

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

AIRSPEED OXFORD I MP425/G-AITB
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 69/A/909

One of 750 Mk.I Oxfords constructed by Standard Motor Car Co Ltd, Coventry from the last batch of 150 aircraft, which included the serials block MP391-MP430, part of contract A/C 2230/C23/(C). Fitted with Armstrong Siddeley Cheetah engines.

- 12 Mar 43 Issued to No.1536 Beam Approach Training Flight, Spitalgate, Lincs. The Flight had moved to Spitalgate that month, training newly qualified night fighter pilots in instrument landing practice. BATF Oxfords carried distinctive yellow triangles to warn other aircraft to keep clear since the pilot was frequently flying on signals and instruments with the cockpit windows screened off.
- 20 Nov 44 Pilot's flying logbook of instructor F/O Kenneth C. Reed records several flights in (MP)'425', on this occasion for 1 ¼ hours with F/O Radley as the 2nd pilot, with a further two flights on 10th December 1944 (total flying time 3 ½ hours), others on Dec.20th, 4 Jan 1945, 6 Jan 1945, 20 Jan 1945, 24 Feb 1945 (two flights), 26 Feb 1945 (two flights) and 2 & 4 March 1945, 4 April 1945, 11 April 1945(3 flights) contradicting the transfer date given below.
- 18 Feb 45 No.18 (Pilots) Advanced Flying Unit, Church Lawford, Warwickshire as one of over 100 Oxfords on the strength of that unit. Gave twin-engined experience to pilots trained overseas.
- Mar 45 Unit moved to the Relief Landing Ground at Snitterfield, Warwickshire.
- 12 May 45 With the impending disbandment of No.18 (P) AFU, which occurred on 29 May 45, MP425 moved to No.7 SFTS, Westwood, Peterborough, Cambs. This unit was training many French pilots for their Air Force, having some 47 Oxfords on strength, until Peterborough went onto Care and Maintenance April 1946 and No.7 SFTS moved to Kirton, joining No.5 SFTS.
- 08 Jun 46 No.12 MU, Kirkbride, Cumbria for disposal.
- 01 Nov 46 Sold to Air Service Training Ltd at Hamble, Hampshire and registered as G-AITB.
- 29 May 47 To AST at Hamble, as one of four Oxfords operated by the Company for pilot training. The first two, G-AITB and G-AITF (ex-ED290) joining the Company in 1947, the other two in 1950.

- 30 Nov 49 Flown at Hamble by Sqn Ldr Tony Farrell (see file letter 20 Sep 79), getting his type rating with Sqn Ldr George Webb AFC.
- 08 Dec 49 Flown by Sqn Ldr Farrell to obtain his night rating on the type, with Flt Lt Mike Croskell.

AST used their Oxfords for instrument rating training at this time, and as new licence requirements were introduced for civilian pilots a lot of BOAC pilots flew `TB and the other Oxfords on instrument approaches at nearby Southampton (Eastleigh) airfield. Photo at this time – Oxford File (Air Britain) p.279; Wessex Aviation Industry (Phipp) p.239. By the summer of 1952, AST were operating six Oxfords.

- 12 Jan 60 Sqn Ldr Farrells' last flight in `TB.
- May 60 Air Service Training sold to the Government by the parent Hawker Siddeley Group and became the College of Air Training.
- Sep 60 To Airwork Services Training Ltd, Perth (Scone) aerodrome, Scotland, for continued pilot training.
- 24 May 61 Withdrawn from use at Perth - CoA expired. Used as instructional airframe for engineering training with sister Oxford G-AITF, withdrawn the same month. Photos: FlyPast Aug 91 p.67; Air Britain Aviation World Summer 2008 p.59.
- 22 Jul 62 Photographed hangered and complete at Scone - Air Britain Digest No.3 1987 p.63.
- Mar 69 Purchased by RAF Museum from Airwork - missing some instruments and electrical equipment.
- Jun 69 At RAFM Store at Henlow by this date, having been transported from Scone by No.60 MU Leconfield.
- Jun 70 At No.27 MU Shawbury, Salop by this date. Moved by No.60 MU Leconfield. It had been hoped that volunteers would restore the a/c but this was not possible.
- May 72 Had returned to Henlow by this date, where the tail and outer wings were restored. Photo of fuselage at Henlow - Air World International Aug 95 p.52.
- Mid 75 Moved to Cardington by this date for storage at the RAF Museum Restoration Centre. Photo: Control Column Jul 77 p.111; FlyPast Aug 91 p.67.
- 1985 Restoration recommenced at Cardington. Fitted with Anson tyres acquired from IWM Duxford. Photos: Aeroplane Monthly May 86 p.226; FlyPast Jan 89 p.26; Great aviation Collections of Britain (Ellis) p.140.

- May 90 Restoration complete. Airframe restored to a high standard and engines virtually to running order. Restored to 1536 BAT Flight colours, code 'G'. Photo: Air World International Aug 95 p.53.
- 19 May 91 Moved from Cardington on loan to Newark Air Museum, Notts. Photos: Aviation News 21 Jun-4 Jul 91 p.103; FlyPast Jul 91 p.34; Air Britain Aviation World Summer 2008 p.56.
- 15 May 94 Returned to Cardington for temporary storage pending display at RAF Museum Hendon.
- 05 Oct 94 Moved to RAFM for display, and reassembled over the following week.

Survivors

Of the 8,586 Oxfords built, several still survive:

- R6029 Mk.1 - Converted to Consul G-AJLR. Ex-RAFM Collection. To Singapore International Airlines and restored by them as 'VR-SLD'; presently stored in New Zealand.
- V3388 Mk.1 - Later Boulton Paul 'Hack' G-AHTW and Skyfame Collection. IWM Duxford. Last Oxford to fly.
- EB518 Mk.V - Ex-Canada. Midland Warplane Museum - under restoration for private owner 1995. For sale 1998. Mk.I/II also (?AT601).
- ED290 Mk.1 - Later G-AITF with Airwork. Photo with AST – Flypast February 2012 p.96. To RAFM Collection 1970. To South African Air Force Museum 1984 in exchange for a Ventura. Undergoing restoration at Port Elizabeth in 2011. Photo-Flypast June 2011 p.7.
- MP425 Mk.1 - RAF Museum
- MP455 Mk.1 - Also Standard Motors built. Later Belgian A/F 0-16. Belgian Military Museum, Brussels from 1960.
- PK286 Mk.1 - Converted to Consul G-AIKR. Operated by Airwork until 1 Jan 1960. Formerly with Canadian National Museum, Rockcliffe-acquired 1965; now under restoration with RNZAF Museum.
- NZ1332 Mk.2 Don Subritzky, Wanganui, New Zealand - discovered 1995.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON