

From the garden to the sky

When I was a young boy my world was limited to my home, garden, school & Sunday school. The only place that I could do some 'plane spotting' was from my garden. At that time West Raynham was home to evaluation units who tried out new combat aeroplanes and also flew some types left over from the war. I now know what they were but, at the time, neither I or my father knew what we were looking at.

At that time Sculthorpe was coming into its own with B29s, B50s, SB29s and probably some SB17s if I was lucky I would see and hear a B36. They were supported by C47s and C82 and C119 Boxcars.

Then came the jets, B45s creating more black smoke than our coal fire! With them were the little T33s darting around the sky. The C47 and Boxcars were still there and if I was lucky I would see a C124 Globemaster. From time to time I would see odd VIP transports as well as L5, L20 and TB26 target towers working for the US Army.

Eventually I got married and had my own garden to watch from. Arriving home from work one Summer afternoon I saw a number of Mosquitos in loose formation with a B25 camera ship making their way the West Raynham where they were filming. One Sunday evening I saw a stream of C141 Starlifters making for Sculthorpe for the start of a 'Flintlock' exercise.

Tuesday Evening was always a good time to see Victor Tankers on their way back to Marham and early Sunday, Monday and Tuesday mornings was a good time to see the contrails of Airliners going East to Germany and beyond. They were too high to identify without the use of a computer tracking program.

Today the only things that fly at a low altitude is local stuff or C130 Hercules and CV22 Ospreys on their way to Sculthorpe. Now and again I would see a C17 Globemaster II making for Marham and on two occasions I saw what looked like an IL76 perhaps on an 'Open skies' mission or perhaps a civilian booked for moving a large load somewhere!