

## *The Kora VEF Irbitis I-12 – Kit review*

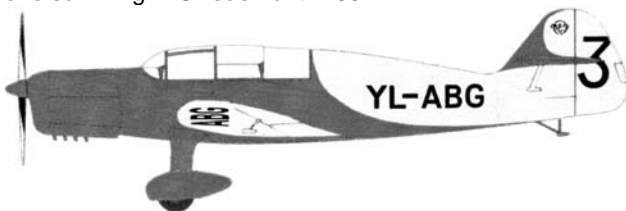
### *Anders Bruun*



**Kora Models** kit No. 72-113 "**VEF Irbitis I-12 Latvian Racer**". 1/72 resin kit, containing 18 resin parts, 2 vacuum-formed canopies, instrument panel films and complete decals for two versions. Available from mail order houses at around EUR 38.00. Kora Models, Robert Koraba, J. Wolkera 874, 756 61 Rožnov p.R., Czech Republic, [www.lfmodels.cz](http://www.lfmodels.cz), [kora-models@post.cz](mailto:kora-models@post.cz), phone and fax: +420 651 657624.

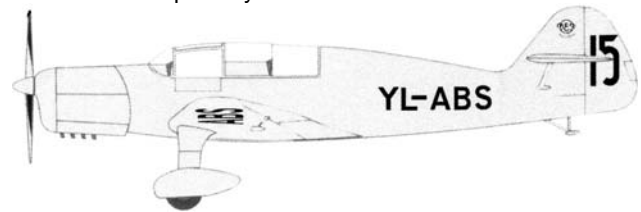
#### ***The plane***

The VEF I-12 was an pretty little low-wing one- or two-seat sports plane with a span of 9.3 meters and overall length of 7.1 meters. It was powered by a 90 hp inline four-cylinder air-cooled Cirrus Minor engine, which thanks to the aerodynamically clean all-wood design gave the plane a top speed of 230 km/h (145 mph). It was designed by Karlis Irbitis and built by the VEF (Valsts Elektrotehniska Fabrika) factory in Riga, Latvia. The first prototype made its first flight in June, 1937. Twelve examples were built, one surviving in Sweden until 1952.



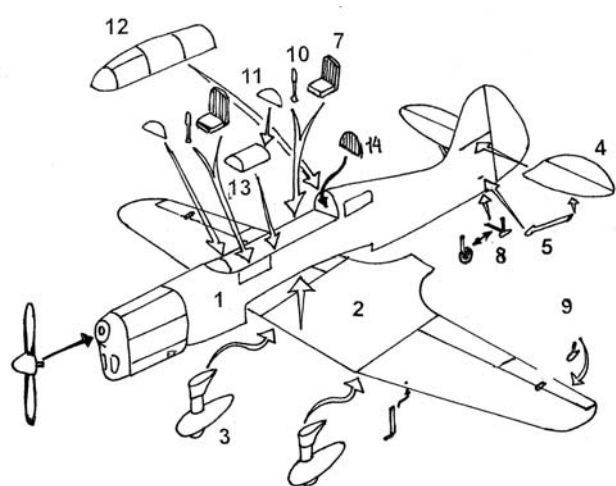
As soon as the prototype (YL-ABG) was finished it went on a tour to Europe. It participated in the "Tour de France", where it won the two-seat category, before being flown to Britain. On August 21st it was flown in the Thanet Air Race in Ramsgate by J. Vitols. It finished fifth in the 70-mile handicap race with a speed of 135.5 mph and won a prize for being the "smartest turn-out". On the next weekend it was in action again, this time in the Cinque Ports International Rally, where it finished second in the 50-mile Wakefield Cup handicap race at 141 mph. It was beaten by a German Klemm 35, but beat Alex Henshaw's Mew Gull! After a further race in 1938 it was flown back to Riga by Philip Avery in a record-breaking 9 hours 5 minutes.

A second example, registered YL-ABS, was entered in a couple of British handicap races in 1939, flown by Robert Bruce and Philip Avery.



#### ***The kit***

As can be seen from the exploded view from the instruction sheet, the kit is conventionally laid out, with a one-piece fuselage and a one-piece wing. The surface detail is discreet and generally there is not much flash or bubbles, but the mould joint line below the fuselage, and particularly below the nose, will need some attention. The joint between the wing and the fuselage will also require some filler. The small parts are generally well-moulded and crisp. The kit contains decals for two versions, the elegant blue and cream YL-ABG and the all-silver YL-ALS – see the side-views. The decals look sharp and thin, and look accurate when compared to the few photos I could find. I don't have much references on the plane, only a simple three-view from an old Flight magazine, so I must reserve judgment on the general accuracy of the kit. However, it looks like a good model could be built from it with a relatively small effort.



#### ***References***

- [http://latvianaviation.com/VEF\\_I-12.html](http://latvianaviation.com/VEF_I-12.html)
  - "Racing at Ramsgate" (Flight, August 26, 1937)
  - "Lympne's Fifth International" (Flight, September 2, 1937)
  - "The Island Again" (Flight, June 9, 1938)
  - "Island Continuation" (Flight, August 10, 1938)
  - "Fourth of the Series" (Flight, June 1, 1939)
  - "The Folkestone Trophy Race" (Flight, August 10, 1939)
  - "Latvian Efficiency" (Flight, August 17, 1939)
- All illustrations are from the kit instructions.

***A big thanks to Kora Models for the review kit!***