

Airfield Review

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To advance the education of the general public by carrying out research into, and maintaining records of, military and civilian airfields and related infrastructure, both current and historic, anywhere in the world

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THE ARG MANAGEMENT TEAM

DIRECTORS

Chairman	Paul Francis	paul.francis@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	07972 474368
Finance Director	Norman Brice	norman.brice@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	
Director	Peter Howarth	peter.howarth@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	01234 771452
Director	Noel Ryan	noel.ryan@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	

COMPANY SECRETARY

Peter Howarth	peter.howarth@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	01234 771452
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OFFICERS

Membership Secretary & Roadshow Coordinator	Jayne Wright	jayne.wright@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	0114 283 8049
Archive & Collections Manager	Paul Bellamy	paul.bellamy@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	
Visits Manager	Laurie Kennard	laurie.kennard@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	07970 160946
Health & Safety Officer	Jeff Hawley	jeff.hawley@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	
Media and PR	Jeff Hawley	jeff.hawley@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	
Airfield Review Editor	Graham Crisp	ar.editor@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	07970 745571
Roundup & Memorials Coordinator	Peter Kirk	roundup@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk	

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Cover picture: The main telephone switchboard at Weston-super-Mare Aerodrome photographed in March 2016.

Many of the lines were tied connections to Westland Helicopters at Yeovil.

It was located in the Oldmixon Administrative building which was scheduled for demolition. (*Graham Crisp*)

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info@dscreative.co.uk - www.dscreative.co.uk

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INFORMATION AND NOTICES

NEWS, DEVELOPMENTS, STATUS AND MEMORIAL INFORMATION

EMAIL: ENQUIRIES@AIRFIELDRESEARCHGROUP.ORG.UK

WWW.AIRFIELDRESEARCHGROUP.ORG.UK

This is a special web download version of the original AR153 published in December 2016.
It has been slightly updated and contains two extra pages.
Please be reminded that the contents are copyright.

EDITORIAL

Some feedback from AR152 has resulted in a few changes to this issue. My aim was to make AR just a bit more magazine orientated, nothing like Flypast and the like, but just a little less like a technical report.

First a bit of history on the journal to answer a query:

For a long time AR used a serif font just like this for its body text. Then from 2009 it became a sans-serif font as in **this sentence**. Many people believe the serif font is easier to read, whereas others prefer the cleanliness of the sans serif. Certainly for web use the latter is preferred due to the relatively low screen resolution of the VDU compared with printed material (90 pixels-per-inch versus 300+). I've had a look at a substantial number of other magazines and journals—most now use a combination of the fonts. Meanwhile others have now settled almost totally for sans-serif (*Gardeners' World*, *National Trust* etc). For this issue I've decided to use both and in common with other magazines I'll use one generally for articles and the other for reports.

The choice of suitable fonts themselves will always be a bone of contention; for every avid supporter of **Arial** and **Times New Roman** there is the person who is keen to remove the 'Microsoft stamp' from the document. There are numerous interesting free fonts available, the problem being that a significant number which look great on screen do not print well, which just could be one reason they are 'free'.

Many articles require a huge amount of editing before publication. There are a few features in the pipeline which regrettably (after consultation with the team) will not appear in the Review due to the huge amount of rework which would have been necessary. However, bearing in mind the hard work that's gone into these, the team has decided to make the articles available as a download from the website at a later date. Also, to improve my function, proof-readers Norman Brice and Peter Howarth have been 'promoted' to sub editors. Along with Paul Francis their contribution will be invaluable.

This issue features a number of items relating to lesser-known UK airfields plus some overseas. Bruntingthorpe (part II) now has a lot of photos relating to the USAF occupation which unfortunately did not make it for the previous issue.

A word on photographs – all submissions need a degree of preparation before publication, some a lot more than others. Many of the photographs offered have a sloping horizon. I don't know what it is about cameras with a screen rather than an eye-level viewfinder, but I'm as guilty as the next man at producing these problem pictures. I try and level all photos before publication, but this may result in important detail being lost after cropping the picture. Often a compromise is needed. What are always needed are suitable (portrait mode) photographs for the front cover. There must be some good stuff out there.

Re the future – we're now looking for more articles for publication. Also wanted are ARG visits and trip reports. Offerings can be quite succinct – 'snippets' are always useful (for an example see the bottom of page 10). For submission details see foot of previous page. Deadline for AR154 is Wed 15 February 2017.

*Graham Crisp
December 2016*

COMPANY SECRETARY'S REPORT

As noted in the last Airfield Review, Dietmar Morley has tendered his resignation as Company Secretary, as well as the many other roles he undertook in ARGL. Although it is always sad to see an individual leave the management team, his reasons are understandable and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him, both on behalf of the Board of ARGL and also personally for all the effort he has put in over the last few years. Members would be most aware of the new website, forum and on-line shop, but Dietmar has done a lot of unsung work in the background such as accounts, legal company duties and even temporarily editing the magazine. For all this we thank him.

For my sins I have volunteered to take over as Company Secretary and this came into effect on 9 October 2016. Members might be interested to know what this entails so I thought I would take this opportunity to outline the responsibilities that come with the position.

A Company Secretary is responsible for the administration of a company, in this case Airfield Research Group Limited, and has particular responsibilities for ensuring that we comply with all relevant regulations and legislation, as well as advising the board members on their legal responsibilities. I have become the point of contact with both Companies House and the Charities Commission and am responsible for making annual returns to each. As part of this I have to work with the Finance Director (Norman) to ensure that a set of accounts is produced each year. I also have to arrange and provide minutes for Board Meetings and the Annual General Meeting. There are other minor duties but those are the main tasks.

In effect that is a small part of what Dietmar did and although we are trying to plug the various gaps, the single most important hole yet to be filled is that of Financial Controller. You will have seen a Vacancy Notice for this in the last Airfield Review and as yet we have had no volunteers. It is essential that this post be filled and so this is a reminder to all members of that vacancy. If anyone feels they could help us in this role, or indeed contribute to the running of the organisation in any other way, please drop me, or anyone else in the management team, a line.

*Peter Howarth
November 2016*

BACK ISSUES

Available back issues – We have plenty of the following numbers:

In the old numbering format: Vol.9 No.3 /4 (double issue), Vol.10 No.1, Vol.10 No.2 and Vol.10 No.3

In the new numbering format: 76 – 148 inclusive, but NOT issues 78, 94, 109, 111; also very limited copies of issue 72

Please be aware – old magazines are sold on a first come first served basis, and will be sent out on receipt of payment.

The magazines which we have limited copies of may vary in quality, and may have a mark or a scuff on them, but the best available copy will be sent out to you.

Please note – not all back issues are available in print any more. We do have PDF copies of all issues, some of which can already be purchased for download via the webshop. As time permits, all issues will become available for download.

NB: The cost of AR back issues has changed. The amended prices are as follows:

- **Hard copy** of any issue from the preceding 12 months of the current issue £9 plus postage
- **PDF copy** of any issue from the preceding 12 months of the current issue £9
- **Hard copy** of any issue published prior to the preceding 12 months of the current issue £3 plus postage
- **PDF copy** of any issue published prior to the preceding 12 months of the current issue £3.

Please allow up to 21 days for delivery of any back issue and books that you order.

Further details on the website or contact: enquiries@airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

First of all, apologies for the short report.

I would just like to reiterate what Dietmar said in his Company Secretary's Report, as published in AR152. For the charity just to remain stable in its current guise, it needs more people to step up to the mark, and if it is to develop and grow, we require more support from the members. Norman also made it quite clear that we need people to come forward to take over the financial and book-keeping jobs that Dietmar and his wife, Lynne, have done for ARG over the last few years. We have had no replies or volunteers in this respect and the situation is becoming desperate. If you think you can help please get in touch with Norman ASAP; his address can be found in the inside cover. Thank you.

Dietmar has resigned from the officer's position of ARG Company Secretary, Webmaster and book keeper. I would like to just put on record, my heart-felt thanks for everything that Dietmar has achieved over the last few years. This includes an extraordinary amount of official work as an officer as well as providing really good advice for the directors and officers.

Perhaps the most obvious one to begin with as we are on the ARG forum, is the design, planning and instigation of our web site and forum. The effect of this is that ARG is now without doubt firmly in the 21st century, with the result that we have an excellent purpose-designed web site and a continuing forum that originated as AiX. As secretary, Dietmar has carried out a huge amount of work to get us accepted as a charity, as well as the day-to-day administrative duties. All of these tasks have been carried out on top of book-keeping as a husband-and-wife team and compiling no fewer than two Airfield Reviews! Thanks Dietmar.

Paul Francis

VALE – KEN BORDER 1925–2016

I was saddened to learn recently of the passing of one of our founder members, Ken Border. From 1973, I and several future members of ARG, corresponded and swapped photographs for a period before and after ARG was formally founded at RAFM Hendon in 1977.

Kenneth Border was born in Lincoln in 1925. He remained in Lincoln until joining the RAF. After a stint in Egypt he was posted to 279 Squadron as a flight mechanic moving from Docking to Reykjavik in time for D-Day, finishing up as a Senior Aircraftman. Back in Lincoln he met and married Barbara Markham and started work with the county council. This was to lead to a series of moves from Lincoln to Chelmsford to Windsor as he took his accountancy exams and moved from post to post eventually ending up at Swindon as Borough Council Deputy Treasurer. During this time he had a daughter and a son and remained in Swindon to enable them to complete their education. Throughout this time he retained a passion for airfields and aeroplanes culminating in his being a founder member of the Airfield Research Group. Even in retirement he meticulously documented UK airfields and answered queries from people all over the world. He was a mine of information. He also had a large model railway and a passion for sports cars.

Following a fall and a fractured hip he was admitted to hospital in Swindon in June of this year. Two further falls in hospital resulted in his deterioration and subsequent demise in August. He will be sadly missed by his children and grandchildren.

Ken's family has donated a significant library of books and photographs for the archive which is currently being sorted and placed on the book shelves.

Paul Francis / Gill Alderton (Ken's daughter)

VALE – JIM HOPE 1944–2016

It was with great sadness and regret to learn that ARG member Jim Hope passed away 3 August 2016.

As reported on the forum, I can't begin describe how utterly devastating this news is for us. Jim was such a super bloke, totally unassuming and dedicated to what he did for ARG. He contributed so much in recording books, scanning old magazines, indexing, and working on the roadshow. He was the epitome of what a volunteer is all about – in short, an unsung hero and a true gent.

Paul Francis

Jim was born in North Tyneside on 9 September 1944. On leaving school he joined the RAF as a boy entrant and trained as an electronic fitter (Ground Communications) and was a Junior Technician when he finished his 12 years.

Jim met his future wife, Dot, when he was on his final posting at Chivenor. Dot had been invited to a dance at the camp and was introduced by a mutual friend. They got married later that year (26 August 1972). Just prior to his discharge date they both headed north to find employment in an area with cheaper property prices than North Devon. He found employment in a factory which specialised in security equipment in Blackburn, Lancashire. After two years, he got itchy feet, (being used to RAF life – moving frequently) and found a job in Burnley, Lancashire not far from where they lived. Nearly two years later it looked like the business he worked for was in trouble and he started to look for alternative employment. They visited the mutual friend (Ian) when he was at Halton. On hearing about the job search he suggested looking in the Aylesbury area as there were plenty of jobs available. Jim was then offered work at Westcott where he worked in the test firing department until he was made redundant. Due to his heart attack, he decided to seek a desk job and found one working at Bicester Depot, dealing with soldiers' documents. When they decided to move to Lincolnshire upon retirement he tried for, and got a transfer to the TA in Grantham doing similar work. He stayed there until final retirement. At an ARG meeting he met a member who persuaded him to help at the road shows which he enjoyed; he was also interested in the Archive, mainly cataloguing the book collection and digitising old copies of Airfield Review. Jim is survived by his wife Dot – they never had any children.

Dot Hope

ARCHIVE REPORT

ON THE MOVE AGAIN...



The last few months have been a busy time here at the ARG Archive. The redevelopment of the former flight line at RAF Alconbury has finally caught up with us, and we're sorry to say the time has come to say goodbye to the Intelligence Cell vault in Building 56 which has been our home for the last two years. However, Urban and Civic have kindly provided us with not one, but two replacement facilities.

Firstly, we have a brand new room in Building 519, the 1980s Base Operations building, which will house the archive office, digital collections and exhibits. High speed broadband should be available by the end of the year, so we'll be able to answer internet enquiries in real time when we're on site.

Secondly is the new Archive Facility itself, and for this we finally have a whole building to ourselves. Building 534 was originally constructed in the early 1980s as part of the TR-1 expansion, and was the base Arts and Crafts Shop within the MWR (Morale, Welfare and Recreation) complex. Having been disused since the flight line closed in 1995, a fair amount of work has been required to tidy the place up even before the archive collections could be moved over. U&C have grubbed out all the brambles and self-set trees from around the building and reinstated basic electrical supplies, while we've set about cleaning and repairing the inside of the building ready to set up shop once more.

By the time you read this the bulk of the Archive collections will have been transported, my thanks go to all those who volunteered their time and energy assisting with that process. The next challenge will be to unpack everything and get the archive back up and running. From prior experience this will take a number of months, so if any members are available to help out please contact me directly.

Paul Bellamy
September 2016



Commemorative plaque at the entrance to Building 519

Update: The archive is currently closed, having moved **AGAIN** since this article was published, however volunteers are **urgently** needed to unpack items, stack shelves etc.

If you can spare a few hours in the near future (or indeed at any time) please contact Paul on 07866 084743.



The new Archive Facility in its original state (above), and after a little pruning! (right)



Bldg.56 library until recently



The same room being emptied



Shelving erection in Bldg.534



...awaiting these books

VISITS SCHEDULE SPRING 2017

We have two methods for booking ARG visits:

You can use the website shop menu and a standard 'shopping cart' system. Complete your personal details and method of payment, and on-line payment means you get an instant booking confirmation. You can also pay by cheque, or off-line bank transfer, and receive a booking confirmation once payment is cleared.

Or, email Laurie Kennard i.e. – laurence.kennard@btinternet.com, to check on availability for your chosen tour(s). For those without email (ONLY) call 07970 160946. You will be issued with reference number(s) which indicate you are definitely booked. Once you have this reference you should forward payment within 14 days, or your place may be released. Note – the last places on any visit will only be bookable by this method.

Payments should be made to Airfield Research Group and forwarded to:

Laurie Kennard, 34 Strawberry Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 6AH, indicating which trips(s) it is for.

Booking conditions:

- We cannot accept third party bookings on behalf of others, only by those wishing to attend
- Some visits may not accept those aged under 16 years, or non-British nationals, so please check with us
- No refunds available for cancellation or no-show
- Refunds are only available when a visit is cancelled by ARGL or the venue, and if possible an alternative would be offered
- Sturdy footwear is required as some visits cover a lot of ground, and at working establishments, especially military ones, appropriate standards of clothing are required (smart casual)
- All visits are at your own risk.
- Full details will be sent to those booked nearer the relevant visit.

Thurs 6 April. Bicester Heritage – A half day guided tour of this well preserved bomber station where exciting plans for a centre for aviation and historic motoring are progressing well. As the owners make a standard charge for the guided tour, the cost of this visit will be approx. £20 for members with a supplement for non-members. (15 places limit)

Saturday 29 April. RAF Digby – A half day tour of the technical site and then after a break a talk and look round the Sector Operations museum, and free time there. In the afternoon some may wish to get together for an optional afternoon visit to Cranwell Heritage Museum. Cost £9 members and £15 non-members (10 places available)

Friday 19 May. RAF Lakenheath – This is the postponed date from June 2015, and we have requested visits to ATC, a squadron office and a close up look at an F15. This half day visit includes coach transport onto the base and is subject to operational requirements. Cost £15 for members and £21 for non members. (5 places available)



Round Up

COMPILED BY PETER KIRK

CONTRIBUTORS: NIGEL BAILEY-UNDERWOOD, MARTIN BRISCOE, RICHARD FLAGG, STEVE HURST, RICHARD POYSER, ROD PRIDDLE, EVELYN SIMAK, BILL TAYLOR, JULIAN TEMPLE, DAVID THOMPSON

BAGINTON (COVENTRY), WARWICKSHIRE

There are unconfirmed rumours that Coventry Airport may finally close.

Nigel Bailey-Underwood 28-08-2016

BALDERTON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

It is thought that the former gym chancel building at the airfield is to be demolished. This is due to safety concerns as the structure is in a bad state and infested with rats. This is one of the last remaining substantial buildings on the site.

Steve Hurst 04-11-2016

BIGGIN HILL, KENT

After more than 30 years, Air Scouts based at Biggin Hill have been told to leave after their lease was terminated 3½ years early, to provide more parking space. They were given six weeks to vacate their premises and remove valuable equipment including their Comet flight simulator. Whilst alternative accommodation was briefly offered to the Air Scouts, this was quickly withdrawn after it was to be converted for commercial purposes. The Air Scouts have used the facilities at Biggin Hill Airport since the 1960s with a Scout Aviation building on the current site since 1985, which sits on the footprint of a wartime fighter dispersal area. The fate of the Comet simulator is not known.

Scout Aviation Centre (Press Release) 23-09-2016

BROADFORD / ASHAIG (SKYE), HIGHLANDS

Plans for the return of scheduled air service between Glasgow and Skye were given the go ahead. Highland Council's Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee approved the business plan to reopen Broadfield airfield in Ashaig and committed up to £30,000 over the next two years to deal with the critical aspects of taking the project forward. The island has seen a dramatic rise in tourism in the last few years and the air link was expected to bring financial benefits to the area. It was hoped to get the service running in two years.

The Oban Times (online) 11-11-2016

CASTLE DONINGTON (EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT), LEICESTERSHIRE

The runway at East Midlands Airport will be resurfaced over three days each week from 5 November to 19 December. To minimise the effects on the airlines all work will be carried out at the least busy time between 8 p.m. on Saturday to 8 p.m. on Monday, except for the

final Monday when it will finish at 13.00. This approach was agreed with the airlines to enable work to be completed in time for Christmas. The work will include the fitting of LED lighting to replace 1,200 lights and it was expected to lay about 50,000 tons of new surface on the 2.9 km runway.

BBC News - Leicestershire (online) 19-08-2016

CHURCH FENTON, YORKSHIRE (1)

The owners of the Leeds East Airport at Church Fenton have applied for an operator's licence with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). They plan to offer up to four 'VIP' type flights a day to Cannes, Faro and Malaga from May 2017. The local Parish Council had not been informed and residents have raised concerns over aircraft noise and an increase in traffic congestion. The CAA is currently finalising the aerodrome licensing process for Leeds East Airport. The airport has also been providing space for film and TV productions and some of the interiors for the recent ITV drama, 'Victoria', were filmed in one of the hangars.

BBC New – York & North Yorkshire (online) 08-09-2016

CHURCH FENTON, YORKSHIRE (2)

Selby District Council has begun consultation on creating a 'garden village' which could include thousands of new homes, on land at Church Fenton airfield. The move is part of the Government's demand on all local authorities to identify potential brownfield or previously developed sites for new villages, and the council said the former RAF Church Fenton has been selected for its proximity to existing road and rail infrastructure. Church Fenton Parish Council was not consulted about the 'expression of interest' which suggests that up to 10,000 new homes could be built. Residents were astonished that such a proposal could be put forward in secret. Selby District Council pointed out that this was just a proposal regarding the potential for such a development and there is no guarantee that it will go ahead. If the government approves the scheme it will still have to go through the full planning process. There was no mention of the impact on Leeds East Airport.

The York Press (online) 01-11-2016

COLERNE, WILTSHIRE

Colerne Airfield and Azimghur Barracks are to be sold as part of the Government's defence rationalisation. The sites will be used as part of the national scheme to build more homes. Details specific to Colerne are not yet known.

Bath Chronicle (online) 12-09-2016

HULLAVINGTON, WILTSHIRE

After 79 years in use as an airfield it was announced on 1 September that with immediate effect that there is to be no further flying from Hullavington airfield. The future of the Historic Flight is currently uncertain.

