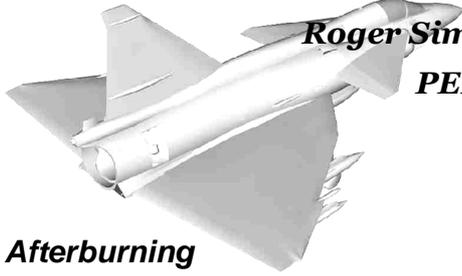


Smoke Trails 36

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Afterburning

It is always gratifying for a columnist to receive correspondence – it allays his fears that nobody actually reads his deathless prose; that he is but a voice crying in the wilderness (or the Flying Field as it is sometimes called), and that vintage rocketeering is to fade into the sunset sky. One which, alas, shows few, if any, smoke trails.

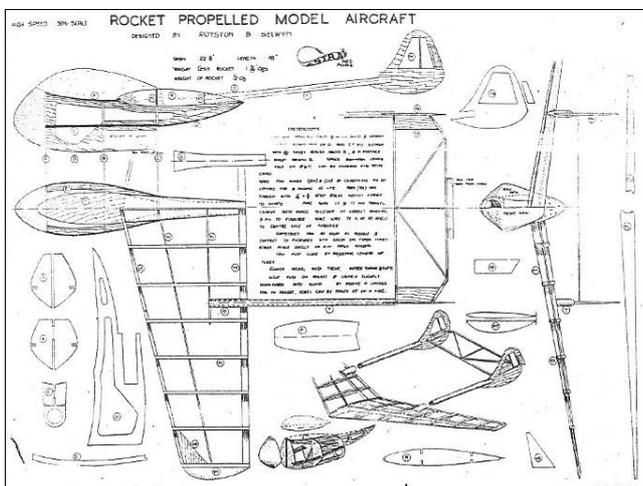


Jim Free, whose PAA-Loader powered 'Jet-Ho' is shown left, would like to see more Jetex-propelled car and boat models. And so would I, but this is, of course, rather dependent on readers' input, so I was pleased to receive these photos of vintage cars and boats from Alan Trinder, who writes: "Both models show their 60 plus years as well as the lack of skills of their constructor – which have improved little over the decades! I was particularly interested to see that the price on my box for the Jetex car is 37/6, exactly the price you quote. I have kept them both in the forlorn hope that fuel might one day again become available.

My first foray into rocket propulsion was probably 1947 or 1948, when fireworks (from Brocks and Standard) were only just coming back onto the market. Rocket motors, designed for use in model aircraft, were manufactured by Brocks. These were light blue in colour and larger than Rapiers, being at least twice the diameter and maybe half as long again. There was no delicate fuse, just a mass of blue touch paper.

Memories of any success are sketchy, but a model with twin booms made of red paper tubes comes to mind. I cannot be sure if it ever managed a flight, but I do have a vivid memory of my disappointment attempting to use the motors as conventional rockets by adding a stick as a stabiliser. Having failed to get one to leave the ground from a milk bottle, I tried launching one up the children's' slide in the local playground. Failure again of course! subsequent attempts to produce home-made rockets also met with little success".

Top: Jim Free's Jet-Ho hydroplane. **Next:** Alan's sixty-year old example with antique Jetex 100. Alan remembered this was a Keil kraft kit, not an Adamcraft/Jetex, kit. **Bottom:** Alan's very rare example of the Jetex Car



Though pellets, even for as old a motor as the Jetex 100 occasionally appear on eBay, and PAA Loaders and fuel appear quite regularly, I thought Alan could try his car and boat with a soon-to-be-available-again L3, which would also be suitable for his Keil Kraft Wisp.

The Brocks' rocket motors were Howard Boys' RP 1 units, of low thrust and (comparatively) long duration (*Smoky Addiction 6*), so it is unsurprising they wouldn't work as Guy Fawkes rockets. The twin-boom aeroplane Alan refers to is the Astral 'Marvellous Rocket Plane' (MRP) which was advertised at 6/6, with the 'plans only' at 1/6, and separate rockets ('which have received official sanction') at 1s. 6d). Andy Brough sent me an original plan for the MRP that includes instructions how to make the motors (thank you Andy). Alan declined my offer of a copy: "I'm not sure this would be a good idea. As a retired pharmacist, I have all the necessary chemicals plus pestle and mortar in the shed and would be very tempted to try making a few propulsion units again (I would have written 'rockets' but that would make it illegal!)"

According to the plan, the MRP (which I didn't know had red paper booms) was designed by 'Royston B. Selwyn', an anagram, Doug McHard suggested, of 'TOWNER' and 'BOYS', who were thereby hiding from the Law, or at least the one that related to the use (or misuse) of fireworks! However, as John Miller Crawford points out, "There's more than an anagram of the names of the two law-evaders – the letters 'SLYN', to be precise. What can they signify?"

