you there!

SRFC Power Competition 2026 Results Table

Pos'n	Name	Expert/Novice	Round 1 Points	Round 2 Points	Round 3 Points	Round 4 Points	Round 5 Point	Round 6 Points	Total
1	Colin Lucas	E	30	30	0	0	0	0	60
2	Clive Upperton	E	27	28	0	0	0	0	55
3	Tom Gaskin	E	28	25	0	0	0	0	53
4	Dave Knott	E	29	23	0	0	0	0	52
4	Chris Foss	E	23	29	0	0	0	0	52
6	John Ivory	E	22	26	0	0	0	0	48
7	Paul Shrubbs	E	26	21	0	0	0	0	47
7	George Evans	E	25	22	0	0	0	0	47
9	Robin Strange	E	0	27	0	0	0	0	27
10	Alan Caldecourt	E	24	0	0	0	0	0	24
10	Mark Vale	E	0	24	0	0	0	0	24
-	Keith Miles	E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
-	Derek Woodley	E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
-	Geoffrey Woolgar	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

SRFC Power Competition 2026 Score Sheet, Round 2

No.	Name	Task 1	Task 2	Total (or differential)	League Points
		Time/Distance	Time/Distance		
1	Clive Upperton	7.9m (32.1pts)	10	42.1	28
2	Paul Shrubbs	39.0m (1pt)	0	1	21
3	Dave Knott	19 (21pts)	11	32	23
4	Robin Strange	12.0m (28pts)	10	38	27
5	Colin Lucas	2.4m (37.6pts)	14	51.6	30
6	Chris Foss	6.5m (33.5pts)	15	48.5	29
7	George Evans	16.6m (23.4pts)	8	31.4	22
8	Mark Vale	15.5m (24.5pts)	9	33.5	24
9	Tom Gaskin	12.6m (27.4pts)	10	37.4	25
10	John Ivory	2.3m (37.7pts)	0	37.7	26
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
		Task 1 - Dead Stick Landing			
		Task 2 - Circuits and Bumps			

SRFC invites you to Coombes for a

VINTAGE

& Biplanes

Fly-in & Barbecue

Saturday 4th July*, 3pm to dusk

General flying is also welcome – all types



Family and friends welcome.

*Alternative date in the event of poor weather: Sunday 5th July

We look forward to YOU joining us at Coombes

WhatsApp groups

Joining one of SRFC's WhatsApp groups can help you get the best from your membership



What is the biggest unknown for new or existing members? Simple, knowing when is the best time to go flying so that you don't arrive at the field and find yourself on your own. That can be demoralising but is easily avoided. Just join and be active in a WhatsApp group.

The club has four official groups at the moment and all members are welcome to join one or more to suit their flying taste and time availability. While they were originally set up to find out who is flying when and where, their use has widened considerably and now encompass almost any flying related issue, e.g. a mass build as undertaken by the glider group this winter which included advice, photos, discussion on problems, etc, or what engine/power train to put in a model, the weather forecast for a particular day/event and even birthday greetings or get well soon message to a member. The groups are informal, sociable and not without humour! Just choose the group(s) that suit your needs best and give your mobile number:

Coombes Flyers. This group is used predominantly (but not exclusively) by those who fly in the morning, lunch time and early afternoon, fixed-wing power and e-gliders. To join e-mail Robin Strange: srfcsec.srfc@gmail.com.

Flying Today? This group to a degree is similar to Coombes Flyers but is used, as it says, to find out who is flying on that specific day. To join e-mail Grahame Pearson: grahame.pearson.srfc@gmail.com.

Happy Flyers. This group is predominantly used by flyers looking to fly afternoons and evenings but also for modelling chat. To join e-mail Grahame Pearson: grahame.pearson.srfc@gmail.com.

SRFC Gliders. The name gives it away. Unlike the other two groups, the glider section has two club sites (Coombes and Ashurst) plus a number of other venues, some close, e.g. Mill Hill, Beeding Hill or Chantry Hill and others further away, e.g. Itford Hill, Firlie Beacon or BoPeep. Thus, being in this group also lets you know where they will be flying on a particular day as well as who is going. To join e-mail Robin Strange: srfcsec.srfc@gmail.com.

At the moment the club is not aware of any helicopter/drone WhatsApp groups.

The Committee is aware that over the years the flying emphasis has changed from mainly weekend flying to weekday flying so if there are members who would like a weekend group to be formed let us know.

It is the club's firm intention that new members are made to feel welcome and inclusive from Day One and, apart from attending our indoor and outdoor meetings, there is no better way of becoming involved than joining and contributing to one of the WhatsApp groups. Apart from knowing who is flying, where and when, the groups provide a whole raft of support, help and encouragement – plus the usual ribbing if you suffer a 'senior moment' when building or flying!

An evening flying at Parham

Robin Strange on a (mostly) relaxing evening

On Monday 26th May a small group of us met at Southdown Gliding Club, Parham in the early evening and spent a very enjoyable hour and a half flying two scale vintage gliders namely Mark Vale's Slingsby Petrel at 1.33/1 scale and my 1/4 scale Akaflieg MÜ13D. Chris Foss flew the tug for us and Colin Lucas provided support and help as required; Colin was also flying his Mustang.



Robin's Akaflieg MÜ13D.
Photo supplied by Robin Strange

Mark was first off with his Petrel for its maiden flight under his control (Mark bought it secondhand; it was built by Chris Williams). He disconnected the tow at a relatively low altitude after an uneventful tow and with some minor tweaking of the trim had an uneventful flight and landing.

I had the second tow – also uneventful – and released it just over 800 feet. There wasn't huge lift but there was some about and I gradually climbed to just under 1400 feet at which point I deployed the spoilers slightly and descended to about 700 feet and levelled off and over the next 15 minutes climbed back up to about 1100 feet. My neck was giving me a bit of gip after a half hour or so and I brought my MÜ13D back down for a nice landing with a total flight time of just over 48 minutes. I could have stayed up for a lot longer but my neck had had enough.

While I was flying Mark had relaunched three times, releasing the tow at lower levels and not flying for such long flights. His final flight was rather too exiting... although I didn't see it, apparently something went wrong at the top of the tow and Mark's Petrel ended up heading towards terra firma in a vertical dive at a great rate



Mark Vale with his Slingsby Petrel.
Photo: Colin Lucas



Robin's Akaflieg MÜ13D on the tow.
Photo supplied by Robin Strange

of knots from which he managed to pull out and land safely. Phew! On inspection Mark found the two steel wing joiners were bent but not in the direction one would not expect: the vertical direction (see photo). Somehow the wings survived, which is testament to the build of the 5m wings.

A great evening of flying followed by an enjoyable beer sitting outside the clubhouse chatting, sorting out the world and watching cloud formations building up to the north.



