

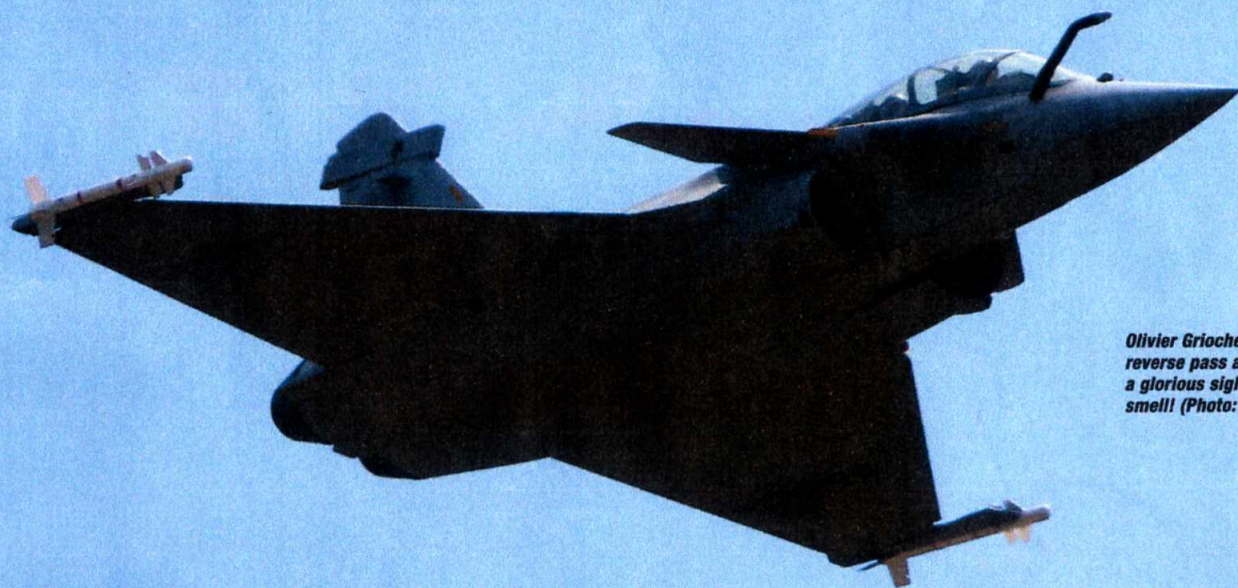
FRENCH CONNECTION

DAVE
GOODENOUGH



Perfect Piste Playtime!

or Flying Frogs Foregather...



Olivier Grioche's Rafale – a fast reverse pass along the runway, a glorious sight, sound...and smell! (Photo: Dede)

As the resident 'Rosbif' and scribe in this neck of the French woods, I once again dragged my weary bones to our club flying site, not entirely unwillingly you understand; it was that time of year again – early May - the Maquettes Show of 'Les Fous Volants' (The Scale Model Show of the 'Flying Fools') was under way and there were photos to take, oaths and curses to record, plus flesh to press. May Day was 'prep at the piste' and the wind was howling - add some showers to the mix, a dozen or so semi-reluctant Frenchmen, stir in a bit of 'will they stay the course' and you have the usual pre-show mayhem. We persevered - the barriers went out and the tents up, all to the incessant background babble of 'too many French chefs'. Though soggy and worn, we had set the scene for the coming weekend. What happened, who did what? The tale begins...

FRIDAY – EARLY ARRIVALS

Arriving at the runway with a car full of 'if there's airspace, I'll fly' models, it was clear that I was out of luck. Several visiting pilots were either in preparation or already test flying and of course, as a humble weekend model mangler, I was way down the pecking order. Oh well, never mind. As the decision has previously been made, regardless of wind direction, all flying was along the East-West runway axis, something that many pilots had cause to curse later. It certainly tested

many to the limit and beyond, one being the supersonic Piper Cub I espied, bouncing down the runway before coming to a stop whilst grating a wingtip along the tarmac. Daniel Boulanger flew his 1/4 scale Stampe - from the Precedent kit - through some rapid evolutions before he too did the hoppity bit, weather-cocking into the breeze and tripping up on the runway edge. He says that the 30cc OS motor (no other details) hauls it around admirably. Two Jungmeisters rent the air and 'did their thing' in practice; Roger Nieto and Bruno Guiquel were flexing their fingers. Tucked away in one of the tents in the soon-to-be public area was Jean-Luc Lacuentra, fettling his 4.2m jet-powered 'Red Bull' Blanik glider. A Horizon Hobby kit, it's modified to take its JetCat P60 on a saddle mount above the wing centre section. The wingtips had curious cardboard tubes and wires attached - I found out why, later. With the weather becoming 'iffy' I, like all the others, gave up and went home to warm up. Many of the arriving pilots and crews later wended their way to 'Norby's' outside the army camp gates, for the pre-show evening buffet, booze and catch-up chinwag.

