



# Skylarks

Dumfries Model Flying Club periodical by and for club members

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## From the Editor ...

Welcome to "Skylarks" - a periodical newsletter by and for members of DMFC.

This is a special compilation edition, featuring articles from several different editions published over several months, and is intended to give an additional flavour of the club and our activities for the benefit of prospective members. Skylarks is produced in electronic form, as a .pdf file, and is distributed to members as an email attachment. It very much relies on the input of articles and photographs sent in by members, so inevitably publication is somewhat irregular, and editions are published as content material becomes available in sufficient quantity to make up an edition. DMFC Members can request back issues of Skylarks, so new members can catch up with recent news and events.

2018 was an exciting year for our Club as we moved to our new flying field at Mabie Meadows after 20 years at Bankend. 2019 also got off to a good start with a new Club event - the "Wing-Ding" which saw numerous of our members having great fun chasing streamers around the sky with flying wings. 2020 and 2021 were both marred by periods of suspension of club activities due to coronavirus lockdown rules, and with no flying there was an inevitable hiatus in the publication of Skylarks. However the skilled scratch-builders among us kept themselves busy building some beautiful models. There are also photographs of numerous interesting models to enjoy, and EDF jets especially have engendered a lot of interest recently. They certainly do look and sound stunning in the air - be sure to check our our photo and videos galleries on the Club website!

We hope you enjoy reading this special issue.

# Decorate with Decals

One of the themes of this issue concerns customised decals, and there is input from several members on this subject. Les Jack shows how to use clipart with MS Word® to create custom graphics. Richard Whiting gives his take on the subject, and after all the care he puts into creating his scale scratch-builds, Derek Latimer takes a different approach!

## *Designing and Printing Your Own Graphics*

ARTF planes come with self-adhesive graphics which usually fit the model well. But if you are building from scratch, or would like to personalise that ARTF, why not design and print your own images? It's very easy to do.

Begin by searching the web for clipart. Bing Image Feed is very good – once loaded, type in your search theme, click on 'Filters' at the right side of the screen, then move to 'Images' and choose Clipart. Having found an image, click to open, then hit copy, and paste into a MS Word® page. Now the editing starts.



**by Les Jack**

Click on the image and 'Picture Tools' appears at the top, click on it and the tools palette appears. Firstly, click 'Position' to lock the image and then experiment to see what's possible. Text can be added – click on 'Insert' and then on 'WordArt', type the text and select the font and size. Picture Tools is a pretty basic graphics package, but is easier to use than vector based software. It's not always easy to move text around, so practice is necessary to achieve the right effect. The 'Send Forward and Backward' commands allow multiple images to be built up for effect.

One command that is important is to be able to set transparent colour – this renders the selected background transparent, allowing multiple images to be built up and still be seen, as with the examples below. Practice with this too.

Both these images have 6 or more elements that have to be grouped so that the image can be stretched or contracted to suit its final location, and have each element move in unison. To do this on a Windows 10 PC, make sure the image is in the centre of the screen, hit the Windows key and PrtScrn key at the same time – this saves the image in .png format in the 'Screenshot' folder on the PC. Open this folder, click to highlight, right click the mouse and Open With Paint (the Paint app should be already loaded in the apps file). Select 'Crop', crop the image and save again as a .png picture in a folder you have selected. Finally, go to that folder, click on the image and copy, then paste back into a Word file, click 'Position' again and you are done, you have an image that is a collection of elements that can be stretched to A4 size without losing resolution.

### **Printing the Image**

The graphic can be printed on a home inkjet printer using A4 Matt/satin or gloss Vinyl Self Adhesive Sticker Paper, easily bought on Amazon or from a company such as PhotoPaperDirect. As the ink is water based, it has to be set with a fixative (clear varnish or lacquer) which is sprayed or painted on. If you have access to a colour laser printer, no fixative would be needed, but lasers use heat to fix their images, so do make sure that material you are printing on is guaranteed for use on lasers as otherwise you could write-off the printer if the adhesive melts inside the printer and jams it up.

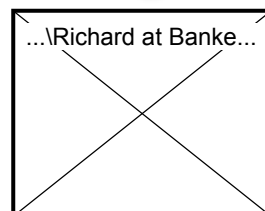
Test print on plain paper in draft mode, and once happy, print on the vinyl at 'best quality' setting, as you would for a photograph. Let the ink dry and spray or paint with fixative. Cut around the image to size and it's ready to enhance the model. You can see some graphics produced in this way on the next page.

