

HAWKER SIDDELEY NIMROD R1 XV249

MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER X006-1343

Assembled at Woodford as a Hawker Siddeley HS. 801 Nimrod MR. Mk 1, one of 46 delivered to the RAF. Serials block for initial batch XV226 - XV263. Constructor's Number 8024, from the first batch of 38 aircraft ordered to contract no. KD/G/064/CB.6B in January 1966 (a further eight were ordered in January 1972, XZ280 – XZ287).

- 20 Nov 70 First engine ground run on XV249.
- 22 Dec 70 First flight from Woodford commanded by HSA pilot E.G. Franklin and four other crew; flight time 2hrs 20 minutes, with a further six test flights prior to delivery to the RAF on 24 December, 31 December, 7 January, 12 January, 13 and 28 January 1971 .
- 2 Feb 71 Delivered to RAF Kinloss, Morayshire, Scotland.
- During the period 2 to 18 June 1972, 120 Squadron Crew 1 (Captain Sqn Ldr Clegg), Crew 2 (Capt – Sqn Ldr Sterling), Crew 3 (Capt – Sqn Ldr Curtiss) and Crew 4 (Capt – Flt Lt Furr) deployed to CFB Greenwood, Nova Scotia for a major NATO maritime exercise called Exercise Pink Lace, during which XV249 was on static display at the CAF Open Day on 10 June.
- 12 Aug 72 120 Sqn Crew 2 (Capt –Sqn Ldr Sterling) in XV249 won the Aird Whyte Trophy competed for annually by all RAF Nimrod MR Squadrons.
- 2 Jan 73 Major 1 servicing at 1322 airframe hours by NMSU RAF Kinloss, completed 5 March 1973.
- Several sorties with 206 Squadron recorded in Co-pilot's logbook of RAFM Curator S/Ldr Al Mclean; usual Captain was Canadian S/Ldr Bob Crutchlow-an AEO; first pilot was actually Steve Santon, since the captain of Nimrod aircraft wasn't necessarily a pilot.
- 17 Dec 74 Major 2 servicing at 2504 airframe hours at NMSU RAF Kinloss.
- 20 May 75 Met up with former RCAF Avro Lancaster en route from Edmonton via Toronto, Gander and Reykjavik to the Strathallan Collection in Scotland.
- Mar 76 Squadron deployed to Machrihanish (Op Bolthole) whilst the Kinloss runway was resurfaced.
- 10 Mar 76 'Cod War' (vs. Iceland) reconnaissance patrol (Operation Heliotrope). Aircraft Captain W/Cdr Gerry Peasley (a Navigator). Flight time 8.5 hours.

- 12 Apr 76 Flown from Machrihanish to Luqa, Malta. Flight time four hours.
- 15 Apr 76 Returned to Machrihanish.
- 2 May 76 Op. Heliotrope sortie. Flight time 8.35 hours.
- 31 Aug 76 Fisheries surveillance flight over Irish Sea – extract from AEO LB of James Brazier on correspondence file.
- 24 Nov 76 Flown by Flt Lt Macrae on continuation training for 6.01 hours (daylight) From logbook (X006-1364) of Sqdn Ldr Ripley, a Nimrod flight engineer.
- 7 Dec 76 Flown by Flt Lt Macrae on Torpedo Exercise for 5.02 hours (daylight)- Ripley LB.
- 1 Mar 77 Flown by Flt Lt Furr on continuation training for 2.00 hours (daylight) and 2.40 hours (night) – Ripley LB
- 15 May 77 Transferred to 203 Squadron, RAF Luqa, Malta.
- 29/30 Jul 77 Queens' Silver Jubilee Review of RAF at RAF Finningley, with XV249 representing No 203 Squadron in the static display.
- 9 Jan 78 Transferred to RAF Kinloss.
- 22 May 78 Operation 'Tapestry' flight – Fishery protection/oil and gas platform surveillance. Flight time 8.35 hours. Pilot Al Mclean, Co-Pilot Flt Lt Barr.
- 6-7 Jun 78 Detached duty to Vaerlose, Denmark.
- 19 Jul 78 Entered major servicing at NMSU Kinloss, completed 2 November 1978.
- 9 Jan 79 Deployed to RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus for seven days – 120 Squadron crew 3; flown from there by Al Mclean on two round trip flights on 11th and 15th January, returning from Akrotiri to Kinloss 16th January (Flight time 6.10 hours, pilot Al Mclean, Co-Pilot Flt/Lt Barr).
- 8 Feb 79 Flown by Flt Lt Laing for 8.00 hours (daylight) and 0.55 (Night) – Ripley LB
- 14 Mar 79 Operation 'Tapestry' flight – Pilot Al Mclean, Co-Pilot Flt Lt Sefton. Flying time 9.10 hours.
- 21 May 79 Flown by Flt Lt Laing for 9.00 hours (daylight) – Ripley LB
- 24 May 79 Flown by Flt Lt Laing for 2.35 hours (daylight) – Ripley LB