621 VGS (via Facebook) 01-09-2016

LEICESTER EAST, LEICESTERSHIRE

The bough from an ash tree broke away and landed on the roof of the 'Ladies Pride' hangar and had to be removed by crane.



Nigel Bailey-Underwood 16-09-2016

MONKMOOR, SHROPSHIRE

The land, off Monkmoor Road, was earmarked for up to 40 new homes after Severnside Housing put forward plans for the former Hathaways commercial site. However, planning officers at Shropshire Council have now turned down the proposal after objections were raised over demolishing hangars on the short-lived First World War airfield.

Whilst the buildings are not listed as a heritage asset, Shrewsbury Civic Society said the site was one of the town's limited reminders of its role in the war. The area is currently a commercial site which is giving jobs to local people so their removal for building new houses was not seen as beneficial to the community.

Shropshire Start (online) 23-08-2016

REDHILL, SURREY

Details of a scheme to close Redhill Aerodrome and build up to 4,500 homes on the site have been published. Following the rejection of a planning

application for a hard runway the airfield's directors believe that it has no long-term future in its current form.

The current grass runways cannot cope with the modern business aircraft which they were hoping to attract to increase revenue. The airfield also suffers from runway closures after heavy rainfall and many of the buildings require significant investment to bring them up to the expected standards and without a long-term aviation based business plan this will be impossible to fund.

One of the options was to use the whole site for the development of a garden village creating up to 4,500 new homes. Housebuilders Thakeham were selected to promote the idea with Tandridge and Reigate & Banstead councils to fulfil their requirement for new homes, including essential infrastructure such as schools.

The scheme is at a very early stage, and Redhill Aerodrome says that the airfield will operate for several years yet, with any necessary investment continuing for flying activities or to maintain tenants' facilities.

Reigate.uk (online) 26-10-2016

ROBOROUGH (PLYMOUTH), DEVON

The Light Aircraft Association Magazine has reported that a decision on reopening Plymouth Airport will be made sometime during 2017.

Light Aircraft Magazine – October 2016 Issue

SEALAND, FLINTSHIRE

The Defence Electronics and Components Agency at Sealand has won a multi-million pound contract to help repair and maintain F-35 components, including electronics and ejection seats, from across Europe.

There are currently 400 jobs at Sealand with thousands more in the supply chain and it was expected that this deal would bring growth to the area. The repair service is expected to begin from early 2018.

BBC News – North West Wales (online) 07-11-2016

SHOREHAM, SUSSEX

One of Shoreham Airport's leaseholders, Albemarle Shoreham Airport Ltd (ASAL), went into administration and the restoration of the terminal and hangar has stalled. Although this has not affected operations the contribution that ASAL was to make towards the restorations will need to be found.

The Argus (online) 09-09-2016

SIBSON, HUNTINGDONSHIRE

A public exhibition by Larkfleet Homes was held at the end of October for a potential garden village at Sibson. The consultation events will allow the company to explain their ideas in more detail and to listen to the views of local residents. Huntingdonshire District Council has submitted an Expression of Interest to the

Government to explore a new garden village of 2,500 homes, plus employment land, a school, health services and shops at Sibson Aerodrome.

The council has been working with the owners of the land and Larkfleet Homes, which is the prospective developer. The Government is currently looking for appropriate sites for a new generation of garden villages across the country and if Sibson Garden Village is accepted by the Government later this year more detailed proposals will be drawn up for a formal planning application, which may be in late 2017.

Peterborough Telegraph (online) 19-10-2016

SPITTELEGATE / SPITALGATE / GRANTHAM, LINCOLNSHIRE

Prince William of Gloucester Barracks commemorated its 100th anniversary in October with a Beating Retreat ceremony. The Band of the Welsh Guards performed the ceremony in front of 250 assembled guests including His Royal Highness Prince Richard, the Duke of Gloucester and the Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach.

The airfield became an Army barracks in in April 1975 having started life as a Royal Flying Corps station. It is currently one of the largest barracks in Lincolnshire and is set to close in 2020.

Grantham Journal (online) 06-10-2016

SQUIRES GATE, LANCASHIRE

Talks are under way to sell Blackpool Airport, 18 months after commercial passenger flights resumed across the Irish Sea. Balfour Beatty, which bought the Squires Gate site eight years ago, closed the airport in October 2014 with the loss of 100 jobs, but daily passenger flights to the Isle of Man and Belfast resumed in April 2015. Balfour Beatty hold a 95 per cent share of the airport with Blackpool Council having the remaining 5 per cent.

The airport remains a base for the North-West Air Ambulance, several flying schools and operates short helicopter flights to the oil and gas platforms in Liverpool and Morecambe Bays.

BBC News- Lancashire (online) 04-10-2016

TATENHILL, STAFFORDSHIRE

One of the disused runways is due to be brought back into use once it has been resurfaced.

Nigel Bailey-Underwood 23-09-2016

TOLLERTON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

The construction of the new hospital alongside the airfield is nearing completion. The opening is due in spring 2017. There is some speculation concerning the future of the airfield following the purchase from Nottingham City Council a few years ago.

The new owners were very upbeat in their plans which envisaged a lengthening of the main runway, a new

control tower and opening of the third runway, currently used for aircraft parking. This seems to be no closer to happening.

Richard Poyser 19-10-2016



Two views of the new hospital
(Photo: Richard Poyser (T) and Nigel Bailey-Underwood (B))

WEYBRIDGE (BROOKLANDS), SURREY

On 21 September, the Bellman Hangar at Brooklands was handed over to the company, Brymor Contractors Ltd for work to start on the disassembling, restoration and relocation of the Bellman hangar. The move to the new location means that the historic finishing line of the Brooklands circuit will be restored to its original state. The aircraft that were housed in the Bellman Hangar have been relocated to other buildings on the site.



The hangar being dismantled (Julian Temple)

By 2 November about 25 per cent of the cladding had been removed and the rear doors were due to be removed soon after. Corrosion has been found on some of the lower cladding rails and stanchion bases so the team are looking for replacements. The entire project is due for completion next summer and should be open to the public from August/September 2017. The race track's original finishing straight will see some significant restoration work too from early next year, and this will be completed by mid-June in time for the 110th anniversary of the track's opening.

Julian Temple 02-11-2016



The Bellman hangar at Brooklands being handed over to the contractors on 21 September.

L – R : Lee Harvey (*Brooklands Property Manager*),
Julian Temple (*Brooklands Estates & Heritage Manager*),
Robert Nairn (*Brymor Contracts Manager*) and
Lee Fletcher (*Brymor Site Manager*)

(Photos: Richard Flagg)

WEST RAYNHAM, NORFOLK (1)

The proposed building of 500 homes on the airfield site looks in doubt as North Norfolk Council produced a report in support of re-use of the existing buildings on the site. They didn't think that the local area could support such a large increase in housing, in what it a relatively remote site.

Eastern Daily Press (online) 12-09-2016

WEST RAYNHAM, NORFOLK (2)

After over a year of hard work with planning and legal matters, Jon and Shell Booty, both ARG members, are proud to announce their purchase of the VHB control tower. The Grade 2 listed building is to be very sympathetically converted to a residential dwelling with much of the original equipment left in place. It is the aim of both the local Council Conservation team and the owners that the tower retains the look of an operational ATC building. The owners are keen to promote the history of the building and the airfield. They hope to participate in organised heritage events. A Facebook page has been opened for news and to invite historic discussion about the building. Jon and Shell wish to take this opportunity to thank ARG members for their assistance with the project so far.

Jon Booty 09-11-2016

WINKLEIGH, DEVON

ARG member Grant Peerless reports that the old control tower at Winkleigh is in a sorry state; other wartime buildings on the airfield are in a much better condition.

August 2016



'Over by Christmas' was a popular slogan bandied around in the summer of 1914. It wasn't of course, but the optimism was to re-appear thirty years later at a meeting within RAF Maintenance Command. Some weeks after D-Day, the subject of 'how much more bombs and ammunition would be required by the RAF' was discussed by HQ 42 Group. At this meeting it was suggested that, '...the war in Europe will probably be over by the end of 1944.'

Source: TNA

MEMORIALS

CONTRIBUTORS: TONY HIBBERD, TONY PRINGLE, CHRIS STANFIELD, BILL TAYLOR, DAVID THOMPSON

CAYTHORPE, LINCOLNSHIRE

A memorial to the crew of a Lancaster that crashed at Caythorpe was unveiled on 10 September 2016. On February 10 1945, Lancaster PB812 of 460 Squadron was on its way back to RAF Binbrook after a training flight, when it caught fire, went into a dive and crashed close to the old railway station. All the crew were killed, Rhod Pope (Wireless Operator), Dick Miller (Pilot), Jeff Downing (Navigator), Graeme Dockery and Tony Robinson (Air gunners) and Freddie Nesbit-Bell (Flight Engineer). All apart from Nesbit-Bell were Australian. A memorial service was held in St Vincent's Church in the village led by Venerable Air Vice-Marshal Brian Lucas. The service was followed by the dedication of a plaque on the church wall and the unveiling of a memorial stone in Love Lane, close to the crash site. This was the result of three-years painstaking research by Dr Linda Pope, from Sydney, whose uncle Rhod perished in the crash. In attendance were relatives, travelling from Australia, Barbados, Germany and Scotland along with present day personnel, veteran associations, Stephen Phillips MP, a representative from the Australian High Commission, aviation heritage organisations, local councillors and George Plant of Grantham who witnessed the crash as a boy. The Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset also attended as 'Freddie' Nesbitt-Bell had been a member of the force. Chris Finn has researched the crash and on Sunday gave families a detailed insight into the incident and they later travelled to RAF Binbrook.

Sleaford Standard (online) 17-09-2016

DUXFORD, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

At a ceremony held on Friday 16 September, the new hangar erected on behalf of the Aircraft Restoration, Co (ARC) was named by Air Marshal Stuart Atha as the 'Stephenson Hangar'. It is named after Geoffrey Stephenson (then S/Ldr) who was shot down over Dunkirk when flying from Duxford in Spitfire N3200 of 19 Squadron. He was captured and was eventually held in Colditz Castle. Many years later his aircraft was excavated from the beach and was restored to flying condition by the ARC at Duxford. Carrying the serial number N3200, the restored aircraft was later gifted to the Imperial War Museums and it is retained in flying condition. Geoffrey Stephenson later attained the rank of Air Commodore and became commandant of the Central Fighter Establishment, West Raynham. Unfortunately, he was killed in November 1954 when the F-100 Super Sabre he was flying from Eglin Air Force Base, Florida crashed. His three daughters attended the Duxford ceremony.

Bill Taylor 17-09-2016

EAST KIRBY, LINCOLNSHIRE

A memorial service has been held for the crew of an RAF Vulcan bomber killed in a crash in Lincolnshire in the 1960s. Vulcan XM601 crashed, killing all on board, while coming into land at RAF Coningsby on 7 October

1964. Relatives of the five men who died attended the ceremony at the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre at East Kirkby. A plaque was unveiled in honour of the dead men, Wg Cdr Kenneth John Lewis Baker, Fg Off Paul Elliot Busfield, Flt Lt Charles Vernon Burkard, Flt Lt Geoffrey Bingham and Fg Off Alan Hubert Jones. The two pilots had managed to eject as the wingtip hit the ground but were too low and at the wrong angle to survive.

BBC News – Lincolnshire (online) 06-10-2016

HERNE BAY, KENT

A bronze statue to honour English aviator Amy Johnson was unveiled at Herne Bay seafront on 17 September 2016. Amy Johnson took off alone from Blackpool Airport on Sunday 5 January 1941 to deliver an Airspeed Oxford to Kidlington for the Air Transport Auxiliary. The flight should have taken 90 minutes but, for reasons unknown, her plane ditched in the Thames Estuary four-and-a-half hours after take-off and roughly 12 miles from Herne Bay. Her body was never found and it was never known why she was 100 miles off course. The statue was created by Ramsgate artist Stephen Melton and funded by local people and businesses. A second bronze statue has been cast for her home city of Hull.

BBC News- Kent (online) 17-09-2016

HOLME FEN, HUNTINGDONSHIRE

A memorial was unveiled in September on the edge of the Holme Fen Nature Reserve to P/O Harold Penketh of 266 (Rhodesia) Squadron who died in the crash of his aircraft on 22 November 1940. Three aircraft had left Wittering for a routine training flight when his was seen to leave formation and dive vertically into the ground and crash. P/O Penketh's body was subsequently recovered from the crash and later cremated in Hove, East Sussex. In 2015 the aircraft was excavated and further remains were discovered and correctly disposed of. Parts of the aircraft are now on display in the Pathfinder Museum at Wyton. As the aircraft had departed from Wittering, it was fitting that personnel from 5131 (BD) Sqn also assisted in the safe recovery of weapons and ammunition during the dig and other station personnel were present at the dedication.

Tony Hibberd 24-10-2016 (two photos next page)

NEWMARKET, SUFFOLK

On 25 August 2016, a memorial was dedicated to the crew of 'AA-N' of 75 (New Zealand) Squadron which crashed there on 16 December 1942. Wreaths from the Harvey family, the Royal Canadian Air Force, the 75 (NZ) Squadron Association and the Royal Air Force were laid after a short dedication service. The new plaque, which is not far from the five-furlong marker on the July course, was instigated by Michael Nicholas when he realised the original had been destroyed by the weather.

Tony Pringle 19-09-2016

SOUTHAMPTON, HAMPSHIRE

A plaque has been unveiled in memory of Wing Commander James Brindley Nicolson, the only Battle of Britain fighter pilot to have won a Victoria Cross. The memorial, designed by a group of Southampton schoolchildren, is the only tribute to Nicolson on public display and was unveiled at Sholing Junior School by Don Smith, who witnessed the action on 16 August 1940. The children had spent nine months on the project, raising funds and presenting the plans to MPs at Westminster. Then a Flight Lieutenant, Nicolson attacked a German aircraft over Southampton in August 1940 whilst his plane was on fire, and he had been severely injured after he was attacked moments earlier. He eventually bailed out when the heat in the cockpit became so intense it was burning his flesh. Nicolson was killed on 2 May 1945 flying as a passenger in a bomber which crashed into the Bay of Bengal after a raid on Japanese installations at Rangoon.

BBC News - Hampshire & Isle of Wight (online) 15-09-2016

WADDINGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

A 7ft high steel sculpture depicting an Avro Lancaster and an Avro Vulcan was unveiled at RAF Waddington to mark the station's centenary. It was created by sculptor James Sutton and as well as the aircraft it depicts the towers of Lincoln Cathedral which would have been a familiar sight to returning crews in peace and war.

BBC News – Lincolnshire (online) 22-10-2016



Newmarket dedication (Tony Pringle)

AW HAWKSLEY LTD AND THE FACTORY AT BROCKWORTH COMPANY HISTORIES, PART I

— PAUL FRANCIS —

This article references the following companies, Armstrong Whitworth Development Company Ltd, AW Hawksley, Hawker Siddeley Group, Hawker Siddeley Transport Ltd, Armstrong Siddeley (Brockworth) Ltd, British Nylon Spinners Ltd, Structural and Mechanical Development Engineers Ltd (SMD), Hawksley SMD Ltd, Templewood Hawksley Ltd, Templewood Hawksley Activated Sludge Ltd and Hawker Siddeley Industries Ltd.

BACKGROUND

The firm of A W Hawksley Ltd originates from the inter-war period of consolidation within the British aircraft industry led by Hawker Aircraft Ltd when, on 11 July 1935, it formed a new company Hawker Siddeley Aircraft Co with the object to acquire, through Armstrong Whitworth Development Company Ltd, the following subsidiaries:

- Armstrong Siddeley Motors Ltd
- Sir WG Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft Ltd
- AV Roe and Company Ltd
- Gloster Aircraft Company Limited (GAL)
- Air Training Services (later).

In 1928 GAL had bought the aerodrome at Hucclecote which became a major centre of aircraft production in the UK. The company's title is in fact a contraction of **Armstrong Whitworth Hawker Siddeley**.

ALBEMARLE PRODUCTION

A large shadow factory at Brockworth adjacent to the aerodrome at Hucclecote was planned by the Government as part of the expansion of the aircraft industry before the war, and this was nearing completion on the outbreak of hostilities in 1939.

The aircraft scheduled for production when it came into use was the Armstrong Whitworth Albemarle, which had been designed by John Lloyd and his team at Armstrong Whitworth, Coventry to Air Ministry Specification B.9/38 (later changed to B.18/38).

The requirement was for a twin-engined bomber aircraft to use alternative materials in place of light alloy, as it was feared that overseas supplies of aluminium ingot might be interrupted by war, and that alternatives would become an urgent necessity. The aircraft was therefore designed in a mixed construction of aluminium alloy and timber, and was also planned for unit sub-contracting among companies outside the aircraft industry of the period.



Part of the Brockworth shadow factory that is now demolished (All photos: Paul Francis)

The pressure of events in 1940 caused the Gloucester shadow factory to be employed in the first case in repairs to Hurricanes and Gladiators, but in due course Hawker Siddeley set up a new company, AW Hawksley Limited in April 1940 as a separate subsidiary to run the Albemarle sub-contract programme and organise final assembly.

Initially it had been planned also to have a second production centre at Yeadon, near Bradford. The Albemarle was delayed by modifications required after the prototypes had flown, and the programme was reduced when the expected shortage of light alloy supplies did not materialize and it was decided to concentrate on four-engined bomber production.

Nevertheless, some 602 aircraft were completed in the course of the war and were modified to suit various specialized requirements. The major versions that were used in operations were for glider towing and for carrying paratroopers, and these played a part in both the Sicilian landings and the operations at Arnhem. In addition, twelve aircraft were sent to Russia and a number of others were used for transport purposes from the UK to the Mediterranean area.

Most of the aircraft produced were fitted with Hercules XI radial engines and among the major civilian contractors who produced components were the following:

- front fuselage (MG Cars, Abingdon also Brush Engineering, Loughborough)
- wing centre sections (Rover Car Company; also Stockport Manufacturing Company)
- rear fuselages (E Pollard and Co, shop fitters)
- outer planes (Harris Lebus, furniture manufacturers; also HH Martyn, ship fitting specialists)
- tail planes (HH Martyn & Co, Cheltenham; also Bath Aircraft, Bath)
- engine nacelles (Singer Motor Company)
- main plane trailing edge sections (Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon; also Courteney, Pope and Co, shopfitters)
- undercarriage (Automotive Products, Leamington).

In addition, General Aircraft Ltd – who was the only sub-contractor with pre-war aircraft experience, mainly Hawker – worked with Hawksleys. Later they pulled out and went over to glider production. In 1949 GEL was absorbed by Blackburns.

One of the major ironies of this well-thought-out plan of decentralizing production was that, although the main assembly factory was never damaged by enemy bombing throughout the war, the sub-contractors suffered very heavily in the Blitz and as a result component production was frequently seriously out of balance.

Frederick Sage, another shop fitting firm, was to have been a major sub-contractor on wing centre sections,

but had their London premises entirely gutted by fire and the Rover Company's factory at Coventry was similarly damaged, with production being completely re-started at Skipton, Yorkshire. In addition, the General Aircraft factory assembly line for front fuselages was destroyed by enemy action and this caused production to be transferred to MG Cars. HH Martyn & Co's factory at Cheltenham was heavily damaged in another bombing raid, and at a later stage, Bath Aircraft's premises in the Lower Bristol Road was completely burnt out in the 'Baedeker Raid' on the city.

When Short's works at Rochester was heavily damaged by bombing in 1940 a number of partly-finished Stirling bombers from their early production line were transferred to the Hawksley factory where they were completed, but otherwise the factory was used throughout the rest of the war for Albemarle production.