The steps I've outlined may seem complicated, but once mastered, it does not take long to create your own artwork. Humorous images work well, I hope you agree.



## Some more thoughts on the subject

I must admit that I almost always customise my models with my own decals. Personally I hate to see models smothered in advertising, but I also think it is a pity when ARTF models all look identical. Indeed if several identically marked models are in the air together, pilots must keep their wits about them! In any case I quite enjoy personalising mine to make them look unique.



By Richard Whiting

Like Les, I make my own graphics etc. mostly using clipart - either from a massive stock I have from old PC Magazine cover disks and purchased disks of images, or from browsing the internet. Any browser will do. Just Google (or other search engine) any subject by name and then select "Images". If you right-click an image and select "Save As", you can copy the individual graphic into a specified folder on your hard drive, either as a .jpg or a .png. Think about how big you want your final graphic to be however, as not all images rescale well.

However, I also like to design bigger graphics and for this I find a Desktop Publishing program much more flexible and easier to use than a Word Processor like MS Word®. My personal favourite is Serif PagePlus® which is the same program used to create Skylarks. Alternatively, you can also use almost any Paint program including the one that comes free with Windows®, and even some photo retouching programs have tools you can use. The reason I like to use DTP software is because it is very easy to place images on the page wherever and however you please. This is quite relevant because self-adhesive vinyl is not cheap and I like to make the best use of it I can. The other reason this is relevant is that most of us probably have an inkjet printer that cannot print anything larger than A4. For producing large flashes and stripes A4 size can be quite a restriction, so the only way to maximise on the limitations of A4 is to design your graphics corner to corner (ie. You need to rotate your graphics on the page).

