

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

HAWKER HURRICANE IICB LF738/5405M
Museum Accession Number 1995/1004/A

Built by Hawkers at Langley to contract No.L62305/39/C parts 13/19, part of the final batch of 1,357 Hurricanes built at Langley and Kingston, from serial number batch LF737 - LF774. Fitted with Merlin XX engine.

- 19 Mar 44 To No.22 MU RAF Silloth, Cumbria, for storage.
- 10 Apr 44 To No.1682 BDTF (Bomber Defence Training Flight) RAF Enstone, Oxon carrying the codes UH -
- This unit was tasked with Fighter affiliation - 'bouncing' bombers from local OTU's to train their gunners. LF738 was one of a number of Hurricanes delivered April 44 to replace the units' Curtiss Tomahawk aircraft.
- 21 Aug 44 No.1682 BDTF Disbanded.
- 23 Aug 44 To No.22 OTU, RAF Wellesbourne Mountford, Warwickshire. This was a night bomber-training unit and LF738 may have been used for further fighter affiliation work, carrying the unit codes LT -
- By December 1944 the unit had on strength 6 Hurricanes, including LF738, 54 Wellingtons and 2 Miles Masters.
- 01 Jul 45 Final course at No.22 OTU completed and all flying ceased. Unit disbanded 24 Jul 45.
- 16 Jul 45 Allotted instructional serial 5405M as one of five Hurricanes sent from Wellesbourne to No.12 School of Technical Training at RAF Melksham, Wilts.
- 6 Sep 54 Allotted to RAF Biggin Hill, Kent.
- 19 Sep 54 Dedicated by the Bishop of Rochester, together with Spitfire LF16 SL674 at a drumhead Sunday service at Biggin Hill as a permanent memorial and gate guard to St Georges' Chapel of Remembrance - the BoB Chapel at the station, and moved into place in front of the newly completed chapel the following year. Displayed in a highly inaccurate green/brown/light blue undersides colour scheme. Photos; Flight 24 Sep 54 p.503; Flight 15 Feb 1957 p.202; AAHS Journal Spring 1961 p.33, still marked as 5405M; RAFM PC73/59/133.

- Summer 67 Refurbished and repainted at No 71 MU RAF Bicester.
- Summer 69 Refurbished at RAF St Athan by apprentices and back at the Chapel by September 1969. Photo: Veteran and Vintage Aircraft (Hunt) p.5 (002064).
- 1974 Refurbished at No.71 MU RAF Bicester. Back on duty at the Chapel, restoration completed, by 12 September 1974. Photos: FlyPast Jan 83 p.17; Vintage Aircraft No.2 red cover; Wrecks and Relics – the Album p.70 (colour).
- 08 Feb 84 To Royal Aeronautical Society, Medway Branch for restoration (now Medway Aircraft Preservation Society Ltd) delivered by AS&TF RAF Abingdon to the Rochester Airport workshop. Fairly complete at this time but missing its radiator, gunsight, a couple of cockpit instruments and other parts. Photos: FlyPast Apr 84 p.2; FlyPast Sep 84. The engine was found to be a Merlin Mk.XXII serial number 166951. Some parts exchanged with Hurricane II LF751, also restored by MAPS 1985-1988.
- Apr 90 Restoration commenced, with work being undertaken at Rochester and Brooklands.
- 28 Sep 94 Restored Hurricane tailplane donated to project by Hawker Restorations Ltd (Aeroplane Monthly Dec 94).
- 28 Jun 95 Formal hand-over ceremony at Rochester Airport, from Medway Aircraft Preservation Society to the RAF, represented by Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Alcock. Photos: FlyPast Sep 95 p.5-6 and April 2000 p.106-7; Aeroplane Monthly Sep 95 p.43.
- 16 Aug 95 Moved by road from Rochester to Aerospace Museum Cosford for display - move sponsored by Wolverhampton Express and Star Newspaper.
- 3 Aug 98 One of a number of aircraft donated to the RAFM by the MoD.
- 25 Sep 07 Temporary move to RAFM Hendon (arriving 26 September) to act as centrepiece of Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) 50th Anniversary Dinner held on 4th October, leaving Hendon again 10 October for return to RAFM Cosford.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON

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