

Harald Penrose was born in 1902, a little over a year before the Wright brother flew for the first time at Kitty Hawk. After leaving university, he joined Westland as a management trainee, where he gained experience in many of the engineering departments.

## Harald Penrose, OBE, CEng, FRAeS, MRINA

He joined the Royal Auxiliary Air Force as a trainee pilot with the view to increasing his understanding of aviation. His work at Westland led to his being made responsible for sales of the Widgeon light aircraft and because he was now a qualified service pilot he was permitted to fly the aircraft he was involved with.

As time progressed, he was regularly employed in the role of Flight Test Observer and subsequently as a production test pilot, and by natural progression and ability to understand and handle experimental aircraft. He was appointed Chief Test Pilot in 1931, a position he retained until 1953.

In a flight test career spanning thirty years he flew all Westland prototypes, including the tailless Pterodactyls, the Lysander, Whirlwind fighter, Welkin and Wyvern. Harald's flying experience took him from biplanes into the jet age during times when a test pilots life expectancy was short and survival depended on flying skills

After retirement as Westland Sales Director in 1966, he continued to fly privately and also to develop his talent as an aviation writer. Harald Penrose the author was no less impressive than the aviator, with a total of thirteen books to his credit. These ranged from his own poetic view of flight, to his five impressive and authoritative volumes covering British Aviation from 1913 to 1939.



History of the Yeovil Branch