

Golden Era Racing

with Stephen Green

When the last plane taxied back to the pits and shut down I breathed the sigh of relief typical of someone who signs their name to being the "Display Director" That's what I did on Sunday at around 4.00 pm at Cobram. Over two days we had some fabulous racing, some 200 flights in a laid back yet competitive atmosphere. At lunchtime we had a small airshow to give the officials a break, to entertain the crowd and to promote the hobby. A big part of entertaining the public is the PA and many thanks to Cliff McIver and Peter Coles for helping out.

To save time during startup and model identification, the startline was set back on the edge of the strip and angled at forty five degrees. Pilots were free to depart from the startbox and make a right turn to fly up to number one for model ID. If they wanted to use all of the available runway they could elect to back track, then turn and go. When the wind swung, the take off in the other direction was followed by a 180 back up to number one. The first one off got the red light and and so it went. This worked a treat all weekend and another advantage is for teams whose caller is colour blind. By Sunday afternoon we had to slow them down, to allow the pylon officials enough time to correctly ID their aeroplane.

Landing order was also left up to the pilots. The more experienced whistled back in straight away and cleared the runway quickly. These two procedures saved quite a bit of time. The standard of flying by the Gold Wings rated pilots shone through all weekend. Hats off the the pilots.

One of the highlights for me was Richard Mudge and Michael Lynch battling it out

All systems go on Friday morning.



One of four large Golden Era models placed in shops around town to promote the weekend. One in the Tourism office, Batta Electrical, a mower shop and Miss Suzy in this motorcycle shop.

On Sunday morning a few locals showed their take on the average Texan landing. Imitation is a form of flattery.



Take off and turn right for model ID. The angled start box worked a treat.



Moirs Model Aircraft Club member Colin Booth hard at work first thing Sunday morning

lap after lap in each heat. Mudgee's P-51 was a little quicker all weekend. In the last heat Michael missed the start by five seconds and managed to peg back the lead on the last lap to finish a second in front. Great stuff by two great pilots.

Another was round five of Texan. Four of the VRF club members from Shepparton entered their Texans and they had been practicing racing each other at the club field. I placed them in the same heat for a grudge match. For the first few laps it was on for young and old. I didn't see or hear anyone swap paint but man they were close. After a few laps Gary Flanagan's model clearly had a few extra knots which he put to good use and slowly pulled way. We could breath again. It was so much fun I bought them a perpetual trophy. Hope to see you guys back next year. That trophy should encourage at least three pilots to seek revenge.

Taking no chances, with the engine running rich and only ten inches of pitch, Dad finally has achieved a race score with Mr Smoothie. Flap-elevator interconnect makes a huge difference to the turn radius and flap does help on landing. It lands like a jet and once the last remaining issues with the landing gear are sorted out model should be very competitive. In the last round Mudgee's Mew Gull wasn't able to peg it back. As they say "The bullshit stops when the flag drops," but having flown it when that Moki 360 is putting out she will hammer around the course.

I would like to thank the principal sponsors for their generosity in supporting the event. OMP, Model Engines. Hobby Headquarters and Desert Aircraft. Also many thanks to RC Tech Supplies for helping me out with a few last minute prizes. Peter Coles handed me a box of champagne to give out as I saw fit. These were given out as impromptu Cobram and Yarrawonga awards. For overshooting and landing nearest those towns. Just a bit of fun but watching a few pilots trying to pull off the best landing gave me a better idea for next year.

Congratulations to the members of the Cobram Club for a job well done. They had not run an event of this magnitude before and, to their credit, the troops just followed the procedures that were decided in the practice day held a month earlier. Talking with competitors everyone was impressed with the facilities and attitude of the members. What a great club.

LEO O'REILLY TROPHY

This is a perpetual trophy and it was awarded to the fastest time around the

course. Richard Mudge took trophy with a time of two minutes thirteen seconds with his Zenoah G62 powered Mew Gull. Next year the pilots will be issued with numbered bibs and number one will be worn by the current lap record holder.

COBRAM DUMP AWARD.

