

Sculthorpe Co-locations

When Sculthorpe was first opened it was under the command of West Raynham, but in the Summer of 1943 it became an independent aerodrome in its own right. Just across the road is the former Decoy Aerodrome of Coxford Heath. When the USAF 47th BW arrived at Sculthorpe in May 1952 they set up a Radio Beacon on this site.

A few miles down the road was a former Air Ministry fuel dump at Harpley Dams from where Sculthorpe collected its fuel. This was once rail-served. The trains of tankers set off from Hutton Cranswick in Yorkshire where there was a link to Watton Carr fuel dump which was associated with the aerodrome at Drifffield. The train ran through Kings Lynn as far as Massingham where the loco ran 'round to the other end of the train and then pulled it back to the dump where it pushed the tankers into the site as no locos were allowed past the gates. Some tankers went further on to a siding at Rudham where RAF bowsers offloaded the fuel for West Raynham and Massingham. In 1958 a pipeline was laid between the dump and Sculthorpe which became the responsibility of West Raynham. There is anecdotal evidence that inspections were carried out by airman wearing civilian clothes and driving civilian cars, such was Cold War security!

In the other direction was South Creak where there was a building known as the Shooting Box. Here in 1944 the USAAF had a radar set up of some sort. Is it perhaps coincidence that the USAAF 803rd BS (pro) was at Sculthorpe at the time?

In the early 1950s when the US Army was responsible for the defence of Sculthorpe, they had a training camp on the coast at Stiffkey. Sculthorpe provide target facilities in the form of TB26 Invader target towers and OQ19 drones.

When Sculthorpe reopened in 1948 it was under the charge of Marham it was also responsible for Little Snoring which was still active at the time with the Civil Anti-aircraft Co-operation Unit (CAACU) operating from there. There were many local families living in the Nissen huts on the domestic sites. When the CAACU left, Sculthorpe used the place for storage.

The CAACU also used Langham, and after they had gone Langham was declared a Relief Landing ground for Sculthorpe but there is no evidence that it was ever used as such.

In Fakenham the Air Ministry had a substantial depot built, originally as an Airfield Repair Depot but it became an administration centre for the rebuilding and maintenance of Sculthorpe. Across town a Mobilization Depot was built before the war, there is little information that it was ever used. The British Army took it over until the

1960s when the USAF at Lakenheath, with the help of Sculthorpe , took it over for storage.

Further afield the 86th BS which was formed at Sculthorpe moved to Alconbury to operate while the 19th TRS went to Bruntingthorpe, both under the command of Sculthorpe. They both returned to the home base before it closed in 1962.