






Second World War aircraft

These notes are intended for adults who are supporting school groups around the Museum.

 <p>Airspeed Oxford</p>	<p>These planes were used for all aspects of aircrew training and later were also used as air ambulances.</p> <p>Aviator Amy Johnson was flying an Airspeed Oxford when she disappeared.</p>
 <p>Avro Anson</p>	<p>The Avro Anson was slow, cold and noisy and is the most famous British aircrew trainer of all time. Used in huge numbers, 'Faithful Annie' was remembered with affection by many RAF aircrew of the Second World War.</p>
 <p>Avro Lancaster</p>	<p>This aircraft flew on 137 sorties; more missions than any other allied bomber, except one which no longer exists. Most Lancasters didn't survive more than 22-25 missions. Lancasters were also used for the Dambusters mission.</p>
 <p>Boeing B17 'Flying Fortress'</p>	<p>American daylight bomber. The B17 was nicknamed the "Flying Fortress" because it was heavily armed and could survive, and inflict, heavy damage.</p>
 <p>Bristol Beaufighter</p>	<p>In his book <i>Enemy Coast Ahead</i>, Guy Gibson tells the story of a squadron ordered to convert to Beaufighters which they refused to do. The authorities sent a Beaufighter to perform spectacular aerobatics which</p>

	<p>the pilots watched. Crowding round the aircraft afterwards, they discovered the pilot was a young woman from the ATA. After this, of course, they had no problems in flying the Beaufighter!</p>
<p>Bristol Beaufort</p> 	<p>The Beaufort operated very successfully as a torpedo bomber, but also carried out the essential role of mine layer. In the spring of 1940, they began dropping magnetic mines in enemy coastal waters and continued to do so until mid-1943.</p>
<p>Consolidated B24 Liberator</p> 	<p>American four-engined bomber supplied to the RAF. The B24 Liberator served in the Far East at the end of World War Two, was transferred to the Indian Air Force who later presented it to the RAF Museum.</p>
 <p>Curtiss Kittyhawk</p>	<p>American aeroplane operated overseas by the RAF. Painted with a shark mouth to make it look scary!</p>
 <p>de Havilland Mosquito</p>	<p>The Mosquito was made largely of wood and was designed as an unarmed bomber, relying on its superior speed to escape enemy fighters. It was nicknamed 'The Wooden Wonder'.</p>

Fairey Battle



The Fairey Battle had the same engine as the Spitfire and the Hurricane. As the Battle was much bigger than the fighter aircraft, it meant it was quite a slow aeroplane.

Fiat Falco



The Italian Falco here at the Museum was flown by Sergente Pilota Pietro Salvadori who had to perform an emergency landing on a beach in Suffolk. He became a prisoner and commented that he was happy to be out of the war, was dissatisfied with the Italian officers, and didn't like Belgian weather, the Germans, or their food!

Handley Page Halifax



Lost on its first operation to attack the Tirpitz. This battleship was hidden in a Norwegian fjord. The Halifax was hit by anti-aircraft fire and came down on a frozen lake into which it sank. Recovered about 30 years later and displayed in "as found" condition.



Hawker Hurricane

British single-seater aircraft which played a vital role during the Battle of Britain. The arguments continue about which was better – Hurricane or Spitfire? What do you think?



Hawker Tempest

Single-seater fighter aircraft. With the use of drop tanks, these planes could travel more than 1,500 miles in one trip. (Drop tanks were extra fuel tanks which could be released from the plane when they were empty.)

Hawker Typhoon



The Typhoon was introduced in 1941 and was the first 400mph fighter in the RAF. During the Second World War it was used as a tank destroyer.

Heinkel He111



The He111 was a fast and manoeuvrable medium bomber which was used extensively by Germany in the early part of the Second World War.

Heinkel He162



Single engined jet fighter. The Heinkel He162 was one of Nazi Germany's last-ditch attempts to win back control of the skies with a cheap jet fighter capable of being flown by almost anyone. This plane came too late to have any effect on the outcome of the war.

Junkers Ju87



German plane widely known as the "Stuka", the Ju87 was one of the most feared aircraft during World War Two. It had a fearsome siren which terrified those who heard it.

Kawasaki - Ki-100-1b



Japanese fighter aeroplane which was only used for a short time towards the end of the war.

Lockheed Hudson



Useful aeroplane. The wooden lifeboat was designed to be dropped by Hudsons to rescue airmen who had ditched. This one served in the Far East so no red spot on the roundel – the Japanese symbol was a red disc.

Messerschmitt 109

Germany's fighter, operating at the limit of its range in Battle of Britain. It could spend only 15 minutes or so over England before having to return to refuel. More heavily armed than the Spitfire and equipped with a fuel-injected engine.

Messerschmitt 110

The Messerschmitt 110 was used as a night fighter by Germany. The Radar antennae sticking out at the front look like a deer's antlers. They were used to detect enemy aircraft. Radar works in the same way that bats use echolocation to find their way.

Mitsubishi Ki-46-111

The Allies gave code names to Japanese planes. The code name for this plane was 'Dinah' – female first names were code for bomber and reconnaissance aircraft.

North American Harvard



Second World War trainer – hence bright yellow for visibility.

North American P-51 Mustang

The Mustang was used as a long-range escort for American bombers. They had drop fuel tanks which were released when empty. These were actually made out papier-mâché!

Republic Thunderbolt

American designed and built fighter bomber, used by the RAF in South East Asia Command.

Supermarine Spitfire 	British single-seater fighter aircraft which played a big role during the Battle of Britain.
Westland Lysander 	Lysanders were used to undertake missions for the Special Operations Executive (espionage) keeping in contact with the French Resistance. Noor Inayat Khan would have been flown to France for her mission in a plane just like this one.

What the roundels (symbols) mean –



RAF aeroplanes



American aeroplanes



Japanese aeroplanes



German aeroplanes