POST-WAR EMERGENCY HOUSING

At the end of the war the Ministry of Aircraft Production requested that AW Hawksley switched manufacturing from aircraft to non-traditional houses, in particular to that sponsored by the Aircraft Industries Research Organisation (AIROH) of 11 Upper Grosvenor Street, London. AIROH organised an aluminium housing programme in conjunction with the Weston-super-Mare factories of the Bristol Aeroplane company, two Vickers factories at Chester and Blackpool, and the Blackburn Aircraft Co at Dumbarton. They allocated the design of the house to Hiduminium Applications, which had been formed in 1942 by High Duty Alloys and Reynolds Tube Company for the development of aluminium alloy applications.¹ Hiduminium Applications worked with AIROH technical Committee under the supervision of A Goldberg and the architect AF Hare. The provisional specification was submitted by AIROH to the Patent Office as 36884/46 on 13 December 1946 by Wilfred Greville Collins and Randolph Reginald Rhodes who were both working for AIROH.

Six years of war had developed capacity for the production of light alloy materials and this was readily convertible to produce the materials required for this vast project. The aluminium house was of unit construction, each unit being completed in the factory, being sufficiently light and of convenient size for road transport. A new company (Hawker Siddeley Transport) was set up for this purpose. Three quarters of a million square feet were available at Brockworth and this had to be carefully apportioned to cover the requirements of the five main building sections:

- Floors
- Walls and partitions
- Kitchen and bathroom unit
- Roofs
- Final assembly and paint

1 Hiduminium refers to a number of alloys developed by Rolls Royce in the late 1920s. They were high-strength, high-temperature products, which led to the name High DUTY aluMINIUM.

The AIROH house was known as the types B1 and B2 – they were detached bungalows, constructed of an aluminium volumetric box, externally clad with painted aluminium sheeting, foamed slag concrete and an inner leaf of plasterboard.

Between 1948 and 1950, AW Hawksley manufactured detached and semi-detached aluminium bungalows called BL8s, some 55,000 being supplied jointly by AW Hawksley and the Bristol Aeroplane Co – they were manufactured to the designs of Structural and Mechanical Development Engineers (SMD) of Slough. These were aluminium framed, externally clad with profiled aluminium sheeting and an inner leaf of plasterboard. According to the journal *Flight* (03-02-1949), the company was producing a complete house every 15 minutes of the working day and that since the war, the company had housed 17,000 families.



Aluminium bungalow in Charlton Road, Bristol.
Photo July 1987

Around 1950 the company experimented with building two-storey aluminium houses but only two were ever manufactured (one of these at Brockworth).



A Hawksley-built BL8 semi-detached bungalow in Duxford village. Photo: 2009

Between 1949 and 1956?, the company also manufactured reinforced concrete frames for 1,400 two-storey houses (terraced and semi-detached units) – these were known as Hawksley Schindler prefabricated reinforced concrete (PRC), built with an external cladding of brick.² They were based on the Schindler-Göhner system of house construction and are thought to have been built by Richard Costain Ltd. The load-bearing structure consisted of concrete pillars and reinforced concrete beams cast in-situ in the formwork.

² Named after the Swiss architect, Gottfried Schindler

The factory-made parts of the house were the foamed plaster internal leaf of the exterior walls (out leaf was brick), foamed plaster partition walls, party walls, windows, doors and the roof. The roof was made in two parts and brought to the site by lorry.



A brick clad experimental aluminium two-storey house at the Brockworth shadow factory site, only one of two built – it is now demolished. Photo: July 1987

HAWKER SIDDELEY GROUP

In 1948, the parent company name changed to the Hawker Siddeley Group Ltd (HS Group), emphasising the company's aerospace and industrial concerns. By 1953, the group controlled a holding company called Armstrong Siddeley Development Co Ltd and this in turn organised the aircraft interests, motor vehicle and compression ignition concerns and the housing interests. The latter included Hawksley Constructions, Brockworth Building Co Ltd and AW Hawksley Ltd.

POST-WAR AIRCRAFT WORK

The shadow factory at Brockworth then partly returned to aircraft work at the time of the Korean war, when part of it redeployed on the production of Sapphire and Avon jet engines for Armstrong Siddeley Motors; under a sub-contract agreement a new company was formed – Armstrong Siddeley (Brockworth) Ltd. By January 1951 production of houses had reduced from 5,000 to 500 a year and on the strength of the aero-engine business, the number of employees increased from 1,500 to 5,000. At the end of that programme, the factory was sold in 1959 to British Nylon Spinners. At this point the Hawksley name disappears from Brockworth but reappears at Slough in various forms.

BRITISH NYLON SPINNERS AT BROCKWORTH

Back in January 1940, British Nylon Spinners was registered as a limited company, to manufacture nylon fibre for making parachutes. The company was jointly owned by ICI and Courtaulds. After taking over the Brockworth factory, the firm produced Nylon 66, for tyres (amongst other products). In 1964 the two companies went their separate ways and ICI acquired Courtaulds' share in British Nylon Spinners. The factory then changed its name to ICI Fibres, South-West Works, but is now the UK manufacturing plant of Invista Textiles (UK) Ltd, being part of the global firm of Invista, a company formed by Du-Pont in 2003, but then sold only one year later to Koch Industries.

Hawksley Named Companies at Slough

Meanwhile during 1955, HS Group acquired the Structural and Mechanical Development Engineers Ltd (SMD) company at Slough who manufactured the 'Alframe' permanent and temporary buildings out of aluminium alloy extrusions. HS Group merged it with AW Hawksley to become Hawksley SMD Ltd. This company manufactured aluminium alloy cranes, aerial masts and aircraft hangars, with at least one being built at Thurleigh and another at Ansty. Perhaps the two most important products from this company were the first all-aluminium aircraft hangar ever built which was erected at Heathrow (1951) and the 'Comet Hangar' at Hatfield (Listed Grade 2) which was built in 1953.

The reorganisation of the Hawker Siddeley Group, meant that several of the HS Group-owned firms at Slough were amalgamated. One of these mergers involved Templewood and Hawksley SMD which became Templewood Hawksley Ltd (dropping the SMD name); this company specialised in the design and manufacture of airline servicing units, formally a product of Air Service Training Ltd. After the 1963 reorganisation of the HS Group, another amalgamation formed Norstel and Templewood Hawksley Ltd, based at 2 Buckingham

Avenue, Slough, Bucks, the 'new' firm coming under a holding company (Hawker Siddeley Industries Ltd) which controlled all of the HS Group industrial power interests.

The new company carried out aluminium structural work for the building and civil engineering trades, including sewage treatment machinery. In 1972, the company along with Templewood Hawksley Activated Sludge Ltd (formally Activated Sludge Ltd) was sold to Water Engineering Ltd, based in Adderbury near Banbury. This sale resulted in the Hawksley name disappearing for good. Water Engineering Ltd also acquired other HS Group companies – Hawker Siddeley Water Engineering and Neckar Water Engineering. Water Engineering Ltd is now owned by Environmental Dynamics Inc.

Sources:

Flight Global:

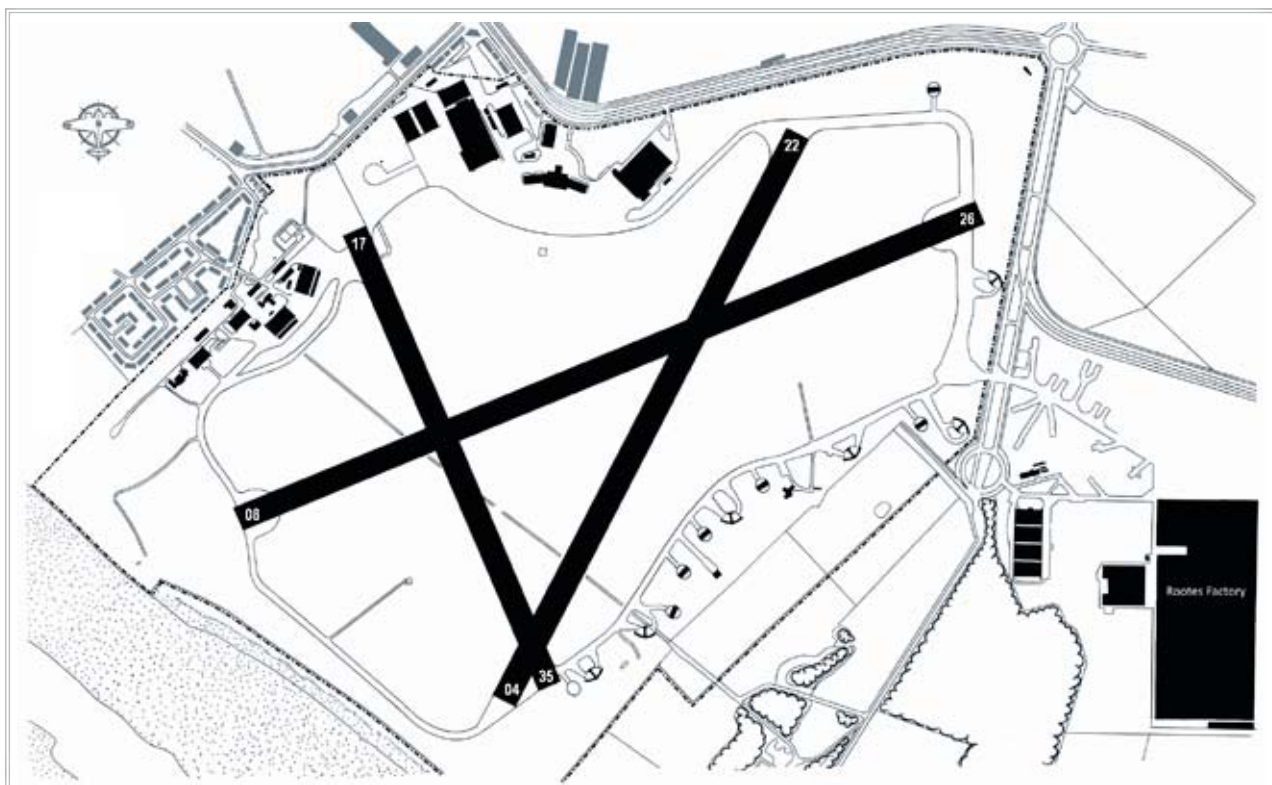
Flight 03-02-1949,	11-01-1951,	14-09-1951,
16-01-1953,	06-02-1953,	20-01-1956

ARGL Archives:

Norstel and Templewood Hawksley Ltd letter,
dated 15 June 1967

Architects' Journal, 21 June 1945

RUNWAY DEVELOPMENT AT LIVERPOOL (SPEKE) AIRPORT — BRIAN JONES —



Speke Airfield, 1945 (Paul Francis)
based on AM drawing 6866/56 and Air Photo 3207, 10 August 1945

In 1942 the airfield had four grass runways of 1,660, 1,460, 1,130 and 1,000 yards connected by a 35 ft-wide asphalt perimeter track. Lighting was typical for a pre-war airport with five fixed floodlights, a neon beacon and boundary and obstruction lights. There were two Bellman and six over blister hangars and Costains added twelve concrete dispersal pens (Blenheim type).

Additional comments provided by ARG member, Dave Smith, former air traffic controller at Speke.

See also: *Liverpool Airport. An Illustrated History* by Phil Butler. Tempus Publishing, 2004

<http://derbosoft.proboards.com/thread/13889/liverpool-aviation-accidents-incidents>

GENERAL AIRFIELD AND RUNWAY NOTES	
01 Jul 1933	Speke Airport officially opened as a grass airfield
By 1939	Five grass runways defined and in use, allowing operation whatever the wind direction
Mid 1941	Costain Ltd laid a hard perimeter taxi-track, various hard-standings and blast pens
Jul–Oct 1942	Three hard runways laid by Arthur Monk & Co, 08/26, 04/22 and 17/35 on what became the North Airfield
07 May 1966	The 'New Runway' on the South Airfield officially opened, and remains in use today
01 Apr 1982	Last official aircraft movements on the North Airfield runways (with a couple of exceptions)
28 Apr 1986	Closure of the 'art deco' terminal and all North Airfield passenger activities ceased (except during short periods of Manchester strike closure) on the North Airfield
29 Aug 2000	Final use of the North Airfield taxiway by an aircraft under power
DEVELOPMENT OF MAIN RUNWAY 08/26	
Mid 1942	The 5,127 × 150 ft hard surface runway laid down, replacing the previous grass surface
18 May 42– 31 Dec 1950	GCA Radar system 'blind landing' aid installed on runway 26
1957–58	Runway 08/26 re-laid to allow for regular use by heavier aircraft e.g. DC-4 and Viscount
By Aug 1962	08/26 extended by 500 ft at the west (river) end (5,627ft) with new taxiway access at that end Runways and taxiways resurfaced. East exit off apron to '26' redesigned
01 Apr 1982	08/26 closed for any aircraft movements. Temporarily open for Air Shows in 1982 and 1984, plus once for a light-aircraft emergency and a couple of landings in error. Relegated to taxiway status
During 1996	Breaking-up and removal of 08/26 and associated taxiways commenced (taxiway 16/34 remaining in use)
DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-WIND RUNWAY 17/35, LATER 16/34	
Mid 1942	The 3,192 × 150 ft hard surface runway laid down
1957–58	Re-laid and resurfaced to permit use by heavier aircraft
Early 1962	Runways and taxiways resurfaced
Early 1966	17/35 extended by 1,000 ft at the '35' (Speke Hall) end as part of South Airfield link taxiway development
01 Apr 1982	Closed for general aircraft movements by day, however '17' (later '16') remained open for night departures only
11 Nov 1982	17/35 renamed 16/34 due to magnetic drift
10 Jan 1984	Completely closed for any aircraft movements, but remained in use as a taxiway only
29 Aug 2000	Last use as a taxiway as Keenair are final North Airfield aviation tenants, moving to the new GA apron

DEVELOPMENT OF RUNWAY 04/22	
Mid 1942	The 4,187 × 150 ft hard surface runway was laid down
1958	04/22 closed for all aircraft movements. Starways soon after erected a hangar close to the '22' threshold
Early 1966	Middle section of 04/22 resurfaced as the 'Central Taxiway', part of the link taxiway to the South Airfield
DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH AIRFIELD 'NEW' RUNWAY 10/28, LATER 09/27	
07 May 1966	Newly constructed 10/28, a 7,500 × 150 ft runway, opened by the Duke of Edinburgh. Connected to the North airfield facilities, runways and taxiways by a 'link taxiway' between Speke Hall and the River Mersey. Laid down by G Percy Trenham Ltd
04 Apr 1968	The 'OE' NDB beacon moved from serving '26', to Runcorn, in line with runway 28 (now the 'LPL' beacon)
21 Jul 1969	ILS on '28' approved for Cat.II operations after protracted system development
02 Feb 1973	Due to global magnetic drift, runway 10/28 becomes 09/27
15 Mar 1984	New ILS system on '27' becomes operational to full Cat.II requirements
Apr/May 1988	09/27 top friction/drainage surface replaced
17 Apr 2003	The first ILS on '09' declared operational, replaced NDB Localiser procedural approach pattern
Oct 2006–Mar 2007	09/27 completely rebuilt and resurfaced, undertaken at night by contractors AMEC over a six-month period
Oct 2010–Mar 2011	Approach lighting completely renewed at the '27' end, bringing it to Cat.IIIB autoland standard
FINAL OFFICIAL NORTH AIRFIELD AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS, 31 MARCH 1982 AND BEYOND	
Runway 08	Final take-off, Cessna 150 G-FAYE at 19.17 hours. Final landing, Cessna 172 G-BIBW at 19.42
Runway 26	Final take-off, Cherokee G-GCAT at 11.44 out on a local flight, on return landed '26' at 12.44
Runway 35	Final take-off, Cessna 150 G-FAYE at 10.22 Final landing, Cessna 310 G-BGTT from Jersey at 12.21
Runway 17	Final daytime take-off, Cessna 414 G-JGCL to Birmingham BHX at 13.38 Final landing, a King Air 90 at 18.38 on 26 March 1982
Exceptions	Although North Airfield was closed, there was at least one emergency landing and several in error on '08'. Runway 17 (now '16') remained open for night departures, while 26/08 was re-instated for air shows in 1982 and 1984
Runway 26	Final '26' airliner departure, Dakota G-AMPO with pleasure flight passengers, air show 27 June 1982
Runway 16	Final night time take-off, a Genair Bandeirante G-BHYT to Manchester at 21.54 hours on 10 January 1984
North Airfield	Last aircraft movement ever was off runway 26, an RAF Hercules twice during an air display 19 August 1984
29 Aug 2000	Final aircraft, Stearman G-BRUJ taxied on own power from North Airfield as Keenair move hangars

David Smith adds the following comments:

I have a 1971 RAF En route Supplement but it only mentions 10/28 for Liverpool, ignoring the subsidiaries. Pooley's Guide for 1978 says that 17/35 was 1,227 × 46m.

RWY 16/34, as it became, was notorious for attracting aircraft away from '09', as it showed up very much better than the latter, especially in poor vis. Even a Concorde one day! Visual approaches were the worst but pilots were even known to turn off on the final stages of a radar talkdown. I had a Yugoslav Tu-154 try it and he ignored my go-around instructions until he probably saw the big white crosses and put the power on. Then there was the French Mil Nord 262 which turned off a right base for '27' towards the old '26'. OK. After a few incidents of misidentifying '08' for '09', I evolved a phraseology something like 'Caution, there is a disused runway easily confused with '09'. The latter has approach lights on a pier in the river.' This was eventually adopted by the other controllers. I could go on. Happy Days!

BRUNTINGTHORPE WIMPEY HANGAR

— IAN ANDERSON —

This article supplements that by Paul Francis in AR 152 – ‘Part 1 of a series on Cold War Buildings’.

On 8 September 2009 the author arranged with Peter Walton of C Walton Ltd, owners of Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground, to visit the airfield specifically to record the main hangar. With Peter’s help he was able to, not only obtain dimensions, but also take copies of relevant drawings.

The author also had telephone conversations with Keith Fox who was a draughtsman at Cowley Concrete Co, a precast-concrete firm based in Abingdon from 1950 to 1964. Keith was involved in the design of the side annexes when working there. Cowley Concrete were approached by George Wimpey in 1954 to quote for the main structure of three of these hangars, and were successful in obtaining the order. He recalled that one or two were for Greenham Common (only one was built?), and he also thought Fairford and Blackbushe. Having delivered those three they then had repeat orders for four more, of which Bruntingthorpe was the seventh and last. Five are known, so where were the other two proposed?

He recalled that the arches were in four precast-concrete pieces, the two largest sections weighed 11 tons each and the smaller sections towards the ridge weighed 8.5 tons. The in situ concrete joints (believed to be high alumina cement for early strength gain) between the column and the bottom arch section and between the bottom and top precast sections were five feet long (Bruntingthorpe’s are six ft long), plus a smaller in situ joint at the crown, giving a total clear span between buttress faces of 160 ft.

Cowley also made the ridged precast concrete portal frames (similar to Atcost agricultural frames) for the side annexes, for which Keith calculated the setting-out dimensions for manufacture of the moulds and reinforcement detailing. These calculations have two contract numbers A2106 and A2821 for George Wimpey.

Of the five Wimpey hangars that we know existed, Alconbury and Greenham Common had eight bays of main frames. Bruntingthorpe and Fairford had ten main bays. Blackbushe seems to have been made smaller at five bays.

Blackbushe was the UK HQ for the US Navy after they moved from Hendon in 1955, until Blackbushe closed in 1960, when they moved to West Malling in Kent and eventually Mildenhall.

From a C Walton drawing the overall dimensions of the Bruntingthorpe hangar are 160 ft clear span, max clear height to underside of arch 43 ft 10¼ in, and minimum height of doors at sides 30 ft 6 in. There are six doors across each end – the two centre ones are of similar height to the others but have additional upper doors suspended from a high-level rail enabling an opening two doors wide to accommodate high tails. The USAF aircraft the hangars were intended for included the Boeing B-47 Stratojet with wingspan of 116 ft, length 109 ft 10 in and tail height of 27 ft 11 in, of which the hangar could comfortably handle two. The author recalled regular visits in his youth to the four main USAF Strategic Air Command B-47 airfields of Brize Norton, Fairford, Greenham Common, and Upper Heyford until their departure in 1964–65 (some airfields being more visible than others). The later arrival of the Douglas RB-66 Destroyer at Bruntingthorpe (as a satellite of Alconbury), with wingspan of 72 ft 6 in, length 75 ft 2 in and tail height of 23 ft 7 in, was even less of a problem as several could fit inside.

