

# Auster

QUARTERLY



THE AUSTER STORY  
AUSTER DESIGNATIONS  
ONE MAN'S AEROPLANE

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# Auster

**QUARTERLY**

**Volume 1 No 2**

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**Front cover :** A suitably inscribed "The Last J/1N" G-AZIH made its first flight at Lee-on-Solent on January 19th, 1975.

**Back cover :** The one-time Auster J/5R demonstrator still flies regularly from Nairobi and is seen in the hangar there in this photograph taken by Peter Cooper earlier this year.

Auster Quarterly is published in co-operation with the International Auster Pilot Club during February, May, August and November. The subscription rate for the four issues of 1975 is £2.32 post-paid, cheques or money orders being payable to Auster Quarterly. The editor will be pleased to receive any articles or photographs intended for publication, but only if a stamped addressed envelop is supplied, can these be returned.

Neither the Editor nor the International Auster Pilot Club necessarily agrees with opinions expressed by contributors. Printed by Hadfield Print Services, Ltd., 43 Pikes Lane, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 8Ed.

# INTRODUCTION

No sooner had the first Auster Quarterly been printed, we heard that Ian Hammond and Les Groves' J/1N G-AZIH had made a successful first flight at Lee-on-Solent. Originally laid down by Beagle in 1966, the aeroplane was never completed, and eventually disposed of, along with all Auster fuselages and parts, to Hants. & Sussex Aviation who in turn sold it to the current owners, in 1969. During this period 'ZIH was no more than a bare airframe, but after six years of painstaking labour she looks a fine example, and suitably inscribed 'The last J/1N'. Whatsoever she carries the personalised marks of Ian Hammond, having just failed to acquire the joint initials G-AZGH OR G-AZHG. Apart from the famous Autocrat G-AERO, we believe it to be the first time that special marks have been allocated to a British Auster.

To the pundits who claim that the day of the Auster has passed, it appears that its heyday is fast approaching, and that Messrs. Groves and Hammond are the first of many dedicated Auster enthusiasts bent on restoring long-defunct airframes. We look forward to seeing more products from Stubbington, none less than the unique J/1N G-AJYB.

Reaction to Auster Quarterly from both readers and the Aviation press has been most encouraging, but your editor must stress that the journal's continued success relies on contributions from readers. Already the tables presented in the first issue have evoked interest from former Auster pilots who recall various incidents described therein. For such purposes we have decided to start a correspondence column as from the next issue, which will include a report on the Shobdon rally, and the first of a Squadron history series - omitted from this issue at the eleventh hour due to new information coming to hand.

It has been suggested that if the first volume of Auster Quarterly is bound, without covers, then the cover illustrations would be lost. For those readers, and many more we suspect, we are reproducing views of 'GOH and 'SEG in this issue, a practice maintained by another well-known aviation journal.

Finally, a request for information. If any readers have photographs or details as to the current location of Auster AOP.9 XP249, your editor would be pleased to hear from you.





*The Leicester Museum of Technology's flying exhibit, Autocrat G.AGOH served as the original Cirrus Minor 2 engine test-bed for the J/1 series, as detailed on page 37. Photographed at Shoreham on 21 st. April 1974 by Peter J. Cooper.*



*G-ASEG, a Terrier 1 converted by Airgeiners Ltd. at Staverton, photographed shortly after its completion.*

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# The Auster Story

## *From Taylorcraft To Beagle*

### PART 2 – WAR AND PEACE

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When Taylorcraft finally came to put the Model D/1 into production for the R.A.F. in early 1942, the Company found itself heavily committed to both Tiger Moth and Hurricane repair contracts. In fact all floorspace at Thurmaston, Syston and Rearsby was taken up with such work, so in order to produce the vitally-needed Auster AOP.1s (as the Model D/1 was more generally known), Taylorcraft acquired two more factories in Syston - Rice's in Peters Street, and Ward's in Broad Street. These new premises became respectively No.7 and No. 7 and No. 8 Works. Shortly afterwards, as production gained momentum, a factory at Brookside became No. 9 Works and used as an experimental shop, while the Company also took over WADD's Garage at Syston for use as a tube store, under the identity of No. 10 Works.

Norman Ellison, writing in Beagle News relates an early problem in setting up the initial temporary layout:

'About for weeks after production had started at No. 7 Works a complaint from a lady, whose house was next door to the factory, was brought to Mr. K. Sharp, the Manager at No. 7 and later a Director of Taylorcraft. The lady said she realised that they were very busy making aeroplanes for the war effort, but her chickens in her back yard had turned green ! Upon investigation it was found that her whole garden was bright green, due to the fact that the extractor fans from the priming paint booths took all the excess paint straight into her garden. In the rush to get the factory working someone had forgotten to find out what was on the other side of the wall when the spray booth fans had been fitted !'

All the jigs and tools for the Auster 1 had been taken to Syston from Rearsby where they had been stored in the old County Flying Club hangar. In order to illustrate the wartime efficiency attained by the Company, the jigs were transferred on February 22nd. 1942, and the first aircraft, LB263, left the new Syston production line on April 29th, only sixty-six days later. In the meantime the Army, anxious for new observation aeroplanes had fitted some forty Tiger Moths with No. 19 Wireless sets. This measure was obviously planned as a stop-gap, for the Tiger Moth was even less suited to A.O.P. work than the Auster 1, but had been selected purely because of its low stalling speed and availability. As it happened, work was still in hand for their A.O.P. camouflage when the Austers began rolling off the Syston production line, and so the scheme was dropped, although some Tigers were used by A.O.P. squadrons for training purposes only.

Flown at Rearsby on 7th. May 1942, the first production Auster 1, LB263, was later delivered to the Aeroplane & Armament Experimental Establishment (A. & A.E.E.) at Boscombe Down for acceptance trials, together with the second aircraft, LB264. On June 1st. a group of pilots from 651 Squadron arrived at Boscombe Down to undertake a 150 hour endurance programme on '263. Trials completed, the crews returned to their squadron at Old Sarum on the 21st. and on the following day the aircraft was flown back to Rearsby for a complete examination, prior to its official handing over to 651 Squadron. The second Auster 1 remained at Boscombe Down for almost a year, and in the event never saw operational service, unlike a third Auster tested by the A. & A.E.E., LB266 which after a short stay returned to Rearsby for re-allotment to 653 Squadron.

During the Summer of 1942 three more A.O.P. squadrons were formed at Old Sarum: 652 on May 1st. under Major R.R. Cobley, D.F.C., R.A., 653 on June 20th. under Major T.I. Tetley-Jones, R.A., and 654 on July 15th. under Major T.C. Willett, R.A.

651 Squadron, by this time was heavily engaged in exercises in the south of England when the first Auster 1 was received (LB269) on July 21st. But events were moving fast, for within a fortnight the Squadron had moved north to Scotland to prepare for mobilization. It was suspected, quite rightly as it turned out, that 651 had been selected to take part in the allied landings of North Africa under 'Operation Torch'.

Accordingly two Flights, each of four Auster 1s, were shipped from England during October 1942 as part of the follow-up convoy to Algiers. The campaign opened at Casablanca on 8th. November, and on the 12th. the convey containing the eight Austers docked safely at Algiers. This section of 651 was under the command of Major H.C. Bazeley, the instigator of wartime A.O.P. who now found himself ideally placed to re-enact all the theories and exercises worked out in England beforehand, and now finally in action against the 'real' enemy that had thwarted him in France two-and-a-half years previously. But the most apparent factor resulting from operational 'shoots' during the opening campaign was the fact that the Auster 1 was highly unsuited for its designed task; it was underpowered and the rearward view was poor, a serious deficiency for observational work.

Taylorcraft was well aware of the snags that hindered the Auster 1, and even before the North African campaign was under way, was considering increased power-plants. Two alternative engines were considered, the American Lycoming O-290 and the D.H. Gipsy 1, both of 130 hp., and versions of the Auster with these engines were designated Model F (Auster AOP.2) and Model E (Auster AOP.3) respectively. The Model E was



*Tiger Moth T6298 arrived at Taylorcraft on October 3rd. 1941 for repairs. A.L. Wykes test-flew this Tiger on 30th November shortly before its re-delivery to 24 MU. This photograph was probably taken at Britannia Works.*

*(Leicester Museum of Technology)*

completed first and made its first flight at Rearsby on 28th. September 1942; the Model F flying later on 30th. December. Reports from the A. & A.E.E., who tested both variants, indicated a preference for the Lycoming version. However, the success of Germany's U-Boats against the Atlantic convoys at the time cast some doubt as to whether American engines could be delivered in sufficient quantities, and so in the event, the Gipsy-powered Auster AOP.3 was given the go-ahead.

From the light of experience in North Africa, Taylorcraft now had an opportunity to incorporate sundry modifications, including the cutting-back of the cockpit, to allow a larger perspex window behind the pilot to be introduced. Another deficiency which had become a nightmare for Operational Training Unit (O.T.U.) pilots was the lack of flaps on the Auster 1. \*As many landing-grounds were merely small clearings in wooded areas, or small roads, the ability to execute a short landing was virtually impossible. A solution was built into the Mk. 3 by introducing split-flaps, while, with the approaching winter in mind, a cabin heater was also installed.

Operationally, the Auster AOP.3 proved to be a far superior aeroplane than the Mk.1, but was still dogged with some of the problems that had snagged the earlier version. Principally, this affected the rearward vision, for despite the increased window area, rearward vision was still not ideal. In February 1943, Taylorcraft received orders to improve this defect, and a complete re-design to the cockpit was tendered successfully to the Ministry. Moreover by mid-1943 the situation on the Atlantic supply routes had improved sufficiently to allow the use of Lycoming engines.

The new version became Model G, or Auster AOP.4, and the first aircraft (MT454) first flew at Rearsby on May 3rd. 1943. Production commenced during the following December, when the last of the Mk.3s was being completed.

