

THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

Workbench notes

ARMSTRONG WHITWORTH METEOR NF.14 IN 1/72 BY MATCHBOX

A bit like the aeroplanes that this Matchbox kit depicted, the night fighter Meteors were made towards the end of the line. The night fighters lost a lot of the good looks of the earlier Meteors by having a big radar set in the nose, which made them look just a little bit ridiculous. Each of the three versions, NF.12, NF.13 and NF.14 had a slightly longer nose so that by the time it came to the last version it looked more like a vaudeville fighter than a real one. The first two night fighter versions had the old and heavy two seater canopy of the Meteor T.7 but the final one, the NF.14, had a nice new canopy which looked so modern on such an old airframe that it looked out of place. Which probably speaks of the rapid evolution of fighters from the F.1 to the NF.14 in a little over a decade. These night fighters must have taxed the basic Meteor design to its limits and they were not in service for long before being replaced in service by the purpose build Gloster Javelin.



I must have bought this kit back in the days when you could still buy Matchbox kits off the shelf. This was one of the last of the Matchbox kits and it showed a lot of improvement over earlier kits. The notorious Matchbox trench digger had been laid off and many of the details were quite fine, though never with the crispness of many other kits. Like many Matchbox kit, this one offers options of making all the night fighter versions with three noses and two cockpit canopies. The cockpits contain a little detail but since British cockpits were painted black I didn't trouble myself about adding too much more detail. Even so, if I'd used the heavier frame canopy you wouldn't have

seen a thing inside. However, I didn't fancy all the masking involved in using the heavy canopy and so I was stuck with making the NF.14.

The kit went together without any problems worth reporting. I decided that the raised framing on the canopy needed a little reduction but when it came to the final polish a little of the buffing paste leaked through a couple of gaps in the canopy and clouded the inside a bit. Some of you might have pulled the canopy off and polished it again. Perhaps I should have too, but ... if you stand far enough back you can hardly see the blemish. The kit decals were so old they were useless, so it was just as well that I had a sheet of Modeldecals Mirage III decals which also had some nice Meteor decals as well, including a couple of nice NF.14s. They went on easily and then a coat of semi-gloss varnish, on with the undercarriage and doors, and the job was done. Not one of the world's great aeroplanes, and a model to match.

These days the kit is available in an Xtrakit box and Hannants will sell you decal sheets and a detail set, so there's no reason to deny yourself the pleasure.



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