

Shoreham's Radar Station

The Story of RAF Truleigh Hill

By

Roy Taylor



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**Comments or corrections are welcome, also contact from any former Truleigh Hill
airmen or women whose association has not previously been known.**

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Introduction

It is over fifty years since I first set foot in Shoreham, as a 19-year-old radar operator at RAF Truleigh Hill. I served the final 15 months of my compulsory period of National Service at this, the last of my six postings. On demob, I stayed in the area and have been here ever since.

I have kept in contact with four of my former colleagues. Photos and memories come out for an airing every so often, but it is only in the last few years, however, that I have started to think seriously about the history of RAF Truleigh Hill. The radar operation started in 1940, just before The Battle of Britain, and continued in several different formats until closure in 1958.

In 2003 I decided to try to complete a book describing my two years National Service, which I had abandoned at roughly the halfway point 36 years earlier. I felt that a bit of early history would do the Truleigh Hill chapter no harm, but was disappointed to find nothing available locally. At the same time I joined the volunteer staff at the Marlipins Museum in Shoreham, which gave me the opportunity to talk to members of the Shoreham public and my fellow volunteers. I was surprised to discover how few were aware that the 18 year Truleigh Hill episode existed. The book was completed and published with only a small amount of history, but research carried on.

Encouraged by the museum's curator Helen Poole, I staged an exhibition of Truleigh Hill material in the museum which has now become a permanent feature. Many of the items on display were supplied by the many former Truleigh 'inmates' who answered my requests through various newspapers and web-sites. Other valuable contributions to my collection were supplied by two serious researchers, Howard Toon and Bob Jenner, and I will elaborate on their part in the exercise later.

Some lengthy visits to The National Archives at Kew added a large amount of material to that gleaned from several books, and many hours of Internet searching. This, plus the information supplied by the ex-Truleigh personnel, gave me enough detail to contemplate a second book purely on the history of Shoreham's radar station.

What follows is by no means the complete story and quite likely will contain some errors. It is difficult to know if information extracted from various web-sites is 100% true. Similarly I have found differing accounts of events in the many radar books that I have consulted. I have done my best to arrive at what would seem to be the most authentic version, but will be more than happy to be corrected. If the book appears a little short on radar technology, I have to say at this stage that this is not a book for the radar purist. It is written by a former radar operator, who entered the RAF with a fair degree of general engineering skill, but nothing to enable him to absorb the complexities of radar technology.

A huge amount of recent reading, in the hope that my capacity to understand it all will have improved over the intervening 50 years, resulted in miserable failure. There are many avenues available to the enthusiast wishing to learn about the beginnings of radar and how the various systems worked. Early radar technology is a part of national history, with each system applicable to several, if not many, radar stations. Some books which attempt to describe wartime and cold war radar are confusingly over technical and sometimes contradictory. Others are aimed at a wider audience. My recommendation in this respect is *Radar a Wartime Miracle* by Colin Latham and Anne Stobbs, and *Pioneers of Radar* by the same authors, which are both a well-balanced mix of development and technology alongside many personal reminiscences.

My initial aim, when I started to gather material for the book, was to ensure that the RAF Truleigh Hill operation took its place alongside other aspects of comparatively recent Shoreham history. In this respect, events, buildings, aerial configurations and people seemed to have priority over technical information that could be found elsewhere. It soon became apparent also, from the enthusiasm shown by those who provided photographs and other items of interest, that the book would also be appreciated as a healthy dose of nostalgia by former Truleigh Hill personnel. Certainly the only other persons likely to find the Roll Call and Gallery pages at the end of the book of any interest would be those involved in the increasingly popular hobby of genealogy.

A huge number of men and women were involved in RAF wartime and Cold War radar. If a few of those, Truleigh Hill or otherwise, find this story of one small but nonetheless important station interesting, it will have been worth the effort.

Roy Taylor 2008

Important note

This book was first published in October 2007. Much new material and information has been gathered since that date resulting in a considerably enlarged edition in November 2008. The wartime chapter has been increased from 7 to 16 pages. Two pages have been added to the sport chapter. Smaller additions have been made to other chapters. The Gallery has increased from 80 to 130 individual photos. The Roll Call has increased to over 400 names including a separate section of 100 names from wartime. The lack of technical content, mentioned on the previous page has to some extent been rectified by the contributions of Les Burchell (GEE) and Eric Ramm (CHEL). Les has been inspired by the general Truleigh Hill revival to write his own account of his service life. Small extracts from Les's story appear in various places. Eric on the other hand (prompted by colleague Peter Cooper) has produced a large amount of material purely as an aid to the book and the general Truleigh Hill archive. Selected parts of Eric's material appear as Appendix 4 at the end of the book. To both, I am most grateful for their assistance.

1. Radar Development

In the early part of the 1930s many influential figures in Britain were concerned at the degree of aircraft production taking place in Germany. Their fears were confirmed when, on 26th February 1935, Hitler announced the official creation of the German Luftwaffe, appointing Herman Goering as its first Commander-in-Chief. By a remarkable coincidence, on the very same day, Britain was conducting its first radar test in a field near Daventry in Northamptonshire. In contrast to the highly ceremonial occasion taking place in Berlin, the British test involved just four men, a Morris van and a solitary Handley Page Heyford bomber. The men were Air Ministry scientist A.P.Rowe, Robert Watson Watt, Head of the Radio Department at The National Physics Laboratory and his assistant Arnold Wilkins, plus the driver of the Morris van.

Inside the van, or mobile laboratory as they preferred to call it, was Britain's first attempt at radar equipment. Initially called Radio Detection and Direction Finding (RDF) it was later changed to radar as an acronym of Radio Detection and Ranging. The tests were successful and while Watson Watt is generally credited with the discovery of radar, the scientist Wilkins was charged with the responsibility of making it work. Rowe also, played his part and all three were major players in the establishment of the first wave of RAF radar stations.

Funding was released for early production of equipment. By the outbreak of war 20 Chain Home (CH) radar stations were operational on the east and south coasts. Stations at Dunkirk (Near Canterbury), Dover, Rye, Pevensey, Poling and Ventnor covered the very vulnerable South-East corner. As early as February 1938 Watson-Watt and Wilkins had visited Truleigh Hill, along with other hill-top sites at Newmarket Hill, Ditchling Beacon and Alfriston, in their quest for suitable CH sites. Eventually Poling, virtually at sea level, was chosen to fill the gap between Pevensey and Ventnor.

Priority had been given to the setting up of these stations, but it was already known that the Chain Home radar was not capable of plotting very low flying aircraft or shipping. The remedy was already in hand. During 1940 a second phase comprising 27 Chain Home Low (CHL) stations became operational, plus an additional 10 Chain Home stations. Truleigh Hill became one of the 27 CHL stations, with Fairlight (Near Hastings) and Beachy Head, making a total of six Sussex radar stations.

Although all of these early installations were RAF stations, radar was by no means the sole preserve of the Air Force. Army and Navy scientists were also working on developments that suited their own particular requirements. In some cases, the requirements overlapped those of the RAF, and some radar systems evolved as a result of pooled resources. The Chain Home Low radar was one of those systems.

Development continued throughout the war, with the addition of many new types of radar to add to the two early systems. By the end of hostilities the number of radar stations, mostly around Britain's coastline, had increased to over 200. After a period of scaling back during the latter part of the 1940s, events in Eastern Europe led to the creation of the extremely expensive but short-lived Rotor plan. The part played by Truleigh Hill and other Sussex radar stations will be found elsewhere in the book.

2. Wartime

RAF Truleigh Hill became operational on 6th July 1940 at the height of the Battle of Britain, under its first commanding officer, Warrant Officer A.J.Rowe. The station was part of No. 75 Wing for administrative purposes, but operationally it was a station within No.60 Group, Fighter Command. Initial radar staff would probably have been in the region of 40, but would be doubled in June 1942 when the GEE navigational aid was to be added to the site. Almost all of the personnel were billeted with local families. Further radar systems were added as the war progressed. The personnel required for these systems, plus additional guarding and administrative staff, increased the number of airmen and women attached to RAF Truleigh Hill to a maximum of 177 during the latter stages of the war. Operators, mechanics, and any others required on site, were collected from various meeting points in Shoreham and ferried in RAF trucks to the radar site 700 feet above the town.

The radar operation is not to be confused with flying operations throughout wartime at Shoreham Airport. This was a completely separate unit under the heading of RAF Shoreham and was in force for the war period only. Its activities have been well documented and need no further comment here. RAF Truleigh Hill operated throughout all but the very early part of the war, and continued in various forms until 1958.

In present times the radar site is easily identifiable to the north side of the present South Downs Way. Over the years it has probably been passed by many thousands of walkers, runners and cyclists. Possibly only a few had any idea that they were passing through a site of national and local historic importance. Approaching from the Beeding Hill direction, the South Downs Way passes the present youth hostel and rises uphill before levelling out for a flat stretch of perhaps 300yards. The field to the left houses an array of aerials, just as it did in wartime and later, but these are now for modern communications purposes rather than radar. The only wartime buildings that have survived are a direction finding pill-box type building set back in the field at the end of this flat stretch, and the blast walls from one of the GEE system transmitter blocks. Half way along, however, a short section of road leads to a wired compound. Just inside the heavily padlocked gates sits the 1950s guardroom, built for a later installation, which will be dealt with in great detail in following chapters. The wartime operation covered a far greater area than that enclosed within the compound, as can be seen from the aerial photographs.

Initially Chain Home Low stations featured separate rotating transmitting and receiving aerials. Most of the high-level stations experienced serious teething problems resulting in the aerials being combined into one unit. Even with this modification, Truleigh Hill was achieving very poor results. Early in July 1940, the Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE) at Worth Matravers despatched Junior Scientific Officer Harry Bisby to investigate the Truleigh Hill performance. Bisby had been at TRE for just two days, having been recruited at an annual salary of £240, but earlier studies in related subjects gave him an even chance of solving the problem.

On arrival at Shoreham Station, he crossed the road to the post office to seek directions to the radar station and promptly found himself whisked off to the police station for interrogation. Having proved his credentials he was taken to the radar site by police car to assess the size of the problem to be tackled the following day. Back in Shoreham that evening, problems other than radar surfaced. The town was full to capacity and the only advice forthcoming from the police station was for him to spend the night in an abandoned car on the beach.

After an uncomfortable night, unwashed and unshaven, he walked nearly four miles up to Truleigh Hill and solved what appeared to be a synchronisation fault between the various sections of the aerial. Harry Bisby remained in Shoreham for a further 14 days monitoring the stations performance, making sure that his accommodation received a substantial upgrade. The remaining period was spent at The Ship Inn (later re-named The Schooner) at a daily cost of six shillings and sixpence for bed and breakfast. He went on to become a major name in radar development, followed by a distinguished post-war career in several specialised technical fields.

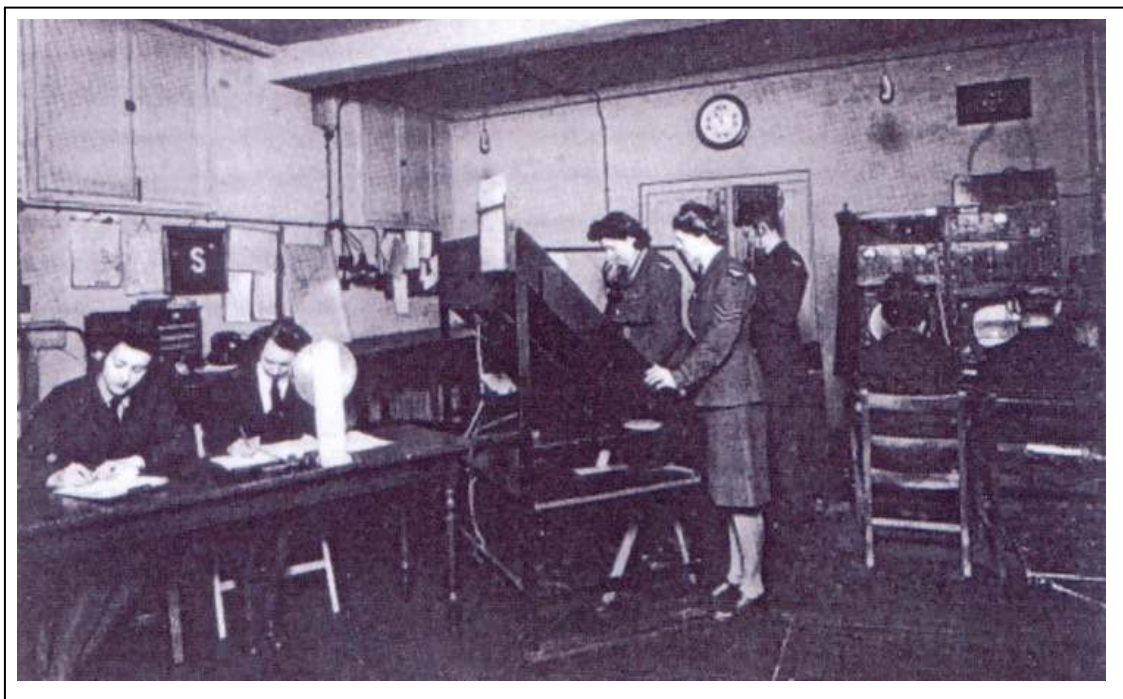
Now that the station was up and running, a typical Chain Home Low watch would involve a maximum of ten personnel, with either three or four watches in operation. WAAF radar operators would most likely outnumber the airmen, but only an occasional WAAF would be found among the mechanics in the transmitter block. In the receiver block, two operators sat at cathode ray tube displays, which enabled them to track details of range and bearing. This information was relayed to a plotting table and converted into plots by two more operators. For the next stage, the reporting procedure at Chain Home Low stations differed to that at Chain Home stations. The latter relayed their plots through a direct line to the Filter Room at Fighter Command HQ at Bentley Priory, Stanmore. The Chain Home Low stations did not have the direct line facility until later in the war. Their plots were passed to the nearest Chain Home station, which in Truleigh Hill's case was RAF Poling, for onward transmission to Stanmore. Finally, the receiver block watch at stations such as Truleigh Hill was completed by one or two recorders.

