

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

HUNTING H.126 XN714/8726M  
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 85/A/63

Built by Hunting Aircraft Ltd at their Luton, Beds. Factory to contract No.KD/23/01/CB10 (a) awarded 16 June 1959 for a jet flap research aeroplane to meet Ministry of Aviation specification Experimental Requirement E.R.189D.The principal of jet flap operation was described in full in Flight International, 4 April 1963 pp 454 - 5. See also Aircraft Magazine July 2011 pp. 72 – 75.

- 16 Jun 59 Two serial numbers allocated, XN714 and XN719 to have differing degrees of wing dihedral; second aircraft never completed-work suspended by mid-1962.
- Autumn 59 Construction began. Photo during construction - Aeroplane Monthly Jan 95 p.12.  
Photo almost complete during fuel flow tests - Flight 4 Apr 63 p.455.
- Aug 62 Completed aircraft rolled out, unpainted. Photos - Aeroplane Monthly Jan 95 p.13; Control Column Dec 82 p.180; Aeromilitaria Spring 2008 p.21; British Experimental Turbojet aircraft (Jones) p.184; Aircraft Magazine July 2011 p.74. Engine runs begun that month.
- 26 Nov 62 Initial taxiing trials at Luton by S.B. Oliver, Chief Test Pilot of Hunting Aircraft.
- 8/10 Dec 62 Despatched by road from Hunting's at Luton some 30 miles to RAE Bedford for ground development work and flight trials.
- 10 Jan 63 Reassembled for (Orpheus) engine runs by this date.
- 19/20 Mar 63 Fast taxi runs and short hops at Bedford, during which the anti-spin parachute was streamed. Work had been delayed by technical snags and the harsh winter of 1962/63.
- 26 Mar 63 Improved weather permitted the first flight at RAE Bedford. Photos - Aeroplane Monthly Jan 95 p.14; Aircraft Magazine July 2011 pp.72-73.Overall yellow colour scheme with black serials and anti - glare panels. Pilot was Mr Stanley 'Olly' .B. Oliver, chief test pilot of Hunting aircraft Ltd, who undertook most of the initial test flying. The aircraft took off at 80 Knots after a 600-yard run and was accompanied by a pair of two - seat Meteor chase planes from the RAE Aero Flight during the 20-minute flight during which an altitude of 3,000 feet was reached.
- 13 May 63 Commencement of contractors initial flight - test clearance trials. First flight since the maiden flight was 16 May 63. Photo at this time – Aeromilitaria Spring 2008 p.21.

- Aug 63 First flown by an RAE pilot - F/L I.H. Keppie. By the end of this month, 27 flights had been completed.
- Sep 63 By this date the aircraft had made 27 flights; flying time 12 hours 16 minutes.
- Feb 64 By this date the aircraft had made 48 flights; flying time 23 hours 43 minutes, of which RAE pilots had made 11 flights (5 hours 43 minutes)
- Sep 64 By this date the aircraft had made 80 flights; flying time 40 hours 28 minutes, of which RAE pilots had made 18 flights (10 hours 13 minutes).
- 13 Oct 64 From BAC at Luton to Aeroplane and Armaments Experimental Establishment, Boscombe Down, Wilts for static trials - Blower Tunnel Tests whilst on charge to BAC (Luton Division). Flying hours at this stage 45.18; 120 landings. For photos in flight see Aeroplane Monthly Jan 95 pp 12 - 15.
- 3 Nov 64 Flown back to BAC (Huntings) at Luton. Flights continued.
- 19 Jun 65 Demonstrated at the Paris salon at Le Bourget airfield, flown by replacement pilot 'Dizzy' Addicott. Ian Keppie later became the H.126 project pilot for the RAE Aero Flight. A few days previously (9th June) during a rehearsal flight both main tyres burst during landing due to premature brake application, with no further damage to the aircraft. Flown from Bedford to Le Bourget 9/10 June, returning home 21/22 June.  
During the actual display on this date the port tyre again burst during taxiing following a crosswind landing. Photos on static display at Paris; Control Column Dec 82 p.180; Aircraft Magazine July 2011 p.75.
- Sep 65 Visited RAF Cranwell.
- 21 Feb 66 Returned To RAE Bedford for high lift flight research with servicing and maintenance assistance from British Aircraft Corporation (Operating) Ltd (Huntings) at Luton.
- 18 Mar 66 Handed over on site to RAE Bedford, though still maintained by BAC. Flying hours 76.23. Flight tests continued.
- 17 Sep 66 Visited RAF Gaydon for the Battle of Britain day display.  
  
Spare starting equipment from the H.126 was loaned to the late Donald Campbell for his world speed on water attempt in his boat, 'Bluebird'. The Orpheus Mk 701 engine fitted to Bluebird was on loan from the Ministry of Aviation.
- 9 Nov 67 Last recorded flight - 25 minutes, then three 5 minute ground runs to 23 Jan.68. Flying hours to 9 Nov 67 - 141.49 - 318 landings. Engine running hours 199.40 to 23 Jan68. Lack of finance and an increase in pure jet lift projects had ended the jet flap research programme, and the wheel brakes on the Electro-Hydraulics undercarriage were worn out.

- 15 Jul 68 Partially dismantled at Bedford prior to road transport.
- 22 Jul 68 Despatched from RAE Bedford and transported by road to Hawker Siddeley Aviation Ltd, Holme -on-Spalding Moor, (Brough) Yorkshire, where the aircraft was to be re - assembled, checked and later further dismantled for loading onto the transport aircraft for the flight to the USA for full -scale wind tunnel tests with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (N.A.S.A.) which required the aircraft to be in fully serviceable condition for these joint NASA/MinTech trials. At this stage the aircraft's future after these trials was yet to be decided.
- Dec 68 Following reassembly, three ground runs totalling 80 minutes on 13/16/17 of that month.
- 3 Apr 69 After dismantling, despatched to NASA's Ames Flight Research Center at Moffett Naval Air Station, California on board Short Belfast XR366. Photos - Aeroplane Monthly Jan 95 p.15; Jones p.188. In the USA it was tested inside a large NASA wind tunnel. At this stage further UK based flight-testing of the thrust reverser nozzles was being considered, but did not proceed.
- 14 May 70 Aircraft arrived back at Home - on-Spalding Moor from NASA.
- 12 Jun 70 Allotted for temporary storage at hole - on - Spalding Moor pending decision on re - use. The jet flap project had proved successful but the concept was not developed further.
- 4 Dec 70 Arrived by road at RAE Bedford crated for further storage. Remained crated for the next 3 ½ years, just in case further civil V/STOL developments required its further use.
- 29 Apr 72 Released for disposal.
- Jun 72 Struck off charge.
- 30 Apr 74 By road from RAE Bedford to Aerospace Museum at RAF Cosford, Salop. Transport by No.71 MU, Bicester. Photos on display - Control Column Dec 82 p.180; Aeroplane Monthly Jan 95 p.19; Wrecks and Relics 16th edition (1998); Aircraft Illustrated September 2000 p.33; Aeroplane September 2000 p.14.

Colour profile – Flypast October 2010 pp. 86-87

Form 700s in DoRIS ref. AC 94/6.

A second aircraft (XN719) was ordered and its construction commenced but cancelled by mid 1962 before it was completed. All related surplus equipment for this airframe was stored at Aston Down until disposed of December 1966.

**TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON**

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