

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

VICKERS WELLINGTON X MF628/9210M  
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 69/A/171

- 28 May 42 Ordered from Vickers-Armstrong at Blackpool/Squires Gate to contract 92429/40, to be fitted with Bristol Hercules XVI radial engines as a Wellington B.X aircraft. One of 3804 Mk.10 aircraft; the most built of any Wellington variant.
- 09 May 44 (10.25am) Initial test flight (20 minutes) made at Blackpool by Sqn Ldr Coton (pilot) and K Farnworth (passenger).
- 11 May 44 Despatched from Blackpool to RAF (No.18 Maintenance Unit at RAF Tinwald Downs, Dumfries) as a Wellington Mk.X - flown there by Fg Off Taylor.
- 3 Jun 44 Navigator's flying Log Book of Sergeant Sydney Alan Sharp of the Wellington XIII equipped No.69 Squadron (extract on file) records flight in MF628 Base (Northolt) – Odiham – Base. Pilot Flight Sergeant E.H. Johnson; total flying time 35 minutes. This flight is seemingly confirmed by an entry in the flying logbook of Sgt Stan Hayward as second pilot (or passenger) on these two short flights. It is not known why the aircraft was there at the time, and shortly afterwards was presumably stored until 1948.
- 9-28 Mar 48 Converted to T.Mk.X standard by Boulton Paul at Wolverhampton. The front turret was removed and replaced by a fairing plus interior re-equipped for navigation training. The rear turret and bomb doors were retained. B/P modified a large number of Wellingtons to trainers at this time. B/P converted 270 B.X Wellingtons to trainer standard Jan 46 - Mar 52. They were stripped, overhauled and re-covered.
- 13 Apr 49 Allocated for service with No.1 Air Navigation School at RAF Hullavington, Wilts. Used for navigation training and practice bombing over ranges at Donna Nook, nr Manby, Lincs and also near Swindon.
- Jan/Feb 50 Photographed serving with No.1 ANS bearing the fuselage code 'FF-KB', with the 'B' code repeated on the nose. The overall colour scheme was silver, with yellow fuselage band and black codes and serials - the standard RAF trainer colour scheme of the time. Photos: Aeroplane Monthly Feb 96 p.47; Air Enthusiast 66 p.67.
- 17 Feb 50 Navigator's Flying log book of Officer Cadet NAV IV Dennis Robert Henry Hobbs (DoRIS Ref. X002-5402/006) records a 4.40 hours daylight training flight, taking off at 08.15.
- 11 Sep 50 Navigator's Logbook of the late Flt Lt Geoffrey Leo Smith (DoRIS

X003-7883/001/001) records flight at 1 ANS with Plt Off Blair as pilot.

Also flown by 1 ANS staff pilot R F Chandler on one or two air tests and a couple of cross-countries- see Wimpy – A detailed history of the Vickers Wellington in service, 1938-1953 (Steve Bond 2014)

- 14 Dec 51 Suffered Cat 4 accidental damage. (Damaged but repairable at MU or Contractors' Works).
- 14 Dec 51 Delivered to Brooklands Aviation Ltd, Sywell Aerodrome, Northants for repair, which possibly included the over-painting in silver of the rear turret. (See P015243, RAFM Photo Collection); Aeroplane Monthly Feb 96 p.44; Royal Air Force Flying Review Dec 1953 p.30.
- 28 Oct 52 Despatched to 19 MU at RAF St Athan, Glamorgan, since by then Varsity T.1 aircraft were replacing the Wellington T.X with 1 ANS for advanced training, which also operated Valetta T.3 for basic navigation training. (1 ANS retired their last Wellington, LP806, in Mar 1953 -the last in normal RAF Service).
- (Two T.10s were seemingly used for film work at this time; with the making of 'The Red Beret' in Sept-Oct 1952 and subsequently 'Malta Story' The aircraft were reportedly No 3 Overseas Ferry Unit T10's (NB113 & HF626 – both scrapped in 1948!) & the filming was at Luqa & Ta Kali in November 1952. The RAF crews were also "extras" in the film).
- 08 Jan 53 Placed on the 'non-effective register' at St Athan but kept airworthy. Later reports suggest that at this time disposal instructions were issued for the aircraft to be scrapped, but that these were ignored by a local engineering officer who recognised the aircraft's historical value.
- 14 Jun 53 Participated at the RAeS '50 Years of Aviation' Garden Party at Hatfield Aerodrome, flown by Flt Lt W N Trimble from RAF Benson, In the most impressive style' according to 'The Aeroplane', Photo in static display - Air Enthusiast 66 p.68.
- 16 Jun 53 Returned to storage at St Athan.
- 19 Sep 53 Participated in Battle of Britain anniversary flying display at RAF St Athan, and also made a flypast at the BofB display at RAF Aston Down, Gloucester, reported thus in 'Air Pictorial' "by this time the crowd had been worked into a state of enthusiasm over the promised arrival of what was definitely the very last Wellington. Eventually a T.10 MF628, appeared and flew past once at a little under a thousand feet, hardly a befitting end to the career of such a famous type". After the display the aircraft returned to storage at St Athan.
- 05 Apr 54 Flown from St Athan to RAF Hemswell for use in filming of 'The Dambusters', still in its overall silver colour scheme with yellow training

bands. Attached to the Hemswell station flight Used as a camera aircraft, particularly for close –up head-on front views of the Lancasters and appeared briefly in a take-off scene in the film-photo of this scene- Aeroplane April 2005 p.26. Apparently hired initially for three days filming only, but use extended. Photo: Flight 18 Jun 54 p.800; Aeroplane September 2001 p.79. Several photos of MF628 during filming in ‘Filming The Dam Busters’ (Jonathan Falconer, 2005) pp.76, 87, 102, 132 and Aviation Classics Magazine 001– Avro Lancaster (2009) pp.46-47; Action Stations Revisited Vol 6 p.130; Flypast June 2018 p.127 (film still)

### **WELLINGTON MF628 - FLIGHTS DURING 'DAMBUSTERS' FILMING**

Telecom with Mr Ken Souter 29 July 1993 - Mr Souter led the flying for the Dambusters film.

As Flight Lieutenant Kenneth P Souter he flew the RAFM Wellington on a number of occasions during the filming - the following data coming from his logbook. (All 1954). Mr Souter also visited Hendon 29 July 1999, adding further detail and leaving his logbooks for copying (DoRIS ref. X001-3536/023-025). He mentioned that during filming the Wellington was also flown by F/Lt ‘Butch’ Birch and a Czech pilot, Joe Kmiejic.

09	Jun	Scampton - Hemswell, 4 crew plus pilot. Flight time 15 minutes.
28	Jun	Air Test. 5 crew plus pilot. Flight time 25 minutes.
02	Jul	Hemswell - Scampton. Pilot plus one crew. Flight time 10 minutes.
19	Jul	Hemswell - Lindholme - Northolt. 2 crew. Flight time 1.15 hours.
19	Jul	Filming Lancaster - low flying - Anglesey area. 2 crew and 2 cameramen. Flight time 3 hours 5 minutes.
20	Jul	Filming Lancaster - low flying - Harwich. 2 crew and 2 cameramen. Flight time 1.35 hours.
21	Jul	Northolt - Lindholme - Hemswell. 2 crew. Flight time one hour.
02	Aug	Filming - Goole area - low flying. 2 crew and 2 cameramen. Flight time 25 minutes.
04	Aug	Filming - low flying over Lake Windermere. 2 crew and 2 cameramen. Flight time 2 hours 45 minutes. Navigator Flying Officer Colin Batchelor. See Flying Logbook X003-8864/025.
04	Aug	Scampton - Hemswell 1 crew. Flight time 10 minutes.
06	Aug	Dual check - RAF pilot. Flight time 20 minutes. Navigator FO Batchelor.
07	Aug	Low flying for filming - Southwold. 2 crew. Flight time 1.35 hours. Navigator FO Batchelor.

