

Dowty: Film and Video Collection

Background

The Dowty Group was made up of a series of companies that were involved in the development of hydraulic and electrical equipment and technology, primarily for the mining, nuclear and aerospace industries. Dowty's name comes from its founder, George Dowty. It was he who in 1931, originally set up the Aircraft Components Company in Cheltenham (which had gone bankrupt before its first order!), before trying once again and setting up Aircraft Components Limited later that year. Over the following decade they grew steadily in size and popularity and throughout the Second World War, they were a significant supplier of aircraft components and hydraulics. By 1940 Aircraft Components became Dowty Equipment, and by the end of the War they had supplied 87,786 landing gears and 984,388 hydraulic units. Following the end of hostilities, several new companies emerged from Dowty, including Dowty Fuel Systems, Dowty Mining Equipment, Dowty Nucleonics, and Dowty Rotol to name but a few. All were striving to make new and exciting innovations in their field, and all were making use of cutting-edge technology. Following several mergers and takeovers throughout the 1990's, the Dowty name is now owned wholly by Safran.

A large collection of audio-visual materials from the Dowty Group have been deposited with Gloucestershire Archives over the last 25 years, and until 2025 they have been largely inaccessible. Now as part of a project, the contents of this collection have been catalogued and listed for the first time, allowing you to explore the material held here and make these materials more accessible in the future*.

* Currently, only a small number of digital access copies of these audio-visual materials are available to view but this guide will be updated as and when more of the collection is digitised.

What records are there and what information will they contain?

The age and format of these materials does vary, but the majority are held on 16mm film. Other formats include 1" Video Tape and Super8 film. Most of these films currently do not have digital access copies available, but those that do are marked on this guide and on the catalogue. The material has emanated from different parts of the Dowty Group and is arranged under the following references: material from Dowty Fuel Systems Limited (**D8347/DGL/20/11/1**); material from the Dowty Group (**D8347/DGL/20/11/2**); material from Dowty Hydraulics (**D8347/DGL/20/11/3**); material relating to Dowty Industrial and Dowty Nucleonics (**D8347/DGL/20/11/4**); material from Dowty Rotol and Dowty Aerospace and Defence Division (**D8347/DGL/20/11/5**); and training material purchased by Dowty

(D8347/DGL/20/11/6). A full breakdown of what is contained within these references can be found below:

Dowty Fuel Systems Limited:

- **D8347/DGL/20/11/1/1** - Entry Film for Technological Innovation - Dowty Fuel System Limited Film Supporting Entry

Material from the Dowty Group:

- **D8347/DGL/20/11/2/1** - Dowty: Change to Win
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/2/2** - The Changing Shape of Dowty
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/2/3** - Dowty - Chairman's Speech
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/2/4** - Dowty: The Preferred Partner (German Version)*
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/2/5** - Dowty: Play In
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/2/6** - Dowty: The Preferred Partner (French Version)*
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/2/7** - Dowty: The Preferred Partner (Italian Version)*
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* A digital access copy of this film in English, taken from a VHS master, is available in D8347/DGL/7/6/46

Material from Dowty Hydraulics:

- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/1** - Head impact of two buffers at slow speed (1959/1960)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/2** - Two buffers closing showing head bounce (1959/1960)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/3** - Slow motion impact of two buffers (Dowty Hydraulics) (1960/1961)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/4** - Dowty Wagon Lift Tests Down Incline (1961)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/5** - Japan (Railway) Installation (1967)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/6** - Japan (Railways) (1967)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/7** - Wheel Lift Tests on Arresters (1971)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/8** - Takes & Outtakes from Tomorrow's World 'Rail Retarders' - Ashchurch (Colour) & Scunthorpe (B&W) (1972)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/9** - Tomorrow's World - Railway Stoppers (1972)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/10** - Recorded tests of wagons slowed by rail retarders (Australia) (1972) – [Digital access copy available to view](#)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/11** - Ashchurch film of Wagon Wheel Lifting with Dowty Rail Retarders (c.1973)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/12** - Forrestfield Hump Retarder's: A Western Australian Government Presentation (c. 1974)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/13** - Strasshof (Retarder) Evaluation Trials (Original) (1979)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/14** - Snow Clearing in Oslo (1981)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/15** - Strasshof High Speed Shots (1982)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/16** - Strasshof – High Speed Shots (1st Copy) (1982)

- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/17** - Dowty Automatic Coupler for Railway Wagon Stock (Dowty Hydraulics) (Year unknown)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/18** - Dowty Hydraulic Buffers (Original Copy) (Year unknown)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/19** - Dowty: Waggon Geschwindigkeits Kontrolls (Wagon System Controls) (Year Unknown)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/3/20** - Dowty Wagon Control Systems – A Dowty Film (Year unknown)

Material relating to Dowty Industrial and Dowty Nucleonics:

- **D8347/DGL/20/11/4/1** - Construction of Berkeley Power Station & Interview with T.D.H. Andrew (M.D Dowty Nucleonics) (Year unknown)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/4/2** - Dowty Forwarder (Logging Vehicle) Model 302 – Demonstration Film (Year unknown)
- **D8347/1/20/11/4/3** - Film demonstrating Dowty Forwarder (Canadian logging machine) in action (C.1959)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/4/4** - Film on demonstrations and work by Dowty Forwarder (1960)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/4/5** - Film for press demonstration - Dowty Forwarder 16th March 1962 (1960-1962)

