

# The flight home

*pictures supplied by Bob Nash*

At last, after a false start due to the weather, TSR.2 XR219 was finally flown 'home' to the BAC flight test centre at Warton by R P Beamont, with navigator Peter Money Penny on Flight 14, February 22 1965.

During the 43-minute flight from Boscombe Down, Bee took XR219 out over the Irish Sea from Colwyn Bay and went supersonic for the first and only time, and Mach 1.12 was reported.

That the prototype should ever have been assembled at Weybridge, dis-assembled, carted to Boscombe Down, re-assembled and test flown from there, so far from all the expertise and hemmed in by unfamiliar procedures and practices - not to mention the costs financial and domestic - only added to the project's woes, but at last the aircraft was based where it most certainly should have been all along, where the expertise and facilities matched the demands of the programme.

Staff at Warton were allowed out on to the apron to watch the arrival, marshalled by the apprentices of the day, and after a short 'demonstration' by Bee (his lunch time 'demos' of Lightnings were a star feature of my own apprenticeship days at Warton) and accompanied by Jimmy Dell in the Lightning, XR219 finally came to a

halt outside 2 Hangar, and right beneath the window in the flight test office I was to work from just a few years later.

One can imagine the euphoria among those who witnessed this, evidenced by the stance of the marshaller as '219 came to a halt (picture 4). After the huge successes of Canberra and Lightning, here was the next mega-project that was going to keep Warton busy well into the 70s and 80s.

Sadly, though, of course it was not to be, and by the time I arrived at Warton at the start of my apprenticeship under 8 months later, '219 was stored 'out of use' in 2 Hangar, for all to see, and was eventually stripped, partly disassembled and taken by lorry on 14 August 1966 to be shot to pieces at Shoeburyness.



Shepherded by Jimmy Dell in Lightning XM968, (with Warton photographer Johnny Whittaker having the flight of his life!) Bee flies overhead Warton on arrival from Boscombe Down, with navigator Peter Money Penny in the back seat.

Right - TOUCHDOWN, and, everyone hoped, the start of another successful era at Warton.

The following pages show XR219 taxi-ing to the apron, and the crowds that surrounded it as it stopped.









