

NEWS LETTER



November 2025

www.jetagemuseum.org

The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

ISSUE 119

Preserving the past, inspiring the future

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OUR SPECIAL VISITOR

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"I had a fantastic visit to The Jet Age Museum in Staverton this morning. As a newer part of my constituency, since the recent boundary changes, I was very pleased to be invited to meet many of the museum's hardworking trustees and volunteers. The museum is free (donations welcome), family friendly, open at weekends and I would thoroughly recommend a visit."

So wrote Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP, seen above with Museum Chair Oliver Towers, on the occasion of his visit on Friday 8 August 2025. Sir Geoffrey has been the Member of Parliament for the Cotswolds since 1997.



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AIR MAIL -THE PAGE YOU WRITE

Issue 118 certainly made readers reach for their keyboards. Adrian Balch got in touch with some Staverton memories while Mike Fortescue remembered Gatow.

First time I went there was in 1965 on a Sunday with my father, writes Adrian. A British Midland Airways Handley Page Herald arrived each Sunday during the summer months on a scheduled flight to Jersey. I was just 15 years old there and taking colour prints with my Dad's camera. Even standing on the steps of the control tower, it was parked too close to get it all in! Fast forward ten years plus and Intra Airways with DC-3s were running the Jersey flights then in 1978.



I wonder how many other members have flown from Gatow, writes Mike Fortescue. In my case it was in an Army Air Corps Sioux helicopter, in 1973, at the height of the Cold War, while I was seconded to RAF Gatow. The airfield boundary was the Sector boundary, separating the British Sector from the Soviet Zone, ie East Germany as we then called it. We knew we were being observed, probably filmed, from the Soviet watchtowers visible beyond the fence, as we walked between hangars.



The Bell Model H13 Sioux, – developed from the earlier civilian Model 47 – was used by British armed forces but remains best known as flying ambulance in the Korean War as illustrated in the film and later TV show M*A*S*H.

The Veteran's Breakfast Club at St Phillips & St James Church in Leckhampton is for all retired armed forces personnel and is held on the first Thursday of each month starting at 9 am and finishing at 11 am, for a full English with freshly brewed coffee for just £5.00 paid on entry. The Church is situated on the road opposite the 3 Alls pub in the Bath Road near to the Exmouth Arms, there is parking on the forecourt of the Church or around the side streets.

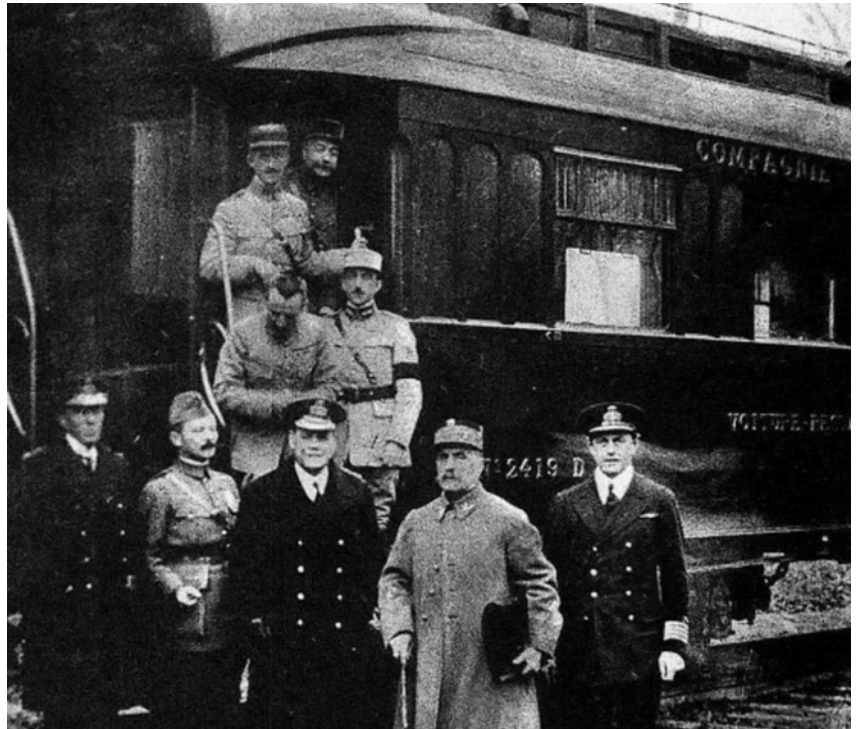
Do you have a story for the February edition of Jet Age Museum Newsletter?
Please get in touch by Monday 5 January 2026 at
alan_drewett_jet_age_museum@yahoo.com

