



Connecticut Flitzer Werke



*Wings
Finished!*

Flitzer - Link with the Past

A recently discovered photograph from the family's uncatalogued collection shows Baron Ivan Morrisov inspecting the wing and aileron of a Staaken Flitzer as Chief Designer Ernst Kessler prepares his three-cylinder *Kobold* biplane for flight at Berlin's Staaken airfield.

Morrisov is wearing a Staaken flight suit, suggesting he was temporarily employed as a test pilot for the Berlin-based aeroplane company in the 1920s between flying for World War I ace Ernst Udet in his numerous aviation-based movies and assuming the role of senior flight instructor on Flitzers at the *Sportflug GmbH für Mittelfranken und Oberpfalz* at Furth, near Nuremberg.

Morrisov was well known in European sporting circles for his personal mount, the Bavarian-flag-painted *Staaken Flitzer D696* adorned with the Death or Glory pennant of the famous Kazakov squadron in which he waged a relentless campaign against the Bolsheviks.

The Morrisov machine is being resurrected at the Connecticut Flitzer Werke from original drawings.





Steamed capstrips on the stove...



Capstrips for all the wing ribs were steamed and then bent in this simple jig.



...and steamed wingtip bows.

Wing Production

How many parts in a wing?
A lot.

The decision was made early on to manufacture all the parts for four wings and two ailerons before beginning assembly.

Time from start to finish on the four wings: 13 months.

Manufacturing parts: 5 months.

Assembly: 8 months



Wing ribs were glued, stapled in the jig, taken out and the other side done straight away.



Wingtip laminations were bent wet in this jig, allowed to dry, then glued.



Just enough ribs for four wings and two ailerons.



Inside the modernized and refurbished Connecticut Flitzer Werke.



Frank Lloyd Wright named every fly before he swatted it. One can do the same before bending each piece of metal.

Making 24 Turnbuckles



Cheaper Than Therapy

The Baroness says that building a Flitzer costs less than seeing a shrink, and is probably far more effective.

It has certainly worked for her, keeping me in the Flitzer Werke for countless hours on end. Not only am I out from under her feet, but she knows where I am — a double bonus.

For my own therapy — well, I am planning another one while my skills are at their peak.

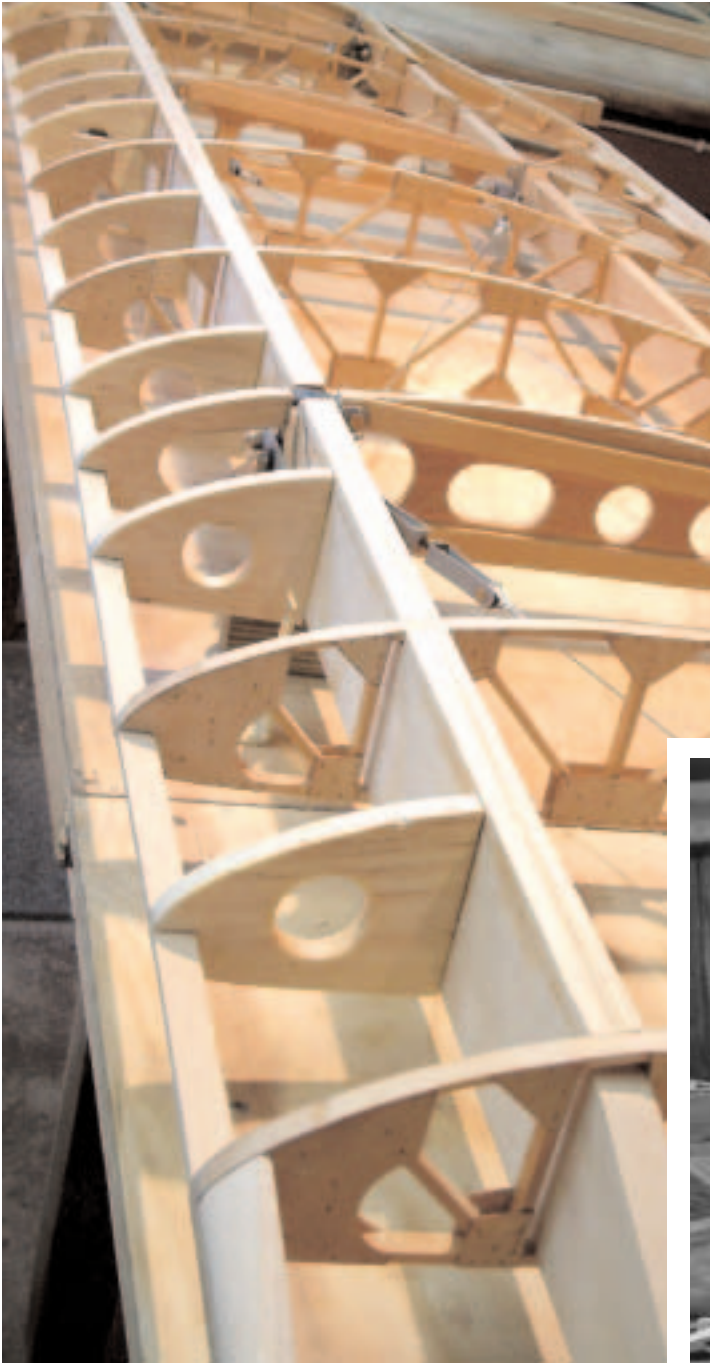
Manufacturing of parts takes determination. This has been the most character-building part of resurrecting the Morrisov Flitzer, although I have found all of it both fun and a challenge.