This is a tongue in cheek trophy, supplied by Fowler, awarded by the Contest Director. Anyone who comes to the attention of the CD for a non safety related flying effort that raises an eyebrow will qualify. As early as Friday there was already a contender. Dad went home to grab a spare retract leg, leaving me to sort out the tuning of the GT 55 in his F-1. Just after take off there was big change in elevator trim. Holding full up was just enough to raise the nose. Flicking the dual rate switch made no difference but at least, half throttle was enough to maintain level.

So there was a chance to fly it back and attempt a high speed landing. I tried the crow braking to see if that would pitch the nose up but it made matters worse. Not being familiar with the switch allocations on his TX, I switched the ignition off instead. So what was quite possibly a manageable situation, put me to the top of the list. By the way you can relax if you have one of these ARFs. The culprit was the silver solder joint on his own designed internal elevator horn that let go.

Fortunately by Sunday a few others had helped me out. Given that the inaugural winner was the current President of the V,M,A,A, his name has been suppressed until he retires on June 30. At next years meeting the current winner of this award will also be issued with a particular bib. Number two.

RED BULL

If judging by the smile on pilots faces is any guide this new 120 sized entry level category is here to stay. All models made it through with hardly a bounce on landing to be seen. Steve and Les Davis had really

done their homework and their Seagull Extra 260's were the models to beat. Everyone had fun racing and talk of the best prop model and motor combination dominated. Cobram club member Shane Jenkinson in his first competition flew his new Flitework Extra 300 and this has inspired a few other young ones to compete next year.

In the last round Shane and Darrin Braybrook flew identical models. Shane's had a small balsa patch on the leading edge and Darrin's sported some very fancy trim on the tips. To my amazement this was enough for guys on the pylons to differentiate between the two. I watched my Super Chipmunk race around the course in the very capable hands of Michael Lynch. The Chippy doubles as my hack model and it is fitted with four inch Dubro tyres to fly off rough strips. Ever the racer, Michael swapped them for a smaller pair. When I mentioned that taking out the baffle in the OS Powerbox muffler was good for a couple of hundred R,P,M that was removed too.

One thing I learned was that the 15x10 APC is not the best prop for racing that model. The next race is Bendigo. Bring it on.

JETTISON

Reliability is a big part of racing. Dealing with Jettison Rule is one of the hardest tasks of being CD. If something falls off the aeroplane the result is a zero score and plane should be landed ASAP. The rule is there for safety reasons and I agree with it entirely. But how do you treat a competitor, who has received a zero, in the next race? For example if an aeroplane has presented correctly at the start of the meeting but during the meeting a component blows off. Four likely suspects are the spinner, engine cowl, wheel spat and canopy. In theory flying without these components should result in a slight loss of speed which should not affect the outcome.

One thought would be to slap a five second

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time penalty in subsequent heats that the model no longer meets the scale requirement. This would reward the competitor who has put in the work to ensure the model is reliable. It would also help when a new model presents but for example it has no wheel spats. Another would be to not impose any penalty which is what happens now. Food for thought.

FORMULA 1

I am really keen to push F-1 and after talking to a few chaps at Cobram, those interested to build said the stumbling block are the rules. In particular the wingspan range of 80-90 inches. Dropping that in favour of a set scale would open up the field for a wider range of subjects. Achieving the minimum frontal area, with the engine cowled, the wingspan of 20 feet is around the optimum. Throw scale out the window and slim the fuselage then a twenty two foot span is possible. Interesting low aspect ratio designs such as the Rivets, Cassutt or the most famous Bonzo don't get a look in. A simple change could make them competitive. This is what has been discussed and what has pretty much agreed by guys interested in actually building something for the class is 35% scale.

All full sized used the same engine and they had to accommodate a pilot. To make it simple for the organisers any model that was smaller than a few templates would be subject to further scrutiny and measurement from a three view.

