

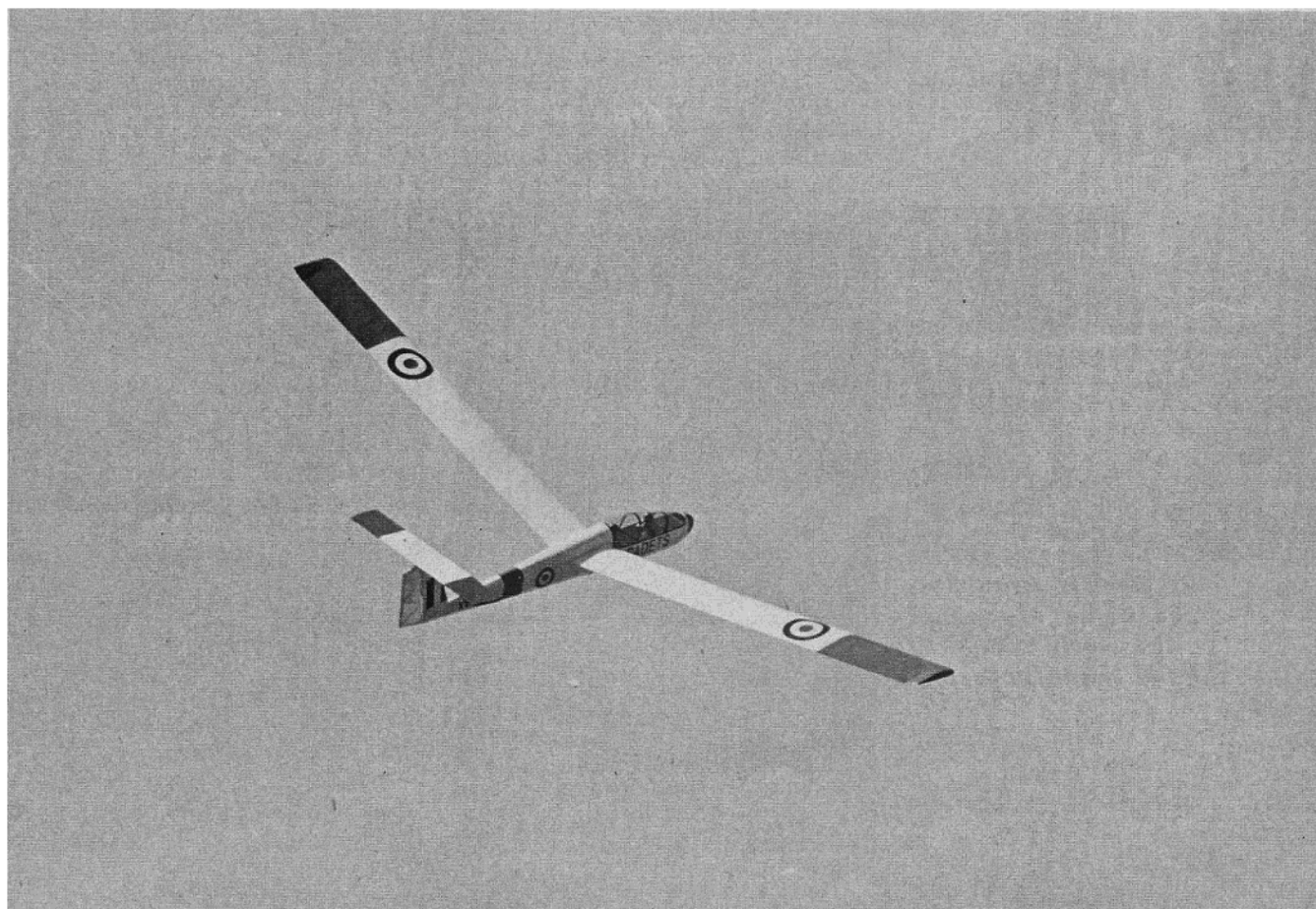
This model of the Slingsby T-53B is the result of an extensive search for a full size sailplane that, in model form, would meet this criteria:

1. In one sixth scale, have a wingspan of 9 to 10 feet with generous wing area.
2. Must have good performance potential with little or no changes in the wing/stab surfaces.
3. Must not be overly complicated with compound curves and fairly simple to build for that reason.
4. Must have "Charisma."