LEST WE FORGET

The more the world moves on, the more we need to remember. It is now 107 years since the guns fell silent on the Western Front, 80 years since the end of World War II and 85 years since the Battle of Britain

Later conflicts in Korea, Aden, the Falkland Islands and even Iraq and Afghanistan are now blending into 'the past' - a time before 'now' that the young find difficult to comprehend,

As Remembrance Sunday approaches on Sunday 9 November 2025, Jet Age Museum remembers not only the Armistice that ended the First World War but those who gave their lives, their health and their futures since then to maintain the society that we now cherish.



Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss (centre), whose family live at Stanway House, near Toddington, Gloucestershire, was the senior British representative at the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I. It was he who made the decision, much to the anger of Prime Minister David Lloyd George, to have the ceasefire to come into effect at 11 am. Lloyd George wanted it to take place at 2.30 pm. so that he could make the announcement in the House of Commons. Wemyss realised that 11 am on the 11th day of the 11th month had a strong, poetic quality about it; besides, by 2.30 pm. more soldiers could die unnecessarily.



Here you are! Don't lose it again!



METEOR NF(T). 14 PROGRESS

The port outer wing has been fitted, which enables us to work safely on its underside, *writes Terry Willis.*

Stripping its surface is uncomfortable work which is largely being undertaken by Andy Enright, Andy Gilbert and Carl Shedden, while Bruce Campbell continues the same, equally awkward, task on the tailplane.

Silvia Gonzales has taken on the task of restoring the last droptank, with the request that she alone do all the work, from start to finish. She is already making good progress.

Simon Hall will now change from occasional to weekly attendance, which will be a great help.

John Entwistle is currently engaged on refitting mudguards, while Bob Merrett is doing preliminary work on the markings, prior to rejoining us in November.

Members may have noticed that a black structure has appeared in the rear cockpit. At its top is an original binnacle (lower picture) sourced by Andy Enright.

It has been populated with period-correct instruments from stock but we were unable to source an original support frame. Faced with this problem, I looked into my own favourite source of spare parts: the skip! From there, I retrieved some metal tubes that once supported a gazebo. Andy fashioned these into a frame and, once painted, you would not know it isn't original.

In the same way that the Gamecock's spinner started life as a wok, restoring old aircraft sometimes requires imagination and humour.



Adrian Allain has very kindly allowed these pictures of WS807 - first shared on Facebook - to be used in the Jet Age Museum Newsletter. They were taken in April 1976, when the NF(T).14 - now under restoration at Staverton - was moved from the hangar on the disused airfield at RAF Watton to the Eastern Radar site. The last picture shows it with the wings refitted and the aircraft in position at the gate.

SKYFAME'S AVRO ANSON



Richard Sleigh recently got in touch and was kind enough to share some Staverton memories and pictures from the photo album of his father. He continues:

'Skyfame's Airspeed Oxford and Avro Anson used to be flown by Ken Daniell and John Cole.

HYDRAULIC

John Cole was the last person to fly the Anson, he took it to an RAF Air Display somewhere, John told me it suffered a loss of hydraulic oil pressure at the airshow and the engineers there topped the oil up, but alas when it returned to Staverton there was no hydraulic pressure so he had to land it with no wheel brakes and I guess no flaps. Anyway he could not stop it and elected to do a ground loop at the end of the runway which damaged its undercarriage and wings. I actually took John Cole in G-BKVL Robin Aircraft (8th May 1989) to see the Skyfame Aircraft at Duxford, I remember him looking at the Anson telling me where it had been repaired.

John Cole reached the age of 100 before a died a couple of Years ago while living with his son in Littlehampton on the south coast. He only stopped flying in his eighties.

He was one of the nicest people you could wish to meet. Flying was his passion, and he was always happy to talk about all the RAF planes he flew in the wartime period as a delivery pilot.

