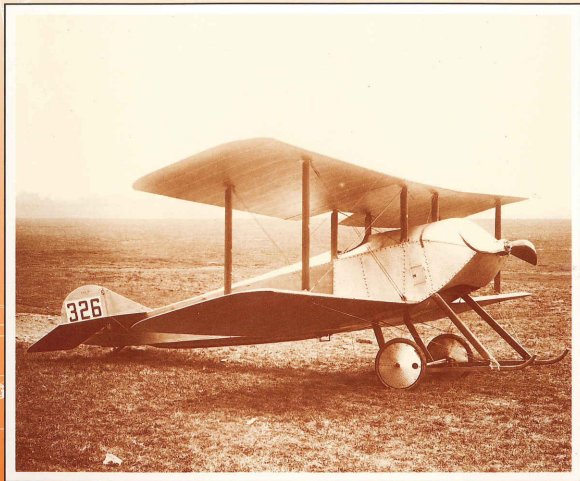
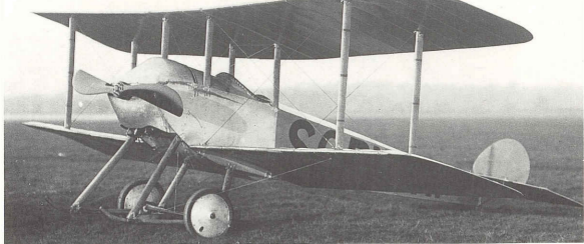


SOPWITH TABLOID



WINDSOCK MINI DATAFILE 9



SOPWITH TABLOID

STORY: J M BRUCE • PHOTOS: THE J M BRUCE/G S LESLIE COLLECTION

The first British single-seat scout, an aircraft specifically intended for military use, was the Royal Aircraft Factory's BS1 of summer 1912, later renamed SE2. It was designed by Geoffrey de Havilland, who piloted it on its first flight early in 1913. He had designed it to prove that it was possible to build an aeroplane capable of exceeding 90 mph, and in this he succeeded: the elegant little biplane returned a speed of 91.7 mph.

It is not known whether in 1913 anyone in the Sopwith company's recently established works at Kingston-on-Thames knew about the BS1, but the company's forward thinking, in particular that of Harry Hawker, was running on lines similar to that of Geoffrey de Havilland, though it would seem that the Sopwith team's primary objective was to create a fast sporting biplane rather than a military scout. The Sopwith Works Order No. 36 of October 25 1913 was for one 80-hp Trac, or Two-Seater (amended from Single-seater) Type St. B, to be built for the company's own use. This order was recorded as coming from 'Hawker'.

On Thursday, November 27 1913 the components of the new Sopwith biplane built under that Works Order

were delivered to Brooklands, where the aircraft was assembled in about 1½ hours and immediately flown by Harry Hawker. It was a tiny, compact biplane, accommodating pilot and passenger seated side by side with little or no elbow room; the wings had single-bay bracing and warping for lateral control. Much of the credit for the concept and actual design of the aircraft has been attributed to Harry Hawker, but contributions were made by Fred Sigrist, Frank Cowlin and Tom Sopwith himself.

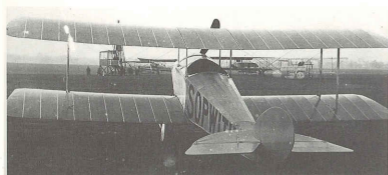
Two days later, on November 29, Harry Hawker flew the new Sopwith to Farnborough for assessment. Flying with pilot, passenger and fuel for 2½ hours, the aircraft recorded a maximum speed of 92 mph and a minimum of 36.9 mph; its initial climb took it to 1,200 ft in one minute. Later that day, Hawker flew his new aircraft over to Hendon, where its arrival at low altitude and high speed created a sensation.

In spite of all the vindictive criticism levelled against the War Office and Royal Aircraft Factory by C G Grey, the editor of *The Aeroplane*, and those who thought like him, the War Office moved with alacrity to order the new Sopwith

for the Military Wing of the Royal Flying Corps. First, nine aircraft were ordered on December 18 1913, a further three on March 13 1914. These had the Sopwith designation Type SS; and one surviving note suggests that the initials might have signified Speedy Scout.

The semi-facetious use of the word 'tabloid' by C G Grey in reporting on the little Sopwith's public debut earned the displeasure of Burroughs, Wellcome & Co, of London, a firm of manufacturing chemists who made and marketed, *inter alia*, surgical dressings and first-aid kits under the brand name *Tabloid*. Although threatened litigation was not pursued, the general brouhaha ensured as nothing else could that the name *Tabloid* became inseparable from the little Sopwith, though in both the RFC and the RNAS, it was always officially the Sopwith Scout. Nevertheless, the nickname *Tabloid* seems to have been common parlance in the Services.

The production aircraft built for the RFC, were single-seaters and had the 80-hp Gnome engine. The first had been completed by April 9 1914 and was flown on April 11. Its officially recorded delivery date was April 22. Initial deliveries of production *Tabloids* might have been somewhat retarded by the diversion of a proportion of the works' production resources to the building of what was logged in the works record as one 'hydro tractor with 100-hp Gnome Monosoupape'; for that Sopwith Works Order No. 56 of February 2 1914 initiated the construction of the Sopwith company's entry in the 1914 contest for the Schneider Trophy.



Above and left, the first *Tabloid*, Sopwith Type St. B., a side-by-side two-seater, photographed at Hendon, November 29 1913.

UK PRICE \$6.00 (NET)

Right, shortly after flying the *Tabloid* on its electrifying debut at Hendon, Harry Hawker took the little biplane to his native Australia. He gave many exhibitions of flying, and created great public interest in aviation in general and the *Tabloid* in particular. This photograph was taken on February 28 1914 at Randwick racecourse, New South Wales. (Colin Owers)



Racers

Jacques Schneider had presented his trophy for a speed and seaworthiness competition between seaplanes. The first contest was held at Monaco on April 15 1913. It was won by Maurice Prévost on a Deperdussin monoplane with a 160-hp Gnome rotary engine at an actual speed of 98 km/hr (approximately 61 mph), but the judges were not satisfied with the manner in which he crossed the finishing line, and made him fly the final lap of 10 km (6.21 miles) again, thus reducing his overall speed to a mere 73.63 km/hr (45.75 mph). No British pilot or aircraft took part.

The Sopwith contestant for the 1914 competition was essentially a *Tabloid*, modified appropriately to accommodate the slightly larger and more powerful 100-hp Gnome Monosoupape engine. In the tail unit a triangular fin was fitted, together with an enlarged plain rudder. As first completed, apparently on March 31 1914, the aircraft had a single central main float of broad beam, with two small outboard floats to maintain stability on the water.

For its initial flight tests the little seaplane, Sopwith Type HS, was conveyed to Southampton Water. Its pilot was to be Howard Pixton. The centre-float undercarriage immediately proved to be a faulty choice. An eye-witness of the abortive first attempt to fly the seaplane was R E Nicoll, and he described the events in a letter published in *Flight* of December 28 1950:

'As a member of the small party of four who originally assembled the aircraft at Hamble, it is interesting to recall what actually happened . . . the aircraft, as at first built, had a single,

main float, and after Pixton had gone on board we launched the machine from the end of the slipway, holding the tail whilst the engine was started. After the let-go signal, and immediately the engine was opened out, the machine went straight over on its back, throwing out Pixton (who had only just got out of bed after a very bad cold) into the icy waters of the Hamble River. The machine drifted out to mid-stream and after some time was made fast with a rope round its tail; finally it was pulled ashore on the change of tide at about 2 o'clock the next morning.'

