

# AUSTER NEWS

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REARSBY AERODROME · LEICESTER · ENGLAND



Vol. 6 : No. 10



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# AUSTER NEWS

Vol. 6: No. 10

March/April 1959

## Editorial

WITH unfailing regularity we hear of unusual feats performed by Auster aircraft and their pilots. In this issue we are pleased to record achievements in both Military and Civil spheres of operation.

In a few pages of type, the story is told of 10 years of activity by No. 656 A.O.P. Sqdn. in flying conditions which can hardly be described as ideal. In another part of the world, a delivery flight of some 3,550 miles in a light Auster aircraft was completed 'according to plan'.

Events which were once headline news are now accepted as routine tasks. This fact in itself proves the unsurpassed reliability of Auster aircraft.

In our last issue we appealed to readers for items of news suitable for inclusion in this magazine. To those whose contributions, however, small, have enabled us to present information which would not otherwise have been possible, we extend our sincere thanks.

To date, however, the general response has been very poor, consequently we feel we are not using the *News* to its full advantage. So we trust that readers will give us any assistance possible.

### Cover Photo

OUR cover picture this month shows the new Auster Workmaster during spraying trials. The efficiency of the four rotary atomisers can be clearly observed in this photograph.



# "ACCORDING TO PLAN"

**W**E REPRODUCE here extracts from a letter written by Mr. J. D. C. White on the completion of a delivery flight from Rearsby to Sierra Leone. The distance of some 3,550 miles was covered at an average speed of about 90 m.p.h., which, considering the frequent deviations from track (which he admits), is not bad going.

However, let the letter speak for itself :

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March.

AR 1959

Dear Mr. Porteous,

Just a note, rather belated, to let you know that my flight out here went according to plan and the Alpha performed beautifully and gave no trouble at all.

I left Newcastle on the 16<sup>th</sup> Feb and nightstopped at Honn, Biarritz, Seville, Agadir, Villa Cisneros and St. Louis and arrived Freetown on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. (a little stiff in the joints, I must admit.) The machine's range turned out to be rather better than I had expected and no intermediate fuelling stops were necessary. I found that cruising at 8000' consumption was slightly less than 6 gals per hour so that my 47 gal tankage gave a full 8 hours endurance . . . . .



... .. I'll keep you posted from  
time to time should there be  
anything of interest to report.  
Meanwhile you've got an entirely  
satisfied customer.

Yours sincerely,

J.D.C. White

P.S. Please pass on my thanks to  
your documentation dept. Apparently  
the customs people found me a  
unique case in that I had ALL  
the requisite blumph!

## Errata

In the performance figures for the 'Workmaster' given on page 12 of the last issue of the 'News', the initial rate of climb (flaps up) at maximum A.U.W. was incorrectly given as 360 ft/min. This should in fact have been 630 ft/min. On the next page, in the 'Table of Dimensions and Loading', the capacity of the spray tank was given as 120 U.S. quarts. This obviously should have read 120 U.S. gals.

# A WORLD



## RECORD

*In the last issue of the 'News' reference was made to the record total of 150,000 operational flying hours logged by No. 656 Squadron A.A.C. In the following pages, News reporter Harry Miller tells, in some detail, of the many and varied tasks performed by this Squadron whilst engaged in reaching that impressive total. The article first appeared in the 'Straits Sunday Times' by whose kind permission it is reproduced here.—EDITOR.*

**by Harry Miller**

**R**ECENTLY, No. 656 Light Aircraft Squadron of the Army Air Corps ceremoniously celebrated a world record—the completion of 150,000 hours of flying on operations in the Emergency since 1948.

This impressive figure is the equivalent of 17 years non-stop flying by one Auster of the Corps, or 498 times round the world.

The word 'operations' in the Emergency covers a variety of tasks beyond the premier one of air reconnaissance for camps and traces of terrorists.

