

### **An Excerpt from “A Hatfield Memoir 1953-1956” by J. W. Rickard**

Before winding up my account of some of the work carried out on this aeroplane. I must mention one bit of fun that was had with it. It was on a Saturday morning, October 30 (1954). I had gone to work for what turned out to be the last flight to check we had achieved the required level of pressure within the fuel tanks. Joe Merrick was also in, and he came on the flight. Up front were Geoffrey Pike and John Barrett. After the flight, during the debriefing in Geoffrey's office, there was much glancing at watches by Geoffrey and John. Suddenly they got up saying to Joe and me: “are you coming?” “Coming where?” we asked. “Didn't you know that Stan Borrie is getting married this morning and we are going over to see what we can?” So we all piled back into the aeroplane and off we went. We didn't have to go far as the wedding was at Lemsford Parish church which is less than two miles from the north end of the runway. The timing was perfect, for we were able to see Stan and Maureen and the wedding party as they lined up for their photo calls. (Maureen was later to become a flight test engineer, in her case at Hunting/Percival at Luton). John Wilson, flying a Vampire trainer, had also passed his respects just before our arrival. How we roared with laughter as we did two low passes in front of the church. It was the sort of thing we read about RAF chaps doing during the War but never expected to experience ourselves. We wondered whether HRH the Duke would have approved of his aeroplane being used in so frivolous a manner. We decided that, on balance, he probably would have.

John Rickard was a member of the de Havilland Aircraft design team at Hatfield. His 'Memoir' describes his activities in the Engine Installation Department during the period. The excerpt above refers to a flight made in a Heron aircraft destined for the Queen's Flight/ The Memoir was published in 2002.