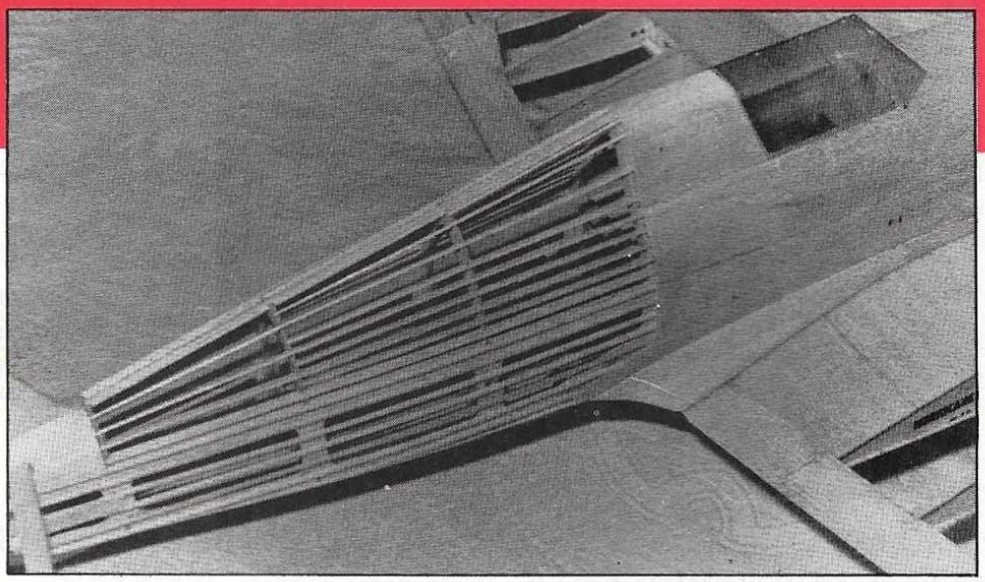
The Pilot Hurricane

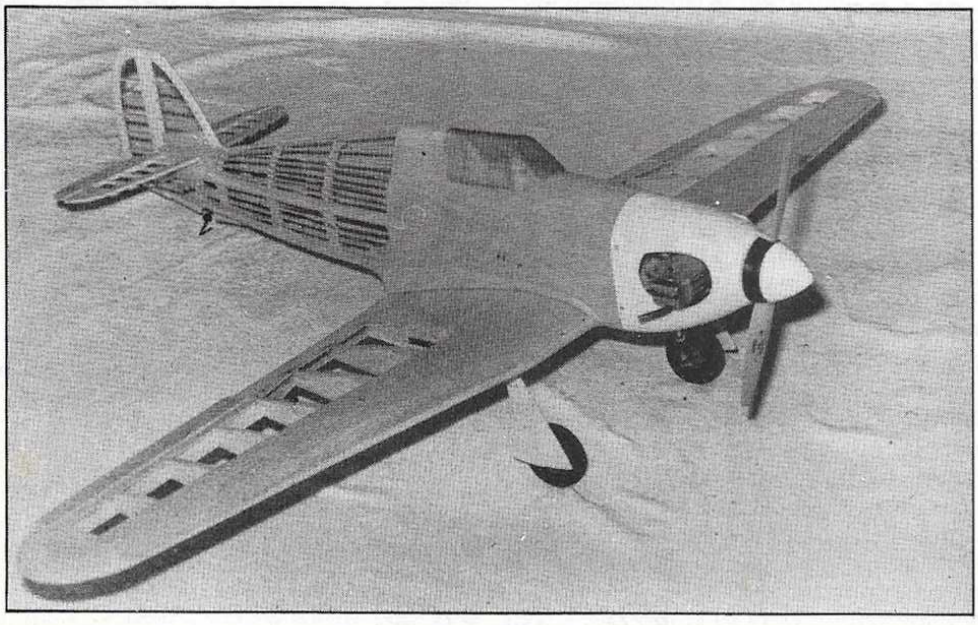
The immortal Battle of Britain fighter, kitted by Pilot in this 49½in. span version for .20 to .30 two strokes or .35 to .45 four strokes, is built by JOHN YATES.

I have built model aircraft all my life, 'man and boy' as they say. In my early days with bits of scrap balsa, etc. right up to modern, sophisticated models, which, if I may say so, being of modest disposition, are worth looking at — some would say, from a distance! However, kit reviewing is new to me, so I was delighted when I was entrusted with the above mentioned model, so here we go.