BOLKOW

[I can vouch for that. John Cole was my secondary school woodwork teacher and took me for my first ever flight in April 1975 from Staverton in Bolkow Bo 208C-1 Junior G-AT SX - Ed]

The Avro Anson was the RAF's first twin engined monoplane with a retractable undercarriage and Skyfame's example – N4877 / G-AMDA - landed at Staverton on 31 August 1963. In fact the 1938 vintage N4877 was not only the first aircraft to join the Skyfame collection but – at the time –

the only British military aircraft of the Second World War still flying.

Skyfame's Avro Anson – restored to 206 Squadron markings and notably with the dorsal turret deleted and faired over – was discharged from the RAF in 1950 after some twelve years service and spent another 12 years in civilian guise.

From 1941 onwards Avro Ansons were used mainly for training aircrew, including some pilots. They also undertook Air-Sea Rescue, ferry and communication work. A well-loved aeroplane which saved many lives, the Avro Anson reached a production figure of 11 020 aircraft.

CHEETAH

The pair of 350 bhp Armstrong Siddeley Cheetah IX radial engines could power the Avro Anson to 188 mph with a climb rate of 720' per minute to a service ceiling of 19 000 with a 790 mile range.

The wingspan was 56' 6", length 42' 3", height 13' 1" with a wing area of 440 square feet.

THE COLLECTION by Martin Renshaw

Following last month's thoughts from Chris Campbell, the Trustee for Visitor and Volunteer Services, we turn this month to Martin Renshaw to give his insights into the Collection, for which he has Trustee oversight.

For those Members I have not met, my name is Martin Renshaw and I have been a Trustee for the past three years. With the establishment of 'Champions' shortly after becoming a Trustee it seemed that the best fit for me would be overseeing the Collection, as I had been involved in engineering within the aerospace industry for the past 45 years or so.

WHAT IS THE COLLECTION?

The Collection is the overall term we use to cover looking after, developing and displaying our collection of historical artefacts and the history of aviation, particularly related to Gloucestershire. We do this through teams involved in Conservation and Restoration, Collection and Display and History and Archive.

The Collection itself comprises not only the aircraft, equipment and other historical artefacts on display in the Museum but a 'Reserve Collection' of stored items and an extensive Archive, mainly of documentation and photographs/films.

The objective is to retain and acquire such items so that the history of aviation in Gloucestershire can be presented to the public in an engaging way, showing the County's aviation history in a worldwide context and pointing to how it may develop in the future.

CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

The overall task of looking after and developing our historical artefacts falls on Roy Pressland as the C & R Manager.

In this role Roy directly manages the workshop in which many activities take place, supported by an enthusiastic team of Volunteers with appropriate engineering skills. The workshop houses a small machine shop and all the equipment required to look after our aircraft and other physical artefacts – work extends from major restorations to the manufacture of stands for displays.

Each major area of activity is led by a Project Manager. This starts with Terry Willis who is Project Manager for Care and Conservation, ensuring that all our existing exhibits are maintained to preserve them for day-to-day display and into the future. Recently this has included such varied activities as repainting the Vulcan cockpit and investigating structural cracks his team have found in the landing gear of our Meteor aircraft.

We have two major projects ongoing in the workshop. Paul Sayer is now project managing the restoration of our Gladiator fuselage, a programme which will stretch over the next few years (pictured bottom right).

This restoration re-commenced in 2023 under the initial lead of Laurie Hilditch who established a sound plan and relationships with other Gladiator restorers, particularly the Malta Museum. Paul is now developing this approach with new external contacts.

A key part of any such restoration is to start with 'what's it for', so the Project Plan not only covers the restoration itself but also how it will eventually be displayed for public benefit. In this case we have a very good story to tell, including that of the pilot who sadly lost his life in the aircraft – we and in contact with his family who are providing financial support.

Terry also leads the other major restoration, that of the Meteor NF14 which sat outside the Museum for some time looking very dilapidated. A total repaint and restoration of, for example, the cockpit is underway for early completion next summer. This is a result of the dedication and hard work of the team in removing the old paint, restoring the surface and ingeniously replacing some parts which were beyond repair.

COLLECTION AND DISPLAY

What items best describe Gloucestershire aviation through the ages and how should they be displayed to the best benefit of the Public? This is the difficult task that Adrian Newman has to manage with his small team. This ranges from providing display boards, which are engaging to all our visitor types and ages, to how and what should be displayed within the constraints of our relatively limited display space.

