

Black Friday: Avro project's death affected hundreds here

Ivan Kilby had just bought a new house on Elmore Dr. in Acton. He and his wife, Jean, had good paying jobs. They worked together, making commuting to and from work economical. Things were looking good. Then came Black Friday—February 20, 1959.

A.V. Roe employee Ian Cass of Georgetown described the day in the Georgetown Herald.

"(It) started like any other workday—none of us had any idea that a few hours later, we would be unwilling participants in an event which has no parallel in Canadian history. If any of us were concerned that morning, it was concern over such things as whether the car would start after the bitterly cold night before....None of us considered the possibility of being unemployed within a few hours."

Before noon, an announcement

came over the public address system at A.V. Roe, where Kilby had worked for close to 10 years. The contract for the Avro Arrow had been canceled by the Canadian government.

they were still shocked when it happened. Kilby said the realization really didn't hit until two weeks later when he returned to the plant and saw the aircraft being cut apart.

"I don't think anyone actually realized it could happen when you're working on something like that," Kilby said. "It was one of the best products in the air ever

Georgetown and 244 in Acton. The Georgetown Herald's editorial in the Feb. 25 issue described the impact.

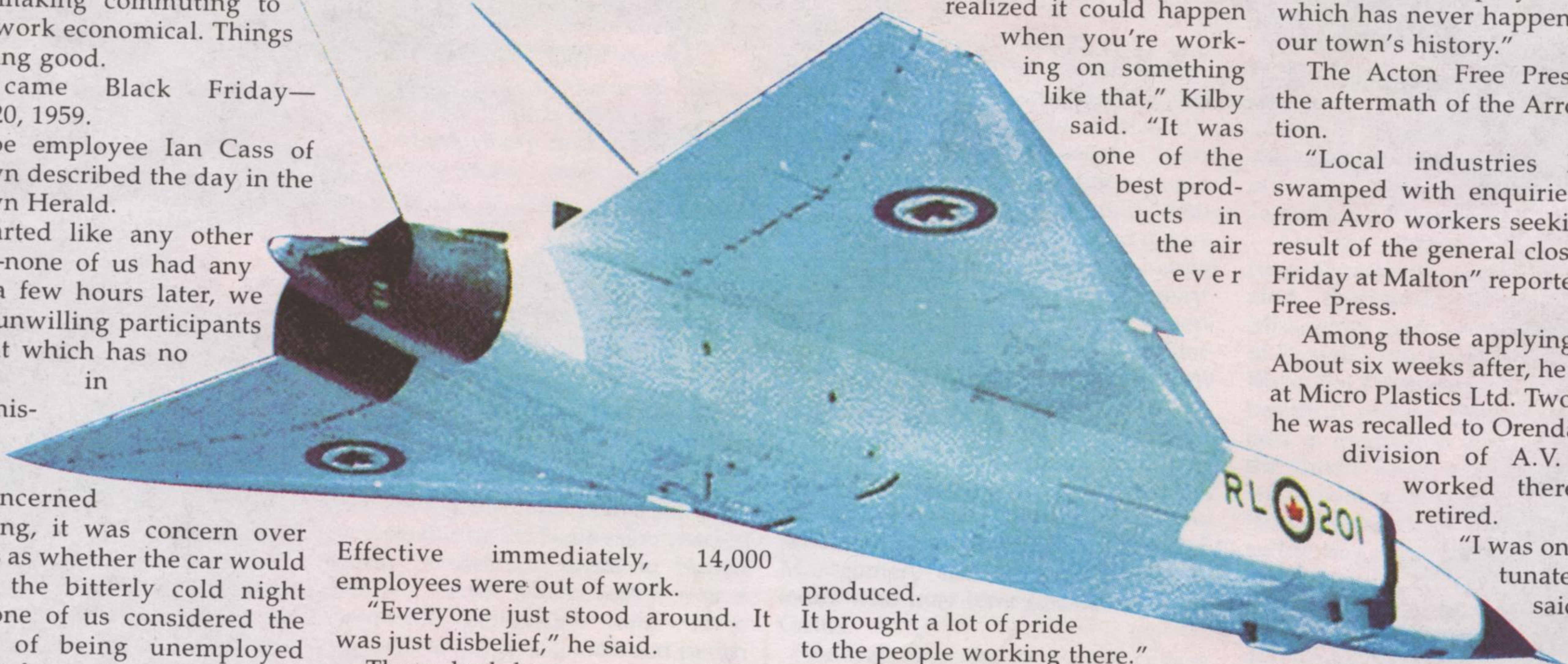
"The grim side of the picture is that today we have 500 to 600 residents unemployed—something which has never happened before in our town's history."

