

Oily Hand Rally 29-31 Aug 2014

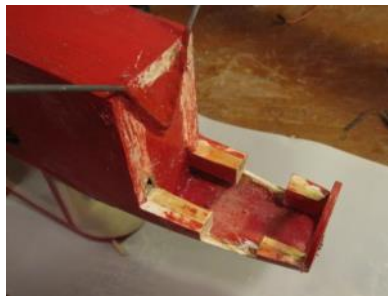
Each year the Cowra Club hold the Oily Hand Rally at their field 20kms North of the town. They nominate a model to be built for the meeting and this year it was the "Sportster" designed by John Lamont in the late '50s and originally powered by an ED 246 with an option for single channel radio. I decided to build one so I downloaded a PDF file from Outerzone, \$5 and a trip to Balmain Office Supplies and I had my plan! I built it as per the plan and by late August it was finished though I decided to put an ED Comp Special in it figuring its 2cc would be enough power considering our modern radio gear weighs a fraction of the original stuff.



You may recall that August was the wettest month in Sydney for the last 100 years and I didn't get a chance to test fly it until Mon 25th. I did get one short flight but it took about 2 hours to start the motor! I had test run it in the back yard (here it is throbbing away nicely) but it was mounted upright and the plan requires inverted! Apart from the usual problems of starting a diesel inverted the Comp Special has a tank that if leaned more than a few degrees from vertical pours all the fuel on the



floor. I obviously had to do something drastic or I would spend a weekend flicking a recalcitrant prop..... there was nothing else for itout with the hacksaw and cut off my lovely streamlined nose! It took a bit of midnight oil but I got it finished in time to set off on the Friday.



Cowra is 350kms from Balmain and the weather got better with every one of them. I had a full load of planes plus an AT6 to deliver to Dave Brown on the way so had a pretty crowded car. I arrived about 2.00pm just before Stan Begg who also had a collection of vintage planes and engines. To our surprise there were a lot of sheep wandering around but there was an electric fence to keep them (and their sh*t) off the main runway and we got on with flying.





The weather was perfect, a gentle breeze and sunshine! I test flew the Sportster and it went well, I also flew an Idol powered by an old DC Sabre and Stan flew his Tomboy powered by his Mills 75 his Dad bought for him when he was 9!

For those of you who are not familiar with the revered Vic Smeed and his designs the Tomboy is a classic from the '50s, probably the favourite, there must have been at least a dozen at the rally. Here's mine!



There was a BBQ and drinks in the Cowra Holiday Park that evening organised by the many people staying there and then it was back to the field at 7.00 am on Saturday morning where it was very cold but with not a cloud in the sky. After an egg & bacon sammich cooked by club members there was a lot of general free flight, radio assist and control line flying during which I took the



opportunity to try my "Flying Carpet"! It's a Peter Holland design from a 1959 Aeromodeller magazine originally with a turbanned "pilot" and a large "urn" as a rudder. I chose to make a more erudite version with penguins and the cover of Erica Jongs book "Fear of Flying" as the decoration. It has an ED Baby .5cc motor and I launched it with some trepidation. It flew! It went slowly, forward and downward and landed safely about 50 yds away. Try again; more revs; it climbed a little, very stable and turned towards



the shed. The shed won but you'd be amazed what a little cyano can do. All 11 pieces fitted neatly back together and it flew a lot more times!



Then on to the excitement of the day - the "Sportster" Concours D'Elegance! This is the line-up of 14 that were finished in time for the event, that's mine in the foreground. Clearly it was the most beautiful except for the teeny weeny problem of having the motor sticking up through the cowling. Ah well, 5th place would have to do. Tomorrow would be the flying event and then we would see what a 60 year old Comp Special could do.

But now it was time for "The Plank Race".

This comes up every year, you take a very simple control line model and try and make it do stuff. To be precise, 10 laps at 6'6" high (OK, 2 metres); 2 wingovers; 2 inside loops; 2 horizontal 8s; 2 laps inverted in the shortest time (and this year just for more fun 2 outside loops for those who dared). Considering the plane has a flat plate wing it's damned good to do it in 54 sec as Steve Thomas and Dave Bailey did I made 2 attempts and achieved 2 DNF which is much the same as last year.

That night I met with others at the Services Club for a pleasant meal, a chat and a couple of bottles of a local Shiraz at only \$14 a bottle a bit rough but drinkable.

6.45 am and it's back to the field for more action. Apart from all the fun flying there was now the Catapult Glider scramble contest! You have half an hour to spend as much of it as you can in the air but you must return to the same starting place between flights. Thirty minutes is 1800 secs so Sam Peders total of 1036 takes some doing and makes my 334 look a bit feeble but at least I wasn't lastoh yes, just checked, I was. Sam's was amazingly trimmed - straight up in a tight spiral and then gently off into the blue. Mine tended to be more twang, zoom, clunk.



But now to the one that mattered - the Sportster Flying Challenge. Take your 10cc of fuel, ROG for 10 points; an inward and outward 8 as per gold wings for 10 points each; glide for 100 secs for 10 points and 10 points for a spot landing. Here's the assembled models ready for the off and the winner with 49 points out of 50 wasme! I have perfected the "smug smile".



started and released vertically goes straight up - hilarious.

There was so much other stuff going on all the time. Here is Robbo ably egged on by Jeremy with what you may think is a load of washing. No, bits of rag with an 049 on the end that when



Warren has some lovely oldies - another Vic Smeed beauty is the Coquette biplane that flies with a throttlable Schlosser as well as it looks. Steve and his son Cameron had many flights with this gem. Diesel powered of course, FF but with a D/T so that it rose, circled gently and when the D/T tail popped up and slowly dropped to earth.



And a meeting would not be complete without Peter Jackson and one of his little FF gems - in this case a Nieuport with a .5cc Sclosser.

One of the more impressive flights was my last practise one with the Sporster before the flying comp when I just wanted one more to make sure it would ROG before the long grass. It did and then I gave it a little left rudder, **left, LEFT, oh Sh*t I haven't turned on the receiver!** It climbed beautifully, it headed out over the canola and was clearly going way beyond the horizon when the motor cut and it turned and headed back still circling in a perfectly trimmed glide. It came back over the trees, it missed the barn but just managed to turn into a tree - **SMACK** - and broke one small rubber band retaining peg. Thank you the Gods of models.



But we haven't talked about the Power Scramble. Again you must maximise you flight time in 30 mins but flights over 2 mins only get you 120 secs so the key is to get flights of less than that but that don't go far away as you have to start each flight from the same place. Dave



Bailey, Phil Poole and Bruce Smith are recognised as hot shots in this. To see their planes flying in smooth tight circles at low altitude is a lesson in flight trimming. This is Phil launching for another gem but it was Dave who clocked up 1020 secs to win. And I must mention Mark and his

Charybdis! Look'em up on U Tube - it's definitely aviation but

Oh and so much more! A great weekend of fun and friendly competition. You really should try it some time. *Mike M.*