In Malaya, the Austers have been and are being used as ordinary passenger transport, evacuating wounded troops or captured or surrendered terrorists, dropping leaflets over terrorist country, reconnaissance of helicopter grounds and supply-dropping zones, marking targets for attack by bombers and fighters, guiding helicopters, dropping supplies, spotting for guns as they shell enemy territory, taking air photographs, looking for terrorist camps, broadcasting messages to terrorists, searching for illegal samsu stills in the northern swamps of Singapore, searching for yachts in distress off the coasts of Malaya, and even anti-piracy patrols.

### RIVER RAFT

This, however, is a brief story of how the sighting of camps by Auster pilots led to successful ground operations.

One of the most unusual experiences was that of Squadron Sergeant Major G. D. Jenkins after the killing in October, 1956, of the assistant manager of the Sungei Kruda Estate in Perak. Sergeant Major Jenkins was sent up to fly low over an area into which the terrorists had escaped hotly pursued by men of the 2nd Royal Australian Regiment. While flying over the northern boundary of the estate, Jenkins saw eight terrorists crossing a river on a raft. He dived his aircraft and at the same time tried to unstrap his rifle from his seat. (A rifle is part of the Auster pilot's jungle escape equipment should he crash. He is not expected to use it while flying.)

### FRUSTRATION

Jenkins went so low that the terrorists frantically jumped into the river. Jenkins kept on diving and kept on trying to release his rifle. The terrorists realised after a while that he was unarmed and began to climb back on to the raft.

In mortification, frustration and anger Jenkins used his Verey pistol instead. He dived once again towards the raft and, as he flew low by it, he fired. This unorthodox approach shattered the terrorists who took to the water again. But they capsized their raft and upset all their packs and equipment into the river.

Jenkins realised he was short of fuel and he returned to the airstrip at Sungei Siput. He reported his encounter.

### FROM DAWN

The scene was not far from the town. That night security forces ambushed the terrorists who were attempting a further river crossing after dark. There were no casualties unfortunately, but the next day the troops recovered packs of clothes and equipment from the bottom of the river. This was an example of where a tactical denial by an Auster paid off a bigger dividend than expected.

Austers are called for when ground forces want an air reconnaissance for various reasons. The pilot, provided the conditions are right, might see the smoke of a fire, or if he is lucky enough, glimpse through the trees the corner of a brown basha. His radio report will put the troops in the right direction and so save hours of work for the troops.

Visual reconnaissance can last from dawn to dusk and be spread over a fortnight. Austers will fly over a selected area at different times of the day to take advantage of the different light conditions as the sun moves over the sky.

Late one Sunday afternoon in October, 1958, Captain M. P. E. Legg went up over the Penggerang area of Johore at the request of a patrol of the 2/7th Gurkha Rifles.



## DIRECTIVE

They were tracking important members of the South Johore Regional Committee. At 6.45 p.m., just as he was about to return to base after two hours' flying, Capt. Legg from 4,500 feet, spied a plume of smoke. He plotted its position. The terrorists seemed to have crept into a white area and appeared to have made the mistake of thinking that because they had done this, they were safe.

They were making more smoke than they should have done. Indeed Communist high command instructions are that fires should only be made under cover. Many terrorist units dig small holes in the ground in which to light fires for cooking or for warmth.

## LITTLE FOOD

The Gurkhas switched their direction, soon found a camp for 25 men, followed the tracks leading away from it, and four days later caught up and had a brief engagement. The terrorists left behind all their packs and cooking utensils.

Special Branch knew that this group had little or no food. The reports were that the group was held together only by the Regional Committee Member, Ah Ann, and his dominating wife. However, the group swung back on its tracks and returned to its own area of activity where it had food dumps. Capt. Legg went up on reconnaissance early another morning at 6.45 and spotted smoke although there was some ground mist. The chase was on again.

