

22 June 2015

M6 road trip for Cosford's new VC10

The Royal Air Force Museum Cosford is pleased to announce that its latest acquisition, VC10 serial number XR808 has now arrived at Cosford, following a final road trip along the M6 motorway.

After a successful eight month dismantling process carried out by GJD Services, a specialist maintenance and aircraft salvage company based at Bruntingthorpe, Leicestershire, the VC10 finally arrived at Cosford on Sunday 21 June.

The 93ft long fuselage departed from Bruntingthorpe early on the Sunday morning and arrived at Cosford shortly after 1.00pm. Transported on a low loader lorry, the route saw the aircraft pass along the M69, M6 and the M54 to Cosford, via the nearby village of Shifnal. Too large to pass under the railway bridge at Cosford, the fuselage made its way to Junction 4 on the M54 and through Shifnal, with some tricky manoeuvring en route, before heading onto the airfield at RAF Cosford.

Sqn Ldr Chris Wilson, Media, Communication and Co-ordination Officer at RAF Cosford said:
"Having flown on VC10s throughout my career I've been looking forward to seeing this one arrive at RAF Cosford. The VC10 has been an iconic RAF aircraft for so many decades that it seems fitting that XR808 finally comes to rest at the RAF Museum at the end of its exemplary service. RAF Cosford is the Home of RAF Engineering so it is apt that the VC10 comes to our airfield to be rebuilt prior to going on permanent display at the Museum."

The VC10 wings and tail plane will be transported on 28 June and work will then commence on the rebuild. Throughout July a team of engineers from GJD Services will unload the aircraft, position and trestle the inner wings before attaching them to the fuselage. Early August the aircraft will transfer from the RAF Cosford airfield to the Museum site for the final reassembly, which will take place directly outside the Museum's Hangar 1.

Once on the Museum's site, the wings will be rebuilt and the rear fuselage section attached. By late September the team anticipates to be fitting the fin and tail plane ready to install the engines, nacelles and outer wings. The final finishing touches of refitting the access panels and a little paint work touch up will be carried out late October before the fully reassembled VC10 is moved into its final position next to the Lockheed Hercules C130K Mk3, where the aircraft will go on public display.

Gary Spoons, Accountable/Engineering Manager at GJD Services said:
"When GJD were asked to move XR808 on behalf of the RAF Museum we were very keen to take on the challenge; to play our part in preserving this icon of British Engineering. Whilst we were fully aware of the scope of the challenge presented to us, it has tested our engineering skills. Working as a team we have come up with some innovative solutions to problems as they arose, all of which we have overcome. Personally, I have a great affiliation with the VC10, having worked on the type throughout

various stages of my career and I wanted to ensure that XR808 was dismantled and moved with care and precision. We chose to reverse engineer the aircraft, de-riveting the various section, wing, fin, tail and back end, in order to avoid any cuts which we felt would compromise the integrity and beauty of the aircraft. An enormous effort has gone into the dismantling of XR808 and we are very pleased with progress the GJD team has made so far. We are looking forward to the next phase and seeing XR808 complete in her new home."

The VC10 was a British aircraft originally built by Vickers-Armstrong and then later by the British Aircraft Corporation and entered service with Royal Air Force in 1966. This dual-role aircraft enabled the rapid deployment of troops and their weaponry and fast jet aircraft to many theatres of operations around the world. With the ability to carry up to 124 troops at a time with nine crew members or a freight load of up to 20,400kgs the VC10 has been one of the RAF's most significant assets for nearly 50 years. The RAF VC10's allowed true global mobility offering a combination of speed and range never previously attained by an RAF Transport Command aircraft type.

Ian Thirsk, Head of Collections at the RAF Museum said:

"The BAC VC-10 formed the mainstay of the RAF's long range strategic transport force for almost fifty years. For one aircraft type to have been in service for such a long period is remarkable in itself. However, when this is added to the variety of roles and worldwide scope of operations, it is clear this is a unique aircraft and it would not be possible to accurately portray the history of the RAF without an example of the type – therefore it is essential that such a pivotal and long serving aircraft is preserved by the RAF Museum."

Darren Friday, Conservation Centre Manager at the RAF Museum said:

"I completed two tours on VC10's during my RAF career, totalling 6½ years on type, so I am looking forward to being reacquainted with an old friend. Renown for being a troop carrier the VC10 also excelled in other roles – carrying freight, aero-med, VIP duties and air-to-air refuelling. 'BOB', will be a great addition to the RAF Museum Cosford site."

For further information about the Museum, please visit the Museum website www.rafmuseum.org or call 01902 376200. The Museum is open daily from 10am and entry to the Museum is FREE of charge.

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VICKERS/BAC VC 10

VICKERS VC10 C1K AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBER XR808

Assembled by British Aircraft Corporation at Brooklands (Weybridge), Surrey as VC-10 Type 1106, (One of 14 RAF VC 10 C. Mk 1 aircraft) constructor's number 828, serials block XR806 – XR810.

