

RM **KIT REVIEW** *Royal Coachman*

Sterling's 42in. span quickie described by C. J. Foster

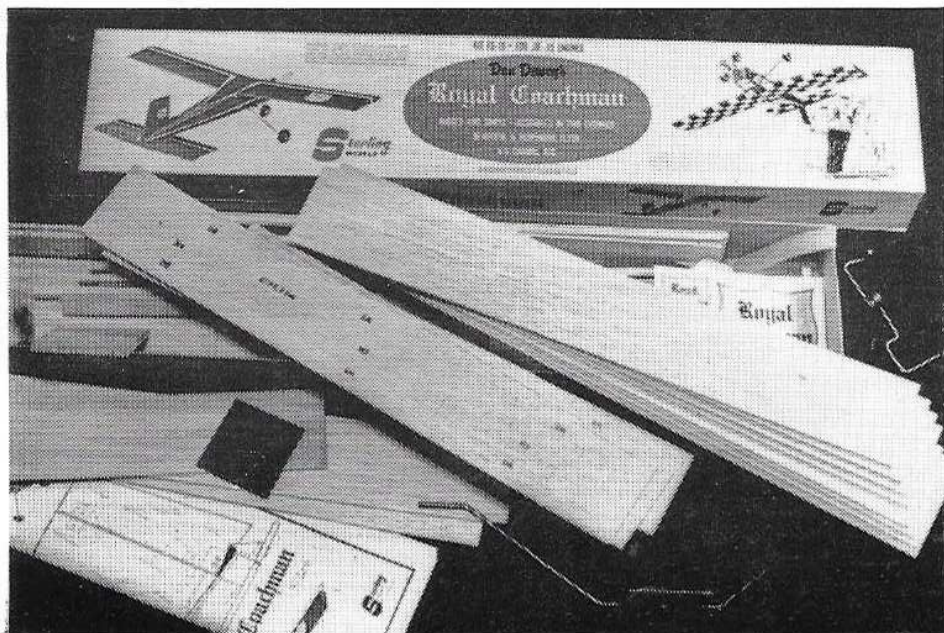
THE Sterling *Royal Coachman* is not exactly a new kit but, as I was looking for something rugged and quickly built, it appealed to me, in spite of its ugly duckling appearance. And quickly built it certainly is, believe me. One's first impression, on opening the box is "what a lot of wood". This is mainly because of the fully

sheeted wings, of course, but one must carefully sort out the sheet wood for its respective uses. The plan is a very comprehensive one—not only is every part shown full-size, but a large number of step by step exploded views leave nothing to guesswork.

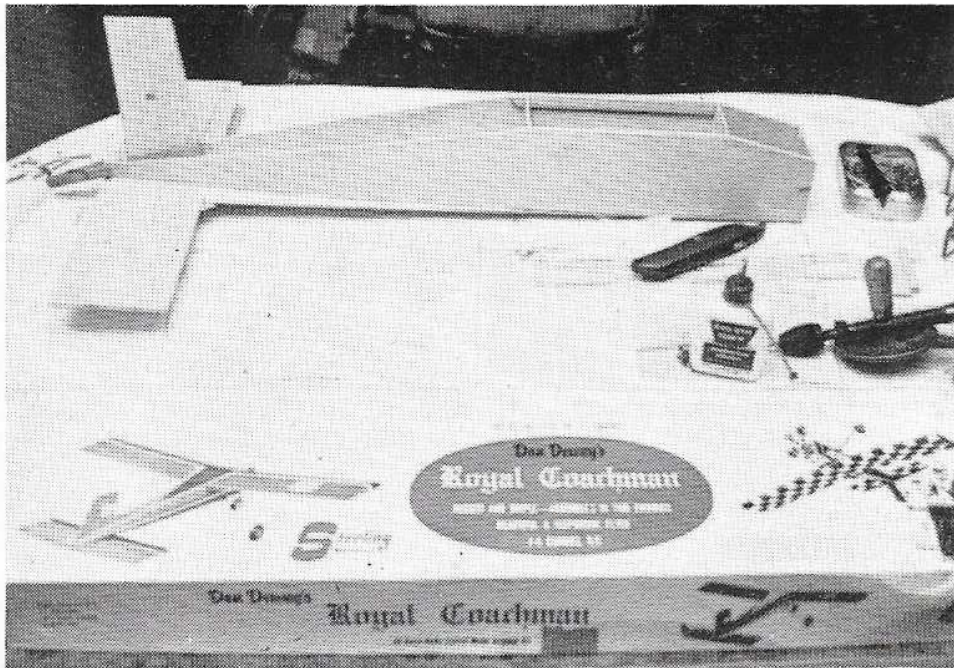
The fuselage is built flat on the building board, and is unusual in