## THIRD FLIGHT

A third flight early a third morning produced more smoke signs again—which confirmed that the terrorists were moving towards their food dumps, the sites of which were known to Special Branch by this time. An ambush on one dump killed one terrorist and wounded two others. The intensive pressure that followed led to the breaking up of the party. Some surrendered. Others were killed.

In November, Ah Ann, his wife, Chai Swee Sang, and another comrade, Yoke Foong, who had hoped to slip out of the area, were cornered. They were killed by three bullets fired at point-blank range on the edge of jungle north of Kulai. They had \$30,000 in party funds to help them to establish themselves in civilian life.

An accolade for the little Austers came when the Malayan Communist Party described them as 'a dangerous weapon' in the Government armoury. They had never connected the Austers with ground forces. In the early years of the war when pilots spotted camps, security forces found the terrorists still in them two or three days afterwards. Today, if an Auster circles over an area and the terrorists below do not actually see it, they do not feel it necessary to move immediately but they do move within 12 hours. If, however, they can see it through the trees, they may break camp at once.

An experienced pilot describes the successful sighting of even a corner of a terrorist hut as something requiring the aircraft being at the right height with the right light below and 'an element of good fortune'. Flights of up to 2½ hours spent searching an area of jungle for terrorists' camps and cultivations require great skill, vigilance and perseverance.

#### WARY EYE

Besides examining the ground in detail, the pilot must fly his aircraft, read a map, operate the wireless set and keep a wary eye on the weather which can change very rapidly and become most hazardous to small single-engine aircraft with limited instruments.

Since 1948, Auster pilots have found 1,750 camps. Large camps are still occupied by terrorists near the Siamese border in North Perak. Late last year, for instance, the reports of Auster pilots led security forces to several semi-permanent camps which were fenced in, had excellent defence positions, and could hold 60 people.

Terrorists go to great lengths to camouflage their camps. For instance, one Auster pilot sighted a parade ground—which seemed to have disappeared when a check was made later the same day. A ground follow-up, however, confirmed the existence of the camp—and revealed that the parade-ground had been covered with fresh green attap.

After pilots fly low over a certain area for days on a concentrated reconnaissance, they begin to notice slight tell-tale features . . .

#### A HOOK

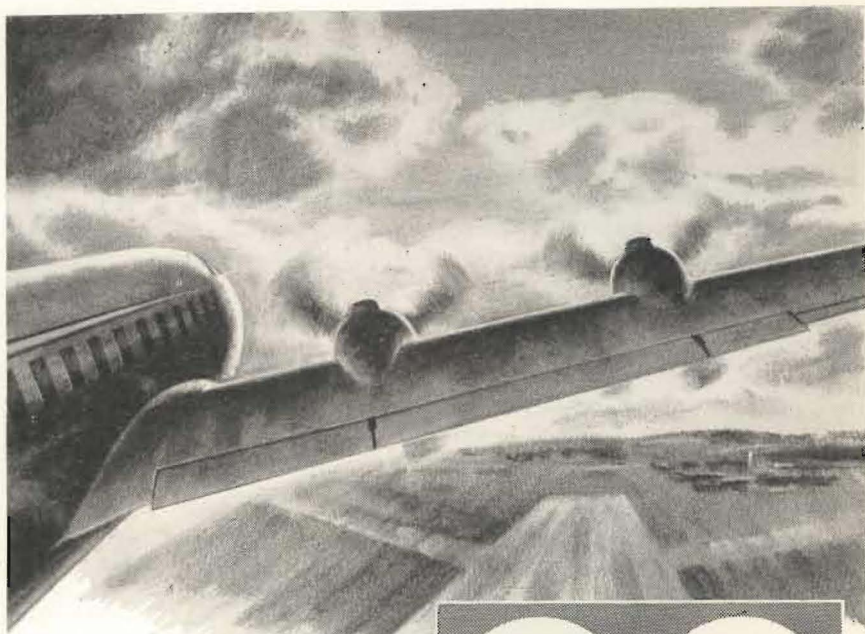
Such as the pole with a hook in it which one pilot glimpsed as he skirted over trees in the Kluang district. When ground forces entered the site they found the post. It was one of two which stood at the centre of a marked-out basketball court. But the court itself had been 'concealed' with saplings stuck all over the ground.

