An FM Product Review:

Happiness is a good soarer. The Chinook fills the bill with a fiberglass fuse, fine plans, wood and die-cuts.

by John Schneider
PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN SCHNEIDER

One dark night a few moons ago Don McGovern dropped over to the house with a big box under his arm. "A Soarer John, would you like to build a kit for a Product Review?" Why not? I like to build and I didn't have any new projects on the fire.

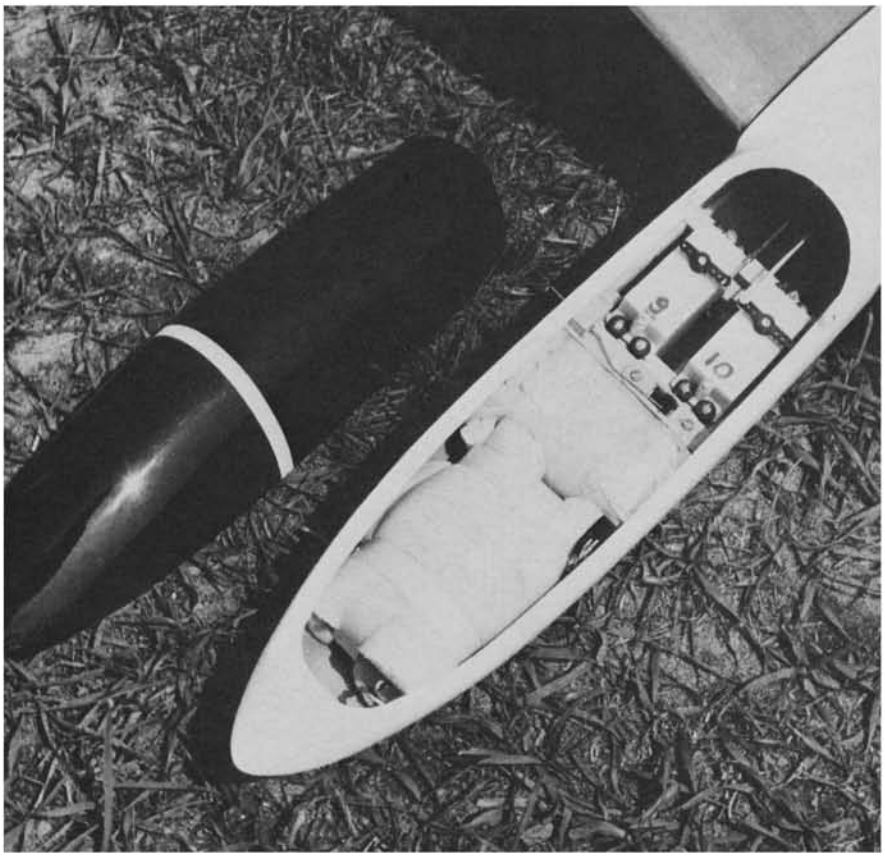
"You must be crazy," my second reaction. "My soaring experience is limited to a Graupner Dandy which I use for everything from cliff soaring to power assist." Don then explained that that was why he wanted me to build it, for an average modeler's reaction. Almost all of the kits that are built for such kit reports are off the bench of experts in that particular field that the model was designed for. Everyone knows the pro's can fly, but in this case the idea was to see what the average weekend R/C flyer thinks of it.

And so it came to pass I opened up the box. A Chinook MK-II, manufactured by G.B. Glass Products, 221 Roslyn Ave., Yorktown, Saskatchewan S3NIP3, Canada. $79.95 F.O.B. Yorkton as we go to press.

I was glad I agreed to build it! One look at the contents was all the goodies it took to convince me. This kit is really complete: two beautiful fiberglass fuselage halves; all the hardwood for the wing spars; shaped trailing edge stock; nicely die-cut ribs and a wealth of balsa. There is also a bag of hardware items including brass tubing; music wire; hinges; nylon horns; clevises and a sack of micro balloons. Three sheets of full size plans are provided, one for the fuselage and the tail surfaces, two for the wing structure. All three are liberally covered with pertinent building information. Even if this was your first kit you would not have any trouble putting a presentable Soarer together.

The fuselage is laid up of a polyester/fiberglass laminate in left and right halves with a bonded gelcote finish. The seam between the two halves is sanded smooth and the canopy is fitted. All that was necessary to finish the fuselage was to drill the holes for the wing and stabilizer wires. (Little dimples are built into the fuselage, so all I had to do was select the right drills as noted on the plans and the holes came out in perfect alignment.) The next step was to lightly sand it down and spray on a thin coat of K&B epoxy paint.

The horizontal and vertical stabilizing tail surfaces are simple and straightforward. They are assembled directly on the plans in conventional fashion and then the



The Chinook is a big, graceful bird as shown at **top.** The radio fits in the nose (**above**) with plenty of room for a glider. Make sure that you get that heavy battery pack way up front. The engine pod on the Chinook (**right**) was designed by John and was featured in the January 1977 FM. It's not part of the kit.

leading and trailing edges are rounded off.

The wing is essentially a Zaic Floater type, 112″ in span. All the ribs are die-cut, so it assembles rapidly. Two main spars of spruce to take the launch load and a trailing edge of 1″ wide tapered stock. The wing sections are also built flat upon the plan as was the tail. Outer panels are cemented to the inner surfaces with the pre-formed plywood dihedral braces supplied. These are positioned on both sides of the main spars. Root sections are well reinforced and the brass tubing for the wire wing joiners is epoxied in. Both wing and tail assemblies were covered with transparent Solar Film.

To balance the plane, instead of using a lot of lead I installed larger batteries, 1.2 ah. I placed them as far forward as possible and I only had to add 2 oz. of lead. This arrangement gives me a full average day's flying time on one set of batteries.

The ship weighed in at 54 ounces which gave it a wing loading of 8.5 oz. per sq. foot.

The Long Island Drone Society, of which I am a member doesn't do a great deal of Soaring. We have only one Soaring contest during the year and that is engine assisted, and so I built an engine pod visible in the pictures (featured in Jan. 1977 FM). While not part of the Chinook story, it certainly can come in handy when there is no hi-start or winch available. Sometimes scrubby terrain makes it impractical to deploy a long towline. In a nutshell the pod sides are made up of two sheets of 1/32″ ply laminated together over a form, a root rib of 1/8″ spruce glued along the bottom and maple mounts and a tank support on top. Wing mounting wires position it, and it is removable whenever you wish. The engine I am using is a Webra .09 diesel. On one ounce of fuel it gets much higher than a winch or hi-start.

For this report however, I borrowed a hi-start. On a practically windless day I hand-launched it a few times to check the C.G. and general trim. It seemed on target.

Now for the moment of truth. I had installed the hook as shown on the plans, pulled back on the hi-start to about 10 lbs., tension and hooked up. Check the controls! You would be surprised at how many ships are launched with the receiver turned off, usually with "instant-kit" results. Holding the nose slightly high, I released. It was on its way. Just a touch of rudder to hold it straight on the line. The wings flexed under the powerful pull of the line as soarer wings do, but up it climbed. I felt it was a giant condor on the hook. Quite a feeling! At the top of the line I gave a little down elevator and it slipped off the hook with no loss of altitude. The glide was a little fast, so I cranked in full up trim and then it really floated. There was not too much good air up there, but I still managed over seven minutes on the first flight.

This then was one plane that really flew out of the proverbial box. All pleasure! Since first flight day I have logged quite a few flights with both hi-start and engine assist and it has performed flawlessly. I am anxious to try a winch tow.

I don't care what the experts might say, but this weekender thinks it's a great glider and I would recommend it to anybody without hesitation.