

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

BLERIOT XI 164/9209M/BAPC.106
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 74/AF/20

- 1910 Possible construction date as a Bleriot Type XIa. Suggested constructors' number 164. Similar to the 1909 type Bleriot but fitted with a more powerful 6 cylinder 60hp Anzani Engine of a type introduced in the Spring of 1910.
- c.1935 One of three Bleriot XI aircraft – two XIs, Nos 54 and 164, and Bleriot XXVII 433, found in Le Havre, France and acquired by R.G.J.Nash from their owner, early racing driver and aviator Monsieur Molon, as part of his International Horseless Carriage Corporation collection of vintage cars and aeroplanes and kept at Brooklands Aerodrome, Surrey.
- The three Bleriot XI aircraft were shipped uncrated to the Thames by the General Steam Navigation Co, transferring them mid-stream to a lighter, then taken from London Docks to Weybridge by Dick Nash in his Ford lorry, recorded a 1950 article.
- Nash owned two other Bleriot XI aircraft (Nos 16 (or 5) and 54), which were damaged in a German air raid on Brooklands on 6 September 1940 and reduced to parts only; parts of one of them – fuselage frame and shortened span wings, possibly No 5, 54, or 160 - survive in store at RAFM Stafford. One (? No 5 of 1909) had been acquired as a fuselage from a builder's yard in Newcastle in 1935.
- Dec 53 Purchased from R.G.J Nash by the Royal Aeronautical Society, together with the rest of his aircraft collection. Initially stored at Weybridge, Surrey.
- May 55 On view at RAF Honington, Suffolk Photo – Lost Aviation Collections of Britain (Ellis) p.18.
- Jul 56 Stored at No. 15 Maintenance Unit, RAF Wroughton, Wilts along with the rest of the Nash Collection.
- 1957/58 Stored in No.106 Bellman hangar RAF Hendon along with other aircraft from the Nash Collection.
- c.1959 Stored in BEA hangar at London Heathrow Airport with the rest of the Nash collection. Photo of dismantled remnants in December 1961 - The Brooklands Society Gazette Vol 34 NO 3 (2009) p.25; Prop-Swing (Shuttleworth Veteran Aeroplane Society) Spring 2011 p.37.
- c.1962 To RAF Upavon for storage with other aircraft of the Nash Collection.
- 1964 Royal Aeronautical Society handed Nash Collection to RAF on permanent loan.
- c.1965 To RAF Cranwell, Lincs for storage and restoration. The aircraft as received was in poor condition, with longerons, spar and ribs warped and worm eaten, all metal fittings and wires severely corroded and various components missing.
- Jan 67 Under restoration at RAF Cranwell; the fuselage was built from scratch with ash longerons and spruce/deal struts; the tailplane retained its original front and rear spars, the rest, including elevators and rudder being new manufacture of ash and spruce; most of the original starboard wing structure was retained (main and rear spars, leading edge, trailing edge and three ribs, the rest being new build of ash and spruce. The port wing was also mainly original, with five new ribs and new stringers; the original metal undercarriage legs were

retained, the rest of the undercarriage being new ash ; the original rudder and elevator controls were also retained. New top and bottom pylons with a few original turnbuckles used on the main plane bracings. See rebuild specification in original RAFM Henlow aircraft restoration file.

A collection of wing ribs, undercarriage components and bracing wires were retained and were displayed in Gallery 2 at RAFM Hendon (Accession numbers 72/A/840 and X002-6611-6621) until 2000, then moving to storage at RAFM Stafford.

As mentioned above, also held at Stafford after previous storage at RC&RC Cardington are what is believed to be a Bleriot XI fuselage frame and a pair of incomplete wings. (Accession Numbers X001-1747 –fuselage – and X001-1736/37 - wings)

- c. Mar 67 To storage at RAF Henlow, Beds with other RAFM aircraft. Overhauled and further restoration undertaken including fabriking.
- Late 71 Moved from RAF Henlow to RAFM Hendon by No.71 MU. Displayed to the public from Nov 1972.Photo prior to Museum opening - Aircraft Annual 1975 p.90.
- Mar 92 Purchased with rest of Nash Collection by MOD (Air) from Royal Aeronautical Society as part of the permanent RAFM collection.
- 19 Jul 93 Allotted RAF Maintenance serial 9209M.
- 2 Sep 94 By road from Hendon to RAFM Reserve Collection and Restoration Centre at RAF Cardington, Beds for storage.
- 15 Apr 98 Moved to Royal Air Force Museum Cosford for suspended display in new visitor centre, officially opened 22 Jun 98.Photos on display - Aeroplane Monthly Sep 98 p.5; Aeroplane Monthly Airshows and Museums Guide May 1999 p.46; Plane Talk Spring 2000 p.9; Wrecks and Relics 17th Edition (colour).
- 2002-3 Following removal from suspended display, renovated and recovered at the new Michael Beetham Conservation Centre, Cosford.
- 17 Mar 03 To RAFM Hendon for storage prior to suspended display in new Milestones of Flight gallery.
- 3 Apr 03 Moved into new Milestones of Flight building at Hendon for suspended display.
Photos
Flypast June 2003 p.3; Wingspan International 20 p.62; Wrecks and Relics 20th Edition (Cover); Bleriot in Britain Sanger/Air Britain p.179.
- Sep 04 Gifted to the RAFM by the MoD along with the other former Nash Collection airframes.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

© ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2012.