It's strange really, I'd owned the magazine for 42 years and here I was considering building the free plan! The model had definitely been designed for the rough and tumble of the period and, as a result, heavy arrivals were catered for with a suitably beefy construction. As I mulled over the plan I decided that I would enlarge the overall size of the model, from its original 30" span to a more suitable 40", whilst lightening the structure suitable for electric flight and three channel radio.

With cold turkey sandwiches still on the menu, I got stuck into the building, and three days later the airframe was ready for covering. Here's how:

A LOT OF OLD CHAT

The fuselage has simple slab sides built directly over the plan. Each has a basic 3/16" square strip framework, some sheeted areas for strength, and a few gussets in high stress areas near the undercarriage and around the wing fixing dowels.

All formers are traced from the plan and cut out, the motor mounting ditto being from birch ply, the remainder from liteply. Proceed by adding the forward formers and liteply servo tray to the fuselage side in the traditional way. Add the second side, wait for the glue to dry and then place the assembly over a centreline drawn from nose to tail on your building board. Add the rear former, pull the sides in at the tail and glue it all together, adding cross-members to complete the basic framework.

The motor / gearbox used on my prototype had a radial mount which was fixed to the bulkhead with 6BA nuts and bolts. As for the cowl, this is built in-situ around the motor with the lower section left out for cooling and the front finished off with a 1/32" ply disc of the same diameter as the proposed spinner. By the way, don't forget to cut a hole in the firewall for the motor wires; so much easier than tanks pipes and throttle linkages!

In order to provide a good seating for the wing, a second strip of 3/16" balsa is added inside the cabin, whilst down below, a 1/32 ply plate is attached to the underside of the fuselage to beef up the u/c fixing.

The undercarriage dowels serve a dual purpose in that they double as a support for a liteply cabin floor on which to place the receiver. Above this is the battery box, constructed to suit your chosen pack, and again, built from liteply. It's wise to leave the final position of the box until the model is complete and the radio installed. That way, you can get the centre of gravity spot on, without having to alter too much. My Chatterbox has a forward sloping battery box which is glued to the front undercarriage dowel thus allowing landing loads to be directly transmitted to the wheels, and giving easy access through the cabin for removal and charging. 8 'AA' cells seem to do the job very nicely, and what's more, they're very cheap, and easy to solder into packs. For the latter I use Scalextric braid, good quality flexible cables, and Tamiya connectors.

Back in 1958 builders of Chatterbox had a choice of using either a folded aluminium undercarriage or a piano wire version, bent and bound with light gauge tinned copper wire. In the interests of bouncability, and with the weigh of the cells on board, I opted to go the piano wire route.

Makes you realise just what a pretty little aeroplane the Chatterbox really is... and she's only 42 years young!