- June 1979 120 Squadron detachments for XV249 included 11-13 June to Keflavik, 20-22 June to Bodo, Norway, bringing Sea Eagle missiles back to the UK upon return; and 25-29 June to Gibraltar.
- 28 Aug 79 Flown by 120 Squadron crew 8 to CFB Trenton to participate in the Toronto airshow, with daily displays 31 Aug and 1-3 September, thence to CFB Greenwood on 4 September, leaving for Kinloss on 7 September.
- 20 Mar 80 Flown by Flt Lt Zarraga for 6.50 hours (daylight) – Ripley LB
- 22 Apr 80 One of three 206 Squadron-crewed aircraft involved in Exercise Open Gate at Gibraltar.
- 23 June 80 Two 201 Squadron crews to Sigonella with XV249.
- 28 Aug 80 Flown by Flt Lt Wingate for 4.00 hours (daylight) on Continuation Training – Ripley LB
- 8 Nov 80 Five aircraft, including XV249, and six crews deployed to RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus as part of the four-month Operation Homespun.
- 5 Apr 81 Major servicing at 5604 airframe hours at NMSU RAF Kinloss.
- 21 Jul 81 Transferred to RAF St. Mawgan.
- 27 Apr 82 Flown by 42 Squadron crew on four-hour torpedo modification trial flight from St Mawgan in the Clyde Exercise area; the first trial of Mk46 torpedoes modified for attacking surface targets with passive homing.
- 1 May 82 Flown by 42 Squadron crew from Freetown in Sierra Leone until 7 May to provide the ‘southerly’ SAR cover for the 1 Squadron Harrier GR3 deployments to Ascension Island and flying SAR cover duties 3-6 May.
- 26 May 82 And also 29-30 May; 42 Sqn crew 4 on SAR cover sorties with XV249, for transiting Harrier aircraft from Dakar in Senegal.
- 10 Jun 82 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Hurley for 6.10 hours (daylight) on Continuation Training – Ripley LB.
- 4 Nov 82 42 Sqn Crew 1 in XV249 scrambled for last SAR call out from Ascension Island to search for a Victor tanker which had failed to make pre-briefed radio reports; the Victor was located 55 nautical miles out; it had suffered a total high frequency radio failure.