- Sep 61 Part of an initial order for five VC-10s for the RAF to specification C.239/60 for VIP and Far East Route use. The C.1 was a hybrid passenger/cargo transport version.
- 9 Jun 66 First flight, from Brooklands; photo Aeromilitaria Winter 2013 p.158.
- 7 Jul 66 Delivered to newly formed No 10 Squadron RAF Transport Command (later Air Support Command) at RAF Fairford (based there until 23 May 1967, later Brize Norton) as their first aircraft. The aircraft was formally handed over to the RAF at BAC Wisley on this date, with replica Vickers Gunbus replica '2345' in attendance - photo Aeromilitaria Winter 2013 p.164.
- 22 Aug 66 Made first overseas training/proving flight by an RAF VC-10, from RAF Lyneham to Hong Kong. See RAFM photos P022057 – P022062.
- Initial work for the squadron were scheduled route flights, five times per week to RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus and four per week to the Far East via Akrotiri, Gan, Singapore and Hong Kong, plus twice-weekly schedules to Washington DC, using Dulles International airport. 'Spec' flights included regular runs to Calgary or Edmonton during the summer from RAF Gutersloh transferring BAOR tank crews to training facilities on the Canadian prairies.
- 30 Mar 67 Made press/VIP flight over the Torry Canyon tanker prior to its sinking.
- Nov 68 Named Kenneth Campbell, VC, as part of policy to name all 14 RAF VC-10s after RFC/RAF holders of the Victoria Cross.
- 16/17 Jun 69 Flew Brize Norton – Patuxent River AB (Maryland, USA) – Ballykelly (NI) – Robert Thacker LB extracts on file.
- 3 Sep 70 Flew Aldergrove – Hannover (West Germany)-Brize Norton (Thacker logbook)
- 17 Aug 72 Flew Brize Norton – Gutersloh on two return trips – extracts from logbook of S/Ldr Sidney J Adams, 10 Sqn RAF, on a/c dept. file.
- 9 Sep 72 Brize Norton – Manchester –Gutersloh-Hannover-Teesside-Brize Norton (Adams LB)
- 13/14 Oct 72 Akrotiri – Brize Norton (Adams LB)
- 9-13 Jan 73 JFK New York – Charleston – Chicago-Los Angeles-Brize – Boston – Dulles-Brize Norton (Adams LB)
- 23 Feb 73 Colombo - Akrotiri (Adams LB)
- 27 Dec 73 Akrotiri – Brize Norton (Adams LB)
- 20 Mar 74 Hong Kong – Tengah-Gan (Adams LB)
- 24/5 Jun 74 Gan – Akrotiri (Adams LB)
- 7 Aug 74 Brize Norton – Akrotiri (Adams LB)
- 1/2 Aug 74 Gan – Tengah-Hong Kong (Adams LB)

6 Dec 74 Akrotiri – Brize Norton (Adams LB)

4/5 Mar 75 Gan – Hong Kong (Adams LB)

11 Apr 75 Flight to RAF Kai Tak, Hong Kong –pilot from Gan Martin Willing; No.4 engine failure upon take-off; dumped fuel and returned safely to Gan after 55 minutes

1/3 Jul 75 Brize Norton – Keflavik –Namao-Brize Norton (Adams LB)

13 Sep 75 Akrotiri – Brize Norton (Adams LB)

10 Oct 75 Brize Norton – Dulles-Brize Norton (Adams LB)

28 Jan 76 Brize Norton – Akrotiri (Adams LB)

29 Mar 76 Last RAF aircraft to leave Gan, the former RF Far East staging post in the Indian Ocean.

28/29 Apr 76 Hong Kong – Brunei – Hong Kong-Colombo-Bahrain (Adams LB)

31 May 76 Brize Norton – Akrotiri (Adams LB)

1-4 Jun 76 Akrotiri – Brize Norton – Gutersloh-Aldergrove – Gutersloh-Aldergrove-Gutersloh-Brussels-Brize Norton. (Adams LB)

14 Jun 76 Brize Norton – Akrotiri (Adams LB)

23 Jun 76 Akrotiri-Luqa-Brize Norton (Adams LB)

12/13 Nov 76 Hong Kong-Brunei-Hong Kong-Colombo-Bahrei (Adams LB)

3 Jan 77 Bahrain – Colombo (Adams LB)

2-4 Jun 77 Brize Norton – Dulles-Brize Norton (Adams LB)

19 Jul 77 Flew Brize Norton – RAF Gutersloh (West Germany) – Gander AFB – Calgary (Canada) – Gander – Gutersloh –Thacker logbook.