Mark's wing joiners.
Photo: Colin Lucas



Note the limp windsock.
Photo: Robin Strange

Brief update!

Recent activity in Les Crane's workshop

I can confirm that, under the capable hands of 'Pim' Smith, my Flair Fokker D VII has flown successfully. I am very pleased with it and it looks good in the air.



*Les's Fokker D VII maiden by Pim Smith.
Les was understandably over the moon...
Photos: Grahame Pearson*



*Portuguese markings
supplied by Callie Graphics
Photo: Les Crane*



*Flying photos:
Jaime Brazier*

The DHC-1 Chipmunk is not only finished (in Portuguese markings) but has also flown successfully. It needed a slight repair due to a poorly set CG (by me but don't ask how it happened as I don't know). The next flight was very successful apart from it needing increased throws as it was very sluggish in a roll. This now done I await better weather to fly again.



The Tony Nijhuis Gloster Javelin, 48" wingspan, is well on the way to completion. Building is done and I am now applying filler and sanding sealer prior to camouflage and markings. I received advice that the recommended 4S 70mm fan set-up was a bit under-powered so upped this to a 6S 70mm set-up which required a number of changes to accommodate it, especially to the battery bay and Velcro strapping. This has all been achieved and I hope to maiden it in July, following which I need to decide which of my kits to build next.



Javelin progressing well.
Photos: Les Crane

SRFC videos online

We now have over 135 YouTube videos for you to watch!

If you have not yet discovered the club's YouTube channel you are in for treat. Just search YouTube for 'Sussex Radio Flying Club (SRFC)' or go to the club's website – srfc.bmfa.org – for a direct link to the channel or click **here**.

The videos will play on any device but the bigger the screen the better.

Tip: Consider 'subscribing' to the channel – once on the SRFC page hit the 'Subscribe' button. Subscribed channels are those you visit frequently and saves you from having to search each visit (a bit like Favourites or Bookmarks on your web browser). Additionally, if you click the 'bell' icon you will be notified via your smartphone whenever a new SRFC video is uploaded. A message will pop up on your phone's screen together with a 'ping' but you can easily turn off the 'ping' if you find it irritating or obtrusive and just retain the visual notification.



Warbirds over Coombes

David King reports on SRFC's Warbirds Fly-in and Barbecue event at Coombes on 3rd May

Our first theme event of 2026 was blessed with fine weather, lots of spectators and flyers, and an excellent barbecue run by Ken Hamer with support on the day from Jakob, Izzy, Mike and Paul.

Many of you brought your fine scale models for us to admire. It made for a delightful afternoon. My granddaughter Izzy and I took a few photos, as did Jaime Brazier.

As always, you are very welcome to fly your sport models at all themed events.



*Dave Knott's Hurricane comes in for another perfect landing.
Photo: Jaime Brazier*



*2026 is the 80th Anniversary of the Spitfire's first flight...
Photo: David King/Izzy Brown*



*...Dave Knott's model pays tribute.
Photo: David King/Izzy Brown*



*Mark Vale's T-28 Trojan...
Photo: David King/Izzy Brown*



*...unfortunately suffered an equipment failure after take off.
Photo: David King/Izzy Brown*



*Colin Lucas prepares to launch John Ivory's SU-35.
Photo: David King/Izzy Brown*



*Pim Smith with his Red Arrows Hawk.
Photo: David King/Izzy Brown*



Paul Gladstone's two-seater Spitfire.
Photo: Jaime Brazier



Pim Smith's Red Arrows Hawk.
Photo: Jaime Brazier



George Evans's Vulcan.
Photos: Jaime Brazier



Colin Lucas's Sukhoi SU-35.
Photos: David King/Izzy Brown



Mark Vale's Mustang.
Photo: Jaime Brazier



Ken Hamer busy on the barbecue.
Photo: Mike Henderson



John Ivory launching Mark Vale's Sukhoi SU-35.
Photo: Jaime Brazier



John Ivory's Lancaster.
Photo: Jaime Brazier



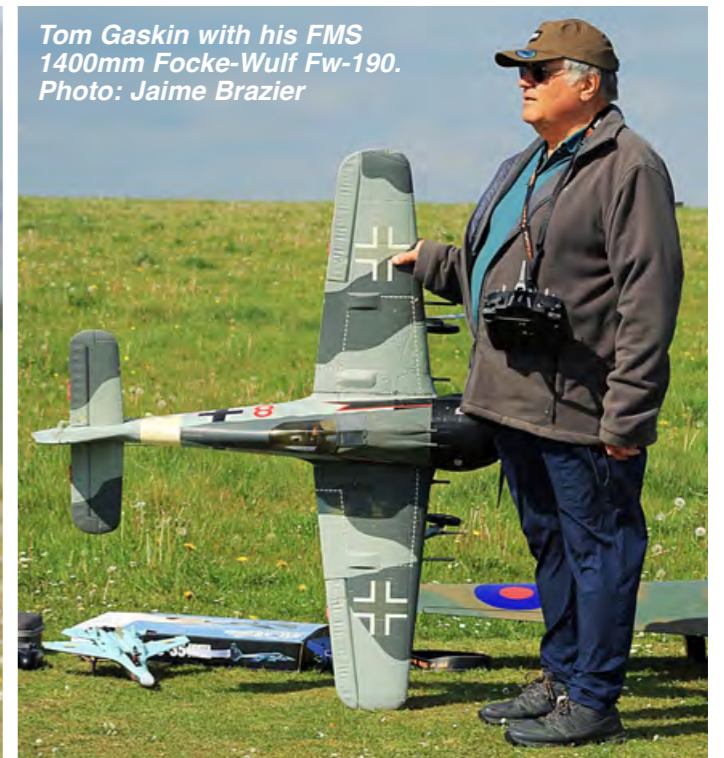
As ever, non-theme models welcome. Dave Knott put on a fine display with his Avios Extra NG.
Photo: David King/Izzy Brown



Alex Blok's Fairchild PT-19.
Photo: David King/Izzy Brown



George Evans launches his Alpha Jet.
Photo: David King/Izzy Brown



Tom Gaskin with his FMS 1400mm Focke-Wulf Fw-190.
Photo: Jaime Brazier



Tom Gaskin's Focke-Wulf Fw-190.
Photo: Jaime Brazier



Group watch intently as George Evans trims his miniature SU-35 pusher foamy.
Photo: David King/Izzy Brown

Olympia 2B Build – Part One

Robin Strange commences the build of this vintage glider

What to build?

Some time ago when I looked at the Akaflieg MÜ13D; I also looked at the EON Olympia 2B as a vintage glider to build. In the event I decided upon the former model and I have written about that build in the past (*FlyPaper*, July 2024, January and July 2025, all downloadable via our website). Even though I decided upon the MÜ13D I still liked the Olympia 2B as a future build and when I saw a short kit being advertised at half price I went for it.

