

January

WITH THE WEEKDAY WARRIORS

53 YEARS AGO and 5300 MILES AWAY

One of the prizes I won at a contest last Summer was a copy of the 1950 Aeromodeller Annual. This was a nice little book that British model mag put out each year from '48 to '80. It contained drawings of significant models, summaries of the year's World Championships, and articles on new topics and trends. A lot of what was written is still valid today, but a couple of the articles were a bit quaint. There was a Swede pontificating on the then-new Nordic A2 towline glider event and expressing himself as shocked - shocked! - at the amount of balsa the Brits used- in their gliders. "In Sweden", he proclaimed, "we use it only for unimportant parts like wingtips and fairings". The rest was good, solid, pine, spruce, and plywood. This may go along way toward explaining why the first Swede to win the Nordic World Champs' did so just two years ago when, as matter of fact, there was again almost no balsa in Nordic gliders. All carbonfibre, Kievlar, and Mylar now.

The one that tickled me, though, was on the advances in R/C during 1950 in the British Isles. The big thing was the vast improvement brought about by the introduction of the XFG1 valve. A little language lesson here: For "valve" read "tube". Yes, Children, back in Prehistoric times, we Neanderthals flew our R/C pterodactyls with radios having tubes in them. Some of you are too young to know what a radio tube was. Ask somebody; I don't have time here. 'The XFG1 was not the usual vacuum tube, but a gas-filled type, the gas being the inert argon.. It measured about .3" x .6" x 1.6" and weighed but four grams. It did, however, require a 1.5v battery for filament and 45v for plate. The batteries were the old carbon-zinc type; nobody knew from ni-cads, let alone nickel-picklehydrox or lithuanian-nylon. The manufacturing process was tricky and, at the start, some tubes came through with too high' a gas pressure, which gave no range, and some with the pressure too low which caused them to burn out early. In this era, you had to tune your receiver at the start of each flying session and the way to do it was by plugging in a meter and reading the current draw which was normally between three -'and five milliamps. The life of a good XFG1 was 10-15 hrs. and when the meter read 1.5 ma, it was time to become concerned. There were things you could do to get a few more flights. One was to. Shorten the normal 52" antenna to 26" or even 13"'. (I have a' neighbor who spent 40 yrs, designing all sorts of antennas and he says it shouldn't have worked.) Another step you could take was to reverse the polarity (!) of the filament battery and/or go up to 67 1/2 v on plate. My favorite was to take the tube out of the receiver and bake it in the oven for 20 min. This was all rudder-only, by the way, and the author opines that bang-bang (full left -full right) control was "little short of ideal", those who had tried proportional having found it much too slow to react, causing them to wreck their models. In the early 50s, we had, over here, a similar tube called the RK61 which was a similar sensation - much smaller, lighter, and-more reliable than what had gone before. Only one of our little band of U/C and FF fliers: was trying R/C and I remember his consternation when the RK61 went off the market. The replacement was a Dutch tube, the Ampex 6007, and the word on the 6007 was to bake it in the oven for 20 min. before putting it in the receiver. Anybody for a return to "the good old days"?

It is possible that all through the above essay you have been wondering how I came to win a 1950 Annual in a -2003 contest. Well, over the last few years some of our club members have died and left all their modeling stuff to the club. We pick the best of it for contest and raffle

prizes and sell off the rest. When your name is called at the end of the contest, you have your pick of what's on offer. I have all the Annuals from '57 on, so I jumped at the chance to acquire the earlier one. You might think about the idea of leaving your model stuff to the club, especially if the alternative is for it to fall into the clutches of the Messers Sanipac. The Willamette Modelers Club has built up quite a healthy treasury partly because of this, though not enough, alas, to buy all of Linn County to assure ourselves of a flying Site.