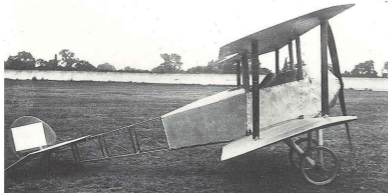
The wrecked seaplane was dismantled, taken back to Kingston and rebuilt. It was recognised that the main float had been positioned too far aft. The big float was divided longitudinally into halves, on each of which the inboard side was filled in to create two floats; these were mounted with a good lateral gap, and the small outboard stabilizing floats were removed. Thus modified, the HS left the Kingston works at about 5 am on April 7 1914 for basic trials on the Thames just below Kingston Bridge. Vigilant (and perhaps insomniac) Thames Conservancy officials objected, and the Sopwith men had to confine their exertions to flotation tests.

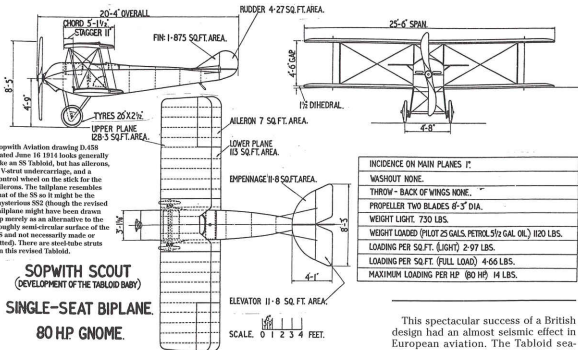
To avoid further officious frustration, the *Tabloid* seaplane was taken early next morning to Richmond, where the

river was within the jurisdiction of the Port of London Authority. Launched at Glover's Island, the aircraft was taxied satisfactorily and handled well on the water. Howard Pixton took off and made a brief flight towards Eel Pie Island.

Flying in the Schneider contest at Monaco on April 20 1914, the little Sopwith outshone all the other competing aircraft. Howard Pixton covered the specified 28 10-kilometre laps in 2 hours 13.4 seconds; the Sopwith's average speed was 85.8 mph. He flew on for two more circuits to complete 300 km (186.42 miles) in 2 hours 9 minutes 10 seconds at an average speed of 86.6 mph; his fastest lap was flown at 92.1 mph. All his speeds would have been somewhat greater had his Monosoupape been running consistently at full power, but on the 15th lap one cylinder cut out, and Pixton carried on with only eight cylinders firing.

Left, Harry Hawker returned to England on June 6 1914; his *Tabloid* followed, arriving at Brooklands on July 11. At some unknown time the aircraft had the fabric removed from its rear fuselage, allegedly to improve its looping capabilities; it had a simple V-strut undercarriage and the rigging of the mainplanes was altered. The upper wing had no dihedral, and that of the lower appeared to have been increased – an interesting foreshadowing of the Camel. It was in this form that the *Tabloid* was bought by the RFC on the outbreak of war; the price was £900, and the aircraft was to be numbered 604. Hawker flew it to Farnborough for delivery to the RFC on August 4 1914. Subsequently it was bought from the War Office by the Admiralty for the RNAS, in which Service it was renumbered 169, and was delivered to Eastchurch on September 13. It went to the RNAS squadron in Belgium, but crashed on September 25. While at the Bollekens works for repair it had to be abandoned in face of the German advance on Antwerp and was lost. (Philip Jarrett)





INCIDENCE ON MAIN PLANES 1°	
WASHOUT	NONE.
THROW - BACK OF WINGS	NONE.
PROPELLER TWO BLADES	4'-3" DIA.
WEIGHT LIGHT	730 LBS.
WEIGHT LOADED (PILOT 25 GALS. PETROL 5 1/2 GAL. OIL)	1120 LBS.
LOADING PER SQ.FT. (LIGHT)	2-97 LBS.
LOADING PER SQ.FT. (FULL LOAD)	4-66 LBS.
MAXIMUM LOADING PER HP (80 HP)	14 LBS.

Sopwith Aviation drawing D.458 dated June 16 1914 looks generally like an SS Tabloid, but has ailerons, a V-strut undercarriage, and a control wheel on the stick for the ailerons. The tailplane resembles that of the SS so it might be the mysterious SS2 (though the revised tailplane might have been drawn up merely as an alternative to the roughly semi-circular surface of the SS and not necessarily made or fitted). There are steel-tube struts on this revised Tabloid.

SOPWITH SCOUT
 (DEVELOPMENT OF THE TABLOID BABY)
SINGLE-SEAT BIPLANE.
80 HP Gnome.



More photos of Baby and Schneider Seaplanes in WINDSOCK DATAFILE No.60, SOPWITH BABY.

Above and left, two early (pre-Monaco) photographs of the Sopwith HS, a modified Tabloid airframe on floats and powered by a 100-hp Gnome Monosoupape engine, built to compete in the 1914 Schneider Trophy contest. These were taken after the repairs necessitated by the aircraft's mishap in the Hamble River on the first attempt to fly it. Here a twin-float undercarriage has been created by halving the original central float longitudinally. At this stage the tail float was small and mounted on short struts. In the group, the man wearing cap, muffer and knickerbockers is Victor Mahl. (*British Aerospace, via Tim Mason*)

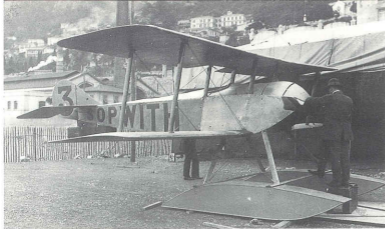
This spectacular success of a British design had an almost seismic effect in European aviation. The Tabloid seaplane was not seriously challenged, and it won the Schneider Trophy for the year. On its return to the Kingston factory a Works Order dated April 25 required its conversion to a landplane by the fitting of a simple V-strut undercarriage with the two-piece articulated axle that was to become a characteristic feature of a long line of Sopwith descendants.

The floatplane successors of the victor of Monaco, the Schneider and Baby, far outnumbered the production Tabloids; their story is told in WINDSOCK DATAFILE No.60. The Schneider Trophy winner never wore floats again, but did much display flying with its wheel undercarriage.

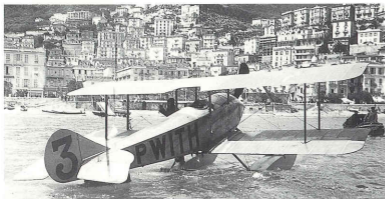
The start of production of Tabloids for the Military Wing, and the testing and triumphant flying of the Schneider Trophy floatplane, had occurred in Harry Hawker's absence, for he had taken the prototype Tabloid to his native Australia, arriving there on January 13 1914. The Tabloid had been assembled by January 26, and next day Harry Hawker flew it for the first time in Australia. His many exhibition flights drew great crowds and stirred much public enthusiasm.

Hawker returned to England on Saturday, June 6 1914, and went to Brooklands next day. The Tabloid prototype did not reach Brooklands until July 11, by which time nine production Tabloids had been delivered to the Military Wing. These aircraft had a small triangular fin and a plain rudder generally similar to, but smaller than, their counterparts on the 100-hp Schneider-contest aircraft.

At about that time, too, Harry Hawker had a narrow escape from



Left, the Schneider entrant at Monaco, now with an enlarged tail float mounted close up to the underside of the fuselage. The seaplane's racing number 3 has been painted on the rudder. (Jean Noël)



Below, now oil-stained but triumphant, the little Sopwith is taken under tow against the backdrop formed by the Monaco of 1914. (Jean Devaux)

aircraft, which on July 9 was passed on to the DGMA by Sykes. Higgins found the Sopwith to be tall heavy, and that it persistently flew left wing low; the throttle was inconveniently placed; most of the instruments were barely visible to the pilot; the needle-valve control and the form of blip-switch were unsatisfactory; and the undercarriage was too weak to survive a landing on ground that was at all rough. Major Higgins concluded that in general flying: *'The machine flies well, does not seem to be affected by "bumps" and corrects itself laterally. It is rather unstable fore and aft but controllable. With a stronger undercarriage it would be fairly easy to land.'*

To Major Higgins' report, Sykes added:

'Major Higgins reports that on the whole S.E.2 is a more pleasant machine to fly.'