SITE	LOCATION	ORIENTATION	ANNEXES
Bruntingthorpe	NE corner: SP 6064 8894	NE/SW	2 SE side, 1 NW workshop
Fairford	N behind two other hangars: SU 1536 9881	E/W	2 N side, 1 S
Greenham	S of runway: SU 4998 6441	E/W	
Alconbury	TL 1962 7679	NE/SW	Replaced by modern 1-storey structures
Blackbushe	NE corner: SU 8127 5963	N/S	2-storey, both E & W sides

The author, Ian Anderson is a Chartered Civil and Structural Engineer who spent 47 years with a contractor, Consulting Engineer, Development Corporation and three local authorities on buildings and bridges.

He is currently the Institution of Civil Engineers Panel for Historical Engineering Works, East of England Member, and their specialist responsible for aircraft hangars.

This article is an extract from an in-depth document on the Bruntingthorpe hangar.

The intention is to combine the original Paul Francis feature, with Ian’s full version.

This document will be available to download from the ARG website.

DUNSTABLE, LONDON GLIDING CLUB AND HANGAR

— IAN ANDERSON —

Encouraged by gliding efforts in Germany, the British Gliding Association was formed in 1929, following a luncheon held in London that year. Of the 56 present, 37 formed a club for the area and the London Gliding Club was inaugurated on 20 Feb 1930. A first meeting with two or three basic gliders was held at Stoke Farm Guildford in March 1930. In the search for a hilltop launch site, Down Farm on the Ivinghoe to Aldbury road was found, but within two months Ivinghoe Beacon was selected as being a better location. Then Tom Turvey, a friendly farmer of Totternhoe, offered the use of his barn to accommodate the gliders, flying from a field west of the Tring road. The present field under Dunstable Downs was rented from farmer Pratt. Three hangars had been erected by 1932 and a WWI sectional hut functioned as a clubhouse. In 1935 the wooden hangars and clubhouse were replaced by the present building.

Designed by architect and club member Christopher (Kit) Nicholson in 1935, Pevsner described this art-deco structure as one of the two great aviation-related icons of the thirties, along with Shoreham airport terminal. It was originally listed Grade II but has now been de-listed. The two-storey building, facing east towards the Downs, opened officially in July 1936, and was designed to accommodate 25 gliders in a hangar. There was also a two-storey 'L'-shaped building at the front with a small dormitory and toilets at ground floor plus a club lounge and dining room with a terrace and toilets at first floor. The 24 ft-wide lounge/dining room is over the front hangar opening, and the two-storey bar-terrace to one side is 26 ft wide. The 90 ft × 60 ft × 8 ft 6 in clear-height hangar has two openings; there are sliding doors at the east front, giving access under the club lounge, and another on the north side behind the main two-storey building. The hangar comprises steel



Front view: Richard Flag, June 2010



Hangar rear. All other photos: Ian Anderson, September 2007

pitched roof trusses spanning 60 ft front to back at 15 ft centres on steel columns with brick infill internally, with roof and side walls clad externally with asbestos-cement sheeting. Behind the main hangar are two mono-pitch rear annexes of unequal depth, presumed added later, housing gliders. The front (east) hangar opening is 60 ft wide with doors rolling sideways to one side, the lounge-dining room above being supported at the front by a deep plate girder with the top flange forming the lounge window sill and at the back by a lattice girder faced with insulating board.



The original field was eventually bought off farmer Pratt. More fields were added post war and overhead power lines buried in 1949. A newer complex of triple-bay tug hangar, office and bunkhouse accommodation was built 1979–80. The 50 ft-deep hangars are approx 40 ft, 36 ft and 40 ft span.

References

1. London Gliding Club, Dunstable, Architects Journal, 11 June 1936, pp915–919, 924
2. Take Up Slack, a History of the London Gliding Club 1930–2000, Edward Hull, 2000

26 Sep 2013



The tug hangar



View from Dunstable Downs

BRUNTINGTHORPE AIRFIELD

65 YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT (PART II) – INTO PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

— GEOFFREY POOL —

In this second article, Geoffrey Pool continues the story of the airfield from the time the US Air Force left, and examines its more modern use, together with some of the owners of aircraft in the Museum, and their prized possessions.

Although unused, and on a care and maintenance basis, Bruntingthorpe was still owned by the Ministry of Defence in September 1971. Chrysler UK Ltd were likely to have been aware that there was a possibility of it being purchased, for plans produced by their Technical Centre in Coventry, dated 30 September that year, proposed a second massive reconstruction of the airfield, this time to test all sorts of vehicles and components for handling, strength, endurance, resistance to wear, etc.

The main feature was to be the creation of a high-speed circuit, this following the general line of the existing perimeter track on the north-western side of the airfield, with high, curved banking at the Bruntingthorpe village end (echoes of Brooklands here). It would then sweep across the grass in a southerly direction to join the taxiway in a curve near what is now its intersection with the main runway. A whole host of smaller features were to be positioned both inside and outside the circuit, including transmission test slopes, rough handling areas, test areas with various surfaces, a skid pan, a dust tunnel, a water trough, a brine trough, and a large rough-road area for trucks. The main hangar and its associated workshops and offices were to be modified for maintenance and administrative purposes.

As might be expected, there was great opposition to the proposals, especially on the grounds of noise, and additional traffic on narrow country roads, and general local disturbance. Because the application contravened the Leicestershire County Council's already-approved Countryside Structure Plan, it was referred to the Secretary of State for the Environment and thus, a public enquiry was held between 11 and 15 December 1972.

On 19 March 1973, the DoE's approval was given for a restricted range of alterations, and then Chrysler went ahead and purchased the airfield. Officially, it then became a motor proving ground, this superseding its use as an airfield. If the proposals had been carried through unaltered, Bruntingthorpe's potential as an airfield would have been dramatically reduced, for it would have been difficult to move large aircraft around on what had previously been taxiways. As it was, the changes that were made were restricted, and the existing runway and taxiways were used as a high-speed straight, and a

test circuit respectively, without alteration. Those that were required, included the creation of a 15-foot-high embankment along the northern and north-western edges of the airfield, as well as along both sides of the runway extension, and the planting of approximately 180,000 tree saplings along those parts of the perimeter that were suitable. A secure, high chain-link fence, topped with barbed wire strands, and supported on concrete posts, was put around almost the whole site, though along the boundary line between the airfield and the industrial estate, a concrete panelled fence was erected. Chryslers also agreed to 'tidy up' the site by demolishing old structures. Somehow, the original wartime control tower survived.

In the late 1970s Market Harborough District Council gave Chryslers planning permission for the temporary storage of cars, though the area was originally restricted to the wartime perimeter track and dispersal pans on the south-eastern side of the site. This new use then, was the beginnings of what was later, and under different ownership, to become one of the main sources of income from the proving ground.

In 1978 Chrysler was taken over by Peugeot-Talbot, who therefore became the new owners of the site. Following a whole series of industrial disputes in the 1970s within the British car industry, and the fact that the company was largely French owned, vehicle testing was gradually transferred to the European mainland, and the use of the proving ground diminished. In 1982 Peugeot-Talbot decided to withdraw from the site altogether, and approached the Amey Roadstone Corporation with a view to the latter excavating all the runways and hardstandings for crushed hardcore recovery, for they did not want the proving ground to fall into the hands of a competitor motor vehicle company.

After this, the whole site would be returned to agriculture, and sold. C Walton Ltd was invited by ARC to be a part of the post-excavation land restoration process, for not only was it a local company, and involved in land drainage in an extensive way, it also had much experience in the transplantation of semi-mature trees. As it turned out, the cost of excavating the runways and hardstandings, of crushing the material, removing it from the airfield, then bringing in an equivalent volume of top soil – this necessary for making the land suitable for agriculture – far exceeded the profit to be made, and Peugeot-Talbot abandoned the whole idea. As a result, the Walton family, who by that time knew the site well, approached the company with a view to purchasing the whole of the former airfield, and became its new owners as from 1 August

1983. The family consisted of Ces Walton and his wife, Olwen, and their children: David, John, Peter, and Elizabeth. They had an interest in aircraft in a general way, as the family farm at Sulby, in Northamptonshire, included part of what had been the wartime Husbands Bosworth airfield, the rest being the base of the Coventry Gliding Club.

The company also owned a Cessna 152 which David, Peter, and Elizabeth flew from the farm strip, and a Hughes 300 helicopter which was flown by David. At the time of its purchase, the airfield looked very different from how it does today, for, although the banking around the edge was there, the trees which are now about 30 feet high and form a dense screen, especially in summer, were only well-spaced saplings. Hence, the whole site had a feeling of emptiness.

In 1988, what had been Lot 4 in the 1965 MoD auction was put on the market by the successors of the original purchasers, and acquired by the Walton company, so re-uniting this long, thin strip of land and the buildings on it, with its much larger airfield neighbour. The various industrial uses continued without change.

Within a few days of taking possession of Bruntingthorpe, the Walton family were approached by Neville Martin on behalf of the Loughborough and Leicestershire Aircraft Museum and Preservation Society, who were searching for a new base for their small aircraft collection, then based at the East Midlands Airport at Castle Donnington in Leicestershire. The airport was owned and run by a consortium of five local authorities, and crippling storage charges were starting to be levied on the largest aircraft in the collection, Avro Vulcan B.2, XM575, which had flown in on 21 August 1982. The aircraft collection found a new home at Bruntingthorpe, though the society did not last, and as the newly created Bruntingthorpe Aviation Collection, (BAC), five airframes were moved by road to their new base over the weekend of 19–20 November 1983. These were: an ex-Danish Air Force Hawker Hunter, a Blackburn Buccaneer, a de Havilland Vampire, a Dassault Mystère, and a North American F-100 Super Sabre.

A dismantled Avro Anson followed about a month or so afterwards. It was also hoped to fly the Vulcan to Bruntingthorpe with the assistance of BAe and Rolls Royce, though it was recognised that this would be somewhat later, as funds had to be raised to put it into flying condition. For the museum as a whole, an application for planning permission had been submitted to Harborough District Council in the autumn of 1983, and was granted in January 1984, the area to be used being confined to three of the former USAF dispersal pans at the northern end of the taxiway. It was these three that had formed the basis of the BAC group's application. Unfortunately, the idea to make XM575 airworthy enough to undertake the short ferry flight from East Midlands Airport to Bruntingthorpe did not materialise because of lack of funds, and it remained there, becoming the centrepiece of the Leicestershire County Council Museum Service's Aeropark display.

In the spring of 1984, the Walton family met Nick Grace, who was restoring his two-seater Supermarine Spitfire, ML407, to flying condition at St Merryn in Cornwall. He was very impressed with the airfield at Bruntingthorpe, and discussed with them his concept of a working aviation museum under the banner, 'British Aviation Heritage'. Nick felt that Cornwall was too peripheral for frequent participation in the airshow circuit, and was looking for somewhere more central. He thought Bruntingthorpe was ideally located, and had a runway that could cope with anything, however large or heavily loaded. In order to raise funds for a possible new hangar, two airshows were held that year, one on 24 June, and the other over the weekend of 15–16 September. Attendances were disappointing though, and the events were not repeated.

The BAC group did not last long either, but the Phoenix Aviation Museum rose slowly from the ashes, again under the guiding hand of Neville Martin. By mid-1988, four of the original airframes had been sold, and the USAF had removed the Super Sabre, which they had always owned, leaving only the Mystère in splendid isolation as the gate guardian. Even this was owned by the USAF Museum, as American finance had originally paid for the post-war equipping of the French Air Force. A further setback to the development of a museum was the tragic death of Nick Grace in a motor car accident on 14 October 1988 – its main guiding light was suddenly not there anymore.

However, quite independently, there had been a major development in late 1987, when Richard Norris, the chairman of a small group of Lightning enthusiasts, made a phone call to David Walton, and asked permission to have an English Electric Lightning fly into the airfield with a view to keeping it in taxiable condition. The idea of using Bruntingthorpe had been suggested by Tony Hulls, himself a Lightning enthusiast, when, by chance, the two had met at RAF Binbrook. Tony lived in Kimcote, a village close to the airfield, and had an engineering works on the Bruntingthorpe Industrial Estate in half of what had been the USAF base's ten-pin bowling alley, and therefore knew the area and the Walton family, well.

Permission was readily granted and on 24 June 1988, XR928 flew in from Binbrook, after making several low passes to burn up fuel. The aircraft's systems were kept serviceable, and simulated take-offs down the runway became a regular, if somewhat infrequent, occurrence. As if owning one Lightning was not enough, it was joined by a second on 21 January 1993, the aim now essentially being to keep both aircraft in pristine condition. The delivery flight from Warton in Lancashire was the last one of any Lightning in the UK, and followed British Aerospace's withdrawal of the last four aircraft as high-speed targets for the Tornado F.3's Foxhunter radar system trials. For the flight, XS904 was accompanied by an F.3 Tornado – a fitting tribute to the Lightning's 34 years of service, for the first had been delivered to the RAF in June 1959.

The previous couple of years had seen Neville Martin's area of operations develop quite substantially, for he had a great understanding of how the MoD surplus sales organisation worked. As a consequence, numbers of Canberra noses, and three complete Folland Gnats came to the airfield, two of the latter on 19 January 1992, one of these being a birthday present from his wife, Dawn. Nev had spent many years working on Gnats at Bitteswell Airfield, near Lutterworth, and had a great love for the aircraft and its compact design.

1993 was a milestone year in the history of the airfield and the embryonic aircraft collection. In the previous autumn, it had become clear that the MoD was not going to provide the £2.5m, required to enable the last flying Avro Vulcan, XH558, to have the major overhaul that would then allow it to continue enthralling crowds at air displays. The only promise that the MoD offered was that the aircraft would not be scrapped, and that it would go to a good home where it would have every chance of being well looked after. At that time, the idea of trying to acquire the Vulcan did not enter the thinking within the Walton family, for the two Lightnings at the airfield were not owned by them, and Neville Martin had the Mystère, three Gnats, an ex-Danish Air Force Hunter, three Jet Provosts, and other assorted nose sections. Once again, it was Tony Hulls who came into the picture, and suggested that a bid should be made for the aircraft. Somehow, a figure of £25,000 was thought to be sensible, and the bid was sent in, with supporting documentation. Subsequently, a further £100,000 was spent purchasing some 600 tons of spares.

On 17 March 1993, David Walton received a telephone call, asking him to go to RAF Waddington on the next day, 'looking smart', i.e. it wasn't an engineering

visit! Once there, he found himself in an MoD press conference, at which he learned, as the public did a little later, that the successful bid was his, and that the Vulcan would be coming to Bruntingthorpe in six days' time at the end of a tour which took in all of the RAF bases at which Vulcans had been stationed, as well as Lincoln, and the Woodford factory on the southern outskirts of the Manchester conurbation at which all 136 aircraft had been built. The press conference made the national newspapers and television, as might be expected, and it is estimated that some 2,000 people went to Bruntingthorpe to see XH558 come into sight, undertake a short display which included a steep climb, and then land. It was a very emotional event, and many a tear was shed, for although there had been a campaign to keep it flying under RAF auspices, no-one believed that such a massive aircraft would ever fly again, especially in civilian hands, for the cost of its dismantling, overhaul, and re-assembly was likely to be prohibitive. Besides which, the CAA would never give their approval – would they? British Aerospace, as it then was, also had to provide manufacturer's support, which was thought to be unlikely, bearing in mind their current commitments. Everyone lived in hope, but thought that simulated take-off runs were all that would be possible.

Also in 1993, the beginnings of a new group came to the airfield, for that summer, a Jet Provost and a two-seat Vampire flew in from Cranfield, Bedfordshire. In July 1992 Harborough District Council had given planning permission for the erection of a hangar on the site of the former USAF crash and rescue base on the north-west side of the airfield for Sandy Topen's Vintage Aircraft Team, the application having been put in with the Walton family's approval. Sandy was in the business of restoring aircraft to flying condition, especially



Vampires and Venoms, for which he had a great affection. It had been necessary to move from Cranfield airfield because of building development there, and by April 1994, eleven aircraft that Sandy owned, and two that he was working on for other people, had arrived at Bruntingthorpe, four of them having flown in. Most were various marks of Vampires or Venoms, though they also included the Jet Provost mentioned above, a T-33 Shooting Star, a T.7 Hunter, a Chipmunk, an Auster, and the crash remains of the sole Miles Student produced. The latter was a privately-funded design by George Miles having originally been created as a low-cost competitor to the Jet Provost. Sandy's intention was to restore all the aircraft to flying condition, though this would obviously take many years to accomplish.

The milestone year continued, for on 19 September, Handley Page Victor K.2, XM715, flew in to join the slowly growing collection. This aircraft was one of the last eight Victors in operational RAF service, and in common with the other seven, had participated in the 1991 Gulf War, having flown 38 refuelling missions for other Allied Force aircraft. The Victor was the twin of the Vulcan, being the third of the 'V' Bombers. All 86 built came out of the factory at Radlett in southern Hertfordshire, and like all the Vulcans, were originally painted in 'anti-flash' white. Although there was no possibility of keeping the Victor flying, there was every intention of maintaining it in a fully taxiable condition, one of only two to be kept in this state.

On that same day, XH568, an English Electric Canberra B.6/2 (Mod), with an elongated nose that had been installed as part of the Sea Eagle anti-shipping missile trials, also flew in. Now owned by Peter and Frances Gill's Classic Aviation Projects Ltd, it had been previously

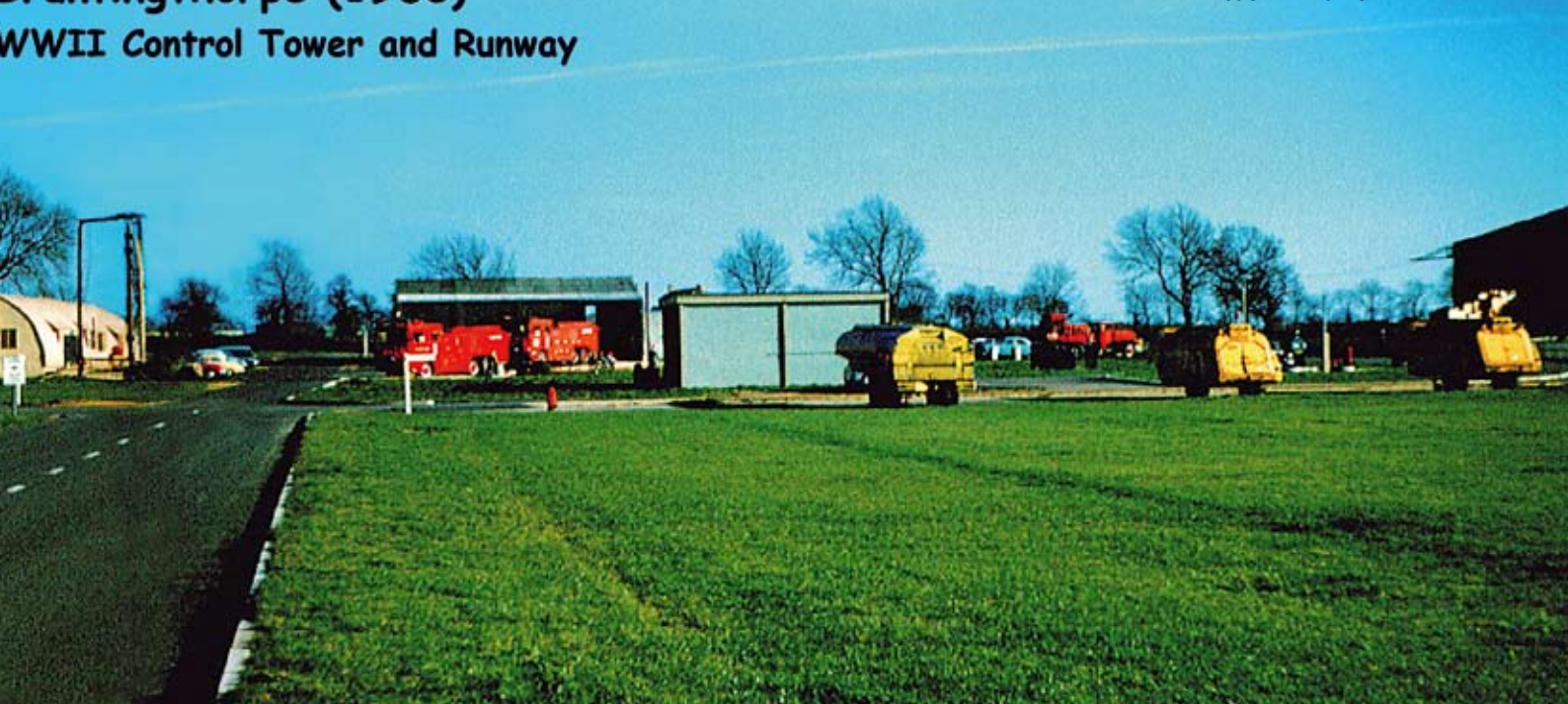
based at the RAE at Thurleigh, near Bedford. That establishment was closing. Sometime earlier, Peter and Frances, both long time aircraft enthusiasts, had become aware that the Canberra fleet was diminishing rapidly, and had decided to look out for a low-hour flying example, which basically meant one that had been involved in trials work, and had therefore been cosseted throughout its life. Having secured XH568 at auction, and having known David Walton through his acquisition of XH558, Bruntingthorpe formed a natural home for the aircraft, and for three years, it was to be on the airshow circuit, resplendent in its red, white, and blue, 'raspberry ripple' paint scheme.