Of course one wants to get cracking on the fuselage, the big bit. But had I done that first I would be spending the next two years walking around it, bumping into it, wishing I had built the wings while there was still room in the Flitzer Werke.



The spars and their plywood reinforcing plates that spread stress all around. A lesson there for all of us!

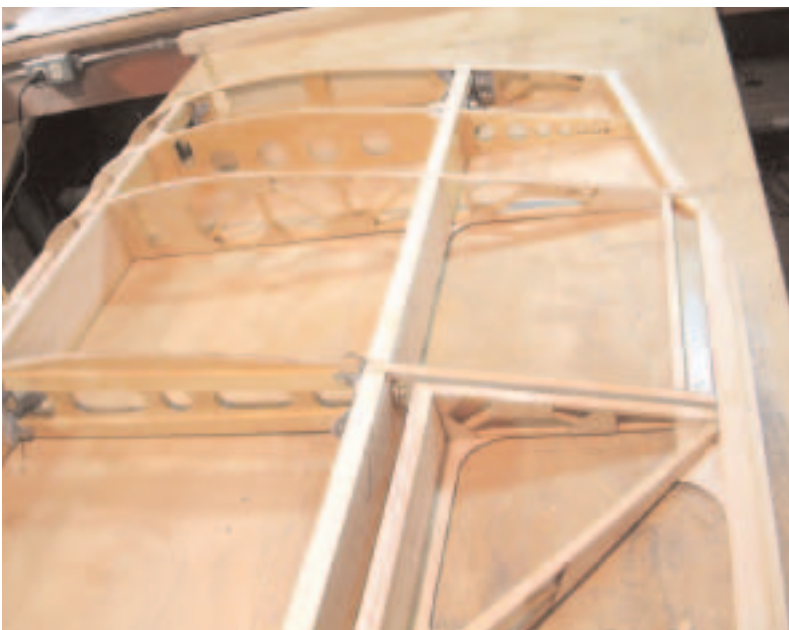




Numerous nose ribs make for an exceptionally strong leading edge.



Leading edge plywood was pre-sealed, soaked and pre-bent in this simple tool.