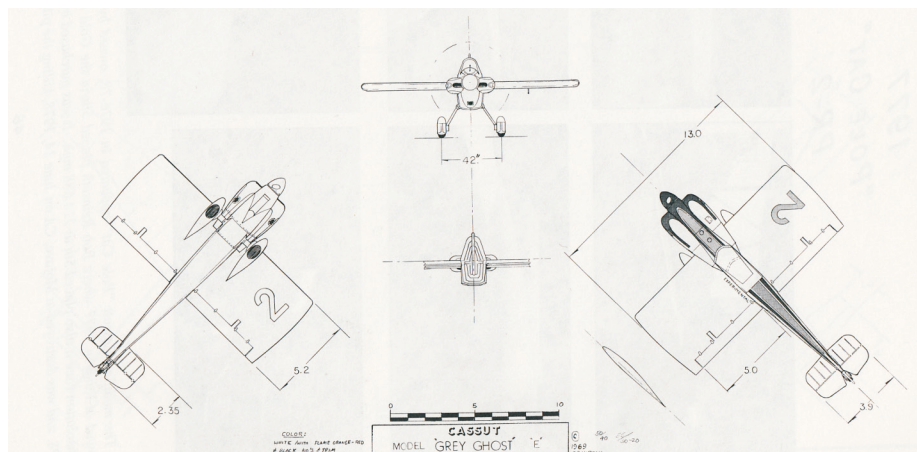
A minimum cowl width of 290 mm and a fuselage cross section of no less than 320 x 190 mm. A minimum wheel thickness of 25mm. This is slightly under scale but fibreglass spats that are commercially available could then be used with a 3.5 inch wheel. The full size to have a maximum wingspan of 21 feet.

The other thing to be addressed is the noise level. I am in favour of a relevant noise test mainly to prevent the inevitable RPM chase for horsepower. Most of us are not interested in being blown away trying to do the right thing but the current level of 98 @3 metres is noddly land for a 56 cc engine at it's usual operating RPM.

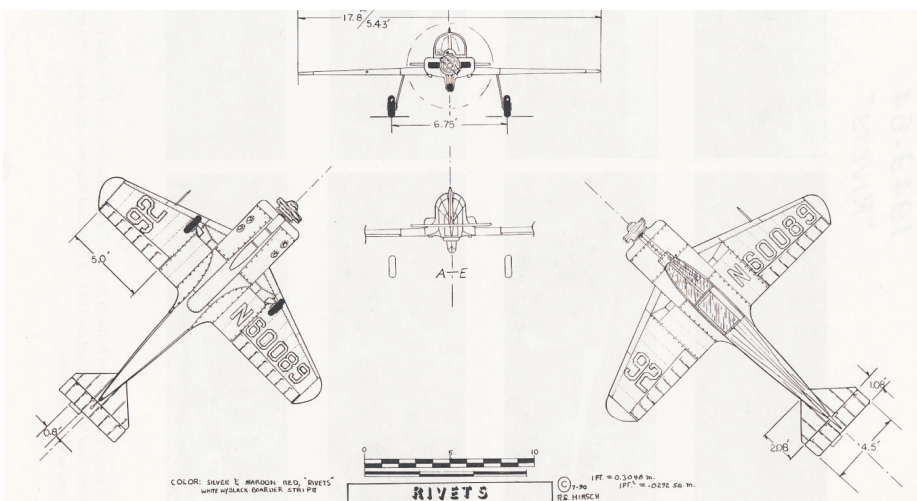
Watching the guys having fun with F-1 at Cobram it seems the best way to kick things off is to come up with a level using a standard in-cowl muffler with a paint stirrer bolted onto the crankshaft. That could be a standard class suitable for an entry level into racing large easy to fly scale models with say 12 or 14 inch pitch maximum.



The DA 50 snuggled inside a 35% scale Nemesis.



The Cassutt is simple to build.



The much admired Rivets. Three views are available in Goodyear and F1 Air Racing by Robert S Hirsch, Windcanyon Publishing. I purchased my two editions from the USA www.aircraftspruce.com

Anyone who wants to go faster would have to learn how to pull more pitch and invest in some modern exhaust technology in order to meet the same noise level in the premier category that allows up to a 63 cc engine. Now were talking!

GREAT TEXAN RACE

The next event on the calendar is at Bendigo for AT6 and Red Bull 120. This is a single day meeting and racing starts at 9.30 on Sunday August 2011.

RACE CALENDAR

Great Texan Race
Bendigo Vic 14 August 2011
National Air Races
Cootamundra 29-30 Oct 2011
Grand Southern Cross Rally
Luskintyre Park NSW 21-22 April 2012
Cobram Air Races
Cobram Victoria June 9-10 2012
 Check the racing link on rcmn.com.au for contact and entry details. Until next time remember, it's bank then yank.