Two other events took place during the summer of 1943 that provided extra work for the Taylorcraft workforce. Firstly, the Company's Repair Unit received contracts for the repair of damaged Hawker Typhoons, and these gradually replaced Hurricanes in No.6 Works. At the same time, and with a general growing importance being attached to the use of assault gliders for the projected landing of France, Taylorcraft took the decision on June 16th. to proceed with the Model H glider as a private venture. This was designed as an assault training glider, and was simply an unpowered version of the Model E (Auster 3) with a glazed front portion replacing the engine. The Model H, not surprisingly, closely resembled the American Taylorcraft TG-6 glider, and was first tested at Rearsby on July 6th. But, in fact, it was never put into production, the Ministry having changed its requirements before the Model H was ready for service evaluation.

\* Study of Table 3b illustrates the problems faced by many Auster 1 pilots when landing in small fields.



*The Auster AOP.3 displaying the increased power of its Gipsy Major engine during a short take-off demonstration at Rearsby. (M.F. Sketchley collection).*





*An impressive line-up of newly-completed Auster AOP.4s at Rearsby, awaiting collection by A.T.A. pilots. Front-to-rear are MT177, 169, 158, 176, 175, 174, 178, 167, 171, plus 2 unidentified.*

Production of the Auster AOP.4 continued throughout 1944, by which time Austers of various marks were operating in almost every theatre of war. 651 and 654 Squadrons had followed the allied advance through Sicily and Italy, 652 and 655 moved across to France following the D-day invasions, while 653 joined the other squadrons in Italy. 656 Squadron became somewhat isolated in the Far East, operating in India and Burma, whilst other squadrons formed during 1943, eg., 658 to 662 were deployed in Europe in support of allied units pushing towards Germany.

After only a couple of years in action, Austers had been used for a variety of roles, apart from basic A.O.P. work. Many had become unofficial communications aeroplanes, in view of their normal operational duties being close to the line of fighting, but in the same way that the early Auster 1s were unsuited for A.O.P. duties, so the later marks were not ideal communications aircraft. When Taylorcraft developed the AOP 4 into the Model J (AOP.5) the result was perhaps the most important factor towards the future success of the company. By fitting a blind flying panel, the AOP.5 could be used officially for communications work. Flying characteristics were improved by moving the trimmer from underneath the tailplane to a trim tab on the port elevator.

Production of the Auster AOP.5 commenced during May 1944, but soon after the first aircraft was completed, the Company was struck with a sudden and tragic loss. On May 14th. a military display was held in the Abbey Park, Leicester, part of which was a demonstration of Army Co-operation flying and aerobatics. Two Austers were flown by A.L. Wykes and Jeff Edwards, the company's chief test pilot.

During the aerobatic sequence, 'A-L' made a series of steep turns, but it appears that the aircraft completely stalled at the top of one turn, which was not sufficiently high enough to recover. The Auster fell behind the railway embankment, and plunged into the ground. A.L. Wykes, the founder and the mastermind behind the company died instantly. Indeed it is tragic that the man who worked so hard to build a successful company never lived to see his most successful product in action.

The Auster AOP.5 was suitably tagged 'a maid-of-all-work', but during its production run so many modifications had been incorporated to fulfill various roles that it had become increasingly obvious that some considerable re-design work was necessary.

Work started towards the end of 1944 on what was to be designated the Model K, and construction of a prototype commenced during January 1945, in the Company's experimental department at No.9 Works.

The main difference between the AOP.5 and the new Model K was the use of a 145 hp DH. Gipsy Major 7, an increase in power of some 15 hp. Also the split flaps fitted to the AOP.5 were replaced by external flaps, marking the greatest difference yet between that and any previous models. The prototype, TJ707 was completed during April 1945, and first flew at Rearsby on May 1st. Known as the Auster AOP.6 it entered production later during the same year.

As the war entered its final phase, so production tailed off; the final surrender of the enemy marking the end of the line for the Mk.5. In all, some 790 Auster AOP.5's had been built in little over a year, the high figure being mainly attributable to a mobile assembly line being set up for fuselage assembly. Electrically powered, this mobile line was designed to produce four fuselages per day, and was first put into operation on July 14th. 1944.



Members of the Taylorcraft 39 Club pose at Rearsby in 1941. This photograph provides a fitting record of the Company's employees during the early wartime period. Peter Stoddart identified the members with the assistance of Ken Sharp, and as details were given verbally, some spellings may be incorrect. From left to right are: Joe Eames (Assistant Inspector), Albert Codling, Ken Sharp, Herbert Thompson, Bob Jeffreys, Ernie Facey (who welded the first Model C fuselages), Bob Burrows, Frank Bates (Director), Harold Gooding (Sheetmetal Works), Jack Humphries (labourer), Mrs. Waile (Covering), Phil Coleman, Albert Morris, E.C. 'Jim' Harrison, Reg Hill (behind prop.), Toni Strodl, Lewis 'Gus' Morris, John Grant (later killed in action), Mr. Williams (publicity), George Potterton, Jack Hunter (Works Manager), Harold Chatwind (Sprayer), Bill Waile (Sprayer), A.L. Wykes (Managing-Director), Harold Prestwell (cashier), Reg Barrowdale (Wing Ribs), 'Uncle' Percy Wykes, and David Webster.

Apart from production of Austers, it has been mentioned previously that some considerable space at Rearsby was given over to the repair of damaged Hurricanes and Tiger Moths. During 1943, Taylorcraft had begun repairing Hawker Typhoons, the first of which was delivered to the RAF in May of that year, and the last repaired Hurricane being delivered in October 1943.

During November 1945, Typhoon repair work ceased, and apart from a small contract (between May 1945 and April 1946) for the repair of eleven Kirby Cadet gliders, the total number of aircraft repaired by the Company was: 368 Hurricanes, 281 Typhoons, 339 Tiger Moths, 235 Austers, and one Hornet Moth.

With the end of the war came a need for re-organising the locally-scattered factories used by Taylorcraft. The machine-shop and toolroom were merged at No.7 Works, in buildings that had been built onto the shoe factory, while the actual production line was maintained at Rearsby. The rest of the various properties rented by the Company during the war were handed back to the previous (or new) owners. The original factory at Britannia Works, so important during the early wartime days thus returned to being a textile machinery manufacturing centre.

The end of the war, having brought an end to most military contracts for new aircraft, allowed Taylorcraft to turn its attention to a post-war civilian market. Fortunately, the Company had started planning for such an event some time previously, when it had become obvious that any post-war aeroplane built for civilian use had to be rugged, simple, economical, and relatively inexpensive. The Taylorcraft Model J (Auster AOP.5) therefore seemed to be the ideal choice, as all these factors applied to its design as a military aeroplane. Furthermore, it was still fully-jigged at the time, and in quantity production, although it was generally agreed that with the deletion of all military equipment, the Mk.5 was somewhat overpowered. The prime objective therefore was to select an economical engine, the most promising of which being available at the turn of 1945 was the Blackburn Cirrus Minor 2. One such engine was installed into a standard Auster 5 by Blackburn Aircraft Ltd. and used as an engine test-bed. For such purposes, it was registered to that Company, as G-AGOH.

The next stage was to construct a true prototype and development aircraft, but instead of converting another production Mk.5, Taylorcraft used a pre-war Model D. C/n 124 had originally served as the prototype Model D immediately prior to the outbreak of war, after which it had been employed as a general 'hack', until it crashed during 1942. Although it has often been stated that the damaged airframe was discarded until 1945, it now appears that 'FWN was in fact rebuilt and used throughout the war. In any case, 'FWN was put back into the main jigs, and modified up to Mk.5 standard.

At the same time, the cabin was fitted with two forward seats, and bucket seat facing sideways in the rear of the cabin. The rear perspex area was re-styled to fit the revised fuselage tube arrangement, and a one-piece perspex windscreen was introduced. This then became known as the Taylorcraft Auster 5 J/1 Autocrat, later sensibly shortened to Auster J/1 Autocrat, and had been produced by merely developing the standard Auster 5 with the minimum of structural and design alteration.

Taylorcraft was now fully prepared for the resumption of civilian flying, and when civil aviation officially re-started on January 1st. 1946, the Company was in a position to begin deliveries of the new J/1 Autocrat, although the initial production aircraft had already been flown to dealers. The first production Autocrat, G-AGTO was delivered by Cecil Berry-Ottaway to Mr. T.W. Shipside at Tollerton during December 1945. But circumstances had changed somewhat since the Company had produced its last civil aeroplanes in 1939. Apart from the fact that a war had been fought and won, the name Auster was by now more well-known than the parent Company name of Taylorcraft, especially as the new post-war models were a vast improvement, and bore little resemblance to the original Taylorcraft produced in America. Consequently, it was decided to adopt a new Company name to suit its new image, and so on March 8th. 1946, Taylorcraft Aeroplanes (England) Ltd. became simply Auster Aircraft Ltd.

Curiously, as Autocrat production got under way, one of its rivals was manufactured by the same Company, for redundant Auster 1s, many of which had been held by RAF Maintenance Units in storage for many years and had logged very few flying hours, were being pensioned off to the civil market, to be known as the Taylorcraft Plus D. In all fifty-five Plus D's were converted from Auster 1's, some by Austers themselves, causing the parent design office to view the possibilities of producing a two-seater similar to the pre-war Model C, as the source of surplus Auster 1's was quickly exhausted.

Initially, several ex-Auster 1's were temporarily installed with 55hp Lycoming engines, but after flight trials showed that some design alteration was necessary, the Company decided to modify the basic Auster 5 (Model J) airframe to a two-seater and instal a 75hp Continental engine, giving rise to the Model J/2 Arrow. This closely resembled an un-named two-seat prototype (G-AGPS) that Taylorcraft had built during 1945 around a 65hp Lycoming 0-145-B3 flat-four air-cooled engine. Although un-named, 'GPS was always referred to as 'Sharp's Special' after Mr. Ken Sharp who had masterminded its design.