- 5 Nov 82 SAR cover for the South Atlantic withdrawn post-Falklands War, and 42 Squadron ceased their one-aircraft detachment at Ascension Island; last aircraft was XV249, returned to St Mawgan via Gibraltar.
- Mar 83 42 Sqn Crew 6 (Capt – Flt Lt N Jones) in XV249 won the Aird Whyte trophy.
- 18 Jul 83 Flypast at RNLI Penlee lifeboat station (Cockrill LB). Captain Lt Cdr (USN) Yeats.
- 2 Aug 83 Transferred to NMSU Kinloss for Major 5 service at 7245 airframe hours, being completed 5 December 1983.
- 12 Aug 83 To Valkenburg AB, Netherlands (Cockrill LB; Captain again Lt Cdr Yeats). Returned from Valkenburg to Kinloss 15 August, with transit to St Mawgan same day.
- 5 Dec 83 Flown to Woodford for Mr Mk.2 conversion.
- 12 Feb 85 First flight as a Nimrod MR.2.
- 26 Mar 85 Delivered to RAF Kinloss following conversion to Nimrod MR.Mk.2 standard at Woodford. (Set 24) This conversion, one of 35 delivered from 23 August 1979, involved fitting a new avionics and equipment suite, replacing the Shackleton-era ASV21D radar with the EMI Searchwater system and with an increase in crew accommodation from eleven to twelve. Served with the Kinloss Nimrod Wing as part of the Kinloss Maritime Wing along with Nos 42 (Reserve) Squadron-the Nimrod operational Conversion Unit - , 120, 201 and 206 Squadrons, an original total of 28 aircraft, pooled for servicing and operational purposes.
- Oct/Nov 85 201 and 206 Squadron crews deployed to Patrick AFB, USA for four weeks for Exercise Rum Punch 85B with three aircraft including XV249.
- 3 May 86 Another Exercise Rum Punch at Patrick AFB with four aircraft including XV249; completed 29 May 1986
- 7 May 86 120 Sqn Crew 3 and back up crew in XV235 left Lossiemouth to participate in Fincastle Competition at RAAF Edinburgh, Australia, via CFB Greenwood and Offut AFB, Travis AFB, Hickham AFB Hawaii and Nandi, Fiji; on 22 November Crew 3 won the Fincastle Trophy, leaving for the UK on 26 November via Sri Lanka and Bahrein, arriving at Lossiemouth 30 November.
- 29 Apr 88 Major 6 Servicing at 9243 airframe hours at NMSU RAF Kinloss, completed 9 November 1988.
- 11 Nov 88 Transferred to RAF St. Mawgan

- 1989/90 Flown by Flt Lt John Langley when with No 236 OCU on seven occasions between 24 February 1989 and 27 April 1990- see LB extracts X005-5970/004. Included a 2.35-hour Staff College demonstration flight on 3rd April 1990.
- The Ripley LB contains a number of flights in XV249, 1989 – 1991;
- 2 Mar 89 Flown by Wg Cmdr. Cockrill for 2.20 hours (daylight) on Horn 1 photo over St.Eval and low level and air to air refuelling practice.
- 20 Mar 89 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Warren for 3.30 hours (daylight) on Round Robin via Filton
- 27 Apr 89 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Warren for 1.00 hours (daylight) on Display Practice – Overstress.
- 8 May 89 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Warren for 0.45 hours (daylight) on Final Display Practice and for 1.00 hours (daylight) on Display Ratification
- 24 May 89 Flown by Wg Cmdr. Cockrill for 7.10 hours (daylight) between St Mawgan-Jacksonville via Brunswick (VP30 Visit) and by Wg Cmdr. Cockrill for 2.55 hours (daylight) between Brunswick and Jacksonville.
- 30 May 89 Flown by Wg Cmdr. Cockrill for 2.25 hours (daylight) and 0.50 hours (night) between Jacksonville and Greenwood.
- 31 May 89 Flown by Wg Cmdr. Cockrill for 3.40 hours (daylight) and 2.30 hours (night) between Greenwood and St Mawgan
- 27 Jun 89 Flown by Flt Lt Pullen for 8.05 hours (daylight) for JMC TACEVAL
- July 17 1989 - flown by Sqdn Ldr Warren for 0.30 hours (daylight) on display practice
- July 20 1989 - flown by Sqdn Ldr Warren for 1.40 hours (daylight) on RNAS Culdrose and Fairford Practice
- 22 Jul 89 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Warren for 2.10 hours (daylight) at Fairford International Air Tattoo
- 23 Jul 89 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Warren for 2.00 hours (daylight) at Fairford International Air Tattoo
- 6 Sep 89 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Warren for 0.55 hours (daylight) on display practice. No.4 failed
- 26 Mar 90 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Gillespie for 5.35 hours (daylight) on L23 for Colin Smith

