

**INDIVIDUAL HISTORY**

**BRISTOL 188 XF926/8368M**  
**MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 83/A/1112**

The Bristol 188 was the first Bristol turbojet aeroplane to be built and flown, XF926 being built as second of the three aircraft built to fly, constructors number 13519. The third aircraft was a static structural test airframe only. Built as an experimental aircraft capable of reaching and sustaining twice the speed of sound for long enough to enable steady-state kinetic heating effects on the structure to be experienced and recorded.

- Feb 53 Contract 6/Aircraft/10144 for the three airframes awarded to Experimental Requirement specification ER.143D.
- 4 Jan 54 Serial numbers XF923 and XF926 issued to the flying aircraft. A subsequent (May 1955) order was placed for a further three aircraft, but cancelled in 1957.
- 1960 After considerable delays, under construction at Filton. Photo - Aeroplane Monthly July 1994 p.35. The first aircraft, XF923, made its maiden flight 14 April 1962.
- 29 Apr 63 First flight of XF926, from Filton, using the lower-speed rated Bristol Siddeley Gyron Junior turbojet engines removed from the stored XF923, accompanied by chase aircraft, a two seat Hawker Hunter T.7, XL563. Pilot Bristol chief test pilot Godfrey Auty; flight time 30 minutes. Photos - Flight 23 May 1963 p.734; Scale Aircraft Modelling December 2010 p. 36. Identical to the first aircraft, other than minor changes in instrumentation.
- Flew with Royal Aircraft Establishment. Completed a total of 51 flights; highest speed obtained was Mach 1.88 (651 knots) at 36,000 feet. Tests included Taxiing, take-off and climb, flutter and handling, engine handling and relighting, handling during supersonic acceleration, engine surge, and deceleration. All flights were by only three men - Godfrey Auty and J. Williamson from Bristol, and Lt. Cdr. P. Millet of Aero Flight, R.A.E. Latterly, the first aircraft was cannibalized to Keep XF926 flying.
- 31 Jul 63 36<sup>th</sup> flight. Grounded for re-engining. Photo taking off, July 1963; Aeromilitaria Spring 2004 p.13. Photo in flight – Scale Aircraft Modelling December 2010 p.37.
- 4 Oct 63 Flew again following re-engining with new Mach-2 capable engines. Photo with chase aircraft Hawker Hunter XF509 - Air Pictorial December 1963 p.387.

- 24 Oct 63 Photographed in hangar at Filton together with XF923. Photo – Scale Aircraft Modelling December 2010 p.37.
- Mid- Nov 63 During its 47<sup>th</sup> flight, XF826 reached Mach 1.88 at 36,000ft, the aircraft's highest ever speed attained.
- 12 Jan 64 51<sup>st</sup> and last flight of XF926, flown by Bristol Test Pilot Mr. J. Williamson. Total flying hours 26.11.
- Feb 64 Both aircraft grounded indefinitely and project suspended, partly due problems of high fuel consumption and the inability to reach sustained high speeds, and superceding of the original operational requirement for the project.
- 25 Mar 64 Transferred to C (A) charge, allocated to storage at Filton. Photo of ?XF926 stored at Filton in 1964 – Aeromilitaria Spring 2004 p.12, and of both aircraft at Filton that year – page 14.
- Apr 66 Both aircraft moved to the Proof and Experimental Establishment at Shoeburyness, Essex for gunnery ground trials work.
- 7 Nov 66 Struck off charge along with XF923.
- Photo intact at Shoeburyness adjacent to TSR-2 XR219 April 1968; Aeroplane Monthly July 1994 p.40; photo of one of the '188s intact adjacent still to the TSR.2, circa early 1971; Flight International 27 May 1971 p.789. By 9 Feb 1972 when visited by Jack Bruce of the RAF Museum the aircraft was dismantled and minus engines. XF923 was scrapped at Foulness.
- 3 Sep 72 To RAF Cosford, Salop; displayed minus engines. Photo as delivered; Air-Strip March 1973 rear cover.
- Allotted instructional serial 8368M.
- Photos on display - Air Extra No, 13 p.16; Aircraft Illustrated September 2000 p.32; Aeroplane September 2000 pp.14 – 15.
- 1 May 09 Specially placed on outside display for RAFM Cosford's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. Photos – Aircraft Illustrated July 2009 p.22; Aviation News July 2009 p.10; Wrecks and Relics 22<sup>nd</sup> edition. Detailed internal/external photos as displayed, scale line drawings and historical photos – Scale Aircraft Modelling December 2010 pp. 33-44.

**TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON**

**© ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2010**