The receiver block was part of a multi-purpose timber building, within a blast wall, which was divided roughly into three and also contained the transmitter block and the administration section. Connecting doors linked the three sections of the building which was the largest structure on the site. Although a door connected the administration section to the receiver block, no members of the administration staff were permitted to enter the radar sections. This ruling was even extended to include the commanding officer unless he was specifically radar trained, which was not always the case. In later years a separate building housed the administration operation, as can be seen from the plan at the end of this chapter.

The following photograph shows activity within a typical CHL receiver block. The identity of this particular location is not known, but the set-up at Truleigh Hill in wartime would have been similar. In the photograph one of the two recorders is a WREN, recording shipping information. It is sixty-six years since Jim Ward arrived at Truleigh Hill for a three year spell, broken only by a few temporary detachments to other radar stations. Although much information has been extracted from official station records, there is no substitute for personal recollections and Jim remembers events as though they happened yesterday. He lists the names of three male Navy personnel engaged in recording shipping activities among a large list of wartime Truleigh Hill people, but has no memories of WRENs being used for this function at the station.

Only one plotting table, set at an angle, is visible in the photograph. At Truleigh Hill, and probably at other CHL stations, a separate horizontal table was used for plots below 60 miles. At times of very low activity one operator could handle the plots on both tables.

In the absence of any catering facilities on site, watch times were planned to enable meals to be taken at the private billets in the town either before or after the watch. Tea and biscuits were available during watches, with each watch carefully guarding its stock with a padlocked box.



Typical Chain Home Low receiver block operation. Location unknown, but the set-up at Truleigh Hill during wartime would have been similar if not identical.

(Crown Copyright)

A large percentage of the WAFs engaged on radar work, had entered the service expecting to be employed on some advanced form of office work. Many had answered an advertisement for ‘young ladies of good background and education to be employed as Clerks (Special Duties)’. Instead, in many cases, they found themselves in the direct firing line on radar duties, as many south-east radar stations took a battering, particularly during the Battle of Britain. Several WAAF radar operators have written entertaining books describing their wartime service. Many others have contributed memoirs to a variety of web sites. All make interesting reading. Almost without exception they look back on the period with a great degree of nostalgia, despite the uncertainty and danger for those at the most vulnerable stations.

The Chain Home stations were singled out for the most serious attacks, as their presence was very visible, due to the type of aerials necessary for this form of radar. Each of the South and East coast stations had three, sometimes four, steel transmitter towers 360 feet high, set in a line. Accompanying them were four wooden receiver towers 240 feet high, set in a square.

The Germans could not fail to notice the presence of these aerial arrays around the coast. The RAF Swingate site, on the cliffs next to Dover Castle, was visible from the French coast and was probably the most attacked of all of the British radar stations. Ventnor too was extremely prominent, set as it was on the edge of the cliffs on St. Boniface Down, the highest point on the Isle of Wight. Chain Home Low stations that were sited at a good height above sea level, such as Truleigh Hill, were able to make do with the single rotating combined transmitting and receiving aerial. This was mounted on a 20 feet high gantry with the rotating aerial measuring approximately 20 feet x 10 feet. Two years were to pass before further aerials were added to the site. This alone probably saved them from the type of attack that came during August 1940.

On 12th August 1940, CH stations at Dunkirk, Dover, Rye, Pevensey and Ventnor were all attacked with considerable damage to buildings and equipment. Only Poling escaped, but their turn was to come six days later. Although some of the damage to equipment was severe, all stations were back in action quickly with cleverly sited reserve equipment. This led the Germans to believe that they were unlikely to be able to put our radar network out of action. Goering himself was particularly dismissive concerning the effectiveness of British radar. With the exception of the regular attacks on Swingate at Dover, they mostly directed their attentions elsewhere. The decision by Goering to relax the pressure on the radar stations is seen in many quarters as one of the biggest own-goals of the war.

Poling's turn came on 18th August with a heavy attack, that an unknown Truleigh Hill operator heard at first hand, while passing plots through to that station. The Poling attack produced an act of heroism that will be described later, in a special chapter on RAF Poling. The fortunes of Truleigh Hill and Poling were so closely linked between 1940 and 1952, that a Poling chapter seems particularly appropriate.

Plotting of aircraft continued at Truleigh through the rest of 1940 and 1941, with shipping being plotted for the first time in November 1941. Two way signalling had been installed for the reporting of shipping plots to Portsmouth. Late in 1941 it was reported in Station Operations Records that both Stanmore and Portsmouth had commended Truleigh Hill on the accuracy of their plots.

The Truleigh Hill site grew gradually throughout the war as newly developed radar systems were added to the operations. From aerial photographs taken soon after the war it is possible to count nearly 40 either brick or timber buildings on the site. Garages and stores buildings were erected late in 1941 and in the middle of 1942 the Nissen hut provision for the Army guard was increased from three to six. Later in the war the RAF Regiment took over the guarding responsibilities at Truleigh Hill.



Truleigh Hill CHL watch with receiver block and rotating aerial in 1945.

(Pamela Jenkins)

Early in 1941 the Army began the process of installing a range of CD (Coastal Defence) surface watching radars along the coastal areas most vulnerable to a German landing. Priority was given to the coastline between North Foreland and Littlehampton with 15 sites designated M1 to M15. The following year these were all taken over by the RAF with Truleigh Hill receiving the plots from M14 (just above Mill Hill, Shoreham) and M15 (Highdown Hill, Worthing). M14 was made redundant by the end of 1942 as adequate surface cover was being provided by the main CHL radar. M15 at Highdown carried on until early 1944

The next major operational development came in 1942, with the installation of the Type 7000 GEE Navigational Aid. Planning work on the system had started before the war, but had been put on hold in the rush to get the CH and CHL stations operational. It had now become a matter of prime importance for Bomber Command to have an improved system for target location and also for returning to base. Only four GEE stations were required along the south coast, with Truleigh Hill selected to be a slave station on the Southern Chain. Considerable new building work and aerial erection was necessary before GEE operations commenced in June. This was the start of an unbroken run of over 15 years, terminating almost at the end of the Truleigh Hill story in November 1957.

An aspect of the Chain Home Low operation that crops up in almost every book or article is the one describing the system relating to the method for rotating the large rectangular aerial. Early methods involved a series of chains and gear wheels that were hand turned and not unlike the pedalling action of a bicycle. From this the system on some stations evolved into a full bicycle arrangement where the radar operators actually turned the aerial by sitting on a seat and pedalling.

The WAAFs were not excused this strenuous task and it was often said that you could spot a WAAF CHL operator by her nice trim figure and large calf muscles. This development, however, does not appear to have reached Truleigh Hill where hand turning remained the norm, and the shape of the WAAFs remained unaffected. Turning by this method became impossible in the gale conditions often encountered on Truleigh Hill. Most reports from the period state that power turning of the aerials commenced in 1941, but an entry in the Station Operations Reports dates this at February 1943 for Truleigh Hill. An entry for October 1941, however, states that modifications to the Hopkins Turning Gear made it possible to work through the gale on October 18th. At times it became necessary to lash the aerial to four concreted anchor points, causing a temporary halt to operations. A longer than expected halt occurred when a driver delivering the incoming watch ran over one of the lashings, causing a degree of damage to the aerial.

Most of the reports through 1942 covered day to day business relating to the number of tracks plotted, and entries recording alterations and additions to buildings. Occasional pats on the back are mentioned such as the incident in May when Truleigh Hill was the only station to pick up a hostile bomber which was subsequently shot down by two fighters from RAF Tangmere. At times the radar force was supplemented by both Army and Navy personnel, as well as American and Canadian radar staff. Navy staff reported shipping activity directly to Portsmouth.

During 1941 and 1942 the magazine *Radar Bulletin* appeared to be encouraging a 'longest distance plotted' competition among CH and CHL stations. South Ronaldsay claimed the CHL record in August 1941 with 178 miles, which was then improved to 203 miles by Shotton in November. In February 1942, Grutness in the Shetlands moved the CHL record up to 226 miles. The magazine then ran into difficulties and only four issues appeared in the next 18 months. During this period, in August 1942, Truleigh Hill recorded a plot of 238 miles. This could have been the record at the time, but whether it remained so is not known. Jim Ward expressed considerable surprise at these distances. His own personal record was in the 190s, but as he quite rightly points out, the range tubes were calibrated to a maximum of 200 miles.

Building work commenced in June 1943 for the installation of Type 51 radar, a forerunner of the Rotor Type 14 Chain Home Extra Low system, which would be installed at Truleigh Hill in 1952. Only three sets of this particular radar type were built, the others being installed at RAF Beachy Head and RAF Deerness in the Orkney Islands. The Beachy Head Type 51 was up and running before the Truleigh Hill installation. Jan Parker (now Dinnage) was sent from Beachy Head for three weeks with three other WAAFs, one for each watch, to instruct the Truleigh operators in the workings of the new system.

The report for January 1944 records the commencement of operations for Type 51 and also reports that a fourth system, Type 31, was also working well. The amount of hardware on Truleigh Hill was increasing. In addition to the CHL aerial and six tall aerials for the GEE system, Type 51 is reported as having a 20 ft x 3 ft. 3 bay 'cheese' aerial and Type 31, later modified to Type 41, a circular dish aerial. Both of these systems were early versions of the Chain Home Extra Low radar that was to come later. Two months later Type 51 was off the air to receive what is described as a modified paraboloid aerial array. A mobile trailer radar, Type 57, filled the breach until normal service was resumed in May.

With four different systems operating on the site, it was inevitable that staff levels would rise. It was not until January 1945, that the station strength was included in the monthly report for the first time. In the overall total of 177 were 3 RAF officers and 2 WAAF officers. Among the other ranks WAAFs outnumbered the airmen by 96 to 76. Police, drivers and administration staff would obviously be included in this figure and most likely RAF Regiment guarding personnel. It is likely that this level of staffing operated from around mid 1943 until the end of the war. Almost all were billeted in local accommodation. A few from the local area were allowed to live at home and a few senior NCOs either bought or rented houses nearby. Sergeant Arthur Franklin rented rooms above the Plough and Sail at Crossbush, during a spell at RAF Poling and later, after his posting to Truleigh Hill, had houses in Upper Shoreham Road and Adur Drive. His son, Bob Franklin recalls starting school in 1942 at the small school in Old Shoreham and remembers the bathroom at Adur Drive being made available to personnel who did not have this facility at their billets in some of the older houses in Shoreham.

Most of the wartime private billeting was in the western half of the town with main transport pick up points at The Green Jacket and the Erringham Road/Upper Shoreham Road junction. Connaught Avenue seems to be a particular favourite with the billeting officers. Paul Goldsmith's parents, Fred and Nancy, at No. 113, played host at different times to aircrew from the RAF operation at Shoreham Airport, Canadian soldiers, Truleigh Hill radar staff, land girls and Jewish refugees. Former land girl Phyllis Clarke from Rustington was billeted with the Goldsmiths for the last 18 months of the war and recalls four Truleigh Hill WAAFs, which she names as Mary, Edna, May and Bessie, being there at the same time. Paul Goldsmith has a host of memorabilia and stories passed on from his parents and readily loaned several items for inclusion in this book. The notes written by the WAAFs on photographs sent to the Goldsmiths leaves no doubt about how well they were cared for. Jim Ward was also billeted in Connaught Avenue, at No 75 with Mrs Winter, as well as Swiss Gardens (Mrs.Potter) and Upper Shoreham Road (Mrs. Maple).

A slightly different arrangement was made for the accommodation of RAF Truleigh Hill officers. One of the oldest and grandest houses in Upper Beeding was requisitioned as an officers' mess and quarters. The 17th century house in Henfield Road started life with the very ordinary title of New House. During the period of the RAF occupation it was known as Haven St. Mary and today it is Valerie Manor, a residential home for the elderly. Catering and domestic arrangements were supervised by a local lady, Mrs. Hills. The officers on radar duty were ferried up to the technical site in a small truck, via the Bostal track that meets the Truleigh Hill road at the Beeding Hill corner.

Another item from Jim Ward's extensive memory store, is the occasion when he was caused some discomfort when the officers' vehicle collided with the rather larger watch transport, at a point close to where the present youth hostel stands. The youth hostel building was there during wartime. Built in the 1930s as a naturist colony, there are reports that it was used by the RAF for guarding purposes. This is difficult to confirm, as the 1944 No.60 Group site drawing shows both Army and RAF Regiment huts for this purpose on the actual radar site.



Valerie Manor. Wartime RAF Truleigh Hill Officers' mess and quarters
(Photograph reproduced courtesy of Monkhouse and Bannister, Estate Agents, Pulborough)

In view of the degree of private billeting and the administration of four different radar systems, an increase in the number of clerical staff would have been necessary. Just prior to the two additional radars becoming operational, in November 1943, a shop at No.33 East Street, Shoreham, opposite St. Mary's Church, was requisitioned for station office and recreational facilities. At the time of writing, in 2008, the building is currently a health food shop and holistic centre. With a weekly pay operation involving nearly 200 personnel, it is known that a hall was hired in Shoreham for this purpose. It would seem likely that this was St. Mary's Hall, situated as it was just a few yards from the East Street offices. Not all of the administration was conducted from East Street. WAAF sergeant Millicent Start recalls that her billeting officer duties between 1943 and 1945 were carried out from the office at the technical site on Truleigh Hill. After a spell close to Wick at the northern tip of Scotland, she was granted a posting near to home, due to her father's ill health. She was allowed to live at her home at Patcham, on the outskirts of Brighton, commuting daily to Shoreham station.

