

## Views of the Olympus 22R,

*contributed by John Branch, in the early 60s an apprentice at Bristol Siddeley Engines*



I was an apprentice at Bristol Siddeley Engines at Patchway, Bristol in the early sixties, and had the odd job working on the Olympus 22R engine during my time on the shop floor. I was allocated to a group building a fitting the jet pipe/reheat assembly in one of the sheds backing onto the A38. (Some of these sheds were 'aircraft', and some were 'engines' & all apprentices wore green overalls, and were thus identical to foremen. I spent some happy hours fitting on BAC-111 tails when I worked for the other company).

Anyway, as the youngest, most agile and least experienced person in the group, I was fed horizontally into the engine exhaust to hold a rivetting dolly whilst all manner of fittings were attached to the jetpipe. The noise was incredible, the



vibration was agony , and holding the heavy dolly against the rivet accurately in the dark, whilst lying on my back on a corrugated surface hurt. Altogether not an experience I was in any hurry to repeat. In those days the work group used to reward apprentices if they contributed to the team's bonus. I picked up £2 that week, quadrupling my spending money.

In the early days of development of 22R to Concorde 593, a demo test was run in front of senior captains from Pan Am, BOAC and other airlines. A huge noise, the back end turned cherry red, massive thrust, and then BANG. Later, when the smoke and flames had died away, a guest turned to a senior BSEL man and asked in a slightly embarrassed way "How many blades are there on the Olympus turbine?". A passing cleaner with mop over his shoulder said bitterly, " About three \*\*\*\*ing buckets full". Not a good day.