No wonder that in this war, the 656 Light Aircraft Squadron of the Army Air Corps is known as the most valuable air eye of the ground forces.

And in Singapore, the police have found the Austers most useful for spotting illegal samsu stills, the locations of which they radio to police ground units.

To fill up time, as it were, the light aircraft have also helped the Navy and the Air Force to search for yachts in distress off the coasts of Malaya—and over 1,100 sorties of this nature have been flown.





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# Flight With Safety

SINCE THE ADVENT of the aeroplane the question of safety has of necessity always been to the forefront in the minds of the men who design and build them. To-day, due to the efforts of these men, flying is probably the safest method of transport, but, as always, man is never content to rest on his laurels and research into safer flying goes on. With this in mind it is good news indeed to hear that one man, dedicated to this problem, has produced a scheme which may well mean that the quest for the ultimate in safety has now come to an end.

We are now able to disclose preliminary details of this revolutionary type of construction and we reprint below, exactly as it was received by this Company, the letter containing these details.

The name and address of the designer has been omitted for security reasons.

Dear Sir

I thank you for your letter of March 17th, and note what you say with interest.

Now Sir, your plane is good from the reports you give about it; but it must be better in these days of competition, to make it a matter of sales. Hence—permit me sir, to make your Company; the Pioneers of:

## “FLIGHT WITH SAFETY”

Your Auster Workmaster can be fire-proof and the only crash-proof plane in the world. In the event of a crash, it would bounce to a standstill, with safety and no fire. My model is crash-proof; it has six walls, but if you will only introduce half of this method, into your plane say only three walls, not six, you will then have a winner, that will easily sell. It will only be necessary for you to add two more walls to your existing fuselage at present, to give you the three walls required at only a small extra cost.

Now for your second wall, make it like the present fuselage with a three inch spacing, or cavity, filled with wide spiral springs, every six inches apart. (similar to the latest box spring bed mattress). Also add a lining of fire-proof asbestos sheeting. That is all

Again for your third wall, just repeat the same process as the second wall, but—before you apply the third wall which is final—try out your plane for take off and lift, then make your adjustments accordingly. Also repeat after the third wall.

Sir, when building these two extra walls, work from the centre of the plane to the front; then make the front overlap the two sides and take all shock, (like a buffer!).

Remember Sir, Britain needs your crash-proof plane, as a swift, (although small) deterrent to our enemies. And remember Sir, the whole world also needs it, for flying in safety. You could then give one of these planes to the Duke of Edinburgh, as a help and advertisement. You could also advertise them in other lands, like Australia and countries of long distances where road travel is bad and difficult. There is a great future for this plane.

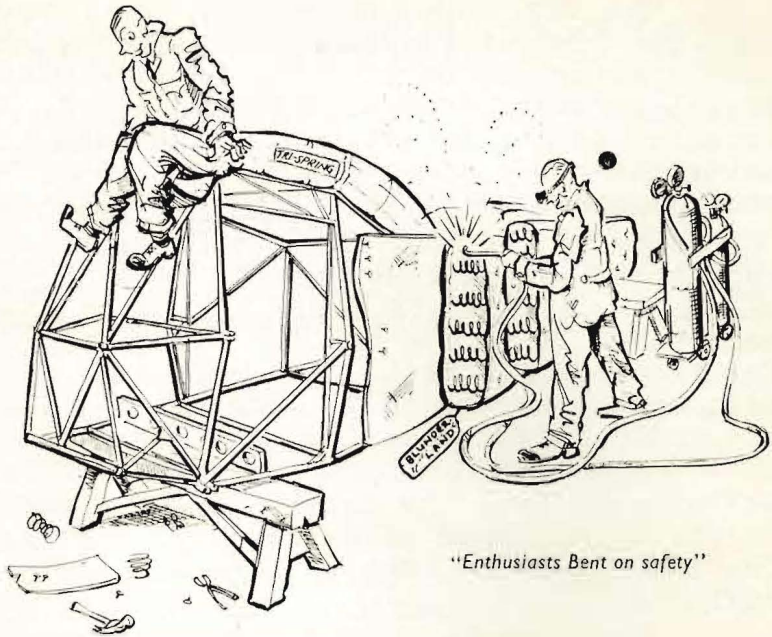
Sir, in me writing you like this please don't misunderstand my motives, I only want you to be a success and then I shall realise my dream has come true; for air travel will be safe. The crash-proof plane is a reality for it has come to stay.