Adrian has been progressively improving the displays, optimising the use of space and concentrating on expanding displays to cover all of Gloucestershire aviation (not just focusing on Gloster Aircraft). This has led to a better use of space and relocation of items, an activity which is continuing to keep the displays 'alive'.

THE COLLECTION - CONTINUED

In particular we are developing the presentations of manufacturers who not only form a key part of Gloucestershire aviation heritage, but contribute in a big way today, including SAFRAN, Dowty Propellers and GE.

Another major project is to present the new aviation technologies currently being developed in Gloucestershire – we now have two electric aircraft and are working on developing this theme of ‘green aviation’, further (pictured right).

HISTORY AND ARCHIVE

The Archive contains not only a large collection of documentation, photographs and films but is also where the mysterious MODES is managed. The latter is the Museum standard computer Data Base which logs and tracks all the items we hold and so is central to the Collection. Richard Hentschke manages all this, updating and logging everything. On top of this we get queries from the public (our Collection is on the National Archive) requesting information of all sorts. This represents a key element of fulfilling our Charity Objects which is mostly not visible to Members, but is well received by all recipients.

THE FUTURE

Collections have a well-developed Forward Plan which has been circulated to all Members. We are working through this plan, but with some delays largely due to having insufficient Volunteers to undertake management roles.

However things are moving ahead positively: when the NF14 moves back into the Display Hall next summer we intend to start a repaint on the Meteor T7; and plan key restorations on the newly acquired Sea Vampire and Gnat cockpits, both of which are now owned by the Museum.

As you may be aware, along with the Vulcan and Trident (the display of which Steve Williams continues to improve), the cockpits represent our most popular exhibits.

So we are doing our best to meet perhaps our most important goal – that when visitors leave the Museum, as well as having been entertained they take away with them some valuable information which can influence the future of aviation, either by inspiring children or informing adults. We firmly believe that the Collection is about the past, but for the future.



BATTLE OF BRITAIN DAY 20 SEPTEMBER

Thank you ONTIC!

As well as the 1/72 scale display-established at Jet Age Museum earlier in 2025 - featuring a twin engine Fiat BR 20 used to bomb Ramsgate - Battle of Britain Day 2025 featured 501 (County of Gloucestershire) Squadron RAF, Royal Air Force vehicles, the Soldiers, Sailors and Airman's Families Association (SSAFA), displays of historic small arms and practical displays by The International Plastic Modelling Society (Gloucester Branch), Air Cadet units, The Dave Partridge Re-Enactor Group and talks on RAF training and flying the Panavia Tornado.



On Friday 15 August the Cleeve and Staverton teams of ONTIC, our cherished neighbour, came together for a fantastic family day at the Jet Age Museum.



DO YOU REMEMBER JUGHEAD?

'Burt the Airport Cat' was a 2022 children's book by Canadian author and illustrator Christine Henry, but did you know that in the mid 1970s Staverton had its own airport cat named Jughead?



Apparently he was fed by all the flying clubs and one of the old black hangars even had a hole cut in its corrugated walls as a catflap.

If a mechanic was working under an aircraft, Jughead

would suddenly appear with a 'gift' of a dead rat or mouse. Or he could be found sunbathing on a taxiway and resist being moved out of the way of aircraft. And in the winter he would sleep on the warm engine cowlings of aircraft or even climb inside for a flight.

With the backdrop of Gloucestershire's rich aviation history (including iconic aircraft from World War II), colleagues, friends, and families enjoyed a day packed with fun. From bouncy castles and inflatable challenges to fairground games, face painting, and cockpit tours, there was something for everyone.

ONTIC were thrilled to welcome 772 attendees – an amazing turnout that shows the strength of our their community. For the kids, there were activity packs to keep the fun going at home, while adults enjoyed the chance to connect and relax with colleagues and friends.

Importantly, the day also made raised over £500 for the Jet Age Museum, supporting the incredible volunteers who keep local aviation history alive.

A huge thank you to Rachel Tomlinson and Matthew Boal for organizing such a successful day, and to all the volunteers and team members who helped make it possible.