On July 31 1914, with war imminent and ineluctable, the Military Wing drew up a list of aircraft and engines serviceable on that day, with or intended for the four squadrons that were to go to France. No Sopwith Scout was listed, perhaps because the aircraft still had to be modified, but four Sopwith Scouts were taken to France by the Aircraft Park, which arrived at Boulogne on August 18. The Sopwiths, 362, 386, 387 and 611, were in packing cases.

Nos.387 and 611 were allocated to No.3 Squadron on August 24 but did not last long: both were struck off charge, 387 on September 2, 611 on the following day. No.386 joined No.5 Squadron on December 3; it was flown by Lt. B C Hucks, Captains F V Holt and G I Carmichael, and by Major A C H MacLean, the CO of No.5 Squadron. In 1957 Group Captain Carmichael recalled that the Tabloid was 'a joy to fly'.

While with No.5 Squadron 386 was modified in minor respects, including the mounting of a rifle on the starboard side, for which an additional steel strut was made, and the fitting of 'two boxes for shot dropping' on January 18 1915. Whatever these were they were never used: on January 20, while being flown by Major G H Raleigh, the Scout crashed in a dive at Dunkerque and the Major was killed.

death. He took great delight in flying the 100-hp Schneider winner in its landplane form, frequently gave exhibitions of looping, and intended to perform these exhibitions every Sunday afternoon during the summer of 1914. His repertoire included looping the aircraft with its engine stopped, but on the evening of June 27 he looped, engine off, at only 1,200ft, apparently stalled while inverted, and fell into a spin. Contemporary descriptions differed somewhat and were vague, but what was certain was that Hawker had too little height to recover. The aircraft plunged into trees which folded the wings back but broke his fall, and by good luck he was uninjured. Indeed, he was flying a standard Tabloid next day!

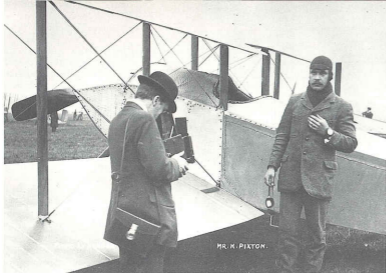
The wrecked Schneider landplane was taken back to the works and repairs were ordered. Confirmation that these were completed has yet to be found, and the ultimate fate of that historic little biplane remains unknown.

The joy with which the standard Sopwith Scout was greeted by Military Wing pilots was not entirely unalloyed. On receipt at Farnborough the Scouts were inspected by the Aircraft Inspection Department, who added some minor fittings and instruments. Among these were safety clips on the valve rockers of the engine, and these increased the overall diameter of the engine sufficiently to necessitate a small enlargement of the engine cowling. A slight bulging of the existing

cowling sufficed.

Official concern as to the structural strength of the aircraft obviously underlay a requirement for the type's factor of safety to be increased. On April 15 1914 the Sopwith works record noted that all machines were to be fitted with 'altered struts' to comply with this requirement, and additional wire bracing was fitted to the fuselage internally. The undercarriage was regarded as weak, an opinion perhaps inspired by the mishap of May 6 1914, when the second production aircraft overturned on landing at Farnborough at the end of its delivery flight. On July 22 the Director-General of Military Aeronautics wrote to the Sopwith company about this problem, but remedial action had already been initiated (possibly as a consequence of Farnborough's structural testing of Scout No.378 in mid-June); later Scouts had an additional strut to each landing skid, and stronger wheels were fitted. Lieutenant-Colonel F H Sykes, then OC Military Wing, had given a verbal instruction that the Sopwiths were not to be flown until the stronger undercarriage was fitted. This was effectively confirmed by a War Office instruction of July 23, on which date No. 362 was returned to the Military Wing after having its longerons replaced, and with 'new type chassis fitted'.

On June 30 1914 Major J F A Higgins, OC No.5 Squadron, RFC, flew Scout No.381 from Farnborough to Netheravon. He wrote a lengthy report on the



Left, Howard Pixton, pilot of the Schneider Trophy winner, photographed being photographed at Hendon a little later, probably on June 6 1914, the day of the 1914 Aerial Derby. The aircraft behind is probably the Tabloid that Pixton flew unavailingly that day.

Centre, the Sopwith primary entrant in the Aerial Derby flown on June 6 1914 was this aircraft, flown by Harold Barnwell, seen here with it at Hendon. This was the Schneider Trophy winner, still powered by a 100-hp Gnome Monosoupape, now fitted with a simple V-strut undercarriage. The landing wheels have been given extra-large wheel covers, which have been laced-on by twine taken over the tyres. (Philip Jarrett)



Below, overhead view of the Schneider victor, here with standard-diameter wheel covers and the new racing number 14, its marking in the London-Manchester-London race of June 20 1914. Harry Hawker started off as scratch man on this aircraft, but became ill and had to retire. He landed at Coventry but managed to fly back to Hendon.

At foot, probably photographed on the same occasion as the previous illustration, the converted Sopwith HS is here seen with engine running at Hendon.

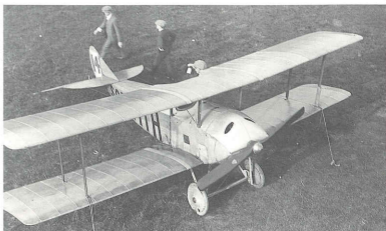
To war

As far as is known, none of the Scouts that went to France had been fitted with any kind of armament before leaving England, but one that was flown with offensive intent and some success was No.387 in its brief operational career. Its aggressive pilot was 2/Lt. Norman C Spratt, who had acquired a reputation as a pre-war pilot at Hendon, and in August 1914 was one of four flying officers attached to the Aircraft Park. His log book records that on six flights on 387 between August 29 and September 2 1914 he was 'chasing Germans' his armament was sketchy. In his book *Recollections of an Airman* Louis Strange credits Spratt with a combat victory:

'He flew a Sopwith Tabloid and forced the enemy [allegedly an Albatros two-seater] to land by circling round him and making pretence to attack him. As a matter of fact, he had run out of ammunition, but the bluff succeeded and the occupants of the German machine were taken prisoners.'

Precisely when this event occurred was not recorded by Strange, but his account suggests that Spratt must have had at least a revolver as a weapon at the time.

Another witness of Spratt's success was James McCudden, then a mechanic in No.3 Squadron but later Major J T B McCudden, VC, DSO, MC, MM, who in





Above, Norman Spratt – likely contender as the world's first ever single-seat fighter pilot.

a long and distinguished career as a fighting pilot flew the Tabloid's descendant, the Pup, in combat with No.66 Squadron and on Home Defence sorties. In his own remarkable book *Five Years in the Royal Flying Corps* McCudden recorded that two Tabloids joined No.3 Squadron at St-Quentin on August 26 1914:

'Soon after landing, we saw two very fast machines come in, and on inspection they proved to be Sopwith "Tabloids" (small single-seater scouts with 80-hp Gnome engines), flown by Lieutenants Norman Spratt and Gordon Bell. These machines were very speedy for those days, doing nearly 90 mph as well as having a good climb.

'They did not avail us much as fighting machines, in that they were not fitted in any way with fire-arms, but they could and did perform excellently from the scouting point of view.'

These two Tabloids were, of course, 387 and 611, both moving with No.3 Squadron to La Fère on August 26 and to Compiègne two days later. It was at the latter place that McCudden witnessed Norman Spratt's duel with the putative Albatros (but indicated, perhaps in error, the date thereof as August 28):

'About 5.30 pm, a large German biplane flew over us and dropped three bombs. One fell near the camp lavatory, and it was a most diverting sight to see a certain Sergeant doing a record sprint partially disrobed. However, the bombs did no damage at all.

