

Flight Test

Maxford Curtiss Jenny
Product Review by Ken Karpinski



"Jenny, I got your number. Jenny, I'll make you mine. Jenny, I'll be your lover. 867-5309."

Very few of us don't remember this incredibly successful song from the 1980's. This review is about one of the most popular airplanes from the early days of aviation, the Curtiss JN-4 otherwise known as the "Jenny".

The Curtiss Jenny two-seat biplane was one of the most popular airplanes of all time. It was the first mass-produced airplane and was made in larger numbers than any other American airplane of its time. By 1918, over 6000 Jenny's had been built. Jenny's were used to train about 95% of the pilots of WW1 from all around the world. Unfortunately about 20% of the airplanes were lost in training accidents. The U S Post Office used Jenny's for airmail service after WW1 and many were sold to civilians as war surplus. Charles Lindbergh's first airplane was a Jenny and he paid about the same amount for his that I paid for this ARF. Jen-

ny's were also popular with barnstormers but not with Susan Sarandon as her character fell off one and was killed in the film "The Great Waldo Pepper". Today, about only 50 or so Jenny's survive in museums or with private owners. But, if you visit Maxford Hobbies at www.maxfordusa.com, you can get your very own Jenny in assorted sizes. So lets get to work on mine.

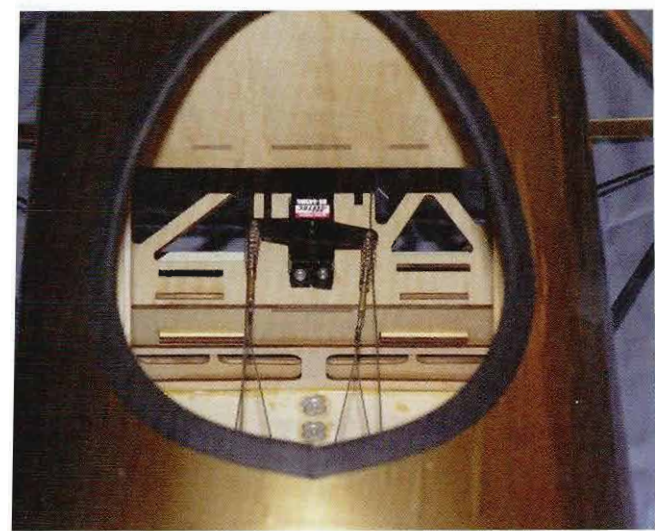
The Maxford USA 20% Jenny by Green Models comes to you in two very large boxes and everything inside is wrapped and bagged to protect the contents during shipment. There's nothing prettier than seeing that very large cowl that's packed with the fuselage. Besides the written instructions, there's also a CD showing a factory worker assembling a Jenny. It doesn't have sound but he's Chinese so I wouldn't understand him any way. An ARF is an ARF and if you've assembled a ARF before then you can assemble the Curtiss JN-4 Hey Wilbur, let me fly that thing!



"Now I lay me down to sleep...." The lower wings install with 4 bolts and an aluminum tube to join the two halves.

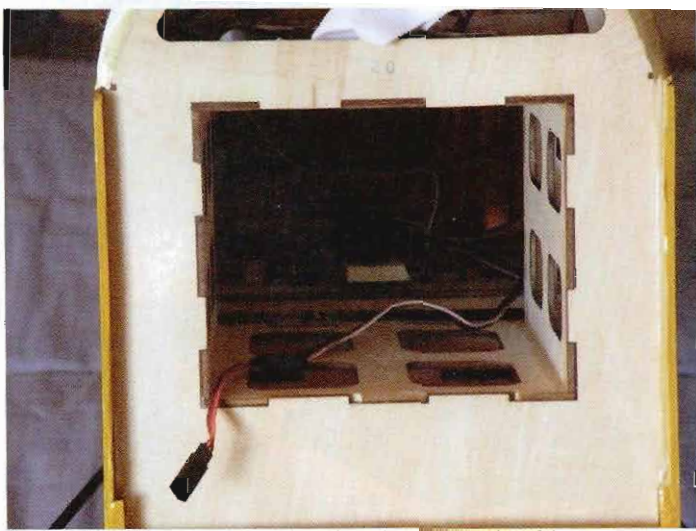


All of the electronic assembly coming together. The "firewall" is not yet installed, allowing easy internal access.



der and elevator servos (Hitec 645mg's) mount under the front and rear cockpits.