The kit came in a good, sound cardboard box with a well illustrated top listing the recommended engines and the general dimensions. The contents of the kit are well packaged, hardwood and balsa are separated into handy plastic bags, and it was complete with comprehensive drawings and instructions.

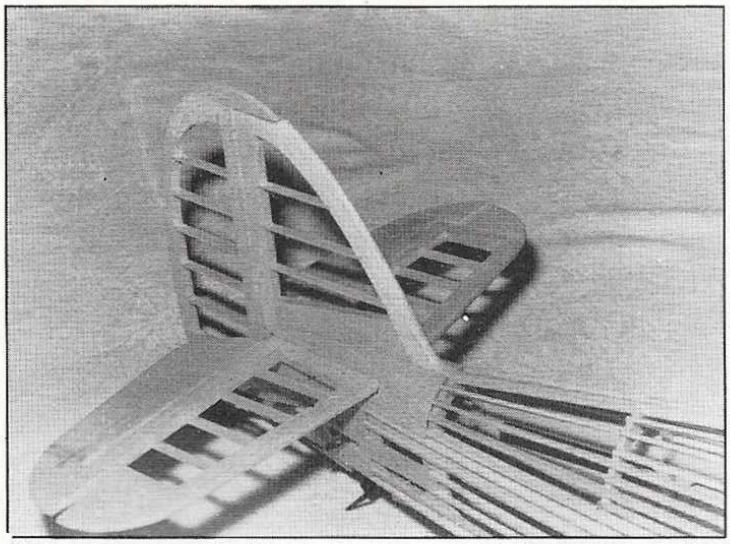


There are two ways to produce the stringer'd rear of the Hurricane fuselage — either thin strips over a sheeted surface or true stringers. The latter is more authentic and more painstaking, but Pilot's excellent die-cutting makes construction a pleasure.

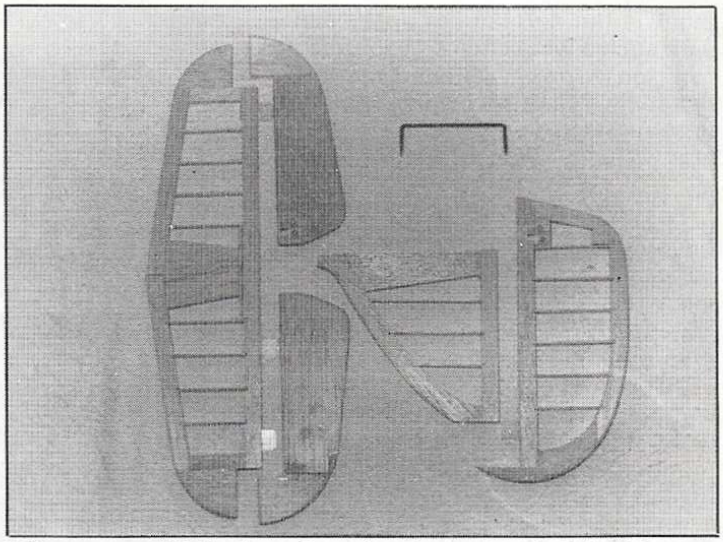


Fuselage first

Building the fuselage, I was surprised how easily it went together. I found the photographic illustrations a revelation of stage by stage building. And what can you say about the die cutting — how do they do it? How well I remember my early days of modelling, hacking out formers, fingers taped up from numerous cuts. Anyway, enough about the past, back to the model.



Tail surfaces are built up structures, which are intended to be lighter than solid sheet equivalents.



When assembled, the tail surfaces are neatly faired in.

The only deviation from the drawing was the top planking, so with care, a little bit of luck and a few choice words, plus steam heating, I managed it with four pieces of sheeting.

I liked the PVC cowling, a nice strong moulding. Some PVC mouldings, mentioning no names, of course, are too thin and flimsy, they tend to distort with engine heat, etc.

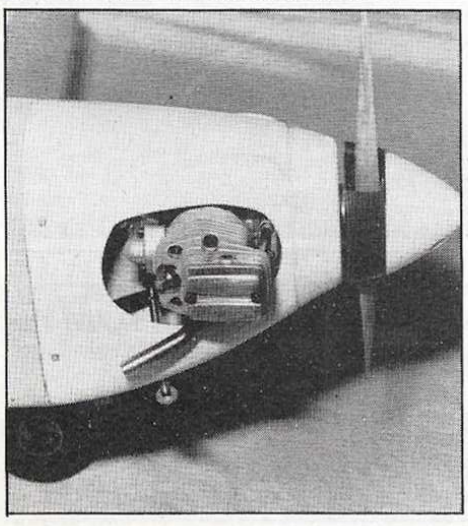
Talking about the sharp end, the engine we are fitting (what a beaut!) is an O.S. FS 40 four stroke. I always think it's a pity the way we have to hack the cowling to accommodate the engine, I suppose they haven't got around to making Merlin's that small yet! or have they? ha! ha!

