



**THE ROYAL AIR FORCES
ASSOCIATION**
Rutland Branch
THE FLYING HORSESHOE



Branch Newsletter

April 2012



Acting Chairman Phil Marston welcomes Ray to our meeting

April Meeting

Our speaker for our April meeting was Ray Hill of Burley, Ray gave a visual presentation, followed by a question and answer session. The DVD Ray showed was on the history of RAF Stations in Rutland. This compilation of sequential facts, photographs, and video with suitable music he had created himself.

This presentation was very poignant as the RAF Ensign was brought down at Cottesmore for the last time on Sunday 1st April 2012.

During the 2nd world war RAF Woolfox Lodge was a satellite airfield for Cottesmore. This airfield was situated on the east of the A1 in the parish of Pickworth, which for the golfers among us is east, of The Rutland County Golf Club. RAF Woolfox was operational between 1940 and 1965 when the RAF finally withdrew. The last unit on the site was No 62 Squadron with their Bloodhound missiles these were withdrawn in 1964 a year before the unit closed.

RAF North Luffenham opened in the summer of 1940 as Number 17 Elementary Flying Training School flying Tiger Moths. This was followed by the arrival of 61 and 144 Squadrons who were flying Hampdens. Between 1942 and 1954 when the final flying unit left North Luffenham they had seen many different and diverse aircraft as the Wellington, Lancaster, Stirling, Dakota, Halifax tugs, Horsa Hamilcar gliders, and the RCAF Sabres. After this the unit took on a



number of Ground communication rolls as well an Aircrew Medical roll. The last RAF presence ended in 1997, the station however opened again in 1998 when the Army took over the base.



RAF Cottesmore was born out of an expansion scheme airfield built in 1936-38 on 200 acres north of the village that bears its name. Initially allocated to No. 2 Group, the first occupants were Nos. 35 and 207 Squadrons, which arrived with their Vickers Wellesley in April 1938. The Wellesley was soon replaced by Battles. Shortly before the outbreak of war No. 185 Squadron arrived with Hampdens and Herefords and No. 106 a few weeks later. During the next few months the station took on a training roll. In 1940 from time to time the

Hampdens took on the job of dropping leaflets on the continent. In 1942 RAF Cottesmore converted to Wellingtons, which remained for about a year when the unit was prepared for the arrival of the Americans.

US Ninth Air Force arrived in October 1943 to set up a Troop Carrier Wing and in February 1944 the 316th Troop Carrier Group arrived from the Mediterranean Theatre with its four squadrons and 52 C-47 and C-53 transports. The 316th participated in the three major airborne assaults - Normandy, Holland, and the Rhine - and was the only troop carrier group still based in the UK at the end of hostilities.

Cottesmore was returned to the Royal Air Force on July 1, 1945, with the No. 1668 Heavy Conversion Unit taking up residence although it was gradually run down. When this formation was disbanded Cottesmore, was occupied by No. 16 Operational Training Unit. Two years later No. 7 Flying Training School was installed, Cottesmore's training role continuing until 1954. Canberra squadrons were next to arrive but their presence was only for eight months as a decision had been taken to upgrade the airfield for use by V bombers. To this end, the main runway, 05/23, was rebuilt and extended to 3,000 yards and new taxiways and aircraft dispersals built. 10 & 15 Victor squadrons came first followed by 12 & 35 Squadron Vulcan's in 1964. The latter stayed for five years before the station passed to No. 90 (Signals) Group with 98, 115, 360 Squadrons with the 231 Canberra OCU. 98 had Canberra B2s before being upgraded to E15s, 360 Squadron were a joint RAF/RN Squadron flying T17s and 115 Squadron flew Varsity & Argosy aircraft. It remained in this role until after a short period of care & maintenance it prepared for the Tornado with TTTE sharing with Germany and Italian crews this role lasted from 1980 to 1999, 20 years being Cottesmore's longest association with one unit. It disbanded in 1999.



In 1999 the Harrier Force arrived when the unit along with Wittering became the home of all the British Harriers from both the Navy & the RAF.



And so we come to the end of RAF Cottesmore perhaps the 1st April will be an April fool and we will see the RAF Ensign flying again on the station.