With staff returning to separate billets spread across the western half of Shoreham, the likelihood of group social activity was less than for those returning to a common base. The CH stations at Ventnor, Poling, and Rye all had the benefits of a standard domestic site and consequently a NAAFI or other communal gathering place. The CHL stations at Truleigh Hill, Beachy Head and Fairlight did not enjoy this facility, although all were close to large towns.

Shoreham, Southwick and Lancing boasted five cinemas between them, with The Norfolk (later The Ritz)) and The Luxor at Lancing the pick of the bunch and seemingly well used. The Coliseum, on the site of the current Civic Centre in Shoreham, was coming to the end of its life. The balcony was not in use and said to be in danger of collapsing. The New Kinema, on the coast road at Southwick was no better. Shoreham has always had its fair share of public houses and the various attractions of Brighton were close at hand, wartime service wages permitting.

A feeling that the end of hostilities was near is reflected in the only item reported from the Station Commanders Conference early in 1945, attended by Truleigh Hill's Commanding Officer Flt./Lt.H.W.Le Good. It was recommended that compensation be made to billetors for wear and tear to linen and furniture. The possibility of a long service bonus was also discussed. A separate entry in the report for January 1945 records that Flight Sergeant S.Engelman, a Truleigh Hill radar operator, was mentioned in despatches but does not carry any further details.

In February 1945 the Type 41 radar was dismantled and shipped to the station at Great Orme above Llandudno. Just three weeks later a Type 31 arrived from Great Orme to be converted to Type 41. It has to be assumed that there was a good reason for not carrying out the conversion at Great Orme.

Things moved quickly after V/E Day, 8th May 1945. On 6th July the station's status was declared to be Care and Maintenance Stage 2. In September, the shop premises at 33, East Street became the subject of a 'Marching-Out Inspection', before being handed over to the Air Ministry Works Department. Whether or not there was an owner or tenant at the time of requisitioning the shop is not recorded. It is listed as 'Arthur Myers, Glass and China' in 1940 and in 1947 the occupants were R.A.Leggett, Estate Agents. The absence of Kelly's Directories for the period in between makes further research difficult. In later years the building became the offices of the *Shoreham Herald*. It is unfortunate that noted Shoreham historian Reginald Leggett is no longer with us, as he would most certainly have been able to add to the history of No. 33 East Street.

On 2nd October RAF Truleigh Hill officially became a satellite of RAF Poling and individual reports from Truleigh Hill ceased. Station strength had dropped to 116 and all remaining staff were transferred into billets at RAF Poling. Operations continued on Truleigh Hill for a time with watches being transported daily from Poling. The Type 41 radar was dismantled in November and the CHL watch was discontinued early in 1946. Type 51, being a forerunner of the ROTOR Chain Home Extra Low system which was to come later, was in use until 1947 and then kept on operational standby for several years until developments made this unnecessary. Shoreham's first radar, the CHL operation, which had given good service for five years, was also placed on standby, but any hopes of future use were ended shortly after when the receiver block was gutted by fire. This was not by any means, the end for Truleigh Hill. The GEE navigational aid continued to operate and a very major development was due to happen within a few years.

An interesting conclusion to this chapter came with the publication in 2007 of an RAF Truleigh Hill article in the North Portslade News, a free newspaper circulated in a small area from which Truleigh Hill is visible. The article sent 84-year-old ex flight-sergeant fighter pilot John Davidson in search of his wartime log-book. He reported that on 2nd June 1944, shortly before D. Day, he flew out from Thorney Island as one of a formation of eight single-manned Typhoon fighter/bombers. Nicknamed 'train-busters' or 'tank-busters', the Typhoons' mission on this occasion was to attack German radar stations. John Davidson reports that they were receiving their directions from radar operators at Truleigh Hill through the station's GCI (Ground Control Interception) facility.



Joan Corby (Barnett)
LACW – CHL



Arthur Franklin
Sgt. – CHL



Pamela Pounsett (Jenkins)
LACW - CHL



Joy Fuller (Harrild)
LACW – GEE Type 7000



Peter Harrild
Technical Officer GEE Type 7000



Jim Ward
Cpl. – CHL/ Maintenance



Edna Charlesworth
LACW – Mobile Direction
Finder

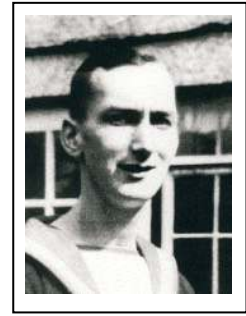


Patricia Rowe (Vale)
LACW – GEE Type 7000



Jan Parker (Dinnage)
LACW – Type 51 CHEL

Wartime Truleigh Hill Radar staff



More wartime radar staff. L to R: LACW Nancy Green (CHL), Cpl. Dave Pye (CHL), Cpl William Clarkson RNZAF (CHL) Able Seaman John Howarth RN, (Recorder of shipping plots from Truleigh Hill radar.)

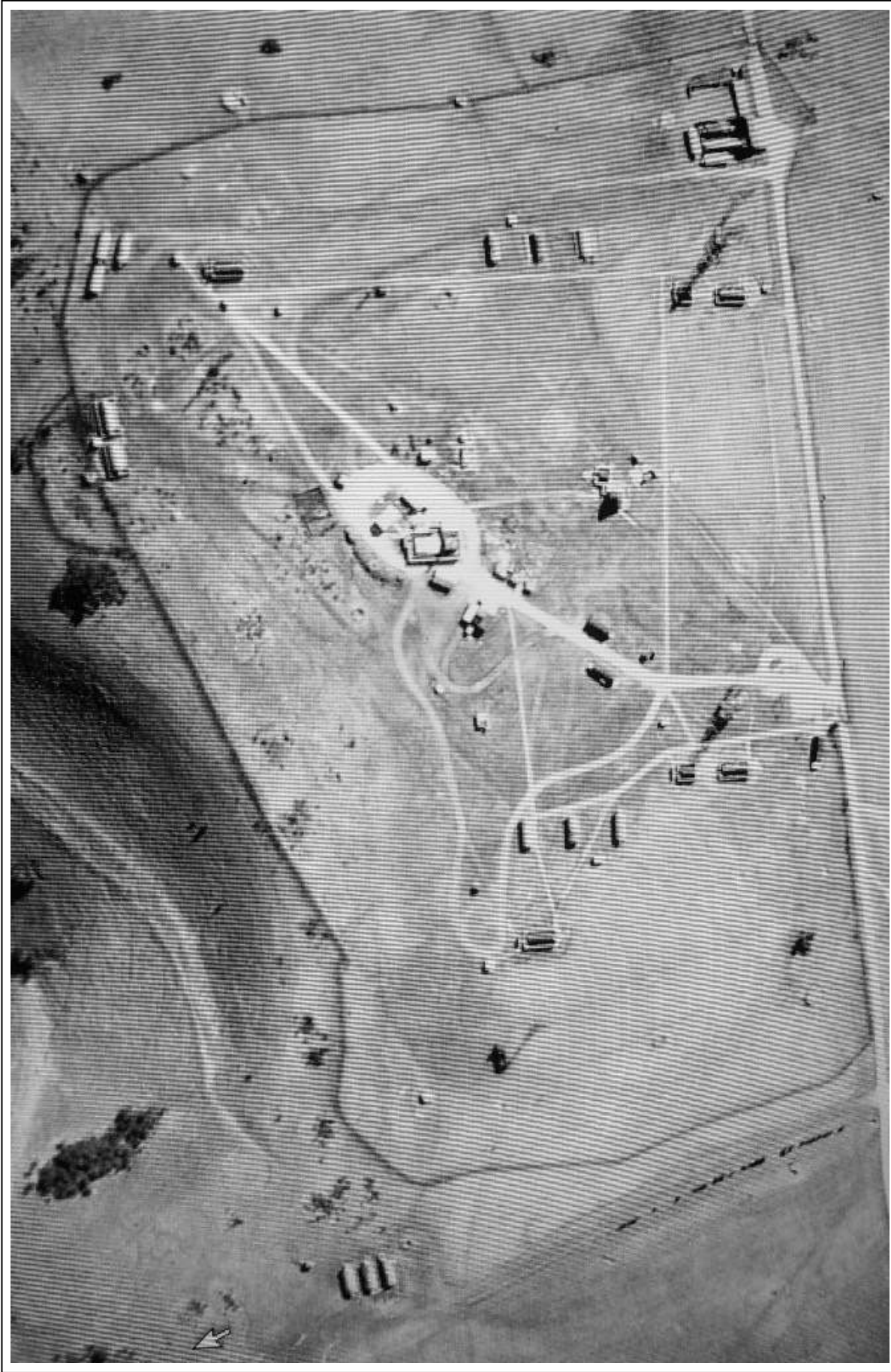
TRULEIGH
HILL

We know the boys of Truleigh Hill.
Do their jobs with all good will
And we below in Town or Street
Ask no questions, are quite discreet
We cook their meals and say Cheerio
Each morn or eve as they may go
Feeding them up with bread and taters
They journey forth all full of capers.
When day-light fades and they feel worn
Back they come all tattered and torn
Or if they come back in the morn
Their hair is ruffled by the storms
Whichever way you look at it
It really must need tons of grit
We know they work, they play they fight
But do it well with all their might
We know not what their work may be
How long it takes or what they see
We only know we're proud to feel
They'll sometimes come in for a meal
We wish to say to all their mothers
We're thankful they are not with others
We love to have them one or more
God bless 'em every one of those
As on his daily job he goes.

Miss Hilda Wimbush
Shoreham by Sea
Sussex
Circa 1940-1

(Miss Wimbush lived in a house in Shoreham where
Radar Operators/Mechanics were billeted)

At least one Shoreham landlady was particularly pleased to share her home with Truleigh Hill airmen.
The poem has been recently transcribed by Jim Ward, who was billeted in Upper Shoreham Road, Connaught Avenue and Swiss Gardens during the period 1942-1945. It was given to Jim by the late Cpl. George Blunden, who it is to be assumed was billeted with Miss Wimbush.



The 1942 HQ No.60 Group drawing, updated in 1944, gives the key to the buildings in the aerial photograph on the previous page, taken during the later stages of the war. The unmarked building, bottom centre, is the guardroom. The multiple dotted lines represent the present South Downs Way

(Photograph source unknown. Probably English Heritage National Monument Record. — Plan. Sqdn/Ldr Mike Dean —Historical Radar Archive)

REFERENCE

- 1 T&R BLDG. TYPE 2
- 2 STAFF QTRS. BT HOUSE
- 3 REST HUT
- 4 STANDBY GET HOUSE
- 5 INTERROGATOR MAST
- 6 INTERROGATOR HUT.
- 7 R1 7000
- 8 R2 "
- 9 R1 "
- 10 R2 "
- 11 ADMIN. BLDG.
- 12 WORKS SERVICE BLDG.
- 13 ARMY GUARD HUTS
- 14 " " "
- 15 R.A.F. HUTS
- 16 L.A.M. HUTS
- 17 " " "
- 18 TYPE 31 SITE
- 19 RT BLDG.
- 20 TYPE 14 MARK I
- 21 TYPE 11 AERIAL TRAILER
- 22 TYPE 10 VEHICLE
- 23 RESERVE OCI CONVOY SITE.

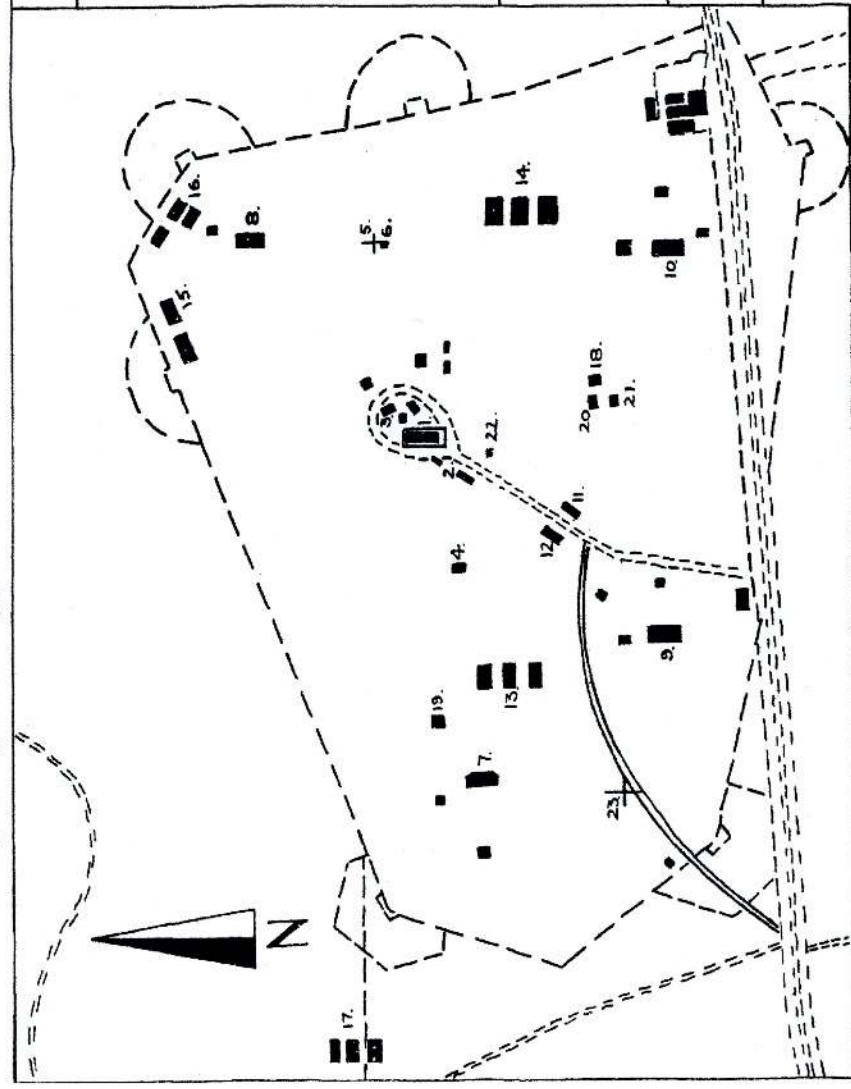
DRAWING OFFICE H.Q. 60GR D.A.F.
 D.D.G. NO. 60C/07B/2B
 BASED ON D.O.F.W. D.D.G. NO. 417/42

SCALE 1:2500

GRID REF: WQ 6613 : 2997.

