

Persian Adventure

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British modellers fly at Teheran

Heading picture at left gives an impression of the number of people watching Peter Cabrol performing aerobatics with the Veron Concord at Mehrabad airport Tehran during a flight demonstration close to the main control tower and Headquarters buildings.

H.I.M. the Shah of Persia holds the transmitter as Phil Smith explains the controls. Model in foreground is 10 channel Merco .35 powered Robot, with the tail of the Concord at right. Reading l to r, H.I.M. Queen Farah, H.R.H. Crown Prince Reza, television recording engineer, H.I.M. the Shah of Persia, Phil Smith, Dr. Safedi, Brigadier General Rafat, Mr. Arbabi (Director General of Civil Aviation in Persia) and officers.

WINGING THEIR WAY in the comfort of a Qantas Boeing "V-Jet" 707 at high speed and altitude over the desert waste of the Middle East, two British modellers sat pensive, wondering what to expect in the ensuing two weeks.

Phil Smith, noted designer for Model Aircraft (Bournemouth producers of "Veron" kits and Peter Cabrol, radio equipment designer and partner in C & L Developments, producers of Climax Servos, had been invited to demonstrate radio-controlled models to high ranking authorities by the Iranian Civil Aviation Club, at Tehran. Brigadier General Rafat had seen R C demonstrations during the Tiger Club Air Display at Fair Oaks aerodrome, and also visited the "Veron" factory extending verbal invitations at that time. By happy coincidence, Phil Smith also had a contact with Iran. Phil Oddy, a B.O.A.C. engineer, had promoted Aeromodelling in Tehran, and so when all the formalities of the trip had been finalised, the two modellers did at least have the prospect of meeting people they knew, despite what were otherwise to them strange surroundings.

Imagine the responsibility. Asked to fly models before authorities in the Air Force, Aero Club, and even the Royal Family, one could have no patience with equipment malfunction, and must quickly adapt oneself to the high altitude and rarified dry air conditions, as well as the requirement to operate in confined spaces before large crowds.

Their confidence quite unshaken, our two modelling Ambassadors landed in the early hours at Mehrabad airport to be greeted by their contacts and conducted in chauffeur-driven car to a comfortable hotel in the city centre on October 26th.

On the following day, they were given a conducted tour of the capital city to admire the beautiful surroundings, crystal-clear air, and brilliant sun.

A main runway at the airfield was made available to them for their first practice session. Equipment included a Veron Robot with 10 channel



R.C.S. radio, Merco 35 and a Climax 10 channel Servomite pack. Span had been increased to 52 in., but even so, the rarified air produced strange flying, trim and both fuels and propellers had to be changed to suit the 4,500 ft. A.S.L. altitude. Flying speed was greatly increased, manoeuvres opened out and take off runs were approximately 25 per cent longer. One particular flying hazard was having to anticipate the stretched pull-out from any loop.

Another multi-channel model taken was the prototype of the new Veron Concord using the same equipment as the Robot. Mini versions of both Robot and Concord were used for single channel,

the *Mini Robot* having R.E.P. Gemini, Webra Piccolo and Elmic Commander escapement. The *Mini Concord* was fitted with A-M.10, R.E.P. "Twin-triple" and Bonner Varicomp escapement. Duplicates of these four basic demonstrators were taken as well as adequate spares.

A foretaste of the impressive organisation that was to follow, came during the first practice session when the radio monitor flooded the air with innumerable transmissions on the 27 Mc/s wavelength. A hasty word with the Minister of Communications produced an impressive silence, and all interference subsided so that practice could begin.

Having acclimatised themselves and become used to the new flying characteristics, Phil and Peter were ready for the first official demonstration which was to be in the Amjadieh sports stadium. Meanwhile Phil had most unfortunately pulled his achilles tendon during practice when having to put the extra heave into a launch and this gave him considerable trouble over the next few days.

The stadium was somewhat smaller than our own Wembley arena, and an immediate decision was made on sight of the forest of flag poles and floodlights to restrict the demonstration to the lower power single channel models. A take off in the midst of a 25,000 crowd had little appeal, so the fliers obtained permission to climb upon the Shah's enclosure and so control the model from a hand-launch, approximately 40 ft. above ground level.