Material from Dowty Rotol and Dowty Aerospace and Defence Division:

- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/1** - Dowty: Your Partner in Aerospace and Defence (American Version) - Copy 3 (c.1978) – Preservation copy
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/2** - Dowty: Your Partner in Aerospace and Defence (American Version) - Copy 8 (c.1978) – Access copy – [Digital access copy available to view](#)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/3** - Dowty: Your Partner in Aerospace and Defence (American Version) - Copy 17 (c.1978) – Projector copy for events
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/4** - Dowty: Your Partner in Aerospace and Defence (Arabic Version) (c.1978)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/5** - Dowty: Your Partner in Aerospace and Defence (Chinese Version) (c.1978)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/6** - Dowty: Your Partner in Aerospace and Defence (English Version) (c.1978)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/7** - Dowty: Your Partner in Aerospace and Defence (Russian Version) (c.1978)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/8** - ADV (Air Defence Variant) Tornado Clips – British Aerospace (Aircraft Group) (Year unknown)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/9** - Challenger - Camadair (Copy 1) (Year unknown)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/10** - Shots of various aircraft and jets at Farnborough (1974)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/11** - The Hawker Sidderly – Harrier GR MK.1 (Year unknown)

- **D8347/DGL/20/11/5/12** - Tornado IDS (Interdiction Strike) Clip – British Aerospace (Aircraft Group) (Year unknown)

Training films purchased by Dowty:

- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/1** - Talkback: A Study in Communication (1969)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/2** - Who Killed the Sale (Rank Film Library) (1970)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/3** - Letter Writing at Work (Rank Film Library) (1971)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/4** - Supervisor (British Productivity Council) (1971)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/5** - The Great Betrayal (Clark Equipment) (1974)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/6** - Profit & Cash (Rank Film Library) (1975)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/7** - The Goya Effect (Rank Film Library) (1976)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/8** - I Owe You (Milbank Films) (1976)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/9** - If You Only Knew (Millbank Film Ltd.) (1982)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/10** - The Unorganised Manager – Part 1 – Damnation (Video Arts LTD.) (1983)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/11** - The Unorganised Manager – Part Two – Salvation (Video Arts LTD.) (1983)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/12** - Time to Think (Rank Aldis) (1984)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/13** - Counting the Cost (Rank Aldis) (1985)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/14** - The Weakest Link (Millbank Films) (Year unknown)
- **D8347/DGL/20/11/6/15** - The Floor is Yours (Management Training LTD) (Year unknown)

What other records from Archives are linked to these films?

Whilst these films may not all be viewable at the time of writing, other documents from the Dowty associated collections can be useful for finding out more about their activities and work. This list is by no means exhaustive but will give you a starting point to find out more. Examples include:

Dowty Railway Preservation Society:

D8347/DGL/23/23: Blank certificate for membership of the Dowty Railway Preservation Society (c.1960).

D8347/DGS/9/52/2/27: Plan of the Dowty Railway Preservation Society relocation at No.2 unit, Ashchurch (21st November 1979).

R21.2GS: Catalogue of exhibits of the Society (Believed to be 1978).

Dowty Hydraulic Units:

D8347/DGS/6/39/54: Correspondence between Dowty Hydraulic Units and British Rail relating to agreements for hydrostatic transmissions for the advanced passenger train. Includes draft agreements, and the British Transport Commission's general conditions of contract for locomotives, power equipment and allied goods (1960-1970).

D8347/DGS/6/39/55: Correspondence and agreements relating to contracts for repair facilities at Tinsley, Bescot and Scunthorpe Yards, contracted to Dowty Hydraulic Units and Dowty Hucknall by British Rail (1981-1982).

Dowty Nucleonics:

D8347/65 – Series – Divided into Correspondence (**D8347/65/5**), Products (**D8347/65/9**), Legal (**D8347/65/1**), and Minutes (**D8347/65/2**).

D10638/1/1959/37/70: Berkeley Nuclear Power Station: Construction (1959).

Dowty Rotol/ Aerospace and Defence:

D8347/DGS/7/43/7/84: Documents relating to patents and drawing copyright for a gearbox for the "Challenger" including an agreement between Dowty Rotol and others concerning a European fighter aircraft, patent specifications, Dowty Rotol drawing FV1030531 for a main casing cov (1980-1988).

PF22.3GS: Collection of Dowty Group colour brochures – Within this is a brochure from 'Aerospace and Defence' that appears to accompany the film 'Your Partners in Aerospace and Defence' mentioned above (1978-1980).

How to Find the Records

To view the records and documents we hold at Gloucestershire Archives, use our online catalogue which can be found on our website at:

<https://catalogue.gloucestershire.gov.uk/> Use the references given above as your search terms if you are trying to locate these examples or explore these collections further. You can also refine or sort your search by other search categories, such as date created.

For more guidance on using our online catalogue please see the Help page and FAQs or watch our YouTube tutorial.

If a digital access copy is available for a particular item, you can request to view this in our searchroom. Details of how to make a booking to view items can be found at:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/visit-us/>

External websites

Dowty Heritage is a website that shares experiences of people who worked or are connected to the history of Dowty. Oral histories, articles, and events relating to Dowty are also published here. You can access the website at:

<https://www.dowtyheritage.org.uk/>

Have something to bring to the Archives?

If you are interested in depositing any relevant records with us from or about Dowty or you are looking for guidance on how you can care for your collections, visit [Adding to our collections](#) | [Gloucestershire Archives](#)