

East Lincolnshire aviation heritage



An aviation guide through East Lincolnshire
locating active RAF stations, former airfield sites and memorials





Contents



Abbreviations	North Coates	Other Memorials
PAGE 4	PAGES 18 & 19	PAGES 30 - 33
Introduction	Spilsby	BBMF Visitor Centre
PAGE 5	PAGES 20 & 21	PAGE 34
Bardney	Strubby	Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre
PAGES 6 & 7	PAGES 22 & 23	PAGE 35
Coningsby	Woodhall Spa	Thorpe Camp Visitor Centre
PAGES 8 & 9	PAGES 24 & 25	PAGE 36
East Kirkby	Other Locations	Petwood Hotel
PAGES 10 & 11	PAGES 26 & 27	PAGE 37
Kelstern	Coastal Bombing Ranges	The Cottage Museum
PAGES 12 & 13	PAGE 28	PAGE 38
Ludford Magna	Anti Aircraft Defences	Tourist Information
PAGES 14 & 15	PAGE 29	PAGE 39
Manby		
PAGES 16 & 17		

Cover picture captions, starting top left to right: Typhoon 'afterburner' take-off at RAF Coningsby, Flt Lt Whiteley DFC (centre) and his 619 Sqn crew, memorial at RAF Strubby. Main picture: Lancaster NX611 'Just Jane' at Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre.

Acknowledgements: East Lindsey District Council gratefully acknowledges the following people and organisations for providing material for this booklet: IX(B) Squadron Association; 619 Squadron Association; Air Cdr Milligan CBE; Andy Thomas Collection; A and K Markham Photography; Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire; Brian Stafford; Down To Earth Promotions; John Whiteley's family; Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre; Lincolnshire County Council; Mill Design & Advertising; Mr Fred Witchell Collection, courtesy of North Staffs 1940s Group; Nev Franklin Collection - Newark Air Museum Archive; Peter Green Collection; Peter Snaith; Peter Allam; Petwood Hotel; RAF Coningsby (BBMF); Sonia Limm; Thorpe Camp Visitor Centre; Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum.

Abbreviations

AAS Air Armament School	E&RFTS Elementary and Reserve Flying Training School	NAFFI Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes
ABG Air Base Group	FIDO Fog Intense Dispersal Operation	OCU Operational Conversion Unit
ABS Air Base Squadron	FJWJEU Fast Jet & Weapons Operational Evaluation Unit	RAAF Royal Australian Air Force
AFS Advanced Flying School	Flt Flight	RAF Royal Air Force
Air Cdr Air Commodore	FTS Flying Training School	RAFCAW ... Royal Air Force College of Aerial Warfare
AOC Air Officer Commanding	GAS Ground Armament School	RAFA Royal Air Force Association
AOS Air Observer School	Gee Code name for - hyperbolic navigation system	RAFFC Royal Air Force Flying College
ARS Air Rescue Squadron	Gp Group	RCAF Royal Canadian Air Force
ATC Air Training Corps (Air Cadets)	HCU Heavy Conversion Unit	RDF Radio Direction Finding
BAT Beam Approach Training	HD Home Defence	SAM Surface to Air Missile
BBMF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight	HTCU Heavy Transport Conversion Unit	Sqn Squadron
BDTF Bomber Defence Training Flight	IRBM Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile	Sqn Ldr Squadron Leader
BDU Bomb Disposal Unit	LFS Lancaster Finishing School	TCG Troop Carrier Group
CH Chain Home	MOD Ministry of Defence	UAS University Air Squadron
CHL Chain Home Low	MU Maintenance Unit	USAF United States Air Force
DFC Distinguished Flying Cross	NZ New Zealand	VC Victoria Cross
EAAS Empire Air Armament School		Wg Cdr Wing Commander
ECAS Empire Central Armament School		WWI World War One
ELDC East Lindsey District Council		WWII World War Two

Introduction

The patchwork of fields across Lincolnshire's landscape has been sculpted by aviation from the earliest days of flight with the introduction of the World War I landing grounds and aerodromes.

The pace of this sculpting was increased by World War II and the need for airfields close to the county's coastline. In some places it was changed irrevocably by the laying down of countless concrete runways and taxiways that criss-crossed the region and in doing so helped cement a common bond of service and camaraderie. These bonds were formed in the shadows of adversity, but they connected people together from around the world in a way that remains strong today.

In several places in East Lincolnshire these changes continued post-War, during the Cold War Era through continued military

development; like the V-Bomber base at RAF Coningsby; the Thor IRBM base at RAF Ludford Magna; and the Bloodhound SAM base at RAF North Coates.

Some locations, such as RAF Coningsby have continued to develop and are still active today with Typhoon fighters, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and Visitor Centre. Other aviation locations are merely marked with memorials to the fallen, like the inspiring mosaic at North Thoresby.

Please note: Some of the sites featured are on private land and we urge you to respect the privacy of those locations.





Bardney went from being a wartime bomber base through to a Thor Missile site.



1. Nose art on a Bardney based Lancaster
2. The Bardney watch office as it looks today
3. Bardney crew in front of Lancaster H 'Hephzibah'
4. IX(B) Sqn crew on Lancaster Y 'Younger'
5. RAF Bardney Memorial on the village green
6. IX(B) Sqn bomb aimer's Log Book entries

Bardney

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 121SK135708; close to the B1202 Bardney to Wragby road

DATES OF OPERATION:

1943 to 1945 – bomber base
 1945 to 1959 – storage & maintenance
 1959 to 1963 – Thor missile base

SQUADRONS:

IX(B) Sqn; 227 Sqn; 189 Sqn; 106(SM) Sqn

RAF Bardney's major wartime role was as the main base for IX(B) Sqn, which along with 617 Sqn was one of the RAF's main precision bombing squadrons.

The airfield site at Bardney was first surveyed in early 1941 and was designed in the standard pattern with 3 concrete runways. Construction work started in 1942 but was delayed by a shortage of construction materials.

The base opened in April 1943 when IX(B) Sqn moved from RAF Waddington to Bardney. Most accounts note that the squadron took off from Waddington on 13th April on a raid to Northern Italy; after take-off the ground crews relocated to Bardney ready to receive the returning aircraft from the raid.

Early IX(B) Sqn operations out of Bardney coincided with the 'Battle of the Ruhr'. On 20th April 1943 Lancaster W4964 (WS-J) took off from Bardney on an Op to Stettin, that particular aircraft went on to become a '100 Op' aircraft when it took part in a Tirpitz Raid in September 1944. Post war the aircraft was displayed in a small museum at the College of Aerial Warfare at RAF Manby; was then scrapped and a small fuselage section survived as a garden shed, before being donated to the Newark Air Museum in 1974.

IX(B) Sqn soon became established as a two Fight Main Force Squadron and during the 'Battle for Berlin' established a reputation for high accuracy bombing. Operating with 617 Sqn, IX(B) Sqn was used on Ops targeting U-Boat pens; railway bridges; V weapon sites; Normandy fortification; and the Tirpitz battleship.

In October 1944 'A' Flt of 227 Sqn was reformed alongside IX(B) Sqn at Bardney; whilst 'B' Flt was formed alongside 619 Sqn at Strubby; before both Flt's moved to RAF Balderton.

One of IX(B) Sqn's finest Ops took place on 12th November 1944, whilst flying from RAF Lossiemouth, Y – 'Younger' piloted by Doug Tweddle and with bomb-aimer Denis Nolan, is widely believed to have dropped the Tallboy bomb that finally turned the Tirpitz battleship over and made it inoperable.

In April 1945 Bardney hosted 189 Sqn; with IX(B) Sqn returning to RAF Waddington shortly after the war ended.

A period of use for storage and a Care and Maintenance role followed; before Bardney returned to operations in a Cold War role as a Thor Missile Base with 106(SM) Sqn based there between 1959 and 1963. The site was eventually used for gliding and by an aerial crop spraying company.

There is an excellent memorial on the village green at Bardney map ref: Sheet 121 SK119693.

Date	Remarks (including mode of loading, quantity, nature, etc.)	21/50	26/48
		Day	Time
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	H.L.B.	1.20	
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	OPS 17 - SANDERBERG (DORTMUND) (2000lb H.C.) (2000lb TALLBOY)	5.28	
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	FIGHTER ATTACHED	1.05	
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	H.L.B.	1.20	
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	OPS 18 - GASSNITZ (LAFFEN) (2000lb H.C.) (2000lb TALLBOY)	10.00	
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	OPS 19 - HANAUER (1st) (2000lb H.C.) (2000lb TALLBOY)	6.16	
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	OPS 20 - EISEN (2000lb H.C.)	5.20	
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	OPS 21 - DORTMUND (2000lb H.C.)	5.26	
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	OPS 22 - SANDERBERG (2nd) (2000lb H.C.) (2000lb TALLBOY)	6.20	
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	OPS 23 - HANAUER (2000lb H.C.)	4.45	
IXLEY AIR BOMBER	SUMMARY OF MONTHLY ENDS MAR 31st	21.30	21.30
		21.20	23.50

RAF Coningsby, a "Classic RAF base" that has seen operations over a seventy year period.



- 1. Fg Off M J Milligan with IX(B) Sqn Canberra
- 2. Sqn Ldr J D Melrose DFC belly lands a Canberra at RAF Coningsby
- 3. June 1959 AOC's Inspection at RAF Coningsby
- 4. Wheels-up! RAF Coningsby, 12 November 1959
- 5. Stained glass window in the Church of the Holy Spirit
- 6. A Canberra Typhoon prepares to take off
- 7. The BBMF Lancaster banks away
- 8. A Flight Commander IX(B) Sqn, Sqn Ldr J D Melrose DFC

Coningsby

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK230570; just off the A153 Sleaford to Horncastle road

DATES OF OPERATION:

1940 to current

SQUADRONS:

106 Sqn; 97 Sqn; 617 Sqn; 619 Sqn; 1514 BAT Flt; 61 Sqn; 83 Sqn; 97 Sqn; 109 Sqn; 138 Sqn; XV Sqn; 44 Sqn; 40 Sqn; 57 Sqn; IX(B) Sqn; 12 Sqn; 35 Sqn; 228 OCU; 6 Sqn; 54 Sqn; 41(R) Sqn; 111(F) Sqn; BBMF; 5 Sqn; 229 OCU; 56(R) Sqn; 29(F) Sqn; 6 Sqn; 29 (F) Sqn; 3(F) Sqn; 41(R) Sqn FJWOEU

RAF Coningsby is often described as a classic RAF base, which has been operational since November 1940; although building work had started in 1937.

The first operational unit was 106 Sqn with Hampdens, closely followed by 97 Sqn; both also operated Manchesters; these types were often synonymous with heavy losses. Coningsby was the second RAF base to receive Lancasters, but conditions were not ideal. 97 Sqn moved to the newly built RAF Woodhall Spa and 106 Sqn to RAF Syerston and the base closed for reconstruction.

Lodge. RAF Coningsby then housed 83 Sqn and 97 Sqn, both helping to develop target marking (Pathfinder) techniques for 5 Group.

Post World War II RAF Coningsby remained operational with various bombers through until 1964. Types operating from the base included: Lancasters, Lincolns, Mosquitoes, Washingtons, Canberras and Vulcans.

The temporary closure in 1964 was for Coningsby to be upgraded for the iconic TSR-2 and the base was due to be the OCU and Development Unit for the type. After cancellation of the TSR-2; Coningsby changed roles and became a fighter base. For many years it operated the Phantom, with various squadrons being based there. In 1976 the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight was relocated to Coningsby, where it remains today.

In 1984 Coningsby received Tornado F2 interceptors and these were followed in 1988 by the Tornado F3s.

The current phase of Coningsby operations with Typhoons started in 2005, when 29 (R) Sqn stood up at the base as the OCU and in 2006 the first operational unit 3(F) Sqn was formed at the base.

Village signs highlight Coningsby's aviation connections. Similar connections can be found in the various World War II and more modern memorials in the north aisle of St Michael Church, which is located on the A153 road.

The village cemetery on Dogdyke Road houses several air force graves.

When it reopened in August 1943, its first unit was 617 Sqn and this famous 'Dambusters' squadron. Arriving on 25 August, from Coningsby they flew many raids, before moving to RAF Woodhall Spa in January 1944.

619 Sqn (The Forgotten Squadron) operated from RAF Coningsby for 4 months, along with 61 Sqn, before 619 Sqn moved to RAF Dunholme

RAF Coningsby itself houses several aviation memorials, but these are only accessible by prior arrangement. These include: an honours and awards board in the station headquarters; a commemorative garden in front of the Sargent's Mess; and a host of stained glass windows in the Church of the Holy Spirit.



From decoy site, through operations, East Kirkby still reverberates to the familiar Lancaster sights and sounds.



1. 57 Sqn and 630 Sqn memorials at the entrance
2. 630 Sqn Lancaster I 'LE-F' 'Popeye', East Kirkby 1944
3. East Kirkby village sign
4. 630 Sqn Lancaster I LL966 LE-P, East Kirkby 1944
5. Tributes at East Kirkby's memorial
6. Lancaster 'Just Jane' taxis out



East Kirkby

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK338618; just off the A155 Coningsby to Spilsby road

DATES OF OPERATION:

1940 to 1958; current Visitor Centre

SQUADRONS:

57 Sqn; 630 Sqn; 460(RAAF) Sqn; 139 Sqn; 231 OCU; [USAF era] – 3931 ABG; 3917 ABS; 62, 63 & 64 ARS

In early 1940 East Kirkby was established as a decoy airfield site for RAF Manby and was bombed several times. Formal airfield constructions started in 1942 and the base was ready for operations in mid-1943.

The first operational unit was 57 Sqn, which arrived from RAF Scampton on 20 August 1943; they flew their first op from RAF East Kirkby on 27 August 1943.

In November 1943 the squadron's 'B' Flight was used to form the nucleus of 630 Sqn at the base and their first op took place on 18/19 November 1943.

During April 1944 RAF East Kirkby was given Base Station status and it became responsible for major servicing of aircraft from Spilsby and Strubby. The station and its squadrons suffered several sets of heavy losses on ops and on 17 April 1945 a bombed-up 57 Sqn Lancaster blew up at dispersal, killing 3 personnel and destroying 4 other Lancasters.

As the war in Europe drew to a close RAF East Kirkby undertook the role of training crews for Tiger Force operations in the Far East.

57 Sqn also became a trials unit for the new Lincoln bomber. Following 630 Sqn's disbandment 460(RAAF) Sqn moved to RAF East Kirkby from RAF Binbrook.

After a brief spell under Care and Maintenance, RAF East Kirkby re-opened to accommodate 139 Sqn & 231 OCU from RAF Coningsby with their Mosquitoes.

During the early Cold War era of the 1950s East Kirkby was selected for use by the USAF Strategic Air Command. The runways were extended and facilities upgraded as the base began to accept a series of temporary USAF deployments. Of particular note were the modified C-47 aircraft of the 62, 63 & 64 ARSs that trained in the clandestine role of rescuing downed aircrew from behind enemy lines.

In 1958 the USAF started to leave East Kirkby and significant areas of land were returned to agricultural use, with the land eventually being sold by the MOD.

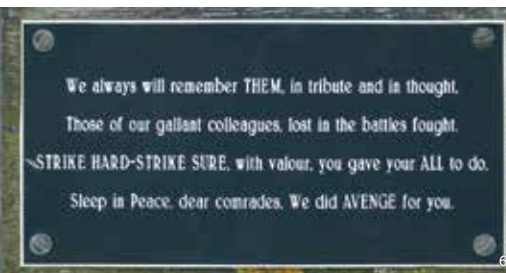
The memorial at the site to 57 Sqn and 630 Sqn was unveiled in 1979 and brothers Fred and Harold Panton established the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre on the site just off the A155 road in 1988, map ref: Sheet 122 SK338618. Around the Centre there are a host of commemorative and object displays in memory of former service personnel and their squadrons.

At the entrance to East Kirkby on the A115, the village signs also mark the local aviation connections.

Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre - see page 35



With operations in both wars Kelstern was one of the highest airfields in the Lincolnshire Wolds.



1. Kelstern's memorial – one of the first in the county
2. 625 Sqn Rigger/ Fitter ground crew at RAF Kelstern
3. Clearing snow at RAF Kelstern in WWII
4. Unknown bomber crew at RAF Kelstern
5. Derelict airfield buildings can still be seen in the area
6. "Strike Hard-Strike Sure" tribute at Kelstern



Kelstern

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 113 SK260920; through Kelstern village just off the A631 Louth to Market Rasen road

DATES OF OPERATION:

1916 to 1919; 1943 to 1945

SQUADRONS:

33(HD) Sqn; 625 Sqn; 170 Sqn

Records show that military flying first began at Kelstern in December 1916 when a site was used by 33 (HD) Sqn through until June 1919, when the site closed.

World War II survey work for Kelstern, at one of the highest points on the Lincolnshire Wolds, took place in February 1942 and the RAF Kelstern site was located about 1 mile from the World War I site. Construction work started in August 1942 and RAF Kelstern was ready for use by 20 September 1943.

625 Sqn of 1 Group RAF was formed at RAF Kelstern from a nucleus of crews from 'C' Flight 100 Sqn; and was declared operational with Lancasters on 9 October 1943. They flew their first op on 18 October 1943 to Hanover and the squadron was heavily involved in the 'Battle for Berlin'.

During early 1944 RAF Kelstern suffered some of its heaviest losses and 625 Sqn was involved in the notorious Mailey- le-Camp Raid during the run up to D-Day.

By autumn 1944 625 Sqn had expanded to become a 3 Flight unit; and then their 'C' Flt was used to form the nucleus of 170 Sqn, which quickly relocated to RAF Dunholme Lodge.

Over the winter of 1945 heavy snow again disrupted operations at RAF Kelstern. However, during this period the base was used to undertake trials on the servicing requirements for the new larger Lincoln bomber. This included the installation at the base of tram tracks from Grimsby to work out how Lincolns could be jacked onto trolleys and moved sideways into the T2 hangars.

By 9 April 1945 all of RAF Kelstern's aircraft had left the base and it was officially closed in October 1945. In 1946 RAF Kelstern became one of the first RAF bases in Lincolnshire to be returned to agriculture, although some wartime structures can still be seen in the area today.

In 1964 Kelstern achieved another first when the site became one of the first in the county to have a memorial erected and dedicated to the base's squadron and personnel. Funded by the 625 Squadron Association the memorial was dedicated on 25 October 1964. It is still there today, close to the T junction where the Ludborough Road meets the North Elkington to Binbrook Road, map reference: Sheet 113 SK253920.

Despite the often harsh operating conditions encountered in their remote location, RAF Kelstern ground crews were noted for attaining high serviceability. This included an occasion in February 1944 when two feet of snow fell across the Wolds; RAF Kelstern was clear of snow and operational some two days quicker than nearby RAF Binbrook.



Poor ground conditions saw RAF Ludford Magna get the nick name "Mudford Magna".

Ludford Magna

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 113 SK205878; just off the A631 Louth to Market Rasen road

DATES OF OPERATION:

1943 to 1945 – bomber base
1958 to 1963 – Thor missile base

SQUADRONS:

101 Sqn; 1682 BDTF; 104(SM) Sqn

The airfield site at Ludford Magna was first surveyed in June 1942; with construction being completed by June 1943, ready to receive 101 Sqn from RAF Holme-on-Spalding-Moor as part of 1 Group.

Operating from RAF Ludford Magna 101 Sqn undertook a special role from October 1943 until May 1945. This was flying top secret ABC

Other innovative uses were found for RAF Ludford Magna, which became the first 1 Group airfield to be fitted with FIDO (petrol burning fog dispersal equipment). Sadly conditions at the base were not ideal for FIDO. Foggy conditions were often low cloud rather than the 'radiating' fog encountered elsewhere in the county; and high winds on the exposed location blew the flames away from the runway.

Another innovation trialled by 101 Sqn was the Lincolnshire manufactured Rose Turret, to replace the Lancaster's Fraser-Nash rear turrets. These new larger turrets had larger calibre guns, which enabled the rear gunner to wear a parachute at all times.

101 Sqn remained at base until October 1945, when they moved to RAF Binbrook; and RAF Ludford Magna became a sub-base. Briefly

handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture, RAF Ludford Magna was reactivated in 1958 as a Thor Missile Site. 104(SM) Sqn was formed at the base as part of the RAF Hemswell Missile Wing. This nuclear deterrent role came to an end in May 1963, shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis.



1. 101 Sqn memorial on the road side in Ludford village
2. 101 Sqn Battle Honours for WWI and Post 1945
3. Battle Honours for 101 Sqn in WWII.
4. Ground crew pose on a 4,000lb bomb
5. Air and ground crew in front of Lancaster D 'Dog'



or 'Airborne Cigar' Lancasters; these aircraft were fitted with an early form of electronic counter measures. Carrying an 8th crew-member who spoke German, these Lancasters operated receiving and transmitting equipment that confused the German night fighter radio frequencies.

Like RAF Kelstern, RAF Ludford Magna was high in the Lincolnshire Wolds and often suffered from poor ground conditions, which earned it the nick name – 'Mudford Magna'.

In December 1943 RAF Ludford Magna became the headquarters for 14 Base, assuming control of RAF Wickenby and RAF Faldingworth. As with other sites this involved further facilities / hangars being added to the site. ABC Lancasters from 101 Sqn were heavily involved in providing 'electronic interference' for the airborne forces operations during D-Day.

A simple memorial to 101 Sqn was dedicated in July 1978, which has been kept up to date with the squadron's Battle Honours, including the South Atlantic (Falklands); Gulf War I; and Kosovo. The memorial is on the side of the A631 in the village of Ludford, map ref: Sheet 113 SK196890. Also on the A631 is the White Hart public house and displayed on the wall of the pub is a memorial plaque that honours the 101 Squadron crews.

In the village church of St Mary & Peter there is a roll of honour of 101 Squadron. Also in the church are the Squadron and Squadron Association standards, plus a small display about a 101 Squadron crew buried in Ludford's twined village of Voué, France.



