

THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

Workbench notes

HAWKER SIDDELEY BUCCANEER S.2 IN 1/72 BY AIRFIX

(July 2008)

I had steered clear of the Airfix Buccaneer S.2 kit for many years because I recalled the ancient Blackburn NA.39 kit that I had been given as a present - which means it was before 1965 - which had all the faults of those early Airfix kits. It also had a folding nose and other neat stuff, but it was not the kind of kit that you would make as a Buccaneer because it represented the Blackburn prototype rather than an operational Buccaneer. That left the option of the old Frog kit or the not quite so old Matchbox kit.

There is also a very recent CMR Buccaneer which is probably highly accurate, but my Bank Manager wouldn't lend me the money to buy that kit. Then I chanced upon a not-so-expensive Airfix kit and, upon peering inside, discovered that it was not the ancient NA,39 kit. It was in my possession very quickly.



This kit is standard latish Airfix with generally nicely moulded surface details and an almost passable cockpit interior. It also supplies bomb bays for the Royal Navy S.2 and the RAF S.2A, which was just as well because I already had decals for the Royal Navy version that I wanted to use.

Assembly is not very difficult. The bits and pieces go together pretty well although there is plenty of scope for the use of filler here and there. The basic airframe went together without problems and a coat of two of primer later that bulky Buccaneer shape, that looks as though it was designed for business, had been achieved. There's not much detail in the cockpit but since the Buccaneer flew when British aeroplanes were black on the inside, there was not much to see. The

kits comes with those big fat slipper tanks the Buccaneer had and a good range of weapons, but before I went any further and committed to use them, I decided to do a bit of research.

There are some very good web sites these days that specialise in aeroplane photos so it did not take long to assemble a good collection that showed Buccaneers late in their Royal Navy career. None of them were carrying weapons so I decided to follow that lead. On the other hand, almost all had the slipper tanks, which was just as well because I did want to use them.

For a few moments I was tempted to go for the earlier Royal Navy colour scheme of grey and white but the more recent dark blue-grey scheme appealed more because that made the Buccaneer look larger, more bulky and more threatening. The Modeldecals sheet I planned recommended the appropriate colour shade in a Humbrol tin that went on very nicely. The same applied to the decals, on a sheet that I must have bought 20 years ago and is no longer available. However, the thing that makes a model that little bit different is the fiddly details that take time and patience.

Nobody will notice that I opened up a couple of little air inlets around the airframe or drilled out the light on the nosewheel and filled it with Krystal Klear. More obvious is the little thin white lines around the cockpit framing that is an attempt to replicate the sealing on the cockpit canopy of the real thing. Peering at photos to try to see how it worked in real life was an adventure in itself but working out how to do it in 1/72 and then getting it right was the real struggle. Still, the end result looks pretty good to me and the model captures something of the sheer brute size and shape of the real thing.



THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM