

seemed feasible. Jeremy was fortunate enough to locate most of the fuselage frame drawings. Gradually, after hours of pouring over 1941/1942 microfilm, he was able to draw all of the fuselage frames and transfer them onto wood.

Wooden patterns were made for all the sections involved in the forward cockpit area. After experimenting and testing the wood theory, Jeremy soon became convinced that to obtain a sufficiently strong structure that would give the impression of authenticity he would have to follow the manufacturer's specifications and complete the work in aluminium. This was particularly important to him as he wanted people see inside the finished product.

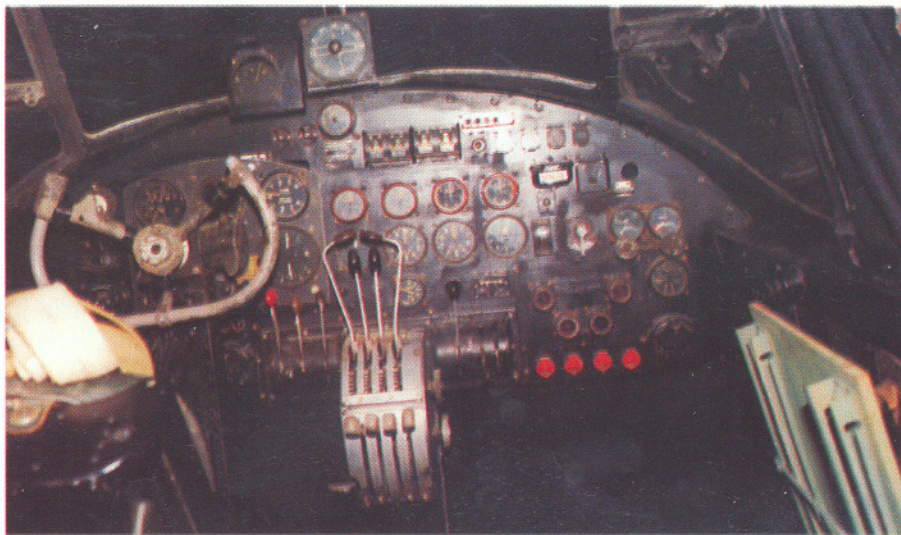
Castings were made for the more noticeable components and various parts were borrowed from private collections and copied, especially where it was envisaged that none would ever materialise – not even from Jeremy's network of good contacts.

A local window firm was throwing out some aluminium, the very material and the right size for the job. This was traded for various sheets of aluminium at a local recycling centre.

Having never done metal work at school, all efforts to bend, fold and shape the aluminium eluded Jeremy but he was not going to be defeated and so sought help. He could never have expected the ebullient support that he received from the directors of local firm, Lee Warren Fabrications. The staff took his wooden patterns one by one and produced each section – fabricating them perfectly. Rivets that would have been thrown away as 'life expired' were donated from Airline Engineers at Heathrow.

All the stringers were then jugged to the fuselage frame and the fuselage base. It was not until he was completely satisfied that the basic skeleton was square, that Jeremy felt confident about putting in the bracket rivets. This instantly gave strength to the frame, some of which had looked painfully thin and fragile, offering little or no protection. Gradually the whole shape miraculously looked right, but the test came later when the original canopy was fitted.

Jeremy followed the same structural techniques as the original, using strips of aluminium for the skinning which were overlapped, each needing hundreds of rivets. These were then put in by hand to form box grids to create



The search for authentic instrumentation has been painstaking – and rewarding!

immense strength. In all, 7,000 rivets were needed in the pilot's area of the cockpit alone.

Paint was mixed to the original colours, using original painted parts (and especially the recovered parts) as guides. And Jeremy's ability to reproduce upholstery and canvas work – all by hand from original drawings and photographs – can only be described as remarkable.

FULL NOSE SECTION

Late in 1997 the decision was made to join the nose section to the flight deck. Through the invaluable assistance of the directors and staff at HDS Studios at Hayes this was achieved. When interviewed, Jeremy said, "Looking back I could not have envisaged completing even the pilot's corner, let alone the complete cockpit section forward of the main spar, some 21 feet of aircraft."

