

# THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

## *Workbench notes*

### MORANE G AND MORANE H IN 1/72 BY AZMODEL

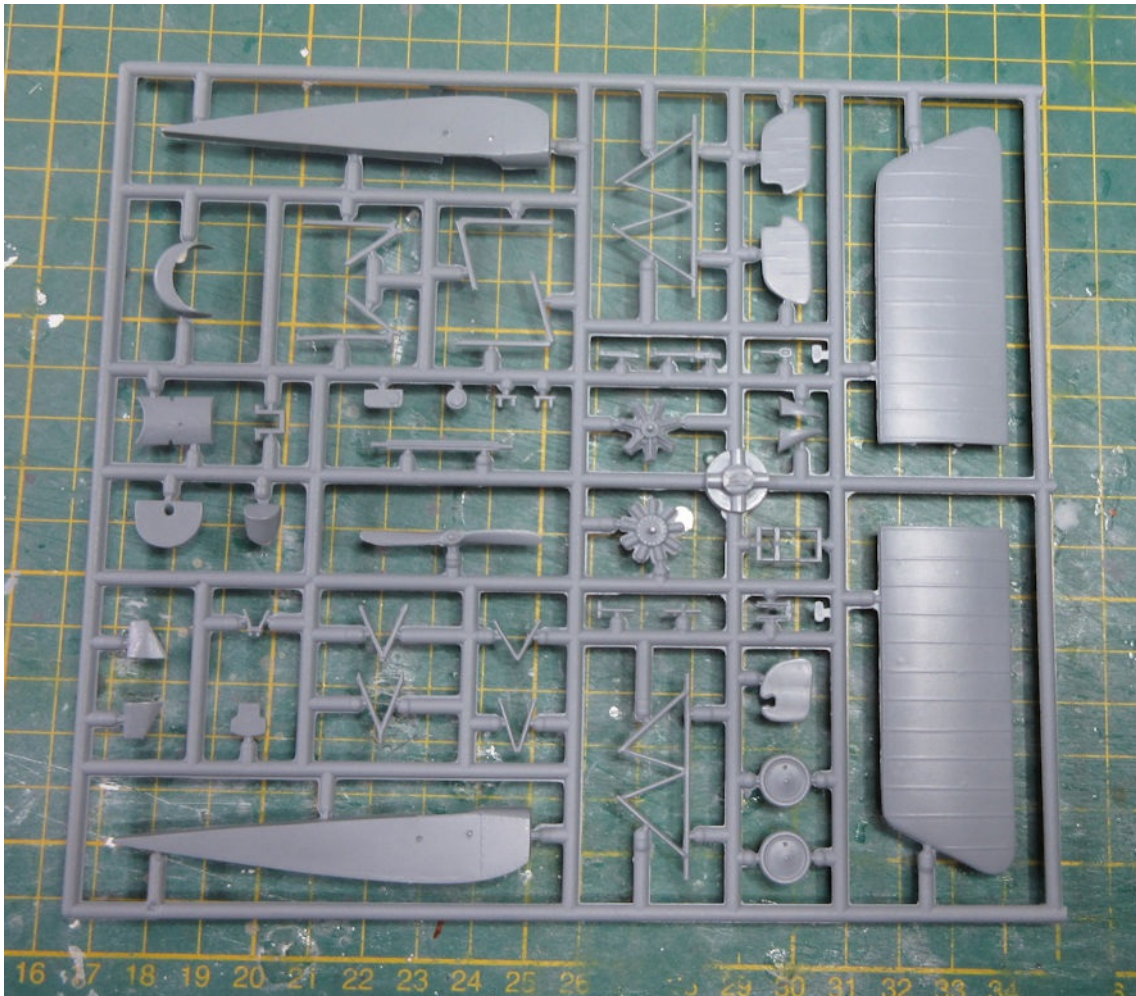
(November 2020)

Here's an aeroplane that I knew almost nothing about and which you may not have know existed, until now. I'm one of those people who usually makes models because the subject looks interesting or because they fit into one of my current hobby-horses which is, of course, French aviation. So when Azmodels released kits of the Morane G and Morane H I had to have them. At the same time they released a kit of the Pfalz A1 which, I learned when I opened the box, was a licence build Morane H. (I discovered later that when the French Army ordered some Morane Hs they designated them as MoS.1 and, not knowing that at the time, I've got one of those too. Anyone wanting to make a model of a Morane H knows where to find me.)

