AEROPLANES IN OUTLINE—No. 4
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THE Hawker Hunter

At the 1951 S.B.A.C. show the then un-named Hawker P.1067 became famous in a flash. In the hands of Neville Duke it bored through the Farnborough sky at a speed that compressed its presence into an impact—felt as much as seen and heard. It is commonly agreed from these runs that the P.1067 is in the 700 m.p.h. class and, with superb handling qualities, is the finest known interceptor in the world.

This supremacy seems appropriate on considering the long line of Sopwith and Hawker fighters which are the P.1067’s ancestors but, more directly, the now officially named Hunter stems from three previous Hawker jet designs. First of these was the P.1040 designed in 1944 and first showing was at the ‘48 S.B.A.C. show. This beautifully clean machine, VP401, featured root-intakes to its R.R. Nene which had a bifurcated tail-pipe ejecting from the trailing edge of each wing root to make space for a third fuel tank. Another machine, VP413, was navalised to Spec. N.7/46 and this has developed into the Seahawk, now in production with folding wings of increased span for the Navy.

Produced for research, the P.1052 was a P.1040 with new swept-back wings but retained the original "straight" tail unit. After much development flying the P.1052, VX727 appeared at Farnborough last year in naval guise complete with sting-hook, and could herald a swept successor to the Seahawk. VP401, the first Hawker jet to fly, is now fitted with the A.S. Snarler rocket motor in the tail and is now known as the P.1072.

On 23rd January, 1950, Hawker’s chief designer, Sidney Camm, decided to go a step further than the P.1052 and to produce a new private venture fighter with all surfaces swept-back and a straight-through tail-pipe. As a result the second prototype P.1052 was cut in two at the rear spar line and a new rear fuselage built on. One month and five days after work started, the new P.1081 was flown for the first time on 19th June, 1950, by T. S. Wade. After the new tail end was painted, Wade flew the P.1081 from London to the Brussels Aero Show in 21 mins. Numbered VX279, the P.1081 had a R.R. Nene with provision for reheat. When the machine crashed last year Wade was killed after the ejector seat parachute failed to open.

These three designs paved the way for the P.1067 Hunter which is a new design with a larger fuselage of higher fineness ratio. The prototype, WB 8188, has the R.R. Avon with reheat provision, and plans have been made to fit the A.S. Sapphire which is now developing 8,300 lbs. thrust. Unlike the P.1081, the Hunter has a Martin Baker ejector seat and has recently been flown by crack U.S. test pilots. Although subject to close secrecy the Hunter’s armament is thought to consist of four high velocity 30 mm. guns and production is to commence at Squires Gate, while Glosters will also play a large part at Hucclecote. Australia is also likely to build the Hunter which has been ordered in quantity to serve alongside the contemporary Supermarine Swift in R.A.F. squadrons. The second prototype first flew on May 5th from Dunsfold.

Construction. All metal. All controls power operated and tailplane incidence is varied as part of normal control system. Hydraulically operated split flaps, wide track U.C. retractors forwards.

Specification. Span 33 ft. 8 ins. No other details released.

Colour. High gloss pale green all over. Roundels and fin flash in usual positions, serial in glossy black on rear fuselage and below wings. Original very large roundels above wings now replaced by smaller ones as on drawing.

Notes for Modellers. A dorsal spine runs unbroken from cockpit hood into fin. Wing fairings and fuselage are not gradually merged. Front panel of windscreen is flat. Anti-spin chute housing below rudder will not be fitted to production Hunters.