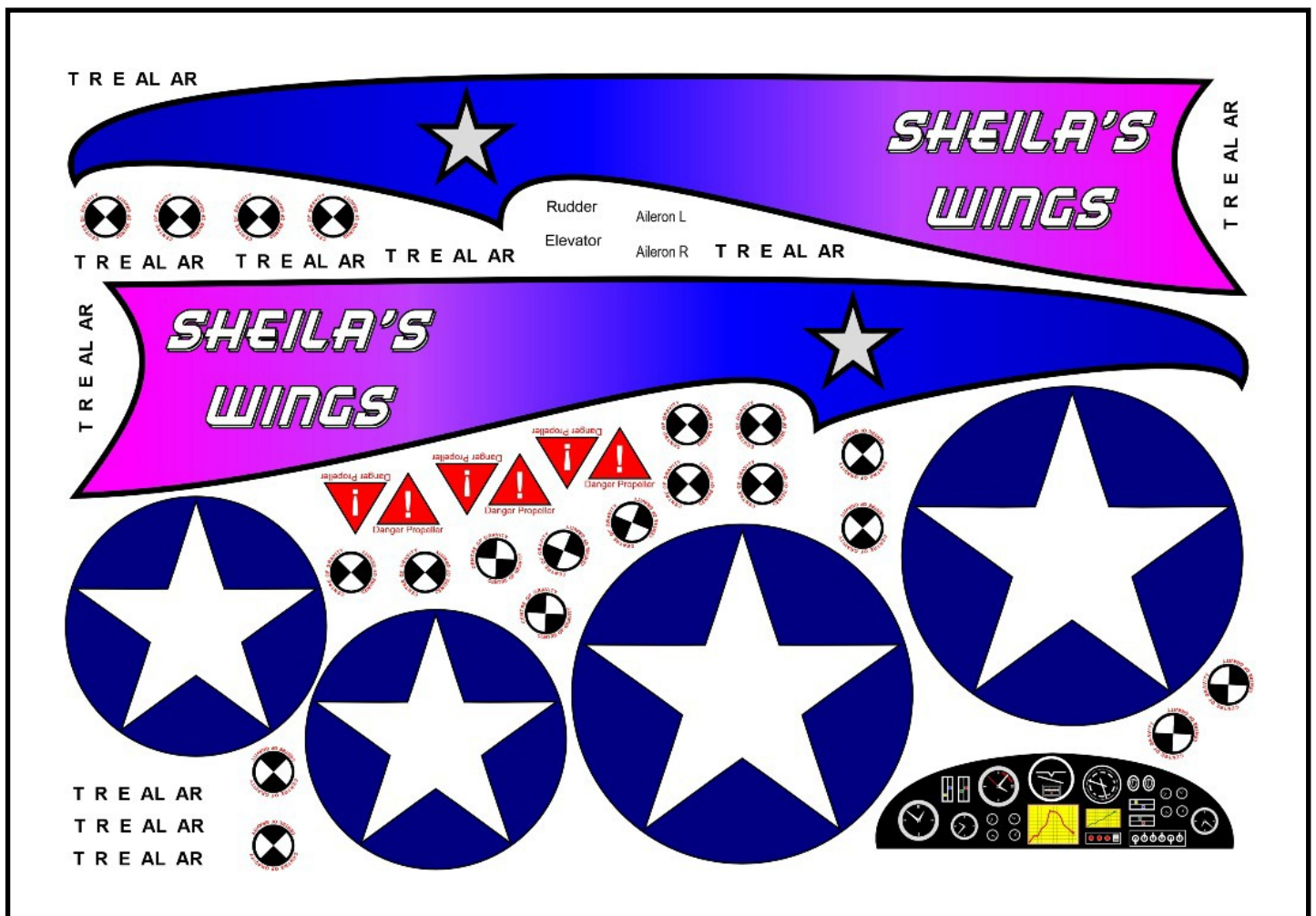


Self-adhesive inkjet vinyl comes in both white and clear. However do remember that inkjet printers cannot print white, so in practice the clear vinyl is not much use unless you plan to stick the finished graphic on to a white surface. As mentioned above it is also not cheap - at any rate not so cheap that you want to waste it, so you should plan to make full use of the space available, as you'll probably only get one decent run through the printer for each sheet - especially if you cut some graphics out of it. Example of complete A4 sheets of graphics are shown below and on the next page.

DTP software also enables you to easily create various shapes and apply colour gradients, and as you'll see, it pays to think how you could use what may be quite a lot of unused white space around your graphic design. Personally I use it for such things as CG markers, switch labels (On/Off), servo labels (Rudder, Elevator, Aileron, Throttle - or R,E,AL,AR,T) and "If found..." address labels - you get the idea. You can also have fun conjuring up your own names for models and using various fancy fonts and enhancements which DTP software is great for. And you can also print cockpit details, radial engines, and anything else you can think of. Don't forget that if you want to stick a graphic on both sides of a model you'll need both a left-handed and a right handed image. When you've created your graphic just copy and paste it and then click to create a mirror image of the newly pasted version.

As Les says above, inkjet images aren't waterproof, so don't forget to spray or paint over them with clear varnish or lacquer BEFORE affixing them to the model. Personally I use clear lacquer to paint over the whole sheet and let it dry thoroughly before cutting out the graphics for use.

Incidentally, the fixative coatings can be purchased in gloss, satin or matt finishes, so think about what you plan to put the graphic on to. Gloss decals on a matt-finished warbird just don't look right! In my experience however, matt coatings are not quite as waterproof, long-term, as gloss. The whole process is really not difficult, and can be good fun.

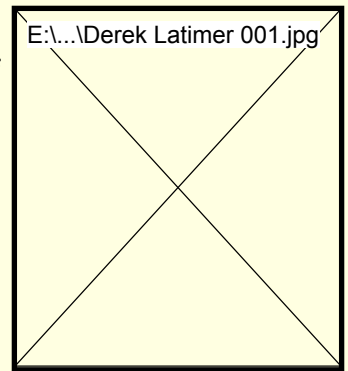






# Scale Model Graphics

I have to admit I'm a bit of a sucker for a scale model. And a bit of extra detail on even an ARTF somehow livens a model in the mind's eye. I usually enjoy finishing off a build with a few decals or racing numbers etc. but one of the most difficult things is a convincing set of registration numbers. I've tried painting letters and roundels etc. with varying success, usually ending up feeling a little disappointed with my efforts. Either the paint creeps under the masking tape or the sticky-back plastic self-sticks before I can get it in place or something is misaligned or creased. Cutting coach lines from film is another bit of a chore.



by Derek Latimer

Recently I decided to equip my new Macchi Riviera with a set of custom graphics from a new local firm (if the price was right). I contacted the guy and explained what I wanted and he was very helpful. I dropped off a picture of the name (Riviera) and registration numbers, and the sizes of the fonts I needed, and he did the rest. I picked up the graphics the following day, excellent work too, (see picture). I also bought some off-cuts of material from him to make coach-lines etc. and the cost was very reasonable, only £15 for the lot. The graphics went on perfectly and the material is brilliant, very resistant to lifting, and seems completely weather proof.



