



New Forest Aviation Group.

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2015 TALKS

9th October 'Portsmouth Aviation Aerocar' by Bob Wealthy

13th November 'The Canberra' by Phil Nelson

December No Meeting

2016 TALKS

8th January 'Battle of Britain - 1935' by Stephen Robson,

12th Feb – TBD,

11th March AGM then 'Sopwith Bat Boat' by Bob Wealthy,

8th April 'Flying & Displaying Vintage Aircraft' by Rod Dean



Observant and knowledgeable readers may guess that Mk26b is unusual for a Spitfire. It is - the Mk26b is a 90% scale kit designed by Supermarine Aircraft for 'home' builders and the aircraft is powered by a V6 Isuzu engine. Martin Laking is the lucky man involved in a syndicate of 12 people who were complete strangers at the beginning of the project. To people who are familiar with the constraints of aircraft engineering the amazing thing is that many of the builders were not even engineers - Martin is a local Chiropractor more used to straightening spines than riveting wings. The kits are designed to be as straightforward to build as possible and construction techniques and skills are developed by the individuals with suitable supervision by Light Aircraft Aviation inspectors. In particular builders have to be checked out for drilling holes accurately and carefully along with the associated riveting techniques - there are a lot of rivets - around 11,000 are involved in the construction and the estimated build time is 1100 hours.



The aircraft was designed by Mike O'Sullivan in Australia in the early 90's but the factory is now in Cisco, Texas with the UK agent based in Enstone, Oxfordshire who wants to have a 'squadron' of Mk26s in the UK.

Key structural parts are factory made with the remainder being CNC cut and

pre-drilled aluminium sheeting and additional hardware. The company has acquired permission to use the name Supermarine Aircraft from the owners of the name who are satisfied that what is being built is worthy of the original. The 90% scale is chosen as it gives the largest airframe possible whilst staying within the boundaries of light aircraft construction thus avoiding the need for 'professional' construction. The aircraft was designed as a two seater yet retains the looks of a single seat Spitfire. The wings are designed to be removed simply so as to aid transport and stowage. Care was taken especially with the painting because each rivet hole was filled to give a smooth finish. Equal care was taken with choosing a the recognition letter - whilst EN-A for Enstone was chosen originally it was discovered that the aircraft subsequently became FN indicating its service with 331 Sqn at North Weald and that was used for the final paint scheme.



Martin had hoped that syndicate members would be in flying their Spitfire this year but delays occurred due to hangarage difficulties and initial air test showed up an undercarriage problem. The delay now is to await the final air test but the pilot scheduled for that is none other than Dan Griffiths who is recovering from a shoulder injury sustained in the crash of a real Spitfire at Biggin Hill.