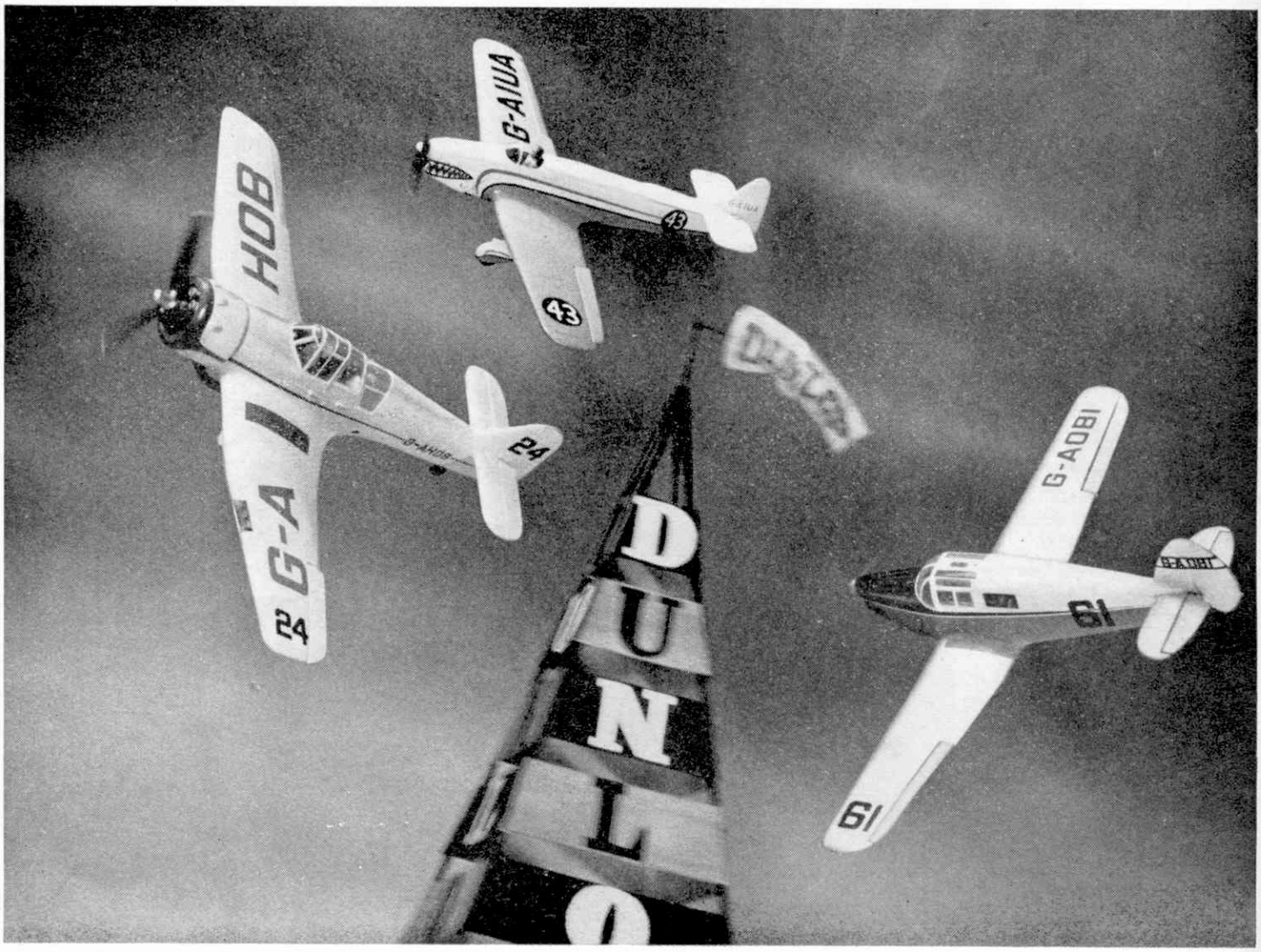
IN RACING COLOURS

Many of the light planes seen in the air race circuits of post-war days were ex.R.A.F. training and communications machines in civilian dress. Three such aircraft are included in the current Frog catalogue: the Miles Master, Miles Magister and Percival Proctor. The Gipsy Moth (from the Trail Blazers series) was also seen at race meetings for many years. The first three aircraft were dealt with and illustrated in their wartime camouflage in the December 1966 Meccano Magazine, and it is interesting to compare the photograph in that issue with the one on this page, where Doug McHard's three models are seen dicing it around a 'Dunlop' race pylon, resplendent in their peacetime owners' colours. Here are some details of the colour schemes and the modifications that were necessary to adapt the basic kits.



Miles Master.

THE radial engined Master was not widely used after the war, but three machines were on the strength of the parent company as demonstration aircraft for three or four years. One of these, G-AHOB, was entered in the 1949 King's Cup race and was allocated the racing number 24 but, as far as we know, it never actually took part. It was a Master Mk. II with a Pegasus 9 cylinder single row radial engine, whereas the Frog kit represents a Mk. III with the smaller diameter twin row Pratt & Whitney Cyclone. To adapt the kit cowling, we wrapped a strip of 20 thou. Plastikard round the cowl allowing $\frac{1}{8}$ in. to extend beyond the rear face. Before this can be cemented in place it is necessary to remove the flared-out cowling gills of the small cowling. Pre-bend the Plastikard and hold it in place with a rubber band until dry (photo. 1). Then complete the front face by building it up with body putty until it can be smoothed into a rounded contour. Cut away the front inner lip of the cowling to enlarge the area of the front opening. The nine equidistantly spaced 'blisters' are formed with body putty. Apply it in fairly large blobs, and carve and sand it to shape when dry. The small air intake scoops just behind the lower cowling are not required for our modified Master, so the fuselage contours at this point must be cut and filled with body putty until smooth (photo. 2). One of the discarded scoops is re-positioned below the cowling.

Scrape and sand the surplus moulding stem to reduce its diameter slightly and from it bend up the twin exhaust pipes. Heat the stem *slightly* to allow the bends to be made. Two short off-cuts from the stem are used to represent the twin tubular intakes at the top of the cowling. These project a little ahead of the front cowling face and are angled slightly downwards.

A $\frac{1}{16}$ in. drill can be used to hollow out the intake and exhaust pipe ends for added effect. Only the front row of the twin-row engine supplied with the kit should be used. Before fitting the completed cowling, remove $\frac{1}{8}$ in. from the front face of the fuselage (photo. 1).

Colour scheme for the Master was all cream with red cowl front and trim stripe, $\frac{1}{2}$ in. red Yeoman alphabet letters on the wing and $\frac{1}{8}$ in. on the fuselage. The racing numbers are $\frac{1}{8}$ in. black on the fin and $\frac{1}{4}$ in. on the wing.

Miles Magister.

This single seat Magister was frequently seen at race meetings until quite recently and makes a colourful subject. The only modifications to the kit are the spatted undercarriage which replaces the bare oleo legs supplied and blanking off the rear cockpit with a paper cover or a Plastikard insert. To be really accurate you may also wish to fit a more sharply raked windscreen.

Make the new legs, as shown in photo. 3, using $\frac{1}{16}$ in. thick plastic sheet for the 'core' (including the dummy wheel) and $\frac{1}{32}$ in. sheet for the two sides. Cement together and then shape to a streamline section. The photo shows both rough and finished legs.

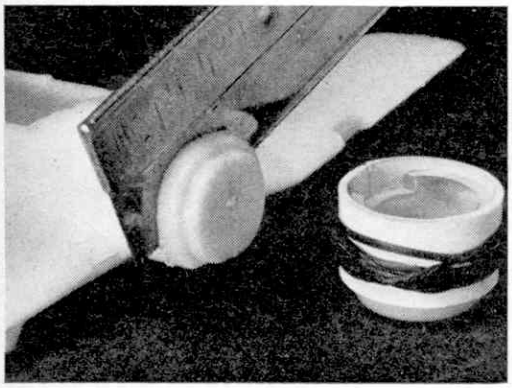
Colours are: orange wings and lower fuselage, orange trim stripe on fuselage and lower spats; black trim line along upper edge of orange areas and around the 'lips' of the shark's mouth. White fuselage top and tailplane, spinner tip and spat tops. Black $\frac{3}{8}$ in. lettering on wing. Black number discs with white numbers. Red 'mouth' with white teeth.

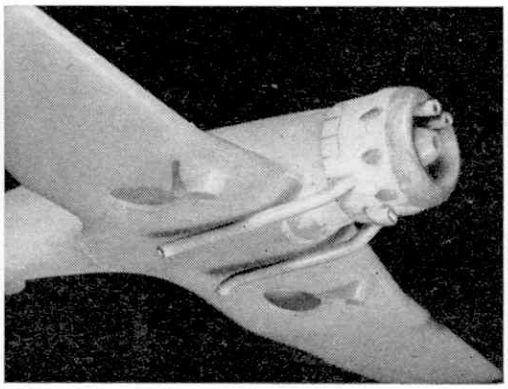
Percival Proctor.

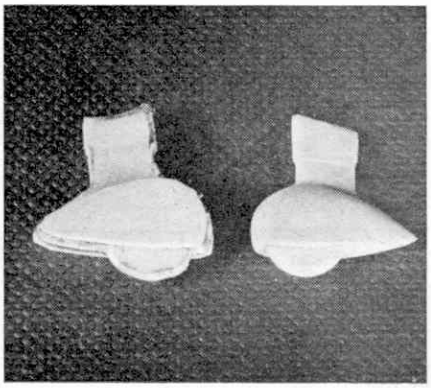
This particular aeroplane never, as far as we know, carried race numbers, but it is a most attractive colour scheme and Proctors are to be seen in so many races that such numbers are not really out of place.

Colours are: Silver wings and horizontal tail surfaces, white top of fuselage, fin and rudder. Dark blue top cowling and trim stripe, light blue lower fuselage (with thin white dividing line) and light blue spats. Blue $\frac{1}{4}$ in. wing registration letters and $\frac{1}{8}$ in. fin letters between two thin blue lines. Black racing numbers.

Doug McHard







THE KING'S CUP RACE

The King's Cup for air racing was presented to the Royal Aero Club by King George V in 1922. The idea behind this trophy, the oldest aviation cup still regularly competed for in a race, was to encourage, by competition, the development of sporting aviation.

THE Great War had only been over for three and a half years when the first race was announced; Britain was filled with ex-R.F.C. and R.A.F. officers, and war-surplus machines, expensive on fuel with their muscular military engines but dirt cheap to buy, were available from the Aircraft Disposal Company. Consequently, the first three years saw mainly military entrants on the start line.

The advent of the first true light aeroplane, the immortal Moth of Geoffrey de Havilland, changed all that. Flown by Captain Hubert Broad, chief test pilot of the company, it won the 1926 race. In the hands of Captain Wally Hope it won the next two. Captain Hope won again in 1932 in a D.H. Fox Moth, to become the only man to achieve the hat-trick. Only once since 1925 has a military aircraft successfully challenged the light aeroplanes for whose good the race was established, when Flt. Lt. 'Batchy' Atcherley, now Air Marshal Sir Richard Atcherley, won in a Gloster Grebe J 7520, at over 150 m.p.h.

The last race before the war was flown in 1938 over a thousand-mile course (1,012 miles exactly) and was an historic event in more ways than just being the closing sporting occasion of peacetime air racing. It was won by Alex Henshaw, at 236·25 m.p.h., in the Percival Mew Gull G-AEXF. This is the fastest time at which the Cup has ever been won. 'XF' herself has a remarkable history; in 1939, between February 5-9, in the same aircraft, Henshaw made a record solo dash to the Cape and back at an average 147 m.p.h. Sold to France and discovered after the war hidden in a barn, it was assembled and flown to England where it raced again regularly until 1965. Damaged in a forced landing, it now awaits probable retirement to a museum.

The King's Cup air race was revived as the culminating event of the Royal Aero Club's National Air Races in 1949. King George VI, who had presented the original cup for the first time in 1937, now presented a new one for the second series.

With the exception of 1951, when it was first rained off and then rendered unflyable by the Entertainment Tax demanded for putting it on at Farnborough, the alternative date, it has been flown every year since. There have been radical changes since the early, round-Britain circuits, with prototypes and demonstrators mingling with the private owners in the race; crowds used to aviation in their daily lives will no longer wait all day to see the contestants pass a pylon once and the courses are now 12-18 mile circuits of several laps. The almost complete death of British light aviation design and construction after the war—folly only recently recognised by the industry and which Beagle are trying to put right—meant that the King's Cup was becoming almost a veteran run until the rules were amended to allow foreign aircraft and engines to race. The pilot, however, must, as always, be British.

The Royal Aero Club is determined to keep air racing healthy as a major part in the important sporting side of flying. What this may mean to the King's Cup in the future cannot be known yet, but with Royal patronage of the Club and the Duke of Edinburgh its President, interest in the Royal race is still high. His Royal Highness has the additional personal interest of being the only Royal entrant to win the Cup, with a Turbulent piloted by his Equerry, S./Ldr. Severne, in 1960.

John Blake