

Airfields near Deddington

One of the major changes inflicted upon the area was the creation of 12 airfields. Suddenly there was an influx of servicemen and women and aeroplanes flying overhead.

Barford St John

Built in 1941 and still open.

An RAF station which was, initially, a Relief Landing Ground for 15 Flying Service Training School, Kidlington.

In April 1942, it was used by Bomber Command as a satellite airfield for Upper Heyford.

Gloster Aircraft Company used part of the airfield to develop the Meteor fighter. The units stationed there were 16 Operational Training Unit (OTU) and 1655 Training Unit. The aeroplanes involved were mainly Wellingtons and, for a short time, Mosquitoes.

It was bombed on 24 August 1941.

Barton Abbey

Opened on 30 September 1941 and closed in early 1945.

It is recorded that it was used by the RAF as a storage area by 8, and later 39, Maintenance Unit. The aeroplanes involved were mainly Wellingtons. José Stevens worked there as a typist in 1944-45 and recalls that it was 6 MU supporting Brize Norton and Little Rissington. More of José's memories can be read on page 184.

Chipping Norton

It was opened by the RAF in July 1940 and closed in December 1945. The first occupants were 15 Service Flying Training School equipped with the North American Harvard. Later 6 Service Flying Training School took over the airfield. It was bombed on 29-30 October and also on 18-19 November 1940.

Croughton

It opened in 1940 and is still operated by the USAAF.

Initially it was a satellite airfield for 16 OTU at Upper Heyford, part of Bomber Command, the main aircraft being the Handley Page Hampden and the Avro Anson. In July 1942 it became a Glider Training School flying the Hotspur Gliders and then in March 1943 became a satellite airfield for Kidlington. When the forces ran short of trained glider pilots, it reverted briefly to being a Glider Training School.

Number of known air accidents in the vicinity is 12.

The airfield was bombed on 20 September 1940.

Edgehill

It opened in October 1941; in 1949 it was placed under Care and Maintenance and eventually closed in 1954.

It was used by the RAF, 21 OTU initially then, in the spring of 1943, 12 OTU moved in and then in 1945 it became 25 Maintenance Unit.

It was briefly re-opened during the Korean War as a satellite station to Moreton-in-the-Marsh.

It was the airfield which hosted the first test flight of the jet engine in February 1942.

In the autumn of 1941 there were at least three air accidents.

The OTUs were teaching the crews to work as a team within the aircraft but also as part of a larger attacking force. They were therefore involved in missions over Continental Europe and suffered casualties.

Enstone

This RAF station was opened in 1942 and closed some time after 1946. It was initially a satellite station for 21 OTU who were at Moreton-in-the-Marsh. More intriguingly, it was also the base for a very secret unit of which nothing is known except that its six Lancaster bombers were painted black and without squadron markings and at all times these aircraft were either flying or hidden from the view of everyone on the airfield.

In 1944 a flight of six Tomahawks was used for training.

Eynsham

In 1939 this airfield was also known as No. 6 Ammunition Park where thousands of tons of ammunition were stored. It then became a Maintenance Unit which it remained until it closed in 1948.

Hinton-in-the-Hedges

This airfield was opened in November 1941 when it was used by 13 OTU who were followed by 16 OTU. It ceased military operations in July 1944.

The other major user of the airfield was 26 Signals Group whose work involved developing aerial systems.

There are known to have been five accidents, one in 1941 and four in 1942, including one on 24 July 1942.

Kiddington (Glympton)

It opened in 1941 as a Relief Landing Ground for its larger neighbour, Kidlington, where 15 Service Flying Training School was based.

Later it was further involved in the training of Glider Pilots.

Kidlington

This was a civil airfield that was requisitioned in September 1939. In the rapidly changing world at that time it became a maintenance facility, a satellite airfield for Abingdon and an RAF Code Training Centre and the base for 6 Service Flying Training School, then 15 Service Flying Training School. All within a year.

In 1942 it became the 101 (Glider) OTU and later 102 (Glider) OTU was added. All training activity ceased in June 1945 and gradually the airfield ceased military operations.

The airfield was bombed on 3 November 1940, when one airman was killed.

