Jim Newman, who now lives in the USA, sent us this profile model with lots of character. All the excellent illustrations are by the author too.

MILES MESSENGER

I “fell in love” with the Messenger in 1948 during a visit to Lulsgate airport near Bristol. This sleek little wooden aeroplane appeared encumbered by the various add-ons of a tail, fixed undercarriage, permanently extended flaps and no less than three fins and rudders. However, it was these appendages which made it a success as an STOL (short take-off and landing) aeroplane. Used by high ranking officers during World War Two, including General Bernard “Monty” Montgomery, it is his aircraft which is modelled here. The extremely slow landing speed can be gauged by the successful trials which tested the feasibility of flying off the rear of a merchant ship, then landing into a net rigged across the stern, the idea being to use the aircraft as an anti submarine aircraft for convoy protection.
slide tightly on to a pin and hold each strip in place by clamping it to the building board. The longerons are light, firm stock, while the uprights, nose pieces etc., are as light a 1/16" sheet as I could find. The fuselage carries next to no load and is virtually along for the ride, the motor loads being carried by the motor stick. So, go ahead... add lightness! The motor stick too, is light, firm balsa glued up as an L shape spar, a short block at the front supporting the bound and glued Peck nylon propeller head with about 1-1/2 degrees of right thrust. The stick is glued to the right side of the fuselage with a distinct nose down angle which generates the down thrust.

Wings and tail group

It is better to commence construction by making all the wing tips and tail outlines first, since these can be drying out as one constructs the other parts of the model. These are laminated around thick corrugated cardboard templates, sized to the inside edge of the outlines. Very light, soft balsa is soaked for an hour in a 50/50 water/ammonia mixture, after which, they are as flexible as wet noodles and can readily be wrapped around the formers, following coating each with glue and pressing them together. Wing tips and outboard fins are laminated from 1/32" x 5/32" strips which are split and sanded to produce two outlines. The centre fin and rudder outline is glued up from 1/32" x 1/16" as a separate unit, only the centre rudder being hinged, using fine copper wire. Wing ribs are sliced, all indentical, from light quarter grain balsa using a 1/32" plywood template. On assembly the ribs TE's are trimmed to accommodate the taper. The light balsa undercarriage spar is glued in while still on the board, but the centre rib and gussets are not added until after the dihedral is set.

Undercarriage

Main and tailwheel legs are .025" wire detailed with rounded-off balsa and paper strips. The distinctive suspension unit was carved from a toothpick, while the tail wheel wire really "comes to life" with cut and folded paper details. Main wheels are discs of 1/8" foam from a supermarket meat tray, lightly sanded to remove the glaze. Small .005" plastic hubs are glued each side with aluminium tube glued through. Paint with acrylic artist's colour. (Not dope!).

Propeller

Taper the hub from 1/8" hard balsa then drill for the .032" shaft. Cut the blades from a plastic container, slightly off vertical, as shown on the plan, so that each has the desirable twist built in. Thin them and sharpen the edges by sanding so that they are almost paper thin. Use the jig illustrated to glue each blade at 45 degrees to the hub. The propeller is balanced after putting the shaft through the bearing and hub, bending it 90 degrees, then gluing it to the hub. Use waterproof marker pens to colour the blades as ink adds virtually no unbalancing weight. If one does not wish to make a propeller, the 5" Peck plastic propellers work very well after thinning.

Covering

Cover with Japanese tissue, after laying it over the plastic covered plan and colouring in the camouflage scheme with alcohol based felt tip markers. Markings are fine point markers on airmail paper, cut out and applied with thinned rubber cement. Thinned white glue was used to apply the tissue to the frame. DO NOT SHRINK THE TISSUE because this will warp the frame out of all recognition; just get it on as best as you can with the minimum of wrinkles.

Assembly

Glue the fins to the tailplane, making sure each is vertical, then glue the assembly into the rear fuselage slot, checking that it is at 90 degrees to the fuselage. Glue the wing through the fuselage slot, aligning it with the tailplane. Carefully pierce holes in the spar, wiggle the undercarriage wires through, then glue them to the spars and the adjacent ribs. Add the flaps, sighting across to align them with each other because they are non-adjustable.

Flying

Keeping the lubricant off the knot, make a 12° loop of .080" wide tan rubber, securing the knot with thin CA glue. Balance the model under the top longeron, on the tip of a knife blade, using a smear of clay where needed. Stretch wind to 900 fums, the messenger flies in 20° right circles, 60 to 70 seconds passing before gently kissing the floor of the gym. It also flies well out doors, and is a pretty sight against a calm evening sky. One need not stay with military colours either - colour photos of civilian versions having appeared in Aeroplane Monthly.