Continued on Page 60



# TAYLORCRAFT MODEL D/1

## Individual Service Histories - 1

Table 3a Service History of Prototype Model D/1.

110	T9120	Originally built as the prototype military Model D in 1939, it was loaned to the Army for early service trials as described in the main text. Throughout its career, T9120 was dogged by minor accidents, the first of which occurred on 16/12/40 whilst in use with 'D' Flight. After taking off to land on a hillside at Fisherton-de-la-Mere, north of Wylie, the undercarriage collapsed. Another similar accident took place on 1/9/41, and after being repaired spent a period on loan to 651 Squadron between 8/10/41 and 22/10/41. After return to 1424 Flight a pilot landed T9120 at Windbrake Shrewton, Wilts. on 27/5/42, but when turning into wind to taxi back, the tail lifted, tipping the aircraft onto its nose. Both pilot and passenger were unable to pull the tail down against the wind, and the aircraft was blown over onto its back, causing substantial damage. This incident necessitated its removal to Rearsby for repairs on June 4th. which were completed on the 25th. Three days later, T9120 was ferried to 651 Squadron, but transferred to 653 Squadron on August 22nd. On the 26th. T9120 suffered an engine-cut at 200 feet immediately after taking-off from Waltham St. Lawrence. The pilot forced-landed in a nearby field, purposely stalling at only 10 feet to prevent too long a landing-run, but damaged the aircraft in the process. Again the prototype was conveyed to Rearsby on 2/9/42 for repairs. During November 1942, T9120 was ferried to 652 Squadron, but on December 6th. was transferred to 43 OTU. Two more accidents befell T9120; on 7/1/43 N OTU pilot made a heavy landing near High Post causing the undercarriage to collapse, and later on 22/8/43, another heavy landing in gusty winds caused the starboard undercarriage to collapse. Another period was spent at Rearsby for repairs until eventually on 7/11/43, it was flown to 5 MU for re-allotment. On December 12th. it was released for 2 Group Communications Flight with whom it remained until its return to 5 MU on 25/5/45 for disposal. Finally, on 19/2/46 T9120 was sold to the Wiltshire School of Flying and registered to them as G-AHAF.
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*An extremely rare and interesting view of the personalities attending the first flight of the prototype Model C at Ratcliffe on May 3rd. 1939. From left to right are Frank Bates, Albert Codling, Percy Wykes (?), Mr.G. Wynne-Eaton, A.L. Wykes, Ken Sharp, 'Jim' Harrison, and Joe Eames. The MG saloon car belongs to A.L. Wykes. The photograph comes from the Sharp Collection, and kindly loaned by the Museum of Technology, Leicester.*

*Toni Strodl poses in the cockpit of a Mustang. Born in Denmark, she became a pilot with the A.T.A., and delivered many wartime Austers. The inscription on the photograph reads 'Best wishes to Taylorcraft from Toni, 1943' being indicative of the close affection she held for the Company, and vice versa for this photograph was hung at Rearsby for many years. It has been suggested that she became a part-time test-pilot for Taylorcraft which may explain her appearance in the 39 Club photograph on page 36. Mr.R.Hook of Leicester writes to tell us that he met Toni Strodl's brother, Max Strodl in Copenhagen in 1960, and was surprised to learn that he too lived in Leicester during the war working at Rearsby during the day, and on an observation post in Victoria Park each evening. So were we !*

### Table 3b Production & Service History of Model D/1

Two anomalies appear within the Model D/1 production sequence :

- (i) The 100 aircraft under Contract 1995 were allocated c/ns in the consecutive block 133 to 232. However Taylorcraft omitted c/n 147, and upon the Company's realization, allocated LB295 with c/n 165A.
- (ii) In fact 101 aircraft were built by Taylorcraft, for Ministry records indicate that LB310 was built as an 'extra' aircraft.

c/n	Serial	History
133	LB263	Rolled-out on 29/4/42 and flown at Rearsby 7/5/42. Delivered to A. & A.E.E. Boscombe Down 29/5/42 for testing. '263 returned to Taylorcraft for examination on 22/6/42 prior to issue to 651 Squadron at Kidsdale on 17/8/42. On 2/9/42, it was flown to 47MU at Sealand for dismantling and packaging before shipment to North Africa aboard SS. 'H-14'. Although records show its arrival in Algiers on 12/11/42, it is presumed to have been lost in the fighting across North Africa.
134	LB264	Delivered to A. & A.E.E. 29/5/42 with LB263. After almost a year of testing, '264 was transferred to 20 MU at Aston Down on 8/5/43 for re-allotment. On 25/5/43, it was despatched to No.1 EFTS at Holwell Hyde (renamed Panshangar on 13/9/43) where shortly afterwards, on 23/6/43 it was 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. On 15/12/43, '264 was transferred to 22 EFTS at Cambridge, until its arrival at 20 MU on 5/8/44 for storage. Eventually it was taken to 5 MU at Kemble on 25/4/46, and civilianised as G-AIXA.
135	LB265	Delivered to 51 MU Lichfield 6/7/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 13/8/42. On 2/9/42, it was flown to 47 MU for dismantling and packaging and shipment to North Africa. '265 survived the advance across North Africa, but was eventually destroyed during a violent storm at Potenza, in Italy on 28/9/43.
136	LB266	Delivered to A. & A.E.E. 14/6/42 for initial acceptance trials and tests. Returned to Taylorcraft 29/7/42 for the completion of its w/t installation, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 15/11/42. Transferred to 43 OTU at Old Sarum on 26/3/43, but was damaged as Cat.B on 5/9/43. Later, '266 was conveyed to Rearsby on 31/12/43 for repairs, after which it was re-delivered to 20 MU on 10/1/44 for release to HQ 2 TAF Communications Flight at Hartford Bridge (Blackbushe) on 8/2/44. On 24/2/44, it was transferred to 131 Airfield HQ Flight, but was returned to 20 MU on 23/7/44. Eventually, it was sold to Taylorcraft on 15/1/46, and civilianised as G-AHHC.
137	LB267	Delivered to 51 MU Lichfield 5/7/42 before being issued to 651 Squadron on 14/8/42. On 11/12/42 it was flown to 47 MU for dismantling and packaging and shipment to North Africa.
138	LB268	Delivered to 51 MU Lichfield 5/7/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 14/8/42. On 31/10/42, it was damaged slightly in a flying accident, but after repairs was returned to the squadron on 10/11/42, and later flown to 47 MU for dismantling and packaging and shipment to North Africa. Although '268 survived much of the fighting across North Africa, it was last reported with 'A' Flight of 651 Squadron in August 1943, it was lost shortly afterwards, and officially struck off charge 1/2/44.
139	LB269	Delivered to 20 MU Aston Down 11/7/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 21/7/42. On 19/8/42, after the squadron had moved north, '269 was involved in a minor accident. After repairs, it was ferried on 2/9/42 direct to 47 MU for dismantling and packaging and shipment to North Africa. No further records exist and it is presumed to have been lost in the advance across North Africa.

- 140 LB270 Delivered to 20 MU 11/7/42, but was involved in a minor flying accident on 19/8/42, '270 received damage to prop. and undercarriage, when the pilot, avoiding telegraph wires struck a river surface, and made a forced-landing at Sandfield, near Farnham. After being salvaged by 63 MU, and taken to Rearsby for repairs on 16/9/42, '270 was issued to 654 Squadron on 18/10/42. Later, it was flown to 47 MU for dismantling and packaging and shipment to North Africa aboard SS. 'J-78'. Although its arrival at Algiers on 18/2/43 is recorded, no further details exist, and it is presumed to have been lost in the advance across North Africa.
- 141 LB271 Delivered to 20 MU 18/7/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 16/8/42. On 2/9/42 it was flown to 47 MU for dismantling and packaging and shipment to North Africa aboard SS. 'H-14'.  
No further records exist, and it is presumed to have been lost in the fighting across North Africa.
- 142 LB272 Delivered to 20 MU 18/7/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 13/8/42. On 11/12/42, it was flown to 47 MU for dismantling and packaging and shipment to North Africa aboard SS. 'H-102'.  
Although '272 survived the advance to Italy, it was declared Cat. B after a flying accident on 15/11/43 and presumably struck off charge.
- 143 LB273 Delivered to 20 MU 25/7/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 15/8/42. On 2/9/42, it was flown to 47 MU for dismantling and packaging and shipment to North Africa aboard SS. 'H-28'.  
As no further records exist, '273 is presumed to have been lost in the fighting across North Africa.
- 144 LB274 Delivered to 20 MU 27/7/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 28/8/42. On 11/12/42 it was flown to 47 MU for packaging and shipment to North Africa aboard SS. 'H-102'. It was operated by 651 Squadron but written off in a flying accident on 1/5/43 near Sidi Bow.
- 145 LB275 Delivered to 20 MU 29/7/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 16/8/42. On 2/9/42 it was flown to 47 MU for packaging and shipment to North Africa aboard SS. 'H-14'.  
As no further records exist, '275 is presumed to have been lost in the advance across North Africa.
- 146 LB276 Delivered to 20 MU 2/8/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 16/8/42. On 2/9/42 it was flown to 47 MU for packaging and shipment to North Africa aboard SS. 'H-28'.  
As no further records exist, '276 is presumed to have been lost in the advance across North Africa.
- 148 LB277 Delivered to 20 MU 6/8/42, before being issued to 654 Squadron on 16/9/42. Shortly afterwards, '277 was flown to 47 MU for packaging and shipment to North Africa, but in fact did not leave the UK. Instead it was issued to the Army Co-operation Centre at Old Sarum on 19/2/43, passing to 43 OTU on 22/6/43. On 2/12/43, '277 was returned to Taylorcraft for repairs, after which it was ferried to 20 MU on 20/1/44. For a brief period from 15/2/44 to 30/3/44 it was used by 83 Group Communications Flight. On 7/4/45 it was again released by 20 MU for 303 Squadron, a Polish fighter unit based at Coltishall, until its subsequent flight to 5MU on 28/2/46 for disposal. LB277 was sold to the Midlands Aero Club on 16/4/46 but was never converted.
- 149 LB278 Delivered to 20 MU 9/8/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 23/8/42. Two days later, '278 was involved in a minor flying accident, and following repairs was flown to 47 MU for packaging and shipment to North Africa, aboard SS. 'H-102'.  
As no further records exist, '278 is presumed to have been lost in the advance across North Africa.
- 150 LB279 Delivered to 20 MU 13/8/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 26/8/42. An accident on 7/3/43 at Scotts Farm ALG, Berkshire when while landing into the sun, '279 hit a hidden slit trench and overturned, caused its return to Taylorcraft on 23/3/43 for repairs. On 3/8/43 it was released for 2 TAF Communications Flight, but in fact used by 34 Wing Communications Flight. While at Odiham on August 20th, a pilot opened the throttle with the parking brake still on causing '279 to tip onto its nose,