that the tail unit (all sheet) is built integral with it, thus ensuring its being set at the correct alignment. There is no need to remove the structure from the board until you are ready to fit the undercarriage. This is pre-shaped, the only work required being to solder the strengthening bar to the main legs. The engine is mounted on the front firewall, without any sort of cowling, the original intention being for a radial mounted engine, which has given me the opportunity to use my O.S.19 fixed on a Micro-Accessories nylon mount. (The engines specified are .09 to .15 so with my O.S.19 I added an extra couple of degrees of downthrust.)

The wings, as mentioned, are completely sheeted and, in fact, are "built on to the sheet". All the ribs are from $\frac{1}{4}$ in. and $\frac{3}{8}$ in. die-cut sheets. The die-cutting had just a little crunchiness, but pressed out cleanly enough, only a slight touch of sandpaper being needed to make them first class. The sheets for the lower surface of the



Heading: "ready for off"—note the elevators locked in position for test-glide. Left: there seems a lot of wood because the model is all sheeted for ruggedness.



Top picture shows how the model is built on the board complete with tail unit. There is no need to remove the structure, in fact, until ready to fit the undercarriage. Above: first flight in somewhat rugged surroundings—the model gets away nicely from a hand launch, with Commander Benson at the controls. Below—tanking up for more flying fun . . .



wing are butt jointed, and the ribs, mainspars and shaped leading edge are then glued to this. When dry, the top sheeting (also previously butt-jointed from narrower-than-chord sheets) is fitted. One point of warning: the sheets are cut to exact length, so one must resist the temptation to clean up the saw cuts at the ends, or one would find that the panels would be a fraction short. The sheet itself, however, was very good quality. After the two wing halves have been joined at the appropriate dihedral angle and allowed to set, the joint is covered with bandage, using a liberal amount of cement, for strengthening.

On completion, the model was thoroughly sanded all over, and covered with tissue doped on to the wood. I used royal blue and orange, with white trim. This, with the addition of the shield name

transfer, gave an altogether regal effect. I fitted my Fleet G.G. pulse proportional outfit, and, after checking the c.g., and making sure there were no warps, it was only a case of waiting for the weather.

First flights

On arrival at the flying site, we decided to try a hand launch, as this is reasonably easily done with a model of this relatively small size (42in. span). Launching the *Coachman* from shoulder height, it was found to have a flat, straight glide, which was a comforting start to proceedings. I was fortunate in having Commander W. Benson with me so, for the first flights, the *Coachman* was in his very capable hands.

After checking the radio under power, half throttle was selected (to be on the safe side, as we were really overpowering it, we felt), and the model was hand launched rather gently but, nevertheless, even on half throttle, the *Coachman* climbed very fast. When the model was as high as was comfortable, slow motor was signalled and we found that, with the motor ticking over, the *Coachman* had a nice, steady, descent. This was very encouraging—just the thing for touch-and-go or spot landings.

Up to a safe height again, on half throttle and, try as we might, we found it was impossible to get the model to spin. Loops and other manoeuvres were nice, however, and the model was generally pleasant to fly, with no vicious tendencies. Again, the steady descent and smooth landing approach.

For the second flight, the *Coachman* was again hand-launched (our flying site being on the rough side), still on half-throttle and once again climbing quite fast. When at a safe height we decided to open up to full throttle. The result was a spectacular climb which would have done credit to a B.A.C. *Lightning*. Although it is often comforting to have a reserve of power, this seemed really to be overdoing things a little, and no doubt a .15 would have been quite adequate.

Summary

The *Royal Coachman* is versatile, inasmuch as it flies nicely on just rudder and throttle, so that the elevator could be fixed and the model flown this way at first, graduating to g.g. or full proportional at a later stage. Price of the kit is £7 12s. 9d. from Ripmax stockists.