

Decoy to confound

The Air Ministry 'acquired' some land from the Holkham Estate to construct a decoy aerodrome at Egmere near the borders with West Barsham and Little Walsingham this was to fill a gap between Langham and Bircham Newton. This type Q decoy, displacing a Canadian artillery site, would serve Doking having itself been an unofficial decoy for Bircham Newton, later Bircham Newton would have its own decoy at Coxford Heath.

Before long, plans were hatched for land near this decoy to be made into a full operational aerodrome as part of a plan to introduce American B29 bombers into the UK. These did not come until after the war but that is another story. The main road from Fakenham to Wells ran through the proposed RAF Station North Creake, this and the fact that farmworkers' cottages stood in the way were not considered to be a problem. The occupants of the cottages were re-housed and the road was partly closed to civilian traffic such as there was, although fuel bowsers were able to use it.

£1m was allocated to Taylor Woodrow to build the aerodrome and work went on around the clock, something that did not go unnoticed by the Luftwaffe who attempted to disrupt the work

North Creake was given two T2 hangers and one B2 at dispersal. Brick was used for construction as necessary, but many buildings were of a temporary nature, being of steel, asbestos and wood. At that time materials were in demand for West Raynham (new runways and additional buildings) and Sculthorpe (then under construction). The nearby port of Wells was used to bring in supplies.

After much deliberation at the Air Ministry, North Creake was made a sub-station of Foulsham in September 1943 and 199 Squadron moved in and took charge of some ageing Stirlings for radio countermeasures work. While the Air Ministry were still deciding about the deployment of B29s North Creake was put onto 'Care & Maintenance' until April 1944.

199 Found itself busy around D-Day dropping window and using its Mandrel device to cause confusion. In September 1944 199 'C' Flight was detached to form 171 Squadron and the short fall in aircraft was made up with surplus Halifax IIIs. By the Spring of 1945 both squadrons were equipped with the Halifax. On occasions 199 still flew the Stirling and were the last to use them before the war ended. When it did, the both squadrons were disbanded and

North Creake was again put on 'Care & Maintenance' until it reopened as a maintenance unit collecting and disposing of surplus Mosquitoes.

The RAF had finished with North Creake by September 1947 and, for some years, some of the buildings were used to produce Silage for cattle feed. Some of the hard landscaping remained until the 1980s used by the local young people for initial driving experience while a mural from the end of one Nissen hut is preserved in the RAF Museum at Hendon.

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