

Westland Widgeon III airmail on Papua 1930

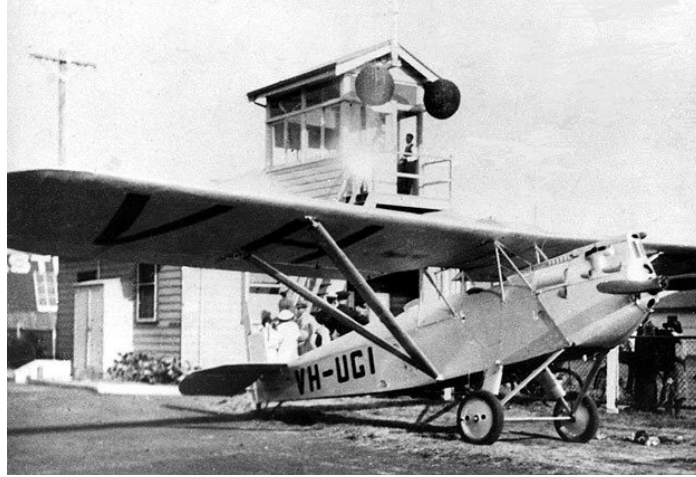
two seat sports airplane

max. speed 167 km/h

Designed in UK

1st flight march 1927

18 built



In 1924, the British Air Ministry, eager to encourage the the development of cheap civil aircraft suitable for use by private owners and flying clubs, sponsored a competition for a two seat ultralight aircraft To meet this requirement, Westland Aircraft produced two designs, the Woodpigeon biplane, and the Widgeon parasol monoplane. Unable to decide which design would be superior, Westland decided to build both types.

The Widgeon first flew at Westland's Yeovil factory on 22 September 1924, eight days after the first of two Woodpigeons.

The Air Ministry Light Aircraft competition began at Lympne Aerodrome, Kent on 27 September.

The Widgeon, which due to the use of the Thrush engine was badly underpowered (as was the Woodpigeon), crashed during the first day of trials.

Despite this setback, it was clear that the Widgeon had promise and was superior to the Woodpigeon, and the damaged prototype was rebuilt with a more powerful 60 hp (45 kW) Armstrong Siddeley Genet engine as the **Widgeon II**.

Westland decided to enter the Widgeon into production for the private owner. It was therefore redesigned with a simpler, constant chord, wing replacing the tapered wing of the Widgeon I and II to ease production.

The first Widgeon III flew in March 1927, with production starting later that year.

The Widgeon proved expensive compared to its competitors and a total of only 26 of all types, including the prototype, were built and sold before production was stopped in 1930 in order to allow Westland to concentrate of the Wapiti general purpose military aircraft and the Wessex airliner.

One of the produced Widgeon III airplanes found its way to Australia and was registered VH-UGI in september 1927.

That airplane was transferred to Papua, and made there several flights among some of which mail was transported.

The authorities produced then airmail stamps by overprinting an airplane to existing stamps.

Most probably the image used in the drawing was influenced by the looks of this Westland Widgeon III.



even a reversed overprint is known