The Tail

I always build the tail before the wings, the reason being is that you can tack the tail onto the fuselage for checking alignment against fuselage and wings when built to the mock-up stage.

Probably this is old hat to most modellers, but how many models on your local flying field have out-of-line wings to tail — funny, though, how they always seem to fly well.

The O.S. FS-40 was fitted sidewinder, which allowed plenty of cooling air to flow around the cylinder head.



You will find on the back of the instruction sheet there is a complete diagram of each piece of balsa and hardwood in the kit, this I found to be most helpful. With other kits I have built, it's frustrating looking for bits of balsa and thinking 'where the ... ... does this go'. Now, what part was I building, oh! yes, the tail.

You can't go wrong, all the pieces are clearly marked, glue it together over the plan, and your tail is built, ready for sanding and hinges.

The wings

One problem I found on building the wings, they are semi-symmetrical, and no template is supplied in the kit, but for the average modeller, this would cause no problem using a piece of balsa tapering from ¼in. to ⅛in. to overcome this minor problem.

The building of the wings is just as straightforward as the tail and fuselage, with good strong hardwood main spars, shaped leading and trailing edges. There is also provision for retracts. After sheeting and capping exposed ribs, the wings turned out to be very strong, ideally suited for the 15.G pilot.

One good point I must mention, not that you could stop me anyway, I was pleased to see the aileron torque rods are made out of good, strong brass tubing with soldered connecting pieces.

Covering

I think of myself as a traditional builder, using only nylon or tissue and dope, according to the type of model. Then came the advent of Solartex. When it first came onto the market, I heard good reports through modelling friends, but I was still a bit dubious. Nothing, I argued, could replace nylon and dope for strength and durability. Well, I was wrong. After using Solartex I was completely converted.

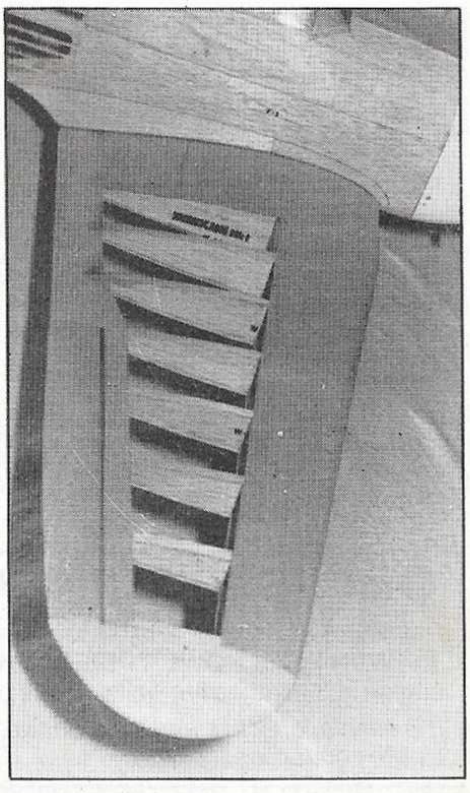
Before covering any model with Solartex, I give the whole airframe a light spraying with cellulose paint. There are three reasons for doing this:

1. By spraying lightly the airframe with cellulose paint it removes all dust particles so giving better adhesion.
2. When applying heat in the process of covering, the heat attacks the cellulose paint, again giving extra adhesion.
3. I use the colour I intend finishing the model, e.g. if red, spray the airframe red, and so on, and you will find you get a nice consistent finish — without those blotches of white filler and of course the differing shades of balsa wood and ply showing through.

Painting

Not possessing a spray gun or being an expert at spraying, I find the easiest and cheapest way of using cellulose

Wing construction is sturdy and conventional.



paint is the aerosol car spray can — with such a wide choice of colours you can't go wrong. I sprayed the underside with cellulose paint, in this case duck-egg blue. I used cellulose paint first because you can mask on top of it.

To obtain a good, sharp line, I use Sellotape — to reduce the powerful adhesive properties I rub it over a piece of smooth hardwood until it has lost nearly all the adhesive qualities thus avoiding lifting the paint. I then used enamel paint for the top camouflage. Having decorated the Hurricane with its roundels and registration numbers, etc. I must say it looked very realistic.

