

Australian Scale Nationals Sept 25-29 2013

The Scale Nats were planned to run at the National Field at Cootamundra so I thought I'd go and watch then I thought why not fly my Pup? So I entered.

There is no way it is in the F4C class so I entered in the F4H which is the old Stand Off Scale class. You have to provide reasonable documentation, a 3 view drawing, photo of a real aircraft and something to prove your colour scheme - not too difficult. I sent off the application, got the stuff together, packed my tent (there is camping and hot showers on the field!) and headed west. It's about 390 kms from Balmain but an easy trip being almost all M or E way, head for Yass and then a quick squirt up the Olympic Highway to 5 kms short of the town of Cootamundra.

I pitched my tent on Wednesday, the registration day, and had a couple of test flights. The weather was pretty good, sunny with some wind but very flyable. It's a big field and very flat so quite different to our "Belrose Bowl" and took a bit of getting used to. You have to fly a fair way out so the



judges don't crick their necks when watching but you have to land very close in as you are standing on the edge of the runway. There were a few others flying too and when it got to sunset and there was no wind a few foamies came out and I flew my dear old Mills .75 powered Tomboy.

That night the temp dropped to 5 degrees which made for a cold sleep but not too bad. At 6.00 am it started to blow, and it blew and BLEW and **BLEW!** That was the day it hit 87 kph at Sydney airport!

It flattened my tent, broke a pole and meant no flying all day. That combined with the forecast of 0 degrees for the night prompted me to nip into town and rent a room in the Central Hotel!

We spent the day standing around, chatting, eating delicious egg & bacon sammies cooked by Dave & Col and cursing the weather Gods.



The next day was heaps better and flying started at 8.00 am in sunny, but cold, weather with some breeze. F4C went first (that's serious, finely detailed planes for those not familiar with the categories) and there were only 4 flyers. Graham Harrod with this beautiful Stearman biplane (you need to get close to appreciate the detail) who went on to win this section; Alf Williams and his Fiesler Storch - another magnificent model that, for some reason, I forgot to photograph; Gary Sunderland and his venerable Pfalz DXII and Bill Mansell with his Spacewalker.



While this was going on the F4H was being judged in the static section prior to flying. Here is me in the background while the "Three Wise Men" discuss the merits (or otherwise!) of my Pup. Sadly neither bribery nor threats are allowed or I could have done much better but came 5th - good enough for me.

With the first round (of 3) F4C flown the Large Scale models came out and did their stuff. There were 11 entered of which one shone out for me - Clive Butler and his Wirraway!



This is a big plane with a 5 cylinder Moki motor up the front. It flies as good as it looks and with 415cc throbbing sounds as close to the real thing as you can get.



He went on to take 3rd place behind the Winner, Rod Mitchell with his Neptune. This was modelled on one that drops water on fires and his produced a very realistic copy.

Alf Williams came 2nd with his Tiger Moth here showing typical AW detail work on the cockpits.

Of course my favourite was the Sopwith Pup of Boyd Elliott which was so much more detailed than mine!



It flew as good as it looked and he finished in 4th place.

We got to the Flying Only next with 13 entries. In this class, as its name suggests, you don't need documentation or "builder of the model" so you can enter ARFs though a number were home built. There were some very nice models especially Anthony Ogle (off to Top Gun in the US this week) and his Aichi Val that did some great dive-bombing runs and James Price with his Gee Bee powered by a Seidel radial motor - sounds lovely!

And so to Round 1 of F4H, and I was listed as the last but one of 10 to fly. It's amazing how the nerves cut in! I've flown the Pup many times and know it flies well but when you have to

complete a chosen schedule in front of your peers (or in many cases your betters!) the worry of "stuffing up" gets the fingers wobbling a treat! Peter Goff, up first, put on a fine display with his big Thunderbolt as did Graham Harrod and his highly detailed Chipmonk. In fact they finished up 1st & 2nd.

An interesting model was Stuart Dawson and his electric powered Stuka. One of the



problems of electric power is the silence when flying (especially when you are judged on) so he had fitted an engine noise generator with amp and speakers. The start-up sounded very realistic though the sound was a bit faint when flying. He also did a great dive, almost vertical, with bomb drop and cloud of "smoke" on impact.

So it got to me and I flew - not the best flight ever but nothing to be ashamed of. I flew too close in I was informed by one judge which I put down to flying at our restricted width field.

The next day and Round 2 was pretty good weather, still a bit windy which is not Pup weather



if you have to anything cross-wind. Paul McKeown turned in a very good flight with his Me109, an electric powered one that suffers from the "silent flight syndrome" but is very nicely detailed and smooth in manoeuvres. Ben Tennant is 11 and flies like he's a lot older apart from his love of speed but he puts on a good show!

My second flight was a bit of a mess as I got way out of position and had to abort one manoeuvre. My schedule is Take Off, Figure 8, Descending Circle, Stall Turn, Split S, Roll, Half Cuban 8, Touch & Go, Landing and it's important that they are done in the nominated order (you have to give it to the judges so they know what to look for) and in a place where they can see it easily ie right I front of them, centered on the strip. Soooooo you need a "caller" standing right behind you and Boyd kindly acted as mine.

Thankfully in the 3rd Round on the Sunday I flew a bit better and the final add-up (static plus the average of your 2 best flights) was enough to get me into 7th place.

It was a great experience, made good friends, had too much red wine, shame about the weather but well worth it. It's the MAS field and a lot bigger than ours, it's nice to have that amount of space - this is just the pits area with Peter Goff's Thunderbolt in the foreground and this is part of the camping site.



And finally a mention of Simon Harvey and his huge Fokker DVII which really lumbers around the sky, here being wheeled out for another round.

That's not all the planes or all the action but fortunately there were no horror stories though don't ask Anthony about his retracts!

I don't know where next years will be but I hope I can make it too!

Mike

