

**WESTLAND WESSEX HC Mk.2 XR525**  
**MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER X003-3615**

- Aug 61 One of 72 Wessex ordered by the RAF.
- 1964 Built by Westland Aircraft Ltd at Yeovil, Somerset to contract KT/N/019. This was for 30 Wessex HC.2s, delivered between February 1963 and December 1964, serials XR497 – XR529.
- 31 Jul 64 Awaiting Collection
- 10 Aug 64 No. 72 Squadron, RAF Odiham, Hants. Colour photograph at RAF Odiham, September 1964; Military Aircraft of the 1960s p.132.
- 1 Oct 69 Repaired on site by No. 71 Maintenance Unit.
- 12 Jan 70 To No. 15 MU for repair.
- 9 May 70 From No. 15 MU to NO. 5 MU.
- 23 Jun 70 To No. 72 Squadron at RAF Odiham.
- The flying log book of Flt Lt Roger Wain records several flights in XR525 at this time;
- 12 Jan 71 40 minute flight, with second 1.35 hour flight the same day.
- 14 Jan 71 20 minute wireless check flight.
- 23 Jan 71 2.15 hour flight, followed by a five minute flight on 30 January 1971.
- 31 Jan 72 Scrambled to assist Bangor Coast Guard to help crew of small boat. 30 minute flight.
- 18 May 73 No.72 Squadron, RAF Odiham
- 26 Mar 74 On loan to Sultan of Oman's Air Force. (Receipt voucher in Form 700s dated 4 April 74). Detachment covered in detail in the 1977 AHB publication 'The RAF Wessex Detachment in Oman' (011372-3) The Sultan of Oman had asked for the loan of helicopters to aid his fight against a hard core of 800 lightly armed Yemeni backed radical dissident tribesmen (plus 1,000 or so occasional fighters) of the Adoo ('Enemy') forces of the 'People's Front for the Liberation of the Arabian Gulf' in the Western Omani province of Dhofar. Extra transport was needed to construct a new defensive line, the Hornbeam Line, across the mountains before the onset of the monsoon period in late June. Four Wessex and five pilots plus support staff were sent, arriving in April 1974.

The Wessex (XR511, XR525, XS678 and XT675) carried freight, troops (including SAS patrols), casevacs and medevacs, assisted in six artillery moves and six large-scale offensive operations. Primary tasks were troop supply and movement and casualty evacuation and forward air controller duties. The area was hot, mountainous, roadless and monsoon-prone. The selected aircraft were sprayed in desert camouflage, modified slightly, and flown out to Masirah in two Belfast transports, reassembled and flown to their Omani base at Salalah on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1974. A period of intensive flying followed, with specialist tasks including directing air strikes by SOAF Strikemasters and controlling artillery fire.

- 11 Dec 74      Returned to No. 72 Squadron strength at Odiham, having been flown back from Masirah on a Belfast.
- 23 May 75      Damaged – Cat 3R
- 3 Aug 76        No. 72 Squadron (Form 700 Receipt Voucher gives return from SOAF September 1976)
- 14 Apr 81      Allotted to No 72 Squadron RAF Benson, arriving the following day; total flying hours then 6301.55.
- 12 Dec 81      Station Flight RAF Benson
- 16 Apr 82      Search And Rescue Wing RAF Finningley, Yorks
- 12 May 82      RAF Benson Station Flight
- 19 May 82      No. 72 Squadron, RAF Aldergrove, Northern Ireland, serving in the Army support role on anti-terrorist duties until 2002.
- 31 Mar 83      To Fleetlands for major overhaul; flying hours 7161.35
- 10 Apr 84      Returned No 72 Squadron RAF Aldergrove; flying hours 7167.35.
- 23 Nov 84      RAF Benson for major overhaul
- 13 Dec 84      Returned to No 72 Squadron Aldergrove
- 1994-6        Flying with No.60 Squadron at RAF Aldergrove, individual code ‘G’.
- 10 May 95      From Shawbury to RAF Benson; flying hours 12369.10.
- 7 Aug 95        On detachment from Benson to RAF Aldergrove as reinforcements for No.72 Squadron due to the war in Bosnia; XR525 then coded ‘G’.
- 26 Jun 96      From No.60 Squadron at Benson to No. 72 Squadron at RAF Aldergrove, Northern Ireland.

2 Jul 96 To RAF Shawbury, Salop.  
5 Aug 96 Returned to RAF Aldergrove.  
25 Apr 97 To RAF Shawbury  
4 Jun 97 Returned to RAF Aldergrove.  
8 Jan 98 To RAF Shawbury  
25 Feb 98 Again to RAF Aldergrove.  
3 Sep 99 To RAF Shawbury  
3 Apr 2000 To RAF Aldergrove  
7 Feb 01 To RAF Shawbury, later returning to Aldergrove for the last time.  
25 Mar 02 No.72 Squadron scheduled to leave Aldergrove, returning its Wessex to RAF Benson for the last time. The aircraft now carries a door with the name 'Sunshine' on it, acquired from another 72 Squadron Wessex.  
27 Mar 02 Flew into RAF Shawbury, Salop for storage pending disbandment of the squadron on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002 and disposal of the Wessex aircraft, some passing to the Uruguayan Navy. Total flying hours 15,609.15.  
11 May 04 By road to RAF Cosford, entering the Museum premises 13 May.  
25 Apr 05 Loaned to No.18 Squadron at RAF Odiham for their 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and commissioning of memorial at Odiham.  
9 Aug 05 Returned to RAFM Cosford.

**TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON**

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