- 18 Apr 90 Flown by Flt Lt Young for 2.35 hours (daylight) from St Mawgan to Kinloss and from Kinloss to St Mawgan for 1.20 hours (daylight)
- 19 Apr 90 Flown by Flt Lt Coley for 2.30 hours (daylight) on L7
- 15 Jun 90 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Banfield for 4.00 hours (daylight)
- 17 Jul 90 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Harborne for 5.15 hours (daylight) for L23 for Sgt Tim Baxter
- 28 Sep 90 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Banfield for 4.00 hours (daylight) for C to I
- 2 Oct 90 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Banfield for 3.00 hours (daylight) for C to I
- 31 Oct 90 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Warren for 5.15 hours (daylight), blue failure
- 16 Jan 91 Flown by Sqdn Ldr Banfield for 0.45 hours (daylight) and 0.30 (night) from St Mawgan to Kinloss. Also from Kinloss to St Mawgan in a time of 1.25 hours (daylight)
- 20 Jun 91 236 OCU flight – Tomlinson logbook; General Handling and circuits.3.25 hours; pilot Flt Lt Coley.
- 17 Sep 91 Three-hour local flight, with circuits, 236 OCU – pilot Sqdn Ldr Banfield – Tomlinson logbook. Flight time three hours.
- 5 May 92 6.15 hour continuation training flight, 42 Squadron; pilot Flt Lt Trout; Tomlinson logbook.
- 10 Jul 92 42 Squadron/training flight. Mark Tomlinson logbook – extracts on Nimrod correspondence file. Pilot Flt Lt Trout.4.20 hours.
- 7 Sep 92 Placed into storage at RAF Kinloss.
- 1 Oct 92 Withdrawn from service along with three other Nimrod MR.2s (bringing the Nimrod MR.2 fleet down to 28 aircraft) and placed into storage at RAF Kinloss having flown 11,941 hours.
- 16 May 95 One of No 51 Squadron's three specially-equipped Nimrod R Mk 1 aircraft, XW666, ditched in the Moray Firth following a starter motor explosion which pierced fuel tanks, causing a major in-flight fire. The seven crew all survived and the aircraft was later salvaged, but was a write-off. XV249 was then identified as a suitable replacement airframe. Nimrod R1s had replaced Signals Intelligence unit No 51 Squadron's aging Comet R Mk 2 and Canberra aircraft from May 1974.
- 12 June 95 Taken out of storage at RAF Kinloss, following British Aerospace being offered a contract (SMC41a/0041) to modify XV249 to Nimrod R1 standard to replace XW666.

- 23 Oct 95 Following major 4 overhaul at Kinloss from 12 June 1995, ferried to BAe Woodford for stripping of all ASW equipment and partial conversion to Nimrod R1 standard through addition of some antenna fairings; £30 million conversion carried out under the codename 'Project Anneka'.

- 19 Dec 96 Delivered to No 51 Squadron's new base at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire, and underwent further work for final fitting out to R1 standard.

- 2 Apr 97 First air test as a Nimrod R1, from Waddington

- 11 Apr 97 Flown as fully equipped R Mk 1 aircraft, with commencement of Airborne calibration of equipment, finished ten days later; calibration report issue 28 April. These Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) aircraft were a major asset to the UK and its allies, with a crew of 27 – 29 people.

- 28 Apr 97 declared operational as a Nimrod R1; the first 'starwindow' equipped Nimrod R1 to fly.

- 23 Aug 99 Major 8 servicing at 12,992 airframe hours at RAF Kinloss, completed 21 March 2000.

- 2003 Deployed to Gulf Area in support of Operation Southern Watch and patrolled the southern no-fly zone over Iraq.

- 5 Nov 2003 Major 9 Servicing at 15,653 airframe hours at RAF Kinloss, completed 14 April 2004.

- 24 Oct 2005 51 Squadron personnel in XV249 participated in Exercise Trident Warrior and a NCCT (Network Centric Collaborative Testing) Trial at Greenville , North Carolina, USA.