SATURDAY – LET THE FUN BEGIN!

Camera back-pack, folding chair, sandwiches, drink – all check, prepared and off to the piste again for some aerial mayhem. Never mind the cold, I was there to do a job, as scribe and second-string photographer.

Mate Kevin had already arrived, collared a good place in the pits and unloaded his 'Pit Queen' models, I did the same with my three to add some colour, as had many other pilots - we of course proudly raised our Sovereign flag to claim a little patch of Bretagne for the weekend and act as a focus for the many (two) visteurs Anglais. A model that immediately grabbed the eye was the 2.45m span Sopwith Pup by Pierre Larrieux, built from the Toni Clark 30% scale kit and powered by a Zenoah 38 with 2.8:1 gear reduction, swinging a huge prop. Pierre flew this model perfectly, emulating the abilities of the original without straying into 'silly stunt' territory – magnificent!

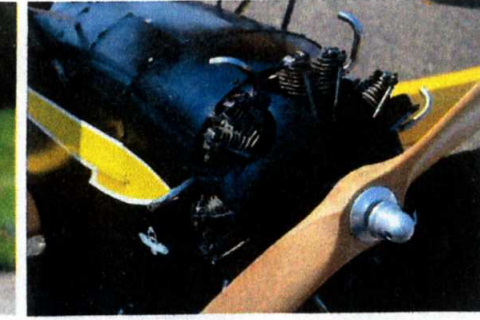
Passing through the pits whilst 'blacking my nose', I marvelled at the huge variety of aircraft in miniature; from airliner - a Lockheed Constellation - to Johann Forgeard's Gee Bee R1 'flying barrel' racer, and almost anything else with wings that you can imagine, virtually all were finished to a very high standard. At the far Western end of the pits, a monster was being assembled; the huge 8m Duo Discus sailplane of Andreas Fricke. Andreas hails originally from Germany, but is now resident in Toulouse where he works for Airbus. His round trip to our show would eventually total 1400km, nearly 900 miles! After loading the largest amount of LiPo's I've ever seen, let alone be fitted into a model, he rolled it out to dominate the runway. With its power pylon extended from the fuselage hatch, the big



A Floch Caudron about to deafen the crowd (no silencer) – a horrendous noise, but what a plane in flight!



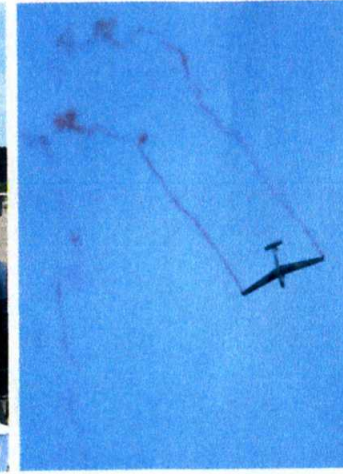
'Papy's' Ponnier lifts off before Pierre headed into his routine – a lovely model and a master flier. (Photo: Dede)



The Seidel 7-cylinder engine in the unfinished Fleet Model 1 – I can't wait to hear it running and see the plane in action.



The French do it sitting down – repas en masse.



Blanik balletics by Lancuentra – a different take on sailplane aerobatics.



Camerameister Dede directs the pilots for the obligatory pilot and plane group hug.



Rarely modelled over here – an unfinished Fleet Model 1.



