

SLOWPOKE

TUNE IN TO STU RICHMOND AND FIND OUT WHY THE LATEST GREAT PLANES FUN-FLY LOOKS STRANGELY FAMILIAR

It's just possible that American automobile pioneer, Henry Ford, should be credited with starting what's referred to today as the 'Golden Age' of aviation. Most of us know that, in the 1920's, Ford built a series of just over two hundred tri-motor passenger airplanes, which subsequently earned an enviable safety record - there's never been a death attributed to a Ford Tri-Motor! However, not so many know that Ford also envisaged people wanting, in addition to their own car, an airplane.

The 'Golden Age' of aviation began in the mid-1920s, and flourished throughout the 1930s, bringing forth many fly-for-pleasure airplanes (lots of W.W.II pilots learned to fly in this period). In 1926, Ford built four prototypes; the first had a three-cylinder Anzani engine, whilst the others used Ford-built engines. The planes, which were referred to as the 'Flying Flivvers', had a 21' 9" span, used what we know today as flaperons, and were targeted at a selling price of 500 American dollars.

In 1933, one of the Ford Flivvers suffered a fatal crash. As a result, Henry Ford quit his private aviation interests, leaving the field open to de Havilland and Piper, amongst others. Today, in the Ford Museum, there's one remaining Ford Flivver on display - and it must be said, the new Great Planes 'SlowPoke' looks very much like that 1920s Flivver profile!

QUICK MOVING SLOW

The Great Planes SlowPoke kit appears to be a new best-seller in



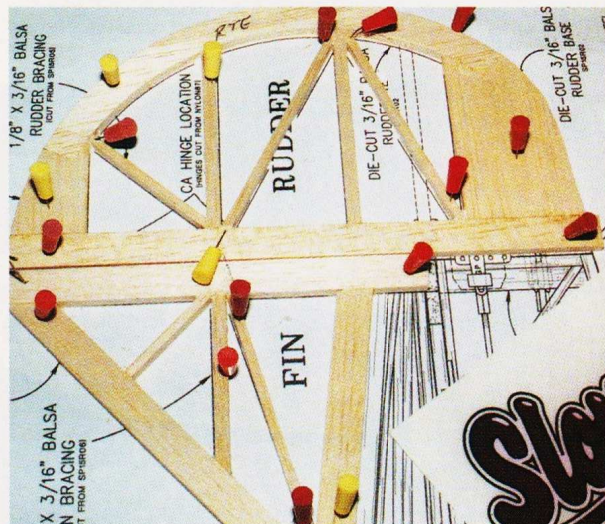
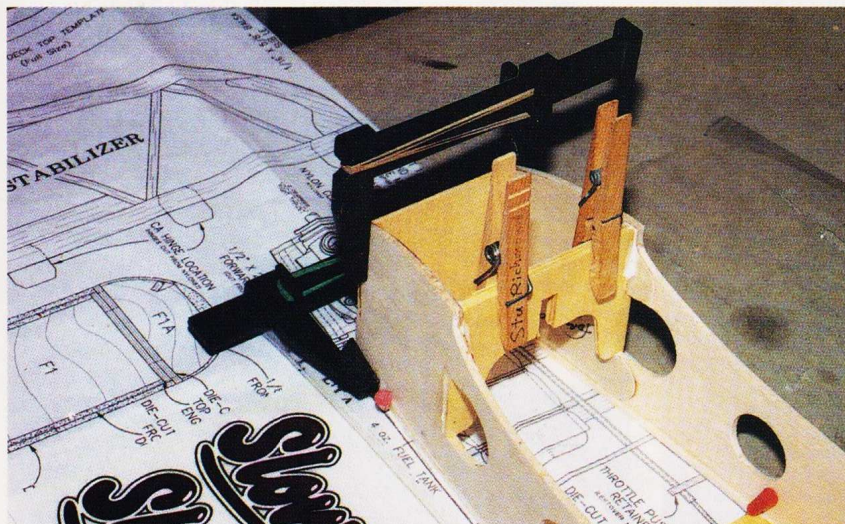
the hobby shops. There are three other SlowPoke's flying in my local area, and a fourth is nearly finished. One local hobby shop sold five or six kits within a week of taking its stock! Our own review model has already been out for about 12 to 15 flights, and it's just GREAT FUN! The model has a fat 'n squat look; it's got curves and stringers, plus doughnut-shaped oversize tyres. It's got little style, but LOTS of Golden Age aviation charm. When I first saw the advertising, even though it's just a small 3-channel model, I knew I wanted to build and fly a SlowPoke.

This new sport model is aptly named. With low throttle, it'll chug along slowly with it's nose a bit high. I've yet to manage a true stall; it just slows down, and pokes along in a forward direction, with you holding 'up' elevator. The name 'SlowPoke' definitely fits!

