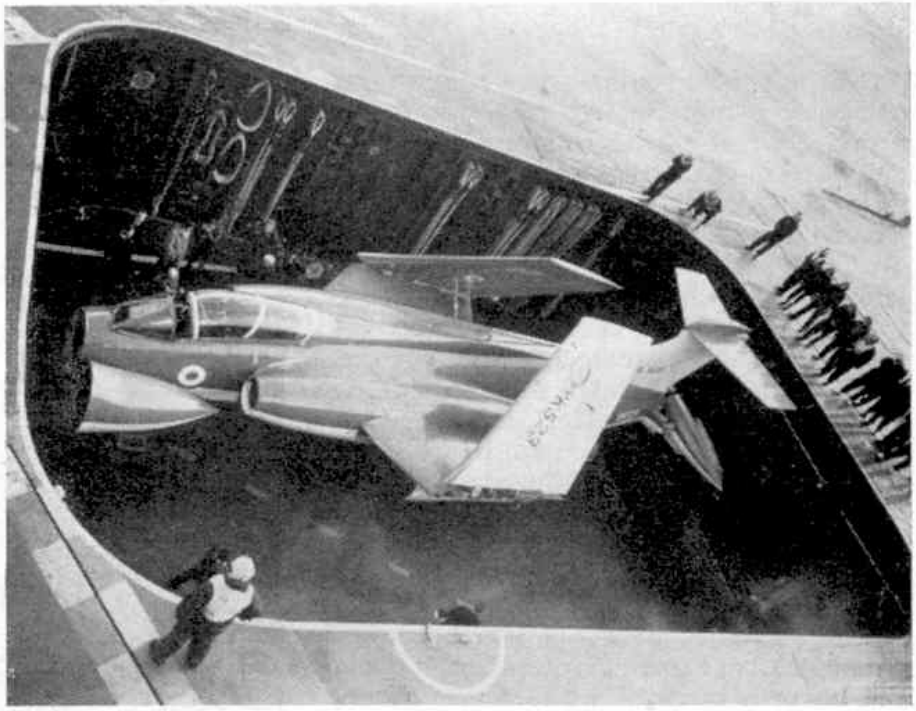
Air News

By John W. R. Taylor



On board the aircraft carrier H.M.S. "Victorious". A Blackburn NA.39, with wings and nose folded and air brakes wide open, descending by lift to the hangars below deck.

NA.39 Deck Trials

An important stage in the development of the Blackburn NA.39, the Royal Navy's new low-level atom bomber, has been reached with the completion of its initial deck trials. Operating from H.M.S. *Victorious*, the fourth and seventh aircraft off the assembly line made a total of 30 take-offs and landings at sea in a period of three and a half days.

Despite the fact that it can fly at about the speed of sound, the NA.39 showed that it can land quite slowly, a very important safety factor during deck operations. The reason is that high-speed air is taken from the two Gyron Junior jet engines and blown from slits in the leading edge of the wings, as well as forward of the ailerons and flaps and from the leading edge of the tailplane. This keeps the airflow moving smoothly and quickly over the wings, flaps and control surfaces, giving a big increase in lift and permitting a slower landing approach.

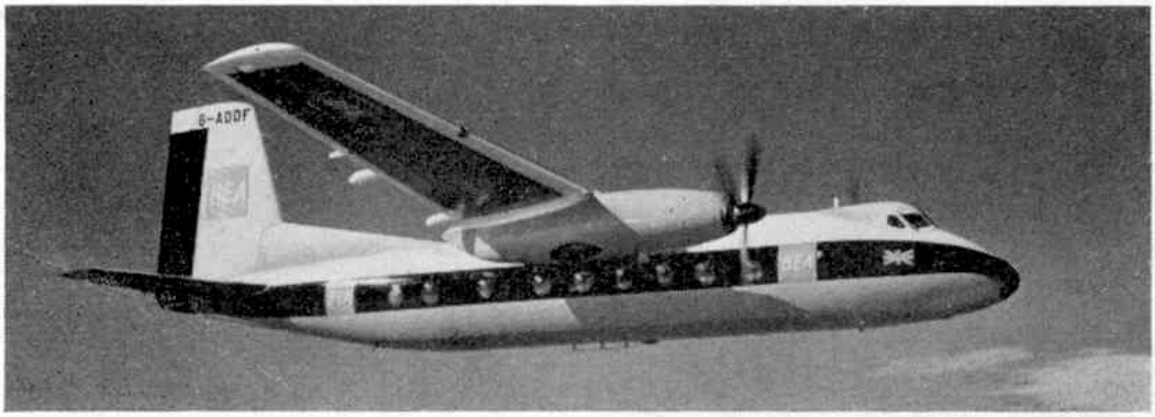
As the engines are kept at full power to supply the blowing air, the entire fuselage tail cone is designed to split open sideways to act as airbrakes and provide drag to counteract the engines' thrust. The airbrakes are open in the picture above, which shows also how the NA.39's wings and fuselage nose are folded when it is taken by lift to the below-deck hangars on board ship. This reduces the normal span of 42 ft. 6 in. to only 20 feet and the length of 62 ft. 4 in. to 50 ft. 7 in.

Helicopter Installs Beacons

Warning-light beacons installed on the two 1,300 ft. peaks of the Tygerberg Mountains in South Africa remind airline pilots to stay clear whenever they land and take off from the D.F. Malan Airport at Cape Town. How the beacons got there is an interesting story.

They weigh about threequarters of a ton each, and would have had to be broken down into small sections if they had been carried up the mountainside in the usual way. In any case, when General Electric Company engineers arrived on the scene they found that rain had made the ground impassable to land vehicles.

Instead of waiting for better weather, the engineers hired a Whirlwind helicopter from the South African Air Force, and used it to lift the complete beacons quickly into position. By a coincidence, the pilot of the Whirlwind, Captain de Villiers, had crash-landed his Ventura patrol-bomber on top of the Tygerberg in bad visibility some years earlier, so he realised better than most people the value of what he was doing.



The second prototype Handley Page Dart Herald, which recently completed a 32,000-mile demonstration tour of South America.