

English Electric Lightening F6



1/48th Scale Airfix Kit – Arthur Banyard

1. The model was built with the addition of the Aeroclub cockpit tub, ejection seat, nose bullet and nose ring. These items provide ample weight to balance the completed model. Some anticipation is needed to build this model successfully and the main points to watch are listed below.

a. Check that the nose weight fits inside the radar scanner halves and trim if necessary.

b. Check that the bullet cap fits the centre body. Paint the centre body and cap before inserting in the intake trunking. Check that bullet assembly fits centrally in the intake trunking and glue the assembly.

DON'T ASSUME THAT THE CENTRE BODY WILL BE CENTRAL WHEN THE TRUNKING IS GLUED INTO ONE FUSELAGE HALF; IT WON'T BE!

c. Insert a strip of plasticard (around 0.020 in) between the trunking and the fuselage half into which it is first assembled. Use dry runs to determine exactly the thickness of the strip required to get the bullet central.

d. Trim the WM cockpit tub to allow the fuselage halves to meet; a No 2 cut standard file saves a lot of time! Trim also the WM instrument panel and glue to the tub before insertion (otherwise you will not get it in). The tub sits on the intake trunking so be prepared to file the bottom as well. No matter what I did, the tub is twisted in the fuselage because the trunking is not central.

e. Check the fit of the WM coaming inside the front windscreen and file the coaming before fitting. Note the coaming must be dead central on the completed fuselage to avoid an offset front windscreen.

f. The WM nose ring lends itself to a high degree of polishing, but no amount of polishing will make it fit accurately! Check the fit with both fuselage halves before assembly. The ring will not be too small, but it may be too large. If so, rub down both fuselage fronts together on a wet/dry sheet (wet) until the ring fits. Don't overdo it otherwise the bullet trunking will not fit!

g. The WM U/C legs, used with the kit wheels, are a big improvement, but be aware of the WM mountings (for the jack and strut) that have to be glued inside the wheel wells. Each mounting has a large and a small protrusion and logic says the large one goes with the strut and the small one goes with the jack - **wrong!**

2. Getting a wire for a nose wheel axle to fit between the nose wheel forks (which were deformed anyway) is enough to try the patience of a saint and I almost quit over this.

3. Looking ahead, it was obvious that handling the completed model was a non-starter if a decent finish was to be obtained so the model was built in sections as follows:

- a. Fuselage (without nose ring, pitot and missile pylons), tailpipes masked.
- b. Wings (without tanks, U/C, doors and nav lights).
- c. Overwing tanks.
- d. Firestreaks (or Redtops).
- e. U/C legs.

Handling is simplified by making a couple of close fitting polystyrene blocks to support the fuselage under the nose and the ventral tank; this is especially useful when the assembly stage is reached.

4. Obtaining the finish was another point at which I almost quit! The original idea to mask the different panels and use various mixes of bright and dull silver would have taken too long so masking was limited to the nose transport joint and the jet pipes and the fuselage given a brush coat of polished aluminium straight from the tin. Individual panels were picked out freehand in matt aluminium and gave a pleasing effect.

5. The next task was to highlight the panel lines and the Airfix mould certainly leaves nothing out! Painting black **enamel** on to aluminium is not feasible since the thinners will remove the aluminium finish, so a water-based paint is needed. At this point a warning sounded; the next coat on the panel lines would be Klear which is also water based and could 'spread' the panel lines all over the model. A test piece proved this to be correct. Adding the decals at this stage was not an option either since they need water and Sol/Set. Time for a Scotch and decide whether to give up modelling!

6. Being so far in, I continued by using Windsor & Newton watercolour black from the tube thinned **slightly** with deionised water for the panel lines. It is vital to **let it dry overnight**. A damp tissue (not wringing wet) rubbed lightly **across** a panel line when dry will remove the excess watercolour (and affect the aluminium finish but, surprisingly, giving a slightly worn look which is acceptable). This was followed by a soft brush Klear coat, the brush never passing over the same place twice. One pass leaves the watercolour in place, the second pass does not. Leave the Klear to dry thoroughly. If you want a higher gloss, repeat the 'one pass' process, but remember that a second coat will be applied to seal the decals.

7. Decalling is a bit of a challenge, especially the wing walkway lines and those round the Firestreaks, but they all went on in the end. Watch the dashed line decals round the rear fuselage! Another coat of Klear (one pass) completes the process.

8. Assembly requires patience as the model becomes increasingly difficult to handle as bits are added. Complete the underside of the model first and then add the following items in this order:

- a. Pitot probe (then turn model upright).
- b. Canopy.
- c. Overwing tanks (if fitted).
- d. Fin.

9. What did it cost? The kit was £22.00 and the Aeroclub parts a further £10.00. Around 150 hours, half a kitchen roll, 3 Swann Morton No 10A blades, half a bottle of Scotch and some new words for the English (?) language. It may not be the best model I will make, but it is the most detailed and I reckon it was worth the effort.

(It couldn't have been that bad since it won 'Best in Show' at the 2007 East Anglian Model Show as voted by visitors (and yes - there was more than one model and visitor!))

AEB