



The Gloster-Whittle E28/39 Pioneers the jet age

At precisely 13:15h on 15 November, a pair of Gloster Meteors (guided by a flight of four Panavia Tornados) flew over Westminster Abbey in London in a final tribute to the man who, more than any other, made jet-powered flight a practical possibility — Sir Frank Whittle.

A few minutes earlier, 1,500 people had been gathered in the Abbey for a memorial service addressed by several people who had more reason than most to remember him with thanks.

One was his son Ian, a retired airline pilot, who was able to remember Dad as somebody who "...did

not invent, nor did he claim to invent, the gas turbine", but who had made it a practical and commercial success. No one would argue with his simple summing-up of a man who "...stood firmly in the tradition of great British Engineers".



Another was ACM Sir Michael Graydon, the current leader of the one organisation to which Whittle owed both his opportunity to build a gas turbine in the first place, and arguably his greatest loyalty, the RAF.

The last was Capt Eric ("Winkle") Brown, who flew the Gloster/Whittle E28/39 and who read Brian Young's poem "Flight" which ends appropriately:

*How splendid is this gift He gave
On high to roam,
The sun a friend, the earth a slave,
The heavens home.*

Uncle Roger's Total Aviation Bookshelf

Genesis of the Jet, by John Golley; Airlife Publishing, 101 Longden Road, Shrewsbury SY3 9EB, UK.

Golley's definitive 1987 biography of Whittle, written in association with the man himself, originally published as *Whittle: the true story*, now updated and published in this new edition by Airlife.

Triumphs: comprehensive examination of what went right (the technicalities) and what went wrong (the politics) for Whittle; copious input from Whittle himself gives it added legitimacy; full appendices listing everything from his 27 patents, honours and afterthoughts like the Turbo-drill for the oil industry, and an admirable brief technical description of the Whittle engines; a proper index;

Defeats: peters out after the nationalisation of Power Jets, with the last 50 years of his life effectively dealt with in one chapter; relative paucity of illustrations; paperback format not ideal for an essential reference work.

TAB RATING
[X] Top Shelf

Whittle ran his first turbine engine at the age of 29, had overseen its development into a reliable, universal powerplant within the next decade, and effectively had left the industry which he created by the time he was 40. Just imagine what he might have achieved if he and the Government machine had got on together.



75 YEARS AGO



Extracts from Flight, November 24, 1921

The Paris Aero Show

Large machines dominate this year's Salon. Although they are outnumbered by the small fry, their wings seem to cast their shadows over the whole of the Grande Nef, and to claim attention by their very size. Towering in some instances with the noses of their fuselages over the gazing pigmies walking below, they undoubtedly form the chief attraction as regards the general public... From the practical point of view, however, it is extremely doubtful whether these "Mammouths", "Leviathans" and "Juggernauts" deserve the prominence which their size gives them. There is still much to learn before we can profitably turn to these giants, and, unless a full load can be guaranteed for each trip - which may be doubtful - they are likely to prove disappointing to run until flying becomes more popular with the general public than is the case at present.



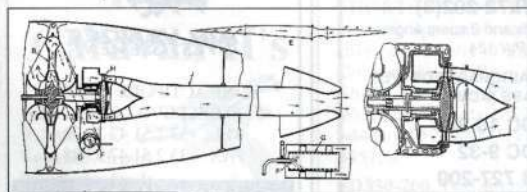
Bad Weather Trials

Bad weather completely dislocated the air services to the Continent for three days last week. On Wednesday, the weather changed suddenly all along the London-Paris route, and caught machines actually in flight. All the pilots managed, however, to bring their machines safely to the ground, but many of them had exciting experiences... Mr MacIntosh, on a Handley Page 0-400, descended at Crowhurst. He could only see a few yards ahead, peering into the rain mist, and, as he himself expressed it, got a "close-up view" of a church clock, but managed to get the machine safely past it. He finally landed in a small field, and the aeroplane had to be lightened of all superfluous weight in order to get it out again. Several other machines came down in fields.

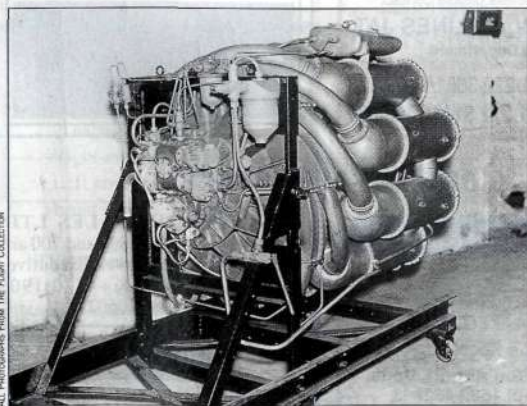


Attack from the Air

Speaking at Amiens recently, Sir Henry Wilson, the Chief of the General Staff, suggested that it was for those who govern the world to ponder whether, if they wanted to limit the horrors of war, it would be better to limit aeroplanes rather than submarines. He was speaking of the bombing of defenceless towns from the air, which, he said, seemed to be on the whole a development of a movement for killing women and children. Soldiers did not like it much, either, he said.



Whittle's original patent drawing



The Whittle engine as built