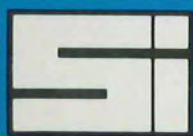


Smiths Industries at Cheltenham

The story of fifty years at Bishops Cleeve
1940–1990



SMITHS INDUSTRIES

Aerospace & Defence Systems

Published in 1990 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Smiths Industries site at Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, in May 1940.

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Contents

Introduction	5
The Early Years	7
The War Years	19
The Post-War Era	37
Colour Section	64
The Technical School	65
Product Support	71
Guided Weapons	74
Smiths Flying Unit	76
Health and Safety at Work	86
The AFCS Story	87
Autoland	95
Head-up Displays	106
The Boeing Connection	114
The Sports and Social Club	120
Research Then and Now	124
Into the Future	127

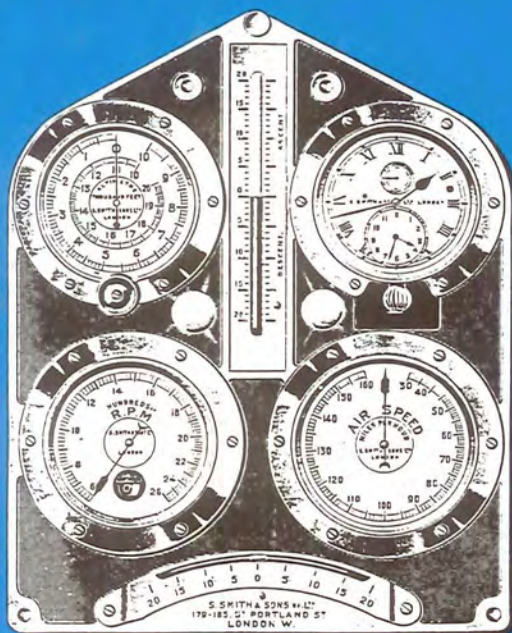
Introduction

Fifty years – or half a century – of achievement deserves to be celebrated in style, and that is what Smiths Industries is doing to commemorate a great and continuing tradition of innovation, development, and production at the major group site at Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham. It was in the dark days of 1940 that the first building on the site, CH1, was opened after being put up in record time at a period of emergency. The other buildings followed quickly – CH2, CH3, then CH4 post-war and the others over the period of fifty years.

May 1990 is the month of the fiftieth anniversary of the Cheltenham site and apart from the celebration on site commemorating fifty years of Smiths Industries achievement at Cheltenham, this book offers a more permanent record of the half century. It has been fifty years of amazing growth and development, which actually started well before 1940, as this book records. But since 1940 Cheltenham has become a major site in the Smiths Industries Aerospace group and many great technical achievements in aviation, such as Autoland and Head-Up Displays, developed from here. Here we record the story in non-technical terms that all can understand. It is a tribute to the many thousands who have worked to make it all possible over the last fifty years.

Many of those people have contributed to the contents of this book, for we have drawn on personal memories from those who have worked on every level in the company, from memos and documents in the company archives, and from articles in company publications and ‘house magazines’. Several members of Smiths, past and present, have loaned personal photographs and documents, for all of which we are extremely grateful. Because so many people are involved in the Smiths story we have kept names recorded in this book only to key figures, but to all the many Smiths people involved we offer out grateful thanks. We hope this book will recall times past and the great achievements for all who have worked for or with Smiths, for customers past and present, and for the ‘host’ town of Cheltenham.

The first half of the book, up to page 64, tells the overall story of Smiths and the Cheltenham site, while the second half of the book, after the colour pages, highlights achievements and activities over the years.



Above: One of the earliest complete instrument systems offered by Smiths, the Smiths Aircraft Instrument Board of 1917-18.

Right: The modern equivalent. Smiths Head-up Display system fitted to a Harrier II AV-8B of the United States Marine Corps.

Front cover: SIADS played a major part in developing the avionics fit for the EAP and will be similarly involved in its production development, the European Fighter Aircraft (EFA).

Front inset: One of the major landmarks in the story of Smiths Industries, illustrated by a British European Airways Trident on Smiths autoland touch down at London Airport in the late 1960s.



Keeping the pilot in the picture – over 80 years of progress in the business by Smiths Industries, 50 of them at Bishops Cleeve.

Smiths Industries at Cheltenham

In 1939, with World War 2 seemingly inevitable, Smiths (now Smiths Industries) were asked to set up a new factory for war production, well away from London and the danger of bombing. They chose a site at Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham (not without opposition from some quarters at first), and in 1940 the first part of the site opened for business. Over the years the site has expanded considerably and Smiths Industries has become a major industrial force in the Cheltenham area, and a major supplier of avionics and related equipment to aviation and defence industries all over the world. This book, published in 1990 to celebrate fifty years of the site tells the eventful story from the beginning.

£9.50 net

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