

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

BRISTOL F2b FIGHTER BAPC 165/E2466'
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 72/A/992

- 1919 One of six wire-braced Bristol Fighter fuselage frames purchased by Mr Boddington, a wheelwright, and used as trusses to support the roof of his barn at Weston on the Green, Oxfordshire, on the A43 Weston to Brackley Road. During the First World War Weston on the Green was the site of No.28 Training Depot Station, opened in July 1918 and closing as an airfield in January 1921. No Bristol Fighters are recorded as having flown from there, however.
- There is no indication of the original identity of this airframe. A letter from John Winter in the August 1962 issue of Air Britain Digest, page 97, records that Mr Boddington had purchased the six fuselages and other parts, and that the fuselages were seemingly never assembled or covered with fabric. With the fuselages supporting the barn roof, the barn doors were originally made from Brisfit wings, replaced by 1962 although tailplane parts did survive. Mr Winter could find no clues as to the identity of the fuselages if indeed they every received such, although Mr Boddington recalled the date `February 1919' on one tyre. Observation of ex-Weston upper longerons left over from this restoration at RAFM Stafford in 2009 suggests that as the longerons are in one piece, and not spliced, they are from post-1920 F.2B Mk.II/III production, rather than earlier Mk.I type spliced longeron construction.
- c.1965 Four frames recovered from Weston on the Green for the RAF Museum and stored at RAF Henlow after initial storage at No.71 MU Bicester. Photo of three complete frames at Bicester - Control Column Feb 1983 p.7. Two of these were accessioned by the RAFM at Henlow as 65/A/1190 and 65/A/1191 in December 1965 (and disposed of in 1988 in exchange for Hudson turret components, at least one going to an Australian dealer via Skysport Engineering; later passed to Peter Jackson in New Zealand).
- Late 1972 One frame restored by Henlow technicians for display at RAF Museum, Hendon, leaving the above two stored at Henlow.
- 1972 The Hendon frame (allocated BAPC 165 in 1983) was displayed in the Bessenau hangar workshop scene in a side gallery, with forward fuel tank added. Photo: Air Enthusiast International April 1974 p.200, RAFM Guide 1974 (001796) p.4.
- 1979 Removed from display and sent to RC&RC Cardington for rebuilding; much of the fuselage framework was replaced at this time.

- Sep 1980 By this date, reconstruction of a complete F2b was underway at Cardington together with the fabrication of a replica Rolls-Royce Falcon engine using original cylinders magnetos and exhaust manifolds. This engine was fitted into the fuselage together with a dummy radiator. Photos: FlyPast Sep/Oct 1981 p.51; Flypast February 2000 p.67. Shuttleworth loaned the engine from their Bristol Fighter for the Cardington technicians to copy. See also FlyPast Feb 83 p.1 - photo of dummy radiator fitted by this date, also Aeroplane Monthly Nov 87 p. 591.
- Autumn 1983 By this date the fin, rudder, and cowlings were assembled. Photo: FlyPast Sep 83, with restoration underway on the original wings, needing the manufacture of some 50 metal fittings although the timberwork was complete. The Shuttleworth collection supplied an original tail plane and original starboard lower wing-its original silver doped fabric remaining in store at RAFM Stafford in 2012.
- The other three main wing panels came from a batch of five (79/A/511 - 515) acquired by the RAFM in July 1971 from the factory of Thomas Thompson & So Ltd, Carlow, Eire - built under sub contract c.1918 and never delivered. Five wing halves and six wing spars were acquired and initially stored at Henlow. AID stamps of 18 Sep 18 and 15 Nov 18 were found on two of the panels. At Cardington the original wing spars were retained and all ribs replaced. The fuselage is mostly new wood with original metal engine bearers and fittings. An original F2b propeller came from RAFM stocks, as did the machine guns. Two original wheels were also purchased.
- Summer 1985 By this time the undercarriage and wings were dry-rigged to the fuselage to check the correct fit of parts prior to dismantling again for fabric covering and addition of small parts. Photo: Aeroplane Monthly Jul 85 p.338 and Nov 87 p.591.
- Spring 1986 Final assembly underway. Photos: FlyPast May 1986 p.19 and Aeroplane Monthly Nov 87 p.592. The aircraft was painted in the markings of No.22 Squadron, France 1918. The starboard half of the airframe was left uncovered to display the aircraft's structure. Given the identity of E2466/I flown from Maisoncelle and Serny by Captain W F J (John) Harvey D.F.C and Bar and his Observer Captain D E F Waight M.C when Capt Harvey was 'B' Flight Commander, July 1918.
- 01 Jul 86 Moved to RAFM Hendon for display. Photos assembled at Cardington prior to delivery; Aeroplane Monthly Aug 86 p.394; Aeroplane Monthly Nov 87 p.592; Photos assembled at Hendon; Aircraft Illustrated Mar 89 p.161; FlyPast Sep 86 p.43; Bristol Fighter In Action (027651) p.47; W.W.1 Aero Feb 2001 p.64; Royal Air Force Celebrating 90 Years p.124; Flypast January 2012 p.88.

1 Apr 1993 Displayed at RAF Marham for RAF 75th Anniversary celebrations, having been dispatched from Hendon 10 Mar 93. Photo: FlyPast May 93 p.4. Later returned to Hendon, where it remains on display. Cockpit photo: FlyPast Nov 96 p.49. Also W.W.1 Aero Aug 98 p.109.

11 Sept 2014 Dismantled and moved to Grahame White Factory building at Hendon for display in new World War One exhibition.

Of the other former Weston on the Green F2b frames, at least one of the ex-Henlow frames went initially to Australia via SkySport engineering (see above). The other four are also extant:

BAPC 19 - Restored by Aero Vintage - to Brussels Air Museum June 1989 as 'J8264'; Hispano engine. Frame acquired from a collector in Yorkshire.

BAPC 166 - Including ex-Shuttleworth Collection and Newark Air Museum parts. With Aero Vintage/Historic Aircraft Collection as 'D7889'/G-AANM. At Old Warden for flight trials 2004. See detailed account by Guy Black, Aeroplane December 2004 p.18. Flew 25 May 2006-see Flypast August 2006 p.4. Now at Canadian Aviation Museum, Rockliffe.

'D8084'/G-ACAA The Fighter Collection Duxford. First flight 30 Jun 98. This incorporates an ex RAFM fuselage, constructor's number 7434, built 1917 as RFC F4516, serving with No.13 Squadron, acquired from the RAFM in 1989, and ex RAFM struts, seat, wing and tail parts. To Peter Jackson, New Zealand, who has another Weston on the Green frame as a restoration project.

Fuselage only with Bob Trickett, South Yorks, 2003 – composite with Marshalls, Gainsborough made parts.

Also extant is the Imperial War Museum Duxford's original F.2b, E2581.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON