

Auster

QUARTERLY



BEAGLE D5/180 Husky

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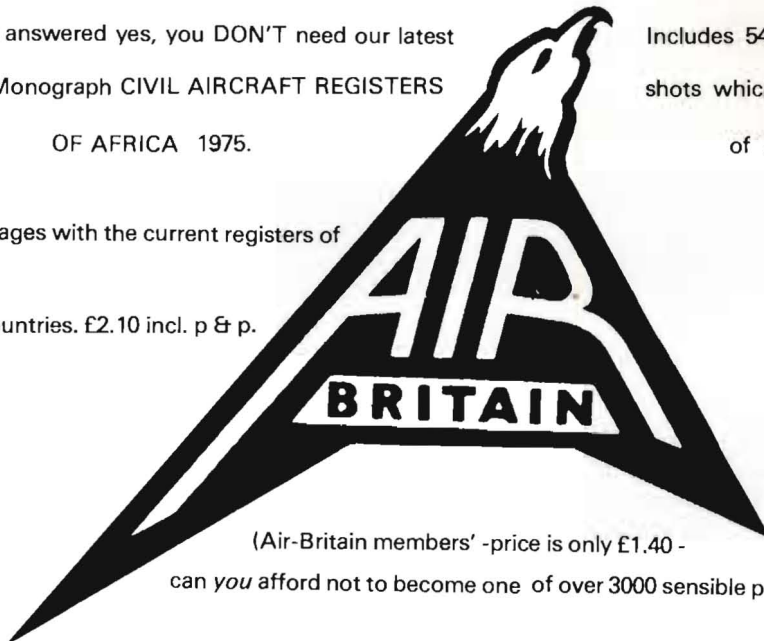
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Volume 1 Number 5

Summer/ Autumn 1976

Editor : Michael Draper

Editorial Office : 40, Turnstone Gardens, Chilworth Park, Lordswood.
Southampton SO1 8EW.

Telephone : Rownhams (042 123) 5056

Contents

Must Read	Page 114
Beagle D5/180 Husky	Page 116
One Man's Aeroplane — Beagle Husky G-AVSR	Page 130
News in Brief	Page 138
Taylorcraft Model E — Part 2	Page 140

We are deeply saddened in having to record the sudden and tragic death of David Miller — featured in our second issue — when his Autocrat G-AJRK spun in near Shorwell, Isle of Wight, on May 22nd. 1976. With David at the time were his wife Joy, and their two children Zoe and Susan, so that in one tragic instance we have lost four close friends.

David was probably more well-known as a highly skilled and respected engineer who was responsible for some of the most remarkable car conversions ever undertaken, including a Morris Minor that could easily out-run the best of Mini Cooper Ss. He applied the same skills to his love of flying Austers, a passion shared by his family, who were ever keen to offer support and encouragement to this journal. In short, he was a true enthusiast of endearing character, and will be missed by all who were lucky enough to be associated with him.

Front Cover

The unique Beagle AOP.11 G-ASCC is now back in circulation after spending several years undergoing a complete rebuild at Heathrow. On April 25th. 1976 it was flown from Heathrow to Blackbushe by John Lee who, as a Company pilot, had made 'SCCs last flight from Rearsby to Castle Donington almost nine years previously on 3/5/67. The aircraft's present owner, Malcolm Fisher, hopes to be able to display 'SCC at several of next year's events, and a welcome sight it will be. (International Air Photo Exchange).

Back cover

Beautifully poised at Rearsby during the 'good ol' days' is J/5F Aiglet Trainer VP-YJF c/n 2778, complete with the name 'Doodie' inscribed on the cowl. (Auster Aircraft Ltd. AT.58)

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Must Read.....

Some years ago when the R.A.E. at Farnborough had had a sudden fit of throwing out various records and books, one item salvaged by our editor at the time was the Pilot's Notes for the Auster AOP.4 and 5, for no other reason than the locally flying club at Blackbushe had just acquired an Auster 5 and it seemed a good idea that pupils could study the official instructions as to how to fly it.

Subsequently the booklet - like the club's Auster 5 - was put to one side and quietly forgotten, until we received a facsimile copy of the Auster 6/T7/T10 Pilot's Notes, and which provide a most interesting comparison, apart from being an ideal source of reference. Reproduction of the Pilot's Notes has been considered something of a breakthrough in terms of official documents being made available to the enthusiast, and it is due to an ex-RAFVR pilot, Mr I.E. Stretch that the venture has succeeded. The remarkable level of authenticity and quality of reproduction is clearly evident, there being nothing deleted from the text of the original document, including the original format whether it be laced or stapled, depending on the vintage of the type in question. To date some eighty-four titles of British and American aircraft types have been reproduced, and we hear that Pilot's Notes for the Auster AOP.9 are programmed for publication during the coming months. In view of the growing number of MK.9s being made airworthy, and the pending sale of a batch of similar Indian Air Force aircraft, the publication of such a book seems well-timed.

However, if Pilot's Notes for the Auster 4 and 5 are to be reproduced, then perhaps Air Data Publications can delete the photograph of MZ 105 and replace it with a more suitable one, preferably of a MK.4 or 5. In the meantime our old copy culled from the R.A.E. goes back on the shelf, though this time not to be quietly forgotten.

Pilot's Notes are reproduced by agreement with the British and American Governments, and published by Air Data Publications, c/o Bookshelf, Back West Crescent, ST. Annes-on-Sea, Lancashire, to whom enquiries should be directed.



The line-up of Austers at the I.A.P.C. Fly-In at Old Warden on April 25th. 1976 photographed by John Webster from his J/5V G-APUW



Above. AOP.6 VX125 was converted at Rearsby during 1950 as a test-bed for the new Blackburn Bombadier engine, as detailed on page 89. The unpainted tail surfaces show the amount of work needed in enlarging this area to offset the heavier engine. (John Lee)

Below. Designed as an AOP.6 replacement, the private venture Model S WJ316 is seen here at Rearsby prior to R.A.F. trials. Clearly noticeable are the large low-pressure tyres aimed at meeting service requirements. Sadly, the Model S failed to meet tough R.A.F. demands, though it provided valuable experience in directing Austers towards their successful AOP.9 design. (Auster Aircraft Ltd. S.2)



Beagle D5/180 Husky

- A Production History -

Of all the designs produced by Auster and Beagle, the one that intrigues your editor most is the Beagle Husky, mainly due to the many variations achieved during its production run. In terms of numbers produced, the Husky can hardly be described as a roaring success, but ask John Webster, owner of J/5V G-APUW — which in many respects was the forerunner of the D5, and he will describe his aircraft as the ultimate Auster in terms of performance and comfort. Ask Tony Young, and he will justify his exhaustive flight back from Teheran in Husky G-AVSR, claiming it to be a comfortable yet rugged aircraft, and strong enough for the tasks demanded of it. Ask both owners to sell, and they will state, 'Never!'

So why did production amount to considerably less than twenty aircraft? If cost is the answer (though it was cheaper than some American competitors), then it can be argued that each aircraft was virtually hand-built from scratch to each customer's requirement, a comparative rarity in times of mass-produced aircraft within a highly competitive market. Alternatively, another question hard to answer is the precise definition of a true Husky, for although Beagle went to great lengths to announce the 'new' D5/180 Husky, the Company still produced several aircraft built to a specification closer to the original Portuguese Auster D5s. Furthermore, doubt exists as to the exact factory designation, having been described elsewhere as the Beagle A.113, whereas a type-study with this number appeared during mid-1962, and bearing absolutely no comparison to the Husky.

Nevertheless, the Beagle D5/180 production is worthy of a detailed study, in that it was certainly the last of the traditional Auster line.



Identified by the Works Planning Number '1215', the Auster D5 prototype (c/n 3651) is seen here at Rearsby during January 1960, probably at the time of its first flight. Note the masking tape still attached to the port cowling.

(Trevor Howard Collection, via Peter Stoddart.)

It is difficult to pinpoint the actual genesis of what was to emerge as the Beagle Husky, for it was essentially a natural progression from when Austers began to think in terms of furnishing, soundproofing and the use of standard American engines, during 1959. As a result, the Auster D-range arrived, which in turn lent heavily on experience gained from such late designs as the J/1U and J/5V, but still based on the original Autocrat fuselage. The motivation behind the D-range was a valuable Portuguese order plus a further one hundred-and-fifty aircraft to be built under licence in that country. The standard Auster D5 built for the Portuguese utilised the 160hp Lycoming O-320A, but several aircraft were upgraded to 180hp, and it was this version that formed the basis of the later Beagle Husky.

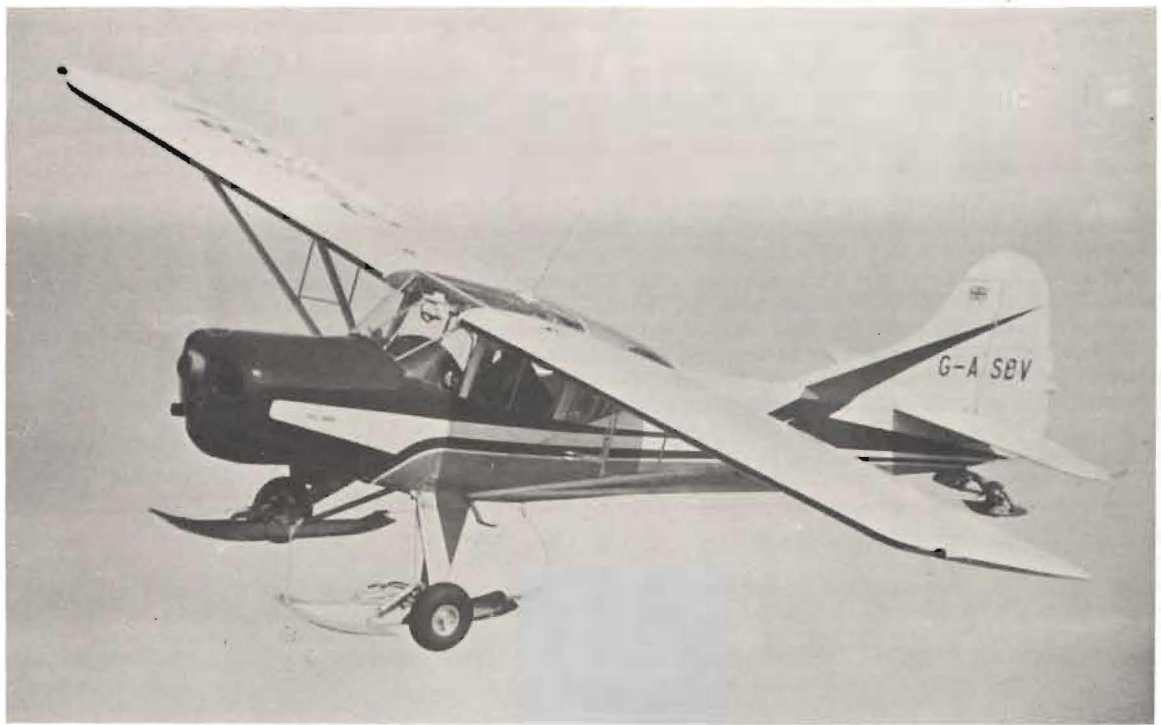
The first D5/180 produced at Rearsby was in fact the last of the Portuguese contract, and apart from the increased power was identical to all previous D5s. However, other changes had taken place, none less than the formation of Beagle-Auster Ltd. in October 1960. The new Company's immediate plans had called for continued production of existing Auster products, and so D5 production continued throughout 1961 until the final Portuguese aircraft, the sole British-built D5/180 (CS-LEE c/n 3670) was delivered in January 1962, followed several days later by three D5/160s (3671-3) for the Congolese Air Force, and the last of three similar aircraft (3674-6) for the Instituto Nacional de Trabalho e Providencia, in Angola. With these deliveries completed, and no further outstanding orders, the only remaining D-model at Rearsby was the D4/108 G-ARLG that had been assembled from spare parts, and in many respects did not resemble the true D-range of aeroplanes.

Aware of the possibilities of further D5 sales, Beagle (renamed Beagle Aircraft Ltd. in March 1962) decided to construct a second D5/180 for use as a Company demonstrator. As G-ASBV, c/n 3677 made its first flight on



The first Beagle D5/180, G-ASBV, is displayed at Biggin Hill during May 1963. The transparent door panel is clearly evident in this view, though not every aircraft had this feature installed.

July 23rd. and almost immediately was flown across the Channel by Beagle Sales Pilot, Lt.Cdr. Vyrell Mitchell, for demonstrations to the Belgian Army. The prototype Terrier 2, G-ARLR, itself a demonstrator accompanied it, but the D5 unfortunately overturned on landing at a wooded-clearing strip near Braaschat, just north of Antwerp on August 4th. causing considerable damage to the airframe. Witnesses to the landing saw that G-ASBV's mainwheels sank into the loose sandy soil, causing the aircraft to somersault onto its back, and the accident was duly attributed to the general inefficiency of the aircraft's braking system, and the fact that the wheels were too small. Worried, but undeterred by the accident, Beagle brought the wreckage back to Rearsby where it was quickly rebuilt to a new specification requested by the Belgians, and with a view to returning the aircraft for further trials, within a few months.



G-ASBV was equipped with a wheel-ski undercarriage as a result of Swiss Army interest in the Husky. Trevor Howard is at the controls in this characteristic pose, which clearly displays the original 'rounded' instrument panel, before the type illustrated on page 125 was adopted. G-ASBV ended its days at Rearsby, dumped behind the Maintenance hangar following an accident in Switzerland.

(Trevor Howard Collection, via Peter Stoddart.)

The Airedale programme had itself introduced many new features, and consequently the rebuilt D5/180 benefitted from several of these as the foregoing list illustrates:

- (i) Hydraulic Braking System — identical to the A.109 Airedale system, which included the installation of an Airedale-type engine-mounting bulkhead frame in the fuselage, and an Airedale-type rudder pedal structure.
- (ii) Low-Pressure balloon tyres — designed specially by Dunlop to suit the standard Airedale wheel hubs, which were fitted in conjunction with the new braking system and wheel-brake units.
- (iii) Individually-adjustable front seats.
- (iv) Perspex starboard door panel — This involved replacing the metal skin on the lower half of the starboard door with a clear perspex panel.
- (v) Scott Pneumatic Tailwheel Assembly — a fully-steerable unit similar to that fitted to contemporary American aircraft, e.g., Piper Pawnee, Cessna 180 and 185 etc.
- (vi) Heated Underwing Pitot Head — identical to the type used on the Airedale.
- (vii) Landing and Taxi light in the leading edge of the port mainplane, again identical to that fitted to the Airedale and Terrier.

One other modification was found to be of utmost importance for when 'SBV' had overturned, the flaps having naturally been selected to the 'down' position, it had been virtually impossible to leave the aircraft through the pilot's door due to it being obstructed by the standard side-mounted flap control lever. Worried by the difficulties in releasing the pilot, the Belgians had requested that a central roof-mounted flap control lever be fitted, similar to that fitted some years previously to the Auster J/8L.

Beagle also decided to install a fully revolving single rear seat, identical to that fitted to the standard Auster AOP.6, but this was rejected in favour of a specially-designed single aft-facing seat before the rebuilt aircraft flew on October 24th.

In connection with the hydraulic braking system, Beagle lengthened the D5's undercarriage legs by several inches in the hope that by improving the angle of attack the length of runway required for take-off could be reduced considering the aircraft was being prepared for normal operation from really poor surfaces. A final innovation that stemmed from the Airedale was the fitment of production cooling baffles, which gave a marked improvement over the original ones.

With so many new features, G-ASBV was by now virtually a different aeroplane, and accordingly Beagle announced the launch of their D5/180 'Husky'.

In the meantime, however, the Belgian Army had decided to purchase a quantity of Piper L-18C Super Cubs, and so having lost one possible customer, Beagle turned to another. Accompanying the delivery flight of Airedale HB-EUE, on December 6th. 1962, 'SBV returned to the continent for demonstrations to the Swiss Army at Bex and Sion, but it soon became clear that more changes were needed if the Husky was to meet eventual Swiss requirements, and so the demonstrator was again flown back to Rearsby. Somehow an obvious requirement was the fitting of a wheel-ski undercarriage, and subsequently Italian-built skis (of American design) were fitted during the summer of 1963. In this configuration, 'SBV once again returned to Switzerland, but the flight proved to be a prelude to disaster, for on October 20th. Beagle test-pilot Trevor Howard flew into difficulties and struck high ground at Ecollivens, near Fribourg, causing serious injuries to himself, and rather more substantial damage to the aircraft.

Almost immediately after the accident, Beagle set about the construction of a replacement demonstrator, c/n 3678, to be built with the same modifications that had been incorporated into its predecessor, apart from the fact that the aft-facing rear single seat had been replaced by the more normal standard forward-facing seat. Another feature that was to become standard to all further aircraft (except 3679) was the re-designing of the instrument panel to that of the Terrier 2 series. Registered G-ASNC the new demonstrator first flew on April 12th. 1964, and by the end of that month had been demonstrated to the Irish Air Corps who, it seemed had a requirement for a small fleet of liaison aircraft. May 1964 was spent demonstrating to the Swiss Army, while in June, 'SNC was examined by the Swedish forces, for whom it was fitted with a novel ski-stowage compartment. This consisted of essentially a rectangular white plastic 'box' approximately 12" by 9" and six feet in length, installed into the inside rear fuselage, with about nine inches protruding into the top left corner of the rear cabin for access, thus allowing skis to be stowed away quite easily.

Despite the amount of attention and work given over to developing and demonstrating the Husky, it seems surprising that Beagle failed to secure more than one definite order, and even then the aircraft was built to a standard almost identical to the original Portuguese D5/180, CS-LEE. Registered 9G-ABR (c/n 3679), this D5 had been purchased by the Ghana Supply Commission for use by the Ghana National Gliding School at Accra, and the only real differences between this and the original D5 was the installation of twin 12-volt batteries and the fitting of a glider-tow hook. However, 9G-ABR was only used by the Gliding School for two years, during which time it logged exactly one hundred flying hours, until June 1966, when it was transferred to the Ghana Air Force and given the serial G-512. Based at Takoradi, G-512 was employed on light communications duties, but by May 1968 had only accumulated another hundred hours flying time.

In the meantime, towards the end of 1964 Beagle had authorised the production of six D5/180 airframes (3680 thru 3685) against pending orders. The first of this batch, 3680 was earmarked for the African Flying Doctor Service as 5N-ADG, but the 'order' was apparently cancelled while the fuselage frame was still at the weld stage. Shortly afterwards, a definite enquiry was received by an Irish businessman following the demonstration of 'SNC during the previous April. 3680 was then allocated for sale to Ireland, with the reserved marks EI-ANP, although it was generally understood at the time that the aircraft was to be evaluated by the Irish Army for A.O.P. duties etc. as one of the requirements was that the aircraft should be fully cleared for spinning. As a result, 3680 was then fitted with a spin-recovery parachute structure, built into the rear fuselage. In fact, the unit had been built some time previously, and had been used for spinning trials in the Terrier and Airedale, and before that in various marks of Austers. Assembly of 3680 progressed to beyond the fabric stage when the interior cabin was finished in an attractive dark red trim, but very soon afterwards interest from Ireland waned, and Beagle decided to suspend completion indefinitely, whereupon the fuselage was put to one side.

At the same time Beagle began a design study based on a floatplane version of the basic Husky, and went as far as allocating 3681 to the first prototype.

Two enquiries received during 1965 accounted for 3682 and 3683, and work started on both airframes during March, the latter being completed first in an incredibly short time of only two months, making its first flight on May 19th. 1965. In fact the wings had already been built and fabric-covered, no doubt having been intended for



The replacement demonstrator G-ASNC (c/n 3678) is seen here in three different schemes — (top) at the Biggin Hill Air Fair during May 1964 when it appeared with a glider tow-bar and the title 'Husky' on the cowl, and an identical scheme to its predecessor (B.N. Stainer); In the centre view 'SNC has received a change of scheme, has lost its tow-bar, but acquired a small spinner. The 'cuffed' struts are an added refinement though not made a standard feature. This view by G. Price was taken at the Hanover Air Show, on 29/4/66. The lower illustration by Peter J. Cooper shows the demonstrator at Farnborough on 5/9/66 when it appeared with underwing rotary atomisers and tank installed into the starboard cockpit (as 5H-MMU on page 125). The atomisers, although genuine, were fitted only for show, and were never actually 'wired-up' on this aircraft.



The first sale of a Beagle-built D5/180 was to the Ghana Supply Commission. During June 1966, 9G-ABR was transferred to the Ghana Air Force for communications work, and given the serial G-512, in which guise it is seen at Takoradi on May 23rd, 1968. Note the retention of the tow-bar, and the small wheels. (M.I. Draper)

the abandoned 3680. The aircraft, registered G-ATCD, was delivered to Shackleton Aviation Ltd. at Sywell later in May, it being the first actual sale of a D5 in this country since the type was introduced in 1960! As such 'TCD was built essentially to the same standard as CS-LEE (3670) and 9G-ABR (3679) apart from having the Terrier 2 style instrument panel and Airedale-type adjustable front seats. It retained the standard flap control lever on the port side of the cabin, although this was slightly modified from the normal 'pull to release' to a trigger-operated release. 'TCD also had fitted the normal D5/160 undercarriage unit with mechanical brakes.

Alongside 3683 work progressed in the main production hangar, though at a slower rate, towards the completion of 3682, it having been reserved for an almost certain order from Beagle's Saudi Arabian agent in Jeddah, Areen Travel Bureau. By mid-1965 the fuselage assembly stage had almost been completed, although neither engine, nor wings had yet been fitted, when the order was cancelled, and the fuselage was left uncompleted, and identifiable only by the dark blue interior cabin trim.

One confirmed order received during 1965 came from Norman Jones' Tiger Club at Redhill, and was allocated c/n 3684. The Tiger Club already operated a Piper PA-18 Super Cub and it was hoped that in the Husky, Beagle could match the fine performance offered by the American aeroplane. Thus Beagle turned to meet a peculiar 'lightweight' specification, resulting in an aircraft that differed substantially from the standard D5/180, although only in detail. Like the original CS-LEE, 3684 retained the standard Auster front bench seat arrangement and a side flap-control lever, albeit trigger-operated, and also incorporated the now-standard Terrier 2 style instrument panel and hydraulic brakes. However, a new innovation was the fitting of Airedale-type wheels and tyres, but owing to a shortage of components the wheels and Dunlop brake units were supported by Goodyear brake

master foot cylinders. Most of the sound-proofing was deleted, along with the usual linoleum floor covering, and unlike all other D5s the battery mounting was moved from the engine compartment to the rear cabin, in order to delete some of the fixed ballast at the stern-post, and in turn saving a little more weight. Eventually, and complete with towing hook, 3684 was registered G-ATMH on January 3rd 1966 and flown on the 17th. After its delivery to the Tiger Club, this unique D5 spent quite a time at Fyfield strip, Essex, and used for glider-towing at nearby North Weald.



Built in an incredibly short period of only two months, G-ATCD represented the first actual sale of a Beagle D5/180 in this country.

Outwardly, there was little difference between the Tiger Club's G-ATMH and the Ghana Air Force D5 (illustrated on page 121), but the former was built to a 'lightweight' standard. G-ATMH is seen in this Brian Pickering photograph at the National Air Races at Tees-Side on 6/8/66.



Several months prior to the flight of 3684, Beagle had completed the frustrated Middle East demonstrator, 3682. Although the order had been cancelled, work had slowly progressed until it could be used for an exercise on flap movement positions in connection with the centrally-positioned flap operating lever. Another test carried out on 3682 involved the complete covering of the rudder pedal bars and control bearings with aluminium panels. A similar modification had been previously applied to the German Airedale, as German requirements apparently stipulated it, although as far as we know no enquiries had been received from Germany for the D5. Whatever effect these covers were designed to achieve, they did have the distinct disadvantage of making the lower forward cabin to appear considerably smaller, and in any case, in view of the normal slight variations in fuselage structure it was felt at the time that they were an extremely expensive feature since each set of covers would have to be individually made for each particular aircraft.

Various other features incorporated into 3682 included a shoulder harness to the front seats, and low-pressure balloon tyres, brake units, and wheels of Goodyear design; in fact as fitted to the AOP.9, B8 Agricola and J/1U Workmaster. The tailwheel was steerable, and of the Scott pneumatic type; dark grey tinted perspex had been fitted to the forward cabin roof with sunblinds installed in the rear cabin, although it proved impossible to include the forward cabin roof due to the centrally-mounted flap control lever. Individually-adjustable front seats were fitted, but the rear bench seat was replaced by a similar seat, but having a fold-down back. Eventually 3682 was registered G-ATKB on October 18th. and it was test-flown on November 10th. although devoid of any markings, being still in its natural overall fabric finish.

Almost immediately after its first flight, 3682 was dismantled and put to one side (with 3680), as Beagle had other commitments.

The Beagle 206 sales-drive during 1965/6 had been fairly successful, but customers were beginning to demand an aftersales service. As the main production hangar was fully given over to 206/Basset production, the only available space to set up such a service was an area in front of the spray shop which, at the time was being used for the construction of D5s. The decision was made therefore, to transfer D5 assembly into the cramped maintenance hangar, itself having been divided some years previously to house the woodworking department which had been ousted from the main hangar to make way for the Terrier production line!

Moving the D5 facility in December 1965 had meant transferring 3684 (G-ATMH) while it was in the final rigging stage, giving some indication of the desperate space situation that was beginning to face the Company, at its Rearsby factory. Also involved in the move over to the maintenance hangar was the unpainted and dismantled 3682, and the fuselage of 3680 which by now was virtually complete, including engine installation, for both aircraft had now finally found a buyer. The Tanzanian Government had purchased the two aircraft on behalf of its Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Wildlife for part of a programme involving Tsetse-fly control. 3682 was completed as a liaison aircraft, and apart from its dark blue interior trim being changed to pale green, the aircraft remained virtually unaltered. However, 3680 was to be fitted with spray-gear and so, apart from fabric-covering, was completely dis-assembled and rebuilt to the same basic specification as 3682, except for the installation of a 96-gallon spray tank which almost filled the starboard side of the cabin, being identical to a similar system previously installed into the J/1U Workmaster. This left just sufficient space for the pilot's seat and one small jump-seat directly behind the pilot, in tandem fashion. Underwing spray bars were fitted, and both aircraft crated for shipment, as 5H-MMU (3682) and 5H-MMV (3680). The first aircraft was shipped ex-U.K. on May 12th. 1966, but due to the dock strike at the time, 'MMV just 'missed the boat' and did not arrive in Tanzania until the end of September. Taken to the international airport at Dar-Es-Salaam, both aircraft were assembled and flown, 'MMU during the third week of October, followed by 'MMV a month later. Later the two aircraft worked in unison, 'MMU being used purely for liaison flights to determine the number of Tsetse fly cases in any one area before the decision was made as to whether or not the spray aircraft should be flown in.

Just prior to the transfer of production to the Maintenance hangar, an order for three D5 Huskies had been obtained from the Burmese Government, which although a fine achievement caused Beagle one or two problems. As mentioned above, the space that had previously been reserved for D5 production beside the spray shop had been taken over for a 206 "Customer Modification" bay, and that D5 assembly had moved to the smaller hangar; but when Beagle found themselves having to start construction of the Burmese order all available space in the new facility was taken up with the two Tanzanian aircraft. So the rear corner of the main 206 production line was allocated to D5 assembly, or at least until the Tanzanian aircraft were delivered, by which time space would become available in the maintenance hangar. Work commenced during February 1966 on the first two Burmese aircraft which were allotted 3685 and 3686, but it was now realised that somehow Beagle had 'lost' an airframe.

Before construction of the Burmese D5s had started, the Company found that another aircraft had to be authorised as the original batch authorised in 1964 had accounted for the six aircraft, 3680 to 3685, but production records indicated that only four had been completed up to and including 3684. Of the authorised

Continued on page 126

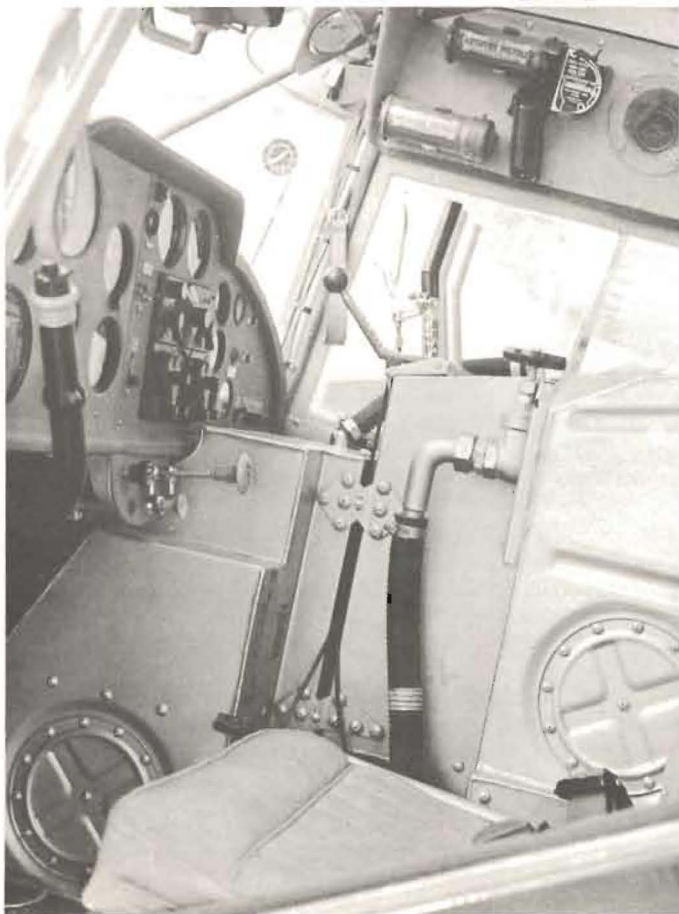


Frustrated export twice-over, 3680 was eventually sold to the Tanzanian Government, and is seen posing for official photographs at Rearsby, prior to delivery.

The underwing spray-bars, and airscrew-driven pump (lower view) were fitted to 'MMV for operations against the Tsetse fly, as part of a programme initiated by the Tanzanian Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Wildlife. Its sister aircraft, 5H-MMU, was employed purely as a liaison aircraft, and used mainly in locating worst-affected regions, until it crashed in Kenya during October, 1970.

(Photos. Beagle Aircraft Ltd. D5/114/4, D5/114/11.)





Top. The revised instrument panel structure was one of several up-dated features introduced to the D5/180 by Beagle. In this case replacing the original and typically traditional 'rounded' panel provided a more modern appearance and brought the Husky into line with other Beagle products, such as the Terrier 2. The view of G-ASBV on page 118 makes an interesting comparison.

(Beagle Aircraft Ltd. D5/100)

Left. A close-up of the 96-gallon tank installation and controls, placed to the starboard side of the cockpit. Despite its bulky and awkward appearance, the pilot's all-round view was not seriously affected. The main feed from the tank to the underwing spray-bars can be clearly seen opposite.

(Beagle Aircraft Ltd. D5/115/1)

batch, only 3685 apparently remained outstanding which brought the total number of aircraft to five, hence the 'lost' airframe. Knowing that a substantial number of bare airframes had been stored above the roof of the spray shop, Ron Neal, who was virtually in charge of Husky production, began to search through them and found a discarded D5 fuselage that had originally been built during the Portuguese D4/D5 production run, probably as a 'tool-proving specimen'. This had been constructed in the fuselage welding jig that had been specifically built for the Portuguese contract, and which was subsequently shipped out to Portugal when production had ended. At the same time it was realised that although reserved for the projected Floatplane version, 3681 had in fact never been built, and so the six-year old airframe became the 'new' 3681, while the third airframe, 3686, was to be built from scratch.

