

COMPER SWIFT G-ACGL
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER X004-6194

41 of this type were delivered, 1929-1934. Of these, 11 were built in 1933 and the last in 1934, after which the company went into liquidation.

26 Feb 08 RAFM archives staff visited the home of the late Mr Stanley (Stan) Brennan, in the village of Timperley, Gtr. Manchester. Mr Brennan had bequeathed his aeronautical collection to the RAFM. Whilst there, they were shown a garage containing aircraft parts, which were recognised as being those of a Comper Swift. The complete pair of main wheels/tyres and 15-gallon fuel tank (the latter marked CLA.7 and dated May 1933) were brought back to RAFM Hendon that day.

4 Mar 08 Remaining parts recovered from Timperley to storage at RAFM Stafford;

80hp Pobjoy Cataract seven-cylinder radial engine, s/n 511, dated August 1934. (An engine type not initially used on the Swift, which used the similar 75hp Pobjoy R, though many were later fitted retrospectively)

Pair of main planes (minus fabric covering) Main spars marked WA 1575X/1; port aileron marked C/381, starboard aileron marked C/380. (Examination 2009 suggests these wings may be from two separate Swift aircraft)

Pair of V-struts

Pair of undercarriage legs

Box of wooden parts including wing structure and tail and rear fuselage parts.

No evidence on parts of a UK registration, but there were traces of red-painted fabric and red paint on the wing strut fairings.

Also recovered were some miscellaneous fuselage parts of tubular construction, a wooden section of wing structure and control column linkages, identified by Skysport as being of Comper origin in 2010.

It is of note that in March 1961, the wings of former Alex Henshaw aircraft S33/6/G-ACGL were reported extant stored at Wolverhampton, and reportedly still extant in 2003-in 1961 other parts were reportedly at Elmdon. This aircraft was originally painted red. Photo-Aeroplane July 2008 p.5.

Correspondence from Mr Malcolm Goosey in July 2008 confirms that this is the Henshaw Swift. Its remains- wings and some rear fuselage components - were acquired from Eric Holden near Kinver (Manager at Castle Bromwich Airfield and a personal friend of Henshaw's) by Stan Brennan in the 1970s when he was a member of the Northern Aircraft Preservation Society (NAPS, later The Aeroplane Collection

(TAC)), and he initially stored the parts in a NAPS/TAC store in Stockport, Cheshire and later near Wigan, Lancashire before moving them to his home at Timperley.

An outline of G-ACGL's flying career is as follows;

- 30 May 33 Registered (CofR 4360) to Alex Henshaw, Mablethorpe, Lincs. Given pillar-box red colour scheme. Photos of Henshaw with the aircraft – Flypast July 2010 p.20; Aircraft Magazine December 2011 p.10.
- 23 Jun 33 Certificate of Airworthiness (CoA) Issued
- 6 Jul 33 Flown by Henshaw at Hatfield, Herts for the 1933 King's Cup Air Race.
- 8 Jul 33 Won Siddeley Trophy at Hatfield, Herts, at an average speed of 127.78 mph over the 830.8 mile course. Photos-Air Britain Archive Autumn/Winter 2004 p.151.
- 20/21 Dec 33 Flown by Henshaw from Nice Aerodrome, France. Photo – Aeroplane December 2011 p.8.
- 7 Mar 34 Sold by Henshaw.
- 21 Nov 34 Registered to Henlys Ltd, Heston
- Apr 35 Business taken over by Airwork Ltd.
- 15 Jul 35 Registered to Airwork Ltd, Heston.
- 14 Nov 35 Registered to David L. Lloyd, Castle Bromwich.
- 28 Oct 37 Registered to Patrick G Leeson, Braunstone
- 27 Jul 39 Registered to Edmund Bradley, Wednesbury/Kinver, Staffs.
- 22 Mar 40 CoA lapsed
- 1942 Fuselage reportedly scrapped at Kinver. (Although an unconfirmed report via RAFM Cosford in 2012 suggested the engine and fuselage were extant in a West Bromwich scrapyard in 1949, after previous use by an ATC unit or similar, with the owner, a policeman, keeping the wings in a shed behind the police station)
- 1 Dec 46 Registration cancelled at census
- 15 Feb 2010 Wings and other remaining parts by road from storage at RAFM Stafford to Skysport Engineering Ltd, Hatch, Beds for restoration under contract, including construction of new fuselage incorporating some original cockpit parts.

Original parts sent were the two wings, two ailerons, two struts, parts of the left hand side cockpit structure, cockpit floor, rear 'A' frame, 15-gallon fuel tank, small piece of side panel, and engine accessories.

Also sent was Pobjoy R 75hp two blade wooden prop 79/E/372, acquired by the RAFM from a different source. By March 2010 repair work on the wings was well underway, by Martin Kimm, and they were completed by June 2010, along with the undercarriage. At this point the surviving section of port side cockpit structure and bulkhead supporting the wing were also under restoration, along with the original cockpit floor/control column mounting. A new rear fuselage was built by Steve Roberts.

Photo at Skysport as completed in pillar box red colour scheme, early October 2011; Aeroplane December 2011 p.8. Carries July 1933 race number 6 on the tail.

14 Oct 2011 Completed aircraft by road to RAFM Stafford; on by road to RAFM Cosford for display 17 October. Formal hand-over and unveiling (by Alex Henshaw Junior) at Cosford 3 November 2011. Photos on display – Aircraft Magazine December 2011 p.11; Aeroplane January 2012 p.8; Flypast January 2012 p.10; Aviation News January 2012 p.28; Air Britain News Dec 2011 p.1872; Wrecks and Relics 23rd Edition, 2012.

Seven other Swifts survive – three in the UK, one in Argentina, two in Australia, and one in Spain;

S31/9	R222/LV-FBA	Buenos Aires, Argentina
S32/1	G-ABTC	Stored, Cornwall
GS32/2	G-ABWH /VH-ACG	Camden, NSW, Australia-airworthy
S32/4	G-ABUS	Stored, Shropshire
S32/5	G-ABUU/EC-HAM	Cuatro Vientos, Madrid, Spain
S32/9	G-ACTF	Shuttleworth Trust, Old Warden, Beds
S32/10	G-ACAG/VH-UVC	Bankstown, Sydney, Australia

On 12 Sept 2010, the forward fuselage of an unidentified Comper Swift was purchased by Tim Moore at an auto-jumble at Beaulieu, having been taken there by a Frenchman who found them in a barn between Poitiers and Chaterault. (Not in the end used)

Plus Swift reproduction G-LCGL, completed 2011 using some one third of original parts; with Real Aeroplane Collection, Beighton.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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