In my youth, the Skyjet 50 was the only one Keil Kraft then offered, but, in answer to my question in January's column, Bob Pickernell emailed me: "There was a Skyjet 100. My [recent] example went quite well on a cooking L3, and far to well the first time I tried it with an L4. Gone but not forgotten! Fifty years ago, my Skyjet 200 made quite a respectable sport towline glider when the motor got tired and fuel was hard to come by. It went OOS one day slope soaring at Ivinghoe beacon".

Left: Bob Pickernell's Skyjets, Ancient (for Jetex 200, top) and Modern (for Jetex 100 (bottom). The latter goes well with the soon-to-be-available-again L3. Bob would, I think, advise fitting a dethermaliser.



Above: I have been awaiting an opportunity to publish this photo from Mike Ingram's archive. JO'D launches a potent duration model at a 1950's meeting.

January's feature on the Jeticopter inspired Robert Parry to look again at his vintage kits, and I also had a most interesting email from John O'Donnell: "I can add a little to the Jeticopter story, as I was involved. Roy Lever did indeed consider resurrecting the Jeticopter, powered, of course, by Jet-X motors rather than the original Jetex products. I was approached by Roy, who persuaded (commissioned) me to build some models to 'prove the concept'. This I did, building two complete examples (one with a foam pod) straight off the original WM plan, plus a set of parts for another. Testing took place in January 1997. Flight seemed much less of a problem than achieving simultaneous ignition of the two Jet-X units! The models then went to Roy – since he had 'paid' for them! He was critical of tube-and-wire hinges for the rotor blades (as shown on the plan, and used on my models) and wanted simpler cloth hinges, probably to ease construction, or for manufacturing considerations. I understand

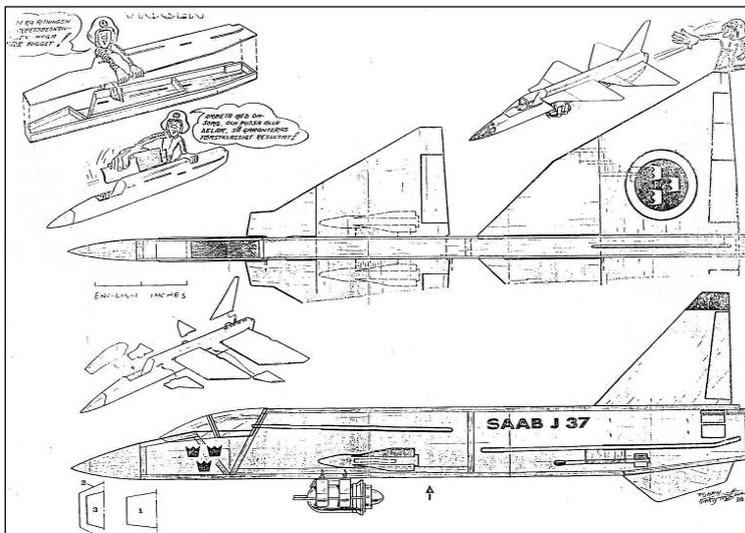
he then tried to interest someone else to takeover the project. They were given one of 'my' models, and then promptly lost it by flying somewhere unsuitable! So the project did not come to fruition. Phil Worth's model could well be the survivor of the pair I built, though I would have to see it to be sure, and no, I'm not angling to have it back! Please don't waste time and effort drawing up a plan as I still have a print from the original Wilmot Mansour (WM) kit".

Apropos the photo of John (top left), my original caption was, "John casting away his Castaway", but John corrected me: "The model is *not* the 'Castaway', as the drawing on p. 176 of Zaic's 1957-58 Year Book will confirm. It is actually my unpublished '(Finny) Haddock' – a very unorthodox design, powered by a Jetex 350. The wing and tail were the same size as the Castaway, but the 350 made it much heavier. Apart from the forward fin the model was unusual (or, rather, unique) in being *low-wing*. This was far from being a 'gimmick' but a practical solution to combining a high-thrust line with the 350 mounting arrangement. The photograph was almost certainly taken at the 1954 All-Britain Rally at Radlett, where it won without much opposition. This was the last of the Wilmot Mansour sponsored contests. Incorporating it into the A-B Rally lost the Jetex contest its previous status and it became just another event on a busy day. The following year saw Sid Smeed win with a score quoted as '4:21' – presumably based on duration rather than the ratio system used by WM to equate different motors' runs from a range of motors. Certainly it was duration in 1956, when I won with an even more modest total – this time with the Scorpion powered Castaway." I must thank John for these fascinating stories, and the Jeticopter story is not over yet. I marveled at John's memory, but he confesses, "A good library and records/archives do have their uses!"

Profiles Revisited.