I am sure that on the evening Ray revived for many memories and recollections of events at RAF Cottesmore. I for one will remember my time with affection. Happy Days. Our speaker for next month is a surprise, we are trying to find someone who can relate to the Jubilee in Rutland and tell us about Her Majesty's visits here. The following month will be our Jubilee celebrations with a Bar-B-Q and other entertainment.



Peter Hart Speaker Secretary April 2012

RAF Cottesmore transferred from RAF to Army command on 2 Apr 12 and has been renamed '**Kendrew Barracks**'.

The 2nd Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment will be the first Army unit to arrive at RAF Cottesmore on Jul 12. The 7 Regiment Royal Logistics Company will follow a year later from Germany. The Station marked the end of RAF Cottesmore with a small ceremony, attended by the Lord Lieutenant, the High Sheriff and Rutland County Council executives, as the RAF Ensign was lowered for the last time at 6pm on 31 Mar 12.

Sqn Ldr (Ret'd) Tony Walsh, MCO said: "Army families will begin arriving at Cottesmore over the next few months ready for the children starting school in Sept. 25 personnel arrive in June, about 120 in July and up to 500 more in August. "The soldiers of the battalion have not been permanently based in the UK since 07 when they departed to Celle, northern Germany, followed by a second move to Cyprus in 2009.

"Next Summer, 460 personnel will arrive from the 7 Regiment Royal Logistics Corps".

RAF Odiham

The transcript below is in response from the article published in the March Flying Horseshoe newsletter regarding the Royal Review at Odiham.

The Royal Review of the Royal Air Force by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, celebrating her coronation. On the 15th of July 1953 I was a Cpl engine fitter stationed at 7FTS RAF Cottesmore and was selected to sit in a co-pilot seat of a BP Balliol T2, piloted by Master Pilot Scott, during this review. The 12 Balliols from 7FTS were designated WG120

We flew in loose formation down to Odiham (but even in a loose formation the pilot had to work hard) tightening up just before we joined the main RAF formation.

It was a never to be forgotten sight, to see all of those different types of aircraft in formation around us. I was able to get a really good view - if only I had had my digicamera with me!

**Frank Haynes
Cottesmore**

Queens Jubilee Celebrations

For security reasons, most events do not appear more than two weeks in advance. However, there are exceptions, particularly for high-profile events which form part of national celebrations. You can search engagements by time period, member of the Royal Family or by UK region. One such event is that a commemorative stone to mark 70 years of the RAF being based in Lyneham is to be erected in the Wiltshire village. The parish council said the "area will become a focus" for those "wishing to contemplate their memories of both the RAF and RAF personnel linked to the base". The memorial is due to be unveiled on The Green in Lyneham as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations on 1 June. Funds have been secured for an inscribed Portland stone memorial, a bench and an oak tree to mark the jubilee.

Kathryn Manderson

DATES for Your DIARY

2 nd May	TBC	
6 th June	Jubilee Evening + BBQ	Details will be given at the May meeting

Meetings are 1st Wed every month

Venue: Cottesmore Sports & Social Club – 7.00 for 7.30pm

Branch Contact Numbers

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Peter Hart, Speaker coordinator, Tel 01572756750 peterivy42@btinternet.com

Wings Appeal Organiser Jim Tibbott

Reminder of Forthcoming events

If any member is interested in attending one of the following events please contact me by email or at a branch meeting as the number of places on the proposed transport will be limited.

WHATS ON:

Wednesday June 6th – RAFA Monthly meeting - Jubilee Evening and BBQ. Full Details at the May Meeting.

Forthcoming Events:

1. **Sunday 27th May 2012** - Duxford Jubilee Air Show – [One ticket left](#)
2. **Sunday 1st July**. - RAF Waddington International Air show – Still places available
3. **September DTBN** - Baldwin Trust -Canal Boat trip
4. **12th October** - The Diamond Jubilee Concert Oakham– Band of the Parachute Regiment and the Minden Band of the Queens Division – Ticket Cost £15.00
5. **Sunday 25th November** (Afternoon Matinee) Birmingham International Tattoo. Still places available.

Please note there will be an additional cost to cover transport. Tel: 01572 755969 or email rafarutland923@yahoo.co.uk

Derek Bury