“Good luck Sir!”

Yours very sincerely.

P.S.: Due to present heavy commitments it is not intended to modify the Workmaster at present.—EDITOR.





"Enthusiasts Bent on safety"

656 • 150,000 • 498

## FIGURES THAT PROVE

No. **656** Squadron A.A.C. has recently established a world record by completing **150,000** operational flying hours since 1948. This figure, in terms of mileage, is equivalent to **498** times around the world.

All flying hours were logged in Auster aircraft, thus further proving:

# AUSTER RELIABILITY



### AUTOCAR 145

**S**INCE ITS introduction some years ago the Auster Autocar has given excellent service as both a personal and business aircraft.

Originally powered by a 130 h.p. Gipsy Major I engine, the Autocar was later made available with a Gipsy Major 10 engine of 145 h.p. Greater engine power, combined with the higher permissible authorised weight of 2,450 lb. (1,111 kg.) has greatly increased the versatility and, it follows, the popularity of this type.

The Autocar 145 will carry three passengers plus luggage (or the equivalent in freight), a distance of over 425 miles without refuelling at a cruising speed of 112 m.p.h.

Shown in the accompanying photograph is a four-seat tourer version. Finished in a paint scheme of silver and blue and fitted with luxury trim, this aircraft was exhibited at the recent Hannover Trade Fair where it created great interest.

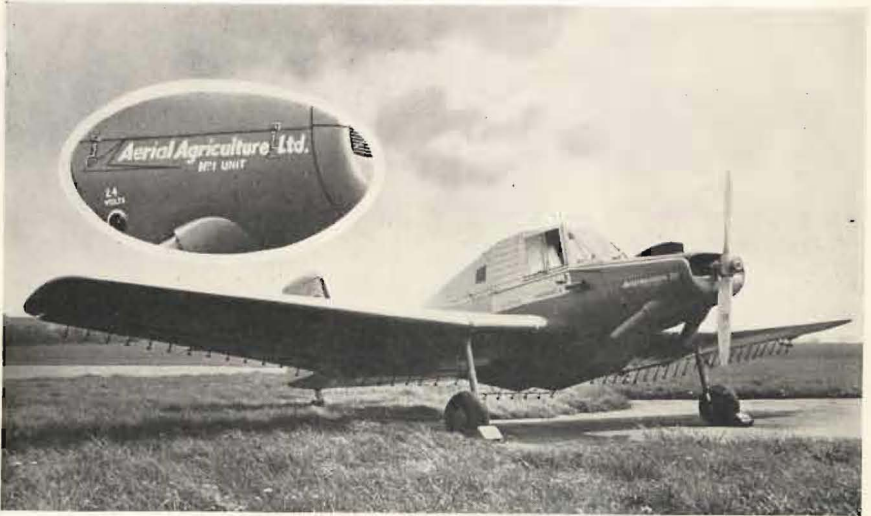


*The Autocar 145.*

## AGRICOLA

Austers largest aircraft, the Agricola can be supplied in five versions, to cover a wide range of agricultural duties.

The spraying version shown below, was recently collected from Rearsby by its owners Aerial Agriculture Ltd.



