

FROM THE SHOP

Don Dewey

Somebody once said that there is a very thin line between love and hate.

While the quotation, itself, may not be verbatim, nothing could be more descriptive of the gamut of fascination and frustrations experienced by those of us who have been involved with radio controlled helicopters since their inception approximately 11 years ago with the appearance of the Du-Bro Whirlybird.

Just as a hummingbird differs greatly from its more conventional feathered counterparts, the helicopter holds an intrigue uniquely its own. Where else can you find an aircraft that can fly in a conventional manner, perform stalled turns, loops, rolls, pinwheels, Figure 8's, then hover in any given position and fly both sideways and backwards? More recently, the R/C helicopter has even been successfully held in a sustained inverted hover.

Yet, over the years the frustrations of learning to fly an R/C helicopter have been almost beyond belief --- discouraging the majority from attempting this most fascinating area of the sport and hobby of radio control. In the early days of the first R/C helicopters, any type of sustained airborne flight, or hover, was virtually little more than an accident. And, speaking of accidents, it seemed that for every few seconds of "flight" time there were several hours of repair time at the bench --- along with the expense of the replacement parts for the damaged helicopter.

During the past decade, it has been the dream of many of us in this phase of R. C. that there would be one day, a small and compact R/C helicopter that was reasonably priced, easy to build with readily available and inexpensive replacement parts, and one that the novice could learn to fly in a minimum of time. Many attempts were made to commercially produce such a model but all of them fell short of one or more of these intended goals. Fortunately, such a machine is now available and has met each and every one of these prerequisites and will enable any helicopter enthusiast to be able to build an R/C helicopter with a minimum initial cost, an evening or two of construction time, and even be able to learn to hover it in a single day.

The Gorham Model Products "Cricket" is truly the answer to the problems we have all encountered in radio controlled helicopters. John Gorham has, for many years, believed that there has been a need for a small R/C helicopter which would be quiet, economical, and available at a low cost. However, despite the many attempts by various individuals and companies to achieve this goal, the biggest problem that has been encountered has been the stability of the small helicopter and the 19 or .25 powered helicopter has mostly been jerky and jumpy in performance --- far from the ideal characteristics for the beginner. John worked on this problem for well over a year and decided to put his ideas down on the drawing board to see if he could come up with a helicopter in this size range that would not only have all the advantages of a .25 powered machine but would eliminate the major disadvantages of erratic performance. John concluded his final engineering prototype design in November of 1979 and test flew the first "Cricket" prototype. The performance, to say the least, was amazing. This helicopter is not only simple, low in cost, has very few parts, is lightweight and compact, but also possesses an extraordinary stability that many of the larger machines would be hard put to match. It is literally true to say that you could take your hands away from both sticks in the hover. Then, provided that there is a slight forward trim and an excess of thrust over weight, the "Cricket" will gracefully take off into forward flight and do all sorts of extraordinary, but stable, maneuvers such as right and left turns and pirouettes for as long as you wish. In the hover, the "Cricket" is very predictable with none of the slow response which one normally associates with the smaller helicopters.

Quite simply, the GMP "Cricket" has been designed to be a light, economical, low noise, fun R/C helicopter. It has also been designed to be very stable and easy to fly. Complications such as collective pitch and cooling systems have been avoided, but not without considerable thought concerning the proper operation of the helicopter without these features. The "Cricket" is extremely responsive while remaining docile enough for the beginner to handle. Fast and slow forward flight is within the machine's capabilities as are stalled turns, pinwheels, Figure 8's, and quick stops. In fact, the "Cricket" will readily carry out any flight



maneuver that its full size counterparts will do.

To say that we were impressed by this all-American design by Gorham Model Products would be a complete understatement! Priced at under \$200 a new .25 powered "Cricket" R/C helicopter is simple in both design and construction and it has been highly developed and flight tested prior to being placed into production. The machine can actually be built in one evening not counting the drying time for painting the canopy and the five completely pre-cut and shaped wooden parts. The "Cricket" also sports an adjustable response rotorhead; a shaft drive tail rotor system; a spinner start --- just like a plane; and uses a simple 4 channel radio of virtually any type, and in the power category, either an O.S. .25 FSR or Super Tigre Schneurle with standard muffler can be used. The kit contains a fully assembled tail rotor gear box; fully assembled clutch drive; all die-cut plywood; finished main and tail rotor blades; all metal parts are finished with only assembly required; Kraft polyethylene fuel tank; fuel tubing; all clevises, rods, and fittings; plus one of the most detailed and fully illustrated step-by-step building instruction manuals we have seen to date. Also included are complete set-up and how-to-learn to fly directions. In addition, spare parts are inexpensive and readily available from Gorham Model Products. An added plus is that expert advice on either building or flying the "Cricket" is as close as your phone. With a 35" rotor span, the GMP "Cricket" weighs only 4 lbs. ready to fly and can be easily fit into the back of a Honda Accord.

If you have never seen a helicopter that comes in a box measuring 22" x 9" x 3"; can be built in one day and which you can learn to hover the next, you'll find that the Gorham Model Products "Cricket" is the perfect solution for the beginner who wants to start an R/C helicopter but does not want to commit to too much money for the \$300 or \$400 machines. It is also an excellent choice for the expert who wants to have something a little simpler, or a little less costly to "mess around" with in his own home or on weekends, or when he goes away on a family vacation --- to take with him. Our congratulations go to John Gorham for developing the "Cricket" which we consider a major breakthrough in the field of R/C helicopters --- one that has no equal. You'll find, too, that the "Cricket" will provide you with plenty of fun and rewarding performance as well as opening up your flying time by enabling you to fly in many more places, including your own garage, because of its low noise level and its ability to land and take-off from very small spaces.

What all of us helicopter "nuts" have been looking for during the past decade is finally here. There is only one drawback to the "Cricket" --- if you like to build you'll have to take the "Cricket" apart 3 or 4 times and put it back together again in order to make the building time last more than 1 or 2 evenings!

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