DRAWN BY: K.M.M. 13.3.44
 APPROVED BY S&L COMMITTEE: *M.A. Pearn H10*
 DATE: 21.4.44
 SUPERSEDES PREVIOUS D.D.G. NO: 07B/2A

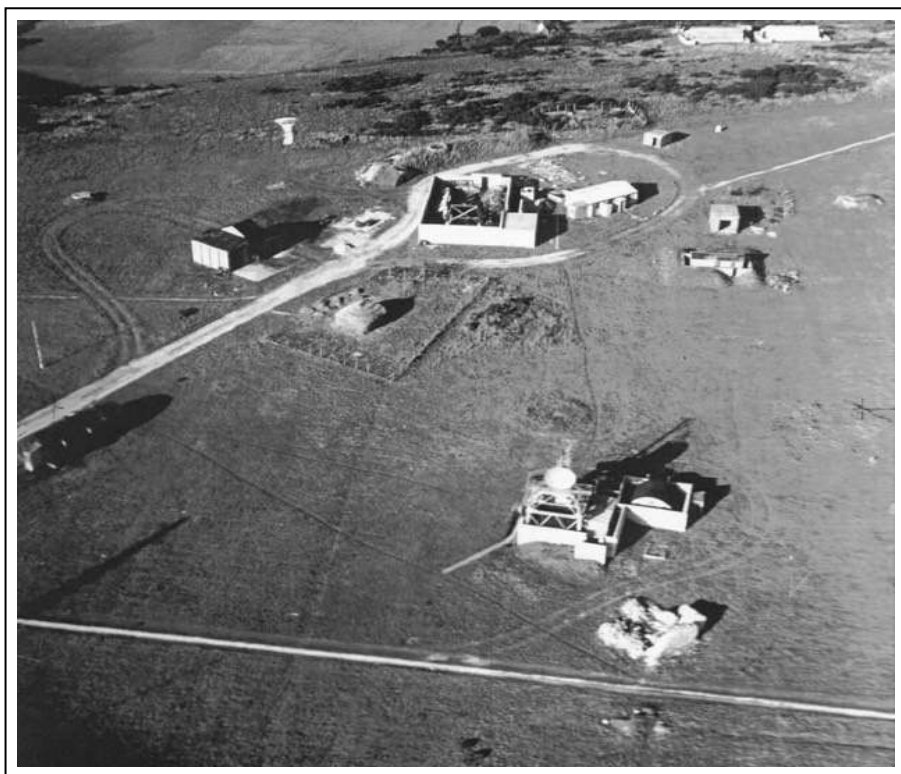
SECRET



TRULEIGH HILL



Truleigh Hill technical site in 1949, looking much as it would have done during wartime.



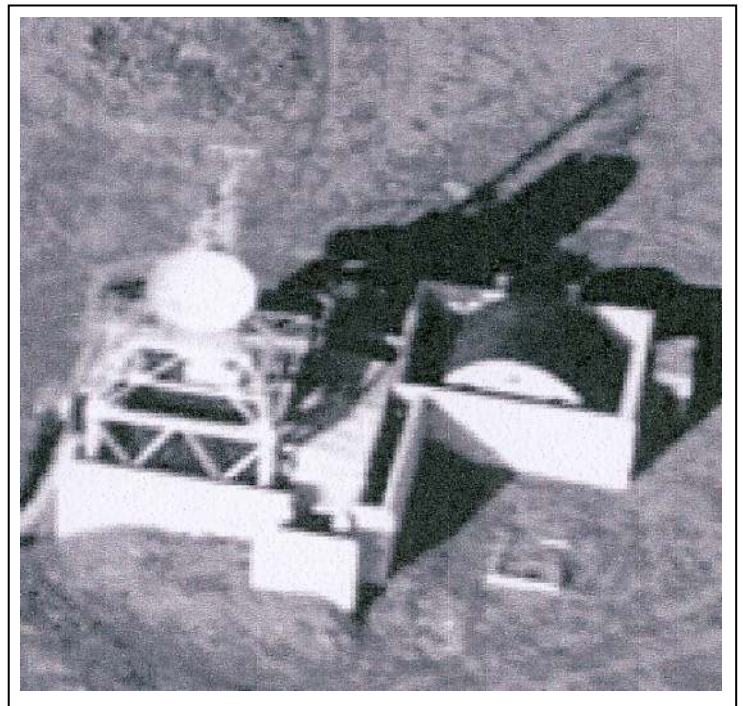
Remains of the fire damaged CHL Receiver Block in 1946 with the aerial gantry still in place. In the foreground is the Type 51 radar which remained on standby until the mid 1950s. (Both pictures: English Heritage National Monument Record)



Type 41 (modified from Type 31) Late 1943 – Feb 1945)



Type 57. Temporary installation during 1944



Type 51. Late 1943-1947. Standby until 1954

Later installations at Truleigh Hill to supplement original Type 2 (CHL) installed early in war,
and the Type 7000 GEE Navigational Aid installed in 1942

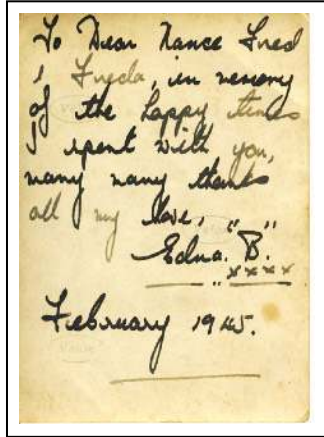
(Type 41 and 57 photos-Crown Copyright via Bob Jenner. Type 51 photo-English Heritage National Monument Record)
Types 41 and 57 were not photographed at Truleigh Hill.



Kaye - from Bradford



Hazel - from Blackpool



Another Edna !



Edna B - from Mansfield

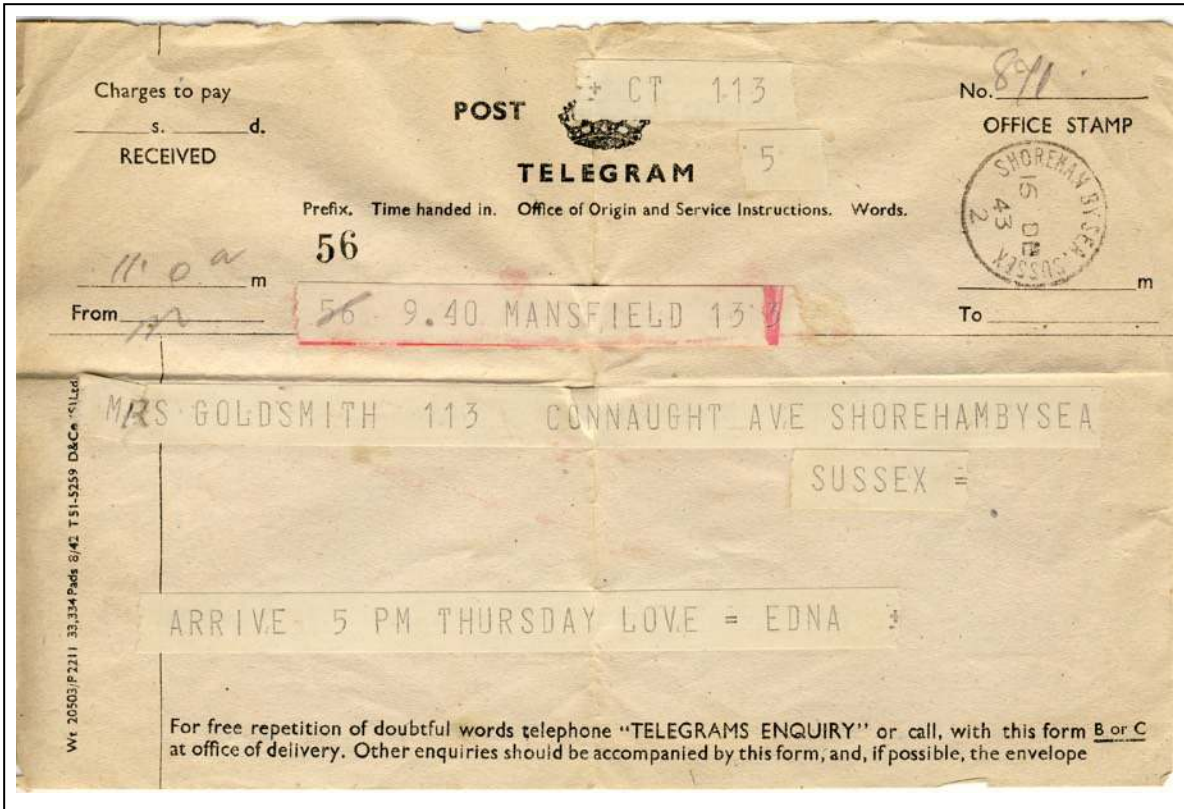


Kaye and friends

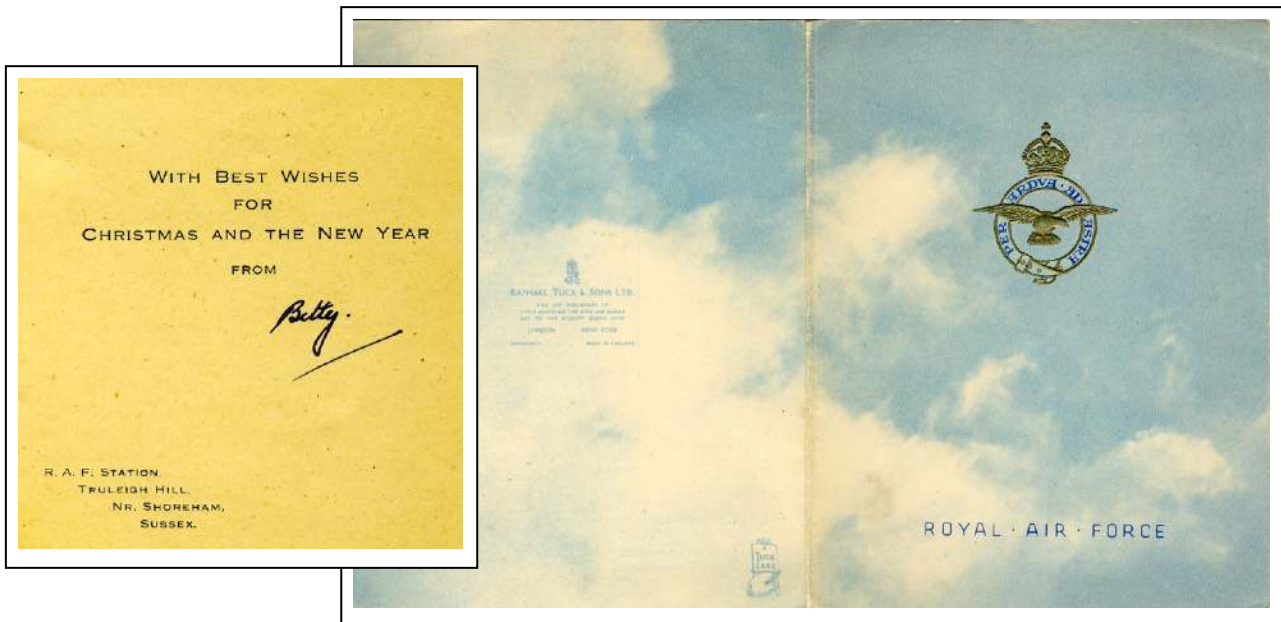


Margaret

A selection of the many wartime Truleigh Hill WAFs billeted with the Goldsmith family at 113 Connaught Avenue, Shoreham. Unfortunately no surnames available.
(Paul Goldsmith)



Returning from leave - 1943
(Paul Goldsmith)



RAF Truleigh Hill Christmas card from same period (Paul Goldsmith)

3. Poling

Poling is the sort of place that you drive through at great speed on the way from Worthing to Arundel, probably without giving it a second thought. It is true that not a great deal of Poling is actually on the main A27 road. The rest is spread over approximately a mile and a quarter of the L shaped Poling Street, which runs due south from a point known as Poling Corner on the A27. Today it is probably best known as the final resting place of former England cricket captain Colin Cowdrey.

In the wartime period between 1939 and 1945 RAF Poling was very important indeed, as one of the first wave of Chain Home radar stations to be set up and operating in readiness for war. Early radar staff at Poling were all male, but at the end of 1939, the 24 WAAF members to pass out from a radar operators' course at Bawdsey were divided equally between the CH stations at Swingate (Dover) and Poling.