I have just looked anew- at-the photos in that article on 1950 U.K. R/C and I have been forced to the conclusion, that the R/Cers were a somewhat disreputable lot. Two of them don't even have, ties on and only one – just one, mind you - is wearing his suit coat. Our tiny flock of early 50s Northern N.J. modelers used to marvel at the pictures in - -Aeromodeler showing guys in white shirts, ties, and suit coats starting engines, launching aeroplanes, flying U/C Stunt, et al. . Some of the middle-aged men had on vests! Our standard flying dress was dungarees, t-shirts, and sneakers. - The Draft took one of our guys to Germany and he used part of his leave one time to fly Stunt at-the British Nats, dressed to our standard with the addition of a pack of cigarettes rolled up in one sleeve of his shirt. His "informal attire" was remarked upon by one of the British' model mags.

I'm going to be away for a fair old chunk of February, -so, if I do get a column done for the next newsletter, it is likely to be "What I Did On My Vacation". Of course that does raise the philosophical question: If you're retired, can you be "on vacation"?

C. O'D.

April

WITH THE WEEKDAY WARRIORS

We had a bit of nice weather at the end of March and beginning of April and the pits went a long way towards drying up. Even the road and parking lot improved to the point where you no longer had to be concerned about your car sinking from under you. This has brought out some of the weekday contingent and a fair amount of flying has resulted. Your columnist managed to miss some of the best days by inept scheduling of various appointments with doctor, dentist, dermatologist, and ophthalmologist, to give only a few examples. Still I did see some of the action worth reporting on.

Doug McWha has been mowing, rolling, and seeding the strip regularly. At one Point this had earned him the unstinted approbation of all the geese in southwest Eugene who found the seed just the thing for a mid-morning snack. So intent were they on the feast that they didn't even look up then buzzed at low altitude. Only when Doug taxied to within fifteen feet of them did they pat their lips with their napkins and flap off - right straight up the runway, by the way. Doug's been flying his old 40-size Kaos and EasySport. He says the heavy stuff, 1-34 and Ultrasport 1000, will come out later in the season and he's working on a Piper Tomahawk from a New Zealand Flair kit.

As straight clown the runway as those geese was El Goodman's flap-equipped Kadet Sr. the other day. The two of us had the strip to ourselves on a solidly-overcast, almost-windless Thursday. I was test-gliding my rebuilt Casino Glamour Girl, a 1940 Wakefield, and El was making flight after flight with the Kadet.

Morris Ostrofsky was doing a lot of flying with the Air Core high-winger with Chuck Jenkins on the other end of the buddy-box set-up! Morris does reasonably well in the air, but that ship approaches fast and sinks like a concrete pigeon, so Morris is often out in the rough with the main gear off. Chuck had let him shoot some landings with the Intro Plane and he was fine.

The one time I have seen Jim Smith out with a plane, he had his New Ruler in the air. This Hank Struck design was originally a 6-footer complying with the “new rules” that were introduced in 1940. Jim’s is the 36” version for a Cox TD .020 and Jim flew it with that engine for a few years. He has now converted it to electric power which has upped the weight by at least half, causing a notable deterioration in the glide. Still better than Morris’s Air Core though.

As many of you know, I spent 17 days in Australia in February. Didn’t see as much as I wanted to, because, on the second day, my left knee let me know that it had retired from the walking-around game. There were, however, some bright spots. The RAAF Museum at Pt. Cook had its newly-re-stored Seagull y on display. This is a biplane, amphibious flyingboat with a single pusher engine, a slightly clumsy--looking machine which nevertheless did a great deal of valuable air-sea rescue work in WWII. The rest of the world calls it a “Walrus” and thereby hangs a tale. The Aussies ordered it first and accepted Supermarine’s standard name for its flyingboats, “Seagull”. When Britain’s Royal Navy showed a belated interest in the plane, that name had to go. Firstly, the Air Ministry naming scheme dictated sea-animal names for that class of aircraft and, secondly, the word “seagull” is not uttered on a ship of the Royal Navy - bad luck. The Australians, not being under that scheme nor having that superstition, persisted with Seagull V and so it is labeled at Ft. Cook. The Queensland Museum at Brisbane has the last remaining of eight Avro Babys built. This was a nice little, 25’, biplane of 1919 which would make a nice model. They also had the remains of Bill Lancaster’s Avro Avian. Lancaster took off from Croydon (London) on April 11, 1933 in a bid to break the London-Capetown record. He refueled at a stop on the Trans-Saharan Track the next day, but suffered an engine failure that night and flipped over upon landing in the dark. He waited by the plane, sheltering under the wing and keeping a log of the experience. A French Foreign Legion patrol found him there - in March of 1962. He had lasted eight days and the last entry in the log said “Please come quickly!

