

AM as they paid Whittles salary, Whittle himself, his two RAF friends and investment bankers OT Falk & Partners (Falk was the father of Roly Falk the famous Vulcan test pilot).

The effort of bringing together all the resources and technical abilities, combined with the exam stresses had a bad affect on Whittles health. Power Jets was set up at the British Thomson-Huston site at Rugby. BTH was chosen as the main sub-contractor to build the engine because it was a prominent steam turbine company. Despite many problems Whittle ran his first engine on 12th April 1937 (80 years ago) but the noise and fumes meant that he was then moved to a disused foundry at Lutterworth. Despite the general disinterest of the AM, the Director of Scientific Research visited in 1939 and saw the engine run for 20 minutes following which government support started. Problems with the combustion were solved by Lubbock and Shell and it remained only to solve the problems of materials that could cope with the searing heat at the turbine which had 'exploded'. While the government helped with finance, it also started giving contracts direct to Rover and BTH and Whittle felt he was losing control. The first flight of his engine was on the 15th May 1941, but by this time the relationship with BTH was strained through his technical disputes and with Rover which had secretly worked on an improved engine concept that Whittle had already worked out but lack of resources had prevented progress. Rolls-Royce, which had been helping Whittle with engineering problems now came in by offering Rover a tank engine factory in exchange for Rover's jet engine operation. Whittle worked well with Stanley Hooker of RR who understood compressors and very quickly the prototype engine for a fighter was produced. The government now stepped in to nationalise jet engine development and by 1946 Whittle had left Power jets R&D and the RAF with a medical discharge in 1948. For his efforts and investment in Power jets he was knighted and also received £100,000.



Engine Pictures Courtesy of Lutterworth museum

BATTLE OF NORMANDY TALK

On Tuesday 21 February 2017 at 5pm, Dr Simon Trew from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, is giving a talk on "German perspectives on the 1944 Battle of Normandy". This will take place at the University of Portsmouth (in association with the D-Day Museum) in the Milldam Building, room LE0.06, and is free to attend. Simon Trew is an excellent speaker and an expert on the Normandy campaign. He is the editor of the "Battle Zone Normandy" series of battlefield guides, has led many battlefield tours to Normandy, and has also appeared in TV programmes on the subject.

More details:

<http://www.ddaymuseum.co.uk/d-day-events/details/german-perspectives-on-the-1944-battle-of-normandy-at-university-of-portsmouth>

Any newsletter contributions, ideas or comments to:

Chris Gilbert-Norton, 12 Meadow Close, Burley, Ringwood, Hampshire, BH24 4EJ

Home number: 01425 403547 Mobile number: 07977 721503 E-mail: gilbey66@gmail.com