

# Not The Prettiest!



Chris Bowler takes a look and has a flight with a Klemm L20 built by Dave Ellis, that certainly turns heads...!

**T**he Klemm L20 won't go down in history as one of the greatest looking airframes! However, it possesses a certain charm, and is a beauty in terms of construction and simplicity of line. The original, built in 1923, was designed by Hans Klemm as a tandem seat motor glider. It established a few records, including notably, an altitude of 6,000 feet and distance of 1,305 km in 1927. This model version is designed using the original plans and drawings, components being manufactured by the now familiar CNC method. The manufacturers claim a 20 hour build time. This example took three months of intensive work by Dave Ellis, a member of the Chedworth Club in the Cotswolds.

One of the major problems for Dave was the fact that he had only German instructions, and had to work from a very sketchy set of drawings. This said, the CNC components were a perfect fit and the scale metal fittings for the wing joiners with its array of nyloc nuts and bolts looked most impressive. Pity it is all covered up!

## Interesting Choice

This is not intended as a kit review, I only saw the model after most of the construction was complete. But it is an interesting choice of what seems to be an unusual and now seemingly rare

original. An Internet trawl shows there is a full size version in the Austrian Air Force Museum.

Covered in natural Solartex, it is powered by an SC90FS which looks lost in the overall scale of things! Radio comprises a GWS receiver, six Futaba servos with their own power supply and an SM Service opto-isolator.

## The Chosen Day

Enough of the technical stuff, let's get down to the flying bit. Now before flying this, Dave had just spent a week in cardiac care adjusting his tick-over, so the test flying was down to Steve Holland at his flying site. Blustery and cold,

*Below: The wing fixing bolts, with the very scale gap between root and wing panel. Alloy strips are screwed into place as per full size to cover the gap. A simpler solution using Velcro to attach the strips may be adopted to save rigging time*



*Below, left to right: A few minor adjustments had to be made; Waiting for 'the off' the Klemm L20*





**Above, left to right:** The distinctive wing shape and tail skid show well in the view; "Well done my man!" A pleased Steve Holland jokes with builder Dave Ellis after the first flight

but brightish was the chosen day. After a couple of adjustments and making sure all controls were in the correct sense, a range check and time to fly.

Among our group of modellers the consensus was that a 90 4-stroke might not be man enough for a 19 lb model. In the event it was airborne in a very stately fashion, Steve throttled back almost instantly and the Klemm was climbing majestically away.

An interesting aside was that the little group who watched the Klemm fly all agreed on the remarkable wing shape, and how reminiscent it seemed to be of the much later designed Spitfire's ellipse. A real head turner!

Most of the flying was done at very low throttle settings, with a power increase to pull it round the turns. After a settling down period of about two circuits a very gentle loop was performed with ease, but making full use of the controls when inverted! The stall was in Steve's words, "An amazing non-event". When he rolled it, Dave went quite pale, it took a long while, with just about enough down while inverted to keep it going. Steve's verdict after three flights was entirely enthusiastic. Landings were of the floaty kind, and will be interesting on a tarmac runway such as Chedworth.

Steve said, "The ailerons seem to be there just to keep the wings level, it flies really well on rudder/elevator and gives a genuine scale display. Apart from the rolls of course!"

**Why Hurry?**

This machine will be a point of interest for many modellers,

and Dave Ellis has made an excellent model which will capture the imagination.

It is a true builders' kit, which could probably be completed more quickly. But why hurry a job if building is your thing? If you linger over the building, the more satisfaction you can savour from the flying, and that is certainly unhurried. The overall verdict of test pilot, builder and spectators was more than favourable. And Mr. Ellis went home a happy man; with one or two tweaks to sort after the shakedown flights he knows he has a success on his hands.

**A Real Gem**

Subsequent flights have proved this to be a real gem of a model, arousing the interest of fellow modellers whenever it flies. With all the tweaks now in place it is a joy to fly, though landing on tarmac runways need care, as it tends to float on. Aileron response is now

very good, but rolls are still forbidden. Steep turns look impressive and are very controllable. I can vouch for the flying abilities as Dave was kind (and trusting) enough to let me have a go on a couple of occasions, even on the first day! The model is very forgiving in turns and because it flies on low throttle settings is amazingly quiet.

So if you fancy a builder's model that is a little out of the ordinary try this one. The kit is by CNC Modellbautechnik Bayer. Tapping in Klemm L20 on your search engine will find references to it with links to the manufacturer and distributor.

**RCMW**

**Above:** Coming in over the Cotswolds, an atmospheric fly past for the camera. Note the wing joint sealing alloy strip in this shot



**Below, left to right:** The SC90FS was more than adequate for this first take-off; Happy landings. On the final approach after floating on for quite a long time

