



## P7056 Club

### Home of the Westland Whirlwind Fighter

## Christmas Newsletter 2021

Well, it's that time of year again, I swear that as you get older time appears to go so much quicker, and this year has been shooting by for the Project but with a very different reason.

Since Pete has been on board with us, the whole idea of a static Whirlwind has taken on new life, we can watch the airframe of P7056 grow week by week into a recognisable shape.

Very soon Pete will be able to fit the cannons to the support frame in the nose of the Whirlwind, we are still looking for one person to donate or a group to donate £250 towards the manufacture of one cannon as the other 3 are already catered for. Pete will construct these out of aluminium blocks which will carry the names of the donor/ donors. I did ask him if we could have ones that went bang but he declined.

If you would like to have your name on a replica of a Hispano 20mm cannon, then let me know via the email address at the end of this newsletter.



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Due to the growing complexities of the build it has been decided to put the project on a much firmer legal footing vis-à-vis the charity; all existing Project Team members will be invited to become trustees of the project's charitable organisation. This is because we feel we need to formalise the Project's team a little more.

Fairly soon we will have Project artefacts on display at a third-party site i.e. the Kent Battle of Britain Museum and a certain amount of 'legalese' has also to be put in place.

We're making this statement so all members are aware we are taking into account of all the matters that surround the making and displaying of a replica Whirlwind.

## Message from the Chair

"I have been watching with great interest the steady progress being made in making parts for an aircraft whose manufacturer ceased production nearly 80 years ago. It is quite amazing to see the progress being made in building the full-size metal replica of a Westland Whirlwind. When I first heard of the project, I had serious doubts as to whether anything would come of it but I have been proved wrong. My congratulations to the production team and I look forward to seeing the completed Whirlwind someday not too far in the future. The Whirlwind found fame not in its originally intended role as a bomber destroyer but as a heavily armed ground attack fighter. The fact that its pilots had two engines to get them home after a highly risky mission to occupied France must have been a great confidence booster. Indeed, I have heard that many felt that the replacement aircraft in the role, the Typhoon, was not as good. It would be wonderful if the replica can be completed in time for the 80th anniversary of the Whirlwind's end of front-line service in 1943.

May I offer my congratulations to all on the Whirlwind Fighter Project Team and wish them a Happy Christmas and a Successful New Year. My father, the first Whirlwind squadron commander, would have been immensely proud of what you have achieved."

Tom Eeles

## Club News

The club night that was held in July went without a hitch, with 12 members present and a video of George Wood and a good chat about the project.

Unfortunately, the same couldn't be said for the November club meeting.

With 15 members present and two videos to show, one with Eric Brown and the other with John McClure along with a talk by David Chant on the Peregrine engine, what could go wrong. Well!!!

Peter Lancaster and I checked out both videos before the meeting to make sure that they worked ok, which they did, but when I went back to show them, they had disappeared.

I then found that I was unable to get back into the meeting for some reason or other using my laptop and had to rejoin on my phone.

I then emailed both videos to Peter which he was able to share thus saving the evening.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Chant for carrying on regardless with his Peregrine talk, and to Peter for stepping in and taking charge.

## Nothing on the Whirlwind was standard or simple

Nothing on the Whirlwind was standard or simple (as we have found out to our cost). Even the spinners, often dismissed as just a pointy cone of metal to make the propeller look nice, were complex items. Whirlwind spinners employed the VDM locking design allowing simple access to the de Havilland pitch-change machinery inside – and it seems that these were initially made by the VDM licence holders, Constant Speed Airscrews Ltd of Warwick. The spinners nevertheless had a de Havilland drawing number – P30200A/C.

It seems the complex process was as follows:

Westland draw up a profile to fit (which it does – compare the smooth lines of the Whirlwind nacelle with other in-line designs, which have pronounced chins, shoulders etc). They tell the propeller manufacturer of choice (de Havilland) who then gives the necessary design a DH drawing number. However, De Havilland then use a VDM design, licenced to Constant Speed Airscrews, for the mechanism and structure, combined with their profile drawing, based on a Westland profile. Whether they or Constant Speed Airscrews Ltd, or even VDM Spinners Ltd (of the same address) do the actual manufacturing is uncertain.

One would think that this process involves so many parties that someone would have a design drawing or two. It seems not.

HOWEVER, owing to apparently close links between Government and Sankey's Engineering (in fact one of the Sankey family became the Regional Controller for the Ministry of Production in 1942) a contract to manufacture de Havilland and Rotol spinners was awarded to Sankey's on September 30<sup>th</sup> 1941. A subsequent document would appear to refer of the transfer of ex-Constant Speed Airscrews manufacturing machinery to a new spinner works in 1942 - (sounds like a stitch-up, but I digress).

As the Whirlwind was not cancelled until January 1942 there is a CHANCE that they received plans for the P30200 as a potential part of the new work that they were taking on, even if it is unlikely that they ever produced any.

Therefore, some spinner details MIGHT be at the Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies Service <http://blackcountryhistory.org/collections/institution/GB149/>

In this file: [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=149-db25&cid=5#5](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=149-db25&cid=5#5)

This is the kind of long-shot that we have to pursue – and which has resulted in what we know so far.



## Information needed

Does anyone have any information on G42B cameras? Specifically, drawings or examples of said camera. The controller in the cockpit was interchangeable, fitting on to the same mounting plate - but we could do with knowing if the camera itself was also interchangeable.

## Latest pictures from the Workshop

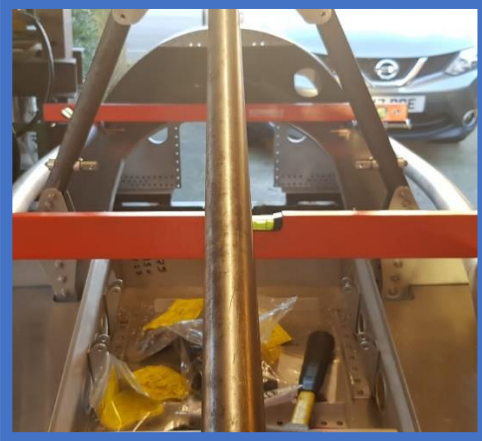
You'll remember Pete's captivating image from his garden of the parts as he had them made in the summer:



Well he has progressed much farther: the cockpit jig has been made and contains a number of the larger framework pieces – into said jig he has placed the control column and the rudder bar (also manufactured by Pete).







Looking forward - pilot's bulkhead, crash bar and support



Gun Sight mount



Starboard cockpit framework - including upper and lower longerons.

# GoFundme

We are still running our fund raiser, so please help if you can, either by donating or spreading the word about the project to like-minded people.

<https://gofund.me/1b47d8b3>

Please feel free to cut and paste this Ecard and send it off to like-minded friends. A small donation of £2.00 Per card sent, payable via our Website would be appreciated.



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