Earlier in the year, the airfield had reverberated to the first of what would become the three '*Big Thunder*' air displays held in successive years, the first of any size since the USAF one in May 1960. It was held under the banner of 'British Aviation Heritage', in honour of Nick Grace, and included Caroline Grace and her Mk.IX Spitfire, *Sally B* – the B-17 Flying Fortress, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, a Buccaneer, Tornado, Hercules, Jaguar, Harrier, Nimrod, a Dutch Orion, the Royal Jordanian and Chilean Air Forces' display teams, the *Crunchie Flying Circus*, aerobatic displays, and parachutists. The Red Arrows opened the show. Resident aircraft provided simulated take-off runs, though naturally, that was all there could be. The intention was that this would be the first of an automatic yearly air display, but the best laid plans can go wrong, especially if the initial expenditure is very high, and the actual income is somewhat less. Nevertheless, 1993 ended with great optimism for the future, for the beginnings of the collection had been firmly established.

To be continued

Bruntingthorpe (1960) WWII Control Tower and Runway

Jack Williams





AACS Maintenance building, 1960
(Army Airways Communication System)

Boeing B-47 Stratojet taken in 1959
(Alec Bailey)



Base Headquarters, 1960

HQ RAF Bruntingthorpe circa 1961

Richard McAroy

A selection of photographs from the USAF era to accompany the article in AR 152

They were sent to Steve Hurst from Jack Williams.

Jack is responsible for these images unless otherwise stated.



Open House RAF Bruntingthorpe, Oct 28 1960

Christmas at RAF Bruntingthorpe circa 1959



Welcome To RAF Bruntingthorpe, 1961

RB-66s Low Pass Bruntingthorpe, 1960



Ralph Bowles circa 1958



A3C Hanks and A2C McCarty talking with A2C Green



Douglas B-66 Destroyer 40511
(Brandon White)



ASHBURTON AIRFIELD

CANTERBURY, SOUTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND

— KEN COTHLIFF —

During a visit to New Zealand in 2012, the author visited the Ashburton Air Museum in Canterbury. This excellent museum, with a very eclectic collection of aeroplanes, is based on a pre-WWII landing field that was used during the conflict for pilot training. During the visit he noticed there were tangible signs of its 1940s role, including one remaining wartime hangar. He wrote an item for the Review that was published in AR 138, March 2013, but then thought it might be time to add more detail, following a comprehensive document file sent by museum member Eric Drewitt.

In December 1939, the Empire Air Training Scheme was ratified at a conference in Canada as part of the British Commonwealth Air Training plan. The New Zealand delegates arrived in Ottawa in November of that year, undertaking to train aircrew at bases on the islands – initially these were mostly on North Island. However the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, and the subsequent gains in the Pacific changed everything.

In 1942 the threat of Japanese invasion was keenly felt in New Zealand, particularly in North Island where airfields were required for operational flying. So it was decided to move No.2 Elementary Flying Training School to the South Island. The school had been formed at RNZAF Air Station Bell Block, New Plymouth, in Taranaki, on the west side of North Island on the outbreak of war in September 1939.

Work started on upgrading Ashburton aerodrome, in the Canterbury Region south of Christchurch, in the middle of South Island. Canterbury Aero Club that had been using the airfield was closed down for the duration of hostilities. Another 92 acres were added to the airfield giving a total of 185 acres, allowing a grass runway of up to 4,200 ft. Another small satellite and storage airfield was created to the east of the airfield.

An amenities site was dispersed from the airfield on another 35 acres, concealed in some tree plantations, and consisted of standard prefabricated wooden huts which covered accommodation and workshops. Four 11,000-gallon fuel tanks were buried alongside roads several miles from the airfield, all equipped with demolition charges, should the enemy arrive.

Initially the unit's strength consisted included 22 DH 60 Moths, 24 DH 82, and a few DH Moth Majors (basically a Tiger Moth with straight DH 60 wings) as well as a miscellany of other impressed aircraft. By November 1942, there were over 50 Tiger Moths at Ashburton. In the early days, because of the distance of the sheds from the flying ground, maintenance of the aircraft was difficult, especially in the strong north-westerly winds that pervade the area, and aircraft picketed out were often damaged.

At a later date hangarage was constructed. Initially a pair of Kittyhawk type '4A' hangars were assembled. Constructed as a framework-only structure to be covered by camouflage netting, the six trusses of 6 x 1 in timber were erected about 11 feet apart, and anchored to large concrete blocks. They were assembled well apart on the edge of the airfield. Although they provided some limited protection it is thought they were intended to act as decoys for enemy aircraft.

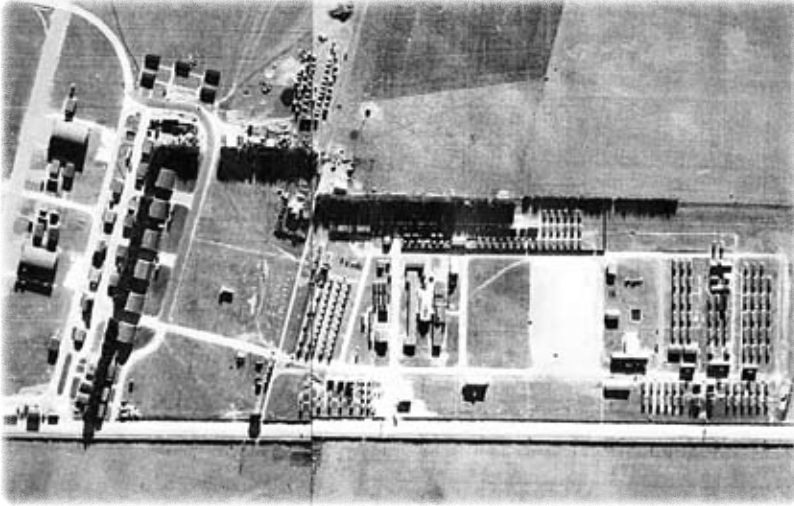
Following these, Kittyhawk type '4B' hangars were built. These were more substantial than the '4A', built to the similar dimensions of 63 ft span and 55 ft length, using lattice-type trusses at each end and standard trusses in the middle area, then covered with plywood sheeting, covered with a black 'Malthoid' waterproof cladding. Two were built concealed in a plantation, and another six were built at the nearby Fairfield landing ground. It may be that none of these had doors or 'hard' floors.

As the threat of invasion receded, six type '4B' hangars were built next to a new technical area adjacent to the flying field, and as 1943 progressed they were fitted with hard floors and sliding doors, so they could be used by the repair and servicing units of the base. In addition three 'Double Hudson' sheds appeared, of similar construction as the type '4B' but double the length (110 ft) and 95 ft wide. These enabled all the Tiger Moths to be stored under cover, often stacked on the noses with empennage in the air to save space. The accommodation blocks had also been moved over the main airfield from June 1943. By 1944 accommodation was provided for 720 officers and other ranks, plus 180 WAAFs. During the war 1,192 airmen completed their flying training at RNZAF Station Ashburton.

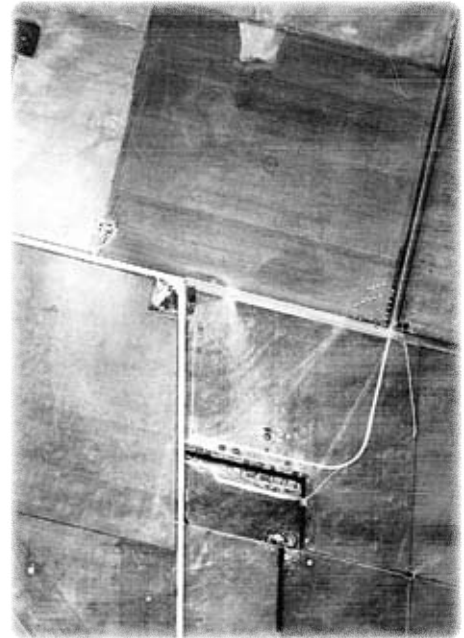
Flying training continued until late 1944, when the decision was made to disband 2EFTS, and by the end of November of that year, flying training ceased and the airfield was put on a 'care and maintenance' basis. After the departure of the Air Force the hangars were used for the storage of wheat and wool, as well as surplus NA Harvard aircraft. In 1955 the Government offered the remaining buildings for sale but few were taken up, and it is thought that most were burnt, or dumped.

Very little remains now apart from a compass calibration pad and a little of one of the taxiways. The hangar that remains, a Kittyhawk type '4B' still stands – just about. One of the flight huts, rebuilt in the intervening years, and the frame for the original wartime water tower is present, with a newer tank. Since my last article the sliding doors of the hangar have come off. The museum has had a detailed report commissioned by Jim Espie, (now deceased) on the hangar, showing just how much under threat this historical building is, and it is still trying to negotiate with the farmer for its acquisition and restoration.

If you are visiting New Zealand, the Ashburton Museum is well worth a visit. A Tiger Moth is present at the Museum, ZK-CDU, one of a civil batch bought straight off the production line in 1938 for the RAF which found its way to New Zealand after the war. It's one of the oldest surviving Tiger Moths. I would like to thank Eric Drewitt, and the late Jim Chivers for their information without which this article could not have been written.



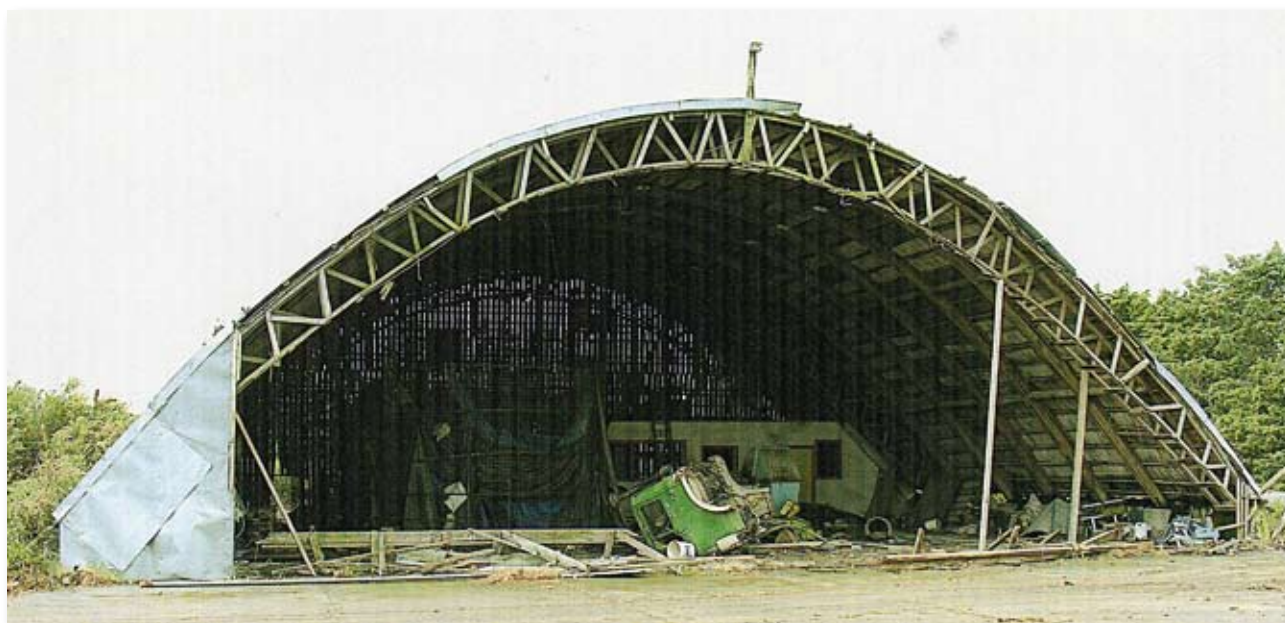
Location: 43° 54' 13" S 171° 47' 50" W



The airfield in 1946 (left) and 1942 (above)



Kittyhawk hangar 7, rear



Above: Hangar 7, front and interior

Left: A rebuilt Second World War flight hut

Photos: Author

Sadly Ken reported that Eric Drewitt, who encouraged him to write this article, passed away on Sunday 9 October aged 92.

He was a long-standing member of ARG.

BRAUNSTONE AERODROME

— ROY BONSER —

In March 2008 the author gave one of his talks on local airfields – the result into his 22-years' research into Leicestershire aerodromes. A previous lecture had concerned Desford, this time it was Braunstone.

Roy is the author of the acclaimed 392-page Aviation in Leicestershire and Rutland (Midland Publishing).

Leicester City Council started to explore the possibility of establishing a municipal civil airport (or 'aerodrome') in 1927 and consulted Sir Alan Cobham and other leading experts. On 30 January 1928 they decided to set up an airport at Braunstone Frith, west-south-west of the city, on 536 acres (0.84 square miles, 217 ha) of farmland. The council already owned much of the site, the remainder was purchased. The site met all necessary criteria:

Plateau?	Yes, 326 ft above sea level
Prevailing wind?	From SW, so factory smoke unlikely to obscure visibility
Major obstacles?	No nearby church spires, etc
Locality?	Only 3 miles from city centre
Rail access?	Adjacent to LMS Leicester–Burton passenger line
Main road access?	Near A47 Hinckley Road.

In August, 32 calls for tender were issued. Leicestershire Aero Club, then based at Desford, agreed to manage the airport on condition that it was provided with a clubhouse, a hangar, use of the airfield for club flying, and a yearly fee of £200 plus expenses. Kellett & Sons quote of £5,000 to build the clubhouse was haggled down to £4,000, partly by lowering the roof. There would be no runways – aircraft would land on grass. En Tout Cas of Syston started work on 10 April 1933 and by September the ground had been prepared. It was left to settle over winter before seeding in spring. The aero club premises were at the west of the site. On the east side the commercial structures included the terminal building, with the booking office, waiting room and customs office; there was a restaurant on the first floor, with the control tower above.

By the summer of 1934 the aero club-house, its adjacent 60 ft × 60 ft hangar and a swinging base for aircraft-compass calibration were ready. The intended opening date of 7 July had to be postponed, drought having retarded grass growth. The clubhouse was used socially from November. In March 1935, the 'licence to operate' was at last issued, celebrated on Sunday 31 March by a gala with 20 visiting aircraft. Sir Alan Cobham was refused permission to bring his Flying Circus. Two civil airlines commenced operations, Provincial Airlines and Crilly Airways, Braunstone being the latter's base and operational hub. Using de Havilland Dragon twin-

engined streamlined biplanes, Crilly offered a morning and an afternoon departure to half a dozen British cities, such as Liverpool and Bristol. To Norwich for example, fares were 30 shillings single, 50s return (2 to 3 times the first-class train fare – 50s equates roughly to £400 today); journey times were about an hour. To increase usage of the airport, a private firm proposed to train RAF Volunteer Reserve pilots. The Air Ministry refused.

The City Council requested the popular Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) to perform the formal opening ceremony; he declined (it was the Silver Jubilee summer), as did Lord Wakefield. Third choice, Lord Londonderry, accepted but was then superseded as Air Minister by Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister (1st Earl of Swinton), who did the honours on a sunny afternoon. There was a demonstration of new aircraft types including the Gloster Gauntlet and the Hawker Fury. Crilly Airways gave joy rides to 700 passengers, the RAF flew a display and the whole event set the City Council back £2,000, including £7 7s 6d to Pearce's Jewellers for a silver cigarette box for Cunliffe-Lister.

Traffic fell away in the winter. One of the aero club's four Hawker Tomtits crashed in fields west of the airfield, killing the pilot; the sole remaining example is in the Bedfordshire Shuttleworth Collection. There were two air shows in May 1936, including the Empire Air Display, but the autumn brought a crisis – Crilly went bust. Provincial had already gone, so there was no resident airline, leaving empty hangar space. Various improvements were completed, including the installation of night flying equipment. Two hangars were let to Reid & Sigrist of Desford. In 1938 activity was mostly confined to club flying until, late in the season, the Civil Air Guard started to give cheap flying lessons. But there was excitement when an early Wellington twin-engined bomber landed with engine trouble; it later took off successfully. Grandiose schemes for major extensions of land and buildings, with a new railway station, came to nothing.

In February 1939 permission for formation of an Auxiliary Air Force unit was refused – Braunstone was regarded as being too close to Desford flying school. Also the site, the second smallest airfield in Britain, was deemed too diminutive. But there was a small increase in flying in the year, partly by aircraft acting as exercise targets for anti-aircraft guns and searchlight batteries.

In conjunction with the airport, Everard's built the 'Airmen's Rest' hotel just across Ratby Lane, opposite the airport entrance gate (hence in the county – Sir Lindsay Everard was an aviation enthusiast). It probably opened in 1938 and was intended as a comfortable jumping-off point for affluent air travellers; the Scottish landlady, Mrs Reid, ran a tight ship. The hotel had a dozen bedrooms and a large dining room and bar. It was an excellent example of 1930s architecture, with curved walls and steel-framed windows, with internal murals.

Late in August, with war almost certain, the city was ordered to camouflage the buildings at a cost of £425 7s 2d. All civil flying stopped on outbreak of war in September. On 15th of the month, D Napier & Son of Acton proposed to take 50 acres for an aero engine factory, costing £15,000 for a new hangar and £30,000 for other works. The Air Ministry and Ministry of Labour refused, as Leicester had full employment. Napier's went instead to Luton, the forerunner of Luton Airport.

On 20 October 1940 (just after loss of many pilots in the Battle of Britain), Braunstone airfield was requisitioned by the Air Ministry to form a satellite of No.7 Elementary Flying Training School, Desford. The airfield continued in this role throughout the war, flying Tiger Moth tandem two-seat single-engined biplanes, although a Stirling bomber visited once. Although far removed from the fast monoplane fighters and bombers of the day, the Moth was a forgiving aircraft and no suitable side-by-side seat basic trainers were available. Some temporary huts and three blister hangars were erected. Inevitably there were mishaps; sometimes, given the small size of the airfield (800 yards east/west and 600 yards north/south), landing aircraft frequently finished up in the hedge. Bizarrely, on 10 March 1942, an instructor, F/Lt Newbury, landed on a soldier, killing the unfortunate man. Newbury was acquitted at court-martial. Meanwhile, Reid and Sigrist, under Major Reid DFC (actually a Squadron Leader) patented their turn-and-slip instrument, which the firm manufactured for almost all wartime RAF aircraft. R&S repaired Defiant fighters at Desford, but not at Braunstone.

