

## Public Letter 4/08

July/August 2008  
www.fai.org/aeromodelling/ciamflyer  
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## Building Your Own Model Aeroplane

### - Means Realising Your Own Ideas



First the planes are designed on paper and then drawn on packing paper in a scale of 1:1



### Is Building Model Aeroplanes no Longer Popular?

The prospect that in a few years' time us model pilots will no longer be building our own planes, but buying them ready to fly instead, is a horror scenario for many enthusiasts. We frequently jump to the conclusion that today's young people are consumerist, spend all their time in front of TV and computer screens and are capable of neither creative nor skilful manual work.

### A Successful Experiment

To prove this pessimistic view of the future wrong, we<sup>1</sup> recently

conducted an experiment with a group of junior aeromodellers aged 12 to 14. The result was very encouraging: Over three days, based at the Fliegermuseum Dübendorf (Switzerland), the young people designed and built beautiful Depron electric flight models from scratch and fitted them with all necessary propulsion and steering components, so that they were ready to fly. Depron<sup>2</sup> is suitable for building virtually indestructible light model aircraft. The material is particularly popular with young people and in many cases replaces expensive balsa wood.

The full-size aircraft surrounding our workplace were additionally motivating.

### Good Coaching Is Important

Us grownups were acting as coaches and supported the young people with our knowledge and experience. When building a model aircraft there are always a few key situations where the coach has to intervene to make sure a lot of good work isn't ruined in a short time. Due to their high competence, the young people recognised the coaches' authority without reservation, which is likely to have been one

of the reasons why there were no problems with discipline.

**Visible Results**

During the three-day workshop, all models – with the exception of one aircraft, which was of a more complex design and was finished at home – could be completed and were ready to fly. In an increasingly cerebral and virtual world of education, creations made using their own hands are of as yet unknown importance for the development of young people. Working with various materials and tools as well as the practical dealings with propulsion and steering are wonderful experiences with a large sensual content. But training of the mind is not neglected either.



**The drawings are transferred onto Depron sheets and cut out**

**Gluing the parts to form a complete aeroplane**



**Installing propulsion and steering**

**Determining the centre of gravity**



- 1) A group of committed and experienced aeromodellers from a regional aeromodelling association of the Aero Club of Switzerland.
- 2) Depron is an expanded plastic material – similar to polystyrene – with a smooth surface and high elasticity. The foam is used in house building as a base for wallpaper or for sound insulation. Depron is commercially available in sheets of normally 3, 5 or 6 mm thickness. These sheets can easily be cut using a cutter and have been successfully used for building small and light model aircraft for several years. The material is usually glued with contact adhesive.

← **Painting the model to finish off a creative and skilled manual job**