



enemy pilots to catch. Until then, if planes lost an engine, they were had it. The Mosquito had two Rolls Royce Merlin motors, with just two bolts and two nuts holding them in position. The plane stood up to all sorts of punishment, far more than a metal aircraft would. The bombers dropped 1000s of tons of bombs on Berlin and had the lowest loss rate in Bomber Command.”

No fewer than twenty-seven different versions of the Mosquito went into service during the war years, and some of the most spectacular operations of the air war stood to its credit. The Mosquito carried phenomenal loads over extremely long distances, performing feats out of all proportion to the specification originally envisaged by its designers. The Mosquito proved to be an outstanding warplane on every count.

Glyn started his formidable project to restore a flying Mosquito 20 years ago. A semi-retired electrical contractor with experience as a builder and in working with wood, when the project was first suggested, he thought: “It can’t be that hard. It’s wood. Now I know what’s involved!” The vision was there, but realising it turned out to be harder than Glyn first thought. “I was told by people who knew about these things that it was impossible to build one. They were nearly right. It certainly wasn’t easy. The fuselage of the Mosquito is built in two halves on wooden or concrete moulds – the only way to get the double curvature in the ply.

The moulds had all been scrapped after production ceased in 1950, so I was faced with the problem of building them.

“I had to start from the original lofting data and with the help of Chris McMullen, a top boat builder, I lofted it out and built the moulds. They weren’t the problem, it was the totally accurate positioning of the bulkheads and numerous other parts, including the main wing pickup fittings in slots in the mould. I had to position them ‘in space’ and build the mould around them. The wooden mould made a difference to measurements from day to day, depending on atmospheric conditions. That’s why the Canadians first used concrete moulds. It took me most of 5 years on my own to build the two moulds, it was an enormous job. The main wing assy jig took six months to make and involved some very accurate engineering, especially with the drill plates for drilling the spars for the engine and undercarriage brackets, which must be absolutely precise. Together, the jigs took five years to make.”

Assembling the wooden airframe on Glyn’s Mosquito has taken three years so far and involves “mind boggling” accuracy, detail and tolerances. Glyn has studied thousands of drawings and other publications, reviving the whole construction system. The original glue used in the plane’s manufacture has been replaced by much stronger, waterproof epoxy glue, but all else follows original

specifications. The wooden framework is made from Canadian spruce and European birch plywood. The whole wooden airframe is covered in a synthetic poly fibre ‘linen’ to protect the ply. “It’s an expensive project,” says Glyn.

Glyn keeps reminding himself “it’s all been done before.” Perhaps, but the Mosquitos made for the war effort had a big workforce behind them, each worker concentrating on their special area of expertise. Glyn got as far as he could on the restoration alone, but now has quite a team of paid and voluntary helpers. “One of the tasks involved included making the tank doors. After building up the main wing structure in the jig we tried a tank door from an original Australian built mosquito – it fitted perfectly in the wing.” Then there’s preparing thousands of metal parts. Glyn has to make those he can’t find, as well as making the tooling for the task. He has six containers full of metal parts, gathered over the years from all around the world.

“There are thousands and thousands of ‘bits.’ An original wing tip was found under a house in Sydney, there’s an original instrument panel and a seat. The original radio equipment weighs about a ton. We will be using modern radio equipment. Just overhauling the original plugs means thousands of hours of work. For an aircraft built ‘entirely of wood,’ you wouldn’t believe how many metal parts there are and we are