On arrival in Arundel the newly qualified WAAFs were in for a surprise when they found themselves billeted in some style in Arundel Castle as guests of the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk. It was not, unfortunately, to last very long. In the spring of 1940, a hutted camp was opened in woods on the corner of the A27 and Dover Lane, immediately south of where the Chestnut Tree Hospice now stands. Where possible, billets and other buildings were set between the trees. The mess hall, being somewhat larger than the rest of the buildings, was built around the lower levels of a sizeable oak tree which protruded through both the floor and the roof. Staff were transported from the domestic site to the radar site on the other side of the A27, halfway down Poling Street.

Initially, operators at RAF Poling were able to determine range and bearing of aircraft, but it needed a time consuming exercise on a plotting table in order to turn the information into a grid reference. Similarly, a mathematical calculation from range and angle data was necessary to establish heights. The arrival of 'The Fruit Machine' changed all that. Engineers from the GPO Circuit Laboratory designed and built what was officially titled the CH Electrical Calculator, but to radar people everywhere it was and will remain 'The Fruit Machine'. Poling had the distinction of receiving the very first of these huge pieces of equipment in March 1940. What today would probably occupy a small amount of space on a desk-top, in 1940 filled a small room. But for that period it represented a huge technological advance and operators, with a flick of a couple of switches, could eliminate the manual plotting and height finding operations.

In addition to passing their own plots to Stanmore, Poling, in common with many other CH stations, had to receive and pass on plots from a nearby CHL station that did not have direct line facilities to Stanmore. In Poling's case their CHL station was Truleigh Hill and this operation was the start of a link with Truleigh Hill that was to continue until 1952.

In the early part of 1940 activity was light, allowing the new operators to become settled in to their new duties. In May things started to hot up and on August 12th all of the Chain Home stations around the south-east corner were attacked with the exception of Poling. The tall aerial array at Poling was identical to the other stations, but as Poling was set back from the coast and on flatter land perhaps it had escaped notice. It is also possible that it could have been spotted when Tangmere was bombed on August 16th, as two days later Poling's turn came.

A new brick receiver block had been built at Poling to replace the hastily constructed timber one. Although it had not yet been used, it was equipped to take the plots from Truleigh Hill. When the CH watch arrived for changeover at 1pm on August 18th there were already signs of intense activity building up. One operator was required to take the plots from Truleigh in the new building, while the rest carried out normal duties in the old. Avis Hearn volunteered for the Truleigh option. At 24 she was probably a bit older than most of her colleagues and at 4ft 10ins she was certainly shorter than all of them. In some reports she is described as the shortest woman in the Air Force.

She was extremely busy; the plots were coming thick and fast. After a while, the telephone rang with instructions to head for the shelter. When she said that she was too busy, the sergeant left it to her to decide but didn't order her to go. When the Stukas arrived and the bombs started to fall, the Truleigh Hill operator warned her that the plot was right on top of her, a fact that by now she was very well aware of. The rest of the watch were already in the shelters, but she made the decision to see it through and continued to receive and pass plots throughout.

A total of 88 bombs were dropped by a force of around 30 planes. 44 fell inside the radar compound, the rest within a radius of three quarters of a mile. Amazingly only two minor casualties were reported. When she finally emerged from the receiver block the original CH building and several others had been demolished along with a number of vehicles. A brand new Lagonda belonging to one of the officers was in flames, as was the truck that had brought them from the domestic site. Avis Hearn became one of only six WAAFs to receive the Military Medal, eventually becoming a Flight Sergeant instructor. Avis, later Mrs. Parsons, lived for many years at an RAF retirement home in Sussex, happily reliving her story for the benefit of many books, newspaper articles and TV programmes. Sadly she died in March 2008. Ironically her funeral was the same day that former members of RAF Truleigh Hill were enjoying their second reunion at Horsham.

The figures come from the official ARP report prepared the day after the raid. In the general remarks the following statement appears: *'Congestion of traffic by private cars and sight-seeing civilians from Worthing and other districts was caused at Poling Corner on the A27 road. If the incident had required other services to attend, I am afraid some delay would have been caused. RAF personnel worked hard on traffic duty at this spot, but the flocking of cars and cycles to scenes of damage is to be deplored'*. This, remember, was August 1940, so it is surprising to learn that there were sufficient private cars to cause congestion and enough available petrol to do it with.

As Truleigh Hill had officially become a satellite of Poling at the end of the war, the camp became home to both units. For a brief period, as the RAF sought to prepare its personnel for re-entry into civilian life, Poling became the RAF School of Dramatic Art. The most notable airman to benefit from this enterprise was Donald Sinden. The Truleigh Hill GEE staff had their own dramatic aspirations, producing a Christmas variety show at Poling called *Yours Truleigh* in 1950. In 2005, in response to the appeal for photographs, Derek Wilkinson, who arranged the lighting for the show, produced several Poling photos including some of the show. The following year, one of the participants, Alfred Stride, who now lives in Southwick, was astonished to receive pictures of himself and other members of the cast 56 years after the event. Shortly before publication of this book, the show's Master of Ceremonies, Don Beckley, was discovered via the membership lists of the Friends of the RAF Air Defence Museum at Neatishead and added to the growing list of Truleigh veterans. Don was able to identify all of the cast members in the photographs.

In October 1945 Flt/Lt Wilfred Slack became the Commanding Officer of both Poling and Truleigh and for good measure supervised the closing down of the Ground Control Interception operation at nearby RAF Durrington. The Chain Home equipment at Poling was upgraded as part of the Cold War ROTOR project and continued to operate, being one of the last to close, along with Swingate, in the middle of 1956. The Truleigh Hill CHL operation closed early in 1946, but the Truleigh GEE staff continued to be accommodated at Poling until 1952 when they were moved back into private billeting in Shoreham.

The extent of the Truleigh Hill billeting at Poling was not initially appreciated, but was accurately described by driver Jim McLaughlin, the first of the Truleigh 'lodgers' to be interviewed. Jim tells the story of orderly room clerk Ken Rootes, grandson of motor group chief Lord Rootes, who occasionally arrived for duty driving his father's Humber Super Snipe. Also at Poling at that time was 'Taffy' Jenkins, the brother of actor Richard Burton.

David Jones, one of the Truleigh radar staff at Poling in 1950-51 remembers his time there for very sad reasons. Two of his friends, Alan Tarling and John Clapshaw, both keen cyclists, were involved in an accident with a car on Bury Hill while on their way to meet parents for the day. John was killed and Alan seriously injured. David Jones had the task of taking John's personal belongings to his parents and later represented the unit at the funeral. Worthing Excelsior Cycling Club still stage a 25 mile time trial event, named in his memory. John Grant, a contributor to this chapter and, coincidentally, a long-time club member, has ridden the event on several occasions.

Many of the early post-war GEE staff served the entire length of their Truleigh Hill period while billeted at Poling. Others, such as Don Beckley, Steve Beamish, Gary Godfrey, Les Burchell and John Disbery survived three moves in a short period of time during the transition to accommodation in Shoreham. All have supplied considerable detail and memories to assist the preparation of this and the next chapter. Worthing was within easy reach for entertainment. Continuing the cycling theme from the previous paragraph, Les Burchell recalls a group attending a racing competition on rollers at The Assembly Hall. Legendary champion Reg Harris competed against local cycling stars, one of which was a sergeant at the Poling camp.

Contact with Ernie Knibbs, an Air Ministry Works Department maintenance engineer at both Poling and Truleigh Hill, has also proved to be a bonus in this respect. Ernie, a 19-year-old Marine machine-gunner at the D-Day landings, and later part of a team known throughout radar stations as 'works and bricks', provided much background material including a drawing of the Poling domestic site layout from memories that go back nearly sixty years.

In common with many others of the first wave of radar stations, Poling's own activities were confined to just the original Chain Home system. Despite the upgrading of its equipment, the end came for Poling when the introduction of the Type 80 system enabled the number of installations along the South Coast to be considerably reduced. Some of Poling's Chain Home staff were retrained on the GEE navigational aid, with two returning to the area as part of the Truleigh Hill GEE operator team.

Buildings at Poling technical site were removed, with the exception of the rectangular receiver block which was the scene of Avis Hearn's heroics in 1940 and two former Air Ministry houses now named Radar Cottages. The receiver block has been turned into private accommodation, comprising four flats, and is known as Radar Barn. The height has been increased and a pitched roof added but the building still retains its basic shape. Bomb damage is still visible on all three buildings which are lasting monuments to Poling's own piece of World War 2 history. Many of the buildings at the domestic site were of timber and corrugated iron construction and have long since vanished. The remains of some of the brick built buildings can still be seen among the trees next to the Chestnut Tree Hospice.



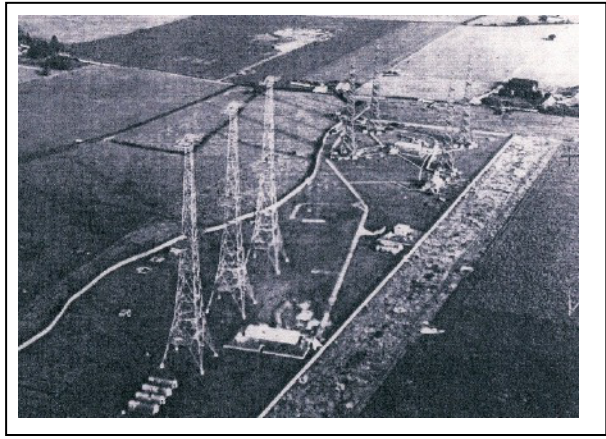
Photographs reproduced from *Radar-A Wartime Miracle* with the permission of Anne Stobbs and Colin Latham showing the party to celebrate Avis Hearn's (Parsons) Military Medal, and Avis as a Flight Sergeant later in her WAAF career.



The aerials identifying the Poling technical site (A), and the roads and buildings at the domestic site (B), are shown on this 1960 Ordnance Survey map. It is possible that the aerials and buildings may still have been in place in 1960. The proximity of the Woodman pub at Hammerpot, a favourite meeting place, can also be seen from this map.
(John Grant)



Poling receiver block in 2007. Now four flats known as Radar Barn. (John Grant)



RAF Poling Technical Site



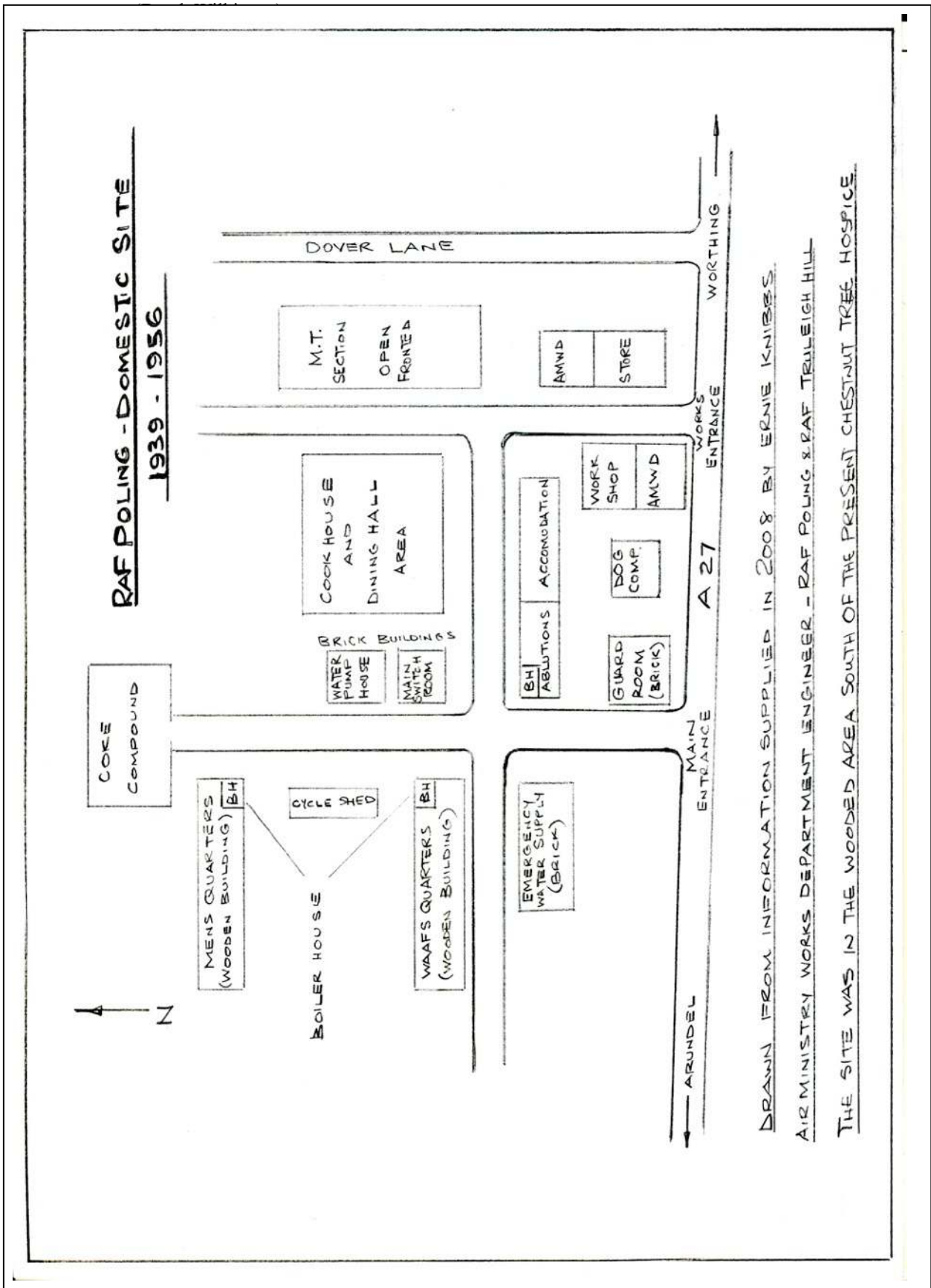
Cast of *Yours Truly* at Poling, Christmas 1950. Back Row: Maurice Hyams, Malcolm Humphries, Peter Longstaff, Ali Tomkins, Jack Lambert, Glyn Williams. Front Row: Alfred Stride, Ian Boss, Don Beckley, Les Newman, Ken Bayliss. (Derek Wilkinson)



Ken Albert gets ready for the Poling to Truleigh Hill run
(Ken Albert)



The benefits of owning a motor-cycle on a mixed camp. Arthur Waller & Mary Cox



Poling and Truleigh Hill Maintenance Engineer Ernie Knibbs' recollection of the layout of the Poling domestic site that closed in 1956.