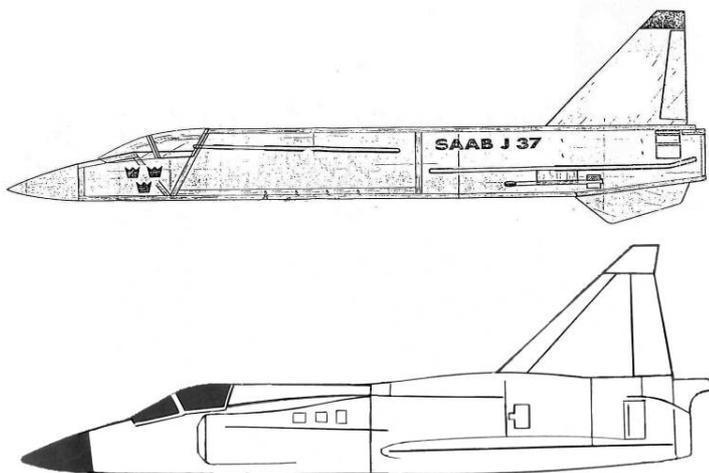
For reasons that only a Freudian or Jungian psychoanalyst would be interested in, I continue to be enamored of simple 'semi-profile models' like the Veron Quickies. But it has to be admitted that (a) it is a somewhat limited genre and (b) their appeal was not, and is not, universal. One well-known UK Jetex flyer is unmoved by them, "They were rather before my time; had they been more modern jets – an F-104 or P1B for example, I would have made them then and [such is the lure of nostalgia] wanted one now". But there were few 'built-up profile' kits for Jetex after 1952 and the many profile kits from Telasco in the USA and Tiger in Japan were just that – profiles, which lack the '3D' effect I find irresistible.

But there is one 'semi profile' jet that first appeared in John Emmet's *Jetex Natters*, Feb 1992 – a SAAB Viggen. The only extant plan is a very poor Nth generation photocopy, (right). John didn't identify or discuss it in his column, but the logo and the delightful cartoon characters indicate Sigurd Isacson was the designer. I know little about this unique design, so I asked Sten Persson, who replied, "I've never seen this Isacson semi-profile kit, either as a kit or on the flying field. I have a vague memory a kit report in a magazine, which I

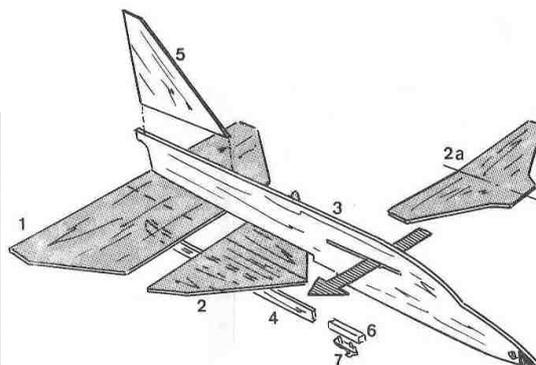


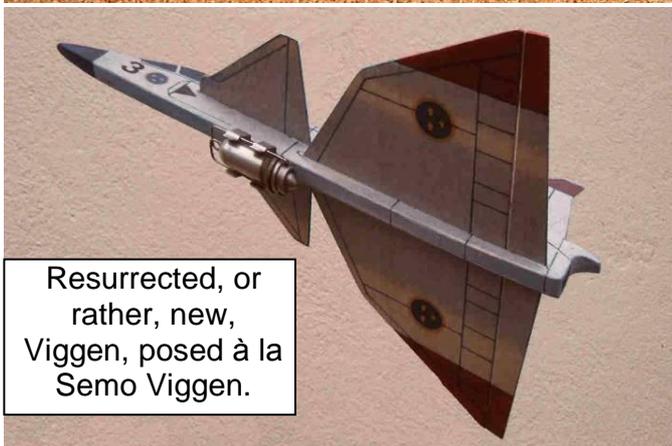
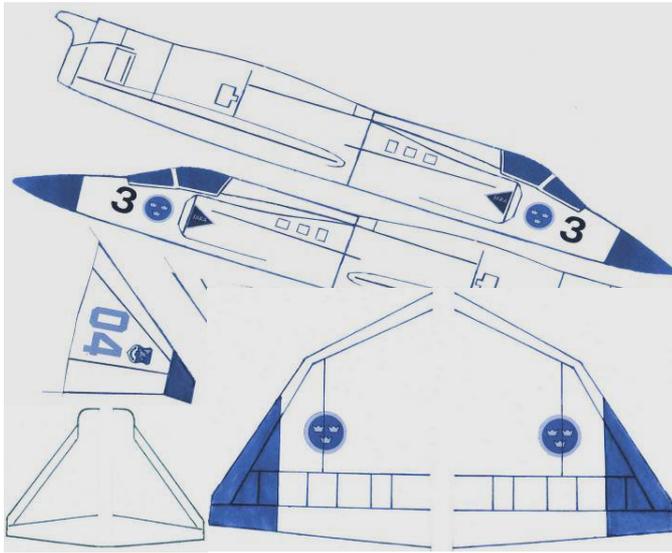
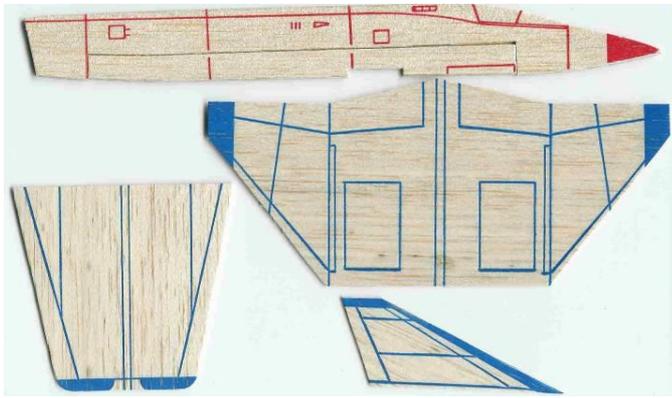
haven't found it yet, but it should be there somewhere. The Viggen appeared in 1962, as did a similar kit for the SAAB 105 jet trainer. I've got a mint example of the latter, but, as I only received it recently, days before it was locked away for the winter in our museum (which is part of a big automobile museum on the south coast). I do not remember any details about its construction. My guess is that the layout of the two kits is identical. I will give you a description of the SAAB 105 when our museum opens in the Spring". This was both disappointing and exciting: although we are no further forward with the Viggen, that we might be able to replicate the SAAB 105 (which was a very pretty aeroplane) is wonderful news, and I look forward to getting scans of the parts

