

When I left Imperial College I joined Vickers at Weybridge as part of the TSR2 Trials Team, a part of Systems Division. Our involvement revolved around the third Aircraft, which was scheduled to develop the Navigation/Attack Systems, prior to its flight programme the various components of the Navigation system were installed into a Comet 4b of the Boscombe Down Evaluation site, which then was used to integrate the hardware and software elements. I was part of the advance part of the team which was down at Boscombe on a part time basis, and so was able to see XR219 take off in the early part of its Flight Programme with some lovely shock diamonds in the exhaust.

The experiences which I remember consist of a small feature and a large feature.

The small feature relates to a visit that we paid to the full scale model of the Aircraft in the hanger at Weybridge. The model was used to establish whether items of equipment would fit into the airframe, a fullscale model being made to drawings and then fitted to the Aircraft model. During the visit I sat in the rear Navigator cockpit and I noticed a small pulley on one side of the cockpit, a thin wire wound around the pulley and then disappeared forward past the equipment faces, when I looked into the forward cockpit I saw a similar pulley which linked up with the thin wire coming from the rear cockpit. Each pulley had a handle to allow the pulley to be rotated, this then moved the wire either forward or backward revealing a clip which was attached to the wire. The purpose of this was to enable a message note to be passed between the pilot and navigator if all other means of contact were down. I do not

know whether this made it into the first aircraft but it strikes me as prime example of Keep It Simple.

The large feature relates to the delivery of the second aircraft fuselage to Boscombe Down. The fuselage was attached to a low loader and all went well until it reached the apron in front of the hanger which was to be used to accommodate the assembly of the aircraft. Unfortunately during one of the final turns, it was too tight and the low loader overbalanced and the fuselage fell to the ground. I was at Boscombe Down at the time and went to see the damage, the fuselage had been moved into the Hanger and you could see the aircraft strong points which had been used to mount the fuselage to the low loader had been ripped out. As you can imagine this problem was not published at the time and I wondered how long it was until the news leaked out.

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