I also brought home two Australian model magazines, Airborne and Radio Control Model News. The former, which comes out every two months was so good when I first saw it in ‘79 that I almost subscribed. Two years ago, I discovered that it had gone downhill into the swamp of “a11 R/C” and this year’s was worse. It seemed to be mostly “product reviews” of, mostly, ARFs and grammar, spelling and punctuation were not up to standard. RCMN (also bimonthly) was worse. It scored by having reports on two or three contests, but grammar and spelling were appalling and punctuation seemed to be at random. I was reading an article on turbines and thinking, “This guy really needed the services of an editor. Why didn’t Ye Ed clean this up before publication?” Then I looked to the top of the page and found that the author was the editor! Worse than an American model mag, if you can believe that.

C. O’D.

May

WITH THE WEEKDAY WARRIORS

The geese didn’t eat all of the seed Doug McWha put down, because the grass on the strip has very few bare spots left and those are small. Doug had his 4-Star 60 out today (5/19) — his

larger ships are beginning to emerge now that the weather is getting better. This big, red, bird is the only ARF in his stable as Doug continues to show ~ predilection for building his own aeroplanes. (Bravo!) This being the ER/CA, this "60" ship has a Magnum .91 in it. The Magnum came with a muffler that Doug didn't think deserved the name, so he modified a large O.S. unit to fit the engine and added a long piece of silicone tuned-pipe tubing to the stack as well. Seems to me to have a deeper, as well as quieter note.

Ken Springate is now flying a U-Can-Do SC ARF with an O.S. .91 4-stroke for power. I guess the model can, indeed "do" it, because Ken has expressed himself as very pleased by its performance.

Chuck Jenkins is back from California and back on the other end of the transmitter cord from Norris Qstrovsky's trans-mitter The day I saw them, Morris was doing reasonably well on his landings, but he's beginning to come around to the idea that the Air Core has reac2~ed the end of its road and needs replacement. Maybe he was influenced by the fact that three or four guys that day were telling him it was. I think the idea is that Chuck has an unused model of suitable performance which he will pass on to Morris.

El Goodman had his Parasol on the field a couple of weeks ago. This is an original powered by a Saito .50 4-stroke, El being one who tends not to over-power things. The wing is the one Dave Upton had on that camera ship of his. To keep the nose free for the camera, Dave had the engine up on a pylon above the centersection of the wing. El dug into the wing and removed all that extra structure needed to support the pylon, thus lightening things considerably. He also shortened the wing, so it is quite a low-aspect-ratio affair with well-rounded tips. The horizontal tail is pure Kadet Sr. and the vertical tail shows a definite influence of the Sig model. All this is tied toge-ther by a fully original fuselage on a trike gear arid with a cabane for wing mounting. And El got a bit clever here: It is very easy to unhook the radius rods and fold the main gear back under the fuselage and the removal of a couple of wheel collars enables the cabane to told onto the top of the fuse. Easier to fit in the can Oh, yes, and it flies pretty well, too.

If you look at the edge of the strip, up towards the right end of the pits, you will see a rather bare stretch just a couple of feet wide. This is Jin Smiths runway for those tiny electrics of his. If he can get enough propwash over the rudder right at. the start to make it effective, the wretched little beasts do take off!

The status of this column is uncertain for the next six or seven weeks. On. Monday next the 24th, my Classic, 1932-model left knee is going to be torn out and a modern fake put in its place. Since my car has a proper transmission instead of a slush pump they won't let me drive for six weeks. That's going to make it hard to get to the field - flights of angels are showing a distinct reluctance to take me out there on a regular basis. Further, If I am reading all the bumpf correctly, I shall have to be either sitting with my leg out straight in front of me or up walking around to exercise it. Neither of these modes. is conducive to typing - or working at the building and drawing boards for that matter. I'll see you when I can; don't do anything really serious until I can be there to bear witness Now, that's for the Weekday guvs; you Weekenders are on your own.

