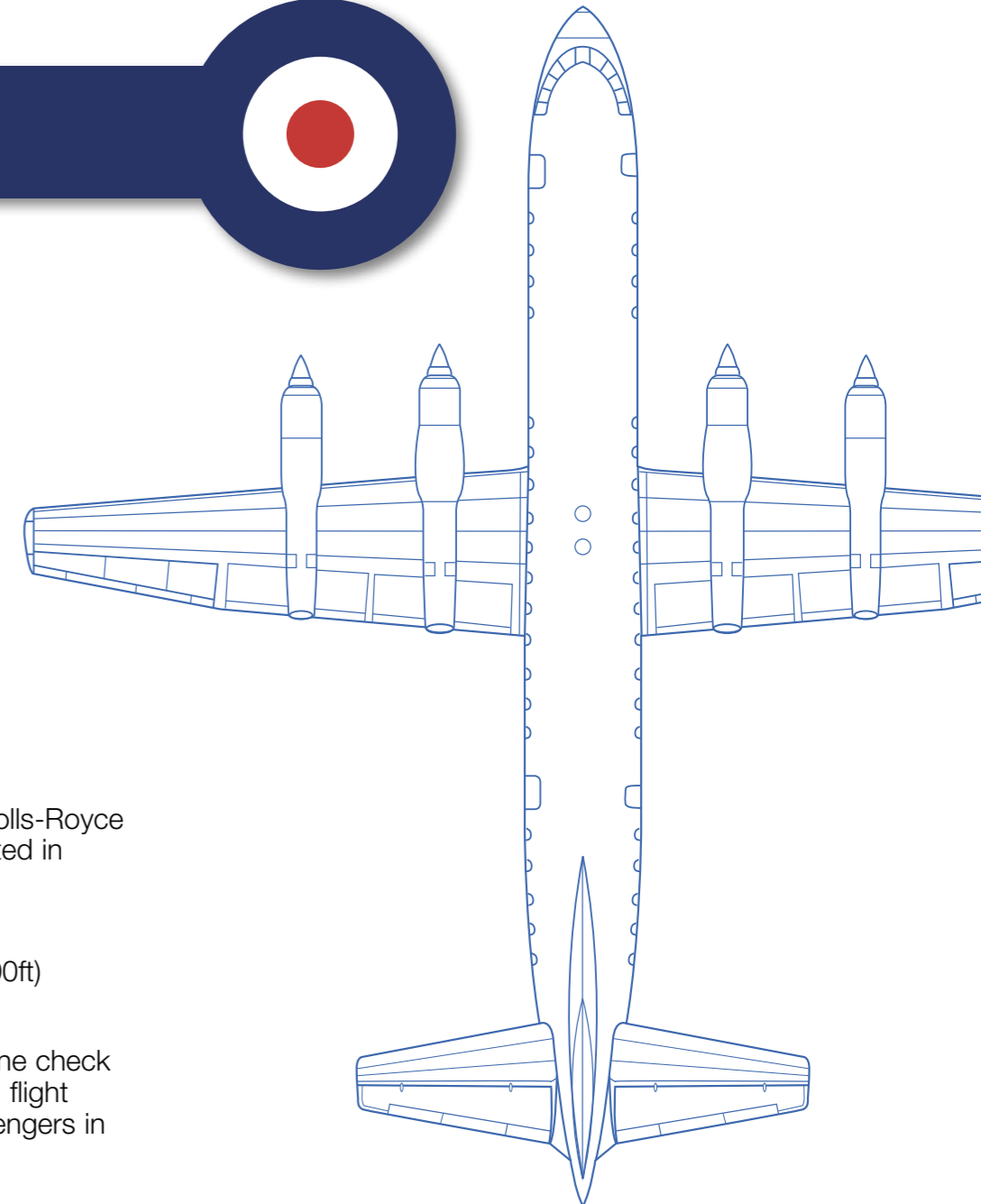


Vickers Vanguard V.953C (G-APES)



Specifications

Dimensions:

Length: 37.45m (122ft 10in)

Wingspan: 36.14m (118ft 7in)

Height: 10.64m (34ft 11in)

Powerplant: Four 5,545-hp Rolls-Royce Tyne Mk.512 Turboprops mounted in nacelles mounted on wing

Maximum Speed: 425 mph

Service Ceiling: 9,145m (30,000ft)

Range: 2,945km (1,830 miles)

Accommodation: Two pilots, one check pilot and one supernumerary on flight deck. Seats for up to 139 passengers in main cabin



In 1953 Vickers began design studies for a four engine, longer range 'big brother' to the Viscount. The new aircraft was designated V870 and was prompted by a detailed specification from BEA (British European Airways) for an aircraft capable of operating economically on short to medium range routes.

The final design (redesignated V900) was to be powered by the Rolls-Royce Tyne turboprop. The name Vanguard was chosen by BEA who initially ordered 6 aircraft, increased by a further 14 aircraft, a year later in 1956.

Manufacture of the Vanguard prototype was undertaken at Weybridge in Surrey. The aircraft rolled out of the factory on 4th December 1958 and once again test pilot 'Jock' Bryce was at the controls when Vanguard (G-AOYW) took to the air for the first time on 20th January 1959. Production aircraft soon followed with BEA's first aircraft flying on 22nd April 1959.

In total, just 44 Vanguards were delivered to the airlines, but the Vanguard was to find success in later life. TCA began to withdraw the aircraft from passenger service in 1967 before converting them to freighters. In 1968 BEA followed suit when Aviation Traders of Southend Airport began a similar freight conversion.

The new freighters were designated Type 953C Merchantman. At last the aircraft found the perfect niche in cargo operations with BEA and later with a number of pure cargo operations.

In 1996 the sister aircraft to our cockpit section (G-APEP) made its final flight to Brooklands Aviation Museum in Surrey bringing to a close the type's 35 year service career.

The Aeropark Merchantman

The Vanguard was delivered to BEA in 1962 and was named 'Swiftsure' – the name it carried throughout its entire operational life. 1970 saw the aircraft converted to a Merchantman pure freight aircraft.

In 1976 it was sold to ABC, Air Bridge Carriers and it was a familiar sight, here at the airport. It was the only aircraft ever to wear the all white Hunting Cargo Livery before its retirement in 1995.

