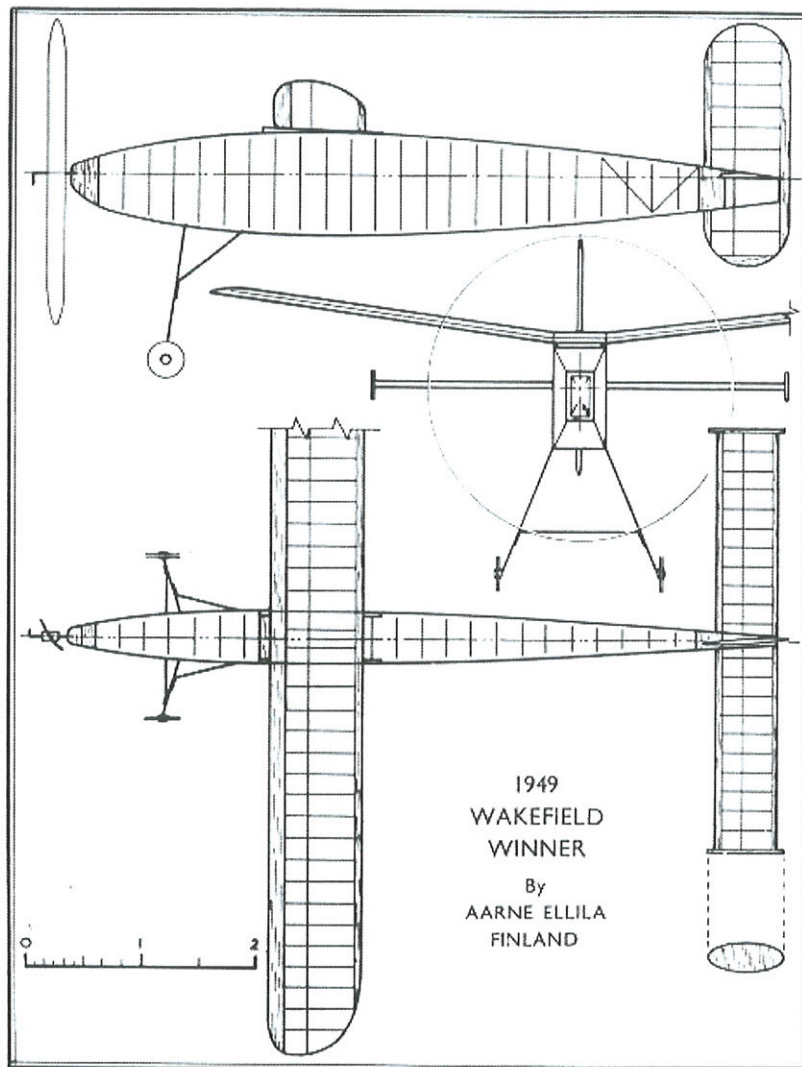


Arne Ellila's 1949 Wakefield Winner

- Martyn Cowley

In reply to Gary Hinze's 100 year Anniversary of Wakefield Cup initiative requesting historic input, I have rediscovered some pictures, quite probably "never-before-published", shared with me by the late Ron Moulton in 1978. At the time, Ron was preparing an article for AeroModeller on the 50th Anniversary of the "new" Wakefield Cup event. These pictures show Arne Ellila's 1949 Wakefield Cup winning model after the event. Built a decade earlier in 1939, the model was flown to victory in the very windy conditions, which prevailed at Cranfield, England that year (as recalled recently in NC 0810, page 18).



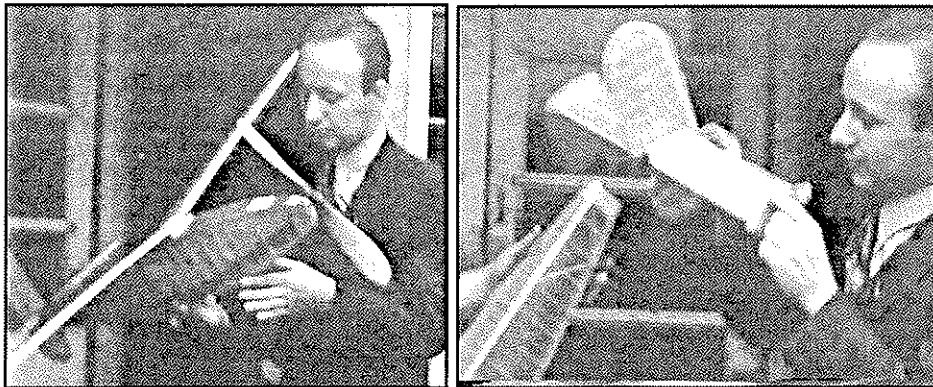
Dimensions shown on the plan (AeroModeller Annual 1949, page 159) are evidently wrong, as at first glance this appears to be an 8 foot span monster. However, if the 2 (ft) shown is really equal to 12 inches, this would indicate 44 inch wing span and 16 inch diameter propeller, which seems about right (although likely designed in metric units).

Born in Helsinki and retired from the Finnish Air Force, Arne Ellila was in his early 20's when he became Wakefield Champion in 1949 and he was also an accomplished glider flyer. His model was described at the time as being ...

"a straightforward slabsider, with parallel chord wings, large central fin and small end-plates to the tailplane, the undercarriage being wire-strutted. The only unorthodox feature was the rear-mounted twin return-gears, which provided a very long and sustained motor run from the twin skeins of rubber".

Details depicted include the removable tail section revealing the very compact twin return-gear mechanism.

Quite likely the model's vintage and the tail installation would have precluded use of a tip-up tail DT mechanism. Hence to become Champion, Arne had to be both good enough to win and lucky enough not to lose the model in the process! As the model was over 10 years old and thus, it was reported, built when he was only 13 years old, it was said that Arne knew the model inside-out and knew the trim for any weather condition! As proved to be the case.



Arne Ellila, with his 1949 winning model, quite probably on the day of the awards banquet. Note translucent fuselage covering (possibly silk?) and twin motors visible draped inside, with free-wheeling propeller and shallow dihedral. The tail and fin was one assembly, which affixed to the rear of the fuselage. Note diagonal fuselage bracing at rear.



View from the rear with the tail and fin assembly removed, twin motors again visible. Note small cross section and neat gear assembly.

Gear Detail: Close-up detail of gear mechanism. Note keys top and bottom to help accurately locate tail assembly. 10 year-old model appears to be in good condition.



A rather poor quality but historic image, shows a relaxed and smiling Arne with the Wakefield Cup after the award ceremony at the ensuing Banquet (I understand that food Rationing was still in effect in Britain at the time, so perhaps the menu was rather sparse that year?). I have since had the pleasure of drinking Champers from that very same vessel in 1987, in the tradition of celebrating the new Wakefield Champion, when Bob White won the Cup in France ! And indeed the last time balsa wood was employed in a winning model, as the primary material in construction.



Leaders Group: The leaders assemble, presumably immediately after the 3rd and last flight. Warren Fletcher and Joseph Boyle of the USA had been 1st and 2nd after the second flight, and yet only Arne is shown holding his model. Nobody is smiling, so perhaps the group was awaiting announcement of the official results.

Left to Right: 2nd Edgardo Sadorin Italy holding winder;
 8th Arne Blomgren Sweden; 6th Borje Borgesson Sweden (plans still available from Mike Woodhouse www.freeflightsupplies.co.uk);
 1st Arne Ellila Finland; 5th Frank Loates Canada; 3rd Warren Fletcher USA; 10th Ron Warring Great Britain; 4th Edward Naudzius USA.

Martyn Cowley