Originally an Expansion Phase airfield of the mid-1930s, Manby still sees extensive use today.



1. Former RAF buildings are now used by ELDC
2. Control tower at RAF Manby
3. Empire Air Armaments School
4. The Station Commanders board in Guy Gibson House
5. Macaws aerobatic team booklet cover
6. A Varsity landing at RAF Manby

Manby

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK395870; just off the B1200 Louth to Saltfleet road

DATES OF OPERATION:

1938 to 1974

SQUADRONS:

1 AAS; 2 GAS; ECAS; EAAS; RAFFC; AFS; RAFCAW

Construction at Manby began in the RAF's Expansion phase of the mid-1930s. In 1937 the nearly complete Manby was used for an experimental cross-wind landing screen, but this was removed before RAF Manby opened as No 1 AAS in August 1938.

RAF Manby's many aircraft types: Harts & Hinds; through Wallaces & Overstrands; to Fairey



At the end of the war aircraft numbers were reduced, but aircraft from RAF Manby toured the world. The Royal Air Force Flying College was formed at RAF Manby on 1 July 1949, with a mixture of types including: Lincolns, Valettas, Meteors and Vampires. One airframe, the 'Aeries III' Lincoln undertook a famous Polar flight in 1951 and RAF Manby specialised in navigation training.

On 20 March 1951, HQ 25 Group re-formed at RAF Manby to form a new series of jet Advanced Flying Schools. Between 1949 and 1954 the RAF Handling Squadron operated from the base, usually receiving early new production aircraft to assess their operation and to prepare 'Pilot Notes'.

Further 'Aeries' series aircraft operated from RAF Manby, including Canberras and they undertook

several record breaking flights. In June 1962 the RAFFC was renamed the Royal Air Force College of Aerial Warfare; with new aircraft types like the Jet Provost and Dominie jet trainer. The college even had its own aerobatic display team the Macaws.

The early 1970s was an unsettled period and RAF

Battles operated mainly on the bombing ranges of the Lincolnshire coast. This role became more important with the outbreak of war and in July 1940 the AAS work was enhanced with the formation of 2 GAS.

Training at RAF Manby was an international affair and 1 AAS achieved 'Empire' status on 18 April 1943. The Empire Central Armament School (ECAS) devised and refined new techniques for bombing leaders / instructors and armament instructors.

Additional concrete runways were laid and a wide range of aircraft types operated from RAF Manby including: Wellingtons, Hudsons, Blenheims and Lancasters. The last wartime change occurred in November 1944 when ECAS became the Empire Air Armament School (EAAS).

Manby eventually closed for flying operations on 31 March 1974. Part of the domestic site was purchased by East Lindsey District Council for their main offices and other parts remain intact but under various different ownerships.

The Station Commanders Board still exists in Guy Gibson House on Manby Park and in special circumstances this can be viewed by prior arrangement with the building tenants the Environment Agency. Many of the roads still proudly carry aircraft names that flew from RAF Manby.



North Coates has seen on and off aviation related operations from 1916 through to the present day.



- 1. The North Coates memorial looks out over the Humber Estuary
- 2. Bloodhound missiles
- 3. Navigator statue, part of the North Coates memorial
- 4. A moving inscription about the RAF North Coates Strike Wing
- 5. The North Coates Flying Club
- 6. The Heritage Room at North Coates Flying Club



North Coates

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 113 SK375025; just off the A1031 Tetney to Marshchapel road

DATES OF OPERATION:

1916 to 1919 – fighters;
 1927 to 1952 – various roles
 1957 to 1971 – Bloodhound SAMs
 1976 to 1990 – Bloodhound SAMs

SQUADRONS:

33 Sqn; 2 AAS; 1 AOS; 235 Sqn; 236 Sqn; 248 Sqn; 22 Sqn; 812 Sqn; 816 Sqn; 42 Sqn; 86 Sqn; 407 (RCAF) Sqn; 59 Sqn; 53 Sqn; 415 (RCAF) Sqn; 404 (RCAF) Sqn; 143 Sqn; 254 Sqn; 236 Sqn; 53 MU; 5131 BDW; 275 Sqn; 25 Sqn; 85 Sqn

A Night Landing Ground was established at North Coates Fitties in 1916, which saw operations of various types until 1919, when the site reverted to its original owner.

The same land was re-purchased in 1927 for use as a landing ground for bombing training camps at the Donna Nook range. In 1935 North Coates Fitties became a permanent base with 2 Air Armament School and then 1 Air Observer School.

In February 1940 the base transferred to Coastal Command and was renamed as RAF North Coates. Various squadrons arrived including 235 Sqn, 236 Sqn and 248 Sqn; their Blenheims undertook long range maritime patrols. As these squadrons moved in April 1940 22 Sqn arrived with Beauforts and 812 Sqn with Swordfish. A new Fleet Air Arm unit, 816 Sqn, arrived in March 1941 and was soon followed by 42 Sqn. These were both replaced by 86 Sqn in 1941

and was joined by 407 (RCAF) Sqn; both units flew 'Rover' anti-shipping strike sweeps along the European coast. These were daring raids and casualties were high.

Both squadrons were replaced in early 1942 with 59 Sqn and 53 Sqn. Other squadrons arrived and operated as a Strike Wing and included: 415 (RCAF) Sqn; 404 (RCAF) Sqn; 143 Sqn; 254 Sqn; 236 Sqn. Using the Beaufighter they evolved into a potent force and sank tonnes of enemy shipping.

In July 1945 the base was closed and transferred to Maintenance Command; operation by 53 MU and 5131 BDU helped clear Lincolnshire of airframes and munitions.

The base was flooded during the east coast floods of January 1953 and ironically the next unit to arrive was 'B' Ft 25 Sqn, undertaking search and rescue duties with Sycamore helicopters; before going into Care and Maintenance in July 1956.

RAF North Coates reopened in 1957 as a Bloodhound I air defence missile site and in May 1960 it became HQ 148 Wing controlling several missile sites in the county. 25 Sqn formed to introduce the Bloodhound II into service and the base undertook missile and radar development work. Eventually the units dispersed and the base closed on 28 February 1971.

The missile era re-started in 1976 when 'B' Ft 85 Sqn arrived with their Bloodhounds and the base was finally closed in 1990.

A stunning memorial to the RAF North Coates Strike Wing can be found opposite the RAFA Club in the ground of Ross Castle, above the Central Promenade car park in Cleethorpes, map ref: Sheet 113 SK305093.

Just off the A1031 road in North Cotes is St Nicholas village church, map ref: Sheet 113 SK 350006. The church features a stained glass window, presented in January 1971, which shows the station badge from RAF North Coates.

The churchyard also contains a number of air force personnel graves.



1

Following its initial satellite airfield status, RAF Spilsby became home to several noted RAF squadrons.