damaging the engine and cowl. On 21/2/44, it was transferred to 83 Group, and issued to Turnhouse Station Flight on 15/3/44. Two months later it was returned to 20 MU on 7/5/44 where it was found to be Cat.B and duly conveyed to Rearsby for repair on 5/6/44. For a third time, it was re-delivered to 20 MU, on 3/8/44, and subsequently issued to RAF Northolt, on 29/5/45.

Finally, '279 was flown to 5 MU for disposal, and was sold to the Royal Flying Club on 16/5/46, and civilianised as G-AHUH.

- 151 LB280 Delivered to 20 MU 14/8/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 18/8/42. On 2/9/42 it was flown to 47 MU for packaging and shipment to North Africa aboard SS 'H-28'. As no further records exist, it is presumed to have been lost in the advance across North Africa.
- 152 LB281 Delivered to 20 MU 15/8/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 19/8/42. Official records are confusing at this stage, but it is believed that '281 was flown to 47 MU on 11/12/42 and shipped to North Africa aboard SS 'H-102' where it is presumed to have been lost in the advance.
- 153 LB282 Delivered to 20 MU 16/8/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 26/8/42, as detailed on page 24. The accident referred to on 14/7/43 was as a result of a pupil flying too slowly at only 20 feet, above the ground. As stalling speed approached, the port wing dropped and the pupil immediately applied opposite bank, but being too low, the aircraft hit the ground. LB282 was involved in another minor accident at Turnhouse on 1/12/45, when it tipped onto its nose during a start-up.
- 154 LB283 Delivered to 20 MU 16/8/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 26/8/42. On 2/11/42 '283 was damaged when attempting a landing at Warren Corner ALG, 3 miles North-west of Petersfield. The pilot undershot the landing, causing the undercarriage to strike a hedge, and tipping the aircraft onto its nose. It was conveyed to Rearsby as Cat.B on the 9th. for repairs. On 19/1/43, '283 was issued to 655 Squadron, until 30/4/43 when it was re-issued to 657 Squadron. A month later, on 25/5/43, '283 was allotted to 1 EFTS at Holwell Hyde, but following a flying accident was conveyed to Rearsby for repairs on 23/12/43. Subsequently, on 22/2/44, it was delivered to 20 MU and released for 1697 Flight at Down Ampney. On 13/11/45, '238 was returned to 20 MU and shortly afterwards, on 1/12/45 was transferred to 5 MU for disposal. Finally, on 7/2/46, it was sold to CTF Aviation and civilianised as G-AHAD.
- 155 LB284 Delivered to 20 MU 18/8/42, before being issued to 651 Squadron on 23/8/42. On 11/12/42 it was flown to 47 MU for packaging and shipment to North Africa aboard SS 'H-102', where it is presumed to have been lost in action.
- 156 LB285 Delivered to 20 MU 23/8/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 26/8/42. On 26/3/43 '285 was transferred to 43 OTU at Old Sarum but was damaged when a pupil bounced badly on a heavy landing and failed to go round again. Initially '285 was declared a write-off, but on 13/4/43 it was conveyed to Rearsby where it was declared repairable. Later on 23/6/43 it was issued to 20 MU and released to 83 Group Communications Squadron. On 12/9/44, '285 was allocated to RAF Manston, possibly for use as a 'hack' with 118 Squadron. After a brief period with 20 MU from 3/3/45 to 21/4/45, '285 was issued to 118 Squadron which had moved north to Bentwaters. Eventually, on 26/3/46, it was despatched to 5 MU for disposal, and sold to the Lancashire Aero Club on 16/4/46 and civilianised as G-AHHB.
- 157 LB286 Delivered to 20 MU 21/8/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 1/9/42. On 20/3/43, it was transferred to 43 OTU, but four days later was declared Cat.B damage after a pupil was attempting to map-read at 200 feet, and flew into the ground! Repairs were completed at Rearsby and '286 was re-delivered to 20 MU on 27/5/43. On 21/7/43, it was released for 22 EFTS at Cambridge until 22/6/44 when it was issued to 84 Group Communications Squadron. Another flying accident took place on 22/9/44, although repairs were within the capability of the Group Servicing Unit. On 16/3/45, '286 was transferred to 70 Group Communications Flight, and later during the month was allocated to 309 Squadron, a fighter unit based at Andrews Field, and later at Coltishall, where LB286 was recorded on 31/3/46. Eventually, on 2/1/48, '286 was sold by the Ministry of Supply to the Weston Aero Club and civilianised as G-AHUM.
- 158 LB287 Delivered to 653 Squadron on 7/9/42 at Penshurst, where it received slight damage after a pilot had taxied too close to a boundary hedge. On 28/3/43, it was transferred to



- 43 OTU. Shortly afterwards on 10/4/43, it was written-off when a pupil, making a dummy landing-run over a field, cut his approach too fine and flew into trees that lined the approach. '287 was struck off charge on 30/4/43.
- 159 LB288 Delivered to 20 MU 23/8/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron. On 8/11/42 it was transferred to 43 OTU with whom it remained until 15/11/43 when it was returned to 20 MU and on 2/2/44 conveyed to Rearsby for repairs. Afterwards it was ferried back to Aston Down on 6/4/44 for long-term storage. Eventually on 18/1/46, '288 was sold to Taylorcraft where it was civilianised as G-AHCI.
- 160 LB289 Delivered to 20 MU 24/8/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 28/8/42. On 10/3/43 it was being flown low over trees during an exercise in Buckinghamshire, when the aircraft hit a wind pocket, causing the starboard wing to drop. In pulling '289 out, the pilot found his aircraft suddenly dropping to port, whereupon the port wing collided with the trees, forcing the aircraft to the ground. On 25/5/43, '289 was conveyed to 20 MU for long-term storage, and eventually on 18/1/46 it was sold to Taylorcraft where it was civilianised as G-AHHA.
- 161 LB290 Delivered to 20 MU 28/8/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 6/9/42. Four days later, on the 10th, '290 was damaged at Penshurst when after a downwind landing it turned onto its back, causing its removal to Taylorcraft for repairs. Several other minor incidents occurred before it was transferred to 654 Squadron on 20/11/42. Two months later, '290 was ferried to 47 MU at Sealand, but released for 652 Squadron on 1/2/43, until 19/2/43 when it was re-allocated to 655 Squadron. Finally on 7/3/43, it was being flown on an observation exercise in Berkshire at low level, when it collided with a telegraph pole and crashed near the village of Steventon.
- 162 LB291 Delivered to 20 MU 28/8/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 1/9/42. On 21/4/43, it was transferred to 43 OTU, but towards the end of the year, on 28/12/43, '291 was despatched to 20 MU for long-term storage. Eventually on 28/2/45 it was released for 1 Squadron, but damaged during the delivery flight on the same day. After repairs, '291 was allocated to 442 Squadron at Digby. It appears that it could have been transferred to 222 Squadron, for on 2/11/45, a pilot from that squadron became lost owing to fog and in attempting to force-land in a field 2 miles from Tring, overshot and caused damage in the subsequent crash-landing. Declared Cat.B, the damaged aircraft was conveyed to Taylorcraft for repairs, but on 12/4/46 it was sold to the Royal Aero Club and civilianised as G-AHGX.
- 163 LB292 Delivered to 20 MU on 29/8/42 before being issued to 653 Squadron at Farnborough on 1/9/42. On 12/3/43 '292 crashed at Byfleet, Surrey after striking balloon cables in bad visibility.
- 164 LB293 Delivered to 20 MU on 29/8/42 before being issued to 653 Squadron at Farnborough on 7/9/42. While being used for message-dropping duties on 21/11/42 at Middle Farm, Sussex, the pilot wrongly dropped the message from the starboard window (instead of port) and while doing so struck high-tension cables. Although repaired, '292 again hit high-tension cables on 24/2/43 during a low-level cross country flight over Epsom, Surrey. Because the engine started vibrating badly, the pilot forced-landed in a nearby field, causing some damage. After further repairs, '293 was transferred to 43 OTU on 26/3/43, but like so many OTU Austers, '293 was subjected to a heavy landing after a stall on approach, on 10/4/43. '293 was conveyed to Rearsby on 13/4/43 for repairs, and eventually on 8/9/43 was re-delivered to 20 MU for re-allotment. On 30/12/43 it was allotted to 22 EFTS at Cambridge, and after nearly eight months was returned to 20 MU for long-term storage, on 23/8/44. Finally, on 16/1/46, LB293 was sold back to Taylorcraft where it was civilianised as G-AHCH.
- 165 LB294 Delivered to 20 MU on 1/9/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 8/9/42. On 8/11/42 it was transferred to 43 OTU at Old Sarum with whom it remained until 7/10/44 when it was allotted to RAF Milfield. On 6/5/46 '294 was flown from RAF West Raynham to 5 MU at Kemble, from where, on 17/6/46 it was sold to the Bristol & Wessex Aero Club for conversion to G-AHWJ.
- 165A LB295 Delivered to 20 MU on 2/9/42, before being issued to 653 Squadron on 12/9/42. During a test of the Verey pistol in a new position at Penshurst on 7/12/42, the cartridge 'star' was accidentally fired through the cockpit floor, setting fire to the aircraft. On the following day, '295 was conveyed to Rearsby for repairs, after which it

was re-delivered to 20 MU on 18/2/43, and released for 43 OTU on the 25th. On 2/5/43, '295 was being flown at low level in poor weather conditions when it flew into the ground at Oatlands Hill, Wilts. Conveyed to Rearsby for repairs on the 11th. Taylorcraft later considered the aircraft to be a write-off, and so '295 was duly struck off charge on 31/5/43.

