

## INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

### TAYLORCRAFT AUSTER 1 LB264/G-AIXA MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER X002-9988

- 1942 Built by Taylorcraft Aeroplanes (England) Ltd, Leics. (Constructor's number 134) to Contract No. 1995 as the second of 100 Taylorcraft Auster A.O.P. Mk.1 aircraft delivered between May and December 1942. Serial nos. range LB263- LB395. Militarised version of Taylorcraft Plus D, intended for artillery spotting work. Built at Syston and assembled at Rearsby.
- 22 May 42 First flight from Rearsby; pilot A. L (Lance) Wykes, founder of the Auster company.
- 25 May 42 Flown by A.L Wykes to the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment, Boscombe Down, for acceptance trials, where it operated together with the first production aircraft, LB263.
- LB264 had experimental split trailing edge flaps fitted, and was flown to assess suitability for ship duties. It was considered that at 1,400lb a take-off run of 80ft would be possible into a 15 knot wind, and a similar landing run achieved with an arrestor hook. It returned to Rearsby on several occasions and was used for a combination of manufacturer's and service introduction tests and trials
- Sep 42 Flown by pilots of No.653 Squadron, both from Rearsby and their base at Penshurst, Kent.
- Feb/Mar 43 Used for camouflage tests at Rearsby, known as 'Mirror Tests'.
- 8 May 43 No. 20 Maintenance Unit, Aston Down, Glos.
- 25 May 43 No.1. Elementary Flying Training School, Holwell Hyde Relief Landing Ground, near Hatfield, Herts. (renamed Panshangar on 13 September 1943). The unit flew Tiger Moths, but used LB264 as a 'hack'.
- 23 Jun 43 Slightly damaged when during a start-up it moved forward and hit a post due to the pupil not being fully conversant with the cockpit layout; repaired on site by unit.
- 15 Dec 43 No. 22 E.F.T.S, Caxton Gibbet, Cambridge for training Auster A.O.P pilots.
- 5 Aug 44 To No. 20 Maintenance Unit, Aston Down for storage.
- 15 Jul 45 Repaired by Armstrong Whitworth.

- 25 Apr 46 No.5 MU, RAF Kemble, Glos, from where a number of impressed and other light aircraft were sold by public tender for civilian use in the immediate post-war period. A total of 58 Auster 1 aircraft were converted post-war to Taylorcraft Plus D standard.
- 24 May 46 Sold to Cotswold Aero Club Ltd, with 328 hours 40 minutes flying time recorded; still registered with them March 1955. Struck off RAF charge the following day.
- 13 Jan 47 Registered as G-AIXA
- Jan/Feb 47 Given complete overhaul
- 20 Feb 47 First civilian certificate of airworthiness issued.
- 25 Feb 47 First recorded civilian flight, for 20 minutes.
- 18 May 51 Aircraft damaged in taxiing accident; repaired within a few days.
- c.1954 Flying with Cotswold Aero Club.
- 1958 Registered to the Sherwood Flying Club Ltd, Tollerton, Notts.
- 1964 By this date, the aircraft was at Tollerton Airport, Notts, owned by N.Gisby as part of the Maid Marion Flying Group.
- 9 Oct 69 Last flight for nearly three years; engine regularly ground run, however. Flying hours to date 5,575.15
- 23 Jun 72 Aircraft flown again – 15 minute test flight.
- 1972 Ownership passed to Peter. J. Anderson, flying from the RAF College, Cranwell, Lincs.
- 1983 Registered to Peter and Jacky Stevens, operating from Cranwell by 1986.
- 1986 Sold to Alan. A and Maureen. J. Cope, Rutland.
- Dec 99 Sold to Mr C Tyres.
- C.2000 Acquired in exchange deal by Geoffrey Brown of Peterborough. Photos in various civil colour schemes – IAC News February 2003.
- 2000 Restored in Loughborough, Leics from May of that year by Mr. Brown and repainted in original 1942 camouflage and markings. Photo –

Flypast October 2000 p.95. Colour photo flying after restoration completed; Flypast December 2002 p.6.

- 23 Oct 02 Final flight, one hour 5 minutes, to RAF Museum Cosford, Salop, following its purchase by the RAF Museum as the oldest surviving Auster 1; CoA expired the same day. Total final flying hours 6,224.45.
- 13 Dec 02 Registration cancelled by Civil Aviation Authority.
- 2003 Stored in the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre, RAFM Cosford. Photo – Flypast July 2003 p.15.
- 27 Aug 03 By road to RAFM Hendon for display in main aircraft hall. Photos on display – Flypast March 2004 p.15; Wrecks and Relics 20<sup>th</sup> Edition.

**TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON**

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