

A spot of research: investigating the previous paint schemes of “G for George”

Andrew Pearce - Question and answer session

Chris Knapp: The idea of stencils and whatever being wrong and sometimes being a bit contentious and upsetting people – there is a positive side, it generates interest and you get people talking about it and you can explain things. An example we had recently – we’ve just finished a Blackburn Buccaneer and we’ve got all the drawings for the stencils and locations. And we ditched that because it’s totally wrong for our aircraft. We’ve got the photographs so we’ve got better accuracy.

Do you know why the paint was mismatched on the wings? Is it at the wing join?

Andrew Pearce: Yes, it’s quite simply a product of the production methods of the Lancaster. It’s because of the dispersed manufacture.

Chris Knapp: It’s not due to battle damage and a wing being replaced?

Andrew Pearce: In the case of the tail planes of George we know definitely they have been replaced. There’s quite detailed records that were taken by Harry Tickle, G for George’s senior fitter. He kept a very detailed log of what had been damaged. From our records we know that an incendiary fell from a Lancaster that was flying above George, burnt through the top skin of the tail plane, burnt through the trim cables inside the tailplane, burnt through the bottom skin of the tail plane and fell out. The Lancaster tailplane has no repair in that section. We know it has to have come from a different aircraft. So some of the colour variations are yes, due to battle damage and replacement.

Tony Coleman: I can relate to the problem of colours and people telling you it’s the wrong colour. With the tram system in Hobart – all our trams were the one colour from 1935 on. The trams that I’m working on are 1915-1917. There’s nobody in Hobart that can remember what those original colours were. I’ve got the colours from scrapes, but I still have to argue the whole thing of the 1935 colours. And that’s the other thing about colour photographs – I can only get black and white photos obviously of that period. But I can pick up the difference because they were green and cream – the trams were painted during the First World War because green paint became scarce and they were actually painted white/cream at that stage.

John Kemister: The funny thing about the Lancaster project – the Russian flag actually, in the repaints, was put on in four renditions. How many variations of a hammer and sickle can you get?