One aerodynamic feature which contributes to SlowPoke's flying fun is its extremely low aspect-ratio wing. This is calculated by dividing the wingspan by its chord; the lower the plane's aspect ratio, the more nose-high it'll fly, and the less violent a stall will be.

BOTTOM LEFT: Be sure to have suitable clamps at hand. Sneak out to the washing line, and...

All construction is conventional.





TOP LEFT: GIVE your model RIGHT thrust, not left as the instructions wrongly suggest. Models with left thrust don't fly well!

TOP RIGHT: The outside of this kit suggests you'll need these items to complete SlowPoke. If you fly from grass, use the fattest wheels you can get, to minimize rolling resistance.



Rear turtle deck, ready for carving / sanding. Everything seems to fit perfectly.



The completed fuselage top, featuring compound curves.

A good example of nose-high, no-stall slow flight would be a supersonic Concorde on landing. While most airplanes have an aspect ratio in the range 6:1 to 8:1, the SlowPoke is about 3.5:1. If you feed in up elevator with the throttle a click or two above idle, and maintain straight forward flight, it'll do what our guys are calling the 'Viagra hump'! The model, flying nose high, gently stalls, picks up speed, and then re-stalls, and re-stalls again - it goes up and down until you add power and release up elevator, which will let you fly out of this kinda sexy manoeuvre.

HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP

Our kit weighed 4 lb. 4oz. (about 1.9 kilos). Based on past experience, I wasn't expecting it to alter much

when ready to fly; there's not usually much difference. The box spiel suggests that SlowPoke will fly with a .10 to .25 two-stroke engine, or a .26 four-stroke. With an anticipated flying weight of around four pounds, I opted for an O.S. 20. You'd be expecting a lot of a .10 or .15, and I'm sure the performance would be less than inspiring.

All our local SlowPokes have lots of added nose weight epoxied behind F-1. With an O.S. 26 four-stroke fitted, flying buddy Al Ward needed 12 oz. in his to achieve the designated balance; he's got just enough thrust / power to safely get away off very short grass (the kit specifies using very fat 3" wheels for minimum grass drag). I have 6 oz. behind F-1, my .20 turns a 9 x 5" prop at 12,100, and I get off in two thirds the distance of Al. The lesson here is simple: if you

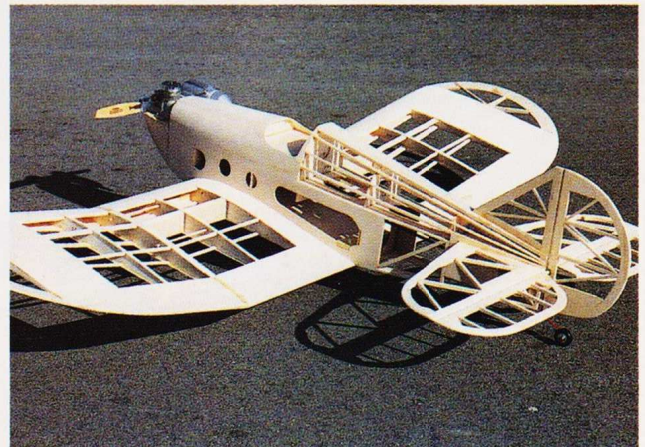
take off from grass, fit a two-stroke .20 or .25. If you fly from pavement / hardtop, you could use a smaller engine, but the flying fun factor will be reduced because your power-to-weight ratio goes down. My flying weight, by the way, is 4 lb. 2oz.

WHOLE BUNCH A' FUN

About half my flying is conducted from a marvellous 800 foot long paved runway near Orlando, Florida. Here, I can drive SlowPoke right down the runway's centerline for a most realistic lift off.

Once away the model, although it's only carrying rudder / elevator / throttle servos (no ailerons), is bunches of fun. It'll do big loops, square loops, small loops, tiny loops, it'll fly inverted for ever, and it'll do

Front and rear three quarter views of the bones.





Ain't she pretty in her bright yellow party dress?

one outside loop - all with a .20, and the specified elevator travel. If the travel is increased, it'll do snap rolls, and spin in either direction, too. The plans call for a 4 oz. fuel tank (about eight minutes of flying), but the model will take most brands of 6 oz. tank as well.