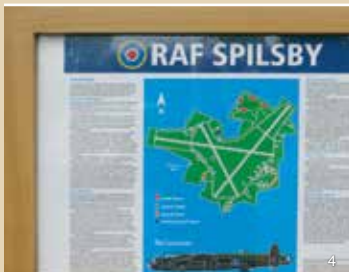
2



3



6



4

1. The impressive Spilsby memorial was dedicated in 2012
2. Ground crew pose with Lancaster EM-Y
3. An unknown aircrew with Lancaster EM-W
4. RAF Spilsby interpretation panel
5. Spilsby memorial and interpretation panel overlook the former airfield
6. The Spilsby memorial commemorates squadrons and an airfield incident



5

Spilsby

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK450650; just off the B1195 Halton Hologate to Great Steeping road

DATES OF OPERATION:

1943 to 1958

SQUADRONS:

207 Sqn; 44 Sqn; 75(NZ) Sqn; 7536th Material Sqn

The construction of RAF Spilsby began in late 1942, formally opening as a satellite to RAF East Kirkby in September 1943. 207 Sqn with Lancasters was the first unit to move to RAF Spilsby arriving on 12 October 1943. They were quickly into action with ops over Germany before the major 1943-44 'Battle of Berlin' offensive.

44 Sqn had been earmarked to be part of the 'Tiger Force' but its aircraft were passed to 75(NZ) Sqn at RAF Spilsby. As the 'Tiger Force' itself was disbanded both squadrons were reduced to non-operational flying.

An Armament Practice Station was established at RAF Spilsby on 26 October 1945 as part of 12 Group Fighter Command; and various visiting squadrons participated in air firing exercises out of the base, including: 29 Sqn; 65 Sqn; 129 Sqn; 219 Sqn; 264 Sqn; and 222 Sqn with their Meteor jet fighters.

RAF Spilsby went into the Care and Maintenance programme in the mid 1950s, before being allocated for use by the USAF on 15 June 1955; this role was in support of their operations at RAF East Kirkby. At this time one of the runways was extended and strengthened,

only to see the base returned to the Air Ministry in March 1958.

The selling off of the site started in 1962 and gradually parts were returned to agricultural use of various types. Memorials were erected on the former airfield, including the impressive new memorial that was dedicated

in the summer of 2012. This can be located off the B1195 Spilsby to Wainfleet Road, following the signs to the Heavy Horse Centre along the road between Halton Hologate and Bratoft/ Gunby, map ref: Sheet 122 SK445649.

The memorial is in various sections and commemorates various aspects associated with the RAF Spilsby site: 207 Squadron and 44 (Rhodesia) Squadron; the personnel that served at RAF Spilsby; and an incident on the station Bomb Dump on 10th April 1944. This incident cost the lives of ten armourers and includes three who have no known graves.

In May 1944 the 5 Group Anti-Aircraft School opened at the base to train ground personnel in the use of the Hispano 20mm AA gun; with live firing exercises taking place on the nearby Wainfleet Sands bombing range.

Base aircraft played an active role in bombing operations pre and post D-Day landings, mainly against tactical targets in northern France.

At the end of September 1944, 44 (Rhodesia) Sqn moved to RAF Spilsby from RAF Dunholme Lodge. These two noted and long standing 5 Group squadrons undertook various ops during the winter of 1944-45 and continued right through until the end of hostilities in Europe.



1

Strubby

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK445810; just off the B1373 Withern to Alford road

DATES OF OPERATION:

1944 to 1972 – RAF Phase
1974 to – current civilian phase

SQUADRONS:

280 Sqn; 144 Sqn; 404(RCAF) Sqn; 619 Sqn; 227 Sqn; 5 Gp AAS

RAF Strubby officially opened on 13 April 1944 as a 5 Group base but the first unit was 280 Sqn Coastal Command, with Warwick Air Sea Rescue aircraft. In July 1944 they were joined by Beaufighters of 144 Sqn and 404(RCAF) Sqn.

After these units left, 619 Sqn moved to RAF Strubby in September 1944 from RAF Dunholme

the end of World War II both squadrons began to fly repatriation flights, which helped return more than 2,000 prisoners of war from Europe. Many Commonwealth airmen flew from RAF Strubby and their personnel were awarded a high proportion of medals: including Flt Lt John Whiteley DFC from 619 Sqn who is pictured with his crew at RAF Strubby.

By the end of June 1945 the squadrons had left and ground parties for the 'Tiger Force' started to form up at RAF Strubby and personnel numbers grew. However the base moved to a Care and Maintenance footing and became a relief landing ground for the RAFFC at RAF Manby. During this period many types flew from RAF Strubby including: Athenas, Vampires and Canberras.

By the mid-1950s new types seen on base included Meteors and Hunters. As training into the 1960s continued lots of the types inter-changed between RAF Manby and RAF Strubby. Varsities and Dominies remained at RAF Strubby until it closed in September 1972.

Post RAF closure Strubby saw additional activity as a heliport to service the gas rigs in the southern North Sea and work for the Trinity House lighthouses and lightships.

Many of the original RAF era buildings still stand – there is a particularly evocative cluster near to the Woodthorpe Garden Centre and Aquatics Centre. The airfield watch office has been turned into living accommodation and there is regular gliding activity on site by the Lincolnshire Gliding Club.

Close to the former station entrance are two memorials, the second of which was dedicated on 24 August 2014. The nearby Woody's Bar on Woodthorpe Leisure Park also features commemorative displays about the station.

Many buildings can still be seen at Strubby that provide a reminder of its wartime role.



2



3



4



5



6



8

1. Flt Lt J Whiteley DFC (centre) and his 619 Sqn crew
2. A 227 Sqn crew with their Lancaster 9J-J
3. Strubby's old watch office
4. The guard room by the main gate
5. RAF Strubby's fire station
6. Strubby Memorial Ceremony
7. A Canberra bomber comes into land at RAF Strubby
8. 227 Sqn pilots pictured in May 1945



7

Lodge and their first operation was a mine laying op. The 7 October 1944 saw the formation of 'B' Flt 227 Sqn at RAF Strubby and they were briefly attached to 619 Sqn. 227 Sqn joined with another Flt from RAF Bardney and they left for RAF Balderton on 20 October 1944.

619 Sqn flew extensively from RAF Strubby and 227 Sqn returned on 5 April 1944. Towards



Woodhall Spa will be remembered as the base from where Wg Cdr Guy Gibson VC took off from on his final Op.



1. Woodhall Spa's impressive memorial in the town centre
2. 627 Sqn Mosquito at RAF Woodhall Spa
3. 617 Sqn memorial plaque at Woodhall Spa
4. Bloodhound missile from the V-Force era
5. Wg Cdr Guy Gibson VC commemorative plaque



Woodhall Spa

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK210610; just off the B1192 Woodhall Spa to Coningsby road

DATES OF OPERATION:

1944 to 1945 – World War II phase;
1960 to 1965 – Bloodhound missile phase

SQUADRONS:

106 Sqn; 97 Sqn; 1514 BAT; 619 Sqn; 617 Sqn; IX(B) Sqn; 627 Sqn; 109 Sqn; 464 Sqn; 222 Sqn; 112 Sqn

RAF Woodhall Spa opened as a satellite base to RAF Coningsby in February 1942. The first squadron to fly from the base was 106 Sqn; however the Lancasters of 97 Sqn arrived on 1 March 1942, becoming operational on 20 March 1942.



Steenbergen, the Netherlands; killing him and his crewmember Sqn Ldr Jim Warwick.

617 Sqn flew 'Tallboy' and 'Grand Slam' ops from RAF Woodhall Spa. As the war in Europe drew to a close 617 Sqn crews moved to other squadrons to teach precision bombing techniques. Preparations were also underway at RAF Woodhall Spa for it to become an assembly base for 'Tiger Force' ground crews.

In September 1945 627 Sqn ceased flying and their aircraft passed to 109 Sqn; 463 Sqn Mosquitoes arrived in late September for disbanding. RAF Woodhall Spa itself closed on 10 December 1945 and went into Care & Maintenance, when it was used to store munitions.