'The German (an Albatros perhaps) was pursued by Mr Spratt on his Sopwith Tabloid armed with a handful of fléchettes, the Sopwith gaining on the German quickly and visibly. It was said afterwards that Mr Spratt forced the German down by circling round him, but I do not know whether that is correct.'

The flight was Spratt's second that day during which he was 'chasing German aeroplanes', but he did not record his victory in his log book.

No.3 Squadron moved to Senlis on August 30, to Juilly on August 31 and to Serris on September 2. Spratt flew 387 to Serris at 4 am that day; two hours later he took off to chase German aeroplanes, as described by Louis Strangle:

'As usual, the German airmen spotted our new aerodrome at Serris and paid us a visit. They had an uncanny knack of finding out where we were located almost as soon as we arrived, so that we were not at all surprised to see them there. Norman Spratt went up to have a go at one of these disturbers of our peace, and managed to fire thirty rounds at him from his revolver at close range, but the enemy remained apparently undamaged. Spratt landed in desperation and tied a hand grenade on to the end of a long piece of control cable; he had the bright idea of flying over the Hun and hitting his propeller with the grenade, but I felt very sceptical about his chances of bagging a victim that way, and I do not think he ever did.'

Spratt's logbook records only one last flight on 387 on September 2, but does not mention his desperate improvisation, noting only that the flight was of no more than ten minutes' duration. McCudden's account helps to explain

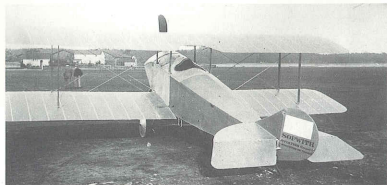
the brevity of the flight:

'The following evening, just before dusk, a Zeppelin was reported near us, and in the north-eastern sky a large smoke blur could be seen. Two machines left in pursuit, a Sopwith Tabloid flown by Mr Spratt and an Auro flown by Captain Wilson, of No.5 Squadron. They were away some time and arrived back in the dark, the Sopwith unfortunately capsizing on the ground. Happily the pilot was unhurt.'

These engagements so gallantly initiated and fought by Norman Spratt were the first true combats in which a Sopwith scout was flown as a fighter aircraft; they were, in their primitive way, exemplary, for they provided a practical demonstration of how superior speed and manoeuvrability gave the essential combat advantage to a fight-

Below, the Sopwith assembly shop in early 1914. At least four Tabloids at different stages of advancement can be seen; at right is a hull for one of the larger, unequal-span Bat-boats, of which at least three were built.

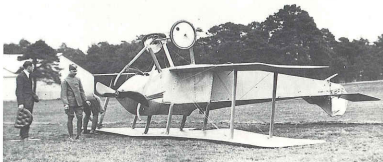
At foot, believed to be the first production Tabloid (properly Sopwith Scout) for the RFC's Military Wing, photographed at Brooklands early in April 1914 before delivery to Farnborough. (R C B Ashworth)



Right, although the due delivery date for the second RFC Tabloid was March 9 1914, it did not leave the works until April 24, whereafter it spent some time at Brooklands before being handed over. Here it is seen at that place, possibly on May 3 1914 when Howard Pixton demonstrated it to the members of a French commission. In this photograph he is standing in front of the nose of the aircraft.



Centre, on first arriving at Farnborough on May 6 1914 the second Tabloid, piloted by Pixton, overturned on landing. It was returned to the Sopwith works next day, and had been repaired by May 25. (RAE: Crown Copyright)



Below, an unidentified Tabloid at Farnborough, shortly after its delivery flight. (RAE: Crown Copyright)

ing aeroplane; all that was lacking was effective armament. Those were epoch-making days, their events perhaps enough to warrant naming Spratt as the first single-seat fighter pilot in history. In more down-to-earth matters, his historic Tabloid was not returned to the Aircraft Park and was struck off charge on the day of its crash.

As a similar fate befell 611 next day, September 3, that left only 362 and 386 still with the RFC in France; but as noted on an earlier page 386 was wrecked on January 20 1915. Evidently 654 went to France, but official records are conflicting and appear to confuse 654 and 362.

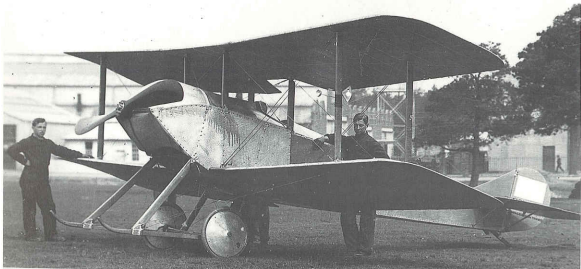
Other Tabloids may have gone to France in the autumn of 1914, for on November 4 the Aircraft Park reported that there were three engineless Sopwith Scouts in transit cases at

Rouen awaiting shipment back to England. Unfortunately these Tabloids were not identified, nor was there any indication of whether they were complete, damaged, or partly robbed of components needed as spares.

No.362 had gone to France with the Aircraft Park in August but was not issued to a squadron. Its engine (No.3533/WD23) was removed and returned to store, probably on or shortly after October 13 1914, whereafter it might have been robbed of its instruments. A further entry dated December 9 1914 recorded the fitting of a new clinometer, altimeter, watch,

air-speed indicator, tachometer and compass. A new engine must also have been found, for on December 12 the Scout was tested at St-Omer by Lt. B C Hucks. Minor adjustments were made and a broken rib in the lower starboard wing was replaced before Captain F V Holt made two flights in the aircraft on December 20.

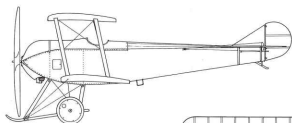
Later that month a rifle was fixed to a port centre-section strut, in one of the very few attempts to mount any kind of fixed-gun armament on an RFC Sopwith Scout. The installation could hardly have proved practical, but it was never put to the test of combat,



Centre-section cross bracing between forward struts only.



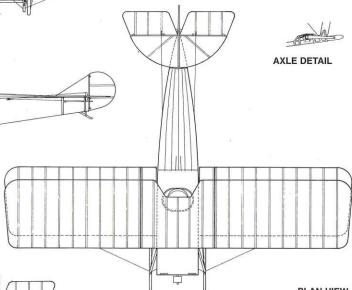
FRONT VIEW



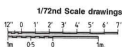
PORT SIDE VIEW



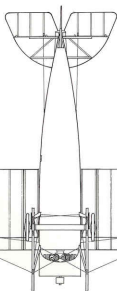
AXLE DETAIL



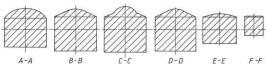
PLAN VIEW



1/72nd Scale drawings
 12" 0 1' 2' 3' 4' 5' 6' 7'
 3m 0.5 0 1m



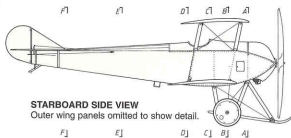
UNDERSIDE VIEW



FUSELAGE SECTIONS

Flying wires double.

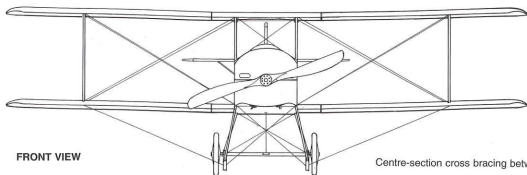
Extra strut to undercarriage on some Tabloids.



STARBOARD SIDE VIEW
 Outer wing panels omitted to show detail.

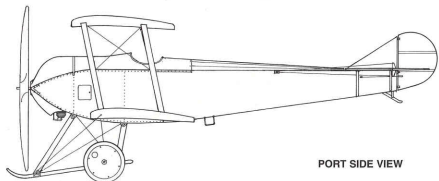
Note

Although the basic airframe of the production Tabloid remained constant there was much variation in detail. Late Tabloids were fitted with ailerons and had a vee undercarriage.

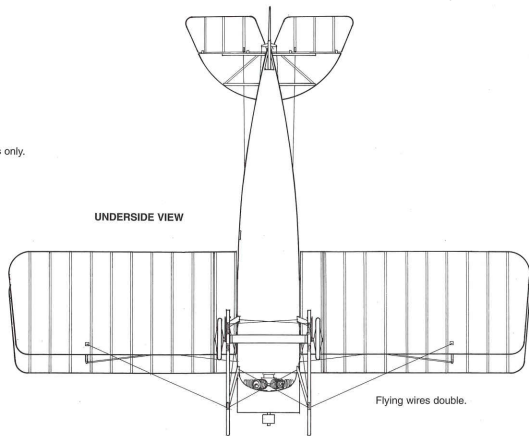


FRONT VIEW

Centre-section cross bracing between forward struts only.

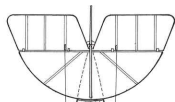


PORT SIDE VIEW



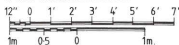
UNDERSIDE VIEW

Flying wires double.



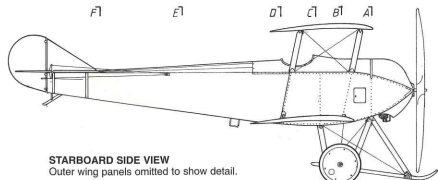
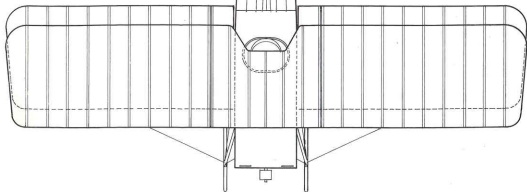
AXLE DETAIL

1/48th SCALE DRAWINGS



PLAN VIEW

Note
Although the basic airframe of the production Tabloid remained constant there was much variation in detail. Late Tabloids were fitted with ailerons and had a vee undercarriage.



STARBOARD SIDE VIEW

Outer wing panels omitted to show detail.

Extra strut to undercarriage on some Tabloids.

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FUSELAGE SECTIONS



Left, dated August 18 1914, this Farnborough photograph of No.394 illustrates the reinforced undercarriage that was introduced in July, 1914. Its wheels had fabric wheel covers instead of the aluminium covers normally fitted. It was sold to the Admiralty in September and became, first and incorrectly, 904, subsequently 167. As 167, it was flown on October 9 1914 by Squadron Commander Spenser Grey in an attempt to bomb the German airship base at Cologne. (RAE: Crown Copyright)



Centre, the depressing scene at Antwerp after 167's capture by the Germans, some of whom are seen here with the engineless airframes of the BE2a No.49 and the Tabloid.

Below, the white rectangle on this Tabloid's rudder suggests that it might have been one of those built for the Military Wing. Here photographed at Brooklands on June 11 1914, still with the original form of undercarriage, it was entered, presumably by the Sopwith company, in some of the local sporting events at Brooklands in the summer of 1914. The numeral 3 was presumably a racing number. (Fleet Air Arm Museum)

for 362 crashed at St-Omer while being flown by Captain Holt on January 17 1915. It was handed over to the Aircraft Park Stores on February 3, and was struck off to England next day.

Scout No.654 had been delivered to Farnborough by Howard Pixton on August 29 1914, and on its acceptance tests had climbed to 3,500ft in 4½ minutes and had returned a speed of 95.4 mph. On the following day it was

inspected and fitted with instruments, and on September 1 was handed over to the Military Wing. It had probably gone to France before October 16, on which date its engine (No.3566/WD28) was taken out and returned to store. On November 18 it was logged, for unexplained reasons, as 'Rebuilt machine', was again fitted with instruments, and was completely redoped. On December 1 1914 it made three

brief local flights, two by 2/Lt B C Hucks and one by Captain G I Carmichael of No.5 Squadron (who, curiously, logged his only Tabloid flight of that day as on 362, which might not have been airworthy at the time). Next day, December 2, Hucks flew 654 from St-Omer to Bailleul and back, and from St-Omer to Merville and back; but on the latter flight he had the misfortune to turn over on landing. With skids,





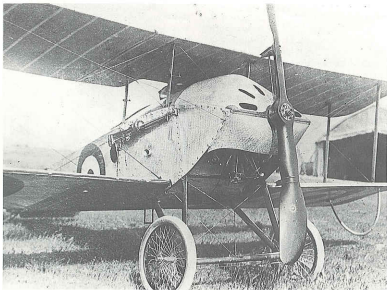
Above, despite its strong resemblance to the Tabloid, this Sopwith single-seater was the more conventional of the two aircraft built to participate in the Gordon Bennett contest of 1914, which was frustrated by the outbreak of war. The two potential racers were purchased for the RNAS and were numbered 1214 and 1215. Here No.1214 is seen in 1915 in France, probably at Dunkerque, distinguished by its steel-tube struts and V-strut undercarriage. In at least some features, No.1214 appeared to embody some of the design recorded on Sopwith component drawings as SS2, but it retained a semi-circular tailplane similar to that of the SS Tabloid. No.1214 arrived at Hendon, flown by Harry Hawker, on October 19 1914, and was listed there as a defensive aircraft on December 1. As at March 12 1915 it was unserviceable, and it was sent to Dover by road on April 4. (Via Leo Opdycke)

Right, by April 24 No.1214 was with No.1 Squadron, RNAS, at St-Pol, and it was probably at that station that it was fitted with a deflector airscrew with steel wedges similar to those fitted to Roland Garros' Morane-Saulnier Type L, (see *WINDSOCK DATAFILES* Nos.16 & 58 by the same author) together with a fixed Lewis gun on the starboard side of the fuselage. This photograph illustrates the Sopwith's armament installation to advantage.

rudder and upper wing damaged, the Scout was returned to the Aircraft Park for repair. Apparently it was not reconstructed, however, for on February 4 1915, in company with 362, it was struck off to return to England.

That marked the end of the RFC's use of Sopwith Scouts in France, and it is doubtful whether any of the other surviving three, or at most four, saw any significant use elsewhere.

Although the two-seat prototype had



been purchased by the War Office for use by the Military Wing of the RFC, and numbered 604, neither it nor 394 and 395 saw any service with that Wing, for all three were bought from the War Office by the Admiralty. On September 8 1914 Squadron Commander Spenser Grey, RN, went to see the DGMA, apparently to sound out the prospects for such a deal. This was agreed and executed almost instantaneously, and on September 10, 394 and 395 were handed over to the RNAS to be renumbered 904 and 905 but hurriedly amended to 167 and 168 respectively. The prototype was to be renumbered 169 and was sent to the Sopwith works to be converted to a single-seater, with urgent delivery to Eastchurch required. However, although the aircraft was reported to be 'ex Works' on September 11 it is doubtful whether the conversion was completed, for Hendon's daily report of September 13 recorded, 'No.604 Sopwith left for Eastchurch at 3.30 pm piloted by Mr Hawker with Flight Sub Lieutenant Lord Carbery as passenger.' The Admiralty paid the War Office a total of \$3,154. 5s. 0d for the three aircraft.