Just like most airplanes, they have you installing the tail feathers first and this one is no exception. One of the things I liked about constructing the Jenny is that most of the parts are bolted together. The only gluing is for the hinges on the rudder, elevator, and ailerons. In this case, the horizontal and vertical stabs are bolted on and can be just as easily bolted off for transportation. I was very appreciative of the manufacturer's pre-assembly and pre-installing the pull-pull cable assemblies for the rudder and elevator. Otherwise, I would have gone nuts assembling them. The rudder and elevator servos, along with the receiver, mount under hatches constructed into the cockpits. It's a good idea to map out where your wires are going to run and where your switches are going to be installed before the upper wing center section is installed. Access to the electronics bays gets tight after that. Also, the instructions tell you to install



A view from the front showing the elevator and rudder servos plus the receiver. The servo extension wire is for the throttle.

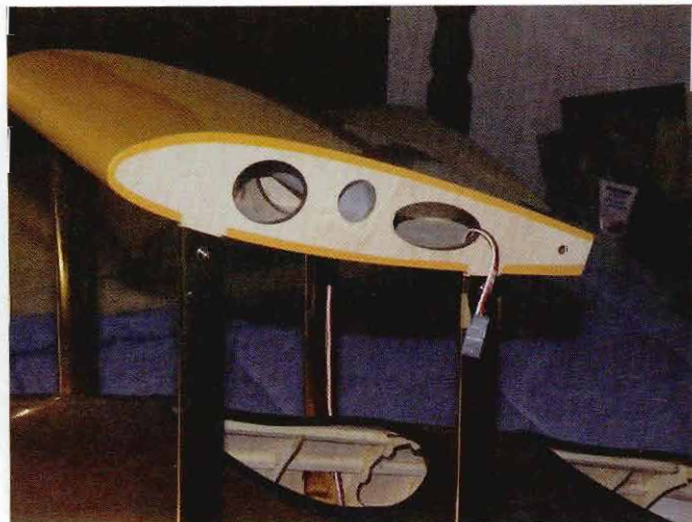
the two windshields after the servos are installed. Wait until your airplane is completed so the windshields don't get damaged when you have to flip the plane over. While installing the tail wheel, I found that the T bracket that attaches to the rudder was missing. As a substitute I used a red servo arm that came with my Hitec servos and voilè (I love that word), problem averted. About the only problem I came up with on the fuselage was that there was no way to get a screwdriver into the wheel collars to tighten them. I fixed that problem by cutting out part of the plastic wheel cover and then tightening the inside collar after the outer one was in place. Hey, I didn't go to high school for nuthin!

The wing assembly is pretty straightforward with no real surprises. While the idea of installing all those wires is really intimidating, once you get into it you'll find it's no big deal. The nice thing

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The pull-pull wires for the elevator and rudder come pre-installed from the factory. A nice touch.



Aileron wires were routed along the rear cabane struts, and out through the wing center section, to plug into the outboard panels.

about this wing construction is that the upper and lower wing halves are made to come off as a unit and stay intact. So, once those wires are on, they stay on! 4 bolts and 3 rods are what hold those wings onto the airplane. Nice!