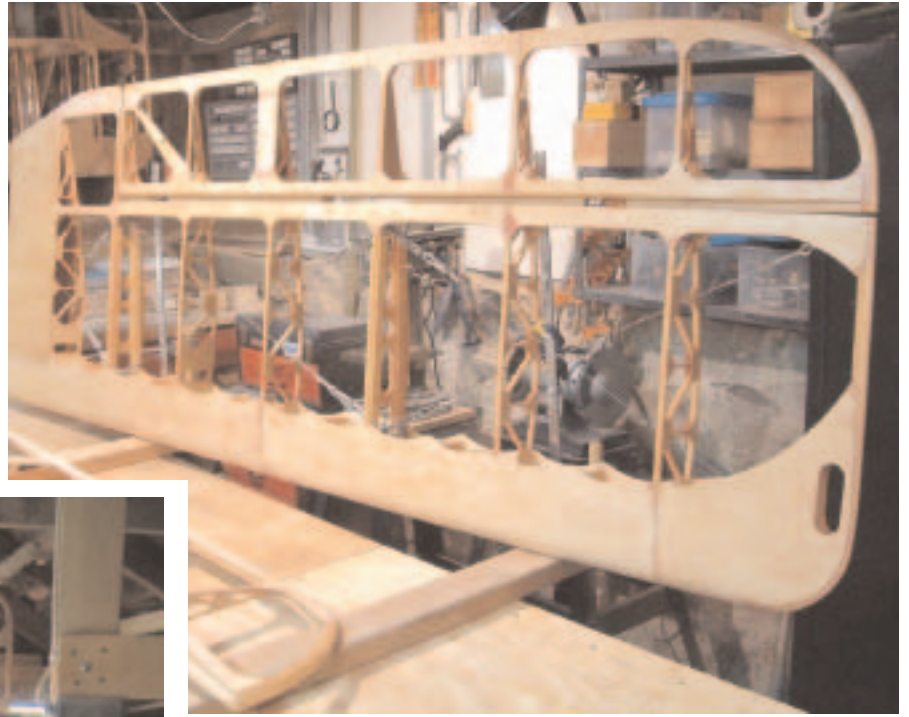
An extra, sturdy rib of plywood gives the strength needed for the wing walkway.



The lower wingtips each incorporate a handhold for ground handling.



*Four wings.
Count
them!*



Did Morrisov Know Willy Messerschmitt?

It is most likely that the two knew each other through a common link—the *Sportflug GmbH für Mittelfranken und Oberpfalz* at Furth, near Nurenburg, where Baron Ivan Morrisov was a senior flight instructor on Staaken Flitzers.

Already growing in leaps and bounds when Morrisov arrived, the flying club would become Germany's second largest flight school for sport and military aviation. But it wasn't a smooth road—economic and financial crises forced the club's founder, World War I ace Theo Croneiß, to seek other sources of income when the state subsidy dried up in 1925.

His answer? To form an air taxi service, using the assets of the flying club. It soon became apparent this wouldn't work, it wasn't structured enough or certain enough to attract interest.

So Croneiß spun the air taxi business into an airline. No matter that there weren't any suitable aircraft, the *Sportflug* would build them. He believed he could make money by linking Germany's small cities together with scheduled air service; the cities would surely subsidize such a service, and the aircraft would



A rare shot of Flitzer D699 in formation with Udet U-12 D1202, perhaps at the *Sportflug GmbH für Mittelfranken und Oberpfalz*.

roll out of the flight school's shops.

The new airline, Nordbayerische Verkehrsflug GmbH (known as NOBA), was launched in 1925 and immediately formed a strong relationship with local aircraft designer Willy Messerschmitt.

Plans for the *Sportflug* to build aircraft were quickly dropped in favor of Bayerische Flugzeugwerk AG (BFW), which later formed the basis of Messerschmitt-Flugzeugbau GmbH, to build the airliners for NOBA. Croneiß, who had already support-

ed Messerschmitt financially in the construction of the M.17 sportplane, gave the designer the assignment to develop the M.18 airliner.