Naturally, 3681 did not meet the Burmese specification, and required some considerable modification. Firstly, the engine mounting bulkhead frame was removed, and an Airedale-type frame fitted; the rear spar in the fuselage structure was also removed and replaced by one of a stronger specification material to take the centrally-mounted flap control in the cabin roof. Building the fuselages of 3685 and 3686 meant that by now space in the main production hangar was at such a premium that Ron Neal's team virtually worked directly underneath the wings of a jacked-up 206. However, work progressed on the Burmese aircraft, undercarriages were fitted and the fabric stage had almost been completed, when space became available in the maintenance hangar as the two Tanzanian aircraft were shipped out. Thereupon, the three fuselages were transferred across to the smaller hangar and all built with the following features:

- (i) Goodyear hydraulic brakes with Goodyear low pressure balloon tyres and brake units.
- (ii) Centrally-mounted roof flap lever and Terrier 2 style elevator trim tab control
- (iii) Individually-adjustable front seats.

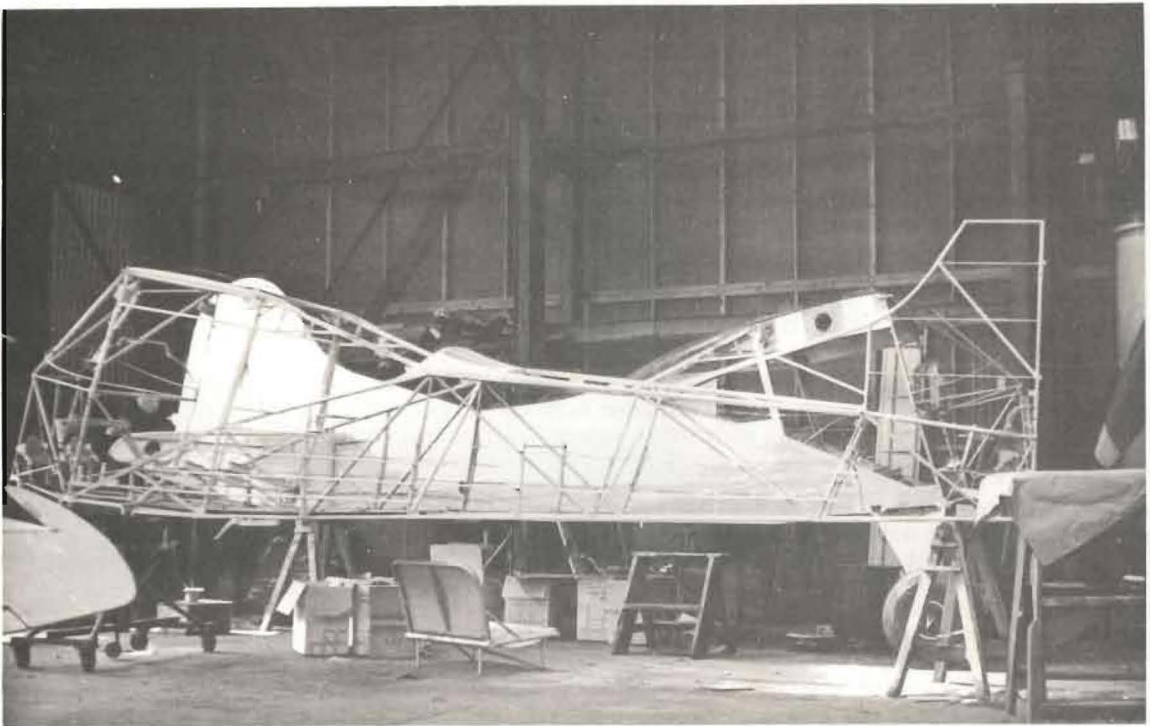
All three aircraft were fitted with glider tow-bars and Scott steerable tailwheel units. Similarly each was identically finished in silver overall with day-glo orange rudders, and dark-blue interior cabin trim. No external markings were applied at Rearsby (although 3685 is reported to have test-flown as G-35-15) and all three were despatched ex-Works on October 17th. 1966.

With the Burmese order completed, Beagle found themselves facing an all-too-familiar situation, that of a drop in production to a virtual halt. The decision was taken that further airframes should only be built against certain orders, although at this stage two more orders had been confirmed, one being completely surrounded with secrecy. Under immense security, the self-styled King of Thailand, Mr. Poonperm Krairiksh, visited Rearsby personally to place an order for one aircraft, and such was the secrecy placed upon the order that for a while production floor records displayed the aircraft as '3687 — Burmese Embassy.' Work was started on 3687 during August 1966, the fuselage being welded in the jig which had remained in the main 206 hangar. The weld-stage complete, the airframe was then transferred to the maintenance hangar for final assembly in September, allowing the fuselage jig to be used for 3688, followed by 3689 during October. 3688 had been allocated to Turriff Construction Corp. Ltd., while 3689 progressed at a slow pace following a tentative order from British Insulated Callenders & Cables Ltd. in connection with a project in Iran. As this order was still only provisional, Beagle focused their full attention to 3687 and 3688.

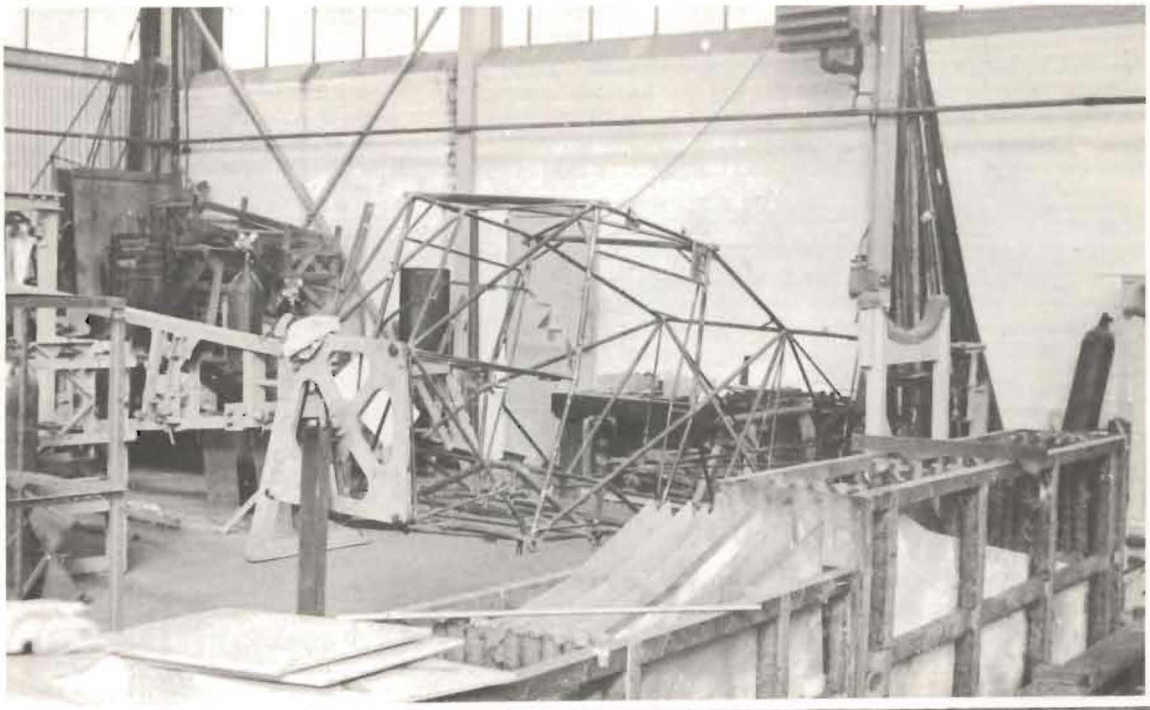
The Thai aircraft was completed during December 1966 in a striking dark blue and white scheme, and like its immediate three Burmese predecessors carried no external markings whatsoever, when it was shipped out in January.

When 3688 emerged during July 1967, registered G-AVOD, it did so with most of the now standard features of the Husky — individually-adjustable front seats, Goodyear hydraulic brakes and balloon tyres, centrally-mounted flap lever, Scott pneumatic tailwheel etc. and with a perspex panel in the starboard door. Of interest was its colour scheme, being mustard yellow and bottle green, and as such was delivered to Turriff Construction during August 1967.

By the spring of 1967, the Husky demonstrator had also been put to good use as one of the Company's general 'hack' aircraft. It had also been fitted with similar spraying equipment as the Tanzanian 5H-MMV, but with mock-up rotary atomisers instead of underwing spray-bars, and displayed as such at Farnborough in September 1966. However, this equipment was later removed, and on April 17th. 1967, 'SNC made the first of a series of flights in conjunction with the Central Electricity Generating Board, when it was used as part of a scheme to train engineers as aerial observers for the maintenance and inspection of all power lines outside built-up areas. This occupied the demonstrator, and its pilot, John Radford for much of the summer until



Seen here in the Maintenance hangar on 7/5/66 are the first two Burmese aircraft — 3681 fabric-covered and 3686 yet to reach that stage. The Husky 'line' was moved around the Rearsby factory with alarming regularity, and depended entirely upon the availability of sufficient floorspace. The lower view shows the last Husky (3691) at the final weld stage, at Rearsby on 24/2/68. Noticeable in the lower view is the 'extra' bracket above the port door, that being the mounting bracket for the ratchet-type positioning plate used with the side-mounted flap lever. The upper view of 3686 shows this item to be deleted, and so indicates the fitting of a centrally-mounted flap lever. (P.J. Cooper/M.I. Draper)



C.E.G.B.'s own helicopters were able to take over on a fully operational basis. Curiously, many aspects of this operation were similar to that planned for another Husky in the Middle East.

But by mid-1967 it soon became clear that as a result of various problems experienced by the R.A.F. in operating its Bassets (ingression of water into the cabin and slightly disconcerting trim changes when flaps were lowered) that the service aircraft would have to be returned to Rearsby over a period so that modifications could be made. By now the problems associated with Beagle's ridiculously small Rearsby factory were more apparent than ever, so while Husky production in the maintenance hangar was once again at a virtual standstill, the 206 repair and servicing bay was moved from the area in front of the spray shop to the smaller hangar, so that the vacant space could be given over to Basset mods. Eventually work on the Basset was completed, but at a time when the maintenance hangar was fully occupied with 206 repair and servicing work. At the same time Beagle received confirmation of the B.I.C.C. order for one Husky, and so once again the assembly line was moved over to the area vacated by the Bassets, outside the spray shop, where 3689 was built to exactly the same specification as 3688, apart from B.I.C.C.'s requirement for a long-range belly tank to be fitted. Registered G-AVSR, 3689 took to the air during October 1967, and became the only Husky to be fitted with a coarse pitch propeller.

1968 saw another two new customers for the Husky, and these two aircraft were destined to be the last ones built, for it was becoming increasingly clear that apart from the problems of floorspace, Beagle was in serious financial trouble, despite Government assistance a year or so previously. However, production continued and the two D5s, 3690 and 3691 were built alongside each other in the area outside the spray shop, the former being allocated to the National Society for the Mentally Handicapped, who planned to raffle it at the Palm Beach Gaming Club, beneath the Mayfair Hotel. It was built to a specification similar to that for the Burmese aircraft, but with Dunlop hydraulic brakes and Airedale-style wheels, together with a standard Auster steerable tailwheel. One new feature was its *unheated* pitot head. Before making its initial flight, although it had been fully rigged, G-AWSW, as it had been registered, was taken to London and assembled for display. Fifty raffle tickets were issued, each at a cost of £100, the winning ticket being held by Sir Billy Butlin. So having found a new owner, albeit in a rather extraordinary manner, 'WSW' was brought back to Rearsby and assembled in the maintenance hangar, now cleared of 206 servicing, and test-flown on February 24th. 1969. But it soon became apparent that its new owner was in no hurry to collect his aircraft, and so it was picketed out on the grass, in front of the canteen.

Meanwhile the final Husky, 3691 had been registered as OE-DEW for an Austrian customer, Asko Flugsport Club of Weiz, Vienna. In most respects 3691 was constructed to the same specification as 3690, apart from the Austrian aircraft being fitted with a glider tow-bar, an improved cabin heating system, and the introduction of metric instrumentation — metric altimeter, oil-pressure gauge in Kilogrammes, Air-Speed Indicator in Km. per hour, fuel gauges in litres, and notices in German, etc. Finished in a striking maroon and white scheme, with dark-red interior trim, OE-DEW was delivered to Austria during May 1969, while its immediate predecessor, G-AWSW was still tied down outside the Rearsby canteen.

By now it was obvious that Sir Billy Butlin had no real need of the aircraft, and duly planned to auction it with proceeds going, once again, to the Society that had previously raffled it. The successful bidder (thought to be Fred Pontin and Hughie Green) presented it to the Air Training Corps, who in turn allocated it to No.5 Air Experience Flight at Cambridge. Eventually G-AWSW found its new home, when it was flown to Cambridge by television personality, Hughie Green, and from where it later operated with the serial XW635.

Some years previously, Beagle had proposed a floatplane version of the D5/180, but had shelved work before the prototype (3681) had been built. It had been reported that the Asko Flugsport Club had specified the fitting of floats, but had accepted the aircraft without for fear of Beagle becoming bankrupt before they were fitted. Beagle's agents in Sweden showed some definite interest in the floatplane concept during 1969, and so Beagle resurrected the idea with a series of proposed Swedish trials in mind. A set of floats was acquired (probably originating from the defunct Auster C4, judging by their orange colour), but the fitting of these floats meant some major alterations to the basic Husky fuselage structure, which therefore delayed the start of the project beyond the initial design stage.

Inevitably the collapse of Beagle brought to an end any further study and an end to what can only be termed as the last of the traditional Auster line, although not in a particularly spectacular manner, for during a run of eight years, only fifteen D5/180s had been built.

In preparing this feature, Auster Quarterly would like to express its gratitude to Ron Neal without whose assistance this article would have lacked an enormous amount of detailed information. Ron joined Auster Aircraft Ltd. as an apprentice during the late fifties, and saw the transition from Auster to Beagle, before Husky production became virtually under his sole charge. During late 1966 he spent some time in Tanzania where he assisted in the assembly of 5H-MMU/V and saw their safe entry into service.

Similarly, we are indebted to Alan and Clive Whale of Romsey, for the use of their photographic studio, and in producing prints for this issue, especially the views on page 139.



Above. G-AVOD (3688) was delivered to Turriff Construction at Baginton on 4/8/67 in a smart mustard yellow and bottle green colour scheme. It has since been acquired by John Hockton though the aircraft is rarely flown these days.

Below. Unofficially known as 'Raffles!' G-AWSW spent some while tethered at Shoreham and Rearsby before acquiring service markings for No. 5 A.E.F. at Cambridge, and in fact became the last Husky to be delivered, apart from the disposal of Beagle's hack 'SNC in 1970.





'VSR at Kingweston as she looks today. Clearly evident in this fine view is the belly-tank, flush landing and nav. lights, and the fitting of a spinner. Note also the owner's personal insignia on the aircraft's rudder. (ALY Aviation BWO2801)

One Man's Aeroplane

A.L.YOUNG

D5/180 HUSKY G-AVSR

The third in our series provides us with an opportunity to detail an aircraft used for business purposes, though Tony Young insists that his Beagle Husky enables him to combine work with pleasure. From his private strip at Kingweston, Somerset, Tony has over the past ten years or so amassed a considerable amount of flying-time devoted to air photographic sorties, and feels that the Husky is probably the best fixed-wing aircraft available for that purpose.

At the same time, the manner in which Tony Young acquired his aircraft serves of sufficient interest to warrant a feature on his flight back from the Middle East, rather than detailing events that make up a typical workload as a photographic platform.

It was back in the mid-sixties when Tony first set thoughts at owning an Auster for it was an Auster 5 (G-ANIR) that he used at Lulsgate for initial P.P.L. spinning tests, since the local flying club's Piper Colts were considered by many to be unsuited to that particular exercise. So having gained his license, Tony set about converting to a tail-wheel aircraft, and did so in Ray Griffin's Auster 5 G-APTU - (See AQ Page 54).

The up-powered version of the Autocrat — the J/1N Alpha — seemed an ideal initial choice during 1967 when he bought Alpha G-AJIP. Putting it to work almost immediately, Tony flew in excess of 1,100 hours in this aircraft in almost four years of operations with, he recalls 'only two engine changes.'

G-AJIP's near demise occurred at 1330 hours on May 5th. 1971 when, flying just north of Newbury, the head came off number one cylinder exhaust valve and tore a hole through the piston. The engine naturally seized, and its owner was forced to put down in the nearest field, but although the landing caused no further damage Tony's efforts to acquire an immediate replacement Gipsy engine proved fruitless - at a time when the air photography season was about to begin. On May 9th. the Alpha was ignominiously brought home from Newbury to Kingweston by lorry for already Tony had decided upon buying a new aeroplane, in order to meet valuable air-photography contracts.

Although the J/1N had proven itself as a good mount for Tony Young's work, it was after all basically a club/touring aeroplane, albeit a good one, but the later Beagle Husky - itself being a development of the basic J/1N - had been designed and built as a rugged and reliable aircraft, aimed at meeting specific tasks outside the realm of a Club training aircraft. Its short-field performance was ideal for 'location work', and the use of a modern engine and systems gave a promise of greater reliability - essential for a business aeroplane. There were, of course, other aircraft that were equally suitably equipped for the job but each had, it seemed, some slight drawback; the Helio Courier, for example, had outstanding flying qualities but was expensive to operate, and even the Polish Wilga Tony found ideal, but feared that spares could become a difficulty.

As each type was inspected in turn, so the field narrowed to Beagle's maid-of-all-work, and on May 11th. Tony Young travelled up to Redhill to test-fly the Tiger Club's Husky G-ATMH, which at the time was up for sale. But having agreed to buy it, Tony discovered that the Devon & Somerset Gliding Club had already made a bid, and which had been accepted. So although the Redhill trip had seemed in vain, it did confirm that the choice of aircraft was the correct one, though in our main article it can be seen that the Tiger Club's Husky was not in fact representative of the true Husky.

The task of actually acquiring a Husky suddenly appeared to be enormous, until on browsing through various copies of 'Flight' a small advertisement, several months old, had announced the sale of such an aircraft that had previously been used in the Middle East, and enquiries revealed, rather surprisingly, that it was still available since its previously intended buyer had encountered problems in his planned use of Heathrow as the aircraft's base.

A deal was struck with the owners, British Insulated Callenders & Cables Ltd., which allowed Tony to fly down to Iran, at the Company's expense, to inspect the Husky, and only after seeing it would the obligation to buy be made. Furthermore B.I.C.C. generously insisted that the sale, if it was to take place, would be made on English soil, and thus incurring the responsibility and the mammoth task of documentation required for bringing the aircraft back to this country.

If B.I.C.C.'s task was a mammoth one, then Tony Young's was equally enormous, for firstly Tony discovered to some horror that his passport had expired, and that only a visit to Newport could guarantee a quick renewal, and as time progressed so did the urgency to complete all the final arrangements. On the morning of Monday May 24th. a visit to the doctor for a host of injections was deemed necessary, after which sufficient money, in American dollars, had to be arranged for incidental expenses - all of which left just enough time to catch the 1220 train from Taunton to London where the bulk of preparatory work was to take place.

Of utmost importance was the obvious need for a co-pilot, who, if not familiar with the Husky, had sufficient knowledge of the route to take the aircraft safely across the eastern Mediterranean. By way of a friend at Heathrow, himself unable to undertake the role due to duty rosters, Tony was led to Chris Hodgkinson, an airline pilot who had just had a holiday cancelled and was moreorless kicking his heels for a couple of weeks. When approached and offered the role of co-pilot, Chris was glad to accept, but with a small request that he be allowed to spend a day in Nice to visit relatives.

With the problem of aircrew solved, Tony turned to other necessities. Bristow Helicopters of Redhill had an operational base at Teheran and frequently flew out across the Middle East and therefore knowing the Iranian terrain well were able to offer the best advice, and even went so far as loaning the various charts necessary to plot the best course home.

A brief and light-hearted moment occurred in the usually dull corridors of Leadenhall Street when insurance cover had to be arranged. It seemed that 'an awful lot of oil was stored at various strategic points around the Middle East', some of these points being ideal staging-posts for refuelling stops, and which had been recommended by Bristows' pilots. It transpired that the Husky and occupants had to be insured for no less than £4,000,000 - at third party risk! Whatever risks were involved, none was less apparent than the amount of water that had to be crossed, so the next day, after leaving the Iranian embassy with the vitally-needed visas for the journey, Tony conveniently located a SARBE life-jacket in Paddington, through the good services of his next door neighbour, while over at the B.L.A.C. offices in Victoria, he collected a two-man dinghy, although hopefully it was not destined to be used during this trip.

Tony had, in the meantime, been booked aboard a BOAC VC-10 flight to Teheran later in the day, but had promptly missed it due to the need to complete all the arrangements to his satisfaction. Instead he decided upon the 1700 flight to Geneva where, without too long a delay, he could transfer to an Iranian Airlines aircraft for the final flight to Teheran. In view of the fact that the planned departure from Geneva was scheduled for 2230 hours, this route allowed just enough time to snatch some sleep in the Airport lounge, though as it turned out, in the wake of the infamous Dawson Field hijacking incident, the Swiss airport security guards were justifiably wary of anyone seemingly 'loitering about' or waiting for Middle East flights. Inevitably the essential need for sleep was not to be gained at Geneva, nor was it possible aboard the Iranian Boeing 707, in view of the persistent and uncomfortably high noise level.

Eventually at 0520 hours on the morning of May 26th. Tony arrived at Mehrabad, Teheran's main international airport, whereupon he immediately taxied to his hotel and after a shower met B.I.C.C.'s Contracts Manager, Jimmy Milne for an early breakfast.

Because of the curious legal aspects of flying in Iran, the Husky had been registered to Milne, and had retained its British registration letters, G-AVSR. Its function in Iran had been as an observational and communications mount during the construction of a 500-mile pipeline from Teheran to the Persian Gulf. Once the contract had been completed, as it had been, the aircraft was declared redundant, but when Tony returned to Mehrabad to inspect the chocked and tethered aircraft the sight of 'VSR left no doubts in his mind that the sale was definitely on. It was immaculate in every detail, and as an added bonus, it only then became known that the Company held a sizeable quantity of consumable spares at the nearby airfield of Qaleh Morgeh, just south-west of the city, and that these were naturally included in the sale, a fact not mentioned by B.I.C.C.'s London office.

So the long haul down to Iran including the loss of sleep at Geneva was beginning to seem more than worthwhile, especially when after a close scrutiny of the aircraft Tony Young and Chris Hodgkinson, who had since arrived direct from London, decided that they would, in fact, fly the aircraft back to England.

In the meantime Tony took time off to inspect the log-books of G-AVSR. They recorded a first flight at Rearsby on October 17th. 1967, after which it had been flown to Biggin Hill by Trevor Howard on November 16th. for the fitting of extra radio equipment, before the aircraft was positioned at Redhill for its new owner. On the 18th. James Baring and Tom Storey had cleared customs at Gatwick for the delivery flight to Iran, routing via Toussus-le-Noble — Nice — Rotieurbe — Brindisi — Athens — Rhodes — Nicosia — Beirut — T.1 (a desert refuelling station) — Baghdad, arriving at Teheran on the 30th. after 31 hours 14 minutes total flying time.

The flight out to Iran appeared to have been made at a leisurely pace, and certainly longer than Tony Young could afford for the return journey. In fact Baring and Story had encountered a three-day delay at Beirut, although the terse entry against November 29th. 'Intercepted by two Mig-17s between H.2 and the Syrian border at 9,500 feet' could hardly have been described as a leisurely occurrence. Following its arrival in Iran, 'VSR had been re-positioned to its operational base at Qaleh Morghi from where Jimmy Milne made most of the aircraft's flights. As the pipeline progressed so longer duration flights had been found necessary, and occasionally the Husky was picketed out at points along the route, notably at Arak and Khorramabad. It seemed that between these points, roughly prepared strips beside construction sites were used, hence the need to operate an aircraft with the attributes such that the Husky endowed, a fact which no doubt accounts for the general lack of 'incidents' throughout its short career. However, on June 12th. 1968 the prop and starboard undercarriage had been damaged during a take-off accident, and for some months 'VSR had remained grounded awaiting a new engine and prop from Hants. & Sussex Aviation. The Portsmouth-based Company, not having a replacement cruise-prop in stock had despatched a fine-pitch prop as a temporary measure, but Jimmy Milne had decided to leave this prop fitted, and it was still on the aircraft when Tony Young saw the aircraft at Mehrabad. (Curiously when Tony Young changed props in the U.K. some years later, he found that Hants. & Sussex still had the intended cruise-prop in stock, and so it was eventually fitted.)

After its C.of A. renewal in January 1969, flights increased in regularity and duration, and throughout the year 'VSR had been airborne almost every other day, until October 29th. when, the aircraft having been tied down, the region was struck by a freak hailstorm. Such was the sheer ferocity of the storm and the size of the hailstones that the aircraft's fabric surfaces were substantially damaged. Those surfaces at right angles to the storm, i.e. undercarriage leg, dorsal fin, etc. were hit worse, as a result of which the local engineer condemned the damage, though the fabric had not been completely holed, and so it was decided to completely recover the entire aircraft. When the work had been completed it then transpired that the engineer responsible for condemning the storm damage had not, in fact, been qualified for fabric work, and so a further delay had occurred until July 8th. 1970 while a suitably-qualified engineer was found in Kuwait and brought up to inspect the aircraft and clear the documentation for its return to normal flying duties. According to the log-books, no further mishaps appeared to have taken place, until May 22nd. 1971 when 'VSR was flown from Qaleh Morghi to Mehrabad to await Tony Young's inspection.

Before flying down to Iran, Tony had contacted Ambrose Hitchman at Hants. & Sussex, knowing that as a previous Commercial Manager of Beagle he was likely to know the specification and likely condition of this particular Husky, and after his arrival in Teheran Tony was able to agree that 'VSR had almost every conceivable optional extra that had been offered by Beagle, apart from a cabin heater and a glider towing-hook. Indeed it had been built with a full blind-flying panel, stall-warning indicator, large balloon tyres, long-range fuel tank, adjustable front seats, folding rear seat, Scott steerable tailwheel, flush-fitting navigational lights, landing and taxi lights, perspex starboard door panel, and a side-mounted flap control lever, etc. The only item that had not been retained was the original silver and green factory finish, for when 'VSR had been recovered in 1970, the aircraft had been repainted **white** and green, and probably at the same time acquired its most un-Beagle-like fin flash. Nevertheless parked at Mehrabad, G-AVSR presented itself as a rare bargain, being probably the best-equipped Husky built, and having been meticulously looked after, despite the conditions under which it operated, and whatsmore in five years the airframe hours had only amounted to 396.25.



The D5/180 Husky G-AVSR seen parked and tethered at Mehrabad when Tony Young first saw her, on May 26th. 1971. (A.L. Young)

Thursday May 27, 1971.

Before Tony Young and Chris Hodgkinson could start their journey homeward, there was still a considerable amount of documentation to clear, before they could finalise a flight-plan. Clearances from the embassies of Iraq and the Lebanon proved to be relatively straightforward, but as had been expected the Syrian embassy was a more difficult encounter. It had been favourable to overfly Syria, but the Syrian authorities refused permission to overfly their country and demanded that if their border be crossed, then the two pilots had to land at Damascus and nowhere else. With the situation in the Middle East being extremely tense at the time, the Syrians perhaps had a good reason for being hostile, and so the flight-plan duly included Damascus as an intermediary stop.

After lunch the two men went over to Qaleh Morghi to sort through the spares holding, and to select those items that were considered necessary for the flight. These were taken back to Mehrabad and loaded aboard the Husky, together with other vital sundries, such as a jerrican of fresh water should they be forced down in the Iraqi desert. The final preparation was undoubtedly the most important, that being a local flight, fully laden, in order to familiarise themselves with the aircraft, and at 1530 hours 'VSR was flown for a brief fifteen minute circuit of Mehrabad, after which everything was set for the flight home.

By way of a celebration, G-AVSR's crew took time off for an evening meal, for Tony Young was keen to sample the speciality of most local restaurants, that being, not unnaturally a delicacy from the not too distant Black Sea. Styled as Caviar Blini, it consisted of a small pancake decked with whipped cream and topped with caviar, whereupon should the recipient find this to his liking, could order a 'double-decker' or 'triple-decker' etc. It all seemed a fitting end to a hectic day, but back at the hotel, Tony had a restless night throughout which he was continually sick and managed little sleep — the second sleepless night in one week. This he had put down to the richness of a meal which he later claims 'a poor aerial photographer was not used to!' It was in fact the beginning of something that he had not bargained for.

Friday May 28 1971

The first leg from Mehrabad to Baghdad was undoubtedly the most difficult, for it meant crossing the Zagros mountain range. It was also the longest section, being 463 nautical miles. Consequently, take-off from the Iranian capital was set for 0400 hours, early in view of Baghdad being almost six hours of flying away, and on the other side of a mountain range. The peaks in the Zagros range rise to some 14,500 feet, but due to the aircraft being fully-laden, this had meant flying at full throttle all the way. But with the fine-pitch propeller and an extremely high outside air temperature, the Husky simply refused to climb high enough to clear the peaks. Fortunately vegetation had grown across the mountain slopes, causing updrafts of air which pushed the aircraft up to 13,000 feet and then by negotiating various valleys below the cloud-hidden peaks, 'VSR slowly passed over the range. Once clear of the Zagros, 'VSR was lowered to denser air in an effort to increase the flying speed, and the remainder of this first leg was flown at a comfortable 8,000 feet.

By this time Tony Young was beginning to experience severe throat and stomach pains, which he still put down to the previous night's meal, but it had meant that his co-pilot had to undertake most of the flying at this stage. Ahead of them, Baghdad airport approach was almost completely encompassed by forbidden military areas which meant that the landing procedure involved dog-legging to a position about fifty miles to the north. But by now the effect of flying most of the way at full throttle and thus using fuel at an alarming rate was beginning to cause some concern, though despite this, and the pending collapse of one of the pilots, Iraqi officials insisted that the correct approach procedure be maintained. Only after the near-delirious Tony Young managed to stop his BOAC co-pilot from rounding out at fifty-odd feet, as he was normally inclined to do aboard a VC-10, did the aircraft land safely — in a temperature of well over 30 degrees centigrade.

So what Tony Young had decided was a small stomach upset was by now taking a more serious turn. In short he was feverishly ill, and immediately declared a hospital case, but a visit to a Baghdad hospital is 'an experience never to be forgotten, nor if one can help, to be repeated.'

'The surgery appeared to be a makeshift affair with only a consulting couch, a small table and a slab. Patients queued from the table to the nearest wall, around the surgery wall, through an open doorway and along the outside corridor. Everybody naturally witnessed each other's diagnosis and treatment, although the treatment appeared to be identical for each patient — an inspection of the throat with the aid of a spatula kept in an enamel shaving mug full of what tasted distinctly like Jeyes fluid. When I reached the head of the queue the doctor made his routine inspection of the throat and promptly diagnosed pharyngitis, and suggested the use of a hospital bed for three days. Chris queried his analysis with some alarm, but the doctor described the precise symptoms with amazing accuracy. It had not after all been the result of a rich caviar meal, although that and some lack of sleep had probably precipitated the fever. But if the flight-schedule was to be maintained to some degree, then the stay in hospital had to be ruled out. So the doctor prescribed a course of tablets, an injection, and a good night's sleep. I asked him how he was going to inject, to which he answered casually 'Intramuscular — take off your trousers.' As I began to lower my trousers, so a hub of twitters and mumbblings went on between the onlookers until those in the outside corridor surged forward to catch a glimpse of the whitest bottom that they had seen in their lives!

So installed in the best hotel in Baghdad beside the River Tigris, Tony Young slept continuously for fifteen hours as the fever passed its height.

Saturday May 29 1971

The original flight-plan worked out in Teheran was now a day behind schedule, and they still faced the grim thought of passing through Damascus, the point where a couple of years previously entrants in the London — Australia Air Race had been held up for some considerable time. Feeling better, although still unable to eat, Tony Young deemed himself sufficiently fit for the next leg across Syria. The flight to Damascus proved itself to be wholly uneventful and after almost six hours in the air, 'VSR was refuelled, and the Syrian authorities, as expected, scrutinized every conceivable document. 'If they had asked for one more form, we would have been unable to supply it, remembers Tony. However, they seemed satisfied that all was in order, and the aircraft was airborne within the hour for the short hop to Beirut, and where it was picketed down for the night, and the crew retired for a well-earned rest.

Sunday May 30 1971

Up to now all the flying had been over either desert or mountain, but after climbing out from Beirut the terrain was to be completely different, for ahead of it the Husky had several days of flying over water, across the eastern Mediterranean to Southern Europe. They say that in these parts flying is 95 per cent boredom and 5 per cent sheer terror, and with the latter part seemingly behind them, Tony and Chris set course for the long 394-mile haul to the island of Rhodes. Only after periodically transferring control of the aircraft to each other to relieve the strain and boredom did they finally reach Rhodes five-and-a-half hours later, and the Husky was again safely on the ground for refuelling while her crew sat through a welcome lunch. Tony Young could afford a little more than a two-hour stopover, before they were once more airborne, and homeward-bound, for the Met. office at Rhodes had warned of a strong headwind for the crossing of the Dodecanese islands. So, cautiously the next stage was planned to terminate at Athens, where both Tony and Chris decided to wait for the wind to drop and only attempt the next leg after seeing how the weather fared the following morning.

Monday May 31 1971

If the previous day's achievement of flying 619 miles in 8½ hours was any yardstick, then it seemed safe enough to plan on making the island of Elba by nightfall. The headwind had eased slightly, but there was still the need for an early departure from Athens — at 0450 hours. Climbing out over the Bay of Corinthus, past the island of Corfu and across the Strait of Otranto meant another day of flying almost continuously over water, to be broken only by a lunchtime refuelling stop at the Italian port of Brindisi. By now the two pilots were beginning to feel more at ease since they had left the Middle East, and readily settled into a working routine. The aircraft also seemed more at ease as the two pilots applied their own flying techniques, though there were still problems ahead that were seemingly designed to hamper their progress. None less, in fact, than the situation that faced them after crossing the ankle of Italy towards the Tyrrhenian Sea, for by now they were entering the Naples ATC zone. As the Husky approached the Sarento beacon, Tony Young radioed the usual identification to Naples, but the instructions he received afterwards provided a not too pleasant prospect. He was courteously informed by the Italian controller to maintain a flight level of below one thousand feet for the crossing to Elba, and as he dropped altitude over the warm Mediterranean so the visibility also reduced, until they were flying in moderate haze and with a forward vision of less than five miles. Despite continuous requests to Naples to climb out of the haze, Tony Young was forced to heed instructions and continue flying in extremely uncomfortable conditions, for apart from the problem of visibility, the low altitude 'didn't give you much shouting time, if the 'old donkey' up front decided to stop, before you were in the drink.'

However, once out of the Naples zone, Tony immediately climbed to 5,000 feet for a pleasant final run to Elba, for in spite of the frustrations incurred en route they had managed to fly over seven hundred miles, and had remained airborne for almost ten hours during the course of the day. It had already been decided to use the beautiful uphill grass airstrip at Marino de Campo, though realising that this involved flying in low over the bay and shoreline towards the mountain that sloped away from the northern end of the runway. But then only after touching down safely did the final snag become evident. The aircraft needed fuel badly, but so, as it turned out, did the airstrip's fuel bowser. Fuel, it seemed was expected within the week, and so having experienced far worse problems than an airstrip out of fuel, the two men decided to find a hotel and plan their next course of action after a meal and a good night's sleep.

Tuesday June 1 1971

It was the groundsman who came up with the answer, for he had put some fuel to one side beforehand, reserving it for the old tractor that he used for cutting the grass runway. He agreed, following some bargaining, to sell just thirty litres which would prove sufficient to enable 'VSR to make the short hop across the bay to Corsica where the aircraft could take on a full tank with no further delay. So, having overcome another minor setback, and with the aircraft suitably refuelled at Corsica, Tony and Chris set course for the French mainland, towards Nice where, after a ninety-minute flight, Tony could complete his part of the bargain struck back in England, when he agreed that his co-pilot could spend a day visiting relatives in the French resort.

Wednesday June 2 1971

Another early start at five in the morning was made for what was planned to be the final part of the journey. The first stage was a five-hour leg to the famous Paris suburb airfield, at Toussus-le-Noble. But almost immediately after taking-off from Nice so the weather again deteriorated to virtual intermittent IFR conditions, and instead of heading along a direct course to Paris, the route selected was to fly west along the French coast to Marseilles, and then due north to Lyons, and on to the French capital. Lunch and refuelling took just over two hours before the Husky was once again on course at 2,000 feet for the final run into Gatwick. Almost predictably, as the northern coast of France was crossed, so the aircraft began to enter typically British weather, and in the event, neither pilot saw any sign of the English Channel during the crossing.

Finally, at 1513 hours and after the short two-hour leg from Toussus, the Gatwick threshold was crossed, and the Beagle Husky, G-AVSR, widely thought at one time never to grace British skies again, had returned after an absence of only four years. The journey from Teheran to Gatwick — a distance of some 3,056 n.miles had accounted for just over 40 hours flying time, and had been achieved at an average speed of 88 mph. For Tony Young it meant that he was back in business with a new aeroplane and well in time for the new season.

Having cleared customs at Gatwick Tony Young and Chris Hodgkinson bade each other farewell, each thanking the other for the experiences that had occurred during the past eight days. For the Husky's new owner, only the final one-hour leg remained, down to Kingweston strip, near Charlton Mackrell in Somerset.

The flight back from Teheran had been a long one, beset with the various snags of flying out of a virtual war-zone. The attack of pharyngitis had not helped either, and as he flew down to Somerset, Tony reflected on the past few days. But as he approached to land at his private strip he was to receive a final and unexpected snag. Since he had last flown from Kingweston back at the beginning of May, the grass had grown to such a length that the actual landing area was almost completely hidden. Circling the strip he quietly gave the prospect of landing some careful study, though with the satisfaction that he knew the strip well, brought 'VSR in to land, applying 'the most back pressure on a stick in all my life.'

So what had turned out to be an epic adventure, coupled with the urgency to get back home for the start of the air photographic season, had ended. Two days of flying entirely over water, two days over desert, and up to 13,000 feet over mountains in a single-engined aeroplane must now be a most sobering thought, but for Tony Young it had certainly proved more than worthwhile.

The day after his arrival home, he removed the port door and took out the sliding windows which prove a hindrance for photographic work. By Friday lunchtime a Terrier-type lift-up window had been installed, and the door replaced, so that on Saturday June 5th. the first of many sorties could be made.

Some while afterwards the stock of spares arrived from Teheran which still provide a valuable back-up service to a very satisfied owner. Says Tony 'The flight back from Iran more than justified the discomforts, and 'VSR has since met more than my requirements. It is truly a very fine aeroplane.'

FOOTNOTE During September 1971, a replacement engine was located for the J/1N G-AJIP. It was in a Tiger Moth that had been earmarked for static exhibition at Keith Fordyce's museum at Torbay. The log-books indicated that sufficient hours were remaining to warrant a purchase, so a deal was struck which involved the fitting of G-AJIP's broken engine into the Tiger, after which the J/1N was fitted with a tow-bar and loaned to the Compton Abbas Gliding Club for the 1972 season. When the airfield closed later that year, the Alpha was returned to Kingweston from where it was sold to a Mr. Phillips of Warminster, on November 8th. The aircraft was kept at Earl Trollope's strip at Longbridge Deverill until it was written-off in a crash after hitting trees in a valley two miles west of Longbridge Deverill.



A close-up study of Tony's unique personal motif, which appears on 'VSR's rudder.



Tony Young's J/1N Alpha G-AJIP seen outside its partially constructed 'do-it-yourself' hangar at Kingweston.

Tony Young receives his 'prize' after being highly-placed in a navigational competition at the I.A.P.C. Rally, at Shobdon last year.
(J.P. Webster)



NEWS IN BRIEF

By the time these notes appear in print, the Charnwood Exhibition at the Loughborough Town Hall should be over. Due to be displayed as a representative of the County's past aviation links is a long defunct bare Autocrat fuselage that has languished at Leicester East for some seventeen years. If reports are correct then this is the unique **Auster 5 G-ALNV** originally converted from RT578 c/n 1216, but later dismantled and returned to Rearsby where it was brought up to J1/ standard and allotted the new c/n 3147. Since October 1959, it has been stored at Leicester East, and plans are now in hand for a full restoration after the Charnwood Exhibition. At one stage it was hoped to display the Leicester Technology Museum's **AOP.9 XP280** as well at Loughborough, but plans have now been dropped, though it will be fully assembled and placed on permanent display in the Museum's planned new gallery at Corporation Road.

Over at Leicester East, Ron Neal has since January been effecting much-needed repairs to the fuselage of **J/5F Aiglet Trainer G-AMUI**. This spent some considerable time derelict at Crowland, during which time it was owned by a Mr. Piper. Some while later, it was purchased by R.F. Saywell Ltd. of Shoreham from where it was conveyed to Leicester. When repairs are complete, 'MUI will be returned to Shoreham for possible restoration. It will be interesting to see Saywell's other **J/5F G-AMTB**, currently stored near Partridge Green, Sussex when work is completed in converting it to an instructional airframe for an overseas buyer, in view of the fact that since its last C. of A. expired on 12/9/65, the framework has deteriorated to such an extent that full restoration to flying status is out of the question. We understand that in the process the fuselage will be shortened considerably.

Progressing satisfactorily towards flying condition at Leicester East during April was the **AOP.9 XR269**, purchased earlier this year by Adrian Tuttle and Carl Tyers from F & H (Aircraft) Ltd. In the opposite direction, Adrian Tuttle's **J/1 Autocrat G-AJDW** passed to the Sibson-based F & H (Aircraft) Ltd. where Bill Fisher is now massing a fair-sized collection of Austers. Apart from the Autocrat 'JDW, he has the **Auster 6A G-ARIH** - for possible conversion to Terrier 1 standard - and **AOP.9 WZ672 (G-BDER)**, both currently airworthy and the latter up for sale, the dismantled **AOP.9 XR240 (G-BDFH)**, and the fire-damaged fuselage of **Terrier 2 G-ASYN** acquired from Netherthorpe.

Further north at Acaster Malbis, York, the ex-Congresbury **AOP.9 XP247** is now with the Yorkshire Aircraft Preservation Society, while in the Midlands the **J/2 Arrow G-AWLX** has once again been on the move. Originally it was imported into Blackbushe on 6/5/67 as F-BGJQ by gun-dealer Neville Revers-Higgins, and named 'Barbara Ann II', as a replacement for his Argu G-AJSN. A year later it was itself replaced by Chiltern G-AFSV, and delivered to D.P. Golding at Thrupton on 11/5/68 and re-registered G-AWLX on July 10th. Some while later, on 23/4/70 its C. of A. expired, and during May 1972 was transported by road from Ipswich to Solihull, where it has resided ever since in a back garden, having been officially withdrawn from use on 14/9/73. Earlier this year the remains were bought by Mike Cuttall (co-owner of J/1 G-AHAY), and towed by car from Solihull to Gloucester on 10/2/76 where it is now undergoing active restoration.

Just prior to his tragic death, David Miller sold his interest in Border Garage at Wellow, and his **Auster 5 G-APTU** which had been stored here since February 1974 was transferred to the nearby Bramble Hill Hotel on 10/2/76 for continued storage and daily prop-swinging. The remains of Miller's **J/1N G-AHAT** have resided in a local dis-used pig-sty since its arrival from Old Sarum on February 1st. 1975 (See AQ page 55).

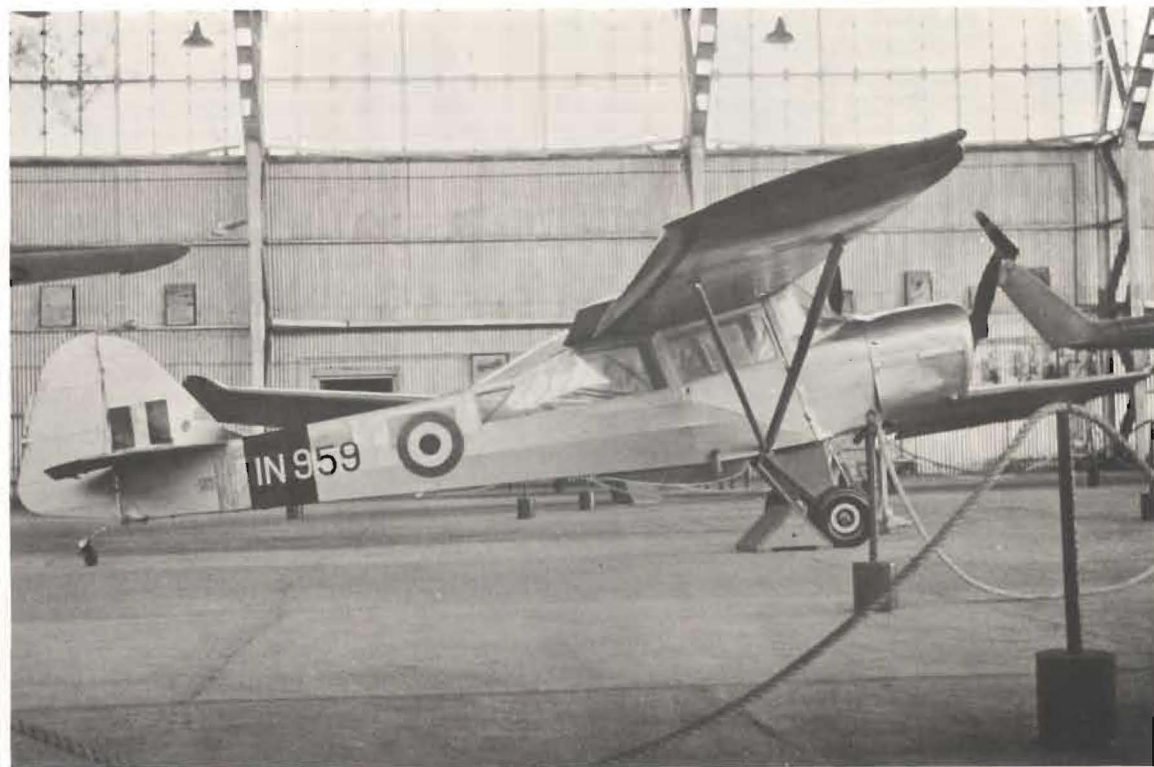
At Stubbington, Les Groves and Ian Hammond continue to house their collection of sundry airframes, although the **J/1N G-AJYB** was moved into storage at Lee-on-Solent on 8/2/76. Officially withdrawn from use at Bickmarsh on 4/2/74, this was acquired from an owner in Northampton during October 1974. The **J/5B G-AXMN**, originally imported to Blackbushe by Maurice Robinson as F-BGPN on 22/7/69 arrived from Shawdene during November 1974, while a third airframe in the Groves-Hammond stable is the **J/1N G-AHHU** which forced-landed at Soria, in Spain as long ago as 10/6/63. Afterwards it was brought back to the Isle of Wight where it was stored for some years until transferred to Stubbington.

Over at Southend, the **Terrier 2 G-ASAK** is now flying again after a four-month engine change, and duly attended the Old Warden Fly-In on April 25th., while at the Cecil Jones Comprehensive School, close to Southend Airport, the **Auster 5 G-ANHZ** has arrived from Biggin Hill, and is now being slowly restored by pupils, hopefully in military markings, and more hopefully as TW384. (We are grateful to L.Groves, R.Neal, P.Stoddart, A.Jesson, M.D.Fisher, M.Cuttall, D.Miller, M.R.Cain, A.J. Jackson, and Air-Britain for the above notes.)



Adrian Tuttle's AOP.9 XR269 (alias G-BDXY) made its first flight for over a decade on May 31st. 1976, and is seen here at Leicester East immediately beforehand. (Ron Neal)

As a contrast this Indian Air Force AOP.5 (IN959) is strictly grounded in the I.A.F. Museum at New Delhi. With the c/n 1358, the Mk.5 was originally built for the R.A.F. as TJ268 and saw service in Asia before being sold locally as VT-COG. It was taken onto Indian Air Force charge during 1957, and was photographed by Steve Simms during October 1967.



TAYLORCRAFT MODEL E

Individual Service Histories - 2

- 287 MZ162 Delivered to 20 MU on 12/3/43 for release to 653 Squadron on the 20th. On 21/2/44, '162 was issued to 83 Group Comm. Flt. but shortly afterwards sustained damage, necessitating its return to Taylorcraft on April 14th. Repairs completed, it was ferried to 20 MU on 17/6/44 for sale to the R.A.A.F. To 47 MU on July 19th. '162 was shipped ex-Liverpool docks on 30/7/44 aboard SS 'Samanco' (with MZ122 etc.) Subsequently it received the serial A11-7.
- 288 MZ163 Delivered to 656 Squadron on 11/3/43 but transferred to 652 Squadron on the 23rd. On 8/3/44 it was issued to 168 Squadron but sustained damage shortly afterwards causing its removal to Leicester for repairs on the 17th. MZ163 was ferried to 20 MU on 12/5/44, and on to 47 MU on 4/7/44 for packaging. On 8/7/44 '163 was shipped ex-Manchester docks (with MZ157) and arrived at Bari on 3/11/44. Its fate remains unknown.
- 289 MZ164 Delivered to 20 MU on 15/3/43 for release to 653 Squadron on the 20th. On 7/3/44 it was issued to 184 Squadron but sustained Cat.B damage on 28/9/44, returning to Taylorcraft for repairs on 3/10/44. Ferried to 20 MU on 2/12/44, '164 was released for 22EFTS on 22/1/45, and following several minor accidents returned to 20 MU on 3/4/46 for storage and sale to the R.Neth.A.F. On 23/9/46 it was conveyed to 47 MU for packaging and was shipped ex-Dagenham on 21/10/46 (with MZ125 etc.)
- 290 MZ165 Delivered to 655 Squadron on 13/3/43, but transferred to 662 Squadron on 18/10/43. On 11/4/44 '165 passed to 442 Squadron until 7/7/44, when it was returned to Taylorcraft for sundry repairs. Ferried to 20 MU on 30/8/44, it was later issued to 222 MU for dismantling and packaging, on 9/9/44, prior to being shipped ex-Sunderland on 26/9/44 aboard SS 'Parkroyal' (?). On 21/10/44 it arrived at Brindisi. Subsequently it was operated by 318 Squadron when on 20/11/45 a Polish pilot forced-landed in a field at Monza, Italy after running out of fuel during a cross-country flight to Milan, having flown into fog over Milan and turned back. The aircraft skidded on wet grass and crashed into trees, possibly being written-off as it did so. Whatever, MZ165 was struck off charge on 14/3/46.
- 291 MZ166 Delivered to 20 MU on 15/3/43 for release to 653 Squadron on the 20th. After sundry repairs at the manufacturers, '166 was ferried to 20 MU on 18/3/44 for release to 38 Group Comm. Flt. on 21/4/44, but was returned to 20 MU on 14/1/45 for disposal. According to AHB records MZ166 was sold to Taylorcraft on 12/9/45, but in the event was sold to the R.Neth. A.F. and coded 'E', and later receiving the serial R-5. Eventually it was civilianised as PH-NGF.
- 292 MZ167 Delivered to 20 MU on 15/3/43 for release to 653 Squadron on the 20th. On 31/7/43 it was damaged at Poverty Bottom Water Works Sussex when the wind having changed direction during an exercise, '167 badly overshot its landing in a selected field. Returned to Taylorcraft for repairs, '167 was ferried afterwards to 20 MU again on 23/6/44, MZ167 then spent a short period with 22 EFTS until 1/9/44 when it was ferried back to 20 MU. Sold to the R.Neth.A.F. via 47 MU on 30/9/46, '167 was conveyed to Dagenham on 21/10/46 and shipped out aboard a Dutch naval vessel, probably being sent to Indonesia with No.6 ARVA.
- 293 MZ168 Delivered to 20 MU on 15/3/43 for release to 653 Squadron on the 20th. On 5/3/44 it was issued to 313 Squadron until 27/7/44 when it passed to 127 Squadron. Conveyed to Taylorcraft on 30/12/44 for a major inspection MZ168 was later ferried to 20 MU on 12/4/45 for storage. To 47 MU on 7/9/45 the airframe was sold to the R.A.A.F. and shipped ex-Liverpool on 21/11/45 aboard the SS 'Empire Clarendon', arriving in Sydney on 3/1/46. Subsequently MZ168 became A11-55, and later civilianised as VH-ALS.

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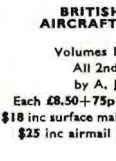
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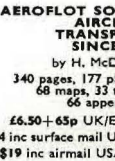
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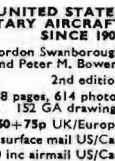
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