The Olympia 2B, or Oly, was designed and built by Elliotts of Newbury (EON) and was one of the later wooden gliders before composite materials took over. Production began in 1947. The Oly 1 had a wooden skid for an undercarriage, the Oly 2 had a wheel and skid.



Photo reproduced by kind permission of Tony Jarvis estate

Building board

Having decided I wanted to build a 1/4 scale model of the Oly I realised that my building board needed a lot of TLC. I had used it last whilst building the wings of the MÜ13D and I didn't think it would survive another build such that I had a true wing or fuselage. I spoke to a number of people and also looked at a forum on RC Groups. The chaps I spoke to all suggested materials that I would have to get off the Internet and would cost a considerable amount when taking into account shipping. The alternative was to follow the recommendation of numerous people on RC Groups,

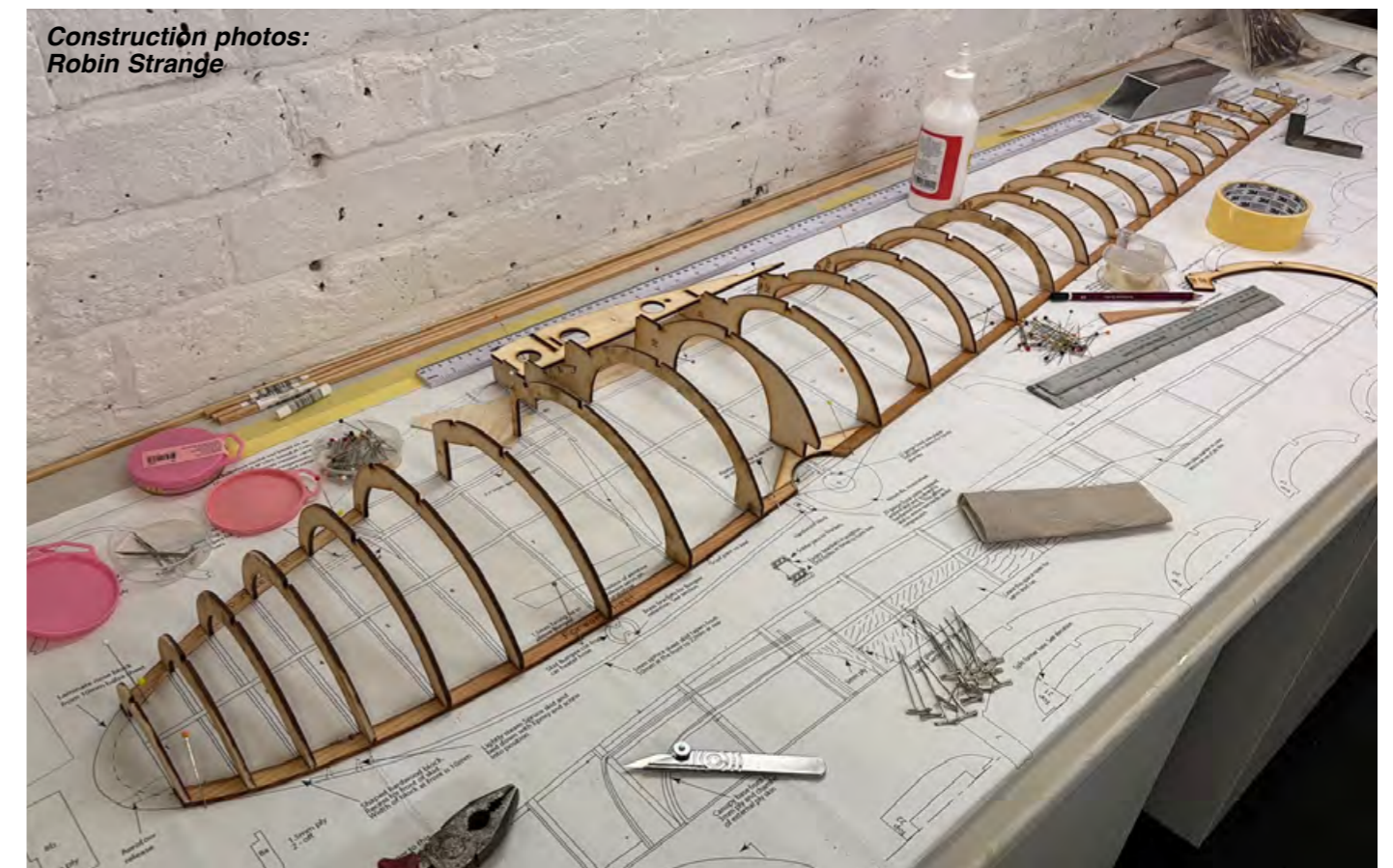
which was to use plasterboard, which is what I've done. Going to the local B&Q or Wickes would have been cheapest but as I needed a board 0.5m x 2.0m I decided a trip to a local building supplier was in order as they would cut down a 1.2m x 2.4m sheet. Consequently I now have three building boards for slightly over £13, two 0.6m x 2m and one 1.2m x 0.4m. My experience so far is positive, the board has been laid on my kitchen worktop bench so it keeps flat, pins stick in easily and I have no complaints. If I need to replace it I have another beneath it waiting to go all for a very reasonable sum.

Fuselage



The Oly plan I'm working to is a Cliff Charlesworth plan. His planes are designed to be lightweight but his plans need some studying to understand how to go about it. Fortunately he wrote a book on vintage scale gliders which I have, in which there is a lot of detail on how to build the Oly. The book is available from Sarik for £9.99, click this link: <https://www.sarikhobbies.com/product/scale-model-gliders-by-cliff-charlesworth/>

The fuselage keel was laid down on the plan. The plywood frames were then attached to the keel followed by the addition of 1.5mm balsa to the frames to give a larger point to glue the ply skin to. The main longeron required two pieces to be joined to give me the full length and then they needed steaming to allow them to be bent to shape before fitting to the frames as the bend needed at the nose is quite extreme. Additional 6mm balsa was added between the frames on the top and bottom keels so that the ply sheeting has a larger landing to adhere to.



