

THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

Random Modelling Notes

MASOCHIST CORNER

MORE HEAD BANGING IN THE WORKSHOP

(when your compressor dies)

December 2010

It occurs to me that this is becoming something of a running column of modelling disasters, one after the other. I wonder if other modellers have so many problems in pursuing their personal form of torment, or am I just going through a rough patch. Perhaps you all have the same troubles that I do but refrain from writing about them - we all know of the problems that Mark has had with bits falling off his He162, but he only touched on them in his write up his most recent Karut Project.

Oh well, they say confession is good for the soul (or this column may be a form of self counselling therapy).

Let's begin with the equipment. Many decades ago I bought an airbrush and a little compressor that served me well for many years. Then, one day, the compressor chugged its last and refused to puff any more air. After that I had a couple of compressors of dubious worth that drove me nuts. On one occasion I took the offending compressor back to Stanbridges (I was living in Perth at the time) and they charged me a fortune to return it to a semi-working condition. It was a problem with the compressor diaphragm they told me, and even told me how to unbolt the top of the contraption so I could fix it myself in the future. So, when it stopped working again I took the top off again and found the ruptured diaphragm. By that time, however, I was back in Victoria and when I took the diaphragm around the various modelling shops of Melbourne everyone just looked at me blankly and suggested that I go somewhere else.

By then, fortunately, I had joined the MoB and Wayne suggested to me that I would get more satisfaction out of buying bottled compressed air. He was right, but MoBsters might have noticed that I make a few more models in the year than Wayne and I therefore went through more air. This meant that visits to the compressed air shop were becoming fairly frequent and expensive and, on one trip I noticed that they were selling a nice, business like compressor for under \$100 so I bought one. In truth, it worked well. It has a simple control that had probably been designed for some emergency purpose - pull the red button up and it goes, push the button down and it stops. There was a nicely sized tank that held enough air to paint a small aeroplane without having to get going again, and this was advantage because when the motor was running it sounded like a Kenworth and I would have missed hearing the beginning of World War III when it was running.

Recently, however, the poor thing has taken to wheezing and groaning when the motor turned off, a sure sign of old age in the wrinkly set and in air compressors, I suppose. I began turning my mind to what I might do when it finally expired, but the end came sooner than I had expected. A week or so back when I pulled up the red button to turn it on the whole control contraption came away in my hand. This meant that the compressor didn't stop pumping air into the tank, which did not seem to be a good or safe thing. The solution? We had seen the Runway 13 stall at Expo and

Dominic had bought a little compressor there which, he told me, worked fine. So I found the Runway 13 website and ordered one. It arrived in only a couple of days and costing only minimal postage, so I did not suffer withdrawal symptoms too badly.



So far so good, it sits there and chuggs away just like my first compressor did, a most reassuring little sound. And it only cost me what my first compressor had cost, but in 2011 dollars rather than 1976 dollars. I might think about buying a larger one with a bigger tank at some time in the future, but our relationship so far has been excellent. I hope it is not just a honeymoon period.

There's more, but why go on? The decals that blow up, the decals that turn to ugly black smudges when varnish is applied, thin resin parts that refuse to straighten out no matter how much hot water torture is applied, and shades of paint that are never the same from bottle to bottle. Oh woe !

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