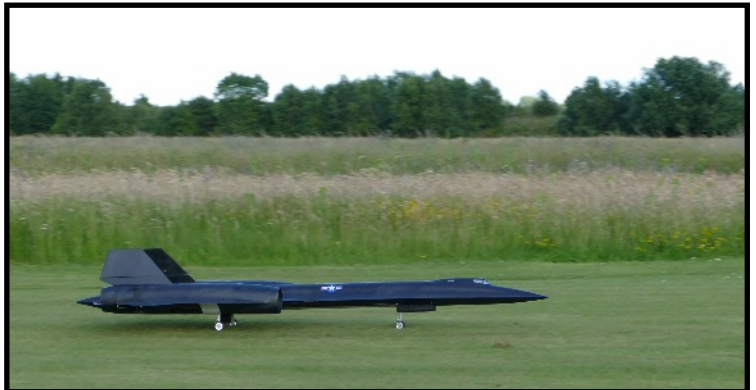


# The Scratch Builders

Amongst our members, there are some very skilled individuals blessed with some fancy machinery and endless patience. They are the scratch builders who are not confined to the ARTF models or kits that we lesser mortals play with, but who can see any interesting aircraft they like the look of, and then source plans and building materials prior to going into virtual hibernation in their hobby room or workshop for weeks and months, eventually emerging into the daylight holding unique and priceless models that money can't buy. Although there are others, this article features, in no particular order, the most prolific of them, together with their most recent creations.

## Ian Dawson

Although rarely seen at the flying field, Ian loves building - even more than flying! Here are some photographs of his amazing creations - all built from scratch.







## Donald Brown

Donald likes warbirds, and has a special interest in Russian and German aircraft, and especially likes WW1 and WW2 warbirds.







## Derek Latimer

Derek is a prolific scratch-builder and especially likes unusual and challenging subjects! He also enjoys flying models from water, so flying boats and floatplanes feature among his scratch-built models.





**North American XB-70 Valkyrie**



**Spitfire Mk XXIV**



**Avro Vulcan**

## Scene at the Flying Field ...

An amazing number of new models appear at the field over the flying season, so here is a gallery of some of them.



**Folland Gnat - kit build by John Roberts**



**Multiplex Acromaster**



**Avios Spitfire Vb**



**Parkzone P47 Thunderbolt**

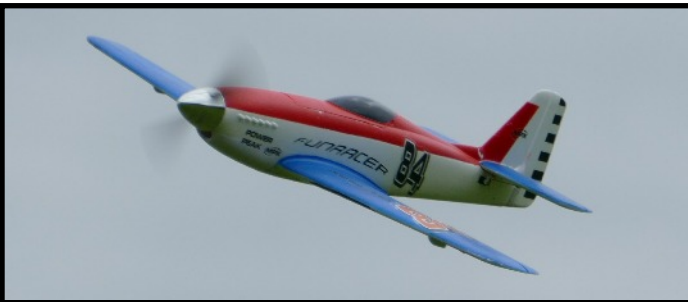


**E-flite SE5A**



**VQ Macchi M205 Veltro**





And there are some venerable true oldies still flying! Here are a couple of them.



## Swap-Meet Items ...

Everyone loves a new model now and again, so here is the place to sell an existing model, or other modelling items to make room for it! This is where members can advertise their models or other items they'd like to offer for sale to their club-mates. We generally call these sales "swap meets" because every seller is also a potential buyer!

New members may well be able to pick up some excellent bargains here too.

DMFC Committee meetings are normally held throughout the winter months, and all members are welcome to attend every meeting, and enjoy a pleasant social evening as well.

## Tail Feathers ...



**Skylarks relies on input from club members. Photographs, articles, reviews, items for sale. Indeed anything of interest to fellow club members is welcome.**

The inclusion of any article in this publication does not imply any form of endorsement by the Editor nor by DMFC in respect of the accuracy or otherwise of any statements made nor of any opinions expressed by the author of the article.