

Concorde rebuilt

By Gordon Roxburgh, Brooklands Museum

Work is now getting underway on the long task of rebuilding and restoring British Airways' eighth Concorde (G-BBDG) at Brooklands Museum near Weybridge in Surrey.

Seven Concordees were operated in commercial service, but the eighth was purchased by the airline for spares and test use in 1984, at the end of the Concorde development programme. When Concorde operations ceased last year, the airframe (number 202) was offered to Brooklands for restoration and public display.

Museum staff have applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund to assist in constructing a purpose-built cover building for the aircraft which will be displayed at the end of a chronological line-up of almost every post-war Vickers and BAC aircraft built or developed on the Weybridge site, including the Vanguard, Viscount, Viking and VC10.

G-BBDG was dismantled and transported 125 miles by road from Bristol earlier this summer. Work is progressing on a major restoration programme that should see the aircraft at least partially open to the public in 2005. Air Salvage International, the company reassembling Concorde Alpha-Alpha at East Fortune in Scotland, should soon be moving to Brooklands to carry out the structural reassembly of 202's airframe, while various volunteer teams have recently been formed at the museum to carry out other important restoration tasks.

One group of former Concorde engineers, who now work on BA's Boeing 747 fleet, is assisting with refitting the aircraft's landing gear, while a group of retired engineers is beginning to restore the forward fuselage. The museum has also recruited a growing number of aeronautical engineering degree students from the University of Surrey who are leading a project to restore the unique air intakes.

Concorde enthusiasts from the ConcordeSt.com website have also been given the chance to help out and have been working to remove 20 years' of grime from the dismantled airframe while it is still sitting at ground level.

Apart from moving the aircraft in sections from Filton, the task of tracking down the majority of the missing parts has been a mammoth logistical undertaking.

After the two high profile Concorde parts

auctions, rather than send surplus Concorde spares to the scrap man, the useful spares were sent to Brooklands Museum.

All major missing parts for the aircraft have now been found except for the rear cargo hold door. This door would probably have been removed and fitted to one of the seven aircraft in the BA fleet, but the one that it replaced would have been kept for repair but has so far not been tracked down and nobody can remember anything about it.

If you can offer any information on the missing cargo hold door, or any other Concorde parts useful to the restoration process, or would like to help restore Concorde 202, please contact Julian Temple, curator of aviation at Brooklands on 01932 857381 or email juliantemple@brooklandsmuseum.com.



The front section of G-BBDG arrived at Brooklands, in Surrey by road from Bristol.