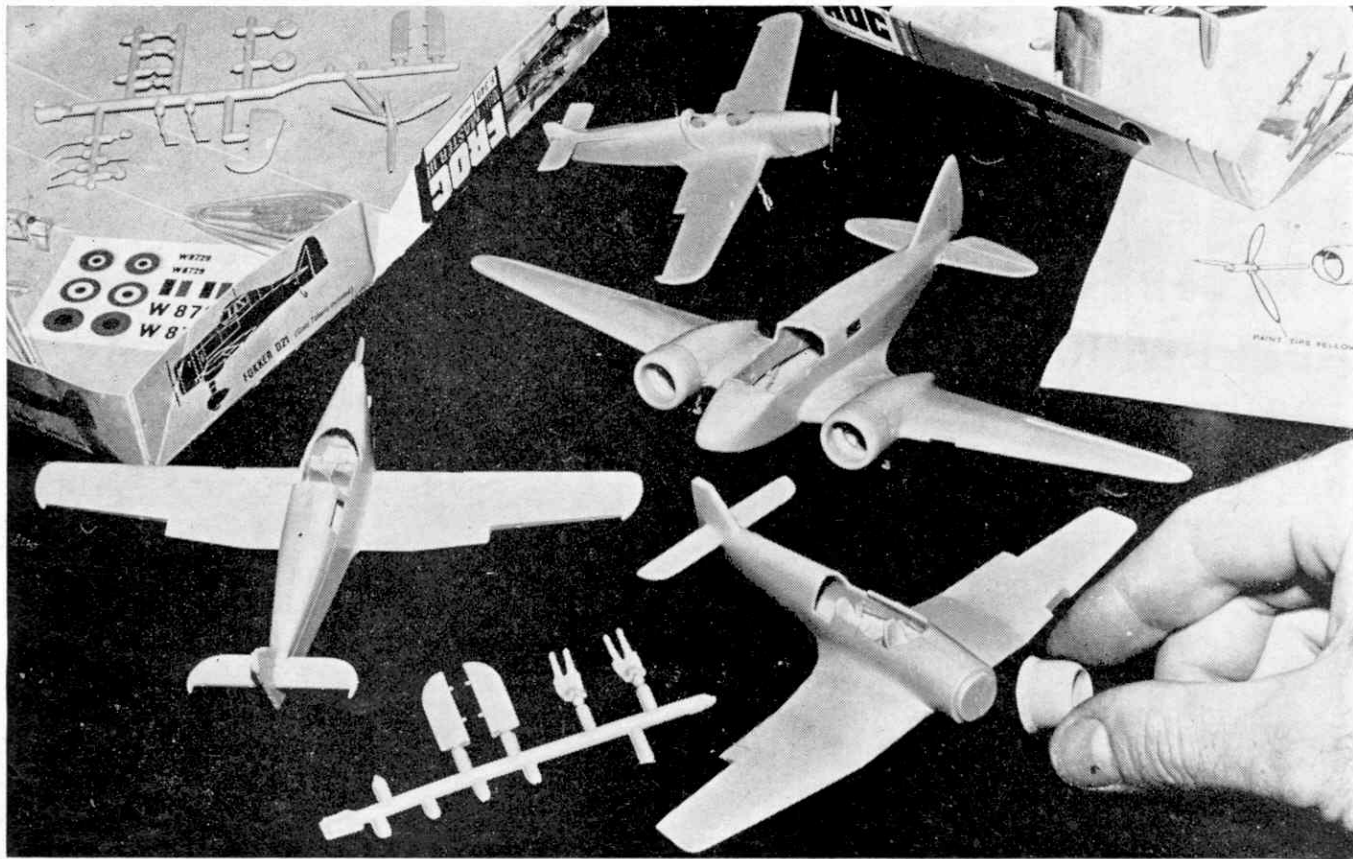


The four models shown above were all assembled at the same time. The Frog 'tray-type' boxes were particularly useful in keeping the individual small components safe and handy. (Below right) **A** The small serial numbers on the silver Airspeed Oxford were applied with Rexel Letter-Press dry transfers. With this system, it is only necessary to place the alphabet sheet over the exact position on which the lettering is required and to rub over the letter with a hard pencil or ball-point. Blick 'Dry Print' is equally suitable. **B** Adhesive masking tape covers the yellow plastic and after applying the black enamel it is removed to reveal a striped effect



the theme's the thing

J. D. McHARD

HOW do you decide which kit to build next? Do you buy the latest issue irrespective of what type it represents—or do you go for a pretty picture on the box-top? Either way you are likely to be lumbered with an assortment of unrelated types each in itself interesting no doubt, but of little value or interest as a collection.

Just as stamp collectors derive enhanced pleasure from their hobby by gathering together as many issues as possible of one particular country or period, so you, as a plastic kit builder, can increase the satisfaction of your hobby by building to a simple pre-arranged plan. A group of three or four related types is infinitely more interesting than a similar number of miscellaneous models.

The Frog range of plastics presents the collector with several potential 'themes'. For instance, our little group of models shown alongside represents some of the most famous planes to serve with R.A.F. Flying Training Command. These were the aircraft in which the fighter and bomber crews learned to fly. They make a most interesting foursome.