Meanwhile, I really wanted to make a Viggen – especially after reading Andrew Longhurst's January *Rubber Column* which featured the 'Canny Canard'. Jetex powered canards are after all pretty thin on the ground. At a pinch, the plan can be scaled-up and built from, but this reveals a problem. Not surprisingly, given that he couldn't have had access to accurate drawings in 1962 (and I have a 3-view of a Viggen published by William Green in 1964, which is, to say the least, fanciful) Sigurd Isacson's Viggen is grossly inaccurate.



Side view of Isacson's 'Viggen' (left) compared to one derived from a modern 3-view. The wing planform, too, is very inaccurate. The slightly later Semo Viggen (below) is better in all respects, and nicely captures the Viggen's 'spirit', though note that this too lacks the characteristic 'hump' of the real one





Resurrected, or rather, new, Viggen, posed à la Semo Viggen.

Top: the red and blue Semo Draken is inferior to their Lanser, and even to a Quicky – where are the national markings? **Middle:** Viggen templates in ‘Quicky blue’ **Below:** two shots of the first full glorious Technicolor prototype.

Howard Metcalfe asked me if this – the inaccuracy of what was after all a 50-year old model – was a problem. Normally, when building a vintage ‘scale’ model – the Quicky Sea Hawk for example – I would have said no, but, in this case, it was inhibiting. In contrast, the Semo Viggen looks eminently buildable. I have scans of the Semo Draken, but none for the Viggen, so, using the style of the Draken as a guide, and working mainly in *Paintshop pro 9*, Viggen templates were created from modern 3-views. I was quite proud of these facsimiles of what I thought a ‘modern Veron Quicky’ would look like. The markings were in particular fun to do, and for these I am indebted to Brian Boot, from whose splendid talk on making decals at the recent Model Engineering exhibition I learned a lot. Brian has distilled his knowledge on this subject on to two A4 sheets: please contact Brian (brian.boot@sky.com) or me if you would like copies.

Such are the wonders of modern image manipulation programs, the Viggen templates can be produced in ‘Veron Quicky blue’ or coloured for a brighter, if less ‘authentic’ model. Not having access to a flat bed printer, templates have to be printed on tissue before transfer to tissue Silver-grey tissue from SAMS Models worked splendidly, but I found, by trial and error, and some good advice from Pauline at Flitehook, that Esaki silver tissue needs to be printed on the reverse side before affixing to balsa sheet with thinned dope or ‘Johnson’s Klear’, and even then there was some ‘bleed through’ of the silver.

I realise this project is not so much a ‘restoration’, or even a ‘recreation’ of a vintage kit, but more a ‘reimagining’ of a model. The result is an ‘Isacson/Semo/Veron’ chimera which, at best, may not be of much interest to the true antique modeller, and, at worst, scandalize him. Especially if, as Howard Metcalfe is planning, a large one for L2-HP made from Depron! Be that as it may, I myself was quite pleased with the first (all balsa) prototype, of 10½" length, 8" span, weight 12g ... er ... 0.4 oz, suitable for an Atom 35. Please tell me if you would like copies of the templates.