

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

CAUDRON G.III "3066"/ O - BELA/ OO - ELA / G - AETA / 9203M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 72/AF/1620

- 1916 Presumed date of construction at the Caudron factory at Issy - le - Moulineaux, Paris. (or by the British Caudron Co at Cricklewood) Given constructors' number 7487. 90 hp Anzani rotary engine fitted.
- Probably saw service with Belgian Air Force, but no details known - type used for training and reconnaissance.
- 22 Jul 21 Given Belgian certificate of airworthiness No. 59 as O - BELA, based at Gosselies, with the Societe d' Enterprises Generales Aeronautiques (SEGA).
- 27 Aug 28 Registered to Mr Petermans of Brussels.
- 28 Apr 30 Registered to Club Des Aviateurs de Belgique by M. J.E. Leduc, based at Brussels. (Previously transferred to "new" Belgian register as OO - ELA in 1929).
- 1931 Displayed by M. Jean Leduc at the International Air Rally at Le Zoute - he used it for aerial advertising at the time. It was seen there by Ken Waller, chief flying instructor with Brooklands Aviation Ltd, who as he described in Flight, 28 May 36 p.576, was 'very much struck by the performance.....I did my best to persuade him to sell me the machine as a curio, but he told me that he wished to keep it for a year or so, after which he had promised it to a museum.'
- c. Mar 36 M.Leduc wrote to Ken Waller (Chief Flying Instructor for Brooklands School of Flying) and offered to let him fly the Caudron over to the U.K 'to show it to the many friends whom I knew would be very much interested in seeing an old timer which could still really do its stuff'.
- 20 May 36 Ken Waller and Capt. Max Findlay, DSC; DFC, sales manager to Brooklands Aviation Ltd, flew over to Brussels in a Brooklands School of Aviation DH Moth to collect the Caudron, A leaky petrol gauge caused a slight delay and the Caudron, flown by Ken Waller and accompanied by the Moth (Photo - Flight 28 May 36 p.576) took off from Brussels at 13.30 for Ostend, to clear Customs, taking 1 1/2 hours at a speed averaging 53 mph. Then flew via Calais, Dunkirk and Folkestone and landed at Lympne. Flying time from Ostend to Lympne was 1 hour 40 minutes. Waller then proceeded to Brooklands after a further 1 hour 35 minute flight at 2000 feet - a total of some 4 1/2 hours for the 200 mile flight. Photos on arrival - Prop Swing Summer 2004 p.35/36.
- 23 May 36 Flown at Empire Air Day, Brooklands 'directed in the rolling plane by Capt. Duncan Davies, in the looping plane by Ken Waller, and in the yawing plane by providence'. (Aeroplane 27 May 1936).
- 13 Jun 36 Flown at the official opening of Shoreham Airfield; '.... Equally arresting to the knowledgeable was the flying of Mr Kenneth Waller in his pre-war Caudron biplane with alleged 80 hp. Almost every component is genuinely antique, and although some of the 80 horses have died in the past 20 years, the take-off and climb caused vocal admiration, as did Mr Waller's courage'. Photo and quote - Aeroplane 17 Jun. 1936. p.777; also Wrecks and Relics - The Album p.8.
- 27 Jun 36 Flown by S/Ldr H.A. Hamersley (rather than by FO M H Findlay as in the printed programme) at the RAF Pageant at RAF Hendon with paddock no.2 on the rudder. Photos; Flypast Dec. 84 p.61; Cross & Cockade (GB) Vol.7 No.2 p.94; Lost Aviation Collections (Ellis) p.21. RAFM photo collection PC73/81/35-36. 'Flight' commented 'it flew very steadily on Saturday' (2Jul 36 p.10).