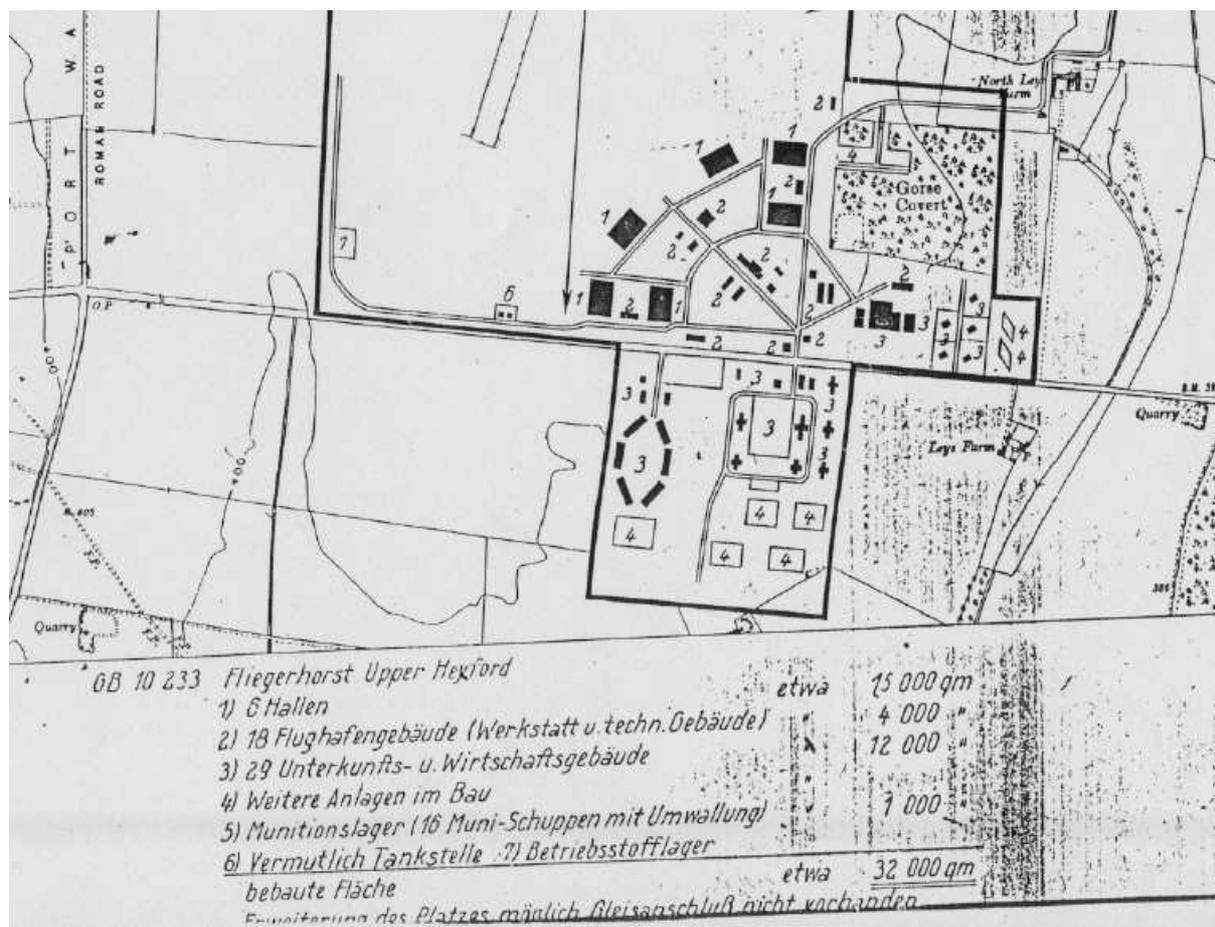
Further attacks were on 27 February 1941 and 12 August 1941 but without any fatalities.

One of the unsolved mysteries of the war is that Amy Johnson died *en route* here.

Upper Heyford

It was originally a WWI airfield which reopened in 1927 as a bomber station. At the outbreak of WWII it became 16 OTU. This involved flying Hampdens, Wellingtons and eventually Mosquitoes. It was also the base of a secret unit involved in radio countermeasures.

The airfield, like most military sites, attracted the interest of German intelligence; this extract from a German map identifies buildings and munitions dumps - Item 5.



It was attacked by bombing on 12 March and 9 May 1941.

The level of activity was so high that concrete runways were laid in 1942 which closed the airfield from March to December and flying transferred to Barford St John.

In 1951, the airfield was handed over to the USAAF and continued to be operational up until 1994. It was an important part of the US Forces' quick response to possible Soviet aggression during the Cold War. US airmen were a common and welcome sight in Deddington but the recreational facilities on base were so good that there was little need to visit the village; in fact Deddington Tennis Club used the base courts in the 1980s prior to building the present courts at the Windmill Centre.

Wykham Hill

This airfield was briefly used in 1944. It was used by spotter aircraft attached to 6 Field Artillery Battalion which was part of the US Army's 5th Artillery Group whose headquarters were in Banbury.