

Where's the pilot?

There is little worse in my opinion than a scale, or semi-scale model with a great big EMPTY cockpit or canopy! Real planes have pilots, models look wrong flying around with no one in them. Mind you some of the “pilots” I have seen are hardly better than nothing. If you forget about the dolls heads, skulls, animal heads (a pink fluffy pig in a Smog Hog!), etc one of the classic inclusions is the dear old Williams Bros plastic special in all sorts of sizes. It's not bad, but painted in gloss colours, as it often is, looks pretty naff and very unrealisticso spend a bit of time improving it.

For a start the fixed stare ahead looks very unnatural – chop his head off and stick it back on at a slight sideways and downwards pose. You can use shavings of the plastic dissolved in thinners as a good glue.



Now you can paint his clothes with matt paints but there is no substitute for a bit of fabric! Here is the back pocket of an old pair of cords – cut a hole in it, cover it and him in contact cement and pull it over his head.



Trim of the seam and stick it around the neck to make a collar. Paint or, if you are really keen, put a piece of fabric in for a scarf. Paint the face with matt “flesh” Humbrol, fill the eyes in gloss white and smudge a bit of brown on the eyebrows and the lips – NOT gloss red on the latter!.

Now for the helmet! You need an offcut of “leather” vinyl, or if you are lucky, real thin leather, or even a piece of imitation suede (the corner of the car shammy chamois?). Cut 3

pieces to match the panel lines on the moulding and stick on with contact cement again. A thin strip around the edge finishes it off nicely.



When you do the eyes remember that the iris can be all sorts of colours and should be touching the top lid not bang in the middle. A thin line across the top of the lid helps too. A “leather” strap on the goggles, some paint around their rims and he’s ready to fly.

Now you have to admit that for a couple of hours work and hardly any cost your cockpit would look much better with him in it.