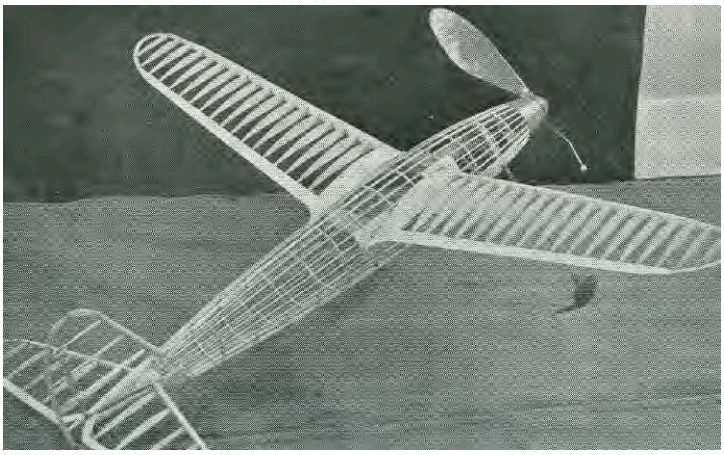
CIAMFlyer
Introduction to the Model Aircraft World
FAI AEROMODELLING COMMISSION
No. 6-2013

No Future without the Past

Due to its versatility, aeromodelling is in the fortunate position of constantly providing opportunities for attempting new things at relatively modest expense and thus sowing the seed for future developments. It is often forgotten that the foundations for most modern achievements were created many years if not decades in the past.



Wakefield rubber powered model airplane 1940

Modern competition model aircraft with extensible motor (Class F1B)

Retro Movement

Amongst other things, the retro movement in aeromodelling should be seen as a counter-movement to ever faster changes. These days, aeromodelling is faced with new technical applications and technologies emerging at an increasing rate. Miniaturisation in electronics and computer technology combined with tremendous increases in power not only make aeromodelling accessible to everyone but sadly also lead to lack of permanence and the throw-away mentality found with other consumer items. It is only logical that this strengthens the desire for permanence and retrospective. It is interesting in this context, to see how creative new ideas keep emerging from past experiences.

Let's look at the classic example of designing and building wooden models.

Competition rules sidelined?

For decades, national and international aeromodelling organisations have been following the sporting "philosophy" whereby flying performance should be achieved mainly through the individual competitor's tactical ability and his skill in controlling his model. The use of technical aids was strictly limited. This policy is finding itself increasingly under pressure, especially in the case of competition regulations that have been maintained with great effort in an attempt to prevent the use of latest technologies. This is questionable when technologies are readily available for anyone at affordable cost. It is of vital importance to cast one's eye back into history, as aeromodelling would never have reached its current high standard if this "prevention strategy" had existed earlier. Aeromodelling had always been more or less in step with technical developments but the latest achievements in electronic sensor technology, stabilising and navigation technology raise the question whether this is still appropriate. There is plenty of scope for heated discussion as to how much and how long technical progress can be prevented in a technical discipline such as aeromodelling.

Encouraging the combination of old and new

The history of aeromodelling provides a huge potential in expertise and experience. Let's look at the classic example of designing and building wooden models. The use of CAD (Computer Aided Design), computer aided cutting of wooden parts or the manufacturing of components using 3D printing ensure that self-building model aircraft is as fascinating as ever. It is a huge opportunity for our generation of computer geeks to swap the screen for the workshop and create something with their own hands. Or let's take a look at young gamers – wouldn't it be great if we could get them to occasionally swap the console joystick for that of an RC transmitter and fly a model aeroplane outdoors and far from the computer screen? We could set up aeromodelling classes where craftsmanship and aerodynamics are taught along with advanced programming skills thus combining the virtual and practical worlds of aviation. Wouldn't that be a great future for aeromodelling?

1960

Model aircraft engines for RC Aerobatics

2000

Computer aided cutting of wooden parts

Get them to occasionally swap the console joystick for that of an RC transmitter and fly a model aeroplane outdoors and far from the computer screen