



*Hunting Jet Flap on tow, Thurleigh airfield, 10 Jan 1963
(neg B417)*



Jet Flap in flight, 1965 (neg B1777)

First Flight Jet Flap Fifty five years ago, on 26 March 1963, the Hunting Jet Flap research aircraft XN714 finally got airborne for the first time, at RAE Bedford's Thurleigh airfield. The aircraft had arrived by road from Hunting's factory at Luton in December 1962 but the bad winter of 1962/63 prevented it from flying until March. Can anyone add any personal recollections of the Hunting Jet Flap at Bedford? The aircraft moved on in 1967 to be used at the Test Pilot School at Farnborough, and is now in the RAF Museum at Cosford.

Although the concept was not taken further at the time, there is renewed interest today in the jet flap idea, as a means of controlling aircraft without any moving control surfaces, and thus enhancing the "stealth" nature of an airframe.

Heavy Snow In the same winter of 1962/63, with a massive fall of snow (see picture below left of the sign-post on the airfield, *neg B429*), a novel method of snow clearance on the runway was tried, using the jet exhaust from a Venom.



The caption to this photo of a Venom aircraft (*neg B470*, Feb 1963) says "Venom de-icing the runway" but it might be more correct to say "re-icing" as an account from the time says it just melted the snow and recreated it as ice.

Munich 60 As this is being written, Manchester United Football Club has again commemorated, in Manchester and in Munich, the air crash at Munich 60 years ago, on 6 Feb 1958, that killed 7 members of the football team (and others). RAE Bedford's investigation of the cause of the accident, involving trials of the effect of slush on take-off performance, has been described before (see Newsletter 22, Feb 2016). No information has been received yet to say when the new TV programme about the accident (mentioned in the last issue) will be broadcast, including reference to RAE Bedford's important work.

RAE 100 It is perhaps not widely known that the Royal Aircraft Establishment acquired its name on 1 April 1918, when the Royal Air Force was formed by amalgamating the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service. Up to then, aeronautical research had been conducted at Farnborough under the name Royal Aircraft Factory, created in 1912, but with the formation of the Air Force, the letters 'RAF' were now taken, so the Factory had to change its name, hence RAE.

Thus, alongside the forthcoming celebrations for the Royal Air Force centenary there is also celebration of the RAE's centenary.

Bedford Aeronautical Heritage Group

Don't forget, to contact us with any news or comments, please email (bahg-bt@hotmail.co.uk).

From the Archive: Some Firsts...



Wessex XR503 was delivered to Bedford 50 years ago, in March, 1968. This first picture was not taken, however, until October 1968 (*neg B2486A*).



Eventually, XR503 received the full colour scheme (*neg B7603K*, taken many years later, in Dec 1986).



BAC 1-11 XX105 was delivered to Bedford 45 years ago, on 26 March 1973. This airborne picture with BLEU markings was taken on 28 March (*neg B3377J*).



VC10 XX914 was delivered to Bedford 45 years ago, in March, 1973, and is shown in this fine July 1974 air-air portrait (*neg B3700N*).

And...Some Lasts



Canberra T4 WJ992 made its last flight at Bedford 25 years ago, on 18 Feb 1993. There is no picture of this in the archive. The picture here (*neg B4570C*) shows the aircraft in flight in Nov 1977. The aircraft served BLEU and then the Radar Flight Trials Unit.



This picture shows Dave Llewelyn-Davies signing off after the final run of the 3x3 supersonic wind tunnel 35 years ago, on 30 March 1983, after operating for 30 years (*neg TS2960*).