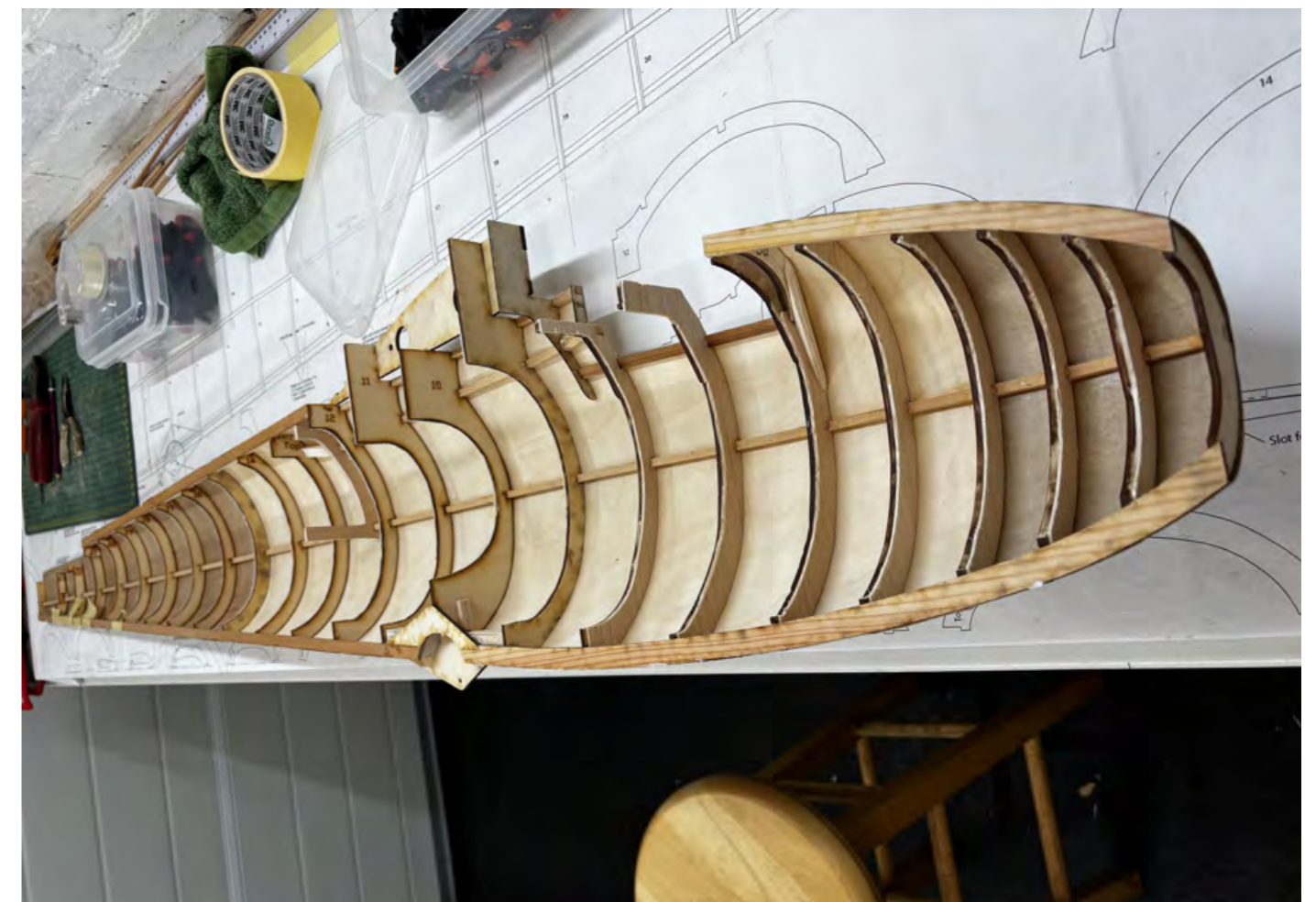


The next job was to start sheeting each bay as can be seen in the photos using 0.4mm plywood. Each piece of ply has to be cut individually to fit as each is very specific though fortunately 0.4mm plywood is very easy to cut either with a sharp knife or a pair of scissors. The edge of each sheet has to be chamfered to give a good fit between panels. The designer suggested the use of contact adhesive but that



requires placing the individual pieces accurately first time and having never done this I decided to use the dry glue method and heat from an iron to secure each panel – slower but safer as I'm concerned.

It was vital that I kept the frame flat while I sheeted the panels on the first half of the fuselage which should keep its shape while I complete the build.



Mid-week Glider Competition

David King reports on Round 3 which took place on 28th May

Round three of the contest for electrically-launched gliders of less than 2.5m wingspan took place at Coombes on 28th May in breezy but sunny conditions. The wind was initially south-easterly, with lots of slope and thermal lift. The second round brought a shift to a more southerly direction and slightly poorer air.

Clive Upperton managed the event, as John Ivory was setting off on holiday. Paul Gladstone marshalled the flightline and slot timing so that Clive could join in the fun.

Contestants were paired up with a helper and timekeeper. I was lucky to be paired with Tom Gaskin whose local slope knowledge was very informative. My granddaughter Izzy was proud to be appointed his timekeeper in the second round.

This limited the photos that she could take, but hopefully the selection printed here give a flavour of the day.

Various types of models were flown, from high performance all-moulded composite 2.5m models to built up rudder, elevator, spoiler (RES) class 2m models to general purpose foamies. All provided a great deal of fun.

Each round was tied



Paul Gladstone marshals the flight line. Jon Halford is assisted by Colin Lucas, Clive Upperton at the far end. Below: A good attendance on a fine day. Photos: Izzy Brown



for first place, but Jonathan Halford was the only one with a perfect 1000 point score in both rounds. Rob Garcka scored 1000 points in the first round and Colin Lucas in the second.

The 2.5m contest was followed by a one-design class for the Grüner Innovation 1.245m span electrically launched glider. (See *FlyPaper*, April 2026 for details of this model if you fancy building one.) Unfortunately I had to leave before it started, but it was won by Colin Lucas, who won both rounds, closely followed by Robin Strange. I hear that I also missed the cake brought out after I left!



David King's Sonata 2m RES model with modified wing section, built by John Ivory using laser cut ribs from Colin Lucas



Tom Gaskin launches his Phoenix foam glider



Robin Strange with his 2m Sapphire

It's a Gangster!

Grahame Pearson dusted off his workbench and built a classic Mick Reeves design: the Gangster 63 Lite

Having flown Jaime Brazier's Gangster 63 Lite on several occasions I have been highly impressed by this 'seventies classic. When I learnt to fly in 1990 at Epsom Downs the Gangster 63 (no 'Lite' version then) was a common sight, popular as it was both a 'Sport' model and a capable aerobatic model. All were IC back then of course. Jaime's model – acquired secondhand some 15 years ago at a model show – is powered by an OS FS-52 4-stroke, an engine which is perfect for the model offering spritely performance, a lovely exhaust crackle and a trail of smoke especially in the turns! The sound of an engine and the aroma of glow fuel is pure nostalgia.

