



from Northrop's
workbench

Henry Struck's Benny Boxcar

by Bill Northrop

Back around 1989, Henry Struck sent me the original drawing of his 1937 Wakefield with diamond fuselage and plug-in wing panels. It never was published. I redrew it for *Model Builder*, but let it sit around until mid-1992, when we sold the publication.

I contacted Hank, told him about my intention to open a plans service, with a mixture of free flight, control line, gas, rubber, RC, OT's, scale in all categories, etc., but not any MB plans except my designs.

Hank agreed to let me put the Wake in my plans list, which eventually became the "Scratch Builders Almanac."

Of course, I had no idea at the time that in about four years hence, I would be re-acquiring all of the MB plans originals.

Rolled up in the same tube with the '37 Wakefield, Hank sent me some miscellaneous sketches of proposed full-size aircraft, details on a combined rubber or gas model (had a huge prop for rubber) which I think appeared in *Polk's Model Aircraft Builder* in 1937, and a print of an obscure gas job for the Brown Jr. that he had designed, of which only two had been built.

I had rolled up this print and put it away with lots other odds and ends, and it didn't re-surface until about a month ago—11 years later, when I was searching for something else.

This time my reaction was quite different, especially after getting out a magnifying glass to study more closely what Hank had scribbled in the lower right corner of the sheet. The two models built were by Hank and his buddy, John Ogilvie, in 1939. John flew his to eighth place at the 1939 Nats, and Hank indicated that there was possibly a photo in *MAN's* 1939 Nats coverage. Wow! A really obscure

design by one of modeling's greatest creators. This was like the classic car nut coming across a Duesenberg buried under a pile of straw in a remote old barn. The name Hank gave it is kinda catchy too, "Benny Boxcar."

When I took the print to the next weekly lunch meeting of the VAMPS (Vegas Antique Model Plane Society), Bob Chambers and Fred Caballero immediately insisted on having copies.

Next I took the print with me to my booth at the AMA/IMS Pasadena Show (the show Anita and I created and ran for 21 years, now owned by AMA.) I showed the old print to Jim Adams, who was there to handle the

ture One-Design contest. You may see some Benny Boxcars at the Champs.

So I guess Benny Boxcar will become another hit from the design board of Henry Struck—still alive but deep in the mysterious memory void known as Alzheimer's.

I have done a brief amount of enhancement on the original drawing print, trying not to disturb Henry's lines and copy. The two $\frac{1}{8} \times \frac{1}{4}$ spars were not shown on the original wing, but were shown by Hank on the rib pattern in the fuselage profile, so Sal agreed that this was probably the way the wing was built; sort of a Struck trademark. And the second name for

the model, "Lost Episodes," added in ink by Henry after the print was made, may have to remain with him in that same mysterious void. Bill Northrop, 2019 Doral Court, Henderson Nevada 89014-1075.

Sal's Benny Boxcar in red, with white wing and elevator. O&R 60.



Jim Adams

SAM booth at the show, as he has done for years. "I want a copy of the plan, and I'll tell Sal about it tomorrow when he comes to the show," was Jim's reaction.

Soon after the show opened the next morning, there was Sal. "Lemme see it," followed by, "Oh, good morning, Bill." I knew what the "it" meant, and unrolled the print on my display table.

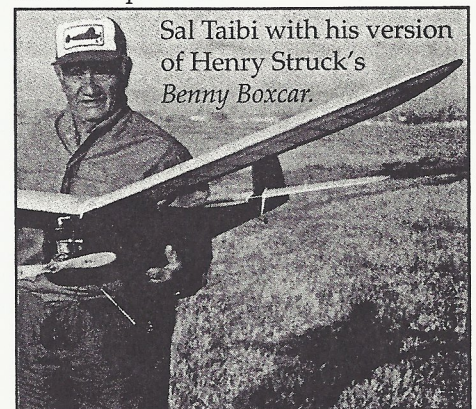
"Omigosh, John Ogilvie. He was Hank's best buddy, but one day in 1939 at Creedmore he helped me beat Hank for first place at a contest. Hank was in first with his Record Hound, and I was Second.

"John went after the Hound in some small car after Hank's next-to-last flight. The car was too small to fit in the model without taking off the wing, so John climbed in back and held it with the wing sticking out the back windows. The driver went just a little too fast and the wing snapped in the middle. I made a safe last round flight and took first. I want a copy of that plan, and I'll build one as soon as you get it to me!"

Ron Boots, of the SCIFS (So Cal. Ignition Flyers) is also talking about a fu-

Sal Taibi writes: The airplane had three names, Benny Boxcar, Lost Horizon and Lost Episodes. I call mine Lost Horizon. Before he died, Henry sent plans to Bill Northrop, who contacted me and wanted to know who J. Ogilvie was. I told him John Ogilvie was one of Henry's flying buddies.

I liked the look of the model and built one powered with an Ohlsson 60; it weighed 3 pounds, 1 ounce, ready to fly. I am having trouble controlling its looping tendencies. It did seven loops in three official flights at Taft during the SCAMPS Texaco meet in April, but thermalled twice and won the 30 Second Antique event.



Sal Taibi with his version of Henry Struck's Benny Boxcar.