Fuel Proofing and Varnishing

This has been a problem for years for scale modellers, the problem has always been to get a realistic flat finish. Using fuel proofing and other types of varnish you get an uneven streaky unrealistic finish. Therefore, to avoid this I always use Ronseal Matt Varnish, which was a tip given to me by a very good modelling friend of mine.

By applying Ronseal matt varnish onto the finished model you get a completely flat realistic finish. By the way, if you haven't any spraying equipment, like yours truly, you can get exactly the same results by using a piece of sponge. Try it, you will be delighted with the finish.

After many years of building models from kits, I found this to be one of the easiest and most satisfying kits to build. So come on, you budding scale builders, try your hand at this one.

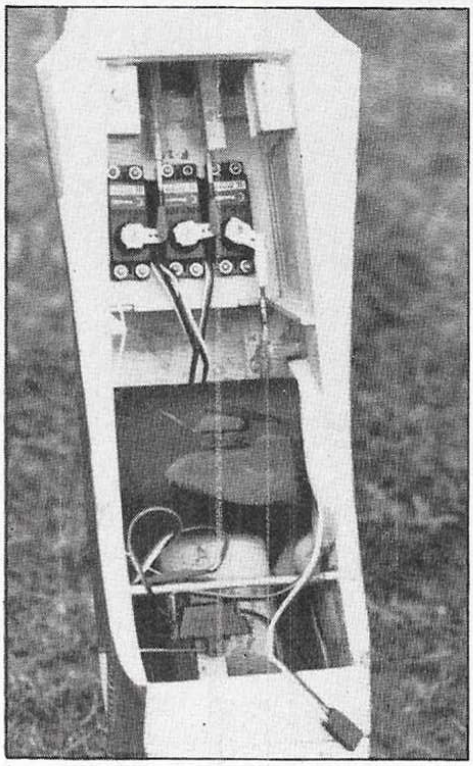
Flying

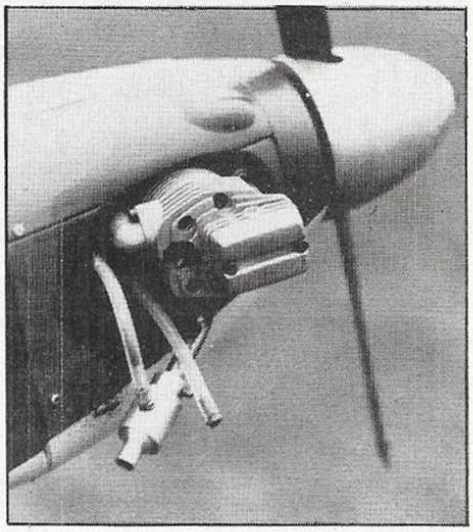
The day turned out to be clear and bright but a bit on the chilly side, but then when can you expect from an English winter.

The Hurricane was fuelled up and the C of G again checked. It's better to be safe than sorry!

From the onset it was decided to fit a four-stroke motor, the OS 40FS was chosen and installed without any problems and proved itself a good choice by starting immediately and after a couple of tweaks on the needle valve we had it running like a Swiss watch (or should it be a Japanese watch?)

The model had been set up with a fair amount of control movement (you can always use less, but its hard to find more if it isn't there) and again all control surfaces were checked for movement and orientation.





Radio bay photographed, left, shows the three servos in the kit's ply servo tray. Photo above shows the metal spinner used for the test flights.

The take off run was made into a very gentle 3–4mph breeze gently easing off the elevator as the tail came up. A long run was made before allowing the Hurricane to part company with the grass, a good speed to build up so that the climb out would not present any problems.

A little aileron and elevator trim were required to achieve straight and level flight.

The model buzzed around beautifully showing off its classic Hurricane lines, and that distinctive four-stroke engine note adding to its appeal (to me anyway!)

After getting the feel of the Pilot Hurricane it was put through its paces and found to be quite pleasing. Time to land and a large left hand circuit approach was made before touching down. The landing was intentionally made a little faster than really necessary again like the take off, just to be on the safe side.

Summary

A nice attractive model that suits a popular engine size of .20–.30 two-stroke and .30–.40 four-strokes. As with most models and particularly with the smaller ones the Pilot Hurricane should be built as light as possible especially the rear end, weight here will need a fair amount of lead in the nose to achieve the correct C of G, so go easy.

Like all Pilot kits the Hurricane is well presented and packed. The die cutting is amazing requiring little effort to release. Fun to build and fun to fly.

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