- 28 Jan 2008 Sooting found in pannier bay at RAF Waddington, following a fuel leak on 7 December 2007 during Operation Herrick

By 2011, following withdrawal of the Nimrod MR.2s and scrapping of the Nimrod MRA.4 project, both in 2010, only RAF Waddington-based XV249 and XW664 remained as the last two Flying Nimrods of any variant, sister aircraft XW665 having been grounded from 27 October 2010 and broken up at Waddington in the summer of 2011, the forward fuselage going to a German museum.

Form 700 indicates final overseas detachment for XV249, with fuel uplifts at Akrotiri, Cyprus 31 March – 22 May 2011.

After a 90-day extension from the planned out-of-service date of 31 March 2011 for the two remaining Nimrod R1s for further operations over Libya, XW664 returned to Waddington from Cyprus on 24 June 2011, two days after its last mission over Libya,

marking the end of the types' involvement in support of Operations Ellamy and Unified Protector (offensive operations over Libya by the RAF which began 19 March 2011) The Nimrod R1 role had been to fly off the Libyan coast to intercept communications and radar signals from pro-Gaddafi forces.

- 23 May 2011 Having departed Waddington for Cyprus on 4 March 2011, and operating over the Mediterranean with the call sign Ascot 7216, XV249 returned to Waddington after operations over Libya, being replaced by XW664 for operations for the final month.
- 9 Jun 2011 XV249 withdrawn from normal service.
- 28 Jun 2011 Formal retirement of Nimrod R.1 with ceremony at RAF Waddington, XV249 making the farewell flypast over the airfield at 11am, pilot Flt Lt Mike Chatterton plus six crew. Photos – Air Forces Monthly September 2011 p. 8. The type's official out of service date was 30 June 2011.
- 2/3 Jul 2011 XV249 and XW664 statically displayed at RAF Waddington Airshow. Photo – IPMS Magazine 04/2011 p.12. XW664 was flown to East Midlands Aeropark for preservation on 12 July 2011.
- 29 July 2011 Taking off at 10.00am, one hour flight, flown from Waddington to Cotswold Airport (Kemble), Glos for dismantling by Air Salvage International in their hangar at Kemble from September 2011 and forwarding in stages by road to RAFM Cosford. Photos of final landing – and last ever Nimrod flight - Aircraft Magazine September 2011; Flypast October 2011 p.9. Total flying hours 18,570.30. Captain Chatterton.
- Feb 2012 Dismantling proceeding, with port wing removed at Kemble 16 February, the starboard wing was removed on 28 February and the fuselage loaded onto the trailer on 1st March.

The fuselage was roaded to Cosford on 11 March 2012 to join previously removed smaller components in store awaiting delivery of fuselage and wings for reassembly of the airframe. Photos – Flypast May 2012 p.9; Classic Aircraft May 2012 p.10.

The wings went to Cosford on 17th March 2012; reassembly of wings and fuselage commenced 18th July 2012. Assembly and movement to its external display position completed on 21st September 2012, with formal unveiling ceremony on 28th September. Photo as displayed – Classic Aircraft November 2012 p.10. Photos of ceremony – Aeroplane December 2012 p.8; Flypast December 2012 p.7.

With an original planned out-of-service date of 31st March 2011 for the two remaining R.1 aircraft, (brought forward from 2012) extended at the last minute by at least three months due to conflict in Libya and elsewhere in the Middle East, XV249 was, in preparation, latterly given a special set of retirement markings on both sides of the aircraft. These consisted of the 51 Squadron Goose on the nose, with lettering Nimrod R1 1974-2011, and the RAF Waddington station crest on the tail fin, lettered RAF Waddington 1995- 2011, replacing the earlier smaller goose symbol carried in that position.

The forward fuselage of R.1 XW665 went to the Speyer Air Museum, Germany in 2011; The salvaged cockpit section of ditched Nimrod R.1 XW666 is privately preserved at Aero Venture, Doncaster.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

With thanks to Mr. Chris Herbert for considerable additional information provided, July 2013.

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