The three Sopwiths were allocated to the RNAS aeroplane squadron in the field, and 167 and 168 arrived at Antwerp on September 18. Sadly, the converted prototype, No.169, was unable to do anything of operational significance, for it crashed on September 25 while being flown by FSL Lord Carbery. Even then it was apparently still a two-seater, for Lord Carbery had a noble passenger aboard, the Prince de Ligne, who escaped unhurt. For repair and conversion (again) to a single-seater it was sent to the Antwerp works of the Bollekens company, but was still there when Antwerp fell to the advancing Germans on October 9 1914,



Above, the 12 single-seaters ordered by the RNAS as 1201-1212 differed significantly from the basic Sopwith SS Tabloid, and were designated Sopwith SS3. This photograph shows the zero stagger, coupled ailerons on upper and lower wings, and revised tail unit that closely resembled the surfaces designed for the shadowy SS2. No.1211 (see *WS DATAFILE* No.60, page 1) was delivered to Eastchurch in March 1915 and went to No.2 Squadron, RNAS, which became No.2 Wing on June 21 1915. On August 3 it joined No.4 Wing in which it was reported to be serviceable on October 1 1915. On November 1 it was stated to be lying at Eastchurch wrecked, and it was reported deleted on both October 31 and November 4. (*Fleet Air Arm Museum*)

a sad and obscure end for such an exceptionally historic prototype.

Lieutenant R L G Marix had flown several operational sorties on 168. On October 9, after Samson's squadron had withdrawn from Antwerp, Nos.167 (Sqn. Cdr. Spenser Grey) and 168 (Lt. Marix) set off from the deserted airfield to attack the German airship bases at Cologne and Düsseldorf. Poor visibility prevented Spenser Grey from locating his target, but he dropped his two bombs on Cologne's central railway station and returned to Antwerp.

Marix fared spectacularly better, for his bombs hit the Düsseldorf shed; its roof fell in, and 500-ft flames marked the fiery end of the Army Zeppelin *Z.X.* Ground fire severed his rudder control cables and punctured his fuel tank. His petrol ran out when he was still 20 miles from Antwerp, and he had to land near the Dutch frontier. Resourcefully, he made his way back to Antwerp partly by bicycle, partly on a railway locomotive. The airfield was then being shelled, so Grey and Marix had to abandon No.167 and BE2a No.49.

The RNAS ordered 12 Scouts under Contract No.CP58295/14, to be num-

bered 1201-1212. Their construction in the Sopwith factory was initiated by the Works Order No.136 on September 26 1914.

Some design development had, of course, been pursued by the company. A few surviving drawings bearing the type designation SS2 suggest that work on this design was in hand in June 1914. The main fuselage box girder was to be basically similar to that of the SS but was 1½ inches shorter overall; the spacers in the forward portion were (or were to be) differently placed; and the lower wings were to be located perceptibly higher above the lower longerons. There was to be a wheel on the control column to actuate the lateral control; the centre-section struts (and probably the interplane struts) were to be of streamline-section steel tubing; and a simple V-strut undercarriage was to be fitted. New and enlarged horizontal tail surfaces were designed; the tailplane had a straight leading edge and slightly raked tips; overall tail span was to be 9ft 2in, eleven inches greater than on the original SS design.

There might have been a relationship between this SS2 design and the more conventional of the two Sopwith single-seaters designed to compete in the

1914 Gordon Bennett race, but this cannot be confirmed. The aircraft concerned was bought for the RNAS with the serial number 1214, but it had a roughly semicircular tailplane like that of the SS, not the surface designed for the SS2.

The dozen Scouts numbered 1201-1212 were evidently known in the Sopwith works as the SS3. They were distinctively different, having zero stagger, ailerons for lateral control on both upper and lower wings, a simple V-strut undercarriage, steel-tubing interplane struts, and an opaque, semi-con-

Below, SS3 No.1207 photographed at Great Yarmouth at a time when the hangars there had been landscaped rather than camouflaged. The aircraft was delivered to Yarmouth by rail on March 16 1915, but the Sopwith company asked that its ailerons, and those of 1208, should be returned to the works; these were sent on March 24, and on April 7 it was reported that the two Sopwiths were being fitted with new ailerons. Next day Harry Hawker tested 1207, but it turned over on landing and was damaged. It was sent to Sopwiths on April 12, was back at Yarmouth on April 27, and was being erected on May 2. Satisfactory acceptance trials were flown by Harry Hawker on May 5, this time without mishap. In this photograph a bomb carrier can be seen under the fuselage, doubtless the 'bomb-dropping gear being fitted to 1207 and 1208' on May 19. This task apparently took until May 27 to complete. Engine trouble caused a forced landing on September 15, and 1207 was serviceable again on October 16. It was redoped and varnished on November 26, but on December 1 it was reported to be out of true. A forced landing, again caused by engine failure, occurred on March 24 1916, and on April 17 No.1207 was deleted. (*RAF Museum P5092*)

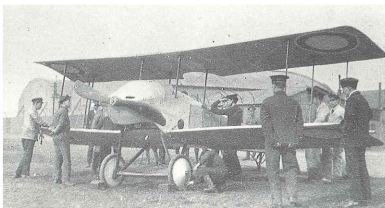


cal wind deflector on the front of the cockpit. The tailplane and elevators were similar to those designed for the SS2. The first SS3, No.1201, left the works on November 28 1914, and five more had been delivered by December 28. There was then an unexplained hiatus until the seventh was passed out on March 15 1915 and was delivered to RNAS Yarmouth by rail next day. The twelfth and last left the works on April 16 1915. Nos.1201-1204 were allocated to the seaplane carrier HMS *Ark Royal*, which conveyed them to the Dardanelles area. They were regarded as suitable for flying off the carrier's flight deck, but it is not known whether this was ever attempted.

Ark Royal arrived in her war area on February 17 1915, but discarded her Sopwith SS3s on April 8. Nos.1201, 1203 and 1204 were sent to Malta, but 1202 remained, nominally still with the carrier but based ashore at Aliko Bay. By December 1915 Nos.1203 and 1204 were at the White City depot, somewhat the worse for wear. A survey report on both was submitted on December 7; damage to and deficiencies from the Sopwiths were quite substantial, and deletion must have followed shortly afterwards.

When No.3 Squadron, RNAS, went to the Aegean late in March 1915, its motley assortment of aircraft included two Sopwith SS3s, Nos.1205 and 1206. The squadron's commanding officer, Sqn. Cdr. C R Samson, RN, had no real use for his Sopwiths (or, indeed, for any of his unit's aircraft that were incapable of waging war against the enemy). In describing his squadron's aeroplanes in his book *Fights and Flights* he wrote of:

Below, No.1202 was one of the SS3 Tabloids that were sent to the Dardanelles area in HMS *Ark Royal* in January 1915. Probably taken at Imbros, this photograph shows that the national markings under the wings were Union Flags. There was no practical use for these Tabloids in the Aegean theatre and 1202 was returned to Britain in January 1916. (RAF Museum)



'Two Sopwith Tabloids, which were single-seaters and not of very much use, as although they were fast and had a gun, they were not efficient as fighters in those days before inventors discovered how to fire through the propeller area, also they had a habit of shaking out their engines.'

One further SS3 went to the Aegean. After service with No.2 Squadron (later No.2 Wing) RNAS at Eastchurch, No.1209 went to Dunkerque on August 1 1915 as the first stage of its Journey to the Aegean. By October 1 it was recorded on the combined strength of Nos.2 and 3 Wings, but was soon returned to Britain. By December 16 it had reached Dover, only to be deleted and sent to the White City depot.

Of the home-based SS3s Nos.1210 and 1212 flew operationally from Eastchurch and Westgate. The anti-Zeppelin flights by 1210 and 1212 were made at night. On May 26/27 1915 an unidentified pilot of Eastchurch flew 1210 from 2320 hours until 0029 hours in a fruitless attempt to intercept Zeppelin LZ38, which had bombed Southend. From 0055 hours until 0130 hours on June 1 Flight Lieutenant Sydney Pickles was airborne on 1210 hunting for LZ37 and LZ38, which had attacked London; while from Westgate, late on May 31, FSL R H Mulock had flown 1212 from 2203 hours to 2355 hours for the same purpose.

