

Home School with Charnwood Museum

Awesome Austers

Aeroplanes used to be made in Charnwood a number of years ago.
Read the factsheet here to find out all about the Auster Aircraft!

Company History

The company started in 1938 as 'Taylorcraft Aeroplanes' and were based at Thurmaston with the final fitting (and flying) taking place at Rearsby where they moved production to in 1946. It was at this time, the company changed the name to Auster—which means 'south wind' in Latin. The company merged in 1961 and became known as Beagle Aircraft.

The light aircraft were originally designed and built to be used for aerial reconnaissance during World War II to support the Royal Artillery on the battlefield. The Auster were popular after World War Two as they were not very expensive.

What are they made from?

Austers are high-wing light monoplanes with a welded steel tubular frame body. The wings have internal wooden struts and aluminium cross-members to create the shape.

The wings, fuselage and tail pane are encased in canvas, stretched tight over the structure! The plane has two rubber tyre wheels on sprung struts below the cabin, and a small sprung tail-wheel.

G-AJRH

The plane on display has been in place since 1998 and was brought into the museum before the final partition between the museum and café was fitted into place...it didn't fly in!



It won the Kings Cup Air Race on 21st July 1956, piloted by James Denyer. This was a cross country air race and in this year was over 68 miles long and there were only 16 planes taking part. It was calculated that the average speed was 124mph!

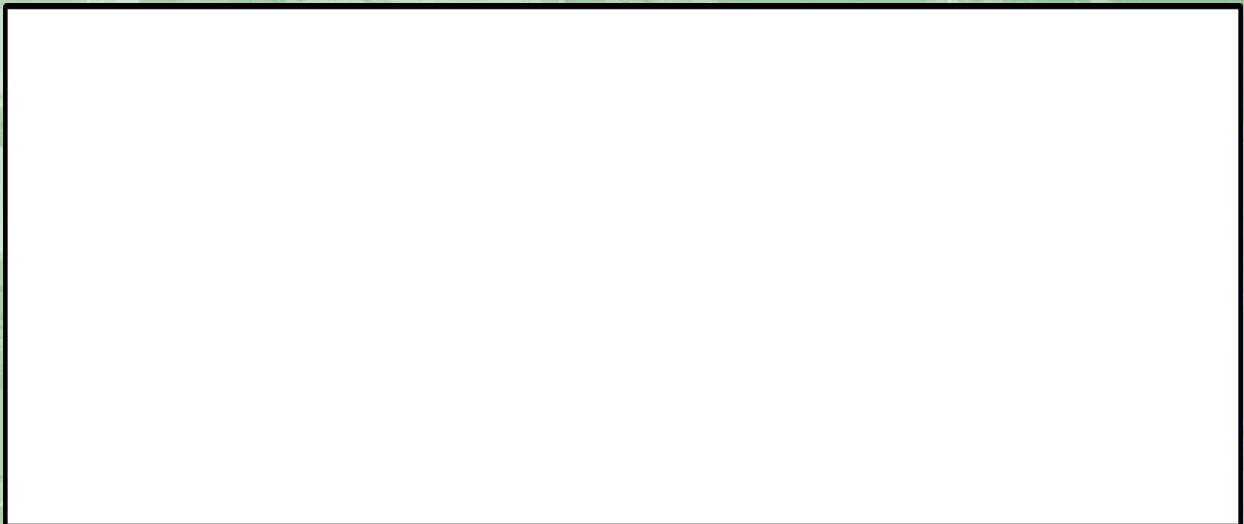
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As the fact sheet has shown, aircraft is fascinating and there is so much to find out!

Test your knowledge here:

- 1) In what year and where did the company start?
- 2) Where did the test flights happen?
- 3) What different materials is the aircraft made from, list them all here. Can you find any objects in your home that contain the same materials?
- 4) Thinking about the way the aircraft was made, what would you use if building an aircraft and why? Draw and explain in the box here:



- 5) On what date did G-AJRH win the King's Cup? How many years ago was this?
- 6) Who was the pilot of this plane when it won the race?
- 7) What not have a go at holding your own version of the Kings Cup air race...get the members of your household to make a paper airplane and create a start line and a finish line, then hold a race! Think about the following things when making your paper airplane:
 - size of your airplane
 - the type of paper used
 - how you fold the paper to make the wings

Remember to decorate your planes so you can tell them apart!