4. GEE Navigational Aid

In the urgency to get the Chain Home and Chain Home Low stations operational early in the war, the GEE navigational aid had been put on the back burner. It soon became obvious that Bomber Command needed a substantial improvement on the target location methods in use at the time, as well as assistance in returning to base.

Trials began in 1941 and during 1942 regional GEE chains were established. A chain comprised a master station, two or three slave stations and a monitor station. Just four stations along the south coast were required to form the Southern Chain with Truleigh Hill becoming one of the slave stations. The second slave station, at the other end of the country, was at West Prawle, near Kingsbridge in Devon. Listings of GEE stations during wartime also show Canewdon in Essex as a third slave, but this station was not part of the chain in later years. The master and monitor stations were positioned in between on the eastern side of Dorset. Bulbarrow, near Blandford was the site for the master station, whilst the monitor for most of the remainder of the war was at Brandy Bay, near Tyneham. In December 1944, Worth Matravers, the scene of much early radar development, became the monitor station and remained so until late in 1957.

A very basic and simplified description of the system is that from pulses transmitted sequentially from the master and both slave stations at a given frequency, aircraft or shipping could take a 'fix' to determine location. For the radar purist a far more detailed eight page description of GEE theory can be found in *Radar a Wartime Miracle* by Colin Latham and Anne Stobbs.

The Truleigh Hill GEE operation commenced in June 1942 and continued an unbroken fifteen years of service until closure in November 1957. The radar site at Truleigh Hill, up to that time housing only the CHL system, underwent major changes. Four Nissen huts surrounded by thick blast walls were constructed and sited in the four corners of the site. Identical receiver blocks were in the two northern corners with the transmitter blocks in the southern corners, close to the track that is now the South Downs Way. Each receiver block also contained a duplicate set of equipment. Behind each transmitter block was a smaller building housing a standby generator. Six tall aerial towers were required, two adjacent to each transmitter block and one at each receiver block. Radar personnel billeted in Shoreham doubled with the influx of possibly 40 mechanics and operators to man the system. Perhaps man is the wrong word, as records show that at least for some periods of the war the WAAF personnel outnumbered the airmen.

Many of the staff required for the GEE operation were mechanics and operators retrained from the Chain Home and Chain Home Low systems. Patricia Rowe (now Vale) had barely settled in at Truleigh Hill in 1943 following her CHL training at Yatesbury, when she was despatched to Barkway to undertake a GEE operators course. Such was the secrecy surrounding GEE, or 7k as it was sometimes called, staff were not permitted to discuss the system even with personnel on other radar systems. Had she been longer at Truleigh Hill, she would not have been allowed to return on completion of her course, as Truleigh was now operating both GEE and CHL systems. As she had only been operating on CHL for a very short time, it was felt that she had not been at Truleigh Hill long enough to have formed close friendships which might have persuaded her to disclose the nature of the 7k activities (her own words).

Back in Shoreham, with Mrs. Huckle at 375 Upper Shoreham Road, her first move was to collect her bicycle from her home at Ashtead. Home visits now involved a mixture of train, cycling and hitch-hiking, complete with bike. Following her spell at Truleigh, she was posted to the appropriately named Windyhead Hill on the north facing Scottish coast, close to Fraserburgh. Scot, Doris Urquhart was originally scheduled for this posting, but a last minute need for an emergency operation saw Patricia Rowe sent in her place.

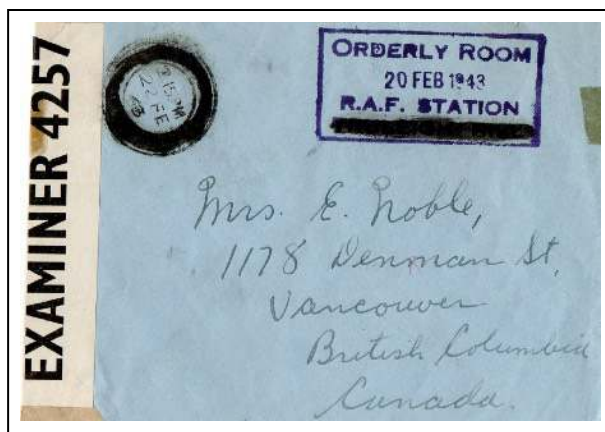
The secrecy issue also involved the CHL staff, although it seems that they were allowed to discuss their operation with GEE staff but not the reverse. Both groups were forbidden to discuss their work with their families and also other RAF trades that they came into contact with, such as drivers and police. Shoreham residents were not permitted to proceed any further on the Truleigh Hill road than the early stages of Mill Hill.

The demands on a GEE operator and mechanic could not have been more different. The mechanic, usually recruited to the position as a result of possessing skills in the electrical and radio fields, had the job of keeping the system running. From time to time a trip in transmission resulted in the station being off the air. It was the mechanics responsibility to restore transmission in the shortest possible time. For the operator sitting peering at his cathode ray tube display in the receiver block, this represented the only time that he or she was required to display any skill. Following a break in transmission the pulse reappeared in all sorts of places, involving the operator in a brief period of near panic action, but this was only an occasional occurrence. Failure to restore the pulse to its correct position within a two minute time period was viewed as a serious matter, resulting in the writing of a special incident report. For the majority of the time the operator's job, although of vital importance, was nevertheless incredibly boring. Wartime operators, transferred from the hectic routine on Chain Home stations, found it difficult to accept. Usually three or four operators took it in turns to have two hour spells 'on the tube' as it was generally referred to. Only an occasional correction, positive or negative, achieved via control knobs either side of the tube, was necessary. The monitor at Brandy Bay and later Worth Matravers was quick to spot any lapse of concentration, issuing the necessary adjustment instructions via headphone sets. An added problem was the difficulty in staying awake on the night duties, particularly on the central 'middle bind' between 2.30 and 5am.

Technical Officer Peter Harrild spent a brief spell at Truleigh Hill in August/September 1943 in what was generally a learning exercise on GEE prior to commencement of a course at TRE (Telecommunications Research Establishment), which by now had moved to Malvern. When the call came, he was stationed at Netherbutton in the Orkney Islands, one of the early Chain Home stations. A very lengthy journey to Shoreham was not helped by having to report to No.78 Wing headquarters at Ashburton in Devon and the Southern Chain monitor at Brandy Bay in Dorset en route.

Despite his brief stay at Truleigh Hill, his contribution to the record is significant. As an officer he was billeted at the officers' accommodation at Haven St. Mary in Upper Beeding. To date he is the only officer so far located, that resided at Haven St. Mary, although Jim Ward recalls playing the piano there at a Christmas party. Patricia Vale has memories of attending discussion groups there. On completion of the course at Malvern, Peter Harrild found himself posted to Burifa Hill on the very north eastern tip of Scotland and within sight of the Orkneys that he had left just a few weeks earlier. His future wife Joy Fuller had been a WAAF operator at Truleigh during his short period there, but their paths had not crossed. Later postings brought both of them to RAF Grangewood, a small station near Hastings operating a GEE-H precision bombing system with equipment that could be converted to a mobile operation. They had been married just one week in December 1944, when the Grangewood operation closed down and the equipment became part of a large concentration of mobile GEE units across France and Germany. Peter Harrild went with it. Extracts from his diary and letters to his wife form a very interesting five pages in *Radar- A Wartime Miracle*.

Another of Patricia Vale's memories concerns a flight sergeant who was granted a favourable posting to Truleigh Hill, to enable him to keep an eye on a museum that he owned. This, she felt certain, was the famous Potters Museum of stuffed animals and birds that had existed in nearby Bramber since 1880. It is known that the owner at the start of the war was Eddie Collins, the grandson of the founder Walter Potter, and that he was called up in 1939 and was involved in radar. Peter Harrild, in his time at Truleigh Hill prior to the course at Malvern, received a degree of tuition in the workings of the GEE system from Flight Sergeant Collins. It would appear fairly certain that Eddie Collins became Flight Sergeant Collins of RAF Truleigh Hill, but the final piece of conclusive evidence has yet to be found.



These censored letters emphasise the degree of security in force, particularly in relation to the GEE navigational aid. The letter above was sent by LAC Wright of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Although the station name is blacked out, when the original is held to the light, the name RAF Truleigh Hill is revealed.

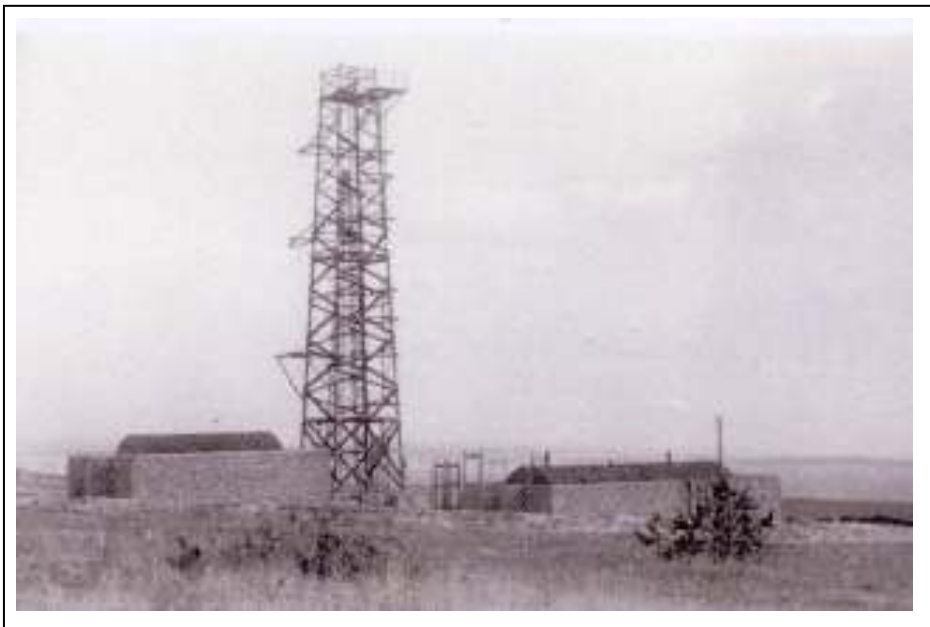
(Ian Muchall – Forces Postal History Society).

The letter to the right was sent by Truleigh Hill GEE operator Patricia Rowe (now Mrs. Vale) to her mother in Surrey.

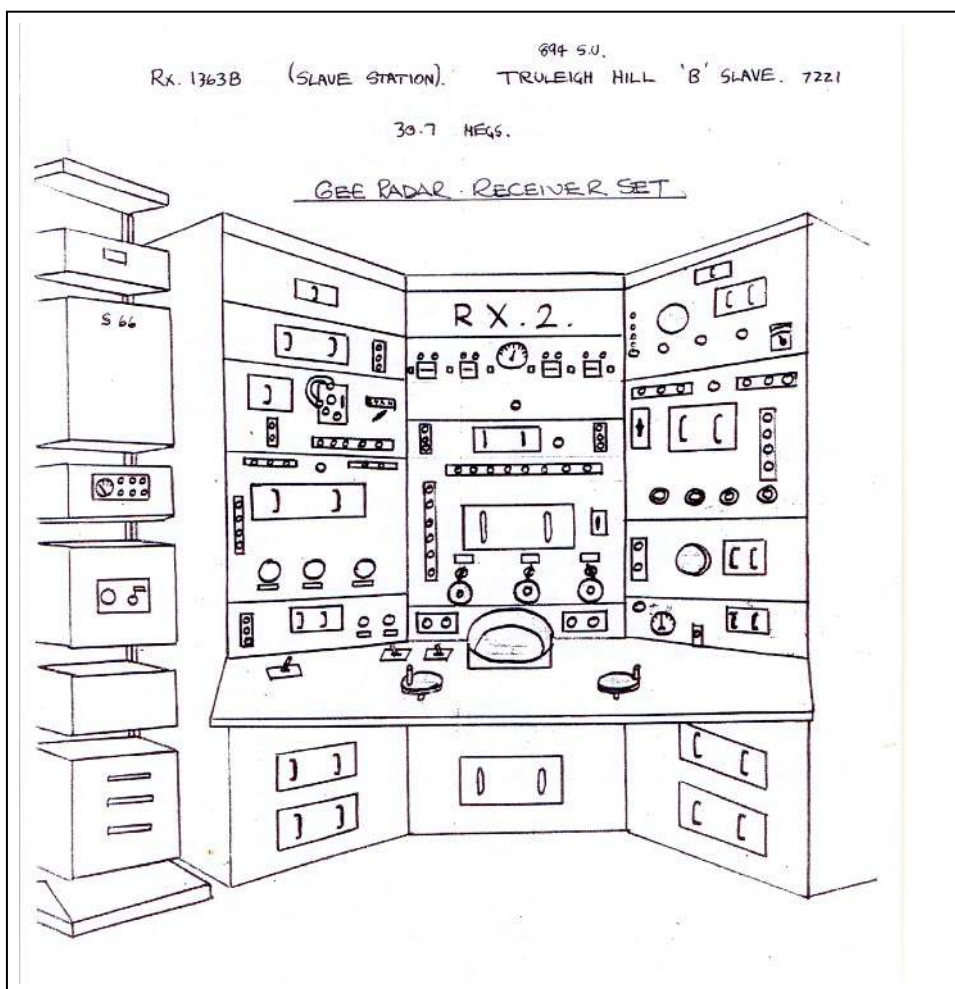


At the very end of the war the GEE personnel were transferred from their private billeting in Shoreham to accommodation at RAF Poling along with the remaining CHL staff. Initially operatives from both systems were transported between Poling and Truleigh Hill, stopping en route at Shoreham Airport to collect water supplies. A further stop was made at the post office in Old Shoreham for cigarettes and confectionery etc. Early in 1946 the CHL operation was wound up, but the GEE staff continued to be 'lodgers' at Poling for a further six years. In 1952 they were on the move again, this time back into billeting with Shoreham landladies.

