

The MCCE Powered Gullwing Flies

By John Hunton

The 1/5 scale Gullwing Stinson made its first flight today. This Top Flite kit was modified from the classic SR-9 to a V-77 version (the full scale Stinson airplanes were made for the military during WWII). The model is in full British military markings to model the full scale that I had during the 1970s and 80s. The model is powered by an Erickson Migrating Combustion Chamber engine which has very low sound output. The model will carry a sound system and play recordings of the full scale airplane. The sound system was not active for this first flight. The model was flown without cowling to be sure of proper cooling. One pound of lead was added to replace the weight of the cowl.

There was a slight quartering wind from the right. When the throttle was advanced to full the model accelerated quickly and the tail came right up. Within a few feet more the wheels were just brushing through the grass, then it was airborne. A left roll developed but this was easily corrected. I was listening intently for any signs of engine leaning during acceleration, but the MCCE with Perry Pump provided full power without any signs of sagging. I kept the model a few feet off the ground then started a right turn over the overrun area, then a climb right into the wind.

Against the background of trees I could see a healthy trail of smoke from the engine which was purring on into the climb. Perhaps it could have been a little leaner, but there was a good margin of safety with that setting and there was plenty of power.

The Gullwing was at a safe altitude now and it was coming back over the field. There was time now to look at the model in flight and see the very creative lines of the full scale Gullwing. What a beautiful sight, the rakish sweep of the wings beginning at the thickest point of the wing (nearly 3 inches) and tapering to the thin tip.

The left bank tendency was trimmed out by now and the flight characteristics of the model could be sensed. The full scale Gullwing had perfectly equally balanced controls in all axes and the model was the same! It was not sensitive or sluggish in any control, all controls were responsive.

A stall showed a definite tendency to fall sharply off on the right wing, but recovery was quick. A try at a spin started with some hesitancy, but once established the model spun quickly with a quick control-neutral recovery. Better watch that stall on landing...a wheel type (no stall) landing was called for.

I turned in for the landing a little soon and dropped half flaps. Moving throttle trim lower produced a nice steep glide from which I ballooned a little in rounding out, but the model started settling in. Instead of feeling for the ground with the wheels like I should have I ballooned a little again, but a gust came up and let the model down on tippy toes with no bounce at all and very little roll.

It looks like the Top Flite Gullwing kit and the Erickson MCCE are a superb combination. There is no better looking airplane in the air and the MCCE is powerful, reliable and very quiet. Next tests will be with the cowling.