

9th July 2013

Models of cancelled concept aircraft now on display

Now on display at the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford is a collection of original aircraft concept models designed by some of Britain's biggest aircraft manufacturers during the 1940's, 50's and 60's. These pioneering designs never made it off the drawing boards. Visitors to the Museum will now have the chance to see some of the revolutionary ideas up close, as they go on display in the Museum's Test Flight Hangar.

The collection brings together ten original pieces of aircraft design, including one by Barnes Wallis creator of the Wellington Bomber and the famous bouncing bomb used during the Dambusters Raid. Wallis' design for Vickers known as the Type 010 or 'Swallow' was one of the more unusual projects of the 1950's. This large swing-wing aircraft was designed with the ability to travel at both supersonic and subsonic speeds whilst the engines could rotate and tilt, acting as control surfaces. The proposals were not seen as practical by Government officials although the Air Staff seemed interested and despite Wallis' best efforts, the Swallow was cancelled in 1957.

Many of the designs were far in advance of their time and only a few made it into construction before later being cancelled by the Government. Those which never made it any further than design concept were ambitious and many had their setbacks, as was the case with the Supermarine Type 559. This interceptor featured two de Havilland Gyron engines with afterburners and two de Havilland Spectre Junior rocket engines, whilst its design featured a Canard layout where the tail-wing was moved to the front resulting in fins being placed on the main wing tips. It would have been a fully integrated weapons system, with technologies beyond its years had it made it into service.

RAF Museum Cosford Curator, Nick Sturgess said:

"The models demonstrate the forward thinking of British aircraft designers during the 1950's and 60's, when Britain was at its peak of the aviation industry. There are some ambitious ideas and many of the designs are very futuristic looking, even by today's standards. Some of the models look like they could be out of a science fiction movie and no doubt, ideas like this would have inspired the likes of Gerry Anderson."

These new additions to the Test Flight Hangar gives the Museum the chance to bring from storage some items relating to aircraft designs held in the Museum collection. Models range in size from 2ft to 4ft and are made from, wood, plastic and metal, each with their own caption boards detailing the design concept and the expected results.

Other models on display include: The Bristol Type 204 - a state of the art bomber; the Bristol Type 178 - a rocket fighter designed to intercept high flying, supersonic bombers; the English Electric P.10 - a high speed reconnaissance aircraft that would have spied on targets before and after a V-Bomber raid; the Hawker P.1103 - thought to be capable of intercepting a supersonic bomber at 60,000ft within 20 minutes of take-off, the Fairey Delta 3 - a high level interceptor designed to catch incoming Soviet bombers; the Saunders-Roe SR.177 - the planned successor to the

experimental rocket powered SR.53 which was cancelled during construction; The Avro 730 - an ambitious reconnaissance aircraft cancelled during construction; the Armstrong-Whitworth 681- a post war transport aircraft capable of carrying vehicles or 60 paratroopers and finally the Fairey Project 75 - designed to be a lightweight aircraft with a short take off run.

Anyone wishing to take a look at this unique collection, the concept models are now on permanent display, located in the Museums' Test Flight Hangar. Admission is free of charge. For more information on the Museum please visit www.rafmuseum.org or call 01902 376200.

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Notes to Editors:

- Royal Air Force Museum Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8UP
- Open daily from 10am
- Admission to the Royal Air Force Museum is free of charge.
- RAF Museum Cosford images & logo available at:
<http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/media-vault.aspx>
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact Michelle Morgans on 01902 376212 or email michelle.morgans@rafmuseum.org
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