As it was satellite to Desford, it is unknown how many trained at Braunstone. Many pilots received their basic training in Canada or Arizona, where the topography was so different that they needed additional training at Braunstone, or elsewhere in Britain to accustom them to European conditions. On 1 December 1944 the establishment was 2 officers, 4 NCOs and 120 other ranks, but no WAAFs. At that time there were the three civil hangars, two over blister hangars, no lighting, some flying control and some radio.

Flying immediately ceased with the end of the war although the airport was not derequisitioned until late 1947; meanwhile the War Agricultural County Executive Committee cut the hay crop, the only activity. The city realised the site was too small for modern civil aviation, especially as housing was encroaching, so it was used as playing fields and a golf course, with Browards manufacturing car springs in the original hangar.

Eventually the area was redeveloped as Braunstone Frith Industrial Estate. The anchor occupier was British Thomson-Houston, (now BAE Systems) – Decca, (now Thales), took over the commercial hangars. Despite its pitted concrete surface, the spine road, Scudamore Road, had not been the runway – indeed there never was a runway! Today it is hard to believe the airfield ever existed; all the buildings have gone except the club hangar (now used for industry) and the *Airman's Rest* car park's distinctive pair of lamp posts. Surprisingly few photographs seem to have survived, although Roy's collection includes a Luftwaffe aerial view covering Kirby Castle to Braunstone Park, including Braunstone Airport, taken from a German civil airliner in July 1939. Loughborough, too, has the ghost of a municipal airport, on a site since swallowed up by the university campus.

John Grech supplied an Official Programme for the opening of Braunstone on 13 July 1935. The content which follows is from that document.



CRILLY AIRWAYS
DAILY SERVICES FROM LEICESTER TO
BRISTOL, NORWICH, NOTTINGHAM AND
NORTHAMPTON

FAST * COMFORTABLE * SAFE

EIGHT-SEATER D.H. DRAGONS WITH TWIN ENGINES ARE USED.

LEAVE BRAUNSTONE AIRPORT—

TO	Depart	Arrive	Single	Return
BRISTOL (Through plane)	8.00 a.m. 4.40 p.m.	10.30 a.m. 3.30 p.m.	40/-	80/-
NORWICH	9.30 a.m. 5.00 p.m.	10.10 a.m. 4.00 p.m.	40/-	80/-
NOTTINGHAM	9.30 a.m. 5.00 p.m.	10.10 a.m. 4.00 p.m.	10/-	18/-
NORTHAMPTON	9.30 a.m. 5.00 p.m.	10.10 a.m. 4.00 p.m.	10/-	18/-

DONCASTER & BIRMINGHAM On Demand. Particulars at Agents.

Fares include concessions to and from Aerodromes.

Free Luggage Allowance 30lbs. per person. Freight carried at 2d. per lb. per 100 miles. Minimum Parcel 2 lb. Cars depart from the Grand Hotel, Granby Street, Leicester.

For BRISTOL—8.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. For NOTTINGHAM—9.30 a.m., 11.30 a.m., 4.15 p.m. and 7 p.m.
For NORTHAMPTON—8.00 a.m., 11.30 a.m. and 7 p.m. For NORWICH—8.30 a.m. and 4.15 p.m.

Booking Agents from whom all information can be obtained:

Sec., Aero Club, Braunstone Aerodrome. Tele. 88458. Grand Hotel, Tele. 5222.
Midland Holiday Bureau, 53 Granby Street. Tele. 59277. Offices of "Leicester Mail,"
27 London Rd. Tele. 20411. Highfields Garage, 14 St. Peter's Rd. Tele. 5398.

CRILLY AIRWAYS LTD., 14 WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON, W.1.
TELEGRAMS: WOTWALL 8002 TELEPHONE: PLACER, WEST LONDON

CRILLY AIRWAYS
LEICESTER'S FIRST REGULAR AIRLINE

CITY of LEICESTER MUNICIPAL AERODROME

A description by

A. T. GOOSEMAN, M.Inst.C.E.,

City Surveyor

Leicester's Municipal Aerodrome is designed and built to conform with the Air Ministry's requirements for a Class 1 Airport. Situated on a plateau 326 feet above sea level, the vicinity is free from obstructions and lies south-west from Leicester, so that prevailing winds carry the smoke of the city away.

The present area is 154 acres, 72½ acres of which have been laid out as a landing ground, but it is ultimately intended to acquire sufficient land to provide a minimum runway of 1,000 yards in any direction, thus making it possible for the largest air liners to land. In preparing and levelling the landing ground, ridge and furrow had to be destroyed by deep cross-ploughing, 3,000 yards of hedges and 160 trees were removed, and ponds, ditches and holes were filled in, and the area mole drained.

Approximately 35,000 tons of earth were moved in the levelling operations and finally the whole area was hand sown with grass seed.

The Aerodrome can be used for night landing since the installation of a combined floodlight and beacon with a beam of light visible for a distance of 40 miles, which can be rotated and tilted in every direction to act as a guide to pilots.

A commodious club house has been provided. One hangar, with a concrete apron in front, has already been built and another has been planned for the near future, as well as waiting room and office accommodation for the use of commercial lines flying from Leicester. Provision for customs facilities is proposed.

For the benefit of pilots, a compass testing base is available and full medical and crash equipment, including a fast motor tender and fire extinguishing plant, have been provided in accordance with the Air Ministry's standard for a first-class Air Port.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEICESTER AS AN AIRPORT

by

Alderman W. E. WILFORD

Chairman of the Aerodrome Committee

The development of Civil and Commercial Aviation is making rapid progress all over the world, and Leicester's Municipal Aerodrome will be one of the most important in Great Britain. Its geographical position in the centre of England will ensure it a valuable place in a national scheme of airways. Air Liners will radiate from it to the four corners of the kingdom and the nations overseas, and will help to make Leicester's fame as a commercial city more widely known. Already, a fleet of Air Liners is operating from the Airport, enabling thousands of business people and holiday-makers to make quicker contact with towns and cities which hitherto have been very difficult of access from Leicester.

The Chamber of Commerce has from the outset realised the immense possibilities of it from a commercial standpoint, and have constantly urged and encouraged the Corporation to provide an up-to-date Aerodrome.

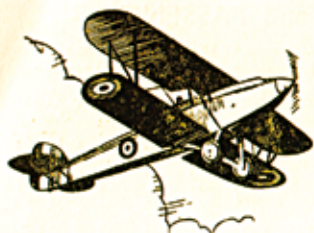
There is no doubt whatever that aviation will pay a big part in commercial activities and transport in the future, and no progressive commercial community can afford to be without an Aerodrome.

The natural position of the aerodrome standing on high and commanding ground only three miles from the city centre is an asset greatly in its favour. No other city has its Aerodrome in such close proximity to its business centre, giving such easy facilities for rapid transport to and from the city on departure and arrival.

A large belt of land surrounding the Aerodrome has already been purchased by the Corporation for future development. It occupies a prominent place in the outer town planning scheme of the city, and will ultimately be approached by good wide main roads.

When a Customs Clearing Station is attached, it will make Leicester's Municipal Aerodrome not only the most important in the Midlands, but of international fame. There is good reason to believe that this will be an accomplished fact in the near future.

The City Corporation has been fortunate in having the Leicestershire Aero Club to manage and control it from the outset. Their expert knowledge and advice has been invaluable. It has ensured, during the early stages of growth and development, progress on sound and scientific lines. The citizens of Leicester have an Aerodrome of which they can be justly proud. It is an invaluable addition to its Municipal Services and will greatly assist its progress and prosperity.



MORNING PROGRAMME

A. 9-45 a.m. to 10-25 a.m.

ARRIVAL COMPETITION (First Part).

9-45 a.m. and 12 noon are regarded as zero hours, and a certain number of minutes and seconds have been fixed and sealed in an envelope. The Competitor landing at Leicester at the time nearest this sealed time in either section will be adjudged the winner of the Competition, and will receive a Cash Prize of £10.

B. 10-30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

ARRIVAL AND ASSEMBLY OF ROYAL AIR FORCE MACHINES PARTICIPATING IN THE DISPLAY ARRANGED FOR 3 P.M.

C. 12 noon to 12-40 p.m.

ARRIVAL COMPETITION (Second Part).

D. 1 p.m. to 2-30 p.m.

PARADE AND DEMONSTRATION FLY-PAST OF REPRESENTATIVE TYPES OF MODERN CIVIL AIRCRAFT.

Full particulars and interesting information concerning each machine will be announced as it is about to take off.

Public Announcing System by Messrs. Partridge & Mee Ltd., Leicester

AFTERNOON PROGRAMME

EVENT 1.

2-30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

OPENING CEREMONY

performed by The Rt. Hon. Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, G.B.E., M.P., H.M. Secretary of State for Air, President of the Air Council, and Speeches by the Lord Mayor of Leicester (Alderman E. Grimsley, J.P.) and Mr. W. Lindsay Everard, M.P., President of the Leicestershire Aero Club.



EVENT 2. 3 p.m. to 3-50 p.m.

ROYAL AIR FORCE DISPLAY

by kind permission of the Air Council.

(For details of the Display, see following pages.)

EVENT 3. 4 p.m. to 4-15 p.m.

PARACHUTE DESCENT

Mr. B. G. de Greeuw, the well-known parachutist, will jump from one of the Leicestershire Aero Club's machines piloted by the Club's Chief Instructor, Flight-Lieutenant G. N. P. Stringer, R.A.F.O., flying over the Aerodrome. Mr. de Greeuw will use a parachute manufactured by the G. Q. Parachute Co., Ltd., of Guildford, Surrey.

EVENT 4. 4-15 p.m. to 4-30 p.m.

DISPLAY OF INVERTED FLYING AND ADVANCED AEROBATICS

by MR. S. A. THORN

(by kind permission of Messrs. A. V. Roe & Co., Ltd.).

Mr. Thorn will use an Avro-Cadet having an Armstrong Siddeley-Genet-Major 140 h.p. engine.

EVENT 5. 4-35 p.m. to 5-10 p.m.

AIR RACE for the GROSVENOR CHALLENGE TROPHY.

Entries received up to the time of going to press.

1B

Entrant.	Machine.	Registration.
Lt.-Comdr. C. W. Phillips,	D.H.60G	G-ACBX
Pilot-in-Charge,		
Ratcliffe Aerodrome.		
Mrs. Elise Battye, Binfield	D.H. Moth	G-AAYL

AFTERNOON PROGRAMME continued

"GROSVENOR CUP" AIR RACE :

Entrant.	Machine.	Registration.	
✓ C. S. Napier, Esq., Brough	Hendy 302	G-AAVT	5 110 5 3
✗ Lord Willoughby de Broke, Kington.	British Klemm Eagle	G-ADES	7 0 0 9
* Capt. The Hon. R. Grosvenor, piloting British Klemm Swallow entered by Lord Willoughby de Broke.		G-AGMZ	1 2 3
✗ Lady Blanche Douglas, Sherston.	Miles Hawk Major	G-ACWV	8 10 0 8
H. L. Brook, Esq., Harrogate.	Miles Falcon	G-AGTM	
✓ Luis Fontes, Esq., Caversham.	Miles Hawk Gipsy VI.	G-ADGP	11 60 2
✗ W. Humble, Esq., York County Aviation Club Ltd.	Miles Hawk	G-ACTE	10 11 4
✗ C. E. Gardner, Esq., Warlingham.	Percival Gull	G-ADFA	9 100 4 9
E. W. Percival, Esq., Grosvenor Place, London.	Percival Gull		
✗ Entrant, Leicestershire Aero Club. Pilot: D. D. Longmore, Esq.	D.H. Moth	G-ABRF	3 40 2
✗ A. Henshaw, Mablethorpe	Arrow Active	G-ABIX	6 50 6
✗ G. S. Davison, Birmingham	Monospar ST4	G-ACJF	4 90 4

EVENT 6. 5-15 p.m. to 5-30 p.m.

DEPARTURE of the ROYAL AIR FORCE.

EVENT 7. 5-30 p.m.

VISIT and FLY-PAST of a FLIGHT from No. 605 COUNTY of WARWICK (BOMBER) SQUADRON AUXILIARY AIR FORCE

(By kind permission of Squadron-Leader J. A. C. Wright, A.F.C.)

The machines are Hawker Haris having Rolls-Royce Kestrel engines.

EVENT 8. 5-35 p.m.

DISTRIBUTION of PRIZES.

AIR RACE for the GROSVENOR CHALLENGE CUP

THE race will be run over two laps of a triangular course, 42 miles in all, and is open to all individual British pilots who have completed at least 50 hours' solo flying.

Competing aircraft, which must be of British manufacture, will be handicapped for the course according to the estimated performances, and competitors will be started from Leicester in accordance with their handicap.

The first turning point of the triangular course will be Ratcliffe (the private aerodrome of Mr. W. Lindsay Everard), where competitors will turn westward as shown on the sketch map, towards the well-known Leicestershire land-mark, "Old John," in Bradgate Park, and thence on the final leg to Braunstone.

The first competitor to cross the finishing line at Leicester who completes the course will be the winner of the Grosvenor Challenge Cup presented by the late Lord Edward A. Grosvenor.

CASH PRIZES : 1st, £40 ; 2nd, £20 ; 3rd, £10.

Presented by the City of Leicester Corporation.

There will also be a special prize of £20 to be awarded to the competitor who completes the course in the fastest time.

Conducted by the Leicestershire Aero Club under the regulations of the F.A.I. and the competition rules of the Royal Aero Club.



The Course

Notes: 1A, 1B: A pencilled addition shows the the race was won by Lindsay-Everard's DH.60G III Moth Major G-ACBX flown by Lt Cmdr CW Phillips. During the Second World War Phillips (then a retired Commander) was on the staff of the Admiralty's Department of Aircraft and Carrier Requirements.

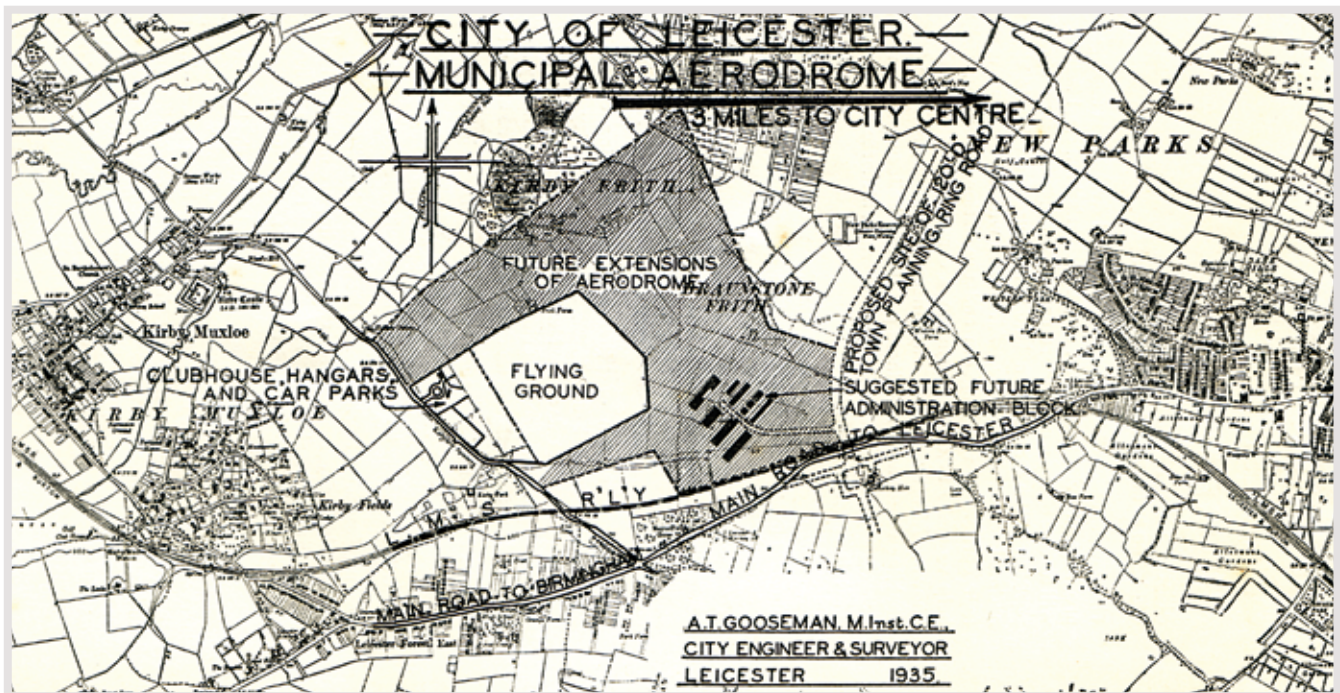
Note 2: Coming in second in the Grosvenor Cup was larger-than-life character Luis Fontes, the son of a Brazilian shipping magnate. In 1933 the 21-year old inherited a fortune from his late father and immediately took up motor racing and learnt to fly. In May 1935 he surprisingly won the JCC International Trophy Race at Brooklands in a 'borrowed' 2.3L Monza Alfa. Later that year he entered Le Mans and won in a Lagonda which under normal circumstances would have been retired due to mechanical problems earlier in the race (apparently the sump contained only oil fumes on completion).

His luck ran out later that year when on 6 October whilst 'racing' on a public road his car was in a head-on collision with a motor cyclist. The driver of the latter

was killed and Fontes was arrested. In court his defence was that he was drunk at the time of the incident. He received a three-year prison sentence for manslaughter, and a ten-year ban from driving. He also forfeited his pilot's licence and motor racing competition licence.

He was released early from prison in 1938 and regained his aviator's certificate. Two years later Fontes joined the ATA as a civilian ferry pilot in No.3 FPP, becoming a first officer. Later that year, on 12 October 1940, he was ferrying Wellington Mk.IC, R1156 from the Vickers factory at Hawarden. The aircraft stalled after an engine failed while circling the Aircraft Supply Unit, 38MU Llandow, Glamorgan and crashed at Llyswoorney. Fontes was killed – he was just 27.

(Editor, information from the internet)



THE DEPARTMENT OF FORTIFICATIONS AND WORKS

— PAUL FRANCIS —

The Department of the Director of Fortifications and Works (DFW), was a War Office department created in 1904 from the amalgamation a number of Royal Engineers' entities dating back to the eighteenth century.

At the outbreak of the First World War, in August 1914, the DFW was Major-General GK Scott-Moncrieff. His experience included the Afghan Campaign, 1879–80, Co-operations in China, 1900–01, and many years on public and military works in India. He was succeeded in February 1918 by Major-General PG Twining.

Prior to August 1914, the DFW's office had been organised in five main branches and three sub-branches:

FW.1 – Rifle ranges.

FW.2 – Barracks and hospitals at home (with a design office known as FW.2 (b).

FW.3 – All fortifications and army ordnance buildings at home and abroad. Barracks and hospitals abroad only.

FW.4 – Personnel for RE services and supervision of the following three sub-branches:

FW.4 (a) – All electrical services and provision of RE stores under an 'Inspector of Lights'

FW.4 (b) – RE technical stores, except for railways, their design, pattern, scales and reserves

FW.4 (c) – Mechanical services and supply of machinery and building stores for foreign stations

FW.6 – Quantity surveyors' work for building contracts and bills, under a 'Chief Inspector of Works'.

There was also a civilian 'Director of Barrack Construction' but this directorate was abolished in 1917.

The expansion during the war of all aspects of engineering work, plus the addition of several new types of directorate, resulted in a large expansion of the DFW's office. This was affected under:

FW.3 – a new department named 'Trench Warfare', under Colonel L Jackson, the remaining part of FW.3 coming under Colonel E Kent.