- 14 Aug Hemswell – Scampton – Pilot Ken Souter; Navigator FO Batchelor. Flight Time 10 minutes.
- 09 Sep Dual circuits with Flt Lt Hingley. Flight time 30 minutes.
- 14 Oct 54 Returned to St Athan and grounded as non-effective aircraft on this date.
- 24 Jan 55 Sold to Vickers Ltd, Weybridge and flown from St Athan to their airfield at Wisley, Surrey, the same day - the last UK Wellington flight, the crew for the last flight were F/S (Later Sqn Ldr) 'Herbie' Marshall (pilot) and Jim C Pickersgill, AFC (Master Flight Engineer). After take-off and a couple of low-level flypasts (at 15-20ft) a camera crew from the Air Ministry filmed 628 from an Airspeed Oxford.; flight time some 1 hour 10 minutes. The crew's hopes of a hearty welcome were soon dashed: 'We landed at Wisley, taxied to the hangars and found these firmly closed. One wee door then opened, and an overalled figure beckoned us forward, stop, switch off, then said "Chuck me the 700", caught it - and beat a rapid retreat back inside the warm hangar, closing the door behind him'. Three aircraft were lined up on the ground to greet them and uniformed staff saluted and civilians doffed their hats.  
And so ended 628s last flight, bought back by her makers for preservation. (For full account of 628s last flight, see Chaz Bowyer's 'The Wellington Bomber; p.27-38 and e-mail from S/Ldr Marshall, June 2008).
- Although the last UK flight of a Wellington, French Aéronavale units possibly operated Wellington GR. XIII/XIV aircraft for a few months further into 1955; Flotille 23F operated Wellingtons from June 1953 until 1955; 56S at Agadir may have had one or two serviceable aircraft on strength at this time for crew training.
- Apr 56 Noted in a corner at Wisley 'distinctly unairworthy ..... unhangered and unattended' according to Air Pictorial. Photo at this time - Aeroplane Monthly April 1998 p.66.
- Mid 1956 Officially presented to the Royal Aeronautical Society by Vickers.
- 15 Jul 56 Displayed in static aircraft park at RAeS Garden Party at Wisley Airfield, by which time it had been repainted in Bomber Command colours. Photo - Flight 20 July 1956 p.134. Photo at this time - (colour) Supplement to Aeroplane April 2000 p.45.
- Dec 56 Noted stored outside at Wisley but minus outer wings.
- W/C 18 Nov 57 Transferred to RAF Hendon along with the RAeS' Nash Collection of vintage aircraft, and stored in a corrugated T2 hangar on the edge of the present Museum site. Still present in August 1959 (Flight). See RAF Hendon Station ORB Nov 57 (DoRIS). Stored in Bellman Hangar, along with Nash Collection SE5a delivered same week, and Sopwith Camel F6314. Photo – Scale Aircraft Modelling January 1986 p.171.

Some work done on airframe – see file letter from Mr. E.A. Stratton,

- August 2001; had broken longerons above the 'window'; tailfin missing – brand new boxed replacement obtained from Scotland;  
Two Vickers apprentices replaced navigation trainer equipment with original flight panels, and new propellers were obtained, the work being overseen by a former Camel pilot, a Mr. Eyrrie.
- Late 1959 Transferred to new BEA Comet maintenance hangar at London Heathrow, and photographed there for the RAeS journal c. May 1960. Colour photo - Air Pictorial June 2001 p.461. Some restoration work undertaken by the Historic Aircraft Maintenance Group.
- Jan 61 Taken to No.71 MU Bicester for repairs by 23 Jan and repainting prior to transfer to the AHB store at RAF Biggin Hill, in March 1961. (Air Britain Digest Jun 61). Photo at Biggin Hill (Sep 65) Aeromodeller Jan 66 p.24.
- Mid 1964 Presented by the RAeS on permanent loan to the RAF/MOD (Air). Photos at Biggin Hill at this time - Air Enthusiast 66 p.69; Ghosts of Biggin Hill (Bob Ogley) p.180; RAFM PC73/59/123 (1968); Wrecks and Relics – The Album (colour) p.59.
- Sep 64 Displayed at Biggin Hill's Battle of Britain Day - photo Air Enthusiast 66 p.69. For posed photo of WRAF's cleaning the aircraft see Flight International 12 Nov 1964 p.824.
- Early 1968 Returned to 19 MU, RAF St Athan, for refurbishing to static display standard, including repainting and partial recovering, although evidence of silver doped fabric on the tailplane indicates not all fabric was replaced. Transferred by 60 MU Leconfield.
- c. 2 May 68 Transported to RAF Abingdon by 60 MU and prepared for static display for the RAF 50th Anniversary celebration.
- 14 Jun 68 Exhibited at RAF 50th Anniversary Royal Review at RAF Abingdon. Suffered damage at this time - starboard engine broken off (see reference in Hawker Hart file). Colour photo Air Extra 11 p.23. Photo also in Scale Models International Jun 86 p.294; Air Enthusiast 66 p.69; Aeroplane April 2013 p.35; Air Britain Aviation World Spring 2014 p.49.
- Jul 68 Returned to RAF Henlow by 71 MU Bicester for storage by RAF Museum.
- 26 Oct 71 Transported by road from RAF Henlow to the RAF Museum. going on public display when the Museum opened 15 Nov 72.Photos; Scale Models November 1974 p.592.
- 08 Jan 81 Fraser-Nash FN5 front gun turret fitted at Hendon to replace the nose fairing and returned the aircraft, externally at least, to BX standard. The turret itself was acquired from No.1374 (East Barnet) Squadron, ATC in Oct 1969 - it had been used as a training aid. The removed fairing remains stored at Stafford.

