



Christophe Herkellmann, model plane maker

Rob: I'm speaking with Christophe Herkellmann, who is a model aeroplane maker and flyer. We're sitting in front of two magnificent models of aeroplanes. Can you explain what they are?

Christophe : They are two different ones. The first one is a Spitfire. It's a British aircraft. It was built during the Second World War. The wingspan is two metres ...

Rob: The wing span is two metres.

Christophe: Two metres. And the other one is a Focke-Wulf Fw 190, a German fighter who was fighting against the Spitfires. This one is bigger than the Spitfire in terms of the model. The wingspan is 2.8 meters and it has a 15 horsepower engine.

Rob: And these are radio-controlled?

Christophe: It is radio-controlled; the weight is about 20 kilograms and it flies very well, almost like a real aircraft.

Rob: You make these aircraft yourself?

Christophe: Yes, not exactly, actually the model is an almost ready-to-fly model, which mean that the wings are already built, the fuselage and everything. You have to assemble the thing, install the *cerveau* the control, the receiver, different safety devices so that the aircraft can fly. But, you have set up the aircraft in flight so that the flight performance are the best as possible.

Rob: Is it life-like, is it realistic when you fly them? Is it the way that those aeroplanes used to fly?

Christophe: Sometimes not, because – to be honest – sometimes we have some crashes. But, we try to fly as realistic as possible.

Rob: And whereabouts do you fly? Apart from here in Saint-Michel-en-Grève?

Christophe: In France, many small railway, clubs and association in which we can fly almost every day. And, you also have the same in Great Britain and in all other countries in the world.

Rob: Whereabouts are you based?

Christophe: I am based in Vannes. Vannes is in the north of French Brittany.

Rob: Vannes?

Christophe: Vannes, not far from Lorient. It's between Lorient and Nantes.

Rob: That's the south, the south of Brittany ...



Christophe: South. I said “north”? Sorry, because we are today in the north of Brittany.

Rob: And you’re the navigator?

Christophe: I’m trying to be one.

Rob: You’re part of a group from Vannes?

Christophe: Yes, I am.

Rob: OK, how many other people are involved in this group?

Christophe: I belong to two different clubs. The first one has almost 30 members and the other one has 70 members.

Rob: 70?

Christophe: 70?

Rob: Soixante-dix?

Christophe: Soixante-dix.

Rob: Ah, OK. So, it’s a big affair. What’s the attraction for you? What do you enjoy about flying planes?

Christophe: I prefer flying small aircraft than real aircraft, because I practice both. And, I really enjoy flying real aircraft, because I often fly to London, Jersey and so on with small aircraft from my airport. But, you can’t daily fly a real Focke-Wulf or a real Spitfire, so they are two different activities and I really like both.

Rob: They’re really very life-like models, I have to say. Even with a pilot sitting aboard.

Christophe: Yes, it’s a wonderful scale model and the real one is only three times bigger.

Rob: Is that so?

Christophe: Yeah.

Rob: They are small planes then?

Christophe: They look not so big, because we are outside, but when you try to put this in your home, the table’s too small.



Rob: Did they have a role to play here at Saint-Michel during the embarkation of all of the American supplies?

Christophe: I don't know, exactly. To be honest, I don't know. I know that in Normandy they had a big role, but here at Saint-Michel-en-Grève, I'm not aware exactly of what happened.

Rob: You come today, this week-end, with other colleagues of yours?

Christophe: Yes, many pilots are coming from all over France.

Rob: OK.

Christophe: And, tomorrow, I think there will be more pilots and we'll have some gliders, gliders from the World War II. We will be told by tower aircraft and we expect to, to fly all the day, I hope. It will, of course, depend on the weather.

Rob: Yes, of course, because we were due to see some skydivers, some parachutists today, as well.

Chrisophe: Yeah, but for safety reasons it's been cancelled. There are gusts, I think, of over 3-5 knots, so it's not, for security reasons, it's not feasible.

Rob: Christopher, it's been great talking to you. Thanks very much indeed for your time and I hope tomorrow goes really well.

Christophe: Thank you very much.

Rob: Thank you.