FW.4 – became responsible for personnel only. The sub-branches, 4 (a to c), became two branches: FW.8 under a 'Chief Mechanical Engineer', and FW.9 under a 'Chief Electrical Engineer'.

FW.5 – (previously non-existent) was formed to receive demands from all overseas theatres for personnel, stores for works, and to negotiate with Government departments as well as civilian contractors.

FW.7 – another new branch was created to deal only with buildings for the Army Ordnance Corps.

FW.2 (c) – a new sub-branch was instigated to deal with the buildings and other works required for the

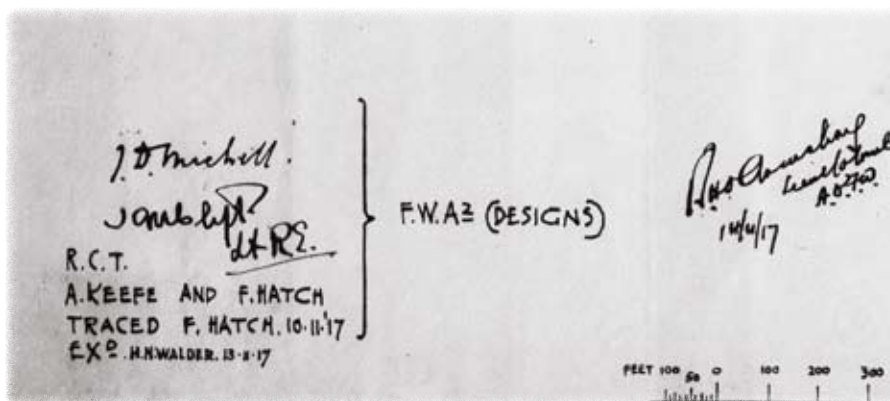
rapidly-expanding Royal Flying Corps. In 1918, this branch moved to the newly-formed Air Ministry taking with it a proportion of the design branch of FW.2 (b) which together became the Works Directorate of the Royal Air Force.

Buildings and Stations for the Royal Flying Corps

A very important task, and one which rapidly increased in size and urgency, was the provision of accommodation for the RFC. On the outbreak of war, this corps was in its infancy and the accommodation available at that time was limited to the old Balloon Factory and a small number of aerodromes.

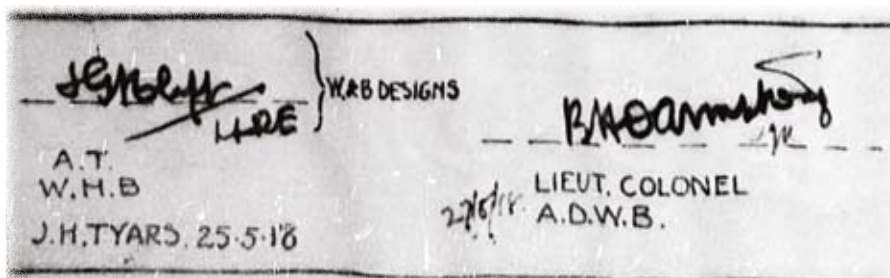
On the outbreak of war, Colonel W MacAdam, who had been Assistant Director under the Director of Flying Services, was transferred to the office of DFW, where he concentrated on the provision of flying grounds and buildings. In collaboration with the Flying Branch, he selected the sites for these grounds and arranged all questions of leases and clearance. Plans for the buildings were then prepared and handed over to the appropriate command for execution. The schemes provided for one or more squadrons or flights at each aerodrome (depending on function) with hangars (or sheds) constructed to designs prepared by Lieutenant-Colonel BHO Armstrong. The original schemes cost between £50,000 to £60,000, but by 1918, the price of a typical Training Depot Station had risen to £250,000.

When the RAF was formed in April 1918 and started its own offices in London, Col MacAdam and Lt-Col Armstrong were transferred to the new headquarters, MacAdam becoming the Director of Works of the RAF.



FW.2 (designs)

Title box dated 1917 showing signatures by BHO Armstrong, JD Mitchell, JGN Clift, A Keefe and F Hatch



Air Ministry Drawing title box showing signatures dated May 1918, of BHO Armstrong and JGN Clift

RAF HORSHAM ST FAITH

— JASON HIMPSON —

Construction of RAF Horsham St Faith, named after the small village that lies just over a mile away to the north, started in mid 1939.

Early days

Initially built with grass runways and a paved perimeter track, Horsham was one of 75 expansion period airfields that were built between 1939 and 1942.

To the south-east of the airfield, five 'C' type hangars were erected; the watch office, to drawing number 5845/39, was sited in front of Hangar 1. Behind these was the main technical site and immediately to the east were the single airmen's 'H' block accommodation, dining hall and institute, NAAFI and sergeants' mess, and officers' mess.

Behind the officers' mess were the senior officers' houses, including that of the station commander.

The airmen's married quarters were built on the opposite side of the main site, on Spencer Road. A dispersed site consisting of a number of Nissen huts was sited in nearby Old Catton; today the area is part of Woodland Drive.

Another dispersed building, (the reason for its position seems unknown), was the gymnasium and chancel. It was built in temporary single brick, the same as duration-only types, and was located half a mile away on what is now Brabazon Road, off Cromer Road.

Squadrons move in

Officially opened on 1 June 1940, it was actually seven months earlier that Horsham saw its first visiting aircraft. Fearing an attack on their own airfield, 21 Squadron from RAF Watton temporarily used the site for a month with their Bristol Blenheims.

The first squadron to use the near-completed airfield properly (it wasn't until mid 1940 that the site was finally completed) was 264 Squadron and their Boulton Paul Defiants which operated from May 1940. These were joined by 114 and 139 Squadrons from Wattisham in June 1940, equipped with Bristol Blenheim IVs. In August that year, 114 Squadron moved to Horsham's satellite airfield at Oulton.

139 Squadron stayed at Horsham, and together with 264 they flew day 'Circus' raids (daylight raids and fighter sweeps across northern France) and many anti-shipping sorties. In July 1941, 139 Sqn moved to Oulton as their place at Horsham was taken up by more Blenheims, this time belonging to 18 Sqn who had moved in from Manston. However 139 moved back again two months later only to return to Oulton in December to re-equip with Hudsons.

The de Havilland Mosquito Mk.IV arrived in December 1941 with 105 Squadron. In March 1942, 18 Sqn moved on, to be replaced again by 139 who swapped their Hudsons for Mosquitos at the same time. The two units flew armed reconnaissance raids over Denmark.

The Americans arrive

After 105 and 139 Squadrons had left for RAF Marham in September, it was the turn of the Americans to make this airfield to the north of Norwich their home. Though only there for a month, the airfield was visited by the B-26 Martin Marauders of the 319th Bomb Group; they left for South Africa in November, after which the site fell silent until April 1943 when the P-47C Thunderbolts of the 56th Fighter Group arrived from Kingscliffe.

'Zemkes Wolfpack' stayed until July before leaving for what was to become 'their airfield' at Halesworth.

Runway Reconstruction

This time, rather than the noise of aircraft, it was the sound of the construction crew's earthmovers that resonated around the station. The site was being upgraded to a Class 'A' bomber airfield with three paved runways replacing the old grass surfaces. The main runway was extended to 2,000 yds with the two subsidiary runways each being 1,400 yds.

Once the construction crews had left, the last group to use Horsham during the Second World War arrived in February 1944. The 458th Bomb Group and their B-24 Liberators, under the command of Colonel James F Isbell and Colonel Allen F Herzberg, flew 240 missions from Horsham until they too left in June 1945.

Station 123, as the USAAF had designated Horsham, was handed back to the RAF in July 1945 – which was the start of the busiest period of the airfield's history.

Back in RAF control

Within a few weeks the following units had arrived:

- Mosquito NF30s of 307 (Polish) Squadron, from Coltshall
- 695 Sqn and their Spitfire Mk.XVIs, Oxford and Vengeance IVs (A-35B) from Bircham Newton
- 64 Sqn and their Mustang IIIs (P-51 B/C) from RAF Bentwaters where they re-equipped with the Mk.IV (P-51D)
- 118 Sqn arrived from Fairwood Common with the Mustang III, (*other sources state Spitfires and Bentwaters*).

All made the airfield their home – therefore space at Horsham was now somewhat constricted.

The situation was to be tighter still when, in February 1946, just 64 Squadron re-equipped with the new de Havilland Hornets; 65 Sqn moved in from Spilsby also converting to the Hornet F.1. Both left in August though, bound for Linton-on-Ouse, and their departure was to herald in the jet age with the arrival of the Gloster Meteor F.3.

During this busy period, Horsham had developed into a major Fighter Command base that saw the establishment of the Horsham Wing, made up of the four Gloster Meteor squadrons namely 74, 245, 263 and 257 – a wing that was to remain there until 1960.

November saw 695 Squadron's Vengeances being replaced with Miles Martinets, and for over a year all squadrons operated without any further changes, until December 1947 when all the Meteor F.3s were replaced with the current F.4.

A little over a year later, in February 1949, 695 Sqn was disbanded, but was immediately reformed as 34 Sqn; they kept their Martinets until August when they were phased out in preference to the Bristol Beaufighter TT.10.

In July 1950 245 Squadron received new aircraft themselves when the Meteor F.8 arrived; it was at this time that in flight refuelling was being developed as both the Meteor F.4 and F.8 aircraft were being fitted with probes for use in trials utilising Avro Lincolns as tankers during 1951.

1950 also saw the departure of two squadrons, when in October, 257 and 263 both moved to Wattisham.

Squadron commitments changed in December 1951 with the introduction of two day- and one night-fighter squadrons – the newly arrived 23 Squadron equipped with the Mosquito NF.36 took care of the night cover while the day was dealt with by 74 and 245 Squadrons.

1952 was an especially busy year for the base as various aircraft types, including the Venom, Hunter and Javelin, passed through as part of the Horsham Wing. July of that year saw the departure to RAF Coltishall of 23 Squadron.

RAF Stradishall was to be the home in July 1955 of 245 Squadron while 23 Squadron returned around the same time. Then in September helicopters began to arrive at Horsham in the shape of 275 ASR Squadron 'D' Flight with its Bristol Sycamore HR.14s. Being situated so close to the North Sea, Horsham was an ideal location.

By 1956 the decision had been made to stop air traffic from using the main runway 22/04 due to increasing complaints from residents in Hellesdon about the noise of the aircraft; the circuit pattern was therefore changed to runway 27/06 which heads to open countryside and is still used today. (Prior to 1958, rwy 27/06 had been extended to the east, from 4,200 to 5,990 feet. operational readiness platforms had been added to the

ends of both long runways. An aircraft servicing platform 760 by 590 feet was also constructed).

Hunter F.4s of 74 Squadron were replaced by the upgraded F.9 in 1957. Two years later they temporarily moved to RAF Coltishall while the runway at Horsham was being resurfaced, returning in January 1960 only to move back again to Coltishall in August to be equipped with the new English Electric Lightning.

The end approaches

With the departure of 74 Squadron RAF Horsham St Faith fell silent, all other squadrons having left over the previous year; the RAF was preparing to wind the station down. That may have been the case entirely had it not been for the arrival of 228 ASR Squadron 'D' Flight who reformed with Whirlwind HAR.10s, working from here until April 1963. Additionally, in November 1961, the Battle of Britain Flight arrived, then consisting of Hurricane LF363 and Spitfire PR.19 PM631, but they too moved to Coltishall in April 1963.

The site continued to be maintained and 12 Group was still using the site as their sector HQ until moving out in July 1963 with RAF control being relinquished in August when the Air Ministry put the station up for sale.

A new lease of life

The site was finally sold in 1967 to Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council. The technical site was turned into an industrial estate and the airfield became Norwich Airport. So, with the help of East Anglian Flying Services, the airfield came back to life, not with military jets this time, but with commercial aircraft. The first holiday charter flight departed in 1971.

Horsham St Faith today

Today the site has experienced mixed fortunes; Norwich International Airport sees many flights being made from the airfield – some around the UK, others abroad, with Malta, Spain and the Netherlands being typical destinations.

On the technical site most of the original buildings survive. The hangars are used by both Anglian Windows as factory units, and KLM, who has one for general aircraft servicing. The original control tower still stands albeit extended and built around – its current usage is unknown.

The MT section is now used by a van hire company, whilst next door the fire fighting MT section is the headquarters of a crane hire company.

KLM utilises the station sick quarters, which – along with the attached gas decontamination centre – act as classrooms for their college.

The former armoury is now the base for Eagit Engineering Training, whilst the old works services buildings, that once incorporated the water tower, are now used by a number of small businesses, the water tower itself having been demolished in the early 1990s.

Serco Group now uses the station headquarters as offices whilst the main stores, workshops and airmen's mess/institute currently stand empty, albeit in good condition.

The senior officers' and airmen's married quarters are now in private ownership however the 'H' blocks, sergeants' mess and officers' mess were demolished in 2000 to make way for housing – the nearby NAAFI though remains unscathed.

Also gone is the guard house and final 'H' block (both in 2008); these sites remain empty as does that of the sergeants' mess.

Photos (Jason Himpson), clockwise from right:

Senior Officers Accommodation

Armoury

Airmen's Mess and Institute

Memorial near Airport Terminal Building, dedicated 1988

Station Sick Quarters

Guard House (now demolished)

Austerity 'C' Hangar



GATOW AND TEMPELHOF

— ALAN BAKER —

*These articles were written in October 2013.
The photographs are copyright: Brian Hewitt*

RAF GATOW (BERLIN)

The General Steinhoff-Kaserne, now used for training German Air Force Officers, lies within the Spandau district of south-west Berlin. It is much better known to aviation enthusiasts as part of RAF Gatow (1945–94) and as the home of the Luftwaffenmuseum der Bundeswehr.

Gatow (IATA code GWW) had been a technical training base under the Third Reich. It was briefly occupied by the Red Army in 1945, thereafter becoming the RAF's primary base in this beleaguered city. GWW also serviced many 'VIP' and civilian flights and played a major role in supplying Berlin with essentials during the (1948–49) Berlin Airlift. Situated very close to the Soviet occupation zone, it was inevitably used to 'observe' activities across the border and became home to various radar and more secretive electronic equipment.

The Cold War is now relegated to history and a changed Gatow might no longer be recognised by any personnel who once served there. The Kaserne is off-limits but the airfield and its magnificent Luftwaffenmuseum welcome visitors. Entry is free of charge and car parking is very adequate. Arriving by public transport is not recommended for the less agile or anyone not fluent in German. Full details may be found on:

www.luftwaffenmuseum.com

The pre-war Luftwaffe hangars remain in place, in excellent condition housing surviving aircraft of two World Wars, as well as the most valuable of the museum's vast collection of NATO and Warsaw Pact airframes. The various 'spy towers' have been dismantled, revealing the RAF control tower as it must have looked in the 1950s. Runway 08L/26R once displayed lines of fighters, bombers, freighters and communications aircraft, consolidated in GWW from dispersed sites all over Germany. These airframes are now somewhat packed together on the tarmac, hinting that GWW is again enjoying some flying activity.

For the technically minded, a range of rockets, mobile electronic surveillance and similar equipment may be explored at leisure, whilst indoor museum features include a full room romancing the fun time that German Air Force officers clearly enjoyed at the Tri-National Tornado Training Establishment (TTTE) at RAF Cottesmore.

Is there much left of RAF Gatow days? Not a lot – the station name board has sadly disappeared from the station HQ entrance (a victim of Berlin's fickle weather?) but tiles in the parking area herald the station

commander's entrance. A few English-language health and safety signs have survived and then there are, of course, plenty of ex-RAF airframes – some of which had once been used as decoys at other front-line RAF Germany bases.

For anyone interested in the story of military aviation during the 20th century, a visit to Gatow is a must. Not far away in Clayallee 135, in what had been the American sector, is an equally fascinating insight into Berlin's recent past. The Allied Museum contains many Cold War artefacts, amongst the best being ex-RAF Handley-Page Hastings TG 503.



Museum model of the airlift days



Control tower, station HQ and F-104



Tower and part of exterior aircraft display

TEMPELHOF AIRPORT YIELDS ITS SECRETS

Germany may not be geographically close to Great Britain but in many ways the history of both areas is intertwined. A legacy of turbulent World War II and Cold War aviation history may be found, almost frozen in time, in the centre of a unified Berlin.

Until its closure in 2008, Berlin's Tempelhof Airport (THF) remained a reminder of Nazi ideology and the long post-war period when flying to West Berlin was not only the easiest, but often the only way to reach this divided city. Most remember the Berlin Airlift – its hardships and its ultimate success, Gail Halvorsen, (the 'Candy Bomber') dropping sweets to children from his C-54 freighter and the strange experience of exiting your airliner under the cover afforded by THF's huge overhanging roof. On the other hand, how many weary travellers ever thought about what might lie outside, above, and especially below the main departures/arrivals hall?

THF's construction commenced as a part of National Socialism's dream to create *Germania*, a capital city of such splendour as to overwhelm all other world capitals. In the event, WWII arrived before completion of the 300,000 sq metre building. Indeed, post-war work continued into the 1960s and some areas were never completed. *Deutsche Luft Hansa AG* (not to be mistaken for the current German airline) flew little from THF, although their headquarters used the new airport building. Instead, the manufacture of Ju87 Stukas and FW190s occupied many of the hangars. Aircraft repair work was conducted within the tunnels lying below the massive building, relatively safe from bombing.

Foresight led to air-raid shelters being built prior to 1939, several of which retain morale-boosting wall paintings. Life underground could not have been a pleasant experience in Berlin, in London, or elsewhere.

What's left of THF's Past?

Stories abound about what might have been going on here and what relics of recent history might be lurking in the labyrinth of tunnels, shelters, storerooms, its unused ballroom etc. Amongst the true tales is that of the underground Lufthansa film and photographic archive, an area now open for viewing by organised tours. Red Army members, finding a vault door impossible to open, decided to dynamite it. One can only imagine what happened when tons of tinder-dry film material exploded. The Russian soldiers were probably vaporised.

When next in Berlin, do find time to visit THF. Contact www.tempelhoferfreiheit.de for conducted English-language tour details and timings. Two-hour-long walks take you on to the now silent tarmac, into a hangar to view the preserved C-54 (DC-4), Pan American signage, remnants of THF's USAF occupation and – wrapped in a time-warp – civil airline equipment. You'll climb up one of the corner observation towers, view the war-damaged ballroom before making a steep descent to explore the underground passageways, graffiti from the 1930/40s and the scary remains of that photographic archive.

Nearby is sited the Berlin Airlift (*Luftbrücke*) Memorial to RAF, USAF, French Air Force and civilian personnel lost during that great campaign.

If your interest is in modern European aviation history and or 20th century architecture or industrial archaeology, then the unique and carefully preserved THF is well worth a visit.



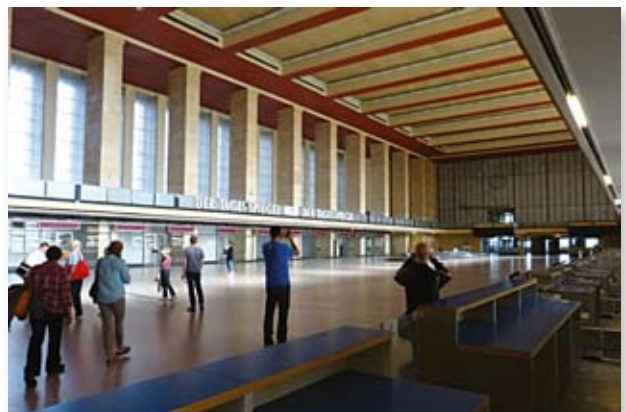
C-54 Troop Carrier



PanAm signage



Tunnel, complete with railway line



Main departure/arrivals hall



ROYAL AIR FORCE STATION GATOW
'A Bridge Yesterday, a Bridge Today.'