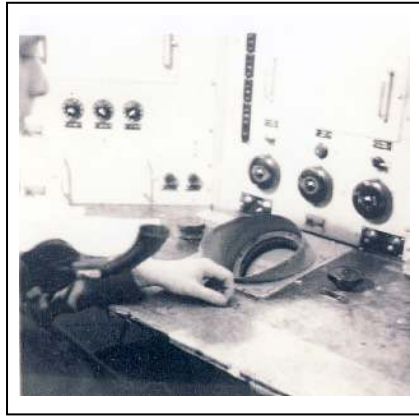
As the wartime conscripts and volunteers were released, they were gradually replaced by those called up in the early stages of National Service. The composition of the watches changed to an all male situation, unlike the wartime period where it would appear from station records that WAAF operatives comprised at least 50% of each watch. There are no records to indicate the presence of any members of the Women's Royal Air Force, as it had then become, being stationed at Truleigh Hill in peacetime.



Truleigh Hill transmitter block T1 in 1952. (Steve Beamish)



A sight very familiar to any GEE operator. This Truleigh Hill receiver set was drawn by Shoreham's last radar operator, Brian Mickels, shortly before he helped to dismantle it early in 1958. (Brian Mickels)



Great concentration from an unknown GEE operator and concentration of a different kind during the favourite night watch time- passing occupation. (Steve Beamish)



John Disbery at the GEE Receiver set in 1952.
(John Disbery)

In the post war period the whole operation was transferred at 12 noon each day from one set of blocks to the others on the opposite side of the site. It is not known if this routine was carried out in wartime, but it would seem likely. For a few seconds the station's pulse disappeared from the set in Receiver Block 1 as transmission was being transferred between the two T (transmission) blocks. The pulse then reappeared some 300 yards away in R2 (Receiver Block 2) in front of an operator who had gone to the second block in advance of the other two or three operators on the watch.

Although a Baby Belling electric cooker had been installed in each block so that meals could be prepared, many other vital pieces of equipment were not in double supply. Once the changeover of operations between the two sets of blocks had been completed, operators took part in a daily bizarre transfer of necessary equipment between the blocks. Such items as a large metal water container, a wooden armed armchair, several rubber insulation mats, broom, kettle, frying pan, radio, plates, log books, and any usable food from the previous night shift made a daily 300 yards journey 700feet up on the downs in all weathers. If at some stage of the night watch a crucial piece of equipment, such as the frying pan, had been left behind, lots were drawn to determine who made the trip back through the field, often in the dark and in bad weather, to collect the missing item.

The routine that has just been described is from personal memory as an operator. The mechanics in the transmitter block followed much the same procedure in switching blocks and transferring equipment. In both cases as much importance was placed in the safe transfer of items relevant to the coming night shift's eating and sleeping arrangements, as to items affecting the actual operation of the system. Meals were cooked during the evening in both receiver and transmitter blocks by one of the watch and was more often than not, eggs, chips and corned beef (usually fried). A four watch system involved a change of watch at mid day, with a meal at camp either before or after watch. A three watch system involved all day working with the same meal procedure as in the evening, resulting in a fairly unhealthy diet of regular fry-ups.

At this stage, fifty plus years on, it is one hopes, safe to reveal without fear of life imprisonment, that from midnight to around 7.30 am two out of three operators slept as did all four mechanics. The operators took it in turns to cover the seven and a half hours 'on the tube', with the performance being carefully watched by the monitor at Worth Matravers. The Transmitter block watch usually comprised three airmen mechanics with one highly qualified civilian technician in charge. Between them they had ample electrical and radio skills to ensure that they were very quickly awake should anything untoward happen. In the early part of the evening the mechanics were required to service the receiver that had been in use prior to the mid-day changeover. The employment of civilian technicians meant that the service personnel, however well qualified, had no opportunity to become the watch leader.

Between 1947 and 1952 the GEE operation was the only activity at the Truleigh Hill technical site, although the Type 51 radar established in the latter part of the war was kept on standby. The 24-hour watch system continued to operate throughout the remainder of the GEE system's lifetime. Early in the summer of 1952 the massive operation to construct the underground bunker for the forthcoming Chain Home Extra Low (CHEL) system, as part of the ROTOR project, was completed. Excavations and spoil disposal had been taking place throughout the winter, and somehow the GEE operation continued throughout the general chaos. The Stoney Lane domestic site that was being built to house the radar and support staff for the new system was due to open in July. In anticipation of the opening of the domestic site, the support staff such as police, drivers, medical, administration and catering staff began to arrive at Poling for temporary accommodation. As there was not sufficient room at Poling to house both Truleigh Hill elements, the GEE staff were moved out to private billeting in Shoreham.

Several, including Les Burchell and Gary Godfrey, found themselves in Old Fort Road on Shoreham Beach, but before they had time to settle, they were moved into the Stoney Lane camp. Equipment delays had meant that the new underground operation was behind schedule. Mechanics and operators could not be drafted into the camp until there was an operation for them to work on. The support staff were quickly moved from Poling to Stoney Lane with the GEE staff filling the rest of the billets. When the ROTOR staff finally arrived in September, the GEE staff were back out into private billeting. The politics behind these arrangements will be explained later.

In 1953, in the early years of general television ownership, the Brighton area was receiving poor reception. There were very real fears that the Coronation would be missed completely by those on the south side of the downs. The BBC, initially unhelpful, finally bowed to public pressure and sited a signal relay van on the Truleigh Hill radar site to pick up the signal from London and relay it down to the Brighton area. Les Burchell, on duty that day, watched part of the service from Westminster Abbey on his way between transmitter blocks.

The ROTOR system lasted just four years in Shoreham, even less in some other locations. The last watch at the underground site was in August 1956. Those close to demob remained in Shoreham for a while, assisting in the closing down operation. As the remainder were posted out to other radar stations or for re-training, the GEE staff were brought into the Stoney Lane camp to fill the vacant spaces.

Staff levels in 1956 for both GEE operators and mechanics were low, with a three watch system in force. By January 1957 operator strength had improved, but in his report for that month Warrant Officer Bill Austin observed that technical staff levels were so low that he was contemplating adding himself to the watch list. He managed to avoid this indignity by paying the civilian technicians overtime.

Staff levels improved sufficiently for a four watch system to operate for most of 1957, but the writing was on the wall for Truleigh Hill as a GEE station. W/O Austin compiled the final station record in which, under the heading General Comment, he observed that the unit was ordered to close down at 09.00 hrs on 1st December 1957, thus ending 15 unbroken years of operational service. Staff at closure comprised: Warrant Officers 1, Sergeants 2, Corporals 4, Aircraftsmen 20, Civilian Radio Technician 1.

Throughout much of the GEE navigational aid's period of operation civilian technicians were used to supplement the RAF staff. One of these, Paul Waters, a highly qualified technician, returned to Shoreham after a lengthy career at several RAF stations in the UK, plus service in The Gulf and The Falklands. He was awarded the MBE for services to the Ministry of Defence. Cliff Hoath was another highly qualified civilian technician who had seen wartime service. A third technician, Charlie Bloomfield, has become part of Shoreham folklore, at least where former RAF radar people are concerned. Charlie lived at Beeding, and on days that he was on duty he walked up the track to the right angled bend at the top of Beeding Hill to be collected by the RAF transport. To any former airman who has ever made that journey, either by coach or truck, during Charlie's time and after, that bend in the road is known as Charlie's Corner. It has remained so to this day although probably very few local people are aware of the story. Perhaps the next project after completion of this book will be to lobby the relevant council to officially recognise the name and erect a sign at the corner. It would obviously invite enquiries as to its origin and help to keep the RAF Truleigh Hill story alive.

Some of the GEE system buildings remained in position for many years, but today there is only one obvious reminder of this particular part of Truleigh Hill's history. Just to the west of the large barn and the more recent communications buildings are the remains of the blast wall from T2, the eastern transmission block.



The remains of T2 transmitter block blast wall in 2007.

5. Rotor Period – Technical Site

At the end of the Second World War the number of radar stations had grown to over 200 and completely surrounded Britain's coastline. Technology had continued to advance throughout the war and the initial two types of radar had been supplemented by a huge variety of new types. Many were developed as variations of original Navy and Army systems. With the ending of hostilities many were either closed down or put on standby. A degree of cover was maintained, mostly along the east and south coasts, but there were no imminent plans for new development.

By the end of the decade, those in power were forced to rethink the overall defence strategy by events taking place in Russia. The ROTOR plan, conceived in 1950, proposed the refurbishment and upgrading of a number of wartime CH stations and a completely new range of underground and semi-sunk installations, mostly on existing sites. Twenty-five fully underground stations were planned for the east and southeast coastline. Many of the radar systems proposed were improvements on systems that were being developed in the latter part of the war. Poling was to be one of the upgraded CH stations, but Truleigh Hill was to become a Chain Home Extra Low (CHEL) station, with its operating rooms forty feet below the South Downs. Other stations were to operate Centrimetric Early Warning (CEW) or Ground Control Interception (GCI) systems. In addition to Truleigh Hill and Poling, Sussex stations to be part of the ROTOR plan were: Rye (Refurbished CH), Fairlight (CHEL), Wartling (GCI) and Beachy Head (CEW). Pevensey (CH) was to be held on standby.

A large influx of airmen was anticipated in Shoreham, although not as many as were accommodated in the town during wartime. Nevertheless decisions were made to house the airmen, and possibly WAAFs, in one place, resulting in the purchase of land for a purpose-built camp between Stoney Lane and Buci Crescent on the eastern edge of Shoreham.

The underground radar installations were of varying sizes, some covering two or three levels. Truleigh Hill was just a single level with excavations by the MacAlpine Company starting in 1951. The layout for sites such as Truleigh Hill started with the guardroom. This was designed as an attractive brick built bungalow, with veranda, possibly to give the impression of a normal British farmhouse. Immediately behind the Truleigh Hill guardroom, however, was a huge rotating aerial on a 28 feet high gantry. With six tall GEE aerials also dotted around the site, this would have been a rather unusual farm.

A door through the back of the guardroom led to a flat-roofed extension, with large external double blast doors, through which the equipment was brought before being lowered 20 feet to the bottom of a stair well. More blast doors led to a gradually sloping tunnel some 100 yards long by 8 feet square at the end of which, a left turn through even more blast doors reached a central corridor. On either side of the corridor, doors gave entry to operations rooms, rest rooms, plant rooms, offices and toilets, all forty feet below the South Downs. At the end of the corridor more blast doors led to stairs and an emergency exit and ventilation shaft. Water for the site was pumped uphill from Horton Corner on the Henfield road and stored in a large tank above the concrete ceiling of the guardroom. The site had its own sewage plant within the wired compound with waste being blasted to the surface when a certain level was reached.



The Truleigh Hill Technical Site Guardroom in 2007.



The stairs at the back of the guardroom lead down to the tunnel. (Howard Toon)



The frequently polished 8 feet x 8 feet x 100 yds tunnel leading to the corridor from which the operations rooms and other rooms are reached. (Both pictures Howard Toon)



Part of the main operations room. (Howard Toon)



The previous four pictures were taken in 1997. The above photograph of the former RAF Sopley gives a closer indication of how Truleigh Hill would have looked in the 1950s. (Dan Mackenzie)

The massive excavations led to a major spoil disposal exercise. Lorry loads of excavated materials were transported to a site north of the downs, resulting in a journey down to Shoreham before turning back along the Steyning road. It has been said that the drivers were paid by the load, and that some took the risky short cut down a track to Beeding at the right angled turn in the Truleigh Hill road.

Some time later, in 1957, some scenes for the film *Hell Drivers*, starring Patrick McGoohan and Stanley Baker, were shot on the roads and fields around Truleigh Hill. The plot for the film also involved a situation where drivers paid by the lorry load were taking short cuts down the steep side of the hill. At one point in the film, a truck goes over a quarry to the north of the Truleigh Hill road and catches fire. The RAF radar staff on their way up in the morning spotted the truck roped up on the edge of the quarry, along with other general activity, but it had all gone by the evening. It is to be wondered if there was any connection between the two situations.

