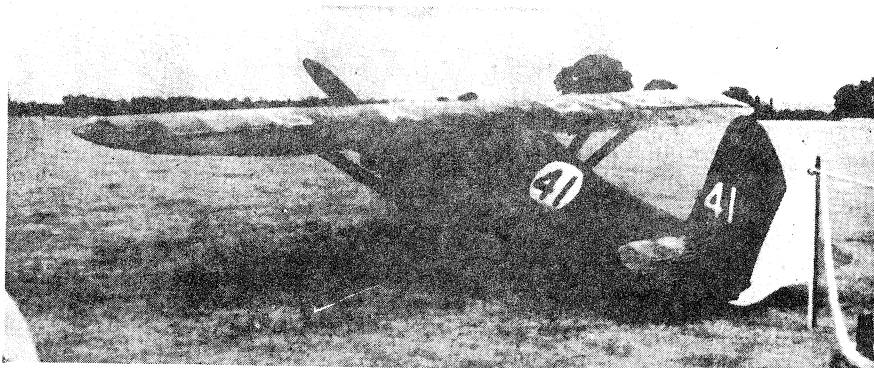


Comper Swift

by Peter G. Cooksley

Comper Swift G-ABUS at the Royal Aeronautical Society Garden Party, Wisley, 1957 (Photo: N. W. Cruwys)



BEST KNOWN OF the designs of the late 1920s by F/Lt. Nicholas Comper, is the seventh, better known as the Swift. This was intended to be a single-seat high-performance sporting aircraft, powered by a 35-h.p. horizontally opposed A.B.C. Scorpion II.

The prototype G-AARX, with different vertical tail surfaces from those that were later to become standard, made its public debut at Brooklands in 1930, after which seven more machines were laid down at the Hooton works, fitted with a variety of engines.

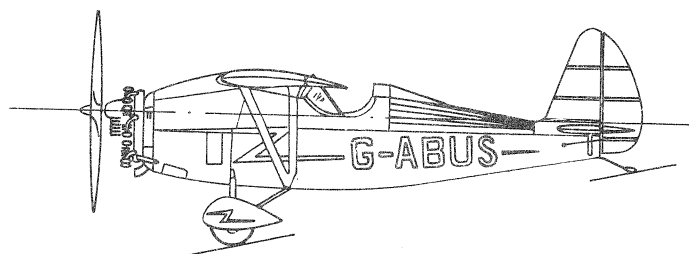
In November 1931 the type demonstrated its ability in the hands of C. A. Butler (later to found Butler Air Transport Ltd. of Sydney, Australia) when the long-range Swift G-ABRE, with an increased fuel capacity of $27\frac{1}{2}$ gal., additional oil tanks and drinking water, flew from Lympne to Darwin in 9 days 2 hours 20 minutes and is recorded as having achieved a take-off run of 120 yards, despite a gross weight of 1,160 lb. The subsequent 22,967-mile tour of Australia was completed in eight weeks. The engine was a 75-h.p. Pobjoy R, which became the most common motor for the type.

The Swift also earned the distinction of being entered in every King's Cup air race from 1930 onwards with the exception of the 1938 event, until the outbreak of war and was a common sight at other air racing events.

During 1932 two 130-h.p. Gipsy Major-powered versions were produced, G-ABWW, entered in the King's Cup for that year on behalf of the Prince of Wales, and G-ABWH owned by the British Air Navigation Co. Ltd. Construction was all wood with steel fittings and fabric covering, and the folding wings reduced the storage problem to that of a large car.

In addition to the prototype, twenty-eight Swifts were registered in Great Britain, including a third Gipsy-engined machine, G-ACBY, which crashed only six months after its C. of A. was issued. Many Swifts found their way abroad, not only to Europe but also the East. Happily G-ABUS, which changed ownership fairly recently, is still with us in flying trim and is a common sight with its headrest and wheel spats.

SPECIFICATION.— Motor: 75-h.p. Pobjoy R or 130-h.p. D.H. Gipsy Major. Span 24 ft., length 17 ft. $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. (18 ft. 4 in. for Gipsy-powered version), height 5 ft. $3\frac{1}{2}$ in., wing area 90 sq. ft., all-up weight 985 lb. (1,130 lb. Gipsy), maximum speed 140 m.p.h. (165 m.p.h. Gipsy).



COMPER C.L.A.7 SWIFT