Our SlowPoke carries three HS-422 servos from the new Hitec 'System X' radio. This is a brand new, ultra-easy-to-program computer radio built into their economical Flash 5 casing. The new System X program has virtually everything you need for fixed-wing aircraft (no heli stuff), and even dedicates one of its three programs to PSS glider people! Simply said, it

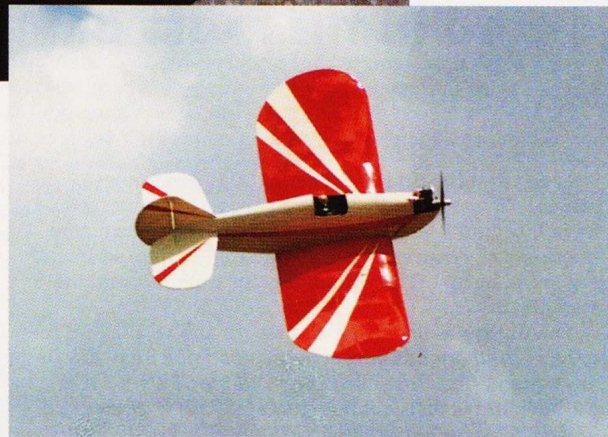
doesn't have a lot of superfluous cute things we never use. Nice! It has aileron / rudder mix, 'V'-tail, selectable wing camber, elevons, rate switches, expo and such. I increased the elevator EPA (end point adjustments) to get my spins, and the elevator expo is set to '-30'; this nicely desensitises SlowPoke around neutral. Oh, and I almost forgot - the System X has autosave, and memory for five airplanes. It's a super, modern radio to go with a super vintage-style model.

When you get a chance, ask to look inside a 'SlowPoke' kit, and see for yourself just how good it is. What's inside represents a lot of building



If you clean your muffler with alcohol first, that vinyl 'O.S. ENGINE' emblem will stick forever. Prop is a 9 x 5".

BELOW: Here's flyin' friend Al Ward's version cruising with an O.S. 26 four-stroke. We've been towing paper streamers behind them: who's for combat?



and flying fun - for not much money. Now, if Great Planes would just bring out a really big version of SlowPoke for a 1.20 four-stroke... WOWEEEE!



FAR RIGHT: Stu suggests a .20 to .25 engine for maximum flight fun.

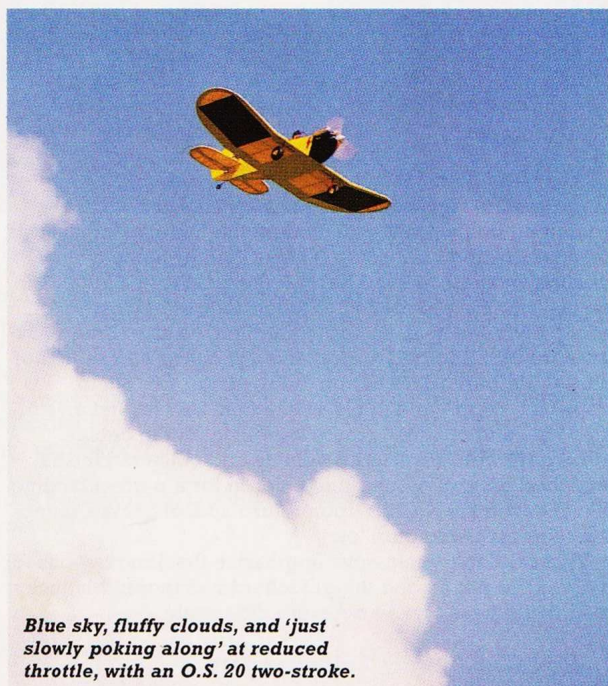
SlowPoke uses an Ernst charge receptacle, Top Flight's MonoKote, an O.S. engine, and is kitted by Great Planes. The hole in the engine's head is filled with a long idlebar glow plug - and you're reading SlowPoke here in RCM&E.

DATAFILE

Name:	SlowPoke
Aircraft type:	Sport / fun fly
Manufacturer:	Great Planes
UK availability:	Local Ripmax stockist as special order only
Price:	£99.99
Wing span:	50" or 1270mm
Wing area:	656.5 sq. in.
Length:	36.5" or 930mm
Suggested weight:	2.5 - 3.5 lb.
All-up weight:	4 lb. 2 oz.
Engine range:	.10 - .25 two-stroke, or .26 four-stroke
Engine used:	O.S. Max .20
Rec. no. of channels:	3
Control functions:	Rudder, elevator, throttle

Likes: Vintage appearance, parts fit well, building is non-complex, and the SlowPoke is MUCH FUN to fly. It's far more aerobatic than you'd think. The plans appear perfect.

Dislikes: The instruction manual with this initial batch of kits has a major thrust line error (it calls for left thrust, which is wrong), and some other small glitches that should be corrected in future kit runs. Rudder / elevator pushrods were each 1/2" too short.



Blue sky, fluffy clouds, and 'just slowly poking along' at reduced throttle, with an O.S. 20 two-stroke.