

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

VICKERS VIMY REPLICA F8614/G-AWAU
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 74/A/24

- May 67 Following successful completion and flying of their Vickers FB5 Gunbus replica, the Vintage Aircraft and Flying Association (Brooklands) - VAFA - decided to construct a replica Vickers Vimy to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Alcock and Brown crossing of the Atlantic, 14-15 June 1919, with completion of the replica in time for the 1969 anniversary.
- 1967 Construction of replica begun by evening and weekend volunteer members of the VAFA at BAC Hurn and BAC Weybridge. Given the constructors' number VAFA 02. It was intended eventually to present the Vimy to the RAFM, as with the Gunbus. Photo of rear fuselage under construction at BAC Hurn - RAF News w/e 27 Jan 68 p.10. Partly funded by giving the public the opportunity to sponsor individual components, for which certificates were issued.
- Rolls Royce assisted the project by tracking down three original former Dutch Air Force Rolls Royce Eagle Mk.IX engines in Holland - one had been driving a canal barge and the other was standby power in a windmill. The engines were reconditioned by Rolls-Royce apprentices at Hucknall, Derby. Although 3 original Vimy propellers were located, new propellers were in the event constructed by Mr Don Moore who had assembled propellers for original Vimys in the 1920s. Photo of propeller assembly - Aeroplane Monthly Jan 79 p.293.
- 8 Jan 68 Registration G-AWAU issued.
- Aug 68 First restored engine bench run.
- Fri 30 May 69 Aircraft completed and lowered off the trestles onto its undercarriage. Photos of aircraft under final assembly - Putnam Aeronautical Review No.2 p.92; The Spirit Winter 1994 p.10; Control Column Sep 72 p.133. BAC Weybridge gave direct help latterly to meet the Paris Airshow deadline. Photo of early engine runs -Control Column Aug 69 p.11.
- Sun 01 Jun 69 First flight, from Brooklands. Took off at 6.40pm, flown by BAC test pilot D G 'Dizzy' Addicott. The 30-minute flight ended with the landing at Wisley. Photo of take-off from Brooklands - Putnam Aeronautical Review No.2 p.94.

Wed 4 Jun 69	An evening test flight from Wisley had to divert to land at RAF Odiham due to turbulent conditions that necessitated a large grass landing area as cross winds with no brakes and a trail skid meant a tricky landing. Photos at Odiham - RAFM photo collection P2057; Royal Air Force News w/e 12 July 1969 p.3. Overnight modifications were made to the ailerons.
Thus 5 Jun 69	Made three test flights from Odiham; pilot 'Dizzy' Addicott. Photo: RAF News w/e 12 Jul 69 p.3 Took total flying hours to about five. The third flight was to obtain a special category certificate of airworthiness. Carried civil registration G-AWAU.
Fri 6 Jun 69	Flown by Dizzy Addicott to the Paris Airshow direct from Odiham in three hours, the Vimy's longest flight. Arrived at Le Bourget shortly after noon. Colour view - Vickers Vimy (027741) - cover. Also Aeroplane Monthly Supplement Apr 94 p.19.
Sun 8 Jun 69	Flown in Flying display at Paris - Photo: Aeroplane Monthly Jun 79 p.294.
Mon 9 Jun 69	Flown back to Wisley.
9-10 Jun 69	Repainted in RAF colours as H651 at Wisley. Names 'Triple First' in memory of the first Atlantic, Australia and South Africa flights by Vimys.
Wed 11 Jun 69	Flown to Manchester Ringway Airport for exhibition in temporary tent - Jack Alcock had been born in Manchester. Total flying hours now 11.15 hours. Photo: Putnam Aeronautical Review No.2 p.3; Air Pictorial Aug 69 p.278. Photo on arrival; Friends of The Manchester Air & Space Museum Newsletter Sep 83 No 3; Great aviation Collections of Britain (Ellis) p.184.
14 Jul 69	Damaged by fire at Ringway whilst being prepared to fly to the Rolls-Royce airfield at Hucknall (Derby) to show the workers there the result of their restoration work on the engines. The fire started in the leading edge of the port lower main plane just outboard of the engine, and within three minutes had spread along the whole of the upper wing destroying all fabric and damaging many wing ribs, despite the best efforts of the airport fire crews. The fire may have been started by the sun reflecting off a polished engine cowling onto the doped fabric. Photos: Aeroplane Monthly Jun 79 p.296; Flight International 24 Jul 69 p.116; Friends of The Manchester Air & Space Museum Newsletter Sep 83 No 3. The fuselage, tail and starboard lower wing were largely unaffected. The damaged aircraft was dismantled at Ringway and roaded back to Wisley and stored. It was decided to rebuild the aircraft to static exhibition standard for the RAF Museum. Three of the seven wing panels had to be totally replaced.
04 Aug 69	CoA expired.

- c.Dec 70 Restored components delivered to RAF Museum Hendon by No.71 MU Bicester from storage at Blackbushe (Robinson Aircraft Ltd) where some wing parts had been restored, and Wisley, where the rest of the aircraft was stored.
- The parts were stored at Henlow by Feb 71. The propellers went to Hendon on 26 January, the mainplanes and centre sections went from Henlow to Hendon on 9 February, with other parts including engines the following day, and the 'flying controls' on 15 February, assembly taking place over the following week or so, recalled former RAF technician Dave Hughes in 2009.
- Jun 72 Fully assembled in main aircraft hall at Hendon by this date and painted as F8614, a Weybridge built Vimy of 1918, still named 'Triple First'. Photo – RAF News w/e 5 August 1972, p.15. Colour profile – Windsock Worldwide Vol 28 No.2, March/April 2012.
- 19 Jul 73 Registration cancelled as withdrawn from use.
- Dec 83 Assembled in new Bomber Command Hall at Hendon. Photo: RAF Ground Support Equipment since 1918 p.57. Displayed in this location until moved into re-sited Graham White Factory building February 2003. Photo during dismantling for this move during January 2003 – Flypast March 2003 p.7. During re-assembly; Flypast April 2003 p.16. On display; Flypast March 2004 p.10; The Flying M Spring 2012 p.14.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON

© ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2013