



8th August 2007

Roll Out

In the shadows of the giant Cardington airship sheds where the Dambusters inventor, Barnes Wallis's R100 airship was once housed, a new aviation project has slowly and lovingly been taking shape. After 2 years of planning, parts sourcing and construction, 134 (Bedford) Squadron Air Cadets have unveiled their latest project, the Hurricane T1 hovercraft.

When an aircraft manufacturer reveals a new plane for the first time the ceremony is known as a 'Roll Out', taking its name from the act of wheeling the aircraft from the hangar for the first time. With a door way only just big enough to take the craft through in 2 parts a true roll out wasn't possible but once outside and assembled the event was marked with a photo call with the rest of the squadron fleet. These previous projects include the restoration of one of the 5 scale models used by Panavia to develop the Tornado aircraft and the Typhoon Soap Box Racer that was built for the Red Bull event in 2004.

The hovercraft dubbed the Hurricane has been named after a famous world war 2 fighter plane, will be used for a number of roles, the first is to fulfil the projects requirement of the cadet syllabus and a number of cadets from the unit have been involved in the construction. The second is to provide practical training for the propulsion and principles of flight lessons that make up part of the academic programme, and thirdly to provide a visual attraction at public events for both the Air Cadets and RAF Careers who were one of the principle sponsors of the project.

The decision to name the hovercraft after a previous RAF type and in particular the Hawker Hurricane pays homage to 134 Squadron RAF, which although no longer an active squadron made use of their fighters to assist and train the Russian Army Air force on the eastern front against the Luftwaffe during the second World War.

Commenting on the project WO Oliver Browne, the lead staff member for the Hurricane said "our role as staff is to supply good value and transferable skills to our cadets which they can put to use in either a military or civil career. The hovercraft has been good for that as there are so many practical aspects and problems to solve, from basic electronics to wood working and mechanics".

There are still a few development issues to overcome but initial engine runs show promise and it is hoped that it will not be too long before the maiden flight is made and the cadets can begin to learn how to fly their creation

Bedford Squadron is currently recruiting new cadets and staff members, if you are interested please contact www.134.org.uk and get in touch with us.