166 LB296

Delivered direct to 653 Squadron on 6/9/42 with whom it remained until 6/4/43 when transferred to 43 OTU at Old Sarum. Four days later '296 sustained damage when it flew into high-tension cables 80 feet over a valley in Wiltshire. On 9/8/44 it was allocated to 20 MU for storage, but was released for RAF Hawkinge on 3/5/45. On 21/3/46 it passed to 3 A.P.S. at Charterhall. However, shortly afterwards LB296 was sold on 17/6/46 to the Bristol & Wessex Aero Club, and civilianised as G-AHWI.

167 LB297

Delivered to 20 MU on 8/9/42, before allotment to 654 Squadron on 18/9/42. On 19/10/42, it was damaged when its pilot mis-judged the wind direction while landing in a field at Culverthorpe, Lincs.

As a result the approach was made too low causing the undercarriage to strike a hedge and subsequently collapse on landing. Conveyed to Rearsby for repairs on October 26th., '297 was re-delivered to the squadron on 9/12/42. On December 23rd. it was flown to 47 MU for packaging, and taken to Birkenhead docks on 30/1/43. On February 1st. it was shipped out to North Africa aboard SS 'J-78', arriving at Algiers on the 18th. Officially, LB297 was struck off charge at Malta on 1/2/44, but was no doubt lost during the allied advance across the desert.

168 LB298

Delivered to 20 MU on 11/9/42, before being issued to 654 Squadron on 16/9/42. On the 25th. '298 encountered poor visibility due to industrial haze and rain, and forced-landed in a field at Carlton Hall, South Carlton, Notts. On landing the undercarriage sank into soft ground causing the aircraft to overturn. Conveyed to Rearsby for repairs seven days later, '298 was returned to the squadron on 4/12/42. On 24/12/42 it was flown to 47 MU for packaging, but instead was released for 652 Squadron on 1/2/43, passing to 656 Squadron on 20/3/43. Within several weeks '298 was transferred to 43 OTU, on 7/4/43, but was involved in a flying accident on 21/6/43. Repairs appear to have taken some considerable time, for when completed it was handed over to 20 MU for storage on 7/10/43. Eventually, on 31/5/44 it was released for Turnhouse Station Flight until 6/7/44 when it returned to 20 MU. Finally, LB298 was released for 329 Squadron on 10/5/45 but was written-off several months later during a forced-landing in Devon on 11/10/45. Finding the throttle inoperative the pilot selected the only available field which, as it was too small, necessitated deliberately touching trees that blocked the approach. LB298 was duly struck off charge on 25/10/45.

169 LB299

Delivered direct to 653 Squadron on 13/9/42, until transferred to 43 OTU on 26/3/43. Three months later, on 22/6/43, '299 sustained Cat.AC damage when it overturned during a precautionary landing exercise. On the 25th. it was conveyed to Rearsby for repairs, which were completed by 2/10/43. Delivered to 20 MU on 14/1/44, '299 was released for 2 TAF Communications Squadron on 8/2/44, but on 29/5/44 was returned to 20 MU for storage. Eventually, on 16/3/45, '299 was released for 603 Squadron, until transferred to 247 Squadron at Chilbolton on 13/9/45. On 15th October a fitter started '299 without chocks being in position, causing it to move forward and to hit a nearby hangar. Damage was sustained to the port wing, centre section and prop. Because Auster 1s were by this time being withdrawn from service, it was decided uneconomical to repair LB299, whereupon the damaged aircraft was taken to Rearsby and sold to the parent company. Later, on 12/4/46, the remains were sold to the Royal Aero Club, probably for use as spares.

For reasons of convenience, the 'extra' Auster 1 built by Taylorcraft, LB310, is included here. There still remains considerable speculation as to its precise history, although has often been quoted as a rebuild of Model D c/n 128 G-AFZJ.

LB310

After completion, LB310 was placed into storage on 4/12/42, until delivered to 20 MU on 20/1/43. On 3/2/43 it was released for 655 Squadron at Old Sarum, but transferred to 657 Squadron on 7/4/43. Shortly afterwards, on 1/5/43 it was returned to 20 MU for long-term storage, apparently for the remainder of the war. Finally, '310 was sold to Taylorcraft on 17/1/46, but its post-war life (if any) remains obscure.

- 170 LB311 Delivered direct to 653 Squadron on 18/9/42, but transferred to 43 OTU on 8/11/42. On 6/9/43, it overturned after landing in a rough field necessitating a return to Rearsby for repairs. Several other minor incidents befell '311 whilst with 43 OTU, until 27/10/44 when it was allotted to 20 MU. After a short period at RAF Northolt, '311 was transferred to RAF Broadwell, probably for use by 1697 Flight. On 5/2/45 it was returned to 20 MU for storage until 8/3/46 when moved over to 5 MU Kemble for disposal. Sold to the Midland Aero Club on 15/4/46 LB311 was later civilianised as G-AHVR.
- 171 LB312 Delivered direct to 651 Squadron on 24/9/42, but during short-landing practice at Kidsdale on 23/10/42, its pilot undershot the approach and struck the airfield boundary fence, causing '312 to land 'on its nose'. On November 9th. a 63 MU salvage team conveyed the damaged aircraft to Rearsby where after repairs, it was re-issued to 653 Squadron on 31/12/42. On 24/4/43, it was re-allotted to 43 OTU, but later transferred to 3 T.E.U. at Aston Down on 6/10/44. On 12/4/45, '312 was issued to 234 Squadron, with whom it remained until 20/2/46 when it was flown to 5 MU for disposal. Upon sale, LB312 was civilianised as G-AHXE.
- 172 LB313 Delivered direct to 654 Squadron on 18/9/42. On 24/12/42 it was flown to 47 MU at Sealand, although not, in fact, shipped overseas. Instead it was released for 43 OTU on 24/2/43. On 15/11/43 it was allocated to 20 MU but a fortnight later was found to have suffered some damage, and so returned to Rearsby for repairs on December 16th. Subsequently, '313 was returned to 20 MU on 24/1/44 for release to 83 Group Communications Squadron on 30/6/44. Later, on 11/9/44, it was re-allocated to Predannock Station Flight for general 'hack' duties, until 5/7/45 when it was transferred to Humanreer (?). On 24/1/46, '313 was flown to 20 MU before being transferred to 5 MU on 4/3/46 for disposal. Two months later, on May 16th. it was sold to the Edinburgh Flying Club and civilianised as G-AHSJ.
- 173 LB314 Delivered direct to 654 Squadron on 19/9/42. On 24/12/42 it was flown to 47 MU and like LB313 was not shipped overseas. Instead it was released for 652 Squadron, on 9/2/43, but in turn transferred to 656 Squadron on 20/3/43. Shortly afterwards, on 17/4/43, it was handed over to 43 OTU, but on July 9th. it sustained Cat.B damage after hitting an obstruction during a take-off from Larkhill. After repairs, '314 was flown to 20 MU on 22/10/43 for eventual release to 83 Group Communications Squadron on 30/6/44. On 10/9/44, it was allocated to RAF Llanbedr where it remained until 15/1/46 when returned to 20 MU. On 8/3/46, '314 was transferred to 5 MU for disposal, and sold to the Lancashire Aero Club on 16/4/46, and civilianised as G-AHHX.
- 174 LB315 Delivered direct to 654 Squadron on 25/9/42. On 23/12/42, it was flown to 47 MU, but released for 652 Squadron on 8/2/43 after its plans for shipment overseas were cancelled. On 20/3/43 it was transferred to 656 Squadron with whom it remained until 29/4/43 when re-allocated to 20 MU. Eventually, on 30/6/44 '315 was released for routine servicing with the Group's Servicing Unit it was found to have received Cat.B damage, causing its removal to Rearsby for repairs. On 5/4/45, it was delivered to 312 Squadron, although appears to have spent some time operating with 164 Squadron. However, on 30/8/45, LB315 was back at Rearsby where, on 3/10/45, it was struck off charge, and probably sold to Taylorcraft for it was later civilianised as G-AHSB.
- 175 LB316 Delivered direct to 654 Squadron on 25/9/42. On 23/12/42 it was flown to 47 MU for shipment, but, as LB315, orders were cancelled, and instead it was released for 652 Squadron on 1/2/43. On 19/3/43, it was transferred to 656 Squadron, until handed over to 43 OTU on 17/4/43. LB316 sustained Cat.B damage on 2/8/43, when an OTU pilot became lost during a cross-country flight, and landed at an aerodrome under construction in Wiltshire. After braking too fiercely, the aircraft tipped onto its nose. After due repairs and return to 43 OTU, '316 was transferred to 20 MU on 18/9/43, for eventual release to 22 EFTS at Cambridge on 28/1/44. On 5/8/44 it was returned to 20 MU and later relegated to an instructional airframe. On 28/4/45 it was given the serial 5222M and allotted to Halton on 3/5/45. LB316's final demise is unrecorded.
- 176 LB317 Believed to have been delivered direct to 47 MU on 25/9/42, but released for 655 Squadron on 17/3/43. Shortly afterwards, it was transferred to 657 Squadron for a short period until 27/5/43 when it was flown to 20 MU for long-term storage. Eventually, on 11/11/44 it was released for 1697 Flight, with whom it remained until 15/1/46 when sold to Taylorcraft and later civilianised as HB-EUL.