The Maxford Jenny was designed to be powered with a CRRC 50cc gas engine and you get a substantial discount on both the airplane and engine if you order them as a package. I, being incredibly cheap, decided to order a Turnigy 52 Overbore from Hobby King. I like the Chinese as much as the next guy but I'm going to send as little money over there as possible. The engine, fuel tank, throttle servo, battery, and ignition module all get installed into a box, which is then installed into the fuselage. Mount your engine onto the box and slide the box into the fuselage. Next, place a piece of masking tape 1" back from the fuselage front and fit the cowl in place. Finally, slide your engine in or out until you have about 1/4" clearance from the front of the cowl to the rear of the drive washer. I then epoxied 1/4" triangle stock to the box/firewall mating surface to shore everything up. Once your battery and ignition module are in place just behind the engine, any added balancing weight will be negligible. And speaking of batteries, I decided to use a Venom 3000ma NiMi battery for the receiver and ignition. How did I do this? By ordering a battery eliminator from Troy Built Models. By plugging the battery eliminator module into the gear slot of my receiver, I can shut my engine down with the flip of a switch on my transmitter and also save on the weight of another battery. And, I have this nice and handy dandy light on the side of my plane to tell me when the ignition power is on. Now isn't that special?

It's now the moment of truth. The plane is assembled and we're at the field. And, as usual, someone else will make the first flight while I take the pictures. Captain Chicken is nothing if he isn't consistent. With the plane fueled up and everything turned on, my test pilot, Tito Rosario, closes the choke and flips the prop a couple of times until the engine fires and dies. With the choke open, Tito flips the prop a couple more times and the Turnigy 52 comes to life. Tito adjusts the engine ever so slightly and we have the full Monty from idle to full power. And, that Zinger 22X8 is providing plenty of wind so it's time to taxi out and prepare to take off. Tito decides to put in a couple of clicks of up elevator before taking off. As he advances the throttle, the plane lifts off and goes

straight up. I guess that trim adjustment wasn't needed after all. After a few passes from left to right and right to left, Tito has the plane trimmed so it's flying hands off. I usually mix in rudder to ailerons to prevent adverse yaw and this has the big Jenny banking and turning gracefully. Tito lines the plane up for landing, slows her down to a crawl, and the JN-4 touches down in the sweetest no bounce 3 pointer you've ever seen. And, the crowd went wild. Yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!

The payoff. On a Karpo scale of 1 to 5, I give the Maxford 20% Jenny a solid 4.5. However, if you don't own a van or full size pickup, please forget about this plane. The fuselage is 78" long and the wing panels are about 48". For ease, I transported the Jenny on top of my Kia Sedona van with the wings inside. There is good news, however, in that Maxford sells two other sizes of Jenny's in smaller sizes for you glow and electric fans. No matter what size you pick, you'll soon fall in love with Jenny. Oh, 867-5309

I would like to give special thanks to these fine people for their help during this project:

Maxford USA
Hobby King
Troy Built Models.

Airplane Specs:

Wingspan- 105"
Wing Area - 1,760
Length - 78"
RTF Weight - 20 pounds
Engine - 40 to 50 cc gas
Prop - 22X8
Radio needed Minimum 4 channel with 5 servos

Items Used in Review:

Maxford 20% Jenny
Turnigy 52cc Overbore gas engine
Zinger 22x8 pro propeller
Spektrum DX7 radio system w/AR7000 receiver
Hitec 645mg servos on elevator and rudder
Hitec 425bb servos on ailerons and throttle
Venom 3000ma NiMi batter for receiver and ignition power
Troy Built Battery Eliminator Module

Positives about the airplane:

A very good covering job with very little wrinkles to iron out or stretch with heat gun
Mostly bolt together constructions. Only hinges are glued.
An extensive, well packaged hardware supply. No cheap stuff!
Flats, where needed, already filed in.
Spring loaded hatches to radio gear in cockpits. Very nice.

Very few wrinkles in the covering. Why any? I can show you other ARF's who have none.
Control surfaces should be pre-hinged and glued. Other companies do.
Some parts (wheels) needed modifications to be installed.
Some of the instructions were a little vague
Control throws were expressed in degrees. Who has a degree meter?
Please give us the recommended control throws in inches or millimeters like everyone else.