

THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

Workbench notes

BAC LIGHTNING F.1 IN 1/72 BY TRUMPETER

(May 2009)

I'm amazed to realise that after only a few months I'm almost half way through my project to make 22 Lightning models (although the plan has now puffed out to 23 or perhaps 24). I'm now starting to get the hang of how to overcome or ignore all the little problems with this Trumpeter kit and one of these days I'll put together some jottings about all that. Of course, if I were not quite so fussy there would be no problem at all with these kits, but I can't help it if I am a pedant in some things.

In many ways the Lightning F.1A/F.2 kit is a bit of an improvement over the F.6/F.2A kit because you don't have all the hassle of trying to get the bigger belly tank to fit nicely or fair in the tail fin. On the other hand, although the F.1A/F.2 wings look a bit better there is a rather horrid little problem with fit between the upper and lower wing halves. When the F.3 kit comes out in a few months time it will no doubt have most of the problems of both kits and less of the advantages. Such is life.

The only visible difference between the F.1 and the F.1A that is modelled in this kit is the cable ducts down the fuselage sides that are missing from the earlier version, so all you have to do is remove them to make a F.1. This is not quite as easy as it sounds because this leaves the plastic of the kit very thin at those points, so I put some epoxy putty inside for support. There is also the



tendency to get over excited and accidentally remove some plastic from the belly tank as well, though better modellers than I might not suffer from that sort of thing.

I'm also starting to get the hang of a decent reproduction of polished aluminium, which was a feature of early Lightnings and unavoidable when making models of F.3s, all the lovely looking ones anyhow. While Alclad II does give a lovely finish it has a few tricky points that I am starting to come to terms with. I've also been experimenting with base coats that reduce the need for so many coats of Alclad II, which is not all that cheap. By the time I've completed the last Lightning I should really have perfected this part of the process.

There are lots of decals coming out for all kinds of Lightnings these days although the Trumpeter decals are pretty good and I use them for most of the stencilling.

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