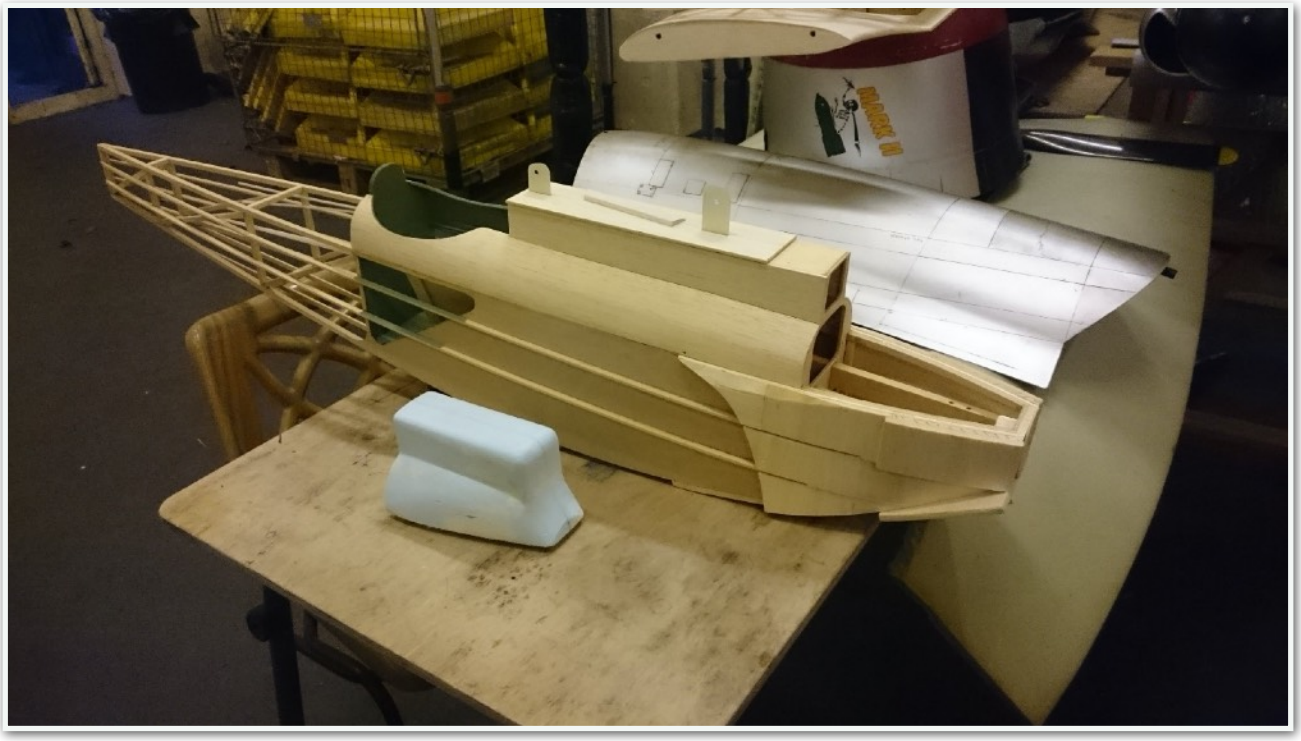
# Corben Super Ace - Tim Knox

## (The build that took forever!)

Many flying seasons ago I was given a partial fuselage, a set of wings, some pictures of the real aircraft and other bits and pieces that were intended to form the landing gear. The plane belonged to Ken Hinton (Mark's father) and he had made a start to the build. Long term Club members will be familiar with Ken and his model building skills and I know you will agree that he is a "MASTER" Model Builder. His attention to detail is unbelievable.



So yes, I was excited to have in my possession, a plane he had worked on. Then reality set in and I began to doubt my ability to complete, let alone do justice, to a model started by someone I look up to and respect.

