

INTERNATIONAL PLASTIC MODELLERS SOCIETY

Canadian Branch

24 June 1964

Random Thoughts # 1

While I have exchanged correspondence with individual Canadian members, I haven't yet attempted anything in the way of a bulletin beamed at members collectively.

2. At the outset I think you're entitled to know something about me, and how I came to be interested in modelling. I have to go back about 32 years, when my brother produced a 1/72 model of the Hawker Fury, a biplane fighter of the early thirties. At that time there were no plastic kits. "Skybirds" produced a line of kits with the fuselage and wings roughly shaped in wood, tailplanes and fins in a fibrous material, interplane and undercarriage struts stamped in metal, and wheels and propellers cast in metal. The Westland Wallace was one of the first I tried my hand at, and then the original Comet, the D-H 88. As the RAF expansion programme got into its stride, "Skybirds" brought out the Hurricane, the Spitfire, the Battle, the Blenheim and the Lysander. The Spit and the Battle had cockpit covers of cast metal! Shortly before WWII Frog started producing plastic kits, among them the Empire Flying Boat and the Wellington. I remember making up a D-H 86.

3. Being by then a confirmed aerophile, I was keen to join the RAF and joined up in 1943. I trained in Canada on D-H 82Cs and Ansons and eventually found my way into the Fleet Air Arm, in which I flew Harvards, Oxforbs and Corsairs. Since the war I have been involved in aviation in one way or another, so I now have over 21 years close association with the air.

4. My interest in modelling was re-awakened in 1959, when Airfix kits began appearing in Canada. Thence, via the Airfix Magazine, to my connection with the IPMS.

The Vickers Vimy

5. I recently received Frog's Vickers Vimy, in their new Trailblazers series. This is 1/72 scale, and is an intriguing model to make up. I was struck by its relative smallness, particularly the fuselage. A certain amount of patience is needed in assembling the engine nacelles and the wings, as there is a mass of interplane struts. However, I found that by glueing the interplane struts to the bottom wings and letting them set before attempting to put the top wings in place, I saved myself any undue grief. Although there is a nosewheel provided in the kit, I believe that for the Atlantic flight it was dispensed with. There is an interesting account on the instructions leaflet of Alcock and Brown's Epic flight, which took place 45 years ago this month. I passed through London Airport a few weeks back and was rather depressed to see that the statue of Alcock and Brown is still on the north side, now no longer in use for intercontinental passenger flights. I hope that the powers that be will move them over to the new intercontinental departures building to serve once more as a reminder of the beginning of trans-Atlantic flying. I don't

expect that many people winging their way between Shannon and Gander give a thought to Alcock and Brown.

6. The Vimy was also used by Keith and Ross Smith for their flight from England to Australia in 1919, so it was truly a 'Trailblazer'. I'm trying to get details of the Smiths' Vimy, and will pass on the dope in due course.

7. It will be interesting to see what other aircraft Frog will bring out in this series. They have announced the Supermarine S6B, which won the Schneider Trophy in the early thirties, and the Bristol 138, which set altitude records shortly before WWII. How about Alan Cobham's D-H floatplane, Wiley Post's Lockheed Vega, Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith's Southern Cross, Mollison's D-H 84, Jean Batten's Percival Gull, Alex Henshaw's Mew Gull, PAA's Sikorsky S42, the D-H Hercules and the Empire Flying Boat? Frog have certainly got a good thing going with the Trailblazers.

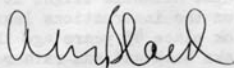
8. At present I'm working on a Revell S.E.5a, which I plan to finish as Mannoek's mount, as described in IPMS Newsletter No. 6.

9. I am attaching a list of the Canadian Branch membership, and would urge you all to work hard for new recruits. In a country as large as Canada, much depends on the efforts of individual members. From B.C. to N.S. we have 8 bodies, but until we build up groups right across the map, it is going to be difficult to organise any communal activity. I understand that the U.K. body didn't really start expanding until they were able to organise monthly meetings in London, but since the beginning of the year they've come along fast.

10. Jim Sage is setting a hot pace south of the border - they're approaching the 200 mark.

11. As you know, we're still operating as an offshoot of the U.S. Branch, but I would hope that when we push our membership up to around the 30 mark, we'll be able to paddle our own canoe.

12. Please forgive this monologue. Next time I go into print, I hope that I'll have plenty of comments and contributions from you, the members. Remember, our Canadian Branch can only flourish if we all pitch in.



A. M. Black.