4 Nov 77 Brize Norton – Calgary (Adams LB)

23/4 Jan 78 Bahrain – Brize Norton (Adams LB)

26 May 78 Brize Norton – Wildenrath –Brize Norton (Adams LB)

12 Jan 79 Akrotiri-Brize Norton (Adams LB)

15 Feb 79 Brize Norton – Bahrain – Colombo (Adams LB)

28 Oct 79 Brize Norton – Gutersloh-Brize Norton (Adams LB)

2/3 Apr 80 Brize Norton – Goose Bay – Belize (Adams LB)

21 Jul 80 Continuation Training (Adams LB-1.25 hours)

24 Aug 80 In USA; McLelland AFB – Hickam – Nandi (Adams LB)

16/17 Sep 80 Hong Kong – Colombo-Bahrein (Adams LB)

1980 By this time the aircraft was serving with No 38 Group, Strike Command.

- 1981 Still with No 10 Squadron, RAF Brize Norton.
- 1990 Used for a never-distributed feature film; filmed at Gatow in temporary United States Air Force markings in return for a donation to the RAFBF. Photo – Classic Aircraft September 2012 pp.86-87.
- 10 Nov 95 Flew last operational sortie of standard RAF VC-10 C Mk 1 over North Sea – pilot S/Ldr John Mass, then flew on down to Bournemouth for modification to C Mk 1K standard; the last flight of an unconverted C.1.
- Oct 96 Delivered to RAF as final VC10 C1 Modified by Flight Refuelling Ltd at Bournemouth (Hurn) – subcontracted from BAe Manchester - to C MK 1K standard (to contract A3a/300, January 1990) as mixed tanker/passenger role with FR Mk 32 refuelling pods under each wing, retaining the original 150-seat passenger configuration and carrying no extra fuel. Returned to No 10 Squadron the following month.
- With the disbandment of No.10 Squadron on 14 October 2005 the remaining C1Ks were transferred to 101 squadron and February 2006 saw the first C1Ks sporting 101 Sqn crests and tail letters, with XR808 becoming 'R' – known as 'Bob' on the Squadron.
- 2 May 09 Photographed at Prague airport, operating support flight for joint Czech Republic/UK exercise, 'Operation Rhino'
- 8 Oct 2010 Photographed arriving at Exeter International Airport bringing troops home from Afghanistan.
- 2011 Remained as one of 13 aircraft in the RAF VC-10 fleet, of which eight were C Mk 1Ks, the first of which were due for retirement August 2011, the last six VC-10s, including one C Mk 1K, being originally due to retire at the end of March 2013.
- 7/8 Jul 2012 Appeared in static park at RIAT at RAF Fairford with special commemorative 101 Squadron markings on tail. Photo in this scheme leaving Brize Norton, July 2012; – Classic Aircraft September 2012 p.39. At this time only eight VC.10s remained in RAF service.
- 28 Aug 2012 Led formation (codenamed 'Tartan 21') of three 101 Squadron VC10s in special formation flight over seven UK RAF stations to mark 50 years of the VC10 and 95 years of 101 Squadron. Photos – Classic Aircraft October 2012 p.10; Air International October 2012 p.6; Flypast November 2012 p.16; Aeroplane December 2012 p.6. Flying hours by this date 43,650 as the oldest remaining VC-10 with 101 Squadron.
- 7 Nov 2012 C1Ks XV106 and XV108 left Brize Norton for Bruntingthorpe airfield pending reduction for spares, leaving XR808 as the last operational VC-10C1K, along with four K3s and a K4 with 101 Squadron at that time.
- 20 Mar 2013 Originally suggested delivery date to RAF Cosford for transfer to RAF Museum; planned out-of-service date for the type was 31st March 2013, but in late 2012 the RAF decided to keep four VC-10s, including low-hours-since-overhaul XR808, in service until September 2013.
- 29 Jul 2013 Leaving Brize Norton at around 11am, flown into Bruntingthorpe airfield, Leics after a 40-minute final flight and retired after 47 years 3 weeks service. Total flying time 43,866.50 hours.
- 17 Nov 2013 Posed for photoshoot at Bruntingthorpe with K3 ZA147 (which made the final VC10 flight of all on 25 September 2013) and ZD241; Aeromilitaria Spring 2014 p.21.
- Other photos stored at Bruntingthorpe awaiting road transport to RAFM Cosford; Aviation News June 2014 p.26; Wrecks and Relics 24th Edition (2014); Scale Aircraft Modelling February 2015 p.50.

Sept 2014 Initial dismantling by GJD Aerotech, including removal of engines and tailplane, commenced, using a team of eight people. See Flypast March 2015 p.7 and July 2015 p.20. Also Cosford Grapevine Spring 2015. Intended for use as a classroom.

June 2015 Delivery to RAFM Cosford expected – for positioning on airfield for initial reassembly.

For flights, see logbook microfilm X006-7025/011.

ANDREW SIMPSON

RAF MUSEUM 2015