BFW had evolved from Ernst Udet's airplane company (itself founded with funding from an American entrepreneur), and it continued to develop and build the popular U-12 Flamingo, the design of which greatly influenced the single-seat Flitzer. BFW provided most of the *Sportflug's* fleet, with advanced single-seat training assigned to the Flitzer.

NOBA's history spanned eight years and was marked by a constant battle for its existence and against its main opponent Deutsche Luft Hansa AG. The airline flew locally in southern Germany, with (whenever it could) local products. Ultimately it was absorbed into Germany's growing national and international airline network.

Although NOBA disappeared, it was instrumental in ensuring the future of the aerospace industry in Bavaria in the form of Messerschmitt-Flugzeugbau.

Morrisov flew for *Sportflug* and helped test Udet's U-12s. Perhaps he flew for NOBA. He and Messerschmitt could hardly have failed to cross paths in that tight-knit aviation world of the time.

10 Years Ago....(from *Aeroplane Monthly*)

● AIRCRAFT ● MUSEUMS ● AIRSHOWS ● PEOPLE ● AUCTIONS ●

Staaken's secret emerges

German airship-launched survey aircraft to make surprise display debut

IN KEEPING WITH its clandestine origins, Glamorgan-based artist Lynn Williams's latest vintage aircraft venture, 1926 Staaken Z-1 Flitzer D-692, has been maintaining a low profile since its completion last April. Following its unveiling on these pages, however, Williams plans to take it to a number of UK airshows during the forthcoming season.

Conceived in secrecy in one of the Zeppelin repair sheds at

Staaken, the Z-1 was a purpose-built *Luftschiffparasit*, airship-launched for aerial survey work by the arctic survey unit of the *Anstalt für Geo-Wissenschaftliche Forschung AG* (Establishment for Geo-Scientific Research — a "front" organization). Originally equipped with skis, it was shipped aboard the steam schooner *Eisbar*, which was specially equipped with ice-breaking bows and a retractable airship mooring mast aft, as part of a secret 1926 air-sea



Left, painted in its original high-visibility red colour scheme for arctic survey work in the 1920s, Staaken Z-1 D-692 should create quite a stir — particularly among enthusiasts of inter-war German types — on the UK airshow circuit this year.

expedition to investigate evidence from old Nantucket whaling logs of a reported landmass north of Jan Mayen. Having lost its overseas possessions after Versailles, Germany was looking for Atlantic refueling stations for transatlantic postal flights (see *Atlantic Mail Pioneers*, May & June 1995 *Aeroplane*), as well as potential U-boat bases.

Williams will not be drawn about how he came to possess the all-wood Z-1, which has made only one previous public appearance — in uncompleted form — at the RAF Museum in 1992. Powered by a VW engine in place of the original 37 h.p. long-stroke Haacke flat twin, D-692 spans just 18ft. "It has an excellent rate of climb, considering its low installed power," says Williams, and is "technically" "stable, viceless, and possesses crisp, powerful controls." It is currently completing its flight-tests in the hands of John Lewis and Andy Sephton.

Heard on the GRAPEVINE

Farewell to Quill...

LEGENDARY TEST PILOT Jeffrey Quill died in his sleep on February 20. The second pilot ever to fly the Supermarine Spitfire (later Mutt Summers), he was responsible for much of the fighter's test-flying before and during World War Two, and rose to become Supermarine's chief test pilot. His death, at the age of 83, came just a fortnight before the 60th anniversary of the first flight of the Spitfire prototype on March 5, 1936.

...and Galland

A FEW DAYS earlier, on February 9, German fighter ace Adolf Galland died, also aged 83. One of the Luftwaffe's leading pilots during World War Two, Galland amassed 104 victories.

- Full obituaries of Jeffrey Quill and Adolf Galland will appear in the next issue of *Aeroplane*.

John Crocker killed

PROMINENT AMERICAN warbird pilot John Crocker died on February 7 when the twin-engine Conquest biplane he was ferrying crashed soon after take-off from St John's, Arizona. He died along with three other occupants of the aircraft when it lost power and stalled. A regular performer at the Reno airshow