Above, Great Yarmouth's other SS3 was No.1208, the subject of this photograph. On this aircraft the roundels were placed outboard of the interplane struts, whereas on 1207 they lay inboard. No.1208 had been delivered to Yarmouth by rail, with 1207, on March 16 1915; its ailerons were returned to Sopwith on March 24, and replacements were fitted on April 7. Harry Hawker flew it on acceptance tests on April 9, and it was reported serviceable on April 11. Its bomb gear was fitted on May 19, and on August 26 and 27 1915 bombs were dropped from the aircraft. Yarmouth reported on the latter date: 'shooting from this machine now improving'. No.1208 spent a few weeks at Bacton from September 16 1915, but it was at Yarmouth again by October 27. It was deleted on March 17 1916.

That last-named Sopwith, No.1212, crashed fatally at Westgate during the night of August 9/10 1915. FSL R Lord had taken off at 2251 hours hoping to encounter one of the four Zeppelins marauding over England that night, but he was killed in a landing mishap. No.1212 was deleted on August 21.

It appears that 1210 was the longest-surviving SS3; while at Eastchurch on February 2 1916, replacement controls and engine cowling for the Sopwith were demanded, but evidently were still awaited at April 14. No.1210 was still on Eastchurch's strength on June 23 1916, and was deleted on July 1 1916.

A few foreign orders for the original SS Tabloid were placed. There are some confusions in the record, but it seems clear that on May 8 1914 one engineless but otherwise complete airframe was ordered by Louis Blériot, and was apparently delivered. It left the Sopwith works, conveyed by the London & South Western Railway, on June 30 1914. Presumably it reached its celebrated purchaser, but its subsequent activities, if any, and its fate are unknown.



Lebed

The first mention of an order by the Russian aircraft constructor Vladimir A Lebedev was recorded on June 8 1914. This was for '1 Sopwith tractor scout Biplane, 80-hp type, complete except engine', which, according to the record, was delivered on July 30 1914. Despite the imminence of war, it appears that Lebedev's Tabloid reached its destination, for the type was produced in small numbers by his company, the Aktsionernoye Obshchestvo Vozdukhoplavaniya V A Lebedeva of Petrograd, with the designation Lebed VII. On September 30 1914 Lebedev ordered from Sopwith 16 tachometers, perhaps an indication that production was in progress. It is not known whether Lebedev had any kind of formal agreement or licence to produce the Tabloid. He subsequently built an enlarged development with extended two-bay wings; this was designated Lebed VIII.

There had been some confusion

(probably on paper only) over the Lebedev order and another, attributed to the Società Transaerea Italiana, and booked in under Sopwith Works Order No.83 on May 8 1914. This, too, was to be for one complete airframe without engine. Some work must have been done on this aircraft, for on October 7 1914 an Admiralty order was recorded for:

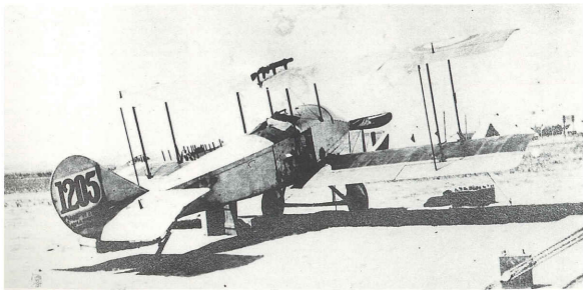
'1 Sopwith Scout Biplane, fitted with 50-hp Gnome engine. Parts from machine built under Works Order 83 to be used. Admiralty No.1213.'

No.1213 was an aeroplane of which no photograph has yet been found. In official lists of RNAS aircraft it appears enigmatically as 'Sopwith Tractor, R Scout', but with an 80-hp Gnome engine. Its purchase was evidently covered by, or added to, the contract that officially ordered the 12 SS3s 1201-1212, and presumably for that reason later Admiralty lists record 1201-1213, simply but misleadingly, as 13 Sopwith Scouts. Although numerically correct,

Above and below, very obviously armed with an overwing Lewis gun, No.1205 had initially gone to No.1 Squadron, RNAS, by January 1 1915, but was shipped to No.3 Squadron at Tenedos on March 20 1915. After having done nothing in particular it was returned to Britain early in October 1915 and was deleted. (*The Liddle Collection, Leeds University Library*)

this is susceptible of misinterpretation, for it seems unlikely that 1213 was identical with 1201-1212.

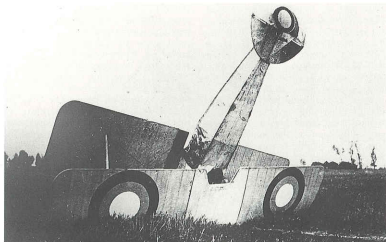
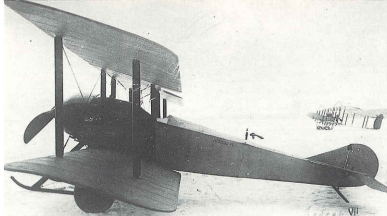
Nevertheless, 1213 was to be fitted with Quick Release Gear. It left the works on November 6 1914, and on November 10 it was flown to Hendon by Harry Hawker. On December 1 it was one of the six assorted aircraft recorded optimistically by Hendon as 'available for defensive purposes'. Together with its stablemates the two Gordon Bennett racers Nos.1214 and



1215, it was part of the so-called 'Fast Flight' at Hendon. By May 6 1915 No.1213 was at St-Pol, spent a few weeks with No.5 Wing at Dover in June, and was with 'C' Squadron, No.1 Wing, Dunkerque, by June 20. From June 30 until September 1915 it was with No.1 Squadron, St-Pol, and was subsequently deleted, probably before the end of that month, for it did not appear in the Disposition of Aircraft list for October 1 1915.

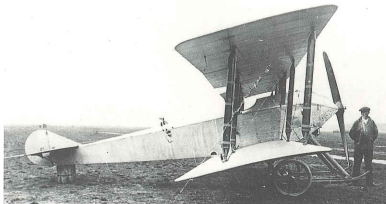
The late Major Oliver Stewart could always be counted upon to capture the character and quality of an aircraft succinctly and perceptively. In that classic book, *The Clouds Remember*, the first sentence of his essay on the Sopwith Tabloid set down the essentials:

'Father of all single-seat fighters, the Sopwith Tabloid will be remembered as an idea and an inspiration, and also as the first single-seater scout to be ordered in any quantity for the British flying services. In its day it showed performance figures which, considering the power used, must still be regarded with respect and admiration.' □



Top, as mentioned in the main text, a Tabloid was ordered by, and evidently supplied to, the Russian constructor V Lebedev in July 1914. It is not known whether he had a formal licence to build the SS Tabloid in Russia, but the type was undoubtedly produced there in modest numbers as the Lebed VII. This unmarked specimen might have been the first of the Lebed-built batch, but this is unconfirmed. (W Lambertson)

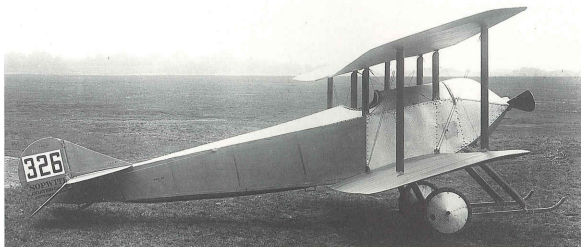
Above, a somewhat drooping Lebed VII in Russian service. This particular aircraft has no under-cowling at the nose, and there are three vertical louvres on each side in the forward nose panels, which suggests that the engine tended to overheat. There is also an access point with what appears to be a sliding door in the starboard flank panel. (C Petrov, via Harry Woodman)



Top left, a rare view of a Lebed VII that had come to grief, perhaps in a forced landing. The roundel colours are red, blue and white. (Wim Schoenmaker)

Left, the Lebed company also built a kind of 'stretched' Tabloid derivative with extended wings that had two-bay bracing and were fitted with ailerons. Apparently the original Lebed VII fin and rudder were retained, and looked inadequate. This development was designated Lebed VIII. (Alexandrov, via Harry Woodman)

FABRIC – camouflage and markings



For those building replica Tabloids, colours and markings reproduction will not prove too challenging. These early machines were 'naturally' finished; the fabric-covered areas were clear-doped and varnished; metal nose cowlings and wheel discs carefully buffed; all wood struts varnished and polished. Later, the Sopwith factory applied large white rectangles either side of the rudder to which the service serial numbers were applied, the company's logo appearing below it. Component numbers – prefixed S.A.C. – are to be seen on tail surfaces, wings and rear fuselage, these above a small rectangular motif, details of which escape even our strongest magnifiers! When marked with national insignia, this was initially in the form of large Union Flags painted to under-

surfaces of the lower wing. When roundels were introduced, the 'flags' were often merely overpainted in white and roundels applied over them centrally.