To support the build-up of the V-Force and the Thor Missile sites across Lincolnshire, RAF Woodhall Spa began ops in May 1960 as part of 13 Group as a Bloodhound I SAM base with 222 Sqn. This unit was later replaced by 112 Sqn with Bloodhound II SAMs under the area control of 148 Wing at RAF North Coates. This unit moved to Cyprus in 1965.

Large parts of the former airfield site were returned to agriculture. Some parts remained in use for engine testing by engineers from RAF Coningsby; but the area is now a Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust nature reserve.

There is a major memorial complex located in the centre of the nearby town of Woodhall Spa, map ref: Sheet 122 SK193631. One is shaped as a breached dam and was dedicated on 17 May 1987; a second 617 Sqn Memorial commemorates post-World War II operations. The nearby St Peter's church has plaques relating to 617 Sqn and 619 Sqn.

In April 1943 97 Sqn moved to RAF Bourn but three crews remained as the nucleus of 619 Sqn, which formed at RAF Woodhall Spa on 18 April 1943 and the squadron became operational on 11 June 1943.

Various regional RAF base responsibility changes saw 619 Sqn move to RAF Coningsby, with 617 Sqn moving in the opposite direction. Both squadrons had officers' quarters in what is now the Petwood Hotel. By this time 617 Sqn was using Mosquitoes for low-level target marking and 627 Sqn moved to the base to learn this technique.

On 19/20 September 1944 Base Operation Officer Wg Cdr Guy Gibson VC flew as master bomber in a Mosquito; sadly he crashed near

Thorpe Camp Visitor Centre - see page 36

Petwood Hotel - see page 37

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum - see page 38



There are many other aviation sites across the District, including civilian aerodromes.



1. A Tiger Moth pictured in an earlier aviation era
2. Actor Tony Hancock on location at Skegness – Ingoldmells, with a Lee Richards Annular biplane
3. Auster J/1N Alpha, with familiar Skegness caravans in the background

Other Locations

Bucknall

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 121 SK170705

This was the location of a World War I Night Landing Ground that was used by 33 (HD) Sqn operating aircraft such as Avro 504s, FE.2bs, FE.2ds and F.2bs; between 1916 and 1919.

Ludborough

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 113 SK280965

Major airfields throughout Lincolnshire were normally allocated an emergency landing ground. Some reports note Ludborough (located close to the B1431) as being such a site for RAF Binbrook; although it may have undertaken a similar role for RAF North Coates.

RAF Market Stainton

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK227801

Set in the heart of the Lincolnshire Wolds, RAF Market Stainton opened in early 1943 as 233 MU and was quickly established as a major munitions storage facility supplying 1 Group airfields across the north of the district. These munitions were typically delivered by rail on the Lincoln to Louth line and eventually the site had well over 200 personnel based there. Unusually most of these munitions were stored along the country lanes and verges of the area and are reported to have stretched for up to 60 miles.

Moorby

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK300655

A Class 1 Landing Ground for use by 38 (HD) Sqn between 1916 and 1918; and by 90 (HD) Sqn between 1918 and 1919, before it was closed.

Skegness – Burgh Road

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK556643

Reports indicate that this site was used to carry out anti-Zeppelin patrols off the east coast soon after the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

Skegness - Winthorpe

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK568665

This site was laid out as a civilian airstrip in 1930 as part of Eastern Air Transport Ltd's operations. The Skegness and East Lincolnshire Aero Club formed there in 1932 and held an Air Pageant soon after. Regular flight services were operated across the Wash to Hunstanton.

One notable aviator who is said to have learnt to fly at the location was Alex Henshaw. The airstrip was closed in the late 1930s as war loomed.

Skegness - Ingoldmells

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK565675

Built in 1948 opposite the Butlin's Holiday Camp this airstrip was called Butlin's Skegness (Ingoldmells) Aerodrome and was officially opened on 13 June 1948 by Alderman J Forester, Chairman of Lindsey County Council.

Butlin's owned light aircraft provided pleasure flights for holiday makers, however these aircraft were moved away and Skegness (Airport) Ltd was formed by a young Freddie Laker. Various other companies operated from the site and a notable use occurred in the early 1960s when the aerodrome was used to base the aircraft for the making of the film, 'Those Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machines'.

The aerodrome closed in the early 1990s although there is now a micro-light landing strip in the vicinity, map ref: Sheet 122 SK563663.

Coastal Bombing Ranges

During the late 1920s the need for armament practice locations was recognised by the RAF. The flat sands and mudflats of the East Lincolnshire coast proved to be ideal locations, especially as the areas were sparsely populated but close to RAF bases. Three particular sites are worthy of mention in the East Lincolnshire area.

Donna Nook

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 113 SK 431997

Initially opened as a relief landing ground to North Coates Fitties in 1927, Donna Nook provided a summer camp training operations for its parent airfield. During World War II this location was mainly used by 1 Group squadrons from RAF Manby. After a period of closure it re-opened in 1967. The Donna Nook bombing range is still actively used today, where the operations enjoy a careful relationship with the nearby seal colonies.

Theddlethorpe

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 113 SK 470905

This location also had its own landing strip and

was a satellite to RAF Manby, established in the late 1930s. During World War II the range came under the control of 25 Group, but it passed to 1 Group post World War II and saw a lot of use by aircraft from RAFFC Manby. The site closed in 1976 when the range area moved north to Donna Nook.

Wainfleet

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK 525565

The bombing and gunnery school was established here in 1937 as part of 5 Group. Used extensively post World War II the site underwent several upgrades and stayed in continual use until November 2009.

One of the final operations undertaken on the range was a bombing competition between two of the noted squadrons featured in this guide – IX(B) Sqn and 617 Sqn; this was to mark the 65th anniversary of the sinking of the German battleship Tirpitz by Lancasters from both squadrons – on this occasion the competition was won by 617 Sqn.

Anti Aircraft Defences

Following the establishment of the airfields post World War I, it soon became apparent that there would be a need to create a warning system to detect enemy air raids. The aim of the system was to give fighters as much time to get airborne and intercept the incoming aircraft.

The solution came in the form of Radio Direction Finding (RDF), or as we now call it, radar and by 1939 a network of RDF sites had been established. Called Chain Home (CH) these sites were located on high ground around the county. RDF Station 34 was at Stenigot, map ref: Sheet 122 SK256825. One of Stenigot's distinctive 360 foot high transmitter towers still stands proudly today on the Wolds skyline as a silent reminder of its role in such an epic phase

of World War II as the Battle of Britain. Gee navigation aid equipment was also installed at Stenigot.

To supplement these operations Chain Home Low (CHL) sites were also developed and an example in the district was at Skendleby, map ref: Sheet 122 SK438708; these sites were designed to detect low flying aircraft.

Post World War II saw a new generation of early warning radars evolve and they were integrated as part of a wider communications network. The remains of the distinctive ACE HIGH radar dishes can still be seen lying in close proximity to the Stenigot transmitter tower, which is itself still used to train aerial erectors from RAF Digby.



1. Bombing range Ops Board
2. Tornado bomber attacks a Wainfleet Range target
3. Wainfleet Range control tower
4. The Wash Ranges mapped out!