Now, how does the T-53B stack up? The scale wingspan works out to 111 inches, i.e., 9 ft., 3 inches, the Aspect Ratio is a shade under 16:1, the fuselage can be constructed using flat balsa for sides, top and bottom, and the constant chord wing permits all ribs to be cut out at one time using the sheet balsa stacking method. Further, the plywood root ribs can be used as "master" ribs and then used in the construction. Finally, with insignia red wing and stab tips, a red nose and fuselage stripe, coupled with the British roundel and "AIR CADETS" in huge black lettering, how could it miss being a stand-out anywhere?

The full size T-53B is a minor modification of the Slingsby T-53 two seat tandem trainer, and is used by the RAF for Air Cadet (pilot) training. The necessity to carry two people requires a lower-than-normal aspect ratio so worthwhile for a model; while the role it plays in training necessitates a gaudy finish and markings. The real model (one is based at Elsinore in Southern California) has a wingspan of 55.5 ft. with an area of 194 sq. ft. The structure is all metal with a weight of 700 lbs. empty. At the gross weight of 1160 lbs. (add radio, oxygen, parachute, and passengers) the wing loading is calculated at 6 lbs. per square foot. When the Slingsby factory in Great Britain decided to get away from wooden construction used in the past, they developed two T-53 prototypes conducting extensive wind tunnel testing over a three year period. Two fixed tandem wheels and a very obvious swept forward wing gives a rather unusual, but pleasing, appearance. Performance is nominal with a calculated L/D max of 29:1 at 55 mph using a proven Wortman FX 61-184 airfoil.

The T-53B was in quantity production for the RAF when, in November 1968, the entire Slingsby factory was destroyed by fire; the



company later going into bankruptcy. It is known that six T-53B sailplanes were imported into the U.S. prior to the fire, but none display the colorful markings that one sees on the ones used by the RAF. More data and one photo is contained in the 1970 U.S. Sailplane Directory, Part II, which is the April 1970 issue of SOARING.

The model has attracted spectators and fliers alike wherever it has flown — ranging from the 1970 NATS Soaring event near St. Charles, Illinois, to the fabulous LSF 1970 R/C Soaring Tournament in Livermore, California. However, the most memorable flight I can remember was the 1 Kilometer goal-and-return flight last Summer. This flight was one that I had been trying to make for months as a part of the Level III LSF Soaring Accomplishments Program. The stumbling block, as with most flights, was that there was never quite enough lift to get out and back. Flying out of a small High School athletic field in the heart of a large city is just not the best place to hook into a “strong” thermal and go cross-country with the promise to return to the launching point.

During the third round of a contest one Sunday, I managed to hook into a

8. Disseminate comparative costs to design groups.
9. Review tooling, manufacturing and test costs.
10. Utilize systems approach in procurement; Compare costs on basis of complete systems, groups and individual components.

I told you the wording would be a bit stilted, but the ideas behind the words are the same.

The very best word of advice towards saving money in this hobby/sport is to ‘crunch’ your pride and joy as infrequently as possible. To help yourself avoid that unpleasant contact with the ground, practice some of the hints that have appeared in earlier columns. Such things as checking the condition of your batteries often; making sure that your radio is vibration proofed; making sure that your wing is strapped on tight to the fuselage; being sure that the wing structure is strong enough to withstand violent maneuvers; and getting lots of help your early flights if you are a beginner.

Earlier I mentioned Johnnie Casburn’s Super Lucky Fly kit. I am currently “putting one together.” ‘Building’ is not the right word, since most of the building has been done for you in this outstanding balsa almost-ready-to-fly-kit. It goes together easily due to the fine engineering and the semi-finished jig-built fuselage. The completed aircraft is a very fine flying airplane, and I can recommend it to you as both a good pattern aircraft and a fine sport flier.

See you at the flying field when it starts to warm up again. □

**From  
RCModeler  
Mar. 1973**

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