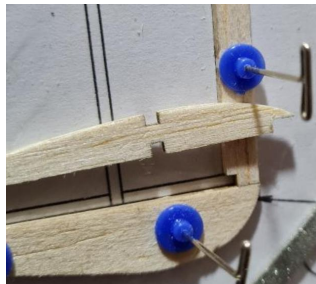


Simon's Pilot Build Blog Part 1: The Wings

I once read that you should build the wings first because the process was repetitive and boring. I'm not sure about that, but that's where I started. My Pilot is a VMC 'Factory Seconds' kit. Most of the wing parts were OK, but the square-section spars weren't properly cut and they proved difficult to remove cleanly. Certainly, VMC Factory Seconds kits are a good way of saving some money - once you've gained some building experience. Also, there's plenty of spare balsa on the sheets for cutting your own replacement parts.

Personally, I don't much like the charred surface left on the balsa parts by the laser, so I sanded most of it off using 800 grade paper. To avoid damaging the plan, I copied the wing shapes from the plan onto separate A4 sheets. Why bother with this? For me it's something of a habit which dates back to the days when a single plan was shared and used to build several models. Of course, free downloads have rendered this pointless, and I doubt that many plans are used for more than a single build.

I used cling-film over the plan to stop the glued parts from sticking to the paper during the build; perhaps, environmentally, this is a bad thing. Maybe I'll go back to the old-fashioned method of rubbing candle-wax over the plan. The wing build itself was certainly straightforward, although I found that the small outermost rib needed some of the leading-edge notch sanded back to fit. All of the others slotted in nicely. The same thing happened on the port wing, so hopefully, it should be balanced. Otherwise, the precision cut of the parts is impressive - a far cry from the old days.

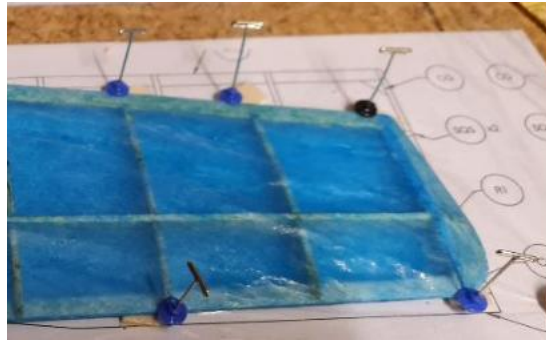


I like to sand the wing trailing edge top surface down slightly to follow the line of the ribs, sticking tape over the ribs to prevent them from being inadvertently sanded. Again, this is unnecessary, but I think it improves the look of the finished wing.



For covering, I used my own lightweight tissue purely because it's a different colour. I followed the process shown in the VMC video, although I didn't use Eze Dope, and I prefer to cover the top surface first. That way, any untidy imperfections are under the wing and hidden by the lower surface covering. I found that the glue supplied with kit left some unsightly white stains on the tissue covering as it dried. My standard Wickes PVA waterproof glue didn't, so I used that instead. It might have been something to do with my tissue material so, hopefully this won't happen to you

What the video doesn't mention is how easy it is to damage the wet tissue when you are weighing it down for drying. Small glass pots are the best; I used T-pins with clamps, which I don't recommend.



As you can perhaps see, my 'atomiser' spray was more like a super-soaker, but it didn't affect the final result which wasn't too bad. Now I'm waiting for a tin of non-shrinking dope to arrive and, in the meantime, I'll move on to the fuselage.

