



*Snipes and Salamanders (with headrests behind cockpit) being built at Ham Works, Kingston, December 1918. Today the scene is of Harriers under construction and the manufacture of Hunter spares; soon the Hawk will also be produced in this building*

vised by Herbert Smith. By the end of W.W.I over 18,000 Sopwith aeroplanes had been built.

In September 1920 the Sopwith Company went into voluntary liquidation but two months later the H. G. Hawker Engineering Company was created and so the craftsmen of Kingston-upon-Thames continued building aircraft under the leadership of Tom Sopwith. But Herbert Smith, believing that aviation had come to a standstill in England, had written to several companies in Japan where opportunities for progress at that time seemed to be greater.

### With Mitsubishi

Mitsubishi were interested in discussing the possibilities of manufacturing aircraft and so Smith, together with a number of colleagues from the former Sopwith company, left the scene of his momentous and vital wartime work to take up the post which, the following year, established him as the chief engineer of the aircraft division of Mitsubishi.

In 1921 new and extensive aircraft works were established by Mitsubishi at the airfield at Nagoya where Hispano-Suiza engines were built under licence from France and four types of aircraft were laid down for the Japanese Navy:

- (1) The Mitsubishi No. 1 Biplane; a single-seat, single-bay fighter, powered by a 300-h.p. Hispano-Suiza engine. The armament consisted of two Vickers machine-guns and the aircraft's maximum speed was 145 m.p.h.

- (2) No. 2 Biplane; similar to No. 1 but with two seats and an increased (two-bay) wing span.
- (3) A single-seat Triplane powered by a 450-h.p. Napier Lion engine. This aircraft had a divided undercarriage for torpedo-carrying.
- (4) The No. 4 Biplane; a two-seater powered by a 450-h.p. Napier Lion engine. This aircraft also had a divided undercarriage for torpedo-carrying.

Japan had expressed a wish to model her fighting services on British standards, and in 1921 a Government delegation of about thirty pilots and engineers who had been in the Royal Naval Air Service left London for Tokyo to advise on such matters at the

request of the Japanese Naval Attaché. The delegation was led by Colonel The Master of Sempill. In his paper on his experiences in Japan, which he presented to the Royal Aeronautical Society in April 1924, shortly after his return to the United Kingdom, the Colonel referred to the outstanding work done by, among others, the "technical staff" of the late Sopwith Aviation Company attached to Mitsubishi.

In 1924 Herbert Smith returned to England at the end of his contract with Mitsubishi and retired from the aircraft industry. His name will for ever be connected with the early pioneering days of aviation and of Sopwith aircraft in particular.

*The Mitsubishi No. 1 Biplane designed and engineered by Herbert Smith at Nagoya, Japan, between 1921 and 1922. Powered by a 300-h.p. Mitsubishi-built Hispano-Suiza engine, the aircraft had a maximum speed of 145 m.p.h.*

