

It's Sopwith time again

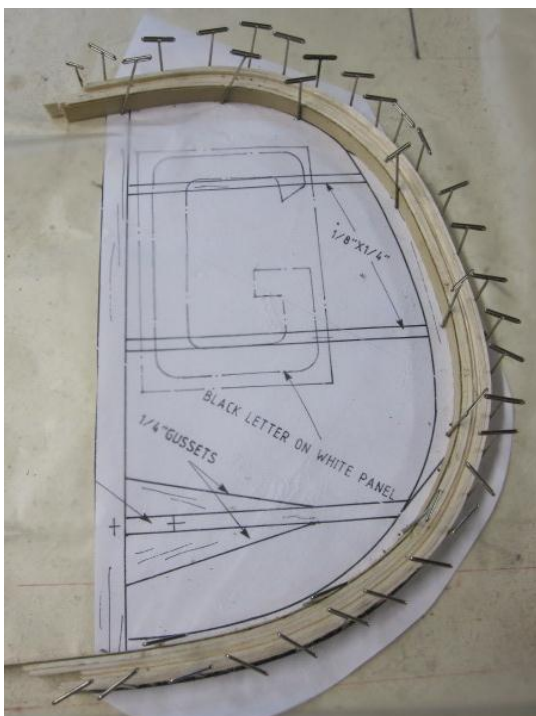
I've always liked Sopwith designs. There's something round and friendly about them, a bit like a Vic Smeed design but full size & military. I built my first Pup (rubber powered) about 55 years ago, my next one (a Dave Boddington 3 channel 48" span) about 35 years ago and my latest ($\frac{1}{4}$ scale DB model) about 12 years ago so it was time for another one. I liked the idea of the triplane but too many ribs to cut out and tricky rigging. I also fancied a large civilian something as I needed one for a set (large and small civilian and military) and I came across the plans in RCM&E for the Scooter in 1989 and had put them aside for ron as in later ron. I got them out, 48" span, 3 channel but a good start for enlarging.

At quarter scale it would be about 80" span and a suitable place to attach my ASP 180, heaps of power and useful nose weight. It's also a rather attractive colour scheme shown here in a magazine picture. Red fuselage, white registration panels and natural linen wings.



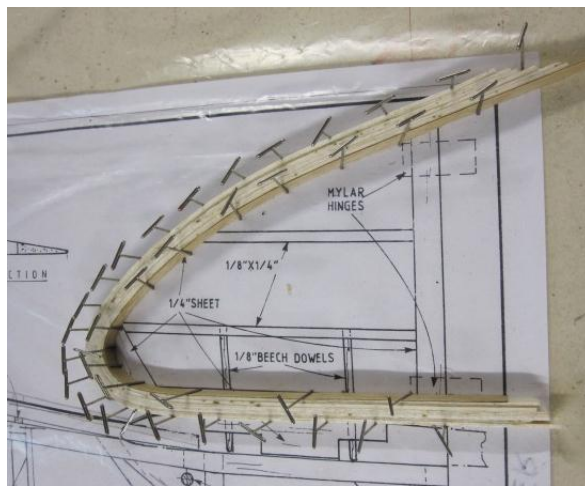
To quote Wikipedia "*the Sopwith Monoplane No. 1, also known as the Sopwith Scooter. It used a normal Camel fuselage, with the wing mounted just above the fuselage, with a very small gap. The wing was braced using RAF-wires (i.e. streamlined bracing wires) to a pyramid shaped cabane above the wing. It was powered by a single 130 hp (97 kW) Clerget 9B rotary*

engine. The Scooter, which was used as a runabout and aerobatic mount by Sopwith test pilot Harry Hawker, demonstrated excellent manoeuvrability, and formed the basis of a fighter derivative, originally the Monoplane No. 2, and later known as the Sopwith Swallow."



So round to Balmain Office Supplies for a few enlarged copies and I had all the outlines I needed though the internal structure would have to very different! With memories of my Pup and the amount of lead needed to get a CG where needed I was determined to build the tail light - a good place to start so I laid up the curved portions of the fin & rudder by laminating 6 layers of 1/16 balsa (sorry but all dimensions will be in Imperial measure - it is a British plane after all) with a final layer of very thin ply. These were coated in white glue and gently bent inside T pins on the outline. In the case of the fin they needed a slight soaking of water to get them to

bend enough. Once dried these were joined up with the rest of the framework including $\frac{1}{4}$ " fibreglass tubes so it could be mounted above the tailplane - I think they look really wrong when there is no gap between the bottom of the fin and the top of the

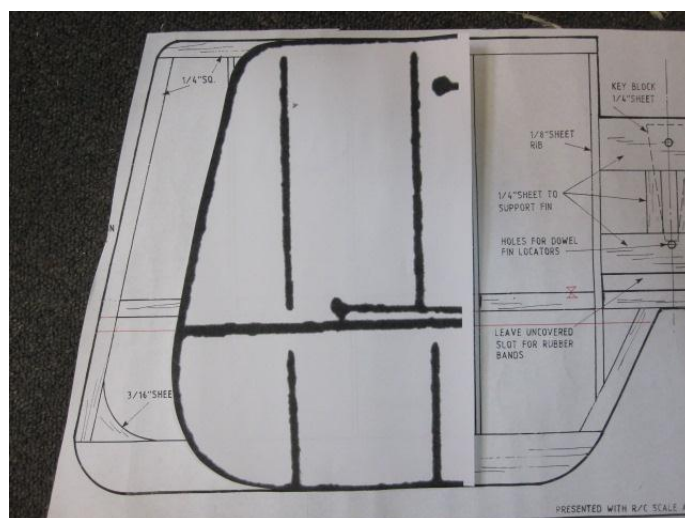


tailplane. I had used the same mod on the DB Pup kit and it worked fine.

When it came to the tailplane tips I intended to use the same method but on looking at the RCM&E drawings something was clearly not right! The tips looked wrong, the curves were too tight



so I dug out a 1/72 scale drawing of the Camel from my files and enlarged a portion of it by 400% and then the tail by a further 313% to get a better outline. The lines get a bit thick but when you lay one drawing next to the other (on the right) you can see there is a big difference! So I built the tips to the new drawing.



While these were drying I started on the fuselage - but more of that next time.

Mike