1. Stenigot's ACE HIGH radar dishes now lie un-used
2. Stenigot's distinctive transmitter tower still dominates the Wold's skyline
3. ACE HIGH radar dishes at Stenigot

Other Memorials

Binbrook

GRID REF:

Sheet 113 SK 210940: 460 Squadron memorial plaque

Sheet 113 SK 208942: Binbrook Church of England Primary School

Sheet 113 SK 212939: St Mary and St Gabriel Church

HISTORY:

Entering Binbrook village on the B1203 from Market Rasen you will find the 460 Squadron memorial stone, which was dedicated on 9th September 1973. This is located on the right hand side of the road close to the junction that takes you up to the old RAF base.

On the opposite side of the road, in the grounds of the Binbrook Church of England Primary School is the upper tail fin from a Lightning. This fin came from an aircraft from the nearby

RAF Binbrook and was presented to the school on 19th June 1987. The fin is decorated with the markings from 5 and 11 Squadrons that flew from the base. This is viewable from the roadside and a plaque in the nearby verge explains the background to the memorial.

In the church of St Mary and St Gabriel on St Mary's Lane there are various artefacts relating to the village's air force heritage. A roll of honour to 460 Squadron and its crews is housed in a display cabinet and a litany desk dated 9th June 1974 also commemorates the memory of 460 Squadron RAAF.

The Binbrook Parish was closely connected to RAF Binbrook, which closed in 1989. A stained glass window was dedicated that year to mark the association; this was designed / fabricated by, the Lincoln artist Glenn Carter. Several military graves can also be seen in the churchyard.

Other Memorials

Great Steeping (Spilsby)

GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK 441643: All Saints Church

HISTORY:

The All Saints village church houses two memorial plaques for squadrons that served locally at RAF Spilsby. The smaller of the two plaques was dedicated to 44 (Rhodesia) Squadron on 21st May 1989, whilst the larger memorial plaque was dedicated to 207 Squadron on 8th May 1992.

In the western end of the church there is a display case that houses the 207 Squadron, roll of honour, which was deposited at the church by the squadron at the same time that the memorial plaque was dedicated.

Halton Hologate

GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK 416652: The Bell public house

HISTORY:

The slightly faded sign at The Bell public house features a painting of Lancaster flying over the public house and it also has the names of 44 and 207 Squadrons at the foot of the sign.

Holton le Clay

GRID REF:

Sheet 113 SK 283035: RAF Waltham Memorial

HISTORY:

On the A16 travelling south from Grimsby to Louth, just before you enter the village of Holton le Clay you will find a memorial stone to the memory of 100 Squadron and RAF Waltham (Grimsby). This is located next to the traffic lights for the turn into the village; it was dedicated in November 1978.



1. 460 Squadron Memorial Stone
2. Tail fin from a Lightning aircraft



1. All Saints Church, Great Steeping
2. Holton Le Clay Memorial
3. The Bell, Halton Hologate

Other Memorials

Ludborough – Lincolnshire Wolds Railway

GRID REF:

Sheet 113 SK 308960: Memorial plaques

HISTORY:

A memorial plaque to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain was unveiled at Ludborough Station on the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway on 11th September 2010. This plaque is displayed on the waiting room wall.

A second plaque with an aviation connection is displayed alongside a rose in the garden behind the signal box at the station, it commemorates those killed in the 9/11 terrorist attacks in America.

North Thoresby

GRID REF:

Sheet 113 SK 292985: Village memorial

HISTORY:

The beautiful memorial in place in the village commemorates the loss of the entire crew of the Lancaster ED583 on 4th October 1943.

Having taken off from nearby RAF Waltham on a test flight the Lancaster suffered structural problems and came down on the village, destroying the Methodist Church and nearby cottages.

Fortunately none of the villagers were injured but sadly the entire 8 man crew all lost their lives. The dedication of the memorial to the crew of the Lancaster ED583 took place on 4th September 2005.

Other Memorials

Revesby

GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK 298614: St Lawrence village church

HISTORY:

The St Lawrence village church, which is located just off the A155, houses a wooden panel memorial to the village residents from the three services that lost their lives in World War Two.

A second memorial panel is in situ in memory of a 97 Squadron crew that lost their lives when Lancaster ND415, collided with a Lancaster LL967 of 57 Squadron in the parish during World War Two.

Tattershall Thorpe - The Blue Bell

GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK218595: The Blue Bell public house

HISTORY:

The Blue Bell Inn houses RAF memorabilia from RAF Woodhall Spa and has signatures on its low ceiling from some of the members of the various RAF squadrons who frequently visited the pub, a tradition that is continued today by RAF personnel from nearby RAF Coningsby.

Ulceby Cross

GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK 406733: Aircraft memorial

HISTORY:

This memorial stone to the crew of a 12 Squadron Lancaster, PB476 from RAF Wickenby is located on an unclassified road close to the A16. The aircraft was shot down by a Luftwaffe aircraft during the night of 4th March 1945. It features the crew names and was dedicated in 1995, on the 50th anniversary of the original crash.



1. & 4. Memorial Plaques at Ludborough
2. & 3. North Thoresby memorial

1. Ulceby Cross aircraft memorial
2. & 3. The Blue Bell, Tattershall Thorpe
4. St Lawrence's Church, Revesby

Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Visitor Centre

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK215565; on Dogdyke Road in Coningsby Village, near the A153/A155 junction

ADDRESS:

RAF Coningsby, Dogdyke Road, Coningsby, Lincolnshire LN4 4SY

TELEPHONE

01522 782040

EMAIL:

bbmf@lincolnshire.gov.uk

WEBSITE:

www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/bbmf

OPENING HOURS:

Monday to Friday 10.00am to 5.00pm; hangar tours start at 10.30am and run throughout the day. Last tour 3.30pm (March-October) (3pm November-February) Normally closed Saturday/Sundays and Bank Holidays.

ADMISSION FEES:

Visitor Centre – free admission; Cost of tours on application.

A unique partnership between the Royal Air Force and Lincolnshire County Council provides the public with a gateway to the home of the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) at RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire. The BBMF operates a Lancaster, 5 Spitfires, 2 Hurricanes, 2 Chipmunks and a Dakota.

The Visitor Centre provides the opportunity to see the Flight's historic aircraft at close quarters and to observe the technicians working to maintain these magnificent aircraft. The aircraft are not museum pieces; they are all still flying and can be seen at a variety of air shows in the summer months.

Entry to the exhibition areas, shop and car park is free but access to the BBMF hangar is by guided tour only, for which there is a small charge. Hangar tours are led by knowledgeable volunteer guides, who give freely of their time and who, in some cases, have first-hand experience of the aircraft. (Tours last approximately one hour).

The RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Visitor Centre attracts visitors of all ages and interests, as well as aviation enthusiasts and the families of people who fought in World War II.

Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK338618; just off the A155 Coningsby to Spilsby road

ADDRESS:

East Kirkby Airfield, East Kirkby, Nr Spilsby, Lincolnshire PE23 4DE

TELEPHONE

01790 763207

EMAIL:

enquiries@lincsaviation.co.uk

WEBSITE:

www.lincsaviation.co.uk

OPENING HOURS:

Monday to Saturday CLOSED ON SUNDAYS
October-Easter – 10am to 4pm (last entry 3pm)
Easter-October – 9.30am to 5pm (Last entry 4pm)

ADMISSION FEES:

Details on application

The Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre is a privately owned and run museum, based on the old wartime airfield of RAF East Kirkby. It was set up by two farming brothers, Fred and Harold Panton as a memorial to Bomber Command, and primarily as a tribute to their older brother, Christopher Whitton Panton; who was

shot down and killed on a bombing raid over Nuremberg on 30/31 March 1944.

The Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre is the only Airfield Museum in the country recreated to its original design sited on an original WWII airfield. Here you get the atmosphere of what it would have been like.

It holds one of the rarest aircraft, an Avro Lancaster Bomber in its collection along with many wartime vehicles, including a Ford WOT1 Crew Bus, the only one of its kind known in existence. The Avro Lancaster, Just Jane, frequently performs four engine taxi runs, the only place in the world you can see this performed on an original airfield. They have retained the original 1940s control tower and the Hangar is built on the original wartime hangar base.

The museum is built up entirely around RAF Bomber Command but the exhibits and displays span many areas, such as The Home Front and Escape and Evasion, giving a wide perspective on wartime Britain and the trials and tribulations of World War II.

The museum is expanding every year and it is their common ambition to fully rebuild it to a complete original wartime airfield, preserving the memory of Bomber Command for many years to come.



1. The Lancaster undergoing maintenance
2. Extensive WWII displays

1. Lancaster 'Just Jane' nestled away in 'her' hangar
2. Taxi-ride visitors preparing to embark on 'Just Jane'
3. Fred and Harold Panton on the control tower at East Kirkby

Thorpe Camp Visitor Centre

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK215597; on the B1192 Woodhall Spa to Coningsby road

ADDRESS:

Woodhall Spa Road, Tattershall Thorpe, Lincolnshire LN4 4PE

TELEPHONE

01526 342249

EMAIL:

webmaster@thorpecamp.org

WEBSITE:

www.thorpecamp.org.uk

OPENING HOURS:

Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays, Easter to end of September. July and August also every Wednesday, 1pm to 5pm. Pre-booked groups by arrangement.

ADMISSION FEES:

Details on application

Thorpe Camp Visitor Centre was formerly part of No 1 Communal Site, RAF Woodhall Spa, and was built in 1940 with a planned lifespan of only ten years! The site included the Officers'

and Sergeants' Messes, Airmen's Dining Halls and the NAAFI building, together with ration stores, latrine and ablution blocks. Only the Airmen's Dining Halls, the NAAFI and ration store are within the Centre's boundary.

At the end of the war, when the RAF vacated the site, it was taken on by the Horncastle Rural District Council who converted it into temporary housing until the early 1960's.

By 1987 the site was completely derelict and overgrown. Part of it came within the area acquired by the Woodland Trust when they purchased the adjacent Carr Woods and it was their plan to demolish the buildings.

The Thorpe Camp Preservation Group was set up in April 1988 with the aim of restoring the site and creating a Visitor Centre to tell the story of RAF Woodhall Spa and civilian life during WWII. The Preservation Group leased the remaining original camp buildings from the Woodland Trust for 5 years, purchasing them in 1998.

The site houses a significant memorial wall, which features memorial plaques to the 4 RAF squadrons that flew from RAF Woodhall Spa. Located on the roadside is a memorial stone and Lancaster propeller that was originally located at the entrance to RAF Woodhall Spa.

Petwood Hotel

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK193638; on the Stixwoud Road, in Woodhall Spa

ADDRESS:

Stixwoud Rd, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire LN10 6QG

TELEPHONE

01526 352411

EMAIL:

reception@petwood.co.uk

WEBSITE:

www.petwood.co.uk

The house was originally built at the turn of the last century for Lady Weigall. The name Petwood, derives from the fact that the site she chose was in the area of her favourite 'pet wood'.

Despite a spell as a military hospital for convalescents in the First World War, the Petwood's most notable appearance in wartime history is probably as the Officers Mess for the 617 Squadron. Requisitioned by the RAF in 1942, originally Officers of 97 and 619

Squadrons were based at the Petwood.

When it was decided that the 617 'Dambusters Squadron' should be made into a special duties squadron which would work in isolation and secrecy, Woodhall airfield was selected as the operational base. So 619 Squadron was moved out of the Petwood and 617 Squadron was moved in. For Officers at war, the Petwood was fondly remembered as a 'splendid place' remote from battle.

Today, the Squadron Bar hosts a range of memorabilia and tributes to Guy Gibson VC, Leonard Cheshire VC and their Officers. In the grounds you will find a dummy practice bouncing bomb, as was used in the Dambusters raid and over the bar you will see the branch of a tree that was found impaled in the fuselage of a Lancaster.

The Petwood Hotel extends a warm welcome to visitors who wish to view the Squadron Bar and memorabilia. However, please note that the Squadron Bar is occasionally booked for private parties and you may wish to telephone ahead to confirm availability.



1. Vulcan bomber model reflects the V-Force era
2. Lightning F.1A XM192 at Thorpe Camp
3. 619 Squadron memorial plaque

1. The Squadron Bar
2. The elegant Petwood Hotel

Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum

LOCATION / GRID REF:

Sheet 122 SK196634; on Iddesleigh Road in Woodhall Spa

ADDRESS:

Iddesleigh Road, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire LN10 6SH

TELEPHONE

01526 353775

EMAIL:

info@cottagemuseum.co.uk

WEBSITE:

www.cottagemuseum.co.uk

OPENING HOURS:

Open daily, Good Friday to 31 October

ADMISSION FEES:

Details on application

The Woodhall Spa Cottage Museum opened its doors in 1987 and has so far welcomed several thousand visitors. It is a small, independent, community museum managed by volunteers and is housed in 'The Bungalow', as it is affectionately referred to by local residents. It

is itself a major exhibit being constructed of corrugated iron laid on a timber frame and is situated in its own quiet grounds.

The museum is a result of the vision of John Wield, who foresaw that one day visitors to the Spa would ask about the origins of the village and so set about photographing and recording Woodhall Spa in its Edwardian heyday. His photographs form the core of the museum's collection and his family lived in the bungalow until 1965.

Having recently been the recipient of a major heritage lottery award, the bungalow and its outbuildings have undergone major refurbishment. New exhibitions have been developed reflecting the wide and varied history of the village from Victorian times to the present day, as well as reflecting the Wield's family home. Themes reflect the war time importance of the village, as well as the stories of local characters and the development of the Spa as a major tourist attraction.

A memorial stone "To the men who left Woodhall Spa to fight in the battle of Arnhem" was dedicated in September 2010. The museum also houses the Tourist Information Centre.

Tourist Information

There are many other great places to visit in East Lincolnshire, from traditional resorts with their friendly family spirit and all weather attractions, or quieter resort towns and villages with their charming, tranquil ambience... or travel inland to discover historic market towns, mills, golf courses and wonderful walks. There are also a host of events and festivals throughout the year, so you will never be short of something to do.

The great places to visit in East Lincolnshire are equally matched by the great places to stay. There's a wide variety of quality accommodation to suit everyone's needs, from large hotels to smaller guest houses, quaint self catering cottages to friendly camping and caravan sites, all offering the warmest of welcomes.

For further information -

www.visiteastlincolnshire.com

www.lovelincolnshirewolds.com

 **@Visit East Lincolnshire**

 **@VisitEastLincs**

 **Visit East Lincs**



1. Memorial stone dedication, September 2010



Whilst every care has been taken to ensure accuracy of the information contained in this publication, East Lindsey District Council cannot accept responsibility for any inaccuracies contained herein, nor does inclusion in this publication imply recommendation.

© East Lindsey District Council 2016 Publishers: East Lindsey District Council.

Research and editorial: Howard Heeley, Down to Earth Promotions. Design: Compass Point Business Services