A bit too close! The Boulanger Stampe drifts a bit in the crosswind.

single-bladed propeller hauled this magnificent sailplane into the air with a distinctive, almost engine-like beat. Supplied by the Czech H-Model company at 1:2.25 scale, this is an aircraft that makes jaws drop whenever it flies. Noise and fury followed, with the Rafale B01 jet of Olivier Grioche taking centre stage. In grey 'Armee de L'Air' colour, this 1.8m span, 2.45m long model uses a Merlin turbine with 16kg of thrust to shove it round the sky with authority, and not a little French verve. Flat out 'to the max' passes, low speed 'all hanging' runs down the runway and lots of big fighter manoeuvres later, he brought it in, ignoring the crosswind and planting it on the runway 'just so' – superb! Some biplaner followed, with several Stampes, Eric Decouvalere's lovely Tiger Moth, joumeau Jungmeisters and a curious pale yellow 'Pitts-like' model - a Pottier P-60 Minacro (literally Mini-Acro). Pierre 'Papy' Boissiere loves his French aerobatic aircraft and brought this wee beastie for a bit of fun, instead of his well-known Jurca Tempete. He describes the P-60 as "...the French answer to the Pitts, but not quite so successful!" Never mind his description of the type, Pierre

flew this little custard tart all over the sky in a delightful display by this master modeller. Two sleek, blue, mean-looking aircraft sat in the pits awaiting attention - the 1/3 scale Caudron Racers built by the Floch brothers, Herve and Ronan. Although not flown on this first show day, one was run-up to check its motor. No-one could ignore it! I can't remember which one was run, but the model 460 sports a 90cc Sachs 'gas' engine, whilst the 561 is hauled by a 70cc Precision Eagle glow motor – both have big bore exhaust stubs with NO silencing! The noise was mind-numbing from close-up. Much mixed warbird flying mayhem took place, with a surprisingly low attrition rate due to 'tripping-up' on landing. Jean-Luc's Blanik glider started to whine as the turbine spooled-up, before he managed a wobbly crosswind takeoff. The wingtip tubes I'd noticed before were in fact smoke cartridges, which he fired-up in flight, showing the populace a different slant on his display with its slow, smoke trailed artistry – very distinctive and a real crowd pleaser. A melee of yellow taildraggers jostled for take-off rights – eight in all – then puttered, roared and whispered into the air, dependant

on power source. Thanks to the wind, we saw a lot of buttock-clenching moments on both takeoff and arrival as taildraggers don't like crosswinds - fun for the crowd, but had the pilots calling for Valium! It led to the question asked before; what do you call a group of Pipers? A toot, a whistle, even a flaut – we settled on a 'Pied of Pipers', do you know better? With the shadows lengthening, it was time to pack away the models and prepare for the Bacchanalia to come - the Saturday evening, all-in, freestyle, fancy-dress beanfeast. Unfortunately - or thankfully - I was unable to attend, though I'm certain that Dede's photos will give a taster of the 'couture' on show and the depths of depravity plumbed!

SUNDAY – ON WITH THE MOTLEY!

The day dawned with a promise of balmy breezes and light cloud, and so it came to pass. I arrived late morning, stowed my stuff and wandered... Flying had already begun and several of the warbirds were gambolling, practice strafing, or generally playing 'catch me' in the circuit – good fun for the early public. One model I'd seen earlier was



Many of the planes present and a disparate bunch of malcontents – the group hug on Sunday.



The huge 8m Duo Discus sailplane of Andreas Fricke hauls round in a high gee turn with wings flexing – an awesome sight and sound.



Compact, isn't it? The Larriex Pup power source – a geared Zenoh 38.



The Rrolinson R22 took to the air – eventually. An impressive bit of kit. (Photo: Dede)



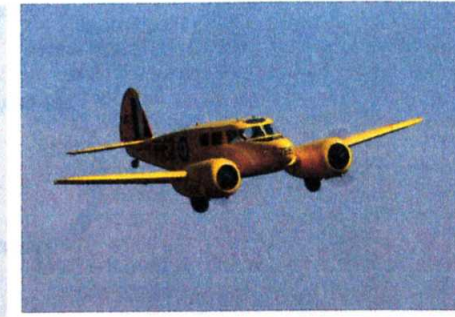
Proud 'Kev shows his A400M from the Nijhuis kit – yet to fly...



he lovely Forgeard Mew Gull hauls round in a fast turn to beat the Caudrons. (Photo: Dede)



Nieto's Skyraider prepares to drop ordnance on the unsuspecting Frog insurgents! (Photo: Dede)



A 'supersonic' Cessna Bobcat rockets past – there's one under restoration at the Angers Aviation Museum – I've seen it. (Photo: Dede)



Lockheed designed a fabulous plane. The 'Connie' banks gently and whispers past on its four outrunners. (Photo: Dede)

Right: Christophe Baudrillart with his 'Bretling' schemed L39 Albatross – at 2.6m span and 3.1m long, you can't ignore this Jetcat P180 powered lovely.



