

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

HART TRAINER K4972/1764M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NO.71/A/1415

One of a batch of 167 aircraft, K4886-K5052, built by Armstrong-Whitworth in 1935 (Contract No.361968/35) to specification 8/35, as a series IIA with 510hp Rolls-Royce Kestrel X (De-rated) engine. Fitted with dual control. Makers No.4261.

- 12 Nov 35 To 2 Flying Training School Digby.
- 29 Apr 37 Kestrel X serial number 6513 installed, replacing Kestrel s/n 4261 - see original airframe log book held by DoRIS with Henlow Aircraft Restoration file.
- The pilot's logbook of P/O I U McRae Gallaway, held in DoRIS Ref.B1651, records several flights in K4972.
- 03 Jun 37 Pilot Sgt Holman. Pupil Gallaway. Duration 25 minutes. Flight included instruction on turns, taking off into wind, approaches and landings, taking off and landing across wind.
- 03 Jun 37 Solo by Gallaway - Instrument Flying - 40 minutes.
- 08 Apr 37 Solo by Gallaway - Digby - Upper Heyford, via Mildenhall and Newport Pagnall (1 hour 40 minutes) and return direct (45 minutes).
- 08 Jul 37 Kestrel X serial number 6653 fitted.
- 07 Sep 37 Moved with 2FTS to new base at RAF Brize Norton.
- 12 Apr 38 Pilots log book of Plt Off Walter Bird (DoRIS microfiche M10328) records 15 minutes of solo aerobatics in K4972.
- 13 Jun 38 To No.24 Maintenance Unit Ternhill, Salop.
- 08 Sep 39 To No.12 MU Kirkbride.
- 02 Jan 40 Engine removed (Kestrel X serial number 7191).
- 22 Jan 40 Allocated 1764M whilst at 12 MU.
- 31 Dec 42 To No.22 MU Silloth.

- 22 Sep 43 To 1546 Squadron Air Training Corps, Wigton, Cumberland for instructional use; the aircraft had been visited at Silloth by Eric Carr, school physics master, who ran the school ATC, on 29th January 1943 as it had already been promised to his unit, and he visited again on 6 February to accept the airframe, which arrived on 22 September and was installed in the loft that day.
- 17 Mar 62 Dismantled airframe discovered by members of Solway Group of Aviation Enthusiasts in loft of outbuilding next to Caretaker's House at Nelson-Tomlinson School, Wigton; still wore its pre-war yellow/silver c/s, since it was withdrawn from flying before the Munich crisis, when other Hart trainers were camouflaged.
- 10 Nov 62 Removed from loft by Solway Group and transferred to Carlisle Airport, Crosby-on-Eden. A delicate operation, with the loft floor being rotten and 10 feet above ground. Some restoration work attempted by the group at Carlisle. Photos upon recovery: Air Pictorial Jan 1963 p.23; Air Britain Digest Apr 63 p.44; Also Flight International 20 Dec 1962 p.986A. Photos as stored at Carlisle Airport; Wrecks And Relics 2nd Edition, 1963; Control Column May 1968 p.7.
- 16 Oct 63 Presented to RAF Museum by Solway Group and moved to Museum store at Henlow that week.
- Jan 1968 Moved to RAF St Athan for restoration. Work undertaken by members of the instruction staff at No.4 School of Technical Training, led by Sqn Ldr S G Boys and Fg Off P G Wilkes, assisted by tradesmen and 32 MU. Photos: Veteran & Vintage Aircraft (Hunt) p.63 (002064); Aircraft Illustrated December 1968 p.242-243
- The aircraft as discovered at Wigton was incomplete: there was also a problem with corrosion of longerons. The engine had been sold for scrap, to save the floor of the loft from collapse, and the engine bearers sawn off. The wheels and axles were last seen at Wigton in the mid 1950s on a Scout Troop handcart! The propeller was missing (replaced at St Athan with an item from RAFM stock) and the port lower mainplane a write-off -a replacement was found at an ATC Squadron in Maidenhead. Rolls-Royce provided a replacement Kestrel engine, a 1B uprated to Mk.X, found at a Sheffield garage. Other parts were manufactured at St Athan. Other missing items included instruments, spade grips for the two control columns, bracing wires and three interplane struts. The aircraft was re-covered - much of the original yellow-doped fabric was damaged or missing. Also missing were the tail wheel, radiator, and exhaust manifolds. St Athan copied the missing engine cowling panels from the RAFMs then newly acquired Afghan Hind.
- May 1969 Restoration completed. Photo as completed; Royal Air Force News w/e 14 June 1969 p.8. Displayed at St Athan until 1972.

- 1969 Displayed at Biggin Hill International Air Fair, though still lacking certain components. Photos: Air Britain Digest Jul 69 p.182; Control Column August 1969 p.11. Photo at this time; Flypast January 2003 p.100.
- 18 Sep 71 Displayed at St Athans' Battle of Britain open day.
- 1972 Moved to RAF Museum Hendon from St Athan and displayed in the Camm Hall. Photos; Scale Models September 1974 p.492.
- Jun 87 Moved to Cardington for restoration by team from RAF Abingdon, via Central Flying School, Scampton - loaned for the 75th Anniversary celebrations, 26.06.87.
- 1991-92 Further restored at RAFM RC&RC Cardington.
- 01 Jun 92 Moved to Cosford for display at the Aerospace Museum. Photo during reassembly; Wingspan Sept 1992 p.48.
- Photos on display at Cosford - Warbirds Journal 35 p.21; Wingspan Mar 93 p.51; Air Britain News December 2000 p.1808.
- 11 Mar 2002 Taken off display and placed in temporary storage at Cosford.
- 13 Nov 2002 By road to RAF Museum Hendon for display. Photos stored initially in Bomber Command Hall – Flypast February 2003 p.19; Aeroplane February 2003 p.6; Aircraft Illustrated February 2003 p.85. Later moved to 'Historic Hangars'
- 20 Apr 2017 By road to RAFM Cosford for further display

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON