

The sole Venom prototype at Brooklands, set up in what appears to be its flying attitude (Photo: "Flight")

Vickers Type 279 Venom

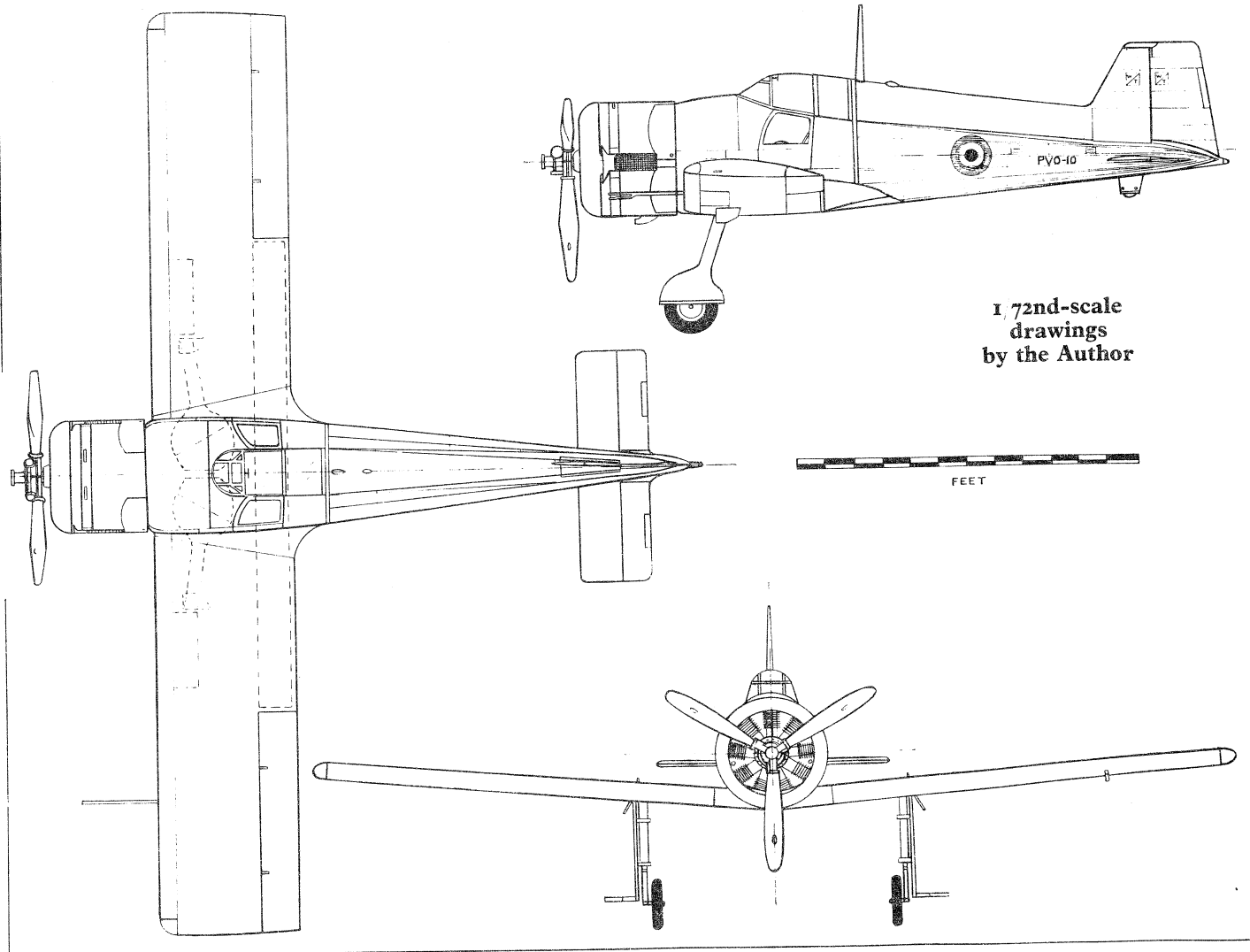
by Peter Lewis

BANTAM-WEIGHT, CHEAP, economical and quick-to-produce fighters have spasmodically engaged the attention of design teams in several countries since World War I. In most cases, after a prelude of publicity and an initial outburst of enthusiasm, the prototypes have come to nought. One of the very few to have achieved production status has been the Folland Gnat of recent years.

An example from the 1930s of the light-

weight concept was the Type 279 Venom built by Vickers and shown at the 1936 S.B.A.C. display. Designed as a private venture day-and-night interceptor fighter to specification F.5/34, the Venom could hardly be said to include beauty among its attributes and yet, at a time when greater attention was being paid to streamlined shapes in pursuit of improved performance, its square-cut lines did possess a certain trim attractiveness. The machine's angularity was an obvious inheritance from its forebears the Vireo and the Jockey, designs brought up to date in the 279. The specification called for at least 275 m.p.h. at 15,000 ft., with a cruising speed of 265 m.p.h. at 20,000 ft.

The powerplant around which the Venom was designed was the Bristol Aquila AE-3s nine-cylinder sleeve-valve radial which developed 625 h.p. at take-off and 600 h.p. at 14,000 ft. An N.A.C.A. cowling, fitted with controllable cooling-gills, enveloped the engine; the propeller



1/72nd-scale drawings by the Author