The Acton Free Press described the aftermath of the Arrow cancellation.

"Local industries have been swamped with enquiries this week from Avro workers seeking jobs as a result of the general close down last Friday at Malton" reported the Acton Free Press.

Among those applying was Kilby. About six weeks after, he found a job at Micro Plastics Ltd. Two years later, he was recalled to Orenda Engines, a division of A.V. Roe, and worked there until he retired.

"I was one of the fortunate ones," he said.



Effective immediately, 14,000 employees were out of work.

"Everyone just stood around. It was just disbelief," he said.

There had been rumors of the Arrow's cancellation for months but

produced. It brought a lot of pride to the people working there."

Many of those employees lived locally, between 500 and 600 in

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer



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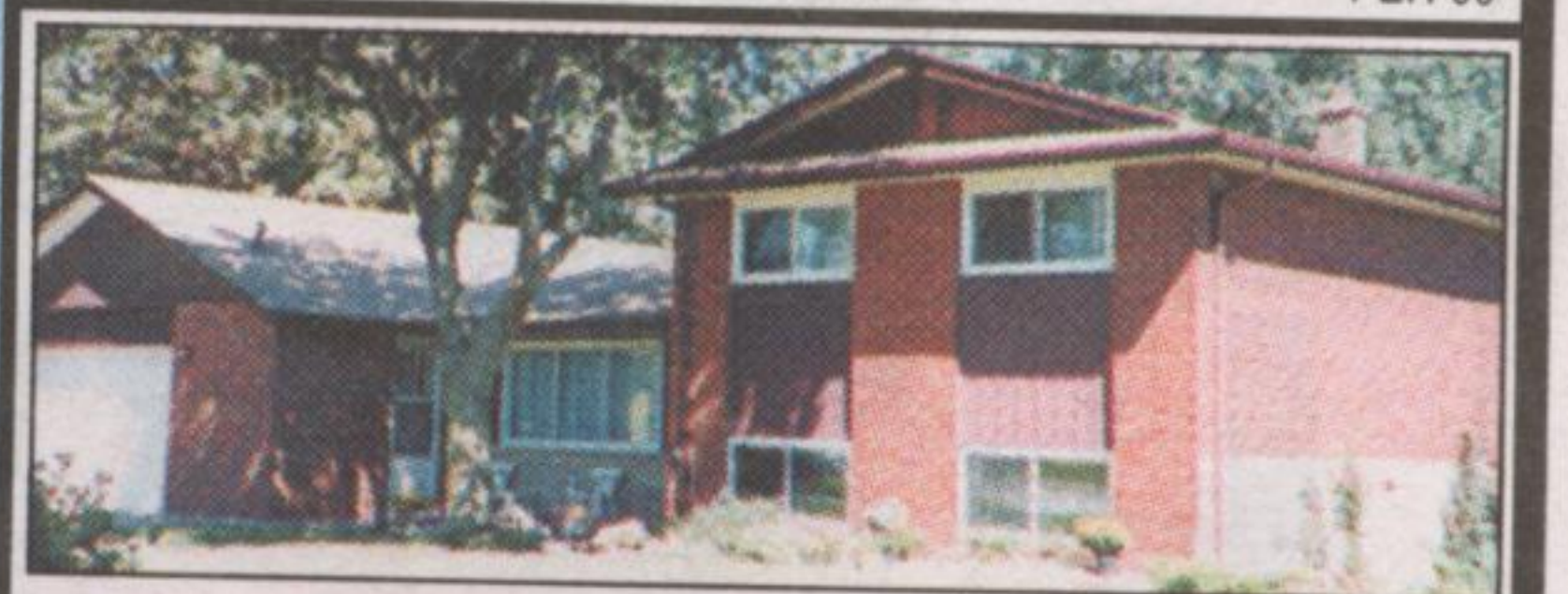
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