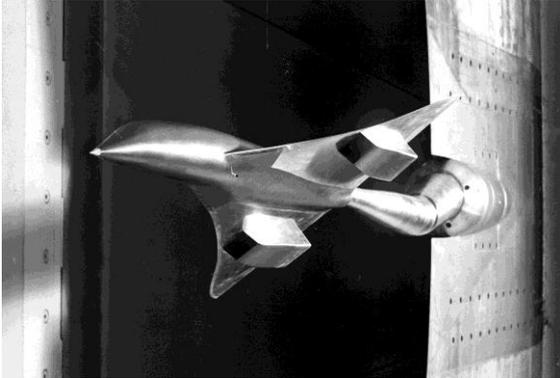


**Happy Christmas and New Year's greetings to all our readers**



*Concorde Model 811-32 in 8x8 tunnel, Dec 1962 (neg B5368-Bk1A)*



*Guppy aircraft N1037V at Thurleigh Dec 1971 (neg B3081G)*

**Memories, Memories...**

This issue is devoted to a series of anniversaries chosen by the editor, usually based on the months of November/December or on an “8” year ie 1958, 1968 and so on. If you have any recollections related to these events, please send them in. If you want to say “what about event XX?” please put forward your suggestions for a future issue. We are always happy to receive brief contributions for inclusion in the newsletter.

The establishment at Bedford began life in the early 1950s as the National Aeronautical Establishment (NAE), independent of RAE management, but in December 1955, Bedford changed to become the largest “out-station” of the Royal Aircraft Establishment.

In December 1962, wind tunnel tests on a variety of Concorde models were in full swing, with the 8ft supersonic tunnel being particularly busy (see image above).



December 1971 saw a “Guppy” outside transport aircraft arrive at Thurleigh (see image above). It’s not documented why it came. It may have been delivering major components of the Goodyear airship.

In December 1974, a new hybrid computer system for the Aero Flight simulator was installed (picture left), in a specially built air conditioned building (only machines were allowed air con at that time). This replaced the analogue computer in use from about 1962. This year also saw the end of famous names Aero Flight and BLEU, when the first Flight Systems Department was formed in November 1974.

Following its arrival in 1975, research Harrier XW175 was active in many areas. In December 1978, XW175 took part in the second set of sea trials on board HMS Hermes to show how a Harrier could be operated at sea (images below).



*Harrier XW175 on Hermes in 1978 (neg B4915S)*



*Harrier XW175 on Hermes, with Harrier GR1, 1978 (neg B4923F)*



*Harrier XW175 on Hermes in 1978 (neg B4349H)*

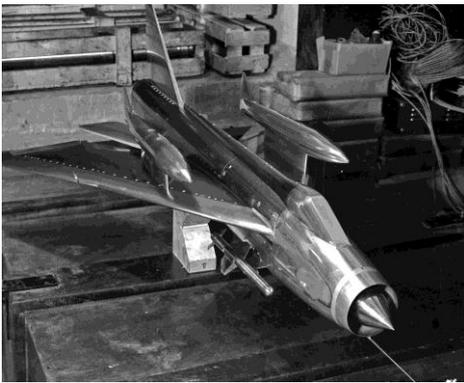
*Bedford Aeronautical Heritage Group*

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



Later, after the first stage of conversion (1984-86) to the VAAC Harrier, with an on-board digital computer for flight control research, the aircraft completed 1000 hours of fly-by-wire experiments in December 1993, some 25 years ago (image left, *neg A9886*). XW175's final flight was on 20 November 2008, when the aircraft returned to Boscombe Down after more sea trials, this time on board HMS Illustrious. This concluded a research career that lasted some 33 years.

Apart from Concorde work, the wind tunnels tested many other models over the years.



*Wind tunnel model Lightning with over-wing fuel tanks, Nov 1958 (neg B4945-Bk1A)*



*Half model being rigged in 13x9 tunnel, Sept 1968 (neg CL249)*



*High Incidence Research Model (Model 2061 HIRM-LERX) on sting rig 13x9 1978 (neg C20797)*

**FASTA AGM** As usual, Gerry Shanks and Barry Tomlinson attended the Farnborough Air Sciences Trust Association (FASTA) AGM on 20 November 2018 and gave a short briefing about BAHG activities. We reported Bedford's contribution to the flight control laws used in the F-35B STOVL combat aircraft, recently undergoing sea trials with the UK's new aircraft carrier. We also reviewed Bedford's major contribution to the Concorde programme, which we will be commemorating at The Higgins museum, Bedford in the New Year.

**Stocking Fillers** At this time of year, you may be looking for a stocking filler or two. Don't forget the two books we publish, available at £15 each plus postage. They can be collected by arrangement. *Wings Over Thurleigh* covers the research work undertaken on the airfield. *Wind Beneath the Wings* deals mainly with the wind tunnels, their characteristics and research programmes, but also includes some additional material relating to the airfield.



**Talks** In 2018, some 8 talks were given to local organisations, of a very varied nature: Amptill and District Archaeological and Local History Society, Bedford Architectural, Archaeological & Local History Society, Bedford Wine & Social Club, Eltisley History Society, IET Peterborough Network, Luton & District Historical Society, Sharnbrook History Society and Thrapston Vintage Tractor Group. We are always pleased to receive invitations. Several requests for 2019 have been received. Our next talk will be given to the Bedford National Trust Association on 15 January 2019.

*Bedford Aeronautical Heritage Group*

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