

An identity crisis: Hawker Sea Fury FB11 “VX730”

John Kemister - Question and answer session

John Kemister: A lot of that approach was a growing process if you like. Like most of our objects, we take care not to rock up to something and say “I’m going to treat it like this”. You’ve got an idea but you’ve got to respect what the object is going to tell you too. Any comments? David!

David Hallam: I think with large objects it’s absolutely essential that projects like that take years.

John Kemister: Take time.

David Hallam: Because if you rush them you’re going to goof it, and you’re going to make mistakes - not see the markings. And things like the Lancaster Bomber, which was done here, the lead time to that was just immense.

John Kemister: Absolutely.

David Hallam: I think John [White] and I started working on it maybe fifteen years before you actually did any work.

John Kemister: Absolutely.

David Hallam: I think that’s a real lesson and a lovely piece of work you’ve done. Thank you.

John Kemister: Is John White here? Okay, we can talk about him. I found it very, very, refreshing yesterday to hear John say that - that he really appreciated people who could take time with their projects. And it’s contrary to the corporate goals usually and you sometimes - you’ve got to fight for it; but please treat your objects with respect for the history that they do present. I think the most I drew out of that project was - for goodness sake - wake up and use raking light in the examinations! This has happened to me three times now by accident. Okay, sure, we go up there and we look at something, but three times by accident I’ve found things on objects. The midget submarine has got flags chiseled on the side of the conning tower. It’s just absolutely fascinating. And the other thing is the surface change. Okay, when I first looked at that aircraft it was dull and weathered and dusty and there was no hope of seeing anything because the surface was so fretted and eroded and scratched, but we put a very light coating of paint on it and it changed the surface sheen on it and I was able to pick up the reflection of the mission markings. So maybe there’s scope there for further work on a nice little, easily removable something-or-other we can put on a painted surface to change the sheen of it and thereby see more detail. Food for thought.