I got scared to even start work on it. The bits took pride of place on the shelf in the conservatory where it sat until one day, my wife asked “ARE YOU EVER GOING TO WORK ON THAT THING”? I knew I had to do something or else come home one day to “I finally cleaned the conservatory”. After looking through the pictures and searching the internet for drawings and plans, I found I couldn’t really match the photos/plans to the model and so I decided to have a go at drawing my own plans for the rear of the plane and so the design process finally began!

Out came the poster board, rulers and pencils. After several drawings and prototypes were made, I finally had the one I wanted to use. After talking to several people and searching the web, I decided to laminate the tail and rudder. Now the fun began! I had never laminated balsa, or any other wood before! I knew I needed to soak the wood in hot water to make it flexible. I made the former to bend the balsa around and started the process. No problem, right? I’ll use my bathtub and run all the hot water out of the system to soak the wood. Everything was going to plan, until I had to explain why no one could take a shower, and there was no hot water left in the house anyway! Shortly after this I bought some PVC pipe and ends and made a tube to soak the wood. I was still in fear for my life and not wanting to upset anyone in the house again. The wood was super flexible and I started wrapping layers around the formers to make the tail. After several days, everything seemed to hold its shape (Happy Days!) Now to start gluing the layers together. Me being me wanted the best bond I could get and out came the Gorilla Glue. If you have never used it, it says to dampen the wood to help adhesion. No problem; dampen the wood, place on the formers, glue and repeat. Simples! Seven layers later, I had created a science fair exhibit! It looked like someone took spray foam and sprayed it everywhere.

My God! What had I created? The glue finally dried and, after several attempts, I managed to free the creation from the board. I proceeded to start hacking away at the expanded foam that was now a rock. Trying to uncover my beautifully laminated tail section, I used every word I learned when in the Military to no avail, and I snapped it in half! Gutted!!! Disheartened, everything was returned to its former storage location to collect some more dust until one day, I was told “Don’t get fancy; Just build it!” So, the plans came out again and I made a conventional, cut-balsa tail section. Happy Days! I now had a tail section to use. Now for the turtle-deck and assembly.

Life and work took its toll and everything went back into storage for a few years. (Yes YEARS!) During this time the plane was weighing heavy on me and I knew I needed to finally sort it out. An engine was acquired (Vintage Saito 4-stroke FA-56), servos, receiver, fuel tank, various pull-pull cables, and an assortment of nuts, bolts, hinges and whatever I thought I needed. It was time to start the assembly process.

Now I consider my covering ability second to none worse, meaning I am terrible at it! I hoped the covering fairy would do it while I slept. It never happened. So, what is the best way to cover a 3.5-foot wing section? I did it with two pieces, one top and one bottom. Not the easiest way, but it worked. I won’t bore you with prepping the fuselage for covering, I’ll let you use your imagination but I will admit a pad sander was used to shape the nose

section.  Now to make the cowl. As you can see in the first picture a blue foam plug was supplied for the cowl.  I played with the idea of a plaster mould and layering epoxy and fiberglass, but decided to just use the plug and layer it up that way. After several layers it was time to remove the plug, and the fun began.  Its hard to tell from the picture but the cowl has compound curves and it would not release from the mould. Fortunately, I had wrapped in electrical tape that held the shape but didn't adhere to the foam. Out came a hacksaw blade and I proceeded to lever between the mould and cowl and finally managed to slide it out from the back in one piece Oh what a relief! Something finally went right, I thought to myself. I'm getting better and nothing can stop me now! Famous last words!

I'm sure everyone is familiar with the dreaded metal puzzle you get in Christmas Crackers?  Let me introduce you to the undercarriage puzzle.  However, after approximately 3 years, it makes perfect sense to me. (I will explain in detail when I bring the plane in for a future "Show and Tell". )

To end on a good note, I have now learned how to Silver Solder, braze copper, make wing braces, do mechanical puzzles, and re-evaluate myself, hopefully for the better.  Now for the final decision. Should I fly it or just hang it up??? Naw (southern for NO) this bird is going to FLY. The end to the never-ending build.