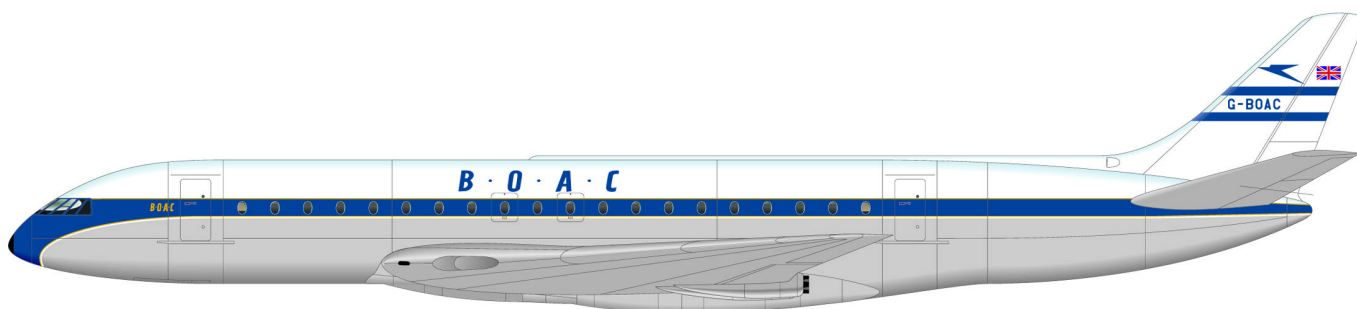


From the V1000 to the VC10

FROM THE V1000 TO THE VC10

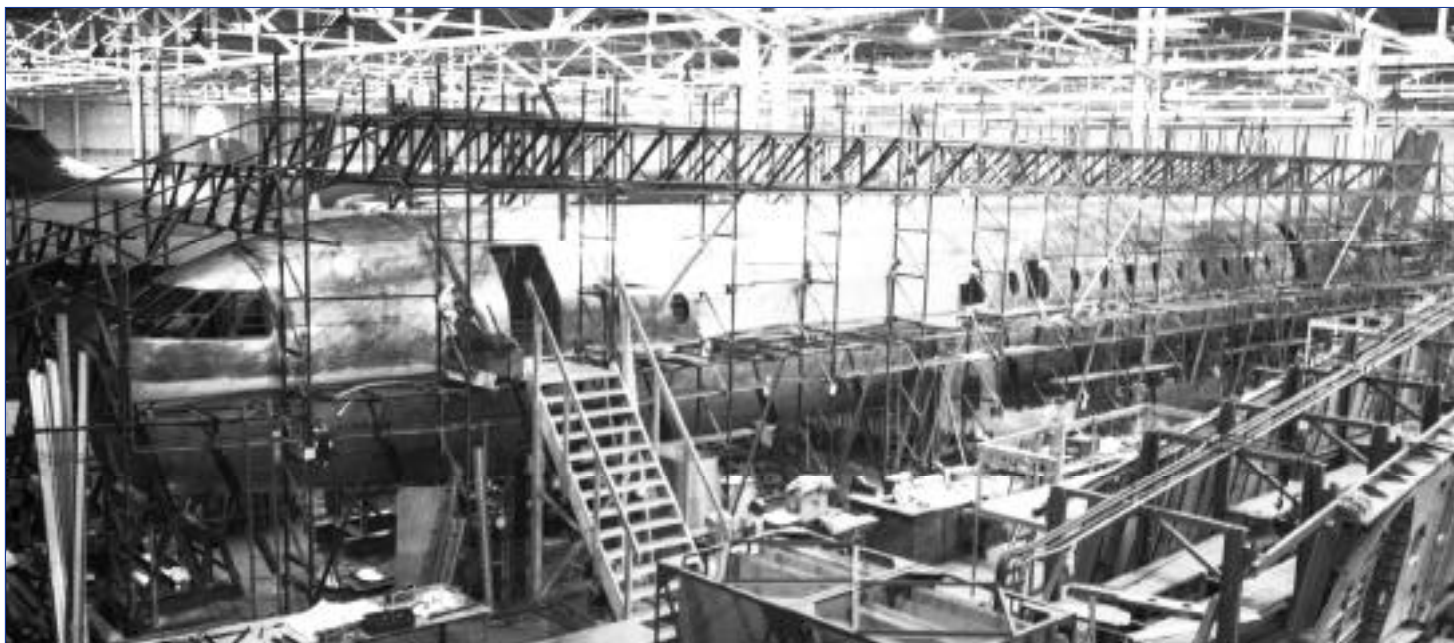


In 1951 the Vickers Viscount, the world's first turboprop airliner, was in production at Weybridge, de Havilland were well on the way to producing the world's first jet airliner the Comet 1, and the RAF were re-equipping Bomber Command with high-altitude four-jet aircraft, the first of which, the Vickers Valiant, took to the air on 18th May 1951.

During 1951, the Ministry of Supply asked Vickers to consider the design of an Air Force transport based on the Valiant. The logical step was for Vickers to look at developing a long-range successor to the Comet, a prospect which interested BOAC who entered into the discussions with Vickers and the RAF, and in October 1952 Vickers were instructed to build a prototype which was to be known as the V1000. The layout of the V1000 showed an obvious resemblance to the Valiant bomber but it was soon realised that an entirely new structure was required with a large pressurised hull and higher-powered engines than those on the Valiant. The quest for a more powerful engine was answered by Rolls-Royce who were producing the Conway 'by-pass' engine which offered improved fuel consumption and better propulsive efficiency. It was thus adopted as the basic power plant for the V1000 and, in June 1954, a contract was placed for the production of six V1000s.

The planned civil version of the V1000 was an almost identical aircraft known as the VC7. The Vickers design team worked under George Edwards, later to become Sir George Edwards, and from the outset he considered the V1000 as a stepping stone to the VC7 which could operate on BOAC's Empire routes and across the Atlantic. Vickers was finally in the position that American aircraft manufacturers had been in for some years — they now had the possibility of concurrently developing a military transport for the RAF and a commercial airliner for BOAC. A common fuselage diameter was established to give six-abreast seating, and ample wing was added to allow for maximum fuel storage.

The development period of the V1000 began to lengthen, which was not surprising as it took Vickers into completely new territory. They were making their first big jet from scratch and they were doing it to very tight specifications. The RAF wanted short airfield performance and a self-loading capability which required inclusion of a large and heavy hydraulic freight lift in the rear fuselage. Vickers placed great emphasis on ensuring the integrity of the pressurised cabin and they evolved techniques which later became commonplace in



A rare view of the V1000 fuselage in the early stage of construction at Wisley in 1955. Although the aircraft was considerably larger than the Comet, there was a striking similarity in design.