177 LB318

Delivered direct to 654 Squadron on 27/9/42, but transferred to 652 Squadron on 8/12/42. On 20/3/43, it passed to 656 Squadron, but re-allotted to 20 MU on 29/4/43. On 27/5/43, it was released for 22 EFTS at Cambridge, where it appears to have remained until 5/8/44 when returned to 20 MU for storage. Finally, on 12/1/46 LB318 was sold to Taylorcraft and later civilianised as G-AHAK.



178 LB319

Originally built as the prototype Model E (Auster AOP.3) with Gipsy Major installation, and delivered as such to the A.&A.E.E. Boscombe Down on 27/10/42. Thereupon it seemed to spend much of its time between Boscombe Down and Rearsby; Rearsby 4/12/42, Boscombe Down 17/12/42, Rearsby 30/4/43, Boscombe Down 16/5/43. On 17/6/43 it was despatched to 20 MU for storage, but later, on 13/9/43 it was flown to Rearsby for conversion to AOP.1 standard, returning to 20 MU on 4/12/43 where it remained until 1/12/45 when transferred to 5 MU for disposal. On 11/1/46, LB319 was sold to Brockhouse Ltd. of West Bromwich and civilianised as G-AGZN.

179 LB320

Delivered direct to 654 Squadron on 30/9/42, but was badly damaged at Delph Aerodromè, Yorks. on 9/11/42, when after taking-off from a forced-landing, the pilot climbed too steeply to clear a fence, stalled and crashed. Initially damage was declared as Cat.B., but after an inspection by Taylorcraft, LB320 was considered to be written-off and duly struck off charge on the 23rd.

180 LB321

Delivered direct to 654 Squadron on 5/10/42, and flown to 47 MU for packaging on 23/12/42. However, its sailing orders were cancelled, and instead was released for 652 Squadron on 8/2/43, passing to 656 Squadron on 20/3/43. Shortly afterwards, it was allotted to 20 MU on 30/4/43, until flown to 1 EFTS on 27/5/43. On 15/12/43 '321 was transferred to 22 EFTS where it remained until 5/8/44 when returned to 20 MU. On 18/4/45 it joined 316 Squadron for 'hack' duties, until flown direct to 5 MU for disposal on 21/2/46. On 29/4/46, LB321 was sold to the Wiltshire Flying Club and civilianised as G-AHKN.

181 LB322

Delivered direct to 654 Squadron on 5/10/42, and flown to 47 MU on 23/12/42, but like so many Auster 1s was not shipped abroad and instead allocated to 652 Squadron, on 8/2/43, passing to 656 Squadron on 20/3/43. On 10/5/43, '322 was allotted to RAF Dunsfold and appears to have been used by both 400 and 430 Squadrons, until

- 31/12/43 when flown to 20 MU. On 5/2/44 it was released for 2 TAF Communications Flight. Seven months later, on 7/10/44 it returned to 20 MU, before being allocated to 313 Squadron on 6/4/45. Eventually, on 6/6/46 LB322 was sold to the West London Aero Club and civilianised as G-AHXG.
- 182 LB323 Delivered to 654 Squadron on 5/10/42, and flown to 47 MU on 24/12/42. Instead of being shipped abroad, '323 was released for 652 Squadron on 8/2/43, passing to 656 Squadron on 20/3/43. On 29/4/43, it was flown to 20 MU for storage, until 30/6/44 when allotted to 84 Group Communications Squadron. On 22/3/45, it was transferred to 310 Squadron, but returned to Rearsby on 6/9/45 and struck off charge there on October 3rd., as 'sold to Taylorcraft'. Subsequently, LB323 was civilianised as G-AHSD.
- 183 LB324 Delivered to 654 Squadron on 5/10/42, but transferred to 652 Squadron on 27/10/42. On 12/12/42 it was flown to 47 MU, where it remained until released for 656 Squadron on 20/3/43. On 15/4/43 LB324 passed to 657 Squadron, but was written-off the following day, when its pilot approached a field near the village of Newton, Suffolk too fast, and attempted to go round again. Unfortunately, the aircraft flew into telegraph wires downwind and crashed.
- 184 LB325 Delivered to 654 Squadron 11/10/42, before being transferred to 652 Squadron on the 27th. It spent a brief period with 47 MU between 12/12/42 and 8/2/43 when returned to 652 Squadron. Shortly afterwards '325 passed to 656 Squadron, but on 22/6/43 moved on to 43 OTU until 28/12/43 when it was flown to 20 MU. On 23/6/44, LB325 was released for 84 Group Communications Squadron. A flying accident caused a return to Rearsby on 26/1/45 for repairs, after which it was delivered to 165 Squadron on 3/5/45 at Bentwaters but appears to have also been used by 126 Squadron. However '325 was next reported at RAF Andover on 14/6/45 and at Chilbolton on 7/2/46, before despatched to 5 MU on 14/3/46 for disposal. Finally, on 12/6/46 LB325 was sold to West London Aero Club and civilianised as G-AHXF.
- 185 LB326 Delivered to 654 Squadron 11/10/42, but transferred to 652 Squadron on the 27th. On 12/12/42, it was flown to 47 MU for packaging, and shipped to North Africa on 10/3/43 aboard SS 'J-98'. LB326 is presumed to have been lost during the Allied advance, but in fact was not officially struck off charge until 1/2/44.
- 186 LB327 Delivered to 652 Squadron 11/10/42, but transferred to 656 Squadron on 20/3/43. On 7/4/43 '327 passed to 43 OTU until 28/12/43 when it was flown to 20 MU. On 12/2/44 it was released for 83 Group Communications Squadron, but was returned to 20 MU on March 30th. After almost a year in storage, '327 was allotted to 441 Squadron on 16/3/45, but was damaged on 3/8/45 when a pilot landed LB327 on 'Summerfield' track at Henlow, Beds. tearing off the tail skid. Whereas the aircraft was only slightly damaged, it was struck off charge on 16/8/45 as Cat.E.
- 187 LB328 Delivered to 652 Squadron 11/10/42, but flown to 47 MU on 12/12/42 for packaging, and taken to Glasgow docks on 21/1/43 for shipment. However, '328 remained in the UK and returned to 652 Squadron on 8/2/43 until passed on to 656 Squadron on 20/3/43. On April 24th. a move was made to 400 Squadron at Dunsfold for a brief period until transferred to 430 Squadron on May 19th. A return to 20 MU was made during April 1944, but on May 3rd. was found to have sustained Cat.B damage, necessitating a return to Rearsby on the 19th. for repairs. On 7/7/44, '328 was allotted to 84 Group Communications Squadron. Much later, on 13/3/45 it was taken over by 124 Squadron, and from 31/8/45 by 183 Squadron. Finally, on 3/11/45, a 183 Squadron pilot encountered unexpected bad weather and was forced to land in a small field near Barrow Gurney, Somerset. Unfortunately the aircraft hit a hedge on approach and turned over. Initially, damage was confined to Cat.B, but on 7/12/45 LB328 was declared a write-off and struck off charge.
- 188 LB329 Delivered to 652 Squadron 18/10/42, but was destroyed on 8/1/43 three miles south of Lochaber, near Dumfries. During a low-level message-dropping exercise across a valley, LB329 struck high-tension wires that had been difficult to see due to the poles being hidden by trees.

# AUSTER DESIGNATIONS

## — A Brief Explanation

When Taylorcraft began building light aeroplanes in this country during 1939, the first design took its designation from its American counterpart as described in 'The Auster Story' part 1.

Since that date Taylorcraft, and later Auster and Beagle initiated various systems of designations under lined in apparent complications, and with no obvious continuity. But apart from a few notable deviations the systems were both simple and well-engineered.

Following the Taylorcraft Model C each subsequent design was allocated a single letter in sequence, while conversions or modifications of that design were shown by suffix digits, eg.,

Model C	1939	55hp	Lycoming 0-145-A2	First British Design
Model C/2	1942	90hp	Cirrus Minor 1	Conversion of Model C
Model D	1942	90hp	cirrus Minor 1	
Model D/1	1942	90hp	Cirrus Minor 1	Production Auster AOP 1

Wartime development continued with the Auster AOP.2, AOP.3 AOP.4 etc, and although these military designations are widely-known, and perhaps more often referred to, each variant had a factory designation within the single letter series, which contained all new designs until 1951. The extent of this series is as follows:

Model E	1942	130hp	Gipsy Major 1	Production Auster AOP.3
Model F	1942	130hp	Lycoming 0-290-3	Auster AOP.2
Model G	1943	130hp	Lycoming 0-290-3	Production Auster AOP.4
Model H	1943			Glider version of Model E
Model J	1944	130hp	Lycoming 0-290-3/1	Production Auster AOP.5
Model K	1945	145hp	Gipsy Major 7	Production Auster AOP.6
Model L	1945			Low-wing. Not built
Model N	1945	240hp	Gipsy Queen 34	Completed as Model A2
Model P	1947	145hp	Gipsy Major 10	Auster 'Avis'
Model Q	1948	145hp	Gipsy Major 7	Production Auster T.7
Model S	1950	180hp	Bombadier	Prototype only.