The occasion was the birthday celebration of His Imperial Majesty the Shah of Persia, who with, H.I.M. Queen Farah and their son, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Reza awaited the spectacle.

Ascent to the lofty launching point was hazardous enough, not only for the climbers, but also for the search for arms and explosives by the Royal bodyguard! When eventually the model was launched, Dame Fortune played her hand and control proved intermittent. The reason for this was the very large metal roof on which the fliers were standing, and which caused a blank-out of

signals, particularly when the model was in orbit at a lower level. One miraculous pass straight through the Royal enclosure from one side to the other under the very feet of the operators must have been a sight worth travelling 10,000 miles to see. When the motor cut for a controlled landing in the centre of the arena the delight of the crowd produced tumultuous applause for what must certainly have been a very brave as well as impressive display.

There followed six hours of rhythmic exercises and marching displays, etc., by the Imperial Guard followed by the finest show of fireworks the two Britishers had ever seen.

Phil's leg became more troublesome, and he was obliged to spend a few days in bed but time was not wasted; a *Colt* control line trainer and *Nimrod* rubber model were made from Veron kits and together with another made by Mr. Oddy these were to be presented to H.I.M. the Shah for young Crown Prince Reza's birthday.

Next time more space was offered on the aircraft ramp in front of the Shah's personal pavilion and hangar at Mehrebad airport. During the 90 min. show, all models were flown and the H.I.M. the Shah was given personal instruction on radio-control and tried it for himself. Televised in its entirety by Iranian TV with Phil acting as commentator whilst Peter flew, the series of aerobatics performed at the national airport were a great success. So much so, that the Shah's brother, H.R.H. Prince Golan Reza and high ranking air force and army officers were to have another display at the airport and one of the jet pilots received instruction (not without incident) on how to fly radio-control models.

A last display before 8-10,000 invited members of the public was made at Mehrebad when the airport was closed to traffic and an area cleared for the demonstration. The German Olympic team, who were waiting to take off on their way back from Tokyo had to spend another afternoon at Tehran, like it or not. Once more the display was televised and a great success.

In addition to the flying displays, lectures were

The Royal Family watching a flight demonstration with Phil Smith giving a commentary to H.I.M. the Shah of Persia. Note the winder and Nimrod rubber model at the ready for demonstration.





Phil Smith giving a lecture to young members of the Iranian Civil Aviation Club in Tehran. Phil is holding a Mini Robot with one of the students operating a G-mini transmitter. Model being held in foreground is a Veron Nimrod rubber free flight model.

given to junior members of the Iranian Civil Aviation Club and a 25 minute interview with the Minister of Propaganda was broadcast on television. Although very little time was found for relaxation, a trip was arranged by Viscount to the old city of Isfahan to see the famous blue mosques and it was largely film and colour slides of the sight-seeing trips which were used to illustrate a most entertaining lecture Peter and Phil gave to members of Esher M.A.C. early in December.

The return flight to London by Comet IV in B.O.A.C. colours was no less interesting and formed a wonderful ending to a fortnight of very hard work and responsibility. Needless to say the Iranian authorities were most impressed, and we understand that the hobby of aeromodelling is now recognised for its worth in education, and helping to make the nation air minded. Trade relations have been established in the model aircraft field which we hope will continue for many years to come.

It is with regret that we learn that Phil's leg became worse after return and necessitated a special operation which has required long convalescence. We wish him well and look forward to seeing the Veron display on show at the 1965 rallies. He can take consolation in the fact that the flight demonstrations of his two latest designs could not have been better appreciated or put to finer use, nor too, could Peter Cabrol be more satisfied with the trouble-free performance of his Climax Servos.

At right the young Crown Prince Reza gazes in awe as a radio controlled model performs aerobatics during a demonstration flight.



Phil Smith is seen on the left releasing the Concord during the public display at Mehrabad airport on our "Guy Fawkes" day, November 5th. Note proximity of airport buildings.