- Early 1983 Moved from the main Hall to the new Bomber Command Museum, opened 12 Apr 83, now the Bomber Command Hall Photos: Air Enthusiast 66 p.66; Wellington (Delve) p.160; Aeroplane September 2001 p.79; Flypast Airshow Guide Supplement March 2005 p.25; Flypast April 2010 p.6. RADAR (RAFM) Issue 3 2013 p.12-13.
- Mar 92 Purchased by MOD (Air) together with rest of Nash Collection, (from Royal Aeronautical Society).
- 19 Jul 93 Allotted RAF Maintenance serial 9210M.
- Sep 04 Gifted to the RAFM by the MoD along with the other former 'Nash Collection' and associated airframes.
- June 2010 Progressively dismantled by team from RAFM MBCC Cosford for despatch by road to Cosford for long-term full restoration. Following despatch of smaller components such as engines, cowlings and undercarriage, fuselage departed for Cosford 1 July, followed by wings/nacelles 13 July.
- Photos of stripped fuselage awaiting removal from Hendon – Flypast August 2010 p.6; Aeroplane August 2010 p.16; Flypast September 2010 p.7; Flying M Summer 2010 p.15; Flypast May 2013 p.52. Photos at Cosford awaiting restoration – Flypast January 2011 pp.86-87; Flypast June 2011 p.7; Flight International 25-31 October 2011 p.50; Aircraft Magazine December 2011 p.11; Flypast March 2012 p.126 – 129; Vintage and Classic Winter 2012 p.14; RADAR (RAFM) Issue 3 2013 pp.14-17 and Issue 7 Autumn 2014 p.11; Flightpath Vol 25 No 4 p.27, 2014; Wrecks and Relics 25<sup>th</sup> Edition (2016) p.232..
- It was noted during restoration that some bomb bay door panels were stencilled with other Wellington T.X serials – RP 412, ex 2228 OCU, SOC 1 April 1952) and LP705 (Flying Refresher School, Sold for Scrap 30 December 1953)

### **Other Extant Wellington Aircraft**

- L4288 (Mk.1) Ex 9 Squadron. Honington. Centre section, engine nacelles, cowlings and engines only, crashed 30<sup>th</sup> October 1939, recovered 1982-83. Norfolk & Suffolk Aviation Museum, Flixton. Crash site recovery. Photo-Flypast November 2005 p.64.
- L7775 (Mk.1) Ex 20 O.T.U - Tail section only – formerly at Wellington Museum & Art Gallery, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucester, moving to Stratford on Avon Armouries Museum, 2011.
- Wings, nacelles, fuselage side panels and one engine from this aircraft also extant at East Kirkby, Lincs, plus the nose and FN.25 ventral turret and other components at the North Yorkshire Aircraft Recovery Centre

(FlyPast Oct 99 p.69, Dc. 2000 p.99); following recovery in 1985, by 2003 the two turrets had moved to Restorations Unlimited, Surrey for restoration, this being completed in 2007 (Flypast August 2007 p.9 and October 2007 p.104 and the turrets returned to Yorkshire).

The other engine, restored and partly sectioned, is at Brooklands Museum, Surrey.

N2980 (Mk.1A) Ex-Loch Ness/20 OUT Lossiemouth; ditched 31 December 1940. Recovered September 1985; Complete restoration at Brooklands Museum, Surrey, who also display a composite Wellington forward fuselage section.

Z1206 (Mk.IVA) Ex 104 O.T.U. Forward fuselage recovered from beach on Ardrol, Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides July 2002 – crashed there 26 Jan 1944. For Midland Warplane Museum, Kenilworth. See Flypast September 2002 p.3 and May 2003 pp.91-94.

BK309 ( Mk. III) Substantial remains including engine, tail/rear fuselage with Flyhistorisk Museum, Sola Airport, Stavanger, Norway.150 Sqn; Crashed in a lake 23 October 1942.Photos; Air Britain Digest Autumn 1999 p.14-15; Aeroplane February 2000 p.11.

In 2006, a complete Wellington mainspar section, complete with wing structure and one engine nacelle, was recovered from the sea off the Greek island of Evia; it has since moved to the Hellenic Air force Museum for conservation.

**Sources:** Flight, The Aeroplane, Air Pictorial, Julian Temple (Brooklands Museum), RAF Museum Files: Vickers Armstrong, Blackpool Factory, Daily Flying Log 17.4.44-12.2.45. Arnold Taylor, Technical Manager, Royal Aeronautical Society: Air Data Aviation Information Service. Also 'Boulton Paul Aircraft' (Alec Brew), Messrs. Ken Souter and Francois Prinns.

**TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON**

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