

TSR.2 seen in public after cancellation

On 15 July 1965, some four months after cancellation, BAC held an Open Day at Warton where it lined up TSR.2 XR219 for public view alongside its other products, the Lightning and Canberra. This may well have been the only time '219 was seen close up by the public and the last time it was outside and in one, essentially airworthy, piece.

XR219 was then stored in a hangar, and finally departed in bits on lorries and reputedly at night in early August 1966, for the Ministry of Defence's Proof and Experimental facility at Shoeburyness, Essex, where it was eventually destroyed in the interests of testing weapons and explosives. A reference book states that BAC had even proposed to fly the aircraft to the nearest airport, Southend, so as to avoid the long road journey, so good a state was 219 still in.

The first TSR.2 to arrive at "the Shoe" had been the third aircraft, XR221, which had completed avionics systems tests the very morning of the cancellation, 6 April 1965, and was due to fly from Wisley the following month: it arrived at Shoeburyness on 13 September 1965: XR223 arrived later the same month. It was several years before the three aircraft were finally destroyed in firing trials. (The second and fourth TSR.2s, XR220 and XR222 survive at the museums at Cosford and Duxford respectively: as far as I know all other airframes were cut up at breakers' yards.).

The first two photos were sent in by Gareth Jones.



