

Astro Hog—Team Zapparelli



These pictures of this lovely Astro Hog, owned and flown by Col Mitchell, ably assisted by Fearless Flying Foster, were taken at the Penrith ROW Fly In last year.

The plane handled and flew so well that someone in our group watching said “ I wouldn’t mind one of those”. Col picked up on this and said “I’ve got a kit in my garage” and I stupidly said “ I’ll put it together for you if you like”.



It looked like such a simple build with its slab sided fuselage and non tapered wings that I thought I could put it together in a week or so. Wrong, wrong...





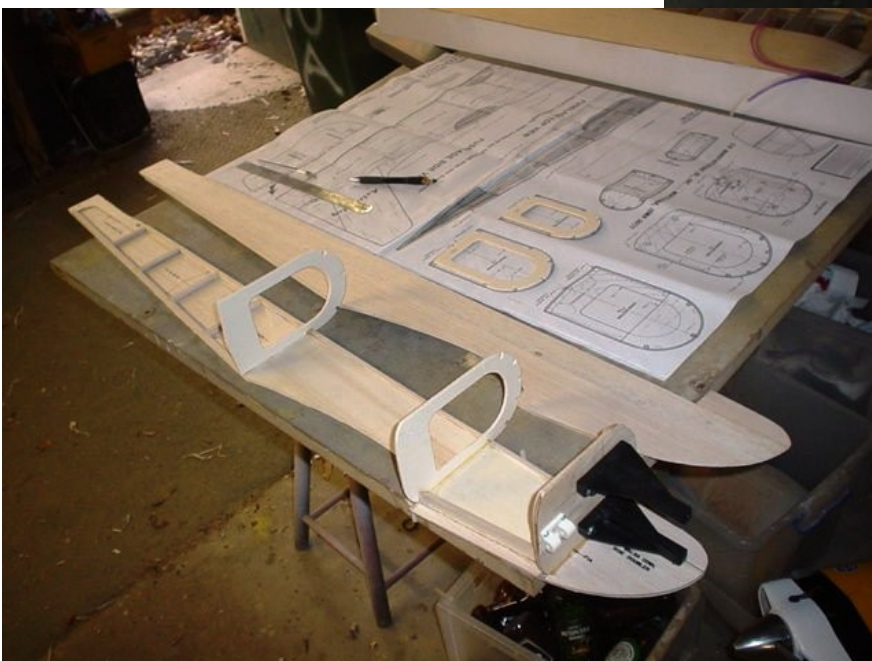
The ever generous Col rocked up one afternoon with four big boxes and I immediately thought “ me and my big mouth”, especially when we opened the lid of the kit, it was chock full of balsa in all shapes and sizes..

The other boxes were floats, float struts and an OS65LA plain bearing motor.



Col's idea was we would make this plane and share it among the regular RC flyers that frequent Zapperellis Pizza Restaurant on most Sunday nights. The same mob regularly hire a waterfront house up on Lake Macquarie so the plane had to fly on salt water as well as the fresh at Penrith.

We have had a couple of goes at flying off salt water and ruined two or three motors as a result, the more complex the motor the more complete the ruin, hence Col's wise selection of a plain bearing OS



OK, time to bite the bullet and get on with it....Starting with the fuselage.

This is an old kit and the parts were either die cut or you had to cut them from sheet with the part printed on it. Easy enough but time consuming.

The fuselage is made up from two re-enforced slab sides, assembled over the plans with frames in between



The bottom is flat sheet but the top is made up by soaking pre shaped sheet in hot water and then bending to shape over stringers. The front and the back have different curves so four pieces are required to get the right shape.

Bit of a challenge but nothing too dramatic.

The nose is shaped from solid 1/2" sheet.





Wings were next. Built over the plans in the old traditional way and then joined with dihedral braces.



Followed by the stabiliser.

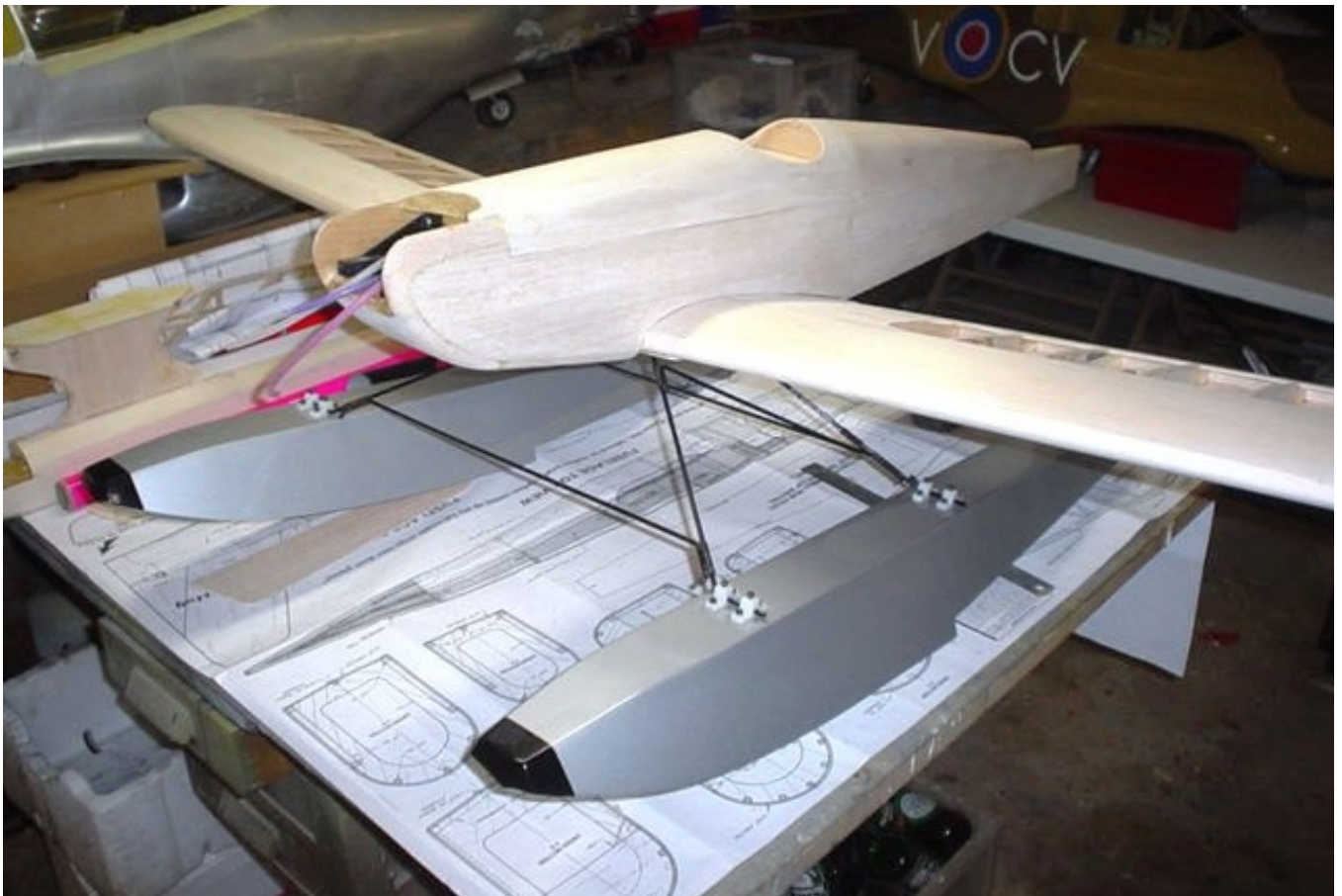
Fin, rudder, elevators and ailerons are all solid sheet and just needed shaping and assembling





Put it all together to see if it fits and then try on the floats.

The front float wire mounts fitted into the front undercarriage blocks in the wing and I had to inset two rear hardwood mounts at the trailing edge of the wing for the rear wire support.





We covered the plane with a mixture of Solartek and scrap Monokote. The Solartek is a natural fabric finish and the Monokote is in the Italian colours to denote its Pizza house home.

The Solartek was waterproofed with Deluxe Eze-Kote. This is a new product to me and is a one part water based filler that worked well. Decoration was done with Col's beaut Stika vinyl cutter and we're ready to fly...

My one to two week job took two months, as I said earlier "me and my big mouth"

See you on the water

Stan