C. O'D.

July

WITH THE WEEKDAY WARRIORS

Okay! On 7/7, the doctor not only took me off the crutches, he also gave back my car keys, so I'm now able to get out to the field again. I'd give you all the details of the operation, but you will probably want to wait for the movie anyhow. Not sure whether it will be the Christmas Disney release or just replace *The Sopranos* on HBO. Suffice it to say that I am again trudging across the southwest corner of the field in a quest to get four models ready for the Northwest Freeflight Championships a month hence.

In the last chapter, Morris Ostrovsky was coming to the conclusion that his Air Core was all set to be pensioned off and replaced by something whose approach to landing was not quite so much like that of a garbage barge. This has come to pass by his acquisition of an Easy Sport 40 with an interesting provenance: Built by Jim Smith for Bill Bodley who used it as a back-up to his other E.S. 40 (also Smith—built). Chuck Jenkins got it from Jim after Bill sold up and now he's passed on to Morris. And Morris is flying the devil out of it. He needs no more help; all the landings are his own and gentle enough to leave the engine running and allow a taxi back.

Jim S., himself, has been flying gas lately - that .25— size tailless whose name neither he nor I remember. It is a short-coupled bird and the other day it did a rocking—horse act down the runway after a firm landing. Wiped the landing gear off, as luck would have it.

Doug McWha has been seen with his old—faithful Kaos and with his Hog Bipe as well. In between bouts of keeping the strip and environs mowed and in good shape, he even flies them.

Ken Springate's Ultra Sport 1000 is powered by one of the larger YS 4—strokes and is a slick machine. It comes whistling down the final approach and Ken often has to resort to standing it on its nose in the weeds at the end of the strip. He has tried “flaperons” and they made the shop so squirrely that it wound up out in my territory, the tall grass. Only just, mind you, but I charge if you damage that soft surface I need for test—flying.

Vaughon Hanchett — late of Reno, now of Santa Clara -is flying a 4—Star 60 with a Magnum .80 4—stroke in the engine room. He is enjoying the glorious Eugene Summer. Wait until Winter when he finds himself up to his knees in mud in the pits and his truck up to its hood in mud in the parking lot.

Bill Hastings is flying a tailcragger powered by an older O.S. .40. He got the model from Mary True's old shop in Creswell and the only name we can find on it is “Pacific Air-something” on the fin. I know; I should have written it down, but I am sure of the “Pacific” and the “Air”. I'd say it had a banana-shaped fuselage, but that's exaggerating the situation. The port side is straight and the starboard curved which should give him an airfoil lifting toward the latter side. Bill says it seems, to have no affect at all. Calling this ship a “taildragger” as I did above is another gross inaccuracy; the tail does anything but drag. Not with the size of the tailwheel under this one! The shaft comes up through the fuselage in front of the tail surfaces and a big tiller is connected to the rudder horn by a pushrod. All a bit — well, er — agricultural, but it seems to do the job.

El Goodman has had his Parasol out regularly and, just in time to make the deadline for this column, landed it heavily and knocked out the firewall. Clean break, easily repaired.

Doug Ward was also just in time for the deadline. He has bought a ship from Jim Smith and had the indefatigable Chuck Jenkins test-fly it for him. Chuck had been helping Doug learn on an

Easy Sport 60 earlier in the week. The plane is a pseudo—WWI monoplane, bearing no close resemblance to anything — certainly not to either Fokker or Pfalz Eidekkers. And a good thing, too; they both had all-flying tails, vertical as well as horizontal. Anyhow, this day saw the Fox (35?) not performing at all well and it painted Chuck into a corner. He had to make a downwind “arrival” which snapped the glass-plastic motor mount and sprung a couple of joints in the open—work fuselage. Doug W.’s buddy, whose name I didn’t get (it’s hard getting back into the swing of this journalism stuff) has bought Bill Bodley’s other Easy Sport 40. Rest assured, sir, that I will get your name right in the future, probably when you have done something horrendous like flying through the door of the storehouse and out the window.

C. O’D.