

RUSSIAN AVIATION, SPACE FLIGHT, AND VISUAL CULTURE

Edited by V Strukov and
H Gosclio

Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2 Park Square,
Milton Park, Abingdon OX14 4RN, UK. 2017.
295pp. £100. ISBN 978-1-1389-5198-3.

Between the Wright brothers' first flight in 1903 and Lindbergh's solo Atlantic crossing in 1927, air transportation came of age. In Russia, another upheaval was in progress that had far-reaching political and social consequences. After the failure of 1905, in 1917 the Bolshevik revolution succeeded and, by the mid-1920s, Stalin ruled. In the years that followed, the USSR sought to use aviation and then space as symbols of Soviet modernity.

Russian Aviation, Space Flight, and Visual Culture explores how these themes have been depicted in Russian films, animation, art, architecture and digital media. The extended introduction by the editors Vlad Strukov and Helena Gosclio traces a coherent path from the ancients' association of the sky with divinity, via the Icarus myth, avian symbolism in literature and the modernity of the avant-garde. They conclude with the hypothesis that flight in Russian culture not only defines the celestial space but, more pragmatically, has been used to expand the ideology and represent geopolitical aspiration.

The case studies that make up the remainder of the anthology attempt to theorise visual culture in an era of transition from analogue to digital technologies and propose ideas about the relationship of contemporary Russia, both with its own past and with other countries and their pictorial traditions.

Soviet and post-Soviet eras are treated separately. Part one of the book chronicles the saga of flight expressed in painting, drawing, sculpture and architecture. Part two concentrates on the narrative found in the moving images of film, animation and computer gaming.

This rather esoteric collection of essays recalls that among the many triumphs of Soviet aviation and space flight there have also been some tragic failures. But aviators and cosmonauts have always been held in high regard, in part because they have provided the Soviet state and its successor with iconic heroes with which to promote the governing regime as forward-looking and futuristic.

Andrew Lovett
FRAeS



Left: Front cover of First International Aeronautical Exhibition held in St Petersburg 1911 organised by the Imperial Russian Technical Society. Right: Front cover of *Nasha Stikhia* (Our Sphere) No1 August 1920 published by the Air Department of the South Russian Army. RAeS (NAL).

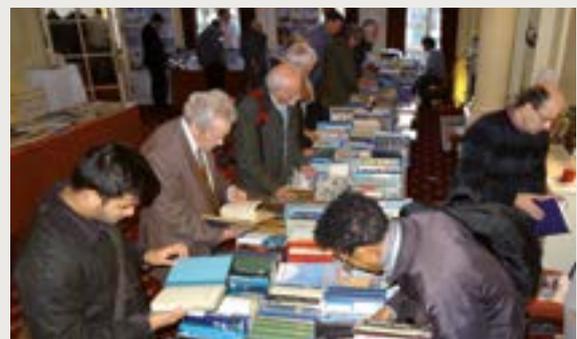


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VC10 – ICON OF THE SKIES



BOAC, Boeing and a Jet Age Battle

By L Cole

Pen & Sword Aviation, Pen & Sword Books, 47 Church Street, Barnsley, S Yorkshire S70 2AS, UK. 2017. 240pp. Illustrated. £25. ISBN 978-1-47387-532-6.

This is an enthusiast's book written by an enthusiast – albeit a well-informed and diligent researcher. The technical evolution of the VC10 is superbly detailed and full of insight. Its weakness as a book on the British aircraft industry in the 1950s and 1960s is to fall into the trap of so many books about the period – to lament the 'what might have been' and to assert an alternative future centred on a series of cancelled aircraft projects.

Lance Cole starts with a solid review of the context in which the VC10 was launched, primarily the impact on industry and of BOAC of the combined affect of the Comet failure and the cancellation of the Vickers V.1000. He also sets the scene for the problematic relationship between Vickers and BOAC with a brief history of the airline's imperial roots.

The first Vickers VC10, G-ARTA, makes its maiden flight at Weybridge on 29 June 1962. RAeS (NAL).

The author's strongest chapters are in his description of the design and development process – the critical interplay of some gifted individuals and a design team working at the top of its game

The author's strongest chapters are in his description of the design and development process – the critical interplay of some gifted individuals and a design team working at the top of its game. I would have liked some insight into Vickers' cost estimation problems that Sir George Edwards admitted the company got so very wrong and which formed the heart of later problems with both customer and the Government.

The political context is not so well drawn and less than dispassionate. In particular, I was disappointed that the author did not get to grips with the links between the VC10 and Vickers' growing financial problems and the merger with English Electric to form British Aircraft Corporation (BAC) and the pressure applied on BOAC to adapt its order. The author might well have looked to the National Archives at Kew for some of these aspects.

But this is to carp too much. Cole's book ends strongly with what is the wonderful paradox of the VC10. Although not a commercial success for the manufacturers and bad-mouthed by the customer in its early days, it was a truly wonderful aircraft to fly and fly in!

Professor Keith Hayward
FRAeS FAAEF

THE AVRO 748



The Full Story of the 748, Andover and ATP

By R J Church

Air-Britain (Historians), Unit 1A, Munday Works Industrial Estate, 58-66 Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1RA, UK. 2017. 304pp + diskette. Illustrated. £34.95 (Air-Britain members); £47.50 (non-members). ISBN 978-0-85130-492-2.

When the prototype Avro 748 took to the air on 24 June 1960 few would have predicted that, over the next 28 years, the 748 would prove so successful that a total of 381 civil and military versions of the aircraft would be manufactured. Regrettably, the 748's successor, the ATP, failed to emulate it and only 65 were built.

This large tome details the history, flight testing, production, sales, airline service and continuing development of the 748 and the RAF's Andover under Hawker Siddeley and British Aerospace. It further examines and amply illustrates 748 licence production agreed in July 1959 with the Indian Government, even before the 748 had flown. The Indian aircraft were initially provided in kit form but later full-scale manufacture was taken on by Hindustan Aeronautics. A total of 88 were constructed in India, many of which are still active.

Projected versions of the 748 and the ATP are not overlooked and three-view drawings show examples of civil, military, STOL and jet 748 variants that never left the drawing board.



With the ATP (Advanced Turboprop) BAe sought to emulate the solid success of the 748. The ATP was a larger, re-engined and updated aircraft but entered a competitive market in which it failed to make much headway. A small number remain in passenger service but with the addition of a freight door the ATP has shown its mettle. The author provides a similarly detailed and well-illustrated survey of the ATP as he has done for the 748.

Richard Church's comprehensive, well-illustrated history of the 748, Andover and the ATP does full justice to them. I strongly recommend this book to those interested in the types.

Stephen Skinner

Main picture: The prototype British Aerospace 748-2B, G-BGJV.

Above: Merpati Nusantara Airlines put its first of five ATPs into service on Indonesian domestic routes on 4 March 1992. RAeS (NAL).