Far Right: Marie Guiquel guides the Dalotel for Dad Bruno. A lovely pair of beauties.



A 'look-see' over the Broceliande trenches? That super Pup ambles past with all its wherewithals on display. A masterful piece of aviation art.



Far Left: A knight out in France and his Damsel graced our happy throng – at least they left the horse behind. (Photo: Dede)



Left: A stuck nosewheel caused Herve Floch's to land his Dornier Do335 'Pfiel' in the weeds – no damage, but no more flights possible. (Photo: Dede)

the Dornier 335 'Pfiel' by Herve Floch, an impressive 'push me - pull you' beast from the Modellbau Lindinger supplied kit. Herve was a bit reluctant to fly as he'd only flown it once before, just the weekend before our show. A bit of arm-twisting saw him prepare, roll out and 'give it the beans'. With a DLE 35 in the nose and a 20 up its chuff, this 2.2m, 13kg model did not hang about! Despite his lack of experience with the plane, Herve flew it very convincingly, showing it to be rock steady in the air. Unfortunately the retracts failed to operate correctly and despite some high 'G' work, he couldn't get the nose gear to lower and lock. He wisely flared-out over the off-piste grass and brought it down, very close to the stall, in a decently controlled 'arrival' - model and pilot survived! Christophe Baudrillart likes his jets big and black! His 'Breitling' schemed L39 Albatross is a polished and primped delight to the eye - sleek and purposeful. At 2.6m span and 3.1m long, you can't ignore this Jetcat P180 powered lovely. The spectators loved it; lots of noise and smell from the turbine and a studied, yet spirited and precise display by a very capable pilot. Do you like air racing? The Floch frères rolled out their snarling 'blue beast' Caudrons and were joined by other 'sky terrorists', club members Johann with his GeeBee R1 'Flying Barrel' and Jacques with his curvaceous R2. Also in circuit was a whisper quiet Caudron twin - the French counterpart of our own DH Comet racer. This disparate group of ne'er-do-wells ripped up

the sky, tortured our ears and howled around like banshees, tearing along the runway from safe to suicide heights - we loved it! Unfortunately, one of the big Floch monsters perpetrated a whoopsie on landing and ended nose down in the off-piste grass, with just bent legs for the plane and red face for the pilot. One flying biplane that continued to 'do it for me' was the Larrieux Pup, its reduction drive giving it just the right urge to emulate a WW1 warbird. Flown oh-so-carefully, it dominated the biplane group flying, right down to the final bounce on alighting - magic! More noise and fury emanated from the flight line as massed fighters coughed and roared into life. To widely differing scales (who cared) and different theatres of war (so what), these hooligans hared away down the runway and flew with abandon. Add the sound of gunfire on the PA system and you can understand why the kids - and some parents - in the crowd were hopping from foot to foot with excitement! A large P51 Mustang had a near miss with our windsock and the trees beyond - perhaps that super-fast Focke-Wulf Ta 152 had snuck up on him? With a large Wyvern and a Chipmunk (!) also getting some action, we just sat back and enjoyed the spectacle.

The three large sailplanes took to the air again and whilst Lacuentra did another 'set

with his smoke-trailed Blanik, the larger pair strutted their languid stuff as only big gliders can do. Whilst the Blanik was brought back, the other two circled slowly in a thermal before slicing the air with energy-retention aerobatics. Andreas' 8m beauty had one last trick up its wing. On a long, low and fast pass, he hauled the Duo-Discus into a monster loop from near-zero level, returning to the same near shrubby level and causing the crowd to spontaneously gasp and clap with appreciation as he popped the airbrakes and 'greased' the landing. And so the show progressed to its conclusion, with happy pilots and crowd alike, on this hot Sunday afternoon.

THE FUTURE - AN INVITATION

Needless to say, we all said we've got to do it again. The show is now on the 'must be there' list for both pilots and visitors alike, and you too can join in - don't be shy! Anyone with 'BMFA' B/C certification competence can fly, providing they adhere to our FFAM requirements. If you've got a scale model, you want to show off, and it's under 25kg, come on down, the wine's cheap and the food is fantastic! ●



CONTACTS

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