*In the Agricola the high efficiency low-drag spray nozzles project from the lower surface of the wing. Internal housing of the spray-boom eliminates the high-drag characteristics associated with contemporary light aircraft used for spraying.*

As this aircraft is to be used for extended spraying operations and is not likely to be called upon to operate in an alternative role at short notice, the fuselage tank installation has been embodied. In



*In this photograph, taken during a test run across the Company's airfield, the even distribution of fluid can be clearly seen.*



this installation the spray fluid is contained in a large flexible tank housed within the hopper. This tank has a maximum capacity of 168 imp. gallons, 24 gallons more than the wing-housed fluid tanks. The second photograph depicts an Agricola sprayer during a test run.

### WORKMASTER ON SKIS

In our last issue we included details of Austers latest product — the Workmaster. The information given related to the spraying version. However, it must be obvious to readers that with its high-performance and remarkable handling qualities this aircraft would not be confined to agricultural duties.

An Auster owner for many years, M. F. Guiron has been quick to take advantage of the outstanding qualities of the Workmaster. A tourist/charter operator, based at the aerodrome Mont Blanc, M. Guiron is to take delivery of his 3-4 seat passenger aircraft in the very near future. The high altitude performance of the Workmaster will well suit it for local conditions.

Finished in white with red flashes, the aircraft will be equipped with hydraulically retracting Federal type skis, whilst the rear roof will be in the form of a large quickly-removable canopy, to facilitate the loading of bulky freight.



*Shown above is the Auster Mk. 5 aircraft which has given M. Guiron many years of good service.*

## **ELEVATOR TRIMMER CABLES**

### **Applicable to all Civil Austers**

A number of aircraft have been supplied fitted with trimmer cables to Spec. D.T.D. 189 in a semi-hardened condition. Whilst this wire is satisfactory as far as its tensile strength is concerned, it will tend to wear more rapidly in the vicinity of the guide tubes on the elevator, and it is desirable, therefore, that replacement control wires manufactured from wire in the hard drawn condition should be fitted at the earliest convenience. The D.T.D. 189 semi-hardened wire can be quite easily distinguished by its dull grey/black appearance, compared with the bright hard drawn wire.

## **CARBURETTOR PRIMER SYSTEM**

### **Mod. 3542 (Applicable to all J5F & J5Q aircraft and J5B aircraft, post Mod. 2748).**

We would draw your attention to Service Bulletin No. 45 in the last issue of the 'News', in which we referred to a fracture of a fuel priming line between the Ki-gass pump outlet and the bulkhead. The above modification, which has now been cleared, introduces a non-return valve in the Ki-gass line between pump and carburettor, thus eliminating the possibility of pressure fuel from the carburettor seeping into the cabin in the event of fracture of the line aft of the engine bulkhead. The Modification Kit consists solely of a Ki-gass type non-return valve Pt. No. E.1502.

## **RUDDER CONTROL CABLES**

### **Applicable to all Auster Civil Types**

It has been realised that there is a possibility that some ex-military rudder cables may find their way into the civil market through surplus sources, and to eliminate the possibility of these being fitted, it is necessary that the following action be taken:

All civil types of Auster aircraft must be fitted with the undermentioned rudder control cables not later than August 31st, 1959 —

