

The de Havilland Aeronautical Technical School Association

Tiger Moth Model at the de Havilland Aircraft Museum

In the cabinet of apprentice work in the old “Foreman’s office” at the de Havilland Aircraft Museum (DHAM), Colney Heath, is a model of a Tiger Moth. This is no ordinary model. It was built by ex-apprentice Jim Butters and is exquisite. Jim only produced four models. The others were a Mosquito, an FW190 and the unfinished D.H.103 Hornet now in the Goldsmith hangar at DHAM.

Jim was a senior design engineer at Hatfield. He built the model virtually as the real thing, which meant using the correct manufacturing methods if possible. He produced miniature press tools for the FW190 wing ribs and for the Hornet he was considering miniature stretch form tools for the wing skins. His moulds for the Mosquito tyres replicated the exact number of blocks on the tread. He calculated the set of the tyre for the Mosquito weight and the correct shade of paint for the scale viewing distance.

He said that if somebody cut open one of his models one would be able to see how the real aircraft was made. The control circuits are as the real aircraft, i.e. the cockpit controls operate the surfaces correctly. All this workmanship was really only seen by Jim. Those who worked with him were amazed and in awe of his skill (and it may be said thought him slightly mad!).

The Tiger Moth model is of a real aircraft, G-AHXC, in the condition in which it won the 1948 scratch Tiger Moth race at Lympne, flown by Hatfield test pilot Pat Fillingham (also a former student at DHAeTS). Note the racing number ‘1’ on the rudder. The aircraft was based at Panshanger and prepared for racing by de Havilland students –see photo below left, taken by the late ‘Pop’ Bilkey, another DHAeTS student.

The photos on the following pages show just some of the marvellous detail, e.g. the fairleads on the tailplane leading edge, the slat detail, the fabric stringing/knotting detail “under” the fabric and the bracing strut holding open the engine cowling. Jim spent a lot of time getting the instruments right although it is very difficult to see them. The rendition of the cockpit leather coaming is particularly fine.

Ken Pye

This photo taken at Panshanger c.1948 shows Tiger Moth G-AHXC as she won the 1948 Tiger Moth Scratch race at Lympne in 1948 flown by Pat Fillingham. Note the racing number “1” on the rudder. De Havilland students are L-R:- Alistair Mackenzie. (George Hart -Chief Engineer of the London Aeroplane Club and the students instructor), Frank Cobb, Roy Blay, Dave Ewer and Hilary Bowman. Photo C. “Pop” Bilkey



Pat Fillingham climbing aboard the London Aeroplane Club’s G-AHXC in August 1948 at Lympne for the Tiger Moth race. Photo courtesy Stuart McKay.