KNOW YOUR VULCAN

Jet Age Museum member David Rose continues his history of Avro Vulcan XM569, the cockpit of which is now a popular attraction at Jet Age Museum.

In all, 134 Vulcans were delivered to the Royal Air Force, the last one being removed from service in 1982 after the Falklands conflict, which was the first and last time the Vulcan was used in anger. Considering the role that the V-force was designed for it's not such a bad thing that it was never used in anger against the Soviet Union.

VULCAN XM569

XM569 was assembled in 1962 at the Avro Aircraft Factory, Woodford, with the centre sections being built at Chadderton.

She was built to deliver a Blue Steel missile as part of the UK nuclear deterrent V force and was initially with 27 Squadron based at RAF Scampton after being delivered in January 1963.

27 Squadron had reformed at Scampton in April 1961 and began a 13-year association with Vulcans in the strike and maritime reconnaissance roles before the type was replaced by Tornados in the bomber role in 1983. No. 27 Squadron relinquished its Tornados in 1993, reforming as No. 27 (Reserve) Squadron, the Chinook/Puma OCU, at RAF Odiham and regained full squadron status in January 1998 solely equipped with Chinooks.



XM569 then continued through her life serving with 9, 44, 50 and 101 Squadrons.

BUTTERWORTH

In late 1964 XM569 was part of the first Far East deployment of B2's being based at RAF Butterworth in Malaya (now Malaysia). This was during the period of 'Operation Chamfrom'.

In December 1965, XM569 was returned to the manufacturers at Woodford for a retrofit and conversion to free fall bombing. She returned to service at Scampton in August 1966 then Waddington in November 1966.

On 17 November 1966, XM569 became part of the Waddington Wing serving on all four squadrons based at that airfield. In April 1967 she found herself again at Butterworth. This time as part of the joint Waddington/Cottesmore 'Exercise Moonflower'.

In fact XM569 arrived by way of a rather spectacular landing due to a seized brake motor on the port footbrake. All of the tyres burst on landing causing the aircraft to slew off the runway.

The runway orientation is North to South and part of the 33 Squadron Bloodhound MkII Surface to Air (SAM) missile complex is showing to the left of XM569 in the monochrome picture.



33 Squadron, which had previously flown Gloster Meteor and Javelin jet fighters, reformed as a Bloodhound unit in Malaya from 1 March 1965 until January 1970.

The Bristol Bloodhound was a ramjet powered and served as the UK's main air defence weapon into the 1990s. It was in large-scale service with the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the forces of four other countries.

As part of sweeping changes to the UK's defence posture, the Bloodhound was intended to protect the RAF's V bomber bases to preserve the deterrent force from attacking bombers that made it past the Lightning interceptor force.

Bloodhound Mk. I entered service in December 1958, the first British guided weapon to enter full operational service.

The Mk. I began to be replaced by the Mk. II starting in 1964

JET AGE MUSEUM HELPS SAVE THE PLANET

We could not refuse! The award winning Jet Age Museum is helping save Planet Earth by advertising on Ubico recycling lorries in Gloucester.

The two vehicles - MX24 GPJ and MX25 EYR - feature Romaquip Kerb Sort recycling bodies on DAF 190 chassis and are each operated by a crew of a driver and two loaders. The two lorries were photographed courtesy of Ubico at their Eastern Avenue, Gloucester, Depot where, among other commodities, aluminium is being recycled to avoid landfill.

The two advertising lorries are set to be seen by over 60 000 people over the next year .If you see either of them, why not post a picture on social media? Please let Jet Age Museum Newsletter know as well.



PROJECT 262 - GLOSTER'S NEARLY METEOR

In the years between 1946 and 1957, the British aircraft industry, spurred on by political and military events in Europe and the Far East, achieved a measure of supremacy in fighter design, only to lose the initiative due to delays in introducing swept wing aircraft such as the Supermarine Swift and Hawker Hunter.

The Gloster P262, a delta-winged development of the Gloster Meteor, was a concept design proposed in 1947 and drawn on 13 November that year.

It featured an all-flying tail and was considered by Gloster as a potential candidate for the Air Ministry Specification F3/48, but was unsuccessful in securing the contract, which was ultimately awarded to Hawker for the Hunter. Both Gloster and Armstrong-Whitworth were part of the Hawker-Siddeley group of companies and



the Hawker Hunter was developed from the straight-winged Armstrong-Whitworth Sea Hawk.

