

A Story About Jimmy Allen Models

Excerpted from the June 2003 Issue of "Flight Plug," the newsletter of the Southern California Ignition Flyers, Mike Meyers, Editor

Jimmy Allen was a fictional character popular in the 1930's during the "Golden Age of Aviation" in America. Many oil companies Skelly, Richfield, Pocahontas, British American in Canada, and other companies ran Jimmy Allen radio features. Kits for rubber powered Jimmy Allen airplanes were available for sale, or as prizes, in company locations. Dudley Field, the Chief Pilot for Richfield Oil Company, occasionally made public appearances as "Jimmy Allen" in California in the 1930's. A friend of mine gave me some copper Richfield "Jimmy Allen" wings a few years ago. The Flying Aces group and some of the SAM contests feature Jimmy Allen events. OT (Old Time) model airplanes have their adherents, even amongst the youngsters. Graham Knight is a movie model builder at Shepperton Studios in England. I'd say he's in his mid 40's. Like many English model builders, Graham has a bit of an obsession about building old timer models exactly as they were originally built. If it's not exactly as it was in 1936 (20 plus years before Graham was born) he's not interested.

In this part of the ongoing series on rubber powered model airplanes, I've "borrowed" heavily from a list that Graham made describing the various Jimmy Allen planes. Graham is secretary of the Raynes Park Model Club, and some of these models can be seen on their website at <http://website.lineone.net/~raynes.pk.mac/>. For you web roving fellows, I think that there are some Jimmy Allen websites here in the USA—there was a lot of stuff coming out of the St. Louis area about Jimmy Allen a while back.

The Bluebird. The Bluebird is a 38" shoulder wing model, the first and best known of the series. This is a Country Club Sportster with detail changes. The model is big, and a bit heavy. . The late SCIF Bob Erickson built and flew a beautiful Bluebird at Moorpark in the mid 1980s.

Blue Flash, 24" shoulder wing, a bit like a smaller Bluebird, this is really an indoor version of the Country Club Thunderbolt - very light construction! 1933.

Silver Streak, 32" low winger. 1935. 2 sheet plan with instructions.

Sky Chief, 40" slightly swept high wing cabin monoplane, the biggest in the series. 1935.

Sky Raider, 26" high wing cabin monoplane. 1936.

Country Club Aero Thunderbolt, 24" same as Blue Flash but heavier outdoor construction and slightly different tail surface outlines. 1935. There is another Thunderbolt as well.

Yellow Jacket, elegant 26" mid-wing monoplane, twin open cockpits, a bit like a 1930's trainer. 1935.

Monsoon Clipper, 29" the only twin motor design in the series, and it's a flying boat too! Based on the Sikorsky S-38. 1935.

Spartan Bomber, 32" mid-wing, enclosed cockpit, high aspect wing, 3-blade prop, drops a bomb if you want! Designed for the Captain Midnight radio series but accepted as eligible for JA as Captain Midnight, was also sponsored by Skelly Oil. Jim Sprenger has been flying a Spartan Bomber to very good effect at Taft over the last couple of years.

Monsoon 800, 24" mid-wing, a very scale-like little plane, like a 1930s racer with 2 open cockpits. Radial cowl with rocker bulges, spatted U/C and struts. Also mentioned in the Jimmy Allen radio series but still not widely known.

Bluebird Racer, 24" shoulder wing, a beautiful, highly streamlined model, elliptical gull wing, spats, struts, spinner, enclosed cockpit. Another little known design mentioned in the series. This model is also known as the Scarlet Tanager. Not to be confused with the Bluebird this is a very different model!

Jimmy Allen Special, 20" shoulder wing, the smallest and least scale-like of the series. A simple 1930s sport rubber model with a tiny cockpit, just a windshield really. Kitted by Reginald Denny Industries, the simplest of the lot. 1934.

Thunderbolt, 22" mid-wing, spatted wheels, small enclosed cockpit. 1935.

Skokie, 25" high wing cabin monoplane also known as the B-A Cabin. 1934. Because of its availability as a kit—and also because it's not that much different from a Flying Aces Moth, the Skokie is the model that most frequently shows up in Jimmy Allen contests here in the States, and certainly tends to dominate the Jimmy Allen SAM Champs entries.

J. A. Racer, 28" parasol wing, again available as a kit from Easy Built. Also known as the B.A. Parasol. 1939. Single sheet plan.

The Skokie or B.A. Cabin and the Jimmy Allen Racer or B-A Parasol were both designed for the Canadian Jimmy Allen Contests, which were sponsored by British American Oil, which Graham thinks was the Canadian subsidiary of Skelly Oil. Easy Built has laser cut full kits for both the Skokie and the B.A. Parasol.

Graham Knight has many of these Jimmy Allen plans available for sale. You can contact him at the following address: Graham Knight, Isola, River Ash Estate, Shepperton, Middlesex TW17 8NL, England. You'll have to write him about overseas payment details and prices for the plans.

The following designs have been identified as "Jimmie Allen" in the title block of the original 1930's plans:

| Name/Date/Span/Prop Diameter | Orig kitted by / for | Currently kitted by Easy Built Models |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Bluebird / 1933 / 38" / 12" | CC Aero / Skelly Oil | |
| Blue Flash / 1933 / 24" / 10" | CC Aero / Pocahontas | Kit FF88LC Blue Flash Racer (Laser Cut) |
| Silver Streak / 1935 / 32" / 11.5" | CC Aero / Skelly Oil | |
| Sky Raider / ? / 26" / 10" | CC Aero / Skelly Oil | |
| Thunderbolt / 1934 / 24" / 10" | CC Aero / Skelly Oil | |
| Yellow Jacket / 1935 / 26" / 10" | CC Aero / Skelly Oil | |
| Monsoon Clipper / 1935 / 29" / ? | ? / ? | |
| Spartan Bomber / ? / 24" / ? | CC Aero / Skelly Oil | |
| Monsoon 800 / ? / 24" / ? | ? / ? | |
| Bluebird Racer (Scarlet Tanager) / ? / 24" / ? | ? / ? | |
| Jimmie Allen Special / 1934 / 20" / 7" | Reginald Denny / ? | Kit CA03 Jimmie Allen Special |
| Thunderbolt / 1935 / 22" / 7.31" | Toledo / Hickok Oil | |
| Skokie / 1938 / 25" / 10" | Easybuilt / B-A Oil | Kit FF12LC Skokie (Laser Cut) |
| J.A. Racer (Parasol) / 1939 / 28" / 9.5" | Ontario / B-A Oil | Kit FF68 Jimmie Allen MC B-A Parasol |
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