Then an FN5 turret, in need of much work before it could be installed, joined the compilation. Jeremy was given a contact at the firm that had made new bubbles for R5868, NX611 and PA474. Costs were prohibitive but a broken original was found and their skills enabled him to successfully restore it. Accessories have since trickled in – including a fire extinguisher, Very pistol cartridges (blanks), parachutes seat harnesses, even rudder pedals.

It was never Jeremy's intention to secure any-

thing in working order but after a visit from several former ground crew members one day, Jeremy's son suggested wiring up the lights. The idea was to enhance the character and authenticity... and so it has. Further 'atmospherics' were added when the Lancaster Association provided a recording of the bomber's engines and pre-flight checks talk.

Jeremy became fascinated with the role of the aircrew – their courage and determination which has never failed to impress him. And in concert, the chairman and founder member of Bomber Command Association Harry Pitcher DFM has given tremendous support to the project, as he is obviously keen to see the spirit of Bomber Command live on.

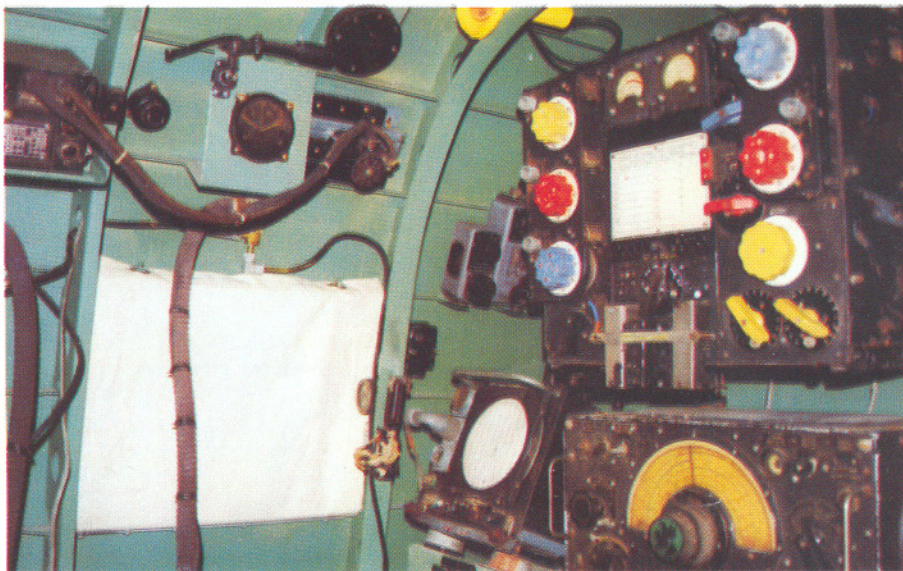
Over the last few years, Jeremy, together with his son and daughter, Alex and Christina, have visited France a number of times, combining their summer holidays with some aviation heritage. As a result, the Halls have developed a special friendship with the team that is rebuilding WU-21 (NX664) at Le Bourget and in particular Jean Daniel (president) of Ailes Anciennes. Many original parts discarded during their restoration have now found their way into Jeremy's cockpit section.

'PEOPLE'S LANC'

During the summer of 1996 Jeremy was approached by the Bomber Command Association and asked if he would lend the cockpit section to the RAF Museum at Hendon for its 'Hands-on' summer holiday experience. This was indeed an honour, culminating in a photo call with Bill Reid VC who happily sat in the pilot's seat directly in front of *S-Sugar* in the Bomber Command Hall.

Then in June 1997, Jeremy provided the RAF Waddington airshow with a real treat when he was invited to participate in the exhibition hangar. The logistics of moving 15ft (4.5m) of metal was daunting but triumphantly achieved with the help of local firms and the 'hangar crew' at Waddington.

During the day, a young disabled boy was able to fulfil his ambition of sitting in a Lancaster – something which would not have been possible in a real aircraft due to the formidable main spar. The expression on that young boy's face made all the effort, all the travelled miles and burning of the midnight oil, worth every minute.



Well-equipped wireless operator's area, with 1154, 1155 and FISHPOND. All photographs via Jeremy Hall