

Supermarine Swift FB.5. By Arthur Banyard

Kit: 1/72nd Airfix kit no.AX04003.



1. Originally expected to be available by Christmas 2014, this kit (A04003) finally arrived in the UK in July 2015 after release in Japan and the USA. The kit comprises 62 finely detailed parts and the implication is that this should be a straightforward build - wrong! The current level of detail available in Airfix kits demands time and experience (usually somewhat higher than the kit proclaimed level 2). This example was built SFTB following the build guide with exceptions given in the following notes.

2. Steps 1 - 5 are fine except that the ejection seat needs a single loop firing handle, and the cockpit tub decals will not fit as supplied. Remove the raised detail from the sidewall areas to allow decals 2B, 3A & 3B to fit. Decal No 1 will not conform to the steps and angles of the panel in one piece. Slice off the upper 'ears' and apply to the upper left and right coaming panels, then apply the main panel decal separately.

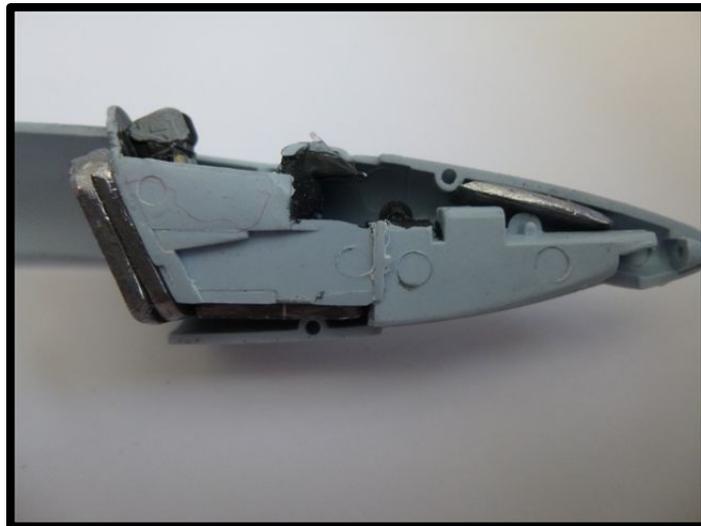
3. Step 6 - DO NOT cement the nosewheel bay to the cockpit tub at this stage - the tolerances are too tight to achieve Step 14 - see also the build article in AMW for November 2014.

4. Steps 7 - 11 are fine, but don't forget to paint the intake sidewalls white.

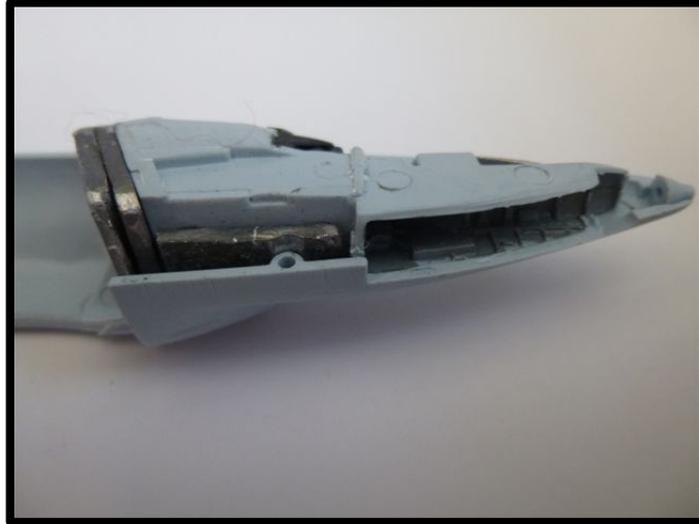
5. Steps 12 - 13 are your choice, but you may find masking the clear camera windows a bit difficult when painting. I chose the solid windows (B10 & B11) and added black decal after painting.

(This is incorrect! The camera windows were covered with shutters when the aircraft was on the ground - which is the point of providing parts B10 and B11 - know your subject)!!

6. Step 14



a. It is crucial that you get this step right. Having followed Step 6, the joined cockpit tub/nose wheel bay was offered to the left hand fuselage and the right hand fuselage added dry to check the fit. A major problem arose here with the fuselage nose halves springing apart about 30 degrees!



b. The sidebars on the rear of the nose wheel bay were sitting on the location points in the fuselage halves. These sidebars are intended to go to the rear of the location points. Check also that the nose wheel bay fits exactly above the opening in the lower fuselage halves. Keeping the tub and bay parts separate will allow you to adjust the fit without difficulty, whereas I had to sand off the sidebars completely. My error, but the kit diagram needs careful study!



7. 2gm of nose weight is recommended, but this will not fit above the nose wheel bay. Strip lead will fit under the tub and behind the rear bulkhead and 3gm balances the model (see photos 1 to 3)

8. Steps 15 -19 are fine (see photos 4 to 6), but note that the bottom of the intake trunking will need easing, as will the guides on the fuselage that fit into the brackets on the upper wing halves, to allow the wing to fit.

9. Step 20 caused a surprise when it was found that the front of the wing required a 10 thou plastic card insert and filler to blend it in to the fuselage (see photos 7 to 8).



10. Step 21 - fit the rudder and ailerons (Steps 24/25) but don't fit the tailplanes, flaps, landing gear, doors and pitot head until you have finished masking, painting and decaling.

11. Paint the model at this stage and apply the decals, but do not paint the wheel wells or gear legs and doors until they have been fitted otherwise you will have adhesion difficulties with the small contact areas.

NOTE. The painting diagrams contain an error; there is NO green camouflage area under the tail plane back to the jetpipe on the right hand fuselage.

12. Steps 22 - 33 are fine when the main painting is finished, after which the U/C detail can be painted.

13. Steps 34 - 35 Canopy and windscreen - these are the parts that will make or ruin the model.

a. First dip in 'Kleer' and allow to dry.

b. To cement plastic to plastic I used 'Kleer'. Avoid liquid cement or the inner windscreen will be permanently frosted (and also the rear of the canopy. Painting these parts is never easy since they are difficult to hold. I used a blob of Bluetack on the end of a cocktail stick and, despite great care, introduced a crack in the canopy!

14. I chose the 79 Sqn aircraft in the as-delivered finish of silver underside with belly tank (see photos 9 to 11). Build time was 37.5 hours broken down as follows:

Build - 18.75,

Paint/decals - 11.25,

Canopy/WS - 7.5

15. Not a particularly difficult kit, but very time demanding to do it justice. The U/C fitting requires better eyesight than I have and nimble fingers are a great help (as was the simple polystyrene block cradle that held the model throughout the build (see photos 5 to 8)).

16. It may be the case that the improved CAD detail available in current kits has come a bit late for those of us who have been building for 60 years and can no longer achieve the potential results available. However, this is another superb offering from the Airfix stable and very good value.



Arthur Banyard

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