During the early part of 1945, by which time the Model J (Auster AOP5) was well into its production run, the Company began looking towards the resumption of civil flying and manufacture. From the Model J a complete family of civil aeroplanes was developed, all logically allocated with designations with sub-type suffixes to the basic type letter. Here the system appears to become confused, but in fact is remarkably simple. The first post-war civil aeroplane was the Autocrat, based entirely on the Model J airframe, and so was styled Model J/1.

Other designs developed from the Model J were indicated by this sequence of suffix digits:

Model	J/1	Autocrat	100hp Cirrus Minor 2	
Model	J/2	Arrow	75 hp Continental C-75-12	
Model	J/3	Atom	65 hp Continental C-65-12	
Model	J/4	Archer	90 hp Cirrus Minor 1	
Model	J/5	Autocrat/ Adventurer	120hp Gipsy Major 1	Adventurer in Australia Not built Not built J/5 series with central flap controls
Model	J/6			
Model	J/7			
Model	J/8			

Whereas these are sub-types of the basic Model J, each of the J/1 and J/5 versions can be divided into a further sub-series, that was later integrated into one series.

Model	J/1	Autocrat	100hp Cirrus Minor 2	
Model	J/1A	Autocrat	100hp Cirrus Minor 2	4-seat version of J/1
Model	J/1B	Aiglet	130hp Gipsy Major 1	Enlarged fin/rudder
Model	J/5	Autocrat	130hp Gipsy Major 1	For Australian market
Model	J/5A		130hp Gipsy Major 1	Enlarged fin/rudder
Model	J/5B	Autocar	130hp Gipsy Major 1	

A further point must be stressed at this stage. If the aeroplane was **built** for civilian use, it was known by the factory letter, eg., the civilian-built version of the AOP.5 was the J/1; but **conversions** of military aeroplanes for civil use maintained their service designation eg., a civilianised Auster AOP.4 or AOP.5 became an Auster 4 or 5 respectively. Initial post-war conversions of the AOP.5 were as follows:

Auster	5	130hp Lycoming 0-290-3/1	Straight conversion
Auster	5A	130hp Lycoming 0-290-3/1	4-seat conversion

After this, in an effort to avert anarchy, it was decided by the company to contain the J/1, J/5 and military-civil conversions in one single series, identified only by a suffix letter. Thereupon the series continued from the letter 'C' as both the J/1 and J/5 had used the letter 'B'.

Auster	5C		130hp Gipsy Major 1	One aircraft only
Auster	5D		130hp Gipsy Major 1	Enlarged fin/rudder
Model	J/5E	Autocar	155hp Cirrus Major 3	
Model	J/5F	Aiglet Trainer	130hp Gipsy Major 1	
Model	J/5G	Cirrus Autocar	155hp Cirrus Major 3	Development of J/5E
Model	J/5H	Cirrus Autocar	145hp Cirrus Major 2	
Model	J/5K	Aiglet Trainer	155hp Cirrus Major 3	
Model	J/5L	Aiglet Trainer	145hp Gipsy Major 10-2/1	
Auster	5M		130hp Lycoming 0-290-3/1	
Model	J/1N	Alpha	120hp Gipsy Major 1	
Model	J/5P	Autocar	145hp Gipsy Major 10/2	
Model	J/5Q	Alpine	130hp Gipsy Major 1	
Model	J/5R	Alpine	145hp Gipsy Major 10-2/1	
Model	J/1S		145hp Gipsy Major 10-2/2	One conversion only
Model	J/5T		108hp Lycoming 0-235	
Model	J/1U	Workmaster	180hp Lycoming 0-360-A1A	
Model	J/5V	Autocar	160hp Lycoming 0-320-B2B	
Model	J/1W		160hp Lycoming 0-320	

To clarify an earlier point, it should now be realised that had the Auster AOP.6 been put into production as a civil aeroplane from the outset, its designation would have been Auster K/1 etc. Conversions of military AOP.6's however, would have then become merely Auster 6's etc. as indeed they did:

Auster	6		145hp Gipsy Major 7	Straight conversion
Auster	6A	Tugmaster	145hp Gipsy Major 10-1/1	Enlarged tail surfaces
Auster	6B	Terrier 1	145hp Gipsy Major 10-1/1	Various improvements

Austers expired their letter system during the early fifties, when they adopted the SBAC system for subsequent designs, and these were allocated within the sequence A1 to A9, B1 to B9, C1 to C9 et seq. Examples include the following:

Model A2	Previously identified as Model N. Built to Spec. A2/45
Model B1	Mid-wing AOP design
Model B3	Radio-controlled target built for British Army
Model B4	Auster 'Ambulance'
Model B5	Auster AOP.9 with Army Air Corps
Model B6	High-wing agricultural design with Bombadier engine
Model B8	Auster 'Agricola'
Model B9	Helicopter design study
Model C4	Auster T.7 'Antarctic' conversion
Model C6	Auster 'Atlantic'
Model C9	Radio-controlled target
Model D4	Development of J/5T
Model D5	Development of J/1W
Model D6	Development of J/5V Autocar

Towards the end of 1960, Auster Aircraft Ltd. was absorbed into the Beagle complex, eventually forming the main part of Beagle Aircraft Ltd. in 1962. Further designs under the new Company were identified by an entirely new, and novel system. Each design was allocated in a sequence 01, 02, 03, 04 et seq. A prefix digit was added to to indicate the number of engines, whilst another prefix digit was added to indicate the design source - 'A' Beagle-Auster, 'B' Beagle, 'M' Beagle-Miles, and 'WA' Beagle-Wallis. Examples include:

Model B.206	Developments included B.210 and B.220
Model A.109	Developed from Auster D8 to become Beagle 'Airedale'
Model A.111	A.109 with Rolls-Royce Continental GO-300
Model A.113	Single-engine pusher design.
Model A.115	Subsequent designation of Model E3
Model WA.116	Autogiro built for British Army evaluation
Model M.117	Not proceeded with
Model M.218	Converted to Model B.242
Model B.121	Basic Beagle 'Pup'
Model B.123	Design study based on B.121
Model B.125	Beagle 'Bulldog'

The system adopted by Beagle almost reached anarchy, for it is widely believed that when the B.242 was initiated, it was looked upon as 'having twice the power (number of engines) of the B.121' and so its design number was attained by merely doubling the figure 121. Similarly, the Beagle Terrier 2 acquired a system of its own when styled as the Beagle A.61, apparently as a result of it being the sixty-first design based on the original Auster theme. Furthermore when Beagle developed the D-series, each variant was identified by the engine power eg., D5/160, D5/180, as was a conversion of a J/4 with a Continental 0-200A, when it was re-styled J/4-100.

Finally, with this brief explanation complete, it is perhaps of interest to note two anomalies that appear in the Auster range. Firstly, post-war *conversions* of the Auster AOP.1 were known as the Taylorcraft Plus D rather than the Auster 1, and secondly the Auster J/8F and J/8L which were simply versions of the J/5F and J/5L but with centrally-placed flap controls.



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# ONE MAN'S AEROPLANE

DAVID MILLER

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*David Miller, seated in the cockpit of his Autocrat talks with your editor.*

*(Southern Newspapers Ltd).*

Straddling the Hampshire-Wiltshire border at Wellow, on the A36 Southampton to Salisbury Road, is Border Garage. Recently modernised with a new forecourt and a well equipped workshop, Border Garage is to the nation's car specialists a shrine for highly-tuned saloon cars. For here such cars tagged as the 'Miller-Mini' and the "Miller-Minor" are produced to attain 0-60 mph almost before one can say "Miller-Magic". Not surprisingly the man behind this venture is David Miller, although it may sound strange to learn that when not working on fast cars Davis Miller is normally flying what must be one of the gentlest Austers in the country - J/1 Autocrat G-AJRK c/n 2609.

When your editor recently visited Shobdon to trace the history of 'JRK,Cecil Berry-Ottaway of Shobdon Aviation Ltd. asked me if it still flies straight and level at 20 mph. Indeed it does for on January 9th. David Miller demonstrated to me the unbelievable stall characteristics of this immaculate Autocrat during a flight from Hursley to Hannington. What'smore for demonstration purposes the flight was ideal, for the farm strip at Farley Mount where "Juliette" (as 'JRK was affectionately named) is kept, was sodden with weeks of continous rains, and more conditioned to skis or floats than standard undercarriage. Nevertheless 'JRK was unstuck (literally!) after a take-off run of about 150 yards, and apart from holding our own against a lone Cherokee flying a parallel course a mile or so to starboard, the short morning hop to Hannington proved most enjoyable, although uneventful, except for that remarkable stall at 20 mph.

G-AJRK was part of a large batch of J/1 Autocrats registered to Auster Aircraft Ltd. on May 12th. 1947, and after gaining its first C. of A. on 'June 9th. it was delivered to Norman West at Rochester. It remained with West until March 1951 when re-registered to the wellknown Auster enthusiast, H.E.Smead. Smead kept 'JRK at Luton and during the next eleven years he regularly flew across the Channel and around Europe, but during early 1962, he decided to replace JRK with the newly imported J/5G G-ARUT. Consequently, the Autocrat was sold to V.G. Beaumont in April '62 where it operated from Shropshire Flying Group at Sleep. Routine servicing during



*A pleasant study of 'Juliette' as she appeared for many years in the fifties. Note the original 'Autocrat' stencil on the fin.*

*(A.J. Jackson)*

its time at Sleaf was carried out by Don Everall Aviation at Wolverhampton, and it was here in January 1966 that 'JRK had its Cirrus Minor 2 replaced by a Minor 2A. Some time afterwards, 'JRK was sold to a W.H.Smith of Leicester, and re-registered to him on July 12th 1967. It appears that Smith had the Autocrat flown to Shobdon for overhaul, but as happens so often, the cost became a prohibitive factor, and so it is doubtful if 'JRK ventured any nearer to Leicester than Shobdon.

'JRK spent a lengthy period in the hangars at Shobdon from September 27th 1967 until August 3rd. 1968 when it was air-tested after a complete overhaul. During this period 'JRK was re-registered to Shackleton Aviation Ltd. on December 18th 1967, and after its overhaul by Shobdon Aviation Ltd. was re-registered to that company on February 17th 1969. By this time 'JRK was being used as a company 'hack' at Shobdon, but was used at weekends by the Herefordshire Aero Club to supplement their two other Autocrats G-AIJZ and G-AJIM.

During October 1970 'JRK was sold and re-registered to E.W.Trollope of Warminster, Wiltshire, although the delivery flight is believed to have been made on September 23rd. Eale Trollope kept 'JRK at his strip at Sutton Veney, but it has since been suggested that the strip proved to be unsuitable for operating a Cirrus Auster, which may explain the short time that he owned 'JRK. Whatever the reasons were, Trollope sold 'JRK shortly afterwards to G.G.Fosberry, to whom it was re-registered on March 30th. 1971. In regular use with the Heron Gliding Club at RNAS Yeovilton until May 1972, 'JRK was again sold, but on this occasion under rather curious circumstances.



*A change of styling took place after its overhaul at Shobdon, as evident in this fine view by A.J. Jackson.*

It transpires that the well-known Taunton veterinary surgeon, Maurice Kirk was a member and a regular visitor of the Yeovilton club, and that on one certain evening in May 1972 Kirk and Fosberry became somewhat worse for wear after consuming a fair proportion of the Club's bar stock. Inevitably, Kirk abandoned a drive home, and instead managed to sleep what little of the night remained, on a sofa at Fosberry's home. When daylight arrived Kirk discovered that during the course of the night he had agreed to purchase the aeroplane, and being a man of his word, duly handed over a cheque and flew back to Taunton shortly afterwards.

In July 1972 'JRK was re-registered to M.C.Kirk, and by special arrangement was kept on the town's polo fields.

Maurice Kirk is one of those rare characters in light aviation, and well-known for his off-beat flying antics. Indeed within weeks of owning 'JRK', he flew off to France for a flying holiday, but on encountering heavy mist in the Loire valley area, and being unable to locate an airfield, landed on the bank of the nearby river. Unfortunately the local gendarmerie was out in considerable force to marshal the Tour de France stage through the town, and descended upon their unexpected visitor believing they had detected another 'French Connection'. Due explanations were made, but more incidents followed until in 1973, the inimitable Mr. Kirk had become involved in the Auster 6A G-ARGL, for by now Kirk was using his aeroplane for 'business' - flying into local farmer's fields to attend to sick animals. The Gipsy-powered Auster 6A was more suitable for these operations, but there was another reason for selling 'JRK' as proclaimed at Sywell's July 1973 PFA Rally. When 'JRK' appeared in the visitor's park it was accompanied by a board, proclaiming "FOR SALE. Brand new father must exchange for pram or £500."

David Miller had first flown in an Auster as a child when given a twenty minute joy-ride over the Norfolk coast, and it was probably this short hop that led him to wanting to own an Auster after gaining a PPL. So during the warm evening of July 20th. 1973 Maurice Kirk delivered 'JRK' to its new owner at Thruxton, although before landing, he performed an outstanding aerial display over the Hampshire airfield. Re-registered to D.W. Miller on September 17th. 1973, 'JRK' headed for the private farm strip at Farley Mount where it has been based to date.

Since acquiring the Autocrat, David Miller has purchased two more Austers - one complete airframe and one wreck - the first of which was:

G-APTU      AUSTER 5      c/n 3413



Built at Rearsby during 1959, 'PTU' made its first flight on June 18th. having been initially registered to Auster Aircraft Ltd. Its first C.of A. was issued on July 23rd. 1959, and on the 27th. it was delivered to Cambridge for new owners Grantchester Garage Ltd. After receiving various extras including a long-range fuel tank, and a glider-towing hook (ex G--AJRC) in September 1960, 'PTU' was sold to Anglian Air Charter Ltd. to whom it was re-registered during February 1961. Initially based at Swanton Morley, the Auster 5 was later flown up to North Denes at Great Yarmouth for the summer joy-riding seasons of 1963 and 1964.

During March 1965, 'PTU' was sold to R.C.Griffin, and flown to Dunkeswell on the 29th of that month, where it operated for the Dunkeswell Aero Club. Some four years later, on March 24th. 1969, it was re-registered to G.H.Smale (t/a Trak-Air) although it seems that this may have been a nominal change only, for only two months later, on May 22nd. registration was transferred to W.E.Taylor & Son Ltd. The aircraft log-books show the owner as Lt.Cdr.Taylor RNR, and it appears to have been based at Thorns Cross strip, near Exeter, alternatively known as Ardens Strip, or Wadden Brakes. Eventually, 'PTU' was sold to Brian F.King of Melksham, and thought to have been delivered to him on September 26th. 1971. King, who was involved in Concorde work at Filton, used the Auster 5 to commute between Filton and Toulouse, and during his three years of ownership amassed almost six hundred hours flying time. During this period 'PTU' was kept at Philip Cottle's strip at Craymarsh Farm, at Seend. The Auster's last flight was made on September 2nd. 1973, after which it was grounded at Seend until bought by David Miller in February 1974. Dismantled and towed to Wellow, G-APTU has since remained in Miller's workshop, where part of the daily routine includes swinging the propellor and running up the engine at regular intervals.

David Miller's third Auster was purchased to provide spares for 'JRK as and when the need arises. Well known in the south of England, it is:

G-AHAT      J/1N ALPHA      c/n 1849.

'HAT is the oldest of Miller's aeroplanes, receiving its first C.of A. on January 8th. 1946, having been built as a J/1 Autocrat for operation in Switzerland as HB-EOK. However this Autocrat, together with several other J/1's was not delivered, and instead registered to Auster Aircraft Ltd. on February 11th 1946, for re-sale to Morton Air Services Ltd. of Croydon, to whom it was re-registered on April 9th. 'HAT passed to several owners during 1946, firstly to Tradewinds(London) Ltd. at Croydon on July 17th. and nine days later to R.C.Hill and R.T.Brookes at Hanworth. After only several months at Hanworth, 'HAT was sold to Congo Charter Air Services Ltd. and based at Heston until that airfield closed, whereupon it was moved across to Elstree. In May 1948, 'HAT was sold to F.J.R.Elliott of Middlesborough, and until February 1953 it was based at Croft, although during the previous September ownership had passed to a Mr.M.W.Robinson.

In February 1953, 'HAT was acquired by the well-known T.H. Marshall, who operated at Christchurch as the Christchurch Aero Club. After some five years with the Club, 'HAT, being due for C. of A. renewal, was flown up to Tarrant Rushton for conversion to J/1N Alpha standard, returning to Christchurch on March 10th 1958.

During the summer of 1958, 'HAT was involved in two flying accidents within a month of each other. On July 31st. the starboard undercarriage was damaged at Christchurch after a heavy landing. Although repaired and back in the air within a week, 'HAT sustained damage to the port wing when it struck Tiger Moth G-AOJK while landing at Christchurch on August 29th. This accident necessitated a return to Rearsby (by road) for repairs which included a new port wing. Duly straightened, 'HAT was flown back to Christchurch on November 11th 1958, where several months later it was overhauled for C. of A. renewal.

When the threatened closure of Christchurch airfield became increasingly unavoidable, the Club began running down its operations, and 'HAT was put up for sale in the early months of 1963, having made its last flight for the Club on February 6th. On April 9th. it was delivered to new owners, H. Grey & Partners, who traded as the Morestead Downs Flying Group, and based at Best's Farm at Owslebury, near Winchester.

During the years 1965 and 1966, 'HAT was only flown occasionally, and seems to have spent most of this period hangared at Netheravon, where routine servicing was normally carried out. From August 30th. 1967 until September 1st. 1968, 'HAT was withdrawn from use due to its operational base being ploughed up! During this period it was again stored under cover.

G-AHAT spent yet another lengthy period of inactivity between May 29th 1969 and October 22nd. 1972, after which it was re-registered to J.D. Clarke of Winchester on November 17th. 1972. By this time it was clear that excessive corrosion was much in evidence, and underwent a complete rebuild. 'HAT's next flight was made on November 6th. 1973, and shortly afterwards was flown to its new base at Old Sarum for operations with the Bustard Flying Club Ltd. to whom it was re-registered on March 25th. 1974. Unfortunately, later during the year, on August 31st. Pat Middleton-Smith, an instructress at Old Sarum was landing at base when apparently baulked by a glider being towed-off. An attempt to abandon the landing was made but due to the close proximity of buildings, the pilot had no alternative but to land in a nearby field, at one end of which was a rather nasty-looking wire fence. As a result of this accident, 'HAT was declared a write-off, and duly cancelled. Subsequently, during January 1975, David Miller purchased the remains for use as spares, and on February 1st. conveyed the wreck from Old Sarum to Wellow.

It is interesting to note that the C.A.A. currently rate David Miller's three Austers as a 'fleet', although only his Autocrat is currently airworthy; they, like us are no doubt eagerly awaiting the 'Miller magic' being applied to G-APTU, but even that is beyond the wrecked Alpha which currently resides in a local pig-sty.



*G-AHAT's final days were spent with dual registration markings.  
(A.J. Jackson)*



*An excellent shot of 'HAT taken at Croydon during April 1946 shortly after its delivery to Morton Air Services. This view of 'HAT as a J/1 Autocrat makes a good comparison with the lower photograph taken after conversion to J/1N standard. (A.J. Jackson collection).*



*6.AHAT spent a considerable time at Christchurch with T.H. Marshall. The enlarged fin/rudder is an obvious feature in this A.J. Jackson photograph.*

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