The Morane G was a sports and racing aeroplane designed by Leon Morane and Raymond Saulnier, made almost entirely of a wooden frame covered with doped fabric. It's little Gnome rotary engine delivered 60kW. The prototype first flew in 1912 and it was a success, taking part in many early air races and record setting flights. It was licence built in Germany, Britain, Russia and Sweden so when the war started in 1914 there were plenty of them around and many of them ended



up in military service. When the French Army took over a delivery that had been destined for Turkey it found they had little military value and used them mainly for training. The Morane H was almost identical to the G except that it had a reduced wingspan. French built machines saw limited service during the opening stages of the war for reconnaissance work with pilots occasionally engaging the enemy with pistols and rifles, and a German copy built by Fokker became the basis for the Fokker Einderker.



The Azmodels kit is a simple little affair and one sprue gives you everything you need. You need to look at the instructions fairly closely to work out which bits go on which version and the kit instructions are not the most helpful so think twice before discarding parts the sheet tells you are not required. The instructions are also somewhat vague about where the parts go so finding some photos of the Morane's on the interweb would be useful. Be careful, however, because many of the photos are of restorations or replicas and not to be relied upon if you are a stickler for accuracy.

I made the Morane H Hydroplane first. Among the options are the one flown by the famous tennis player and aviator Roland Gaross in the first Schneider Trophy race in 1913. It did not win, there were engine problems and he was forced to withdraw from the race. The kit contains the same sprue as the other kits but also parts for the floats. It is like the models of all very early aeroplanes, very fragile, but at least it is a monoplane so it doesn't have all the additional problems of trying to

model early biplanes with their fragile interplane struts. The kit contains wings for the Morane G so you have to shorten them by the width of one former ridge, which is not difficult. The problem is that the attachment point for the wings to the fuselage is indicated only by a couple of little nubs on the end of the wings that fit into small indentations on the fuselage sides so you have to work out a way to locate the wings properly on the fuselage sides with those little nubs gone. The rest of the assembly is fairly fiddly but straight forward.



The big question is; what did this aeroplane look like? The photos are not much help and the decisions made by other modellers is confusing. The kit box art tells us that the aeroplane was

painted white and there were black edging lines on the fuselage and, perhaps, the wings. One modeller has decided that the aeroplane was probably unpainted and hence doped linen colour but with the black lines on the fuselage and wings. Thinking about this and trying to decide what to do made my head hurt so I rationalized it by deciding that the kit makers had probably done more research than I and so followed their directions. Trying to mask for thin black lines on the white fuselage was too much of a challenge so I used some thin black decals instead, which might be a little too thick but still look okay and create an attractive little model.

The Morane G kit is easier to put together in many ways since it doesn't need the shorter wings and the complexity of the floats. My big mistake was in deciding to use the little nubs on the ends of the wings to locate them to the fuselage. I didn't get it right the first time and in shuffling the joints around to get them lined up properly the glue dissolved the little nubs so it became almost impossible to know the precise location of the wings. Had I been smart I would have given up at that stage and made some little pins on the ends of the wings and little holes to put them in that would have given me a more positive and stronger joint. But no, being pig headed about using what the kit maker had provided me with, I persisted. The end result is that the wings don't line up as accurately as they should.



Having got to the painting stage the question of what a Morane G in 1913 might have looked like reared it's ugly head again. Doped linen is the suggestion on the box art and I happened to have a bottle of MRP Clear Doped Linen (variant 2, WWI) which I decided to use. It is a much thinner paint than I usually use so quite a few thin coats were needed to get a reasonable coverage. I'm also not sure that I like the shade of the linen colour which looks a bit more brownish than some of the photos of Morane G replicas. The marking options for this kit are for two Russian, one Belgian and one Swiss aeroplane. I used the Swiss decals to finish my Dewoitine 9 which left me with the other decals and the suggestion that the Russian Moranes had black trimming on the fuselages but the Belgian one didn't. This sent me to looking at a lot more photos and the decision that what looks

like black edging on the fuselage and wings might be the wooden spars and ribs when seen through the semi-transparent doped linen. Which makes me wonder about the white hydroplane with black trim, but it's too late now.

In any event, since there were quite a few Morane G's around Europe before World War I I decided to make this model as one of those generic aeroplanes in, say, 2013. I can't find many photos of them so the only decal from the kit that I used is the little white round one which appears to be of the company logo that appeared on the cowling of some Morane Gs.

There is a lesson in all this. History is our best estimate of what happened in the past, and these two models are a demonstration of that. So if you want to make a really accurate model choose a subject for which there is a lot of research material, not one of these Moranes.



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