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IL COMETA

Elegant five foot vintage model from Italy

The Old Warden "Vintage" days are always memorable events, for many the highlight of the flying season. Although still very popular, the radio control vintage "boom" was at its peak in the late eighties through to the mid nineties. A feature of the events of this era was always the latest Arthur Fox re-creation, often of the more obscure and forgotten designs. For the '95 event Arthur chose to build a design he had obtained from his Italian friend, Riboli Pierpaolo, the Cometa. A simple Italian cabin model of 1.7 metres span designed by Adriana Castellani, Arthur often refers to it as an Italian "Junior 60", being of similar layout and dimensions. Castellani was the proprietor of "Aviomodelli" a model business in Cremona, Italy. Several of his designs have featured in the Italian modelling press over the years, both free flight and control-line.

HISTORY

The Cometa first appeared in the (now defunct) Italian magazine "Aquilone" in 1943, as a free flight power duration model. The original article refers to a 10cc engine being originally installed, not surprisingly this was later reduced down to a 7cc unit. Even given the low power of the spark ignition engines of the time, this would appear more than adequate for this lightly constructed model. The radio controlled version appeared in "Modellissimo" in 1989, this was in a short series of reprints of the magazine to cater for the vintage enthusiast. Castellani penned the article, and it is assumed that the radio conversion was by the original designer.

SUBTLE CHANGES

A close inspection of the '43 and '89 drawings will reveal that a few changes have taken place, the most significant of these is the use of a lifting

section for the tailplane, replacing the original N.A.C.A. 0015 symmetrical section of the free flight model. The Clark Y wing section of the original 1943 model remains.

The nose has been cleaned up, appearing slightly longer; it is certainly more attractive with a full cowling for the practical upright engine installation. A small amount of "beefing" up is also evident, with some additional diagonal fuselage bracing plus the addition of a rear wing spar. Apart from this, and the addition of an inset elevator and rudder the Cometa appears very much as in the 1943 drawing.

STRAIGHTFORWARD CONSTRUCTION

As with many contemporary designs the fuselage is a simple box using obece (original spelling) longerons and front uprights. The remaining fuselage construction is mainly balsa, with ply formers used to join the side frames. The radio equipment is, as you would expect, well forward under the cabin area, with the battery positioned immediately behind the front bulkhead. The wing construction is definitely "lightweight" with but a 6x13mm balsa leading edge and no additional sheeting either on top or underside the wing. However there is balsa webbing between the

Front view showing neatly cowled FS20.



Technical Details of Cometa

Designed by A. Castellani, Cremona, Italy.

Date	1/1/1943 (R/C version 1989)
Wingspan	1.7m (67in)
Length	1.11m (48in)
Wing Area	4.5sq.ft
Engine	20-30 (4 Stroke) 15-20 (2 Stroke)
Electric	600 Geared (2:1-3:1)
Radio	3 Ch. (Rudder, Elevator, and Motor)



Arthur Fox with Cometa in 1995.

5x5mm obeche main spars, running the full span of the wing. The additional spar is shown as being of 4mm diameter round section (dowel), on to which the ribs are threaded. The wings are shown as two piece, with dowel locators, the panels being joined by a 1.5mm Dural brace, with the panels retained by an elastic band. General construction is very straightforward and similar to many contemporary designs.

POWER UNITS

Arthur Fox used an OS FS20 four stroke in his Cometa, this proving more than powerful enough, the model capable of just "puttering" around on a low throttle setting. This engine is no longer manufactured, and has been superseded by the more powerful FS26 Surpass, this and the slightly larger Saito 30 would both be ideal for this model; the short nose and the upright installation being most suitable for a four stroke. Alternatively a 15 two stroke, either glow or diesel should prove ample for this attractive design. The light construction earmarks the Cometa as an ideal choice for electric power, using a geared 600 size motor and a seven cell pack sub-C size pack.

FLYING PERFORMANCE

In a letter to Riboli Pierpado, Arthur reports that 'it looks and flies beautifully, in its Italian

colours' and 'caused much excitement at Old Warden'. Martin Fox, Arthur's son, remembers that this model was at its best just pottering around in true vintage fashion, requiring very little power. He also states that, even with the "lifting tail" there was quite a large trim change between power on and power off; of course this is quite normal, after all, the original model was designed to climb as fast as possible under power to achieve flights of long duration.

FANCY A CHANGE?

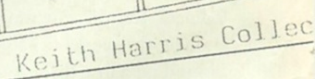
The Cometa, as you can see from the photographs is an elegant aeroplane, of modest dimensions for ease of transport; it also makes a refreshing change from "yet another" Junior 60! Many thanks to Keith Harris for providing the historical information contained in the text. ★