- 29 -30 Aug 1936 Flown by K.K.Brown at Lympne for the Cinque Ports Club International Rally and Wakefield Cup Race in formation with its 1935-6 descendant, a Simoun cabin mono-plane. Photos - Flight 3 Sep 36 p.243; Aeroplane Monthly May 88 p.295 and Aeroplane June 2008 p.37 - still carried the Hendon Pageant No. 2 on the rudder. Later purchased by Ken Waller and allocated G - AETA on British Register (Not taken up) 29 January 1937.
Photo at Brooklands 1936 - Air Pictorial Jan 67 p.18; Aeroplane Monthly May 73; Wingspan International No.25 pp.28-29.
- Later purchased by Richard G J Nash for his International Horseless Carriage Corporation alongside many other vintage aircraft.
- 27 Feb 37 Belgian registration cancelled.
- 1939 - 45 Stored dismantled at Brooklands for the duration of the war; may have moved from Brooklands to elsewhere for storage June 1940 on the orders of Brooklands Aviation Ltd.
- 19 -21 Jul 1951 Statically displayed at the Daily Express 50 years of flying display at RAF Hendon still with pre-war Hendon Pageant No. 2 on the rudders. Photos - RAFM P2235; Flight 27 Jul 51 p.98; World War 1 Survivors (026001) p.45; Air Pictorial March 2001 p.222; Prop Swing Winter 2013 p.38.
- Dec 1953 Nash Collection acquired by Royal Aeronautical Society and stored at Weybridge.
- 13 Jun 54 Displayed at Royal Aeronautical Society Garden Party at Heathrow. Photo - Flight 18 Jun 54 p.784.
- 15 Jul 56 Displayed at Royal Aero Society Garden Party at Vickers airfield at Wisley, Surrey - stored at No. 15 MU at RAF Wroughton, Wilts by this time along with other Nash Collection aircraft.
- 1958/59 Stored in No. 106 Hangar at RAF Hendon with other Nash Collection aircraft.
- 1960 Stored in BEA hangar at Heathrow. Photo - WW1 Survivors (026001) p.34.
- 1962 To store at RAF Upavon with other Nash Collection aircraft.
- 1964 Royal Aero Society handed Nash Collection to RAF on permanent loan; stored initially at RAF Upavon. Inspected at RAF Upavon Oct 1963 – ‘found to need extensive structural repairs and replacements’ particularly the fuselage. Stored dismantled but complete, though missing 2 struts, several flying wires engine controls, and instruments and had a split prop.
Woodwork in poor state.
- Jan 64 Moved from Upavon to RAF Stradishall, Suffolk by No. 71 MU for refurbishment by RAF volunteers to a £50 budget. Photos on arrival, in poor state - Flight International 28 Jul 66 p.160; Air Pictorial May 66 p.180. Work well underway by April 1964, with fuselage stripped and repaired and fuel tank cleaned and burnished, and repair of mainplanes underway.
- Apr 66 By this date still stored dismantled at Stradishall - estimated completion time 9 weeks. Restored by team originally under Flt. Lt. Baker, latterly led by F/O Ray Whittle. Photos as restored at this time - Flight International 28 Jul 66 p.160.
- c. Sep 66 Moved by No, 71 MU from Stradishall to RAFM store at RAF Henlow. Photo at Henlow, October 1968 – Lost Aviation Collections (Ellis) p.21.

- 1970 -71 Further restoration work at Henlow - stripped and rebuilt to represent (N) 3066 of RNAS Flying School Vendome 1917. See Air Pictorial Nov.72 p.418 as further restored, also RAF Yearbook 1973 -4 p.45. Some original portions of airframe remain in store at RAFM Stafford.
- 1972 To Hendon for display at RAFM; Photos -Aeromodeller Feb 73 p.85; W.W.1 Aero Aug 98 p.109.
- Mar 92 Nash Collection purchased from Royal Aero Soc. by MoD.
- 19 Jul 93 Allotted RAF Maintenance serial 9203M.
- 5 Mar 03 Moved to relocated Grahame White Factory building at Hendon. Photos; Flypast May 2003 p.5; Aviation News May 2003 p.375; Aeroplane May 2003 title page; Aircraft Illustrated May 2003 p.68; 'The Flying M' Summer/Autumn 2005 p.11.
- See also Britain at War Magazine January 2015 p.21.
- Sep 04 Gifted to RAFM by MoD along with the other former Nash Collection airframes.
- Other Caudron G III aircraft survive in France ('324' at Le Bourget); Belgium ('2531' at Brussels Air Museum); Finland ('1E18' and parts of another), and a nicely restored example at the Venezuelan Air Force Museum (Windsock International 19/1 p.2), and another, French built in 1916, at The Brazil Air Force Collection, Rio de Janeiro (Flypast Dec 2008).

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

© ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2015