Leading the 'flight' is an Airspeed Oxford in post-war colours—silver with yellow wing and fuselage bands. This particular aeroplane flew from Wellesbourne Mountford in Warwickshire where an Advanced Flying Training School put cadets through their pilot and navigator

courses. A wartime Oxford can still be seen at the Skyfame Museum at Staverton Airport, Cheltenham. In the foreground is the shapely Miles Master III, developed from the earlier in-line engined Master II and the pre-war Kestrel sport plane. It boasted a retractable landing gear and in its tandem-seat cockpit thousands of embryo fighter pilots were put through their paces. The instructor, who usually occupied the rear position, could raise his seat until his head was above the top line of the cockpit cover. To enable him to do this, the transparent cockpit cover roof immediately above him was hinged upwards and forwards, and when locked in place, it formed an elevated windshield.

Another Miles trainer was the Magister (the little open cockpit monoplane bringing up the rear of our flight). This was the first monoplane trainer to be used by the R.A.F. and was widely employed to supplement the old Tiger Moth as a basic trainer. The rear cockpit, and its pupil occupant, could be completely covered by a folding hood, so that the machine could be used in daylight for instrument training. The pupil being completely enclosed was thus compelled to fly the plane entirely by the instruments on his blind flying panel, and the instructor—out in the daylight—could then assess the skill of his charge!

A few Magisters are still in use today, but only in civilian dress!

Finally, the Percival Proctor—a four-seater despite its modest size—can also still be seen on many a local airfield, but when it served in the Royal Air Force it performed the duties of navigational trainer and communications aircraft.

To this quartet of trainers might be added the Hotspur glider, also in the Frog range. This unusual model represents the machine used for assault glider pilot training, and with its diagonal black and yellow under stripes it makes a colourful subject.

All three single-engined models in our group were finished exactly as suggested in the colour illustrations in the respective kits, with yellow undersides and dark earth/dark green top sides. It is interesting to compare the different styles and sizes of the wing and fuselage roundels—

the huge wing markings of the Magister and the tiny fuselage insignia of the Proctor.

The kit box also suggests a camouflage scheme for the Oxford and suitable transfers and squadron lettering are, of course, provided to suit such a finish. However, I have always thought the sleek lines of the Oxford were shown to best advantage in its post-war silver colour scheme with broad yellow bands encircling the wings and fuselage. The particular machine chosen for our photo was, as mentioned earlier, flown from Wellesbourne Mountford and although, to be strictly accurate, it ought to have modified undercarriage doors and under-cowling air intakes, it nevertheless looks very convincing without any alteration.

Yeoman $\frac{1}{8}$ in. black lettering transfers were used for the large fuselage squadron markings while the serial number was easily applied with one of the new 'rub-on' letter sets. The particular one used here was from the Rexel 'Letter Press' collector's pack (3s. 11d.) and is just right for the job. Black 'Dry Print' would do equally well.

A collection such as this makes such an attractive display that many of you will, no doubt, build more than one kit at a time since they are so modestly priced. There's a lot to be said in favour of building several such models all together. Time is saved since cemented joints on one model can be allowed to dry out while working on one of the others. It's quite exciting, too, to see the whole production line nearing completion all together, and where similar finishes are to be used, they are likely to be much more uniform if they are all applied at the same time. By the time you have painted one colour on all four models, the first to be done is probably dry and ready for the next colour, so there's no tedious waiting. Tackled in this way, I reckon to complete five models in the time normally taken to finish two individually.

Now that we've trained our model pilots we can introduce them to some of the more advanced machines which can, like the trainers, be formed into attractive groups. Here are some suggested collecting themes.

1. FLEET AIR ARM AIRCRAFT

Blackburn Skua—(early wartime dive bomber).
Fairey Barracuda—(late wartime torpedo bomber).
Hawker Sea Fury—(last Navy piston engined fighter).
Fairey Gannet—(post war prop-jet patrol and attack aircraft).
Supermarine Attacker—(first R.N. jet).
Hawker Sea Hawk—(jet fighter and aerobatic display aircraft).
Westland Wessex—(Navy helicopter).
De Havilland 110—(twin jet all weather strike fighter).

2. FAIREY AIRCRAFT

Fairey Barracuda
Fairey Gannet.
Fairey Delta II—(first over 1,000 m.p.h. turbojet).

3. DE HAVILLAND AIRCRAFT

D.H. Gipsy Moth—(England to Australia solo flight).
D.H.88 Comet Racer—(England to Australia race winner).
D.H.110—(Sea Vixen (twin jet strike fighter)).
D.H. Comet IV Airliner—(world's first jet airliner 1/96th scale).

4. VICKERS AIRCRAFT

Vickers Vimy—(trans-Atlantic non-stop in 1919).
Vickers Supermarine Spitfire II—(Battle of Britain fighter).
Vickers Supermarine Attacker—(first Navy jet).
Vickers Valiant—(first R.A.F. four-jet rear engined airliner 1/96th scale).
Vickers Viscount—(first four-turboprop airliner 1/96th scale).

5. HAWKER AIRCRAFT

Hawker Typhoon—(tank buster).
Hawker Sea Fury—(last Navy piston engined fighter).
Hawker Sea Hawk—(Navy jet fighter).
Hawker Hunter—(R.A.F. ground attack and fighter aircraft).
Further 'collections' will suggest themselves and you can have a lot of fun simply working out relationships from the big full-colour Frog catalogue which you can get from your dealer for 9d.