The 1/72 scale model of this paper plane was donated to Jet Age Museum in June 2025 by skilled builder Ray Taylor. He has envisaged Project 262 (not

to be confused with the Messerschmitt Me 262) being produced as the Gloster Meteor F Mark 6 and this specific aircraft serving with 74 Squadron RAF.

The Meteor F Mk 6 would have been powered by Rolls-Royce Derwent turbojets



DIARIES

Visitors to the Community Learning Space (CLS) at Jet Age Museum will have seen the 1990 vintage “eye and ear” Dowty flag (pictured below) but did you know that the blue original (pictured above) was designed in 1936 for the Paris Air Show?

Before then, George Dowty was a GAC employee and is pictured on the right, looking up in the Sunningend drawing office with a cup of tea under his desk. The image is courtesy of HE Austin via Mrs Pearce.

All things Dowty were in focus at Jet Age Museum in early October 2025. On the first of the month, Tony Edwards, the last Chief Executive of the Dowty Group gave a talk on the Battle of Britain while the next day a packed audience heard two speeches organised by the Sir George Dowty Memorial Committee on the third anniversary of its foundation.

First to speak in the CLS was John Whitaker, who recounted the formation of the Gloucestershire Aviation Collection before talking about his boyhood memories of George Dowty and his work on aircraft undercarriages and the lives saved by the Dowty Roofmaster pit prop.

These achievements were also discussed by George E. Dowty, son of Sir George, who was only 20 years old on his passing in 1975. George E. Dowty went on to praise the role of apprenticeships and in particular the 50 new Safran apprentices who he recently met at Jet Age Museum.



In the second part of the authorised serialisation of the Diaries of Sir George Dowty, Tim Hickson, Past Second Master of King's School, Worcester, describes the early life of George Dowty:

After being at school in Pershore, George and his twin brother Edward joined Worcester Royal Grammar School in 1913. That entailed a nearly three mile bicycle ride to the railway station, a train ride to Worcester followed by a two mile walk to the school. George did well at school, but in August 1914 World War I started and when conscription was introduced he and his twin brother had to leave school in the winter of 1915 to help their eldest brother with their father's business. After twelve months, the eldest brother felt he could cope alone, so George was free to join the engineering works of Heenen and Froude in Shrub Hill Road in Worcester. His day began at 6.30 am and he worked for eight and a half hours except on Saturdays when he stopped at noon.

He said it was difficult getting up so early especially on winter mornings. He was paid six shillings a week which was roughly equivalent to £20 today. His first job was testing hydraulic hand pumps which, not surprisingly, led on to a career specialising in hydraulics. He was the only boy in the factory and there was no apprentice scheme during the War. He took evening classes in mechanical engineering at the Victoria Institute in Foregate Street, paying his own fees, and took a postal course in the Internal Combustion Engine.

Gloucestershire Aviation Collection known as Jet Age Museum

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SABRE DAWN



The Napier Sabre engine was at the heart of the Gloster built Hawker Typhoon and its successor, the Hawker Tempest, but the first use of the 24-cylinder liquid cooled Sabre was an attempt on the World Air Speed Record.

The Napier-Heston Racer was a single-seat racing monoplane developed by D. Napier & Son Ltd. and built by the Heston Aircraft Company. The project was funded by William Morris, 1st Viscount Nuffield.

The design team was led by Arthur Ernest Hagg, previously responsible for the de Havilland DH88 Comet racer, and the Napier-Heston was constructed primarily using wood, which allowed for quick construction and a sleek, streamlined appearance.

Its maiden flight at Heston Aerodrome on 12 June 1940 was piloted by Squadron Leader Richmond, Chief Test Pilot of Heston Aircraft.

Recovering from an abrupt takeoff, Richmond carried out a preliminary test flight with gear extended throughout but after only five minutes airborne, while encountering inadequate elevator control, the engine overheated. Trying to carry out a forced landing, he inadvertently stalled the aircraft at approximately 30 feet above the airfield. The aircraft impacted heavily, with the undercarriage driven through the wings, and the tail broken off. Richmond survived with minor injuries but the project was abandoned.