The Gatow
photographs
on this page
are courtesy
Frank Vorwerk



STANLEY PARK

BLACKPOOL'S OTHER AIRPORT

— RICHARD RIDING —

Blackpool already had a fully-licensed airport when a second was opened officially in June 1931. Stanley Park municipal aerodrome was one of many in the north-west visited by amateur photographer EJ Riding in the 1930s. This potted history by his son, Richard, is illustrated with his photographs taken during 1936–38

Blackpool in Lancashire once boasted two aerodromes, of which only Squires Gate remains. Not so well known, Stanley Park municipal aerodrome, built by Blackpool Corporation on cheap land at an estimated cost of £90,000, was one of 12 local authority-funded airfields built countrywide at that time.

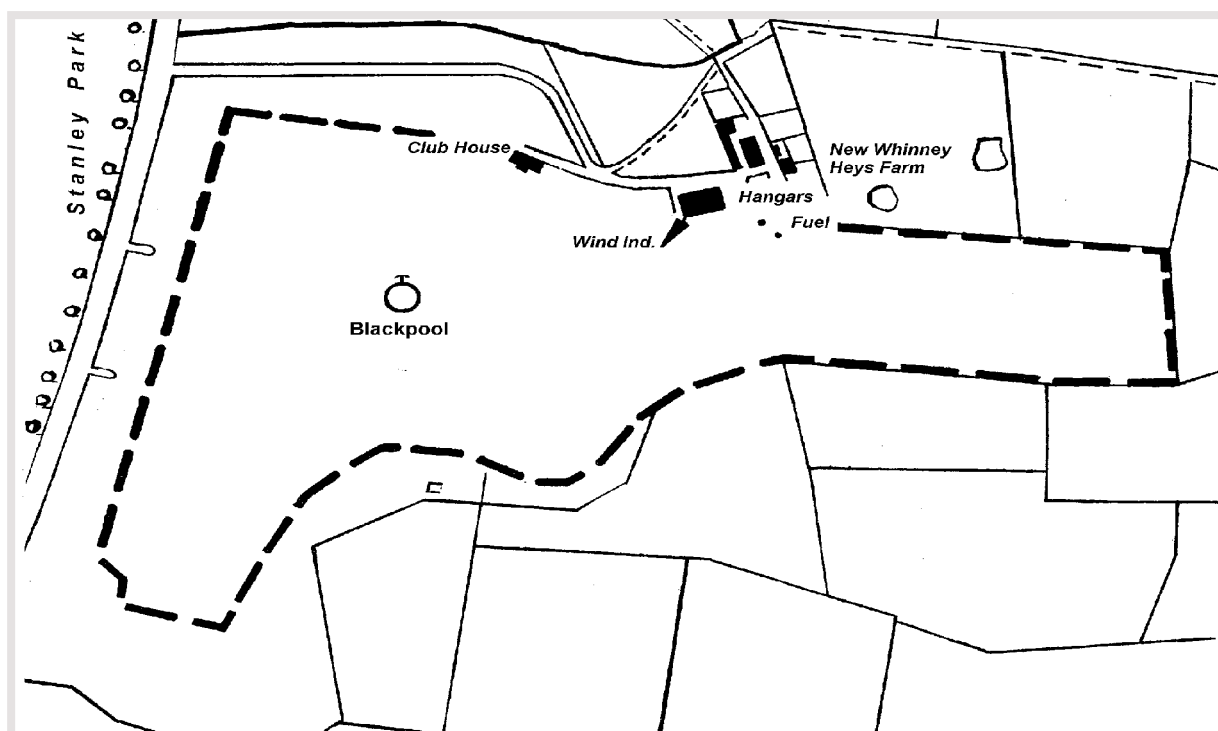
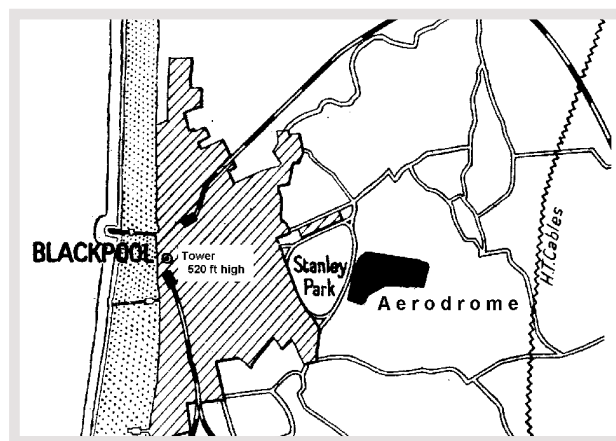
Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald officially opened Stanley Park in June 1931, despite the aerodrome being in use since August 1929. It had been granted a seven-year operating lease by National Flying Services, (NFS), which ran several aerodromes at the time. It begs the question: 'Why didn't Blackpool Corporation develop the existing aerodrome at Squires Gate'? Apparently, the plan was to create a 'Torquay of the North' that distanced itself from the hustle and bustle of Blackpool and its attractions, and lure the middle classes to a better and quieter neighbourhood. There were even plans to lay a race track and outdo Brooklands.

The 'L'-shaped, 120-acre, grass field occupied part of a total 400-acre site at Marton, earmarked by Blackpool Corporation for aviation and sports activities. With the longest landing run of 2,100 feet, the airfield's early use was mostly by light aircraft. It was the home of the Blackpool Aero Club, housed in the art deco style airport building, dominated by a curved concrete roof atop of

which was the control tower. There was hangarage for 20 or so light aircraft and from the autumn of 1933, customs facilities were available.

Commercial and scheduled flights operated mostly from nearby Squires Gate, but Stanley Park was used by Midland & Scottish Air Ferries for its Blackpool–Isle of Man route and in 1934 the company set up a maintenance base there.

Other operators, for example Hillman's Airways, Spartan Air Lines and United Airways, had routes from Stanley Park to the Isle of Man, Belfast, Manchester, Liverpool



and London. In October 1934 NFS went bust and later United Airways took over the lease for its scheduled services and pleasure flying.

Meanwhile, two notable events took place at Stanley Park. An air pageant was held on 26 June 1932 and on 7 September 1935 Alan Cobham's National Aviation Day Display team came to Blackpool. During the latter event, tragedy struck when Avro 504N G-ACOD of Air Travel collided with Cobham's Westland Wessex G-ADFZ whilst closing with the larger aircraft during a pleasure flight. The Wessex, previously owned by Cobham Air Routes Ltd, crashed in Cedar Square without fatalities, but the Avro came down on Swainson Street and all three occupants were killed in the ensuing fire. On 20 November 1936, another tragedy occurred when Northern & Scottish Airways' Spartan Cruiser III G-ADEM hit a hangar while taking off in fog, killing the pilot and a passenger. In the resulting fire, five aircraft in the hangar were destroyed.

Stanley Park was always too small for airline operations and towards the end of the 1930s it was becoming rapidly surrounded by housing. Pleasure flying was not expanding either because the aerodrome was too far from the sea to attract trippers; they preferred Giro's Fox Moth operation from Southport beach, or flights from nearby Squires Gate.

THE WAR AND AFTER

By the time war was declared in September 1939, Stanley Park was requisitioned for use by the RAF and became home to No.3 Technical Training School. Later, Vickers-Armstrong, which already had a shadow factory at Squires Gate, set up a Wellington production line in five purpose-built 'portable' Bellman hangars. Because Stanley Park was grass, the Wellingtons could not be landed back after their first flight and so were flown to Squires Gate for further work and testing. More than 2,500 Wellingtons were built at the two Blackpool sites.

In addition to RAF and Vickers-Armstrong occupation, Lancashire Aircraft Corporation set up a Civilian Repair Unit for the Bristol Beaufighter. From 1943, until flying at Stanley Park ceased in 1947, Slingsby Cadet gliders of No.181 Gliding School RAF were training air cadets. Around 40 Hawker Hurricanes spent a period at Stanley Park but were non-flyable and there to be scrapped. A similar fate befell a number of Supermarine Seafires.

After the war Stanley Park hosted the Royal Lancashire Show. Today, people come to Stanley Park from miles around to see jumbos – animals that is, not airliners! In 1972 it became the site of Blackpool Zoo and is currently home to around 1,500 creatures. The much-modified art deco airport building and some other structures still survive and form part of the zoo complex.

(Top right) DH 53 Humming Bird G-EBXN, built in 1925 and delivered originally to the RAF as J7271 with seven others, to be evaluated as a primary trainer.



All eight RAF DH 53s became civil aircraft in 1927 and 'XN' was sold to the RAE Aero Club, passing through several ownerships before that of J Gillet of Blackpool. Seen in April 1936, it was doped silver overall with green lettering. Note the brick-built walls of the hangar and the sign asking pilots to avoid flying over Stanley Park and the town.

Later the Humming Bird passed to ED Ward and was kept at Speke, Liverpool, before being destroyed in the disastrous Hooton Park fire on 8 July 1940.



General Aircraft Monospar ST-25 Universal G-AEPA in March 1938 was owned first by JAM Henderson at Heston and then sold to HS Ashworth at Blackpool. The Blackpool Flying School was the last pre-war owner before the aircraft was impressed into the RAF as X9372 in March 1940. The Universal was powered by two 95 hp Pobjoy Niagara III radial engines and cruised at 115 mph.



Armstrong Whitworth Argosy II G-AACJ was originally delivered to Imperial Airways in 1928 and named *City of Liverpool*, flying the company's European routes.

The Mk.II carried 20 passengers and was distinguished from the Mk.I by two vertical servo tabs on the trailing edges of the lower wings.



In 1935 'CJ' was sold to United Airways at Stanley Park and used for pleasure trips incorporating an aerial view of Blackpool Tower, before being acquired by British Airways – as seen here in 1936 shortly before its registration was cancelled. The Argosy was doped silver overall with light blue lettering.



DH 60G Gipsy Moth G-AAYY at Stanley Park in January 1936 – note the blind flying hood over the rear cockpit. First owned by JW Chalmers of London in 1930, kept at Stag Lane and named 'Cygnet', this much-travelled Moth flew to Basra and back in 1931.



It passed to United Airways, Blackpool in 1935, later taken over by British Airways, but was sold in December 1936 in Ceylon as VP-CAC. In July 1942, the Moth was impressed there as MA939 and flown by the Station Flight at Ratmalana before being struck off charge in March 1944.

(Top right) DH 60G III Moth Major G-ACCW, seen in March 1938, was owned originally by Hon R Westera and based at Haldon, Teignmouth, before it passed to the Blackpool & Fylde Aero Club. Two Blackpool-based private owners were then its keepers, until being impressed into the RAF as X5114 in December 1939. It ended its days as instructional airframe 3124M.



Seen in April 1936 is Spartan Cruiser II G-ACZM in British Airways livery. The tri-motor was delivered first to Spartan Air Lines before passing successively to British Airways, Northern & Scottish Airways, and finally Scottish Airways – all based at Renfrew, where it was finally withdrawn in January 1940 and scrapped in 1942.



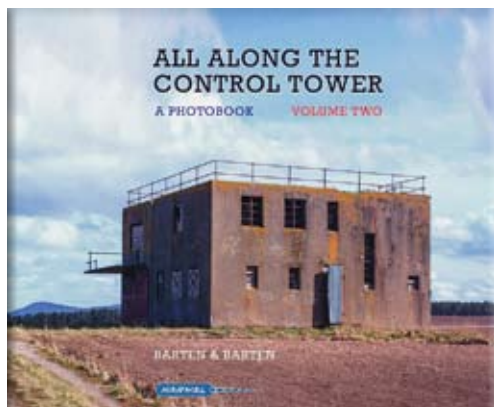
Short-lived Spartan Cruiser III G-ADEM, pictured on 2 May 1936. The all-silver tri-motor was first delivered to British Airways and based at Eastleigh, Southampton. Shortly after passing to Northern & Scottish Airways Ltd at Renfrew, the Cruiser was lost after crashing into a hangar while taking off from Stanley Park in fog on 20 November 1936, killing the pilot and a passenger.

BOOK REVIEWS

– PETER HOWARTH –

All Along the Control Tower – A Photobook, Volume 2

by Frans and Theo Barten Published by Narwal Publishers, hard cover, 276 pages, €37.50 incl P&P, ISBN 978-90-817110-8-1. It can be ordered from the publishers at <http://www.controltowers.eu/html/order.html>



Volume One of this series was favourably reviewed in Airfield Review No.147 and was clearly a success for the authors as a second volume has now been produced. As the book's title indicates, this is mainly a photographic book, covering 66 further control towers as they are today. The authors' selection goes further afield this time, including airfields in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man. The selection of many 'less-famous' airfields is to be welcomed.

The format is the same as in Volume One, with the airfields being covered in alphabetical order with a chapter each. Each chapter includes very brief details of the units based at the airfield and also a short paragraph on the tower type, access to the site and notes on current use. There are generally at least two very good, full-page photographs of the tower and a full-page aerial photograph of the airfield with location details.

If anything, the photographs are even more evocative than those in the first volume. Particular favourites of the reviewer include Davidstow Moor over waterlogged grass with ponies grazing around it, and Limavady being slowly engulfed by foliage. A surprising number within this volume show towers that have been converted into houses. Some of these very much still look like towers, whilst others such as Graveley are barely recognisable.

The book is as beautifully produced as the first and a welcome acknowledgement to the Airfield Research Group and some of its members is given. As before, this book can be recommended for anyone with an interest in control towers and would make a perfect present for someone to browse through on a cold winter's evening in front of the fire, with a glass of something warming in one's hand. I wonder if they are planning Volume Three?

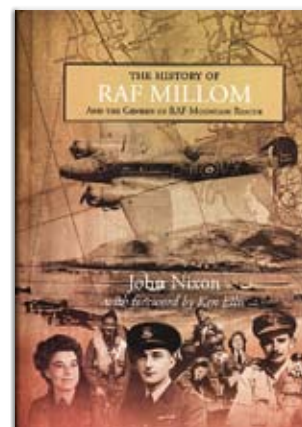
The History of RAF Millom and the Genesis of RAF Mountain Rescue

by John Nixon, Pixeltweaks Publications, hard cover, 360 pages £25.00, ISBN 978-0-9934679-9-8

This author's previous book on Cark airfield was reviewed in Airfield Review No.144 and this one is in a similar style, although hard backed. Like its Cumbrian neighbour it was a training airfield, although in this case it was home to the Bothas and then Ansons of what became No.2 (Observers) Advanced Flying Unit, from 1941 to the end of the war. Its role was train navigators, especially those who had received their initial training abroad, and including an amount of bomb aiming and gunnery in the syllabus.

This book covers the various activities at Millom in reasonable detail, including the ranges used and lodger target facilities units. The first section covers the factual aspects of this, mainly gleaned from Operational Record Books. One odd aspect is the author's own notes within his own text which give a slightly disjointed feel when reading it. Also included, as indicated by the book title, is the origin of the local mountain rescue unit and its wartime operations in Lakeland are also described. By far the largest section is the second part that provides, in 230 pages, a large number of personal recollections from ex-servicemen, which add a lot of colour, detail and context to these activities, although the order of their inclusion is not chronological and therefore is a bit confusing. The author has nevertheless clearly spent a long time researching the topic and presents a lot of material on its wartime use.

It is illustrated with a reasonable number of photographs, although the reproduction quality is not the best as the book is, in effect, self-published.

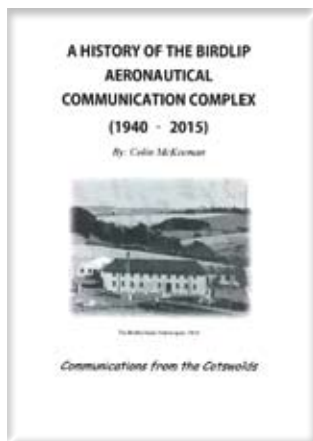


Millom was closed as an airfield at the end of 1945 and, since 1967, the site has been home to Haverigg prison. The author was an officer there and also founded the former museum originally on a domestic site. Sadly the latter shut a few years ago but he has worked with the local council to re-open a small collection in the town's Discovery Centre. As with his Cark book, although it has some quirky features, this book nevertheless provides a lot of interesting information on a relatively obscure airfield and is well worth a place on the bookshelf of anyone interested in Cumbrian aviation or training units.

A history of the Birdlip Aeronautical Communication Complex (1940–2015) – Communications from the Cotswolds

by Colin McKeeman Self-published, soft cover, 330 pages, €15.00 plus p&p.

It is available from the author at 'Shanwick', 56 Terenure Road West, Terenure, Dublin D6W E226, Ireland, with payment via PayPal to downrange@eircom.net.



Occasionally we receive a book to review that is truly remarkable in terms of the amount and detail of research that has gone into its production, for little obvious commercial gain. This is such a book. It tells the story of two connected Wireless Telegraphy (W/T) stations, Birdlip and Winstone, located in the Cotswolds just to the east of Gloucester. Birdlip was the parent station in No.26 Group RAF, whilst Winstone

was its remote transmitter station. They opened in late 1941 and their main role, at least initially, was for communications with ferry flights over the Atlantic and down to the Mediterranean, with wider use later by Transport Command.

The book gives a chronological account of developments at the two sites with a section for each year. It is very well illustrated, with site plans, aerial photographs (and photographs of aeri-als!), as well as photographs of the various items of equipment in use at the various stages of the sites' development and numerous tables. One notable aspect is that the station histories are always put in the context of the UK radio system and therefore much is also learnt about other sites around the country.

Post-war they were transferred to the Ministry of Civil Aviation and were used for VHF communications with flights over the same geographical areas as in wartime. There is too much detail to adequately summarise here, but it is always readable to the layman and forms a fascinating account of the development of the service that would eventually become NATS.

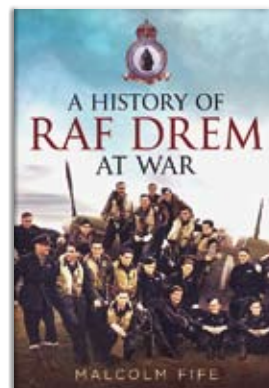
The Birdlip site was closed in 1976, although a repeater antenna remains. Winstone is still functioning, although on a smaller scale. The final chapter looks at the current layouts and the remains of the former sites, many buildings still being in existence.

This is an excellent history, a true labour of love for the author. It contains much new detail on an under-recorded part of British aviation infrastructure within its 330 A4 pages and, whilst of a very specialist nature, can be thoroughly recommended to anyone with an interest in airborne radio, air traffic control, or just looking for something different.

A History of RAF Drem at War

by Malcolm Fife,

Published by Fonthill Media, soft cover, 224 pages, £18.99, ISBN 978-1-78155-523-1.



Excellent books by this author on Scottish First World War aerodromes and British airship bases have recently been reviewed in this periodical and the latest tome from his keyboard covers one of the main airfields used to defend the Edinburgh area in both World Wars.

It was originally opened as West Fenton landing ground during the First World War, but was rebuilt as a fully-equipped aerodrome for use as a Training Depot Station, re-opening in April 1918. The airfield survived the end of the war but closed at the end of 1919. This part of its history is fairly quickly dealt with and there is also a brief chapter on inter-war use, which mainly consisted of farming until it re-opened in March 1939, again for pilot training.

The bulk of the book covers the period of the Second World War during which it reverted, in the main, to use by front-line fighter squadrons. Individual chapters describe its use by different types of aircraft or nationalities such as the Free French and Poles. Others describe an aspect of the airfield such as airfield defences or the innovations that took place at Drem. As well as the famous, eponymous approach lighting system, its role in the development of the Moonshine countermeasures system is also described.

The book is well written and adequately illustrated, some of the more interesting of the latter coming from Polish contributors. The final chapter describes its brief use by the Fleet Air Arm at the end of the war, plus a couple of paragraphs on its decommissioning and return to agriculture. A few photographs illustrate what remains. There is also a comprehensive table of all flying units present. This is another interesting book from this author and can be recommended.



The Bruntingthorpe Wimpey Hangar photographed in September 2009 (Ian Anderson, see page 19)