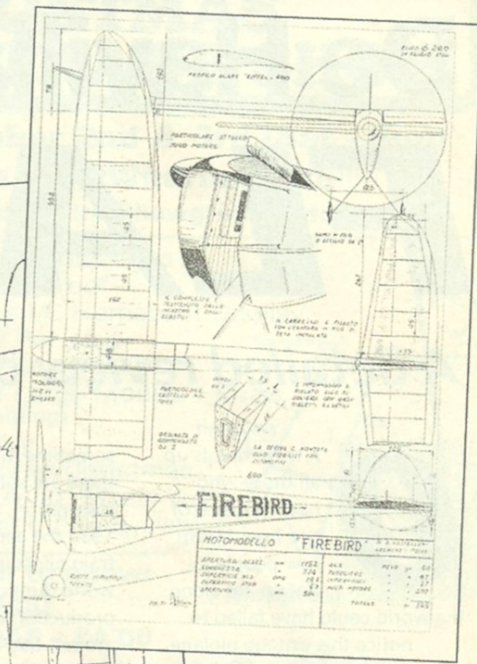
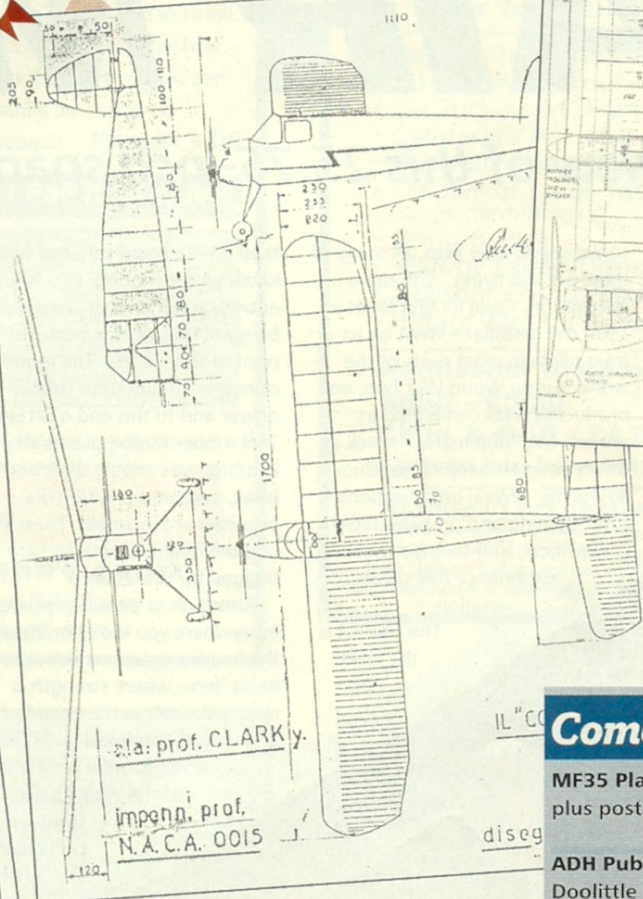
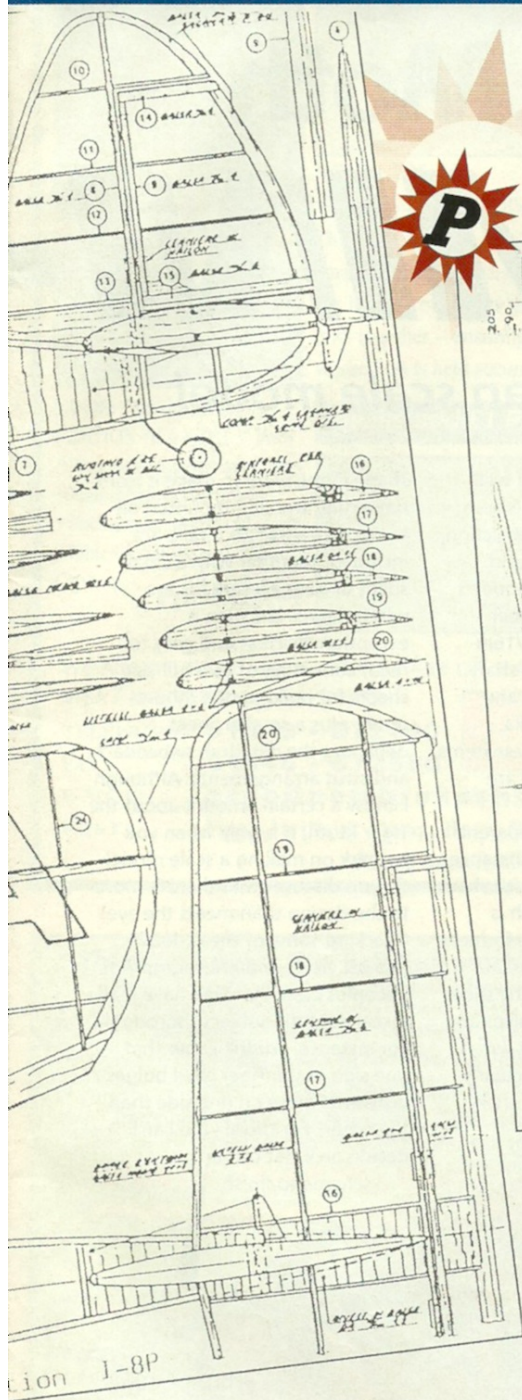
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A photograph of a red and white biplane flying in the sky. The aircraft is a high-wing biplane with a red fuselage and white wings. It has a red tail section with a white stripe and a small red square. The landing gear consists of two main wheels and a tail wheel. The background is a clear blue sky.



ABOVE: Another of Castellani's designs - "Firebird"

Cometa Plan

MF35 Plan is available from ADH at £7.95 plus postage, £1.50 UK, £2.00 overseas.

ADH Publishing,
Doolittle Mill, Doolittle Lane, Totterhoe,
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ABOVE: Original 1963 design from "Aquilone"