However, much as I enjoyed flying Jaime's Gangster I was increasingly conscious that I should really build my own! I looked on Mick Reeves' website and was surprised to discover the kit was not only still available but at a bargain price of £125 (since increased to a still reasonable £145), plus £10 for a resin cowl upgrade and another tenner for postage. That buys you very little nowadays – think what a typical foamie costs, churned out in a Far East factory – and yet this was a proper balsa model from a traditional British company. (click: www.mickreevesmodels.co.uk/other-kits)

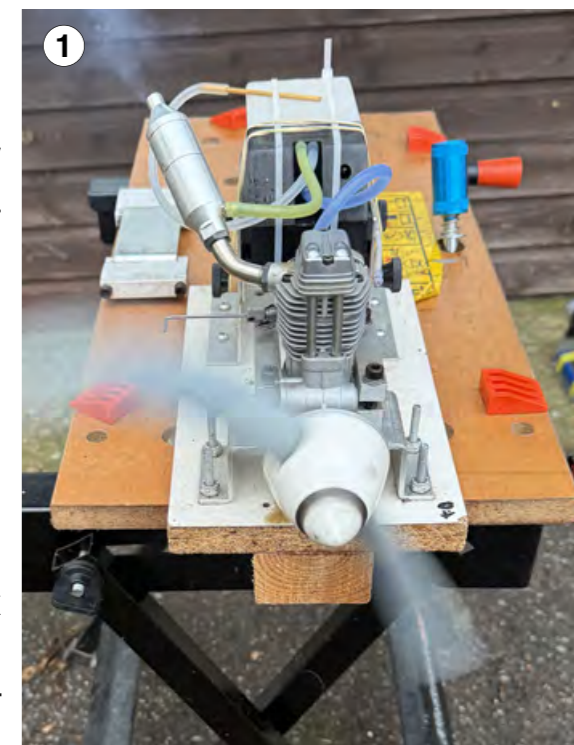
All photos: Grahame Pearson unless stated otherwise



Grahame Pearson and Jaime Brazier with their Gangster 63 Lites. Photo: Les Crane

It was now mid-December so this would be an ideal winter build. Better yet, it could even be justified as a Christmas present, albeit to myself! The model was ordered and arrived just a few days before Christmas ready to commence the build in the new year.

But what engine would I use? I had planned to fit an Irvine 53 two-stroke. I had one already (kindly gifted to me by David King) and it was a good 'period' engine, often fitted to Gangsters back in the day, though it had not run for years and would need a good checking over. However, as luck would have it, I found an identical OS FS-52 to Jaime's on BMFA Classifieds. It was boxed and had never seen fuel. At £175 including postage it was a no-brainer. It was bolted to my engine test rig and ran perfectly – of course it did, it was an OS! (Photo 1.) Running on Optifuel's Optimix 12% nitro, a 12x6" prop gave just over 10,000 rpm with a nice low idle – following a little tweaking – of around 1800/2000 rpm. Perfect.



First impressions

Opening the box I was impressed by the balsa selection; most of the wood was light but with harder grades for wing spars, tailplane leading edge, etc. However, although the kit came with an instruction booklet I was a little disappointed to discover it lacked plans, the laser-cut parts fitting together without the apparent need for plans though a perfectly flat building board is needed and a building jig for the fuselage is highly recommended. Thankfully I had an excellent SLEC building jig with its set of L-shaped adjustable clamps.

Too lite?

I looked at various Gangster Lite forums (fora?) and blogs to see if there was anything important I should be aware of. As regards power, many people, it seemed, opt for the aforementioned Irvine 53 but I much prefer the sound of a 4-stroke, especially as I knew from Jaime's that the OS FS-52 suits the model perfectly. I was surprised but pleased to read that very few people seem to 'electrify' this model, no doubt due to it not being quite in keeping with this 'seventies classic.

It was apparent that some people considered the Gangster Lite to be, well, a touch *too* light! There were all sorts of recommendations to 'beef-up' the structure, many replacing the built-up tailplane with a solid 1/4" balsa version. I don't like overweight models so I mentally took on board the various 'improvements' but elected to build it as per the instructions unless something really screamed out that it needed strengthening. Looking at the weight of some of the contributors' models I couldn't help wonder why they didn't just buy a normal Gangster rather than a Lite! The Gangster (non-Lite) has a veneered foam wing and is a much more robust (read 'heavy') design. However, light models as have a wider flight envelope, good low-speed capability and are invariably easier to land. Jaime's model flies lovely low, slow passes and I was keen mine should do the same.

No model is crash-proof, just as no full-size aircraft is designed to be crash-proof. Make a model strong enough to *supposedly* become 'crash-proof' only makes it heavy. Heavy means it flies faster, needs more power which in turn means a bigger engine (even more weight), and will *still* turn itself into cocktail sticks (assuming balsa) when it hits the ground, probably even more so as it will hit the ground harder. In my view, a model only has to be strong enough to ensure it withstands storage knocks ('hangar rash'), transportation and a less-than-perfect landing. If it is strong enough for that it is strong enough to fly. Air won't break it! OK, back to the build...

Wing

Let building commence! CA was recommended throughout. However, I used a combination of CA, aliphatic resin and five- and twenty-minute epoxy. I was in no rush and while CA is amazing, sometimes a little extra drying time is beneficial. I also found CA reluctant to stick to the parts where there were scorch marks from the laser-cutting.

Construction commenced with the wing panels. I found the wing a bit fiddly to build and would have preferred to have a traditional plan to ensure everything was 'square' but the design was clearly designed to slot together. The ribs slotted into the full-depth spar but required set-squares of various sizes to ensure they were at right angles to the spar. Fitting all the ribs was tedious and although the laser-cutting was crisp there was a lot of leeway and a rib could easily be glued unsquare. I used aliphatic resin, then weighted the wing down on the bench while it dried. (Photo 2.) Then the leading edge sheeting was added which made the structure very stiff and I hoped I was not making any inaccuracies permanent. (Photo 3.)

I made a schoolboy error in making the ailerons, setting their ribs at 90 degrees, only once the glue had set did I realise they should be at angle of approx 10 degrees to allow for the tapered wing. A plan would of course made this foolproof. There was no alternative but to cut fresh wood and remake them.

The two wing panels were joined (photo 4) and the centre section sheeted.



Fit of the angled dihedral spar was less than perfect and despite my best efforts I somehow ended up with one wing having one degree more incidence than the other. Would this be a problem? Time would tell.

