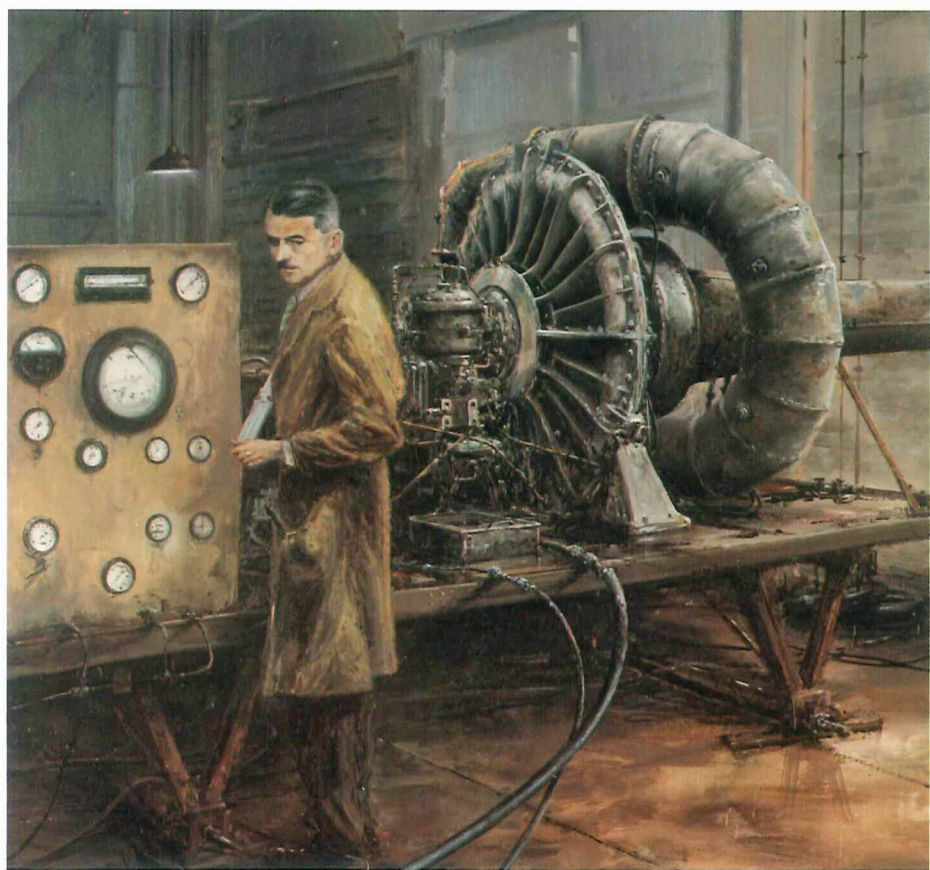


GENESIS OF THE JET

Frank Whittle and the
Invention of the Jet Engine



John Golley

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Preface

This is the human and dramatic story of a very great Englishman. By creating and giving birth to the turbojet, Sir Frank Whittle became one of the greatest inventors of all time, and his name is 'immortalised' in the annals of aviation technology. His superhuman fight to establish and develop his project is the theme of this book, which is the result of long research and collaboration with the inventor.

Working with a genius is a privilege and an unforgettable experience for any writer. Sir Frank's unfailing good humour and his willingness to discuss his traumatic life in the most intimate detail reveals the strength of his character and his moral courage. His words are quoted throughout, whenever possible. Thus, this is his story in association with him.

I have also had the privilege of working with Bill Gunston, who is an author of many aviation books and a walking encyclopaedia of aeronautical history. Bill's encouragement and professionalism have been of enormous help throughout.

I would like to thank the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher PC MP, for her generous appreciation of Sir Frank's life and work. Also Lord Kings Norton, Chancellor of the Cranfield Institute of Technology and past President of the Royal Aeronautical Society and of the Royal Institution of Great Britain, who has kindly written the foreword and given me much help. My thanks to Sir Arnold Hall, formerly Director of RAE and Chairman of the Hawker Siddeley Group, and to Sir Rolf and Lady Dudley-Williams, Reg Voysey, Group Captain J. H. McC. Reynolds, Michael Daunt, and Andrew Stevens. Finally, to Roy and Eileen Fowkes for their hospitality, introductions and back-up.

John Golley

It was in 1984 that Sir Frank asked me whether I would assist him in writing his definitive story. I considered the first thing to do was to contact publishers in the UK and USA, and this wasted more than a year. I soon felt that I was letting Sir Frank down — something that does not bear contemplation — and I judged that I needed a co-author. Picking John Golley was a singularly happy choice. In the event John wrote almost the whole book, apart from one or two bits of background and the appendices and captions. I have been only too glad to stand behind him in setting down a story of technical discovery which for excitement and importance is hard to equal.

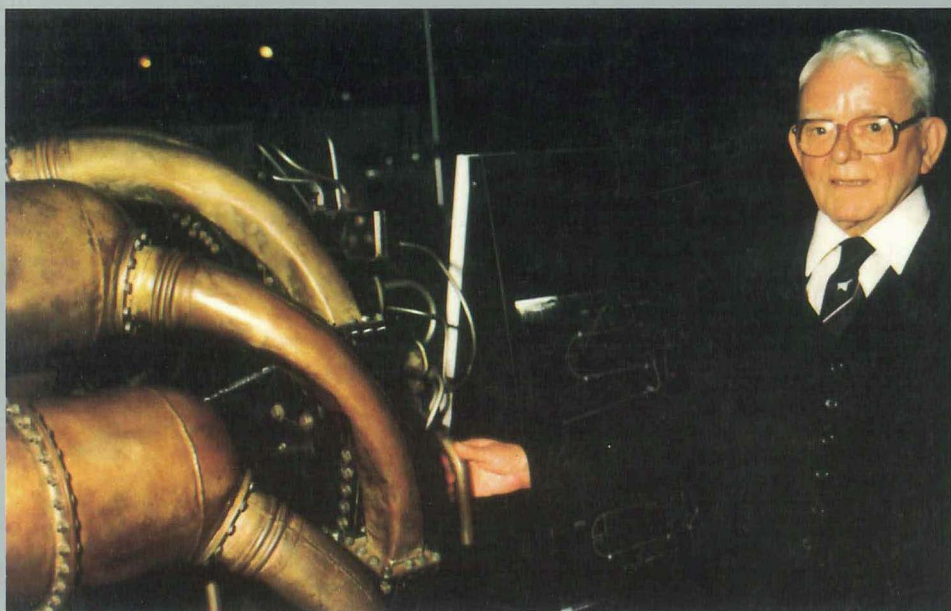
Bill Gunston

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Frank Whittle and the Invention of the Jet Engine

On 12 April 1937 Frank Whittle became the first person to successfully start and run a turbojet engine. In May 1941 this engine took to the air in an experimental Gloster-Whittle aircraft, but despite the RAF's desperate need for air supremacy over her enemies, little support was forthcoming from the military establishment. It was the enthusiasm of the American General 'Hap' Arnold that took the next stage of development to the USA and within six months Whittle's invention was powering more American jets than British.

This is the story of a genius throttled by British government bureaucracy, for even when in 1943 Rolls-Royce became involved with the successful design and manufacture of engines based on Whittle's concepts, his company was nationalised and banned from engine production! Although gagged for decades by the secrecy of that period, the story can now be told in full and these revelations provide a fascinating insight into the attitudes of the wartime government and military establishment, attitudes that led to one of the greatest inventions of all time being offered freely to those who were to become Britain's main aircraft manufacturing competitors.



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