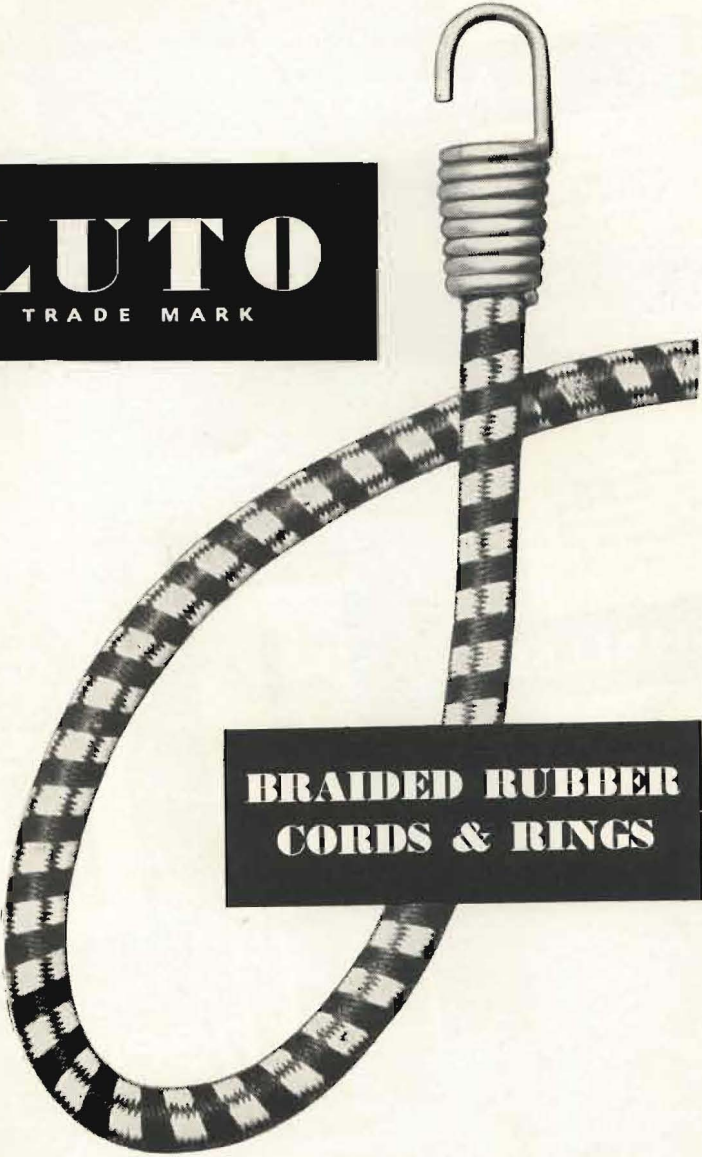
Pt. No. JA2393 or JA2393X port cable.

Pt. No. JA2394 or JA2394X starboard cable.

Cables, Pt. No. JA2393 and JA2394 must be replaced after 300 flying hours with new cables carrying the suffix 'X'; these cables viz JA2393X and JA2394X must be renewed every 1,200 flying hours.

The above requirements have been classified as mandatory by the Air Registration Board.

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# Auster specify Goodyear for the B.8



Goodyear are proud to have their equipment chosen as standard on the Auster Type B.8 "Agricola" — wheels, brakes, tyres and hydraulic brake control components.

#### SPECIAL FEATURES ARE :

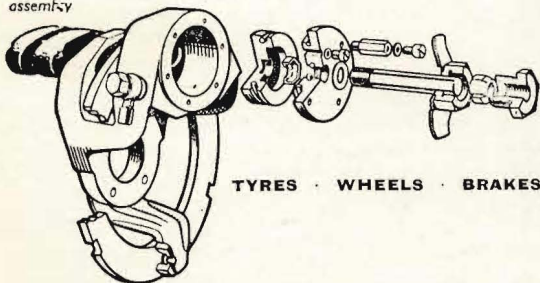
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Auster — and the majority of aircraft manufacturers the world over — specify Goodyear. Full information about all Goodyear Aviation Products may be obtained from the Aviation Division at Goodyear, Wolverhampton.

Cut-away  
of brake  
assembly



The Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Co. (G.B.) Ltd., Aviation Division, Wolverhampton and Wallasey

# Titanine



## **TITANINE AIRCRAFT FINISHES** *are used on Auster Aircraft*

The Auster Agricola is finished with a special Titanine scheme to withstand the corrosive effects of spraying and dusting chemicals.

*"FLIGHT" Photograph*



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