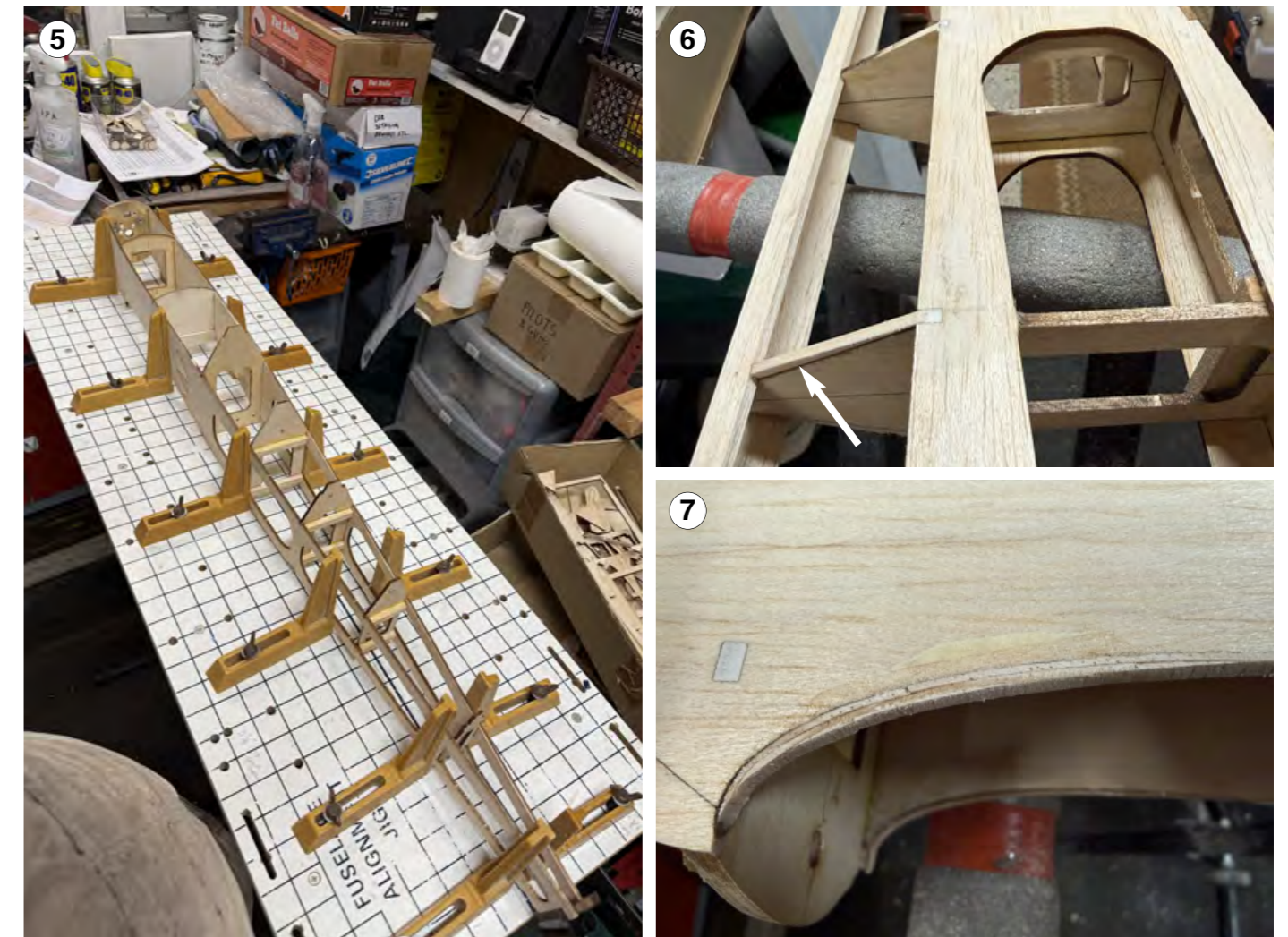
I used MacGregor MG1703DS 17g digital metal-g geared servos for the ailerons as these are lightweight and precise. They also fitted flat into the servo boxes in the wings. I've used them in several models and they are excellent.

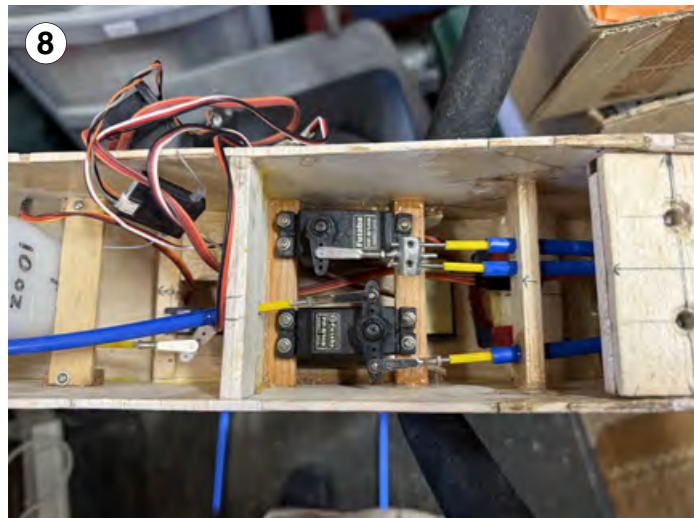
Wings and ailerons were slotted ready to take the hinges.

That was as far as I could go until the wing was covered so it was on to the fuselage.

Fuselage

The fuselage was much easier to build than the wings and my SLEC building jig ensured accuracy. (Photo 5.) The aforementioned online build blog had made me aware that some of the angled formers giving the top of the fuselage its characteristic triangular peaked cross-section were at the wrong angle, leaving a gap at the top where they met the capping and so it proved with my kit. Small tapered slivers of balsa corrected this without any weight penalty. (Photo 6.) Also, the curve on the bottom of the fuselage did not match the curvature of the wing as well as it might entailing balsa strips adding to fill the gap. (Photo 7.) The wing can only be placed in one position due to holes in the former to take the wing dowels. Either the former holes or the wing cutout in the fuselage sides was wrong. I took a gamble that the former was correct. I was starting to realise that although the laser-cutting was crisp, accuracy of some of the parts was not all it should be. It was disappointing that errors



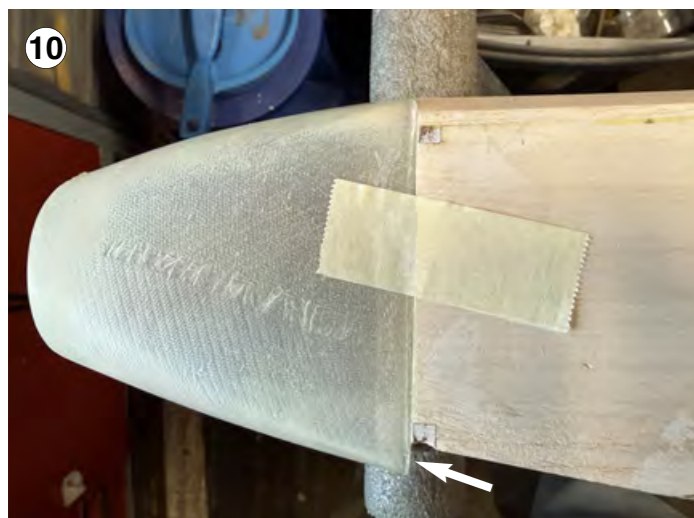


had not been corrected despite the kit having been available for many years.

Full-size 'old school' Futaba S148 servos were employed for elevator and rudder, mainly because I have dozens of these in my 'stash'. (Photo 8.) Although analogue I find these servos super-reliable, strong and positive. Another MacGregor 17g servo (as per the ailerons) was used for the throttle.