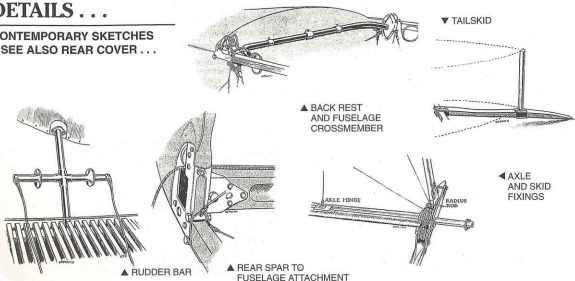
The Sopwith SS3 single-seaters ordered by the RNAS were similarly finished to the basic SS Tabloid and when white and red roundels were carried, these were applied to both surfaces of the upper wing panels and to the under surface of the lower planes or applied full chord well inboard – in neither case did they overlap the ailerons. Rudder markings were most likely the same as those on the SS Tabloids.

There are no recorded examples of individual markings applied to service Tabloids but if readers have photographic evidence to the contrary we'd naturally be delighted to see it! (RLR) □

Above, delivery eventually accomplished, the second Tabloid became No.326 in the RFC. In this photograph it is seen at Farnborough, wearing its serial number. What appears to be a long shallow fairing under the rear fuselage was probably the sagging of incorrectly fitted fabric not properly laced up. No.326 saw brief service with No.5 Squadron, and perhaps with No.1 Squadron, from which latter unit it was transferred to Central Flying School on December 8 1914. This machine is also illustrated on this book's front cover and also forms the subject of the rear cover profile. (RAE: Crown Copyright)

DETAILS . . .

CONTEMPORARY SKETCHES
– SEE ALSO REAR COVER . . .



Appendices

SPECIFICATIONS

Power: One 80-hp Gnome 7-cylinder air-cooled rotary engine driving two-blade wooden Integrale airscrew (numbers P,524 and P,530 known), diameter 2m.500 (8ft 2½in), pitch 1m.900 (6ft 2.8 in). The Type HS Schneider Trophy entrant had a 100-hp Gnome Monosoupape 9-cylinder air-cooled rotary engine.

Dimensions: Sopwith SS Tabloid – Span 25ft 8in; length 20ft 4in (prototype Type St.B, 20ft); height 8ft 5in; wing area 241.3 sq ft.

Weights: Prototype – empty 670 lb; loaded 1,060 lb. Production SS Tabloid – empty 730 lb; loaded 1,120 lb.

Performance: Prototype – max. speed 92 mph at ground level; climb to 1,200ft, 1 min. Production Type SS No.654 – max. speed 95.4 mph; climb to 3,500ft, 4 mins 30 secs.

Armament: The Type SS Tabloids flown by the R.F.C. generally had makeshift armament. The pilot could have a single pistol. On one occasion 2/Lt Norman Spratt took up a hand grenade on a long cable; on another he was reported to have been 'armed with a handful of fléchettes'. No. 386 briefly had two boxes for dropping unspecified missiles, and late in December 1914 No. 362 had a rifle fixed to a port centre-section strut; while No. 386 had a 'rifle fitted to right-hand side' in unspecified manner.

The two SS Tabloids purchased by the Admiralty from the RFC carried two small bombs. At least some of the SS3 Tabloids of the RNAS were armed with a single 0.303-in Lewis machine-gun. On 1202 this was mounted centrally above the centre section. RNAS Gunnery Memorandum No. 4 of January 28 1916 listed the bomb/grenade armament of the Sopwith Scout as 'one set grenade gear', and photographs and reports confirm that at least some SS3s (eg, 1207, 1208) were fitted with bomb-carrying gear.

PRODUCTION AND ALLOCATION

Manufacturers: The Sopwith Aviation Co., Ltd, Canbury Park Road, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey.
Aktionyernoye Obshchestvo Vozdukhoplavania V. A. Lebedeva, Petrograd, Russia.

Sopwith production

Type	Quantity	Contract No.	Notes/Serial numbers
St.B	1	-	Prototype built 1913. Bought by War Office on outbreak of war, numbered 604. Bought from War Office by Admiralty and renumbered 169.
SS	12	A/2368 (MA3) and 87/2290(MA3)	Known serial numbers 326, 362, 378, 381, 386, 387,392,394, 395, 611, 654.
SS	1	C.P.60619/1 4	1213. Made up using parts of an SS ordered for, but not delivered to, the Società Transaerea Italiana. Ex works 6.11.14
SS	1		For Louis Blériot. Ex works 30.6.14
SS	1		For V. A. Lebedev. Delivered 30.7.14
HS	1		Floatplane for 1914 Schneider Trophy contest.
SS3	12	C.P.58295/14	1201 - 1212. Deliveries from 28.11.14, completed 16.4.15.
	1	C.P.60619/14	1214. Built as Gordon Bennett race entrant; purchased by Admiralty for RNAS.

Service use: Type SS – RFC Squadrons Nos 3, 4, 5 and 7; RFC Aircraft Park; RNAS Aeroplane Squadron, Antwerp, *R Scout*, No.1213 RNAS Hendon, Dover, St-Pol, and 'C' Squadron. No.1 Wing, Dunkerque; No.1 Squadron, RNAS, St-Pol. *Lebed Type VII* – used in small numbers by Russian units.

Type SS3 – HMS *Ark Royal*, Dardanelles, Aliki Bay; No. 3 Squadron, RNAS, Tenedos; Nos. 2 and 3 Wings, RNAS, Aegean; No.1 Squadron RNAS, Gosport; No. 4 Wing RNAS Eastchurch; RNAS Stations Dover, Eastchurch, Westgate, Great Yarmouth.

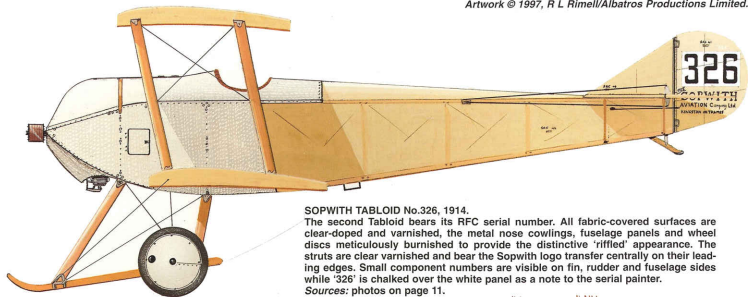
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6.6.97



SOPWITH TABLOID No.326, 1914.

The second Tabloid bears its RFC serial number. All fabric-covered surfaces are clear-doped and varnished, the metal nose cowlings, fuselage panels and wheel discs meticulously burnished to provide the distinctive 'riffl'd' appearance. The struts are clear varnished and bear the Sopwith logo transfer centrally on their leading edges. Small component numbers are visible on fin, rudder and fuselage sides while '326' is chalked over the white panel as a note to the serial painter.

Sources: photos on page 11.