I am not normally a fan of snakes but with space at the rear being tight (rudder and separate elevators) used them here, taking care to glue the snake outers to the fuselage formers at regular intervals and keep the runs as straight as possible to ensure no slop crept in. (Photo 9.) Additional snakes were used from the rudder servo arm for the steerable noseleg and for the throttle linkage. The front of the fuselage was very cramped with snakes, Rx battery, fuel tank, plumbing so a lot of planning was needed before final installation and sheeting the underside of the fuselage. It was also important to ensure the tank could be removed should the need arise which meant a lot of trial fitting of tank, snakes, etc, testing throttle and steering worked, etc.

As mentioned, some parts did not fit as well as they should. With the basic fuselage construction completed I offered up the cowling. The fit was frankly appalling. (Photo 10.) The only way to get the cowl to line up with the fuselage was to add sheeting to the bottom of the fuselage, sanding. Many test fits alternating with sanding took place. Even then, viewed from the side, the line of the fuselage abruptly changes where it meets the cowl but I could do nothing about that though at least the 'step' was now corrected. (Photo 11.) The additional sheeting was sanded so it



tapered down to become a curved 'tongue', the wing slotting under this. I reinforced the tongue with glasscloth as it was quite thin and fragile. Glassing it added very little thickness but strengthened it enormously. (Photo 12.)

One mod was to reinforce the U/C ply plates with triangular gussets. (Photo 13.)

The vacuum-formed canopy was also a poor fit and, like the cowling, there was only so much I could do to improve matters. The shape of the rear of the canopy simply didn't match the shape of the fuselage. (Photo 14.) However, I decided I would add some tiny black screws which I hoped would distract the eye from the poor fit and make a scale-like 'feature' of the canopy frame. The kit comes with no cockpit detail or a pilot. I am not a lover of empty cockpits so spent some time adding an instrument panel and painted an old pilot I had, adding a red harness made from an Easter Lindt chocolate bunny (I have a 'useful box' where I hoard bits and bobs – I watched too many episodes of *Play School* when I was a child!). I also fitted an Rx battery monitor, recessing its lights into a slot to form a fictitious array of dashboard lights. (Photo 15.)

Cockpit done, I used UHU Por to attach the canopy. I find this works very well, far better than so-called canopy glue. Incidentally, never use CA for canopies as the fumes can fog the acetate. I would not recommend epoxy as it can smear and be hard to remove though iso-propyl alcohol (IPA) works if you're quick. No such worries with Por as it dries transparent. With the canopy taped as tightly as possible overnight, the acetate canopy bonded well. Small holes were drilled to take the aforementioned (non-structural) tiny screws which would be added once the model was painted.





Tail feathers

These were simple affairs, built flat on my bench. (Photo 16.) No problems were encountered, the laser-cut parts fitted perfectly (you didn't expect that, did you!). Once the aliphatic resin was dry the pins were removed and the parts sanded. Slots were made to take the hinges which, like the aileron's, would be added after covering. (Photo 17.) A mental note was made that the tailplane had to be inserted through the fuselage slot *before* adding the second elevator.

It was beginning to look like an aeroplane! (Photo 18.)



Covering and painting

Jaime's Gangster is covered with Solarfilm. I find film always bubbles in sunlight on a hot day and forever needs re-ironing. Worse, on an IC model, fuel inevitably creeps under the joins and causes the film to part company with the balsa structure. Once that happens, and the wood is contaminated with fuel, it becomes impossible to re-stick – hence the plethora of duck tape patches on Jaime's Gangster! Yes, Deluxe Materials Cover Grip (similar to the now-unavailable Balsa Loc) works well but I wanted something more permanent and low-maintenance. I much prefer tex as this doesn't suffer from either of these drawbacks. A little heavier, yes, but I felt the longevity and extra rigidity it offers is worth the weight penalty.

So, what tex to use? Solartex is no longer available. Oratex is excellent and easy to apply but is expensive especially if opting for a multi-colour scheme. I had seen several videos on YouTube (e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4agoPcQEr_U) extolling the use of 'Habotai' polyester dress lining material as an alternative. This sells for less than £4 per metre (58"/137cm wide). A roll of Oratex, 2 metres long but only 60cm wide is approx £30, a massive cost difference. Just search eBay or Google for Habotai dress lining. It is available in a variety of colours. It is more time consuming to apply as there is obviously no adhesive on it, instead you brush Mod Podge (photo 19) on to the wood and wait around 15 minutes for it to dry. (Photo 20.) Mod Podge is a heat-activated PVA-like adhesive (similar to the aforementioned Cover Grip) available for around a fiver on Amazon, enough to do several large models, a little





goes a long way. Mod Podge sticks the tex with a very strong bond. Unlike Oratex, the adhesive is only applied where it's needed, an obvious weight saving. Habotai sticks, shrinks and behaves just like normal tex. With Oratex you are paying a lot for the convenience of it being pre-coated with adhesive. Another plus with the Habotai is that, being so cheap, you don't have to spend ages agonising over the most cost-effective way of cutting it!

I bought three metres of orange Habotai for £3.80 per metre so £11.40. I had a three-colour scheme in mind (orange, white and red) and hoped the orange Habotai would mean I would only need to paint the white and red, saving weight. I applied two coats of clear shrinking dope to seal the surface, thinned 50:50. The fuselage (photo 21) and wing (photo 22) looked good but unfortunately on the tailplane and fin the dark edges on the wood from the laser-cutting became noticeable which I had not anticipated. (Photo 23.) Clearly I would have to use orange paint. I used Halfords car aerosols: BMW Mini Chilli Red, Ford Electric Orange (pearlescent) and white. A test frame made from scrap balsa covered with orange Habotai showed the orange paint was not as vibrant as expected and needed white primer to bring out the pearlescent effect – as it stipulated on the aerosol lid! With hindsight I should have used white Habotai.

Using white primer, applied in a couple of very light coats (the dope acts as an effective 'primer'; I just needed to use enough primer to make it white), followed by a few light coats of colour, starting with the red (photo 24). The result looked great, the pearlescent orange really sparkling in the sun.



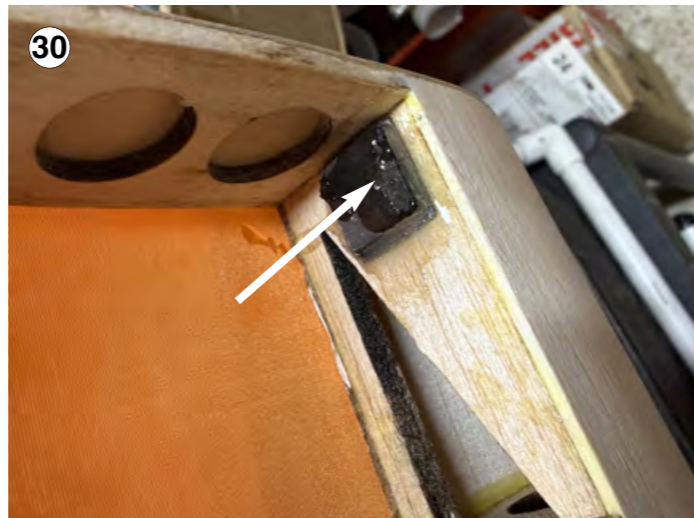
I waited a week to ensure all solvent had fully evaporated and then fuel-proofed the model with Deluxe Materials two-pack Aerokote, brushed on. (Photo 25.) Had I sprayed it I would have had to add thinner (Deluxe Materials recommend 2k car paint thinner) but the solvent would have reacted with the car paint. Even brushing it required care, working quickly and avoiding brushing *across* the colours where they changed from red to white to orange which could have caused the colours to bleed I did have that happen at one point early on but was able to 'brush out' the error.

The end in sight

All hinges, linkages and horns (not supplied in the kit) were connected and throws adjusted. The undercarriage was fitted – the kit comes with pre-bent main legs which screw into ply blocks in the wings with saddle clamps (not supplied) and a sprung steerable noseleg. No wheels are provided. I used three 2.25" wheels I had already.

The classic little man 'Gangster' sticker (photo 26) was provided in the kit which I rather liked. However, the GANGSTER letters supplied were way too large and unsubtle so I bought a sheet of black self-adhesive letters in a similar font and size to those on Jaime's model for a few quid from Amazon together with some larger white numbers so I could add '63' to the fin.

The little canopy screws were added (photo 27), as were the prop and spinner were added and the CG checked. (Photo 28.) The model required 35g of nose weight (photo 29) and another 10g on the port wing tip (photo 30) to counter the side-mounted engine – this was fitted prior to covering. The model was finished at last!



Final all-up weight was 2550 grams (5.5 lbs). I was pleased that despite the tex covering, dope, paint and fuel-proofer it was only 283 grams heavier than Jaime's Solarfilm-covered Gangster (2267 grams). Jaime's model had the Rx battery mounted in a hatch behind the wing; mine need the battery right up front, plus the aforementioned nose weight, no doubt due to my painted finish making the tail heavier. Had I swapped the tailplane for all-sheet as per the blog recommendation I'd have needed even more nose weight.

I am not a quick builder and as I am still working could only allocate an hour or two each day on the model, though longer at weekends. It took around four months from starting the model on 18th January to finishing it in mid-April. (Photo 31.) The model is not one for beginners and although I have made many models the Gangster was challenging in some areas with frustrating problems (not all of which I've mentioned) that should not really have existed in such an established design. If I built another it would be far quicker as there would be no time-consuming problem solving needed. However, I still enjoyed the build very much and was pleased with the final model.

Flight at last!

As previously mentioned, I did have a small discrepancy with one wing having slightly more incidence than the other (photo 32) so I preempted the effect this might have by incorporating a small amount of compensating aileron when setting-up the throws at home. How much was pretty much a guess of course, just sighting the wing from the rear and the ailerons until it looked about right. That aside, I set all control throws



and expo exactly as per Jaime's as that had been fine tuned to perfection. CG was set at 4" from the leading edge – an inch further back than given in the instructions but the Mick Reeves website says that it flies well at 4", giving a more responsive model. Normally I would be more cautious with the CG for a maiden but I knew Jaime's was spot-on at 4" so had no reason to suppose mine would be any different.

The maiden flight took place on 19th April and was entirely uneventful, only needing two clicks of aileron trim. On the maiden, while filming it, Jaime asked how it felt compared to his. "The same," I replied. I went home a very happy bunny.

I have flown my Gangster several times now and am very pleased with it. Ground handling is superb with its steerable nosewheel, remembering to apply full *down* elevator when taxiing – this being the opposite to normal taildragger practise – to keep the nose pressed down and make the steering effective.

In the air the Gangster will perform all the manoeuvres you'd expect. There is ample power for large, graceful loops and limitless vertical climbs. Stall turns are easy provided a blip of throttle is added at the top to kick the model round. Inverted requires just a hint of down elevator. It will knife-edge for ever with no coupling. Rolls – normal, slow and 4-point – are precise and axial. Also, the model will fly very slowly due to its light wing loading. Landings are easy too with no bounce if brought in slow and gently settled on to the main wheels first.



Grahame's Gangster climbs away on the maiden flight.
Photo: Jaime Brazier

Conclusion

The Mick Reeves Gangster 63 Lite is a superb 'go-to' model. Being quick to assemble (just two servo connections for the ailerons and two wing bolts). It fits in my car assembled, saving time at the field. And with an engine that starts instantly there is no reason why it cannot be flown in the winter too. While fuel residue is inevitable with any IC model it does seem to get less exhaust goo than some IC models, presumably a combination of the aerodynamics and the silencer of the side-mounted engine being angled at 45 degrees between wing and fuselage.

If you are looking for a nostalgic build I would recommend building a Gangster 63 Lite – especially if you are a 'certain age' and feel modern electric foam models lack a certain something and want to recapture the thrill of when you started flying.

Dust off that old engine lurking at the back of the workshop drawer. Be a rebel... be a Gangster!



Photos: Jaime Brazier



SRFC is on Facebook

Dan Fallowfield-Cooper with all you need to know...



Don't forget, we have an SRFC Facebook page.

The majority of the content comes from SRFC members who post asking for advice, promoting events, selling items, general discussions, showing off a new model and even showing an unscheduled landing!

To be clear, our Facebook group is not going to replace *FlyPaper* or the website. It is an additional resource and has immediacy as its main appeal.

The page is private meaning it's just for SRFC members.

Like any resource, the more people who use it, the better it is. It's free so what are you waiting for!

Click on the link below and join today.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/www.srfc.bmfa.club>

Putting digit to keyboard!

Your chance to be in the next issue!



As your *FlyPaper* Editor I am extremely grateful to those members who send in articles and photos for each issue; without you there would be no *FlyPaper*. However, it would be great to receive an article from someone who has not written in before.

If you have never sent in something for *FlyPaper*, or are a new SRFC member, your contribution would be especially welcome.

Don't worry if your grammar, punctuation or spelling is not the best. My day job is in publishing and magazine design so I will do my best to make your article look pretty!

Articles do not even have to be about R/C model aircraft.

This may surprise you, but as long as it is likely to interest other members and is vaguely connected with aviation that's good enough for me.

And if you have a suitable photo for the cover or the *Foto Finish* page send it in!

Grahame Pearson, Editor

Foto Finish

Jaime Brazier's Hangar 9 Frenzy posing with his gorgeous 1965 VW camper which he restored himself.

Photo taken by Jaime Brazier at Coombes, 30th May 2026.

Email your photo to the Editor with 'Foto Finish' in the Subject box



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