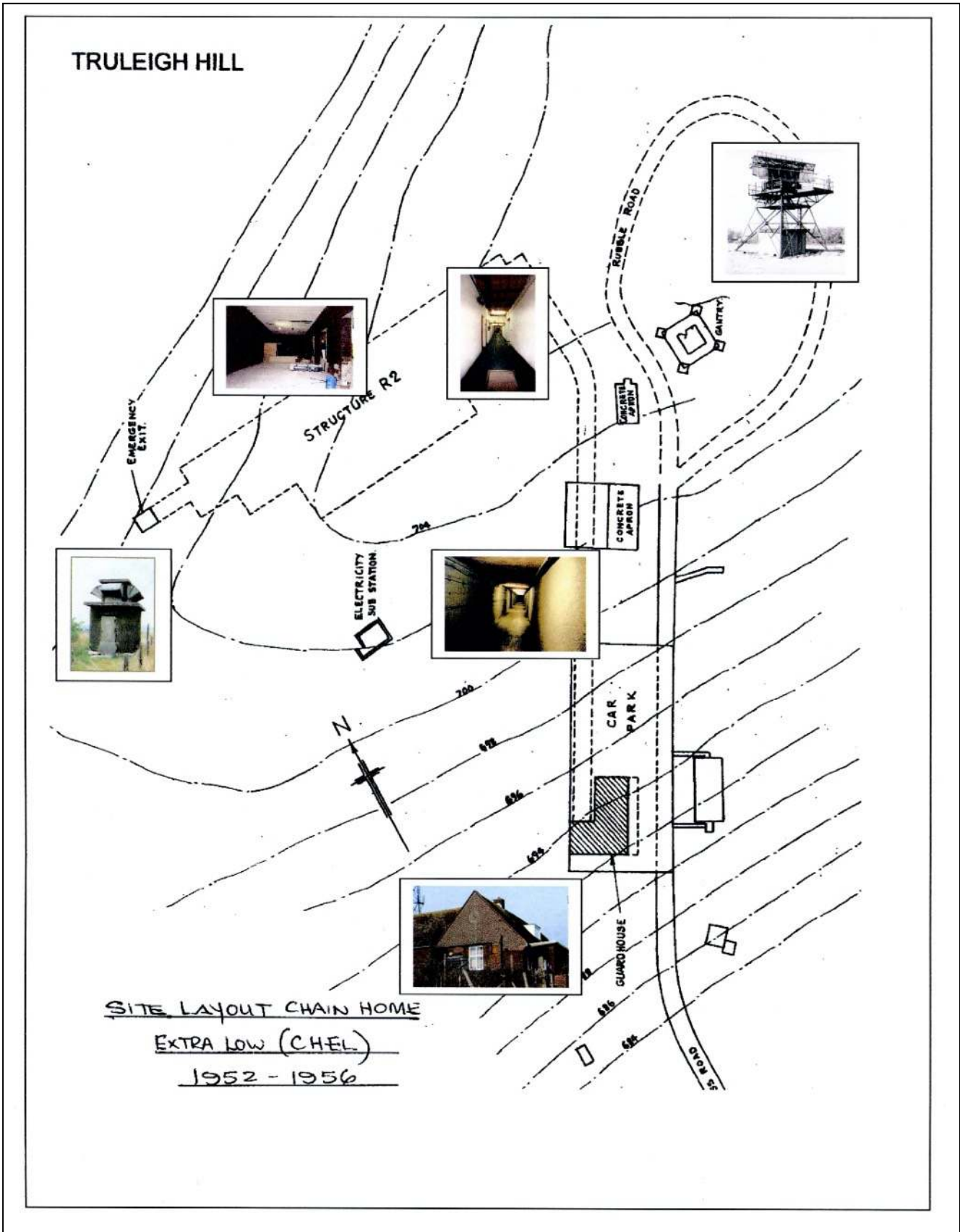
The ROTOR site was taken over on 17th September 1952, one month after target date, but not surprisingly equipment delays meant that operations did not commence until November. Even so, Truleigh Hill became the first of the underground stations to become operational, a little piece of local history not generally appreciated.

In addition to the excavation work necessary, considerable site clearance work had to be undertaken as many surplus buildings and roadways from the wartime period were cleared. The guardroom for the ROTOR operation was not completed until March 1953, a temporary timber structure being used in the meantime. The surface area covered by the ROTOR underground operation was to be enclosed within a wire fenced and gated area. A problem was discovered at the planning stage, when it was found that the eastern GEE receiver block was within the proposed fenced area. This resulted in the construction of a new block several yards to the east, which became operational in February 1953.

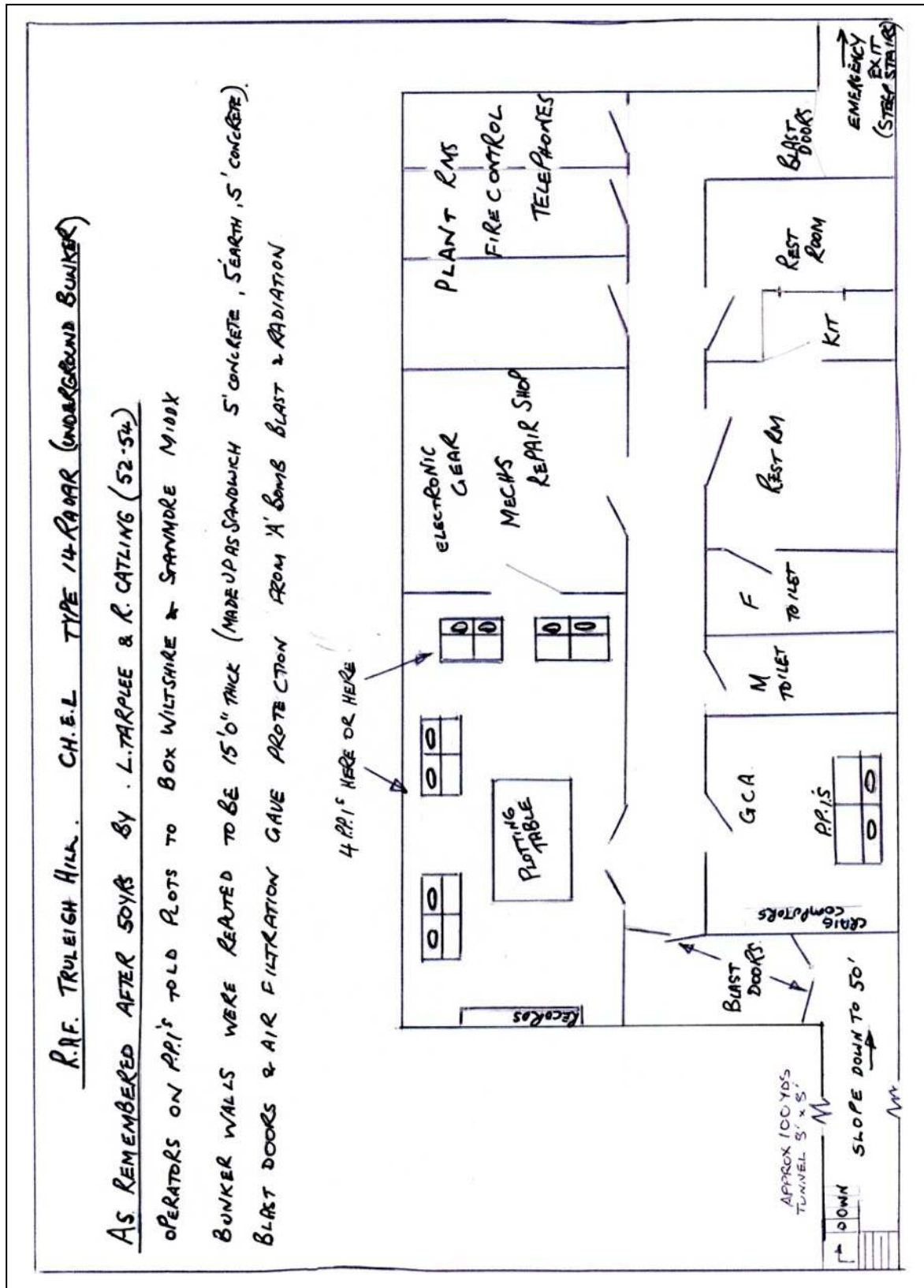
The RAF transport operation in Shoreham underwent considerable changes with the opening of the underground site, plus the transfer of GEE operators and mechanics from Poling into private lodgings in the town. The GEE system was a round the clock, 7 days a week, 365 days a year operation, whereas the new CHEL system, with a few exceptions for exercises etc., was daytime Monday to Friday only. Timings for watch changes for the two systems did not always coincide. Residents along the Upper Shoreham Road, Erringham Road and Mill Hill got used to seeing a 32-seater RAF coach and trucks of varying sizes passing their front doors, sometimes at quite hair-raising speeds.

The trade classification for the underground operatives was either Radar Operator (PPI) or Radar Mechanic (PPI). This was a blanket classification for staff on several types of radar. The initials referred to the Plan Position Indicator consoles through which aircraft and shipping locations were received.

On arrival at the technical site on Truleigh Hill, the GEE staff dispersed to one of the two transmitter or receiver blocks, which were outside of the padlocked compound, to relieve the previous watch. The ROTOR (CHEL) personnel followed a slightly more complicated procedure. An RAF policeman would unlock the gates to admit the watch, who would then assemble in the guardroom to be temporarily relieved of their 1250s (Identity cards). After passing through the guardroom, they would then be required to change their studded boots for regulation black RAF plimsolls. The next stage was to negotiate the highly polished 100 yards tunnel to the operations rooms. As the polishing was done, on a very regular basis, by members of the watch, the change to plimsolls seemed to be a sensible move.



(Plan: Sqdn/Ldr Mike Dean – Historical Radar Archive, Photos: Sqdn/Ldr Howard Toon / Bob Jenner)



Len Tarplee and Roy Catling's memory, 50 years on, of the layout 'down the hole' at the Truleigh Hill ROTOR site forty feet below the South Downs and still in place in 2007

The watch would then be split into two and operate a, 'one hour on, one hour off', system. It was during the latter period that everything that could possibly be cleaned or polished received the treatment. It was permissible for part of this period to be spent in the rest room, which contained a small kitchen manned by one of the watch, whose reward was to escape radar duties. Tea and biscuits etc could be obtained during these 'off-watch' periods. The kitchen did have limited cooking facilities which were used mainly by the two or three staff allocated to night time guard and fire piquet duties. The need for a major catering exercise, to feed the entire watch at midday, was avoided by the planning of the watch structure. Each watch operated either a morning or afternoon shift, allowing one watch to eat at the domestic site before being transported to Truleigh Hill; the other to eat on their return to the camp.

The plotting and reporting system, although on updated equipment, followed much the same pattern as it did in wartime, with movements being reported to Stanmore and Box in Wiltshire. Station reports tended to carry more information related to the administration of the domestic site than references to actual operational happenings. In 1953, the unit tracked the aircraft taking part in the coronation fly past rehearsals, and in the same vein, the Queen's flight to Nigeria in 1956 was plotted for 130 nautical miles. Opposite the main operations room was a Ground Control Interception facility, used mainly on exercises, but which could be brought into regular use if necessary.

Station Operations Reports often quote examples of staff levels being below strength, but many radar operators from the ROTOR 1950s period tell a different story. Several have related incidents of being loaned out to the farmer at Truleigh Hill, to assist with haymaking and other duties. Others were employed in cutting the not inconsiderable grass areas around the Stoney Lane site. One particular airman recalls some being detailed to work on the garden of a sergeant who lived in married quarters. As a parting shot before demob, they planted large areas of the garden with radish seeds. It is probably advisable not to reveal his identity, thereby avoiding possible reprisals by an octogenarian former sergeant.

With the advent of the ROTOR period Truleigh Hill regained its original status, and was no longer a satellite of RAF Poling. Tangmere initially became the parent unit, a position taken over by Wartling from February 1954. Developments in the radar field were progressing rapidly and the introduction of Type 80 at St. Margaret's, Beachy Head and Ventnor, spelt the end for several stations in between or nearby. The Rotor CHEL system at Truleigh Hill ceased operations on 1st August 1956 and in November 1957 the equipment in the bunker was reduced to the bare minimum for standby status.

Two smaller operations also existed under RAF Truleigh Hill control. On its journey to Truleigh Hill, the truck or coach stopped at a point opposite the track to New Erringham Farm. Two or three airmen alighted and then vanished into the field on the western side of the road. Their period of duty was at the direction-finding fixer station, sited on a high point approximately 100 yards into the field. During the 1950s ROTOR period this had been part of the Southern Fixing Chain, alongside others at Berkhamstead in Hertfordshire, Portland and Sherborne in Dorset, and Pewsey in Wiltshire. The fixer station was a small hexagonal, partly sunk brick building with a tall timber tower. On the list of UK fixer stations it is listed as 'Bury', and was always referred to as the 'Bury Fixer'. The significance of Bury, a village above Arundel some 15 miles away, is not clear. Three of these carefully placed units could each pick up a signal from an aircraft and relay a bearing to the Triangulation Table at the Sector Operations Centre. There, with an unbelievably simple system involving three pieces of string, the 'fix' where the three pieces crossed was radioed back to the aircraft. A similar system operated from Truleigh Hill during wartime, with the lower brick section of the building still in place in the field behind the barn on the South Downs Way.

Research on this operation was thrown into a state of confusion by John Charlesworth, from whose home in the village of Small Dole the Truleigh Hill site could be seen. John reported that his sister-in-law, Edna Charlesworth, a wartime WAAF at Truleigh Hill in 1944 and 1945, operated at a fixer station that could be walked to in 15 minutes from her billet in Shoreham. This could not possibly be the one at Truleigh Hill, and it was originally thought that the one close to New Erringham Farm did not commence operations until 1952. Further information from Edna's husband Thomas, revealed that her particular fixer station operated from a truck built by the noted military vehicle manufacturer Taskers of Andover. Edna herself, was sadly not in good enough health to be interviewed personally. Thomas Charlesworth, a former sergeant airframe fitter/mechanic, early in his RAF career worked on Handley Page Heyford bombers, the same type of aircraft that was used for the first radar test. He generously presented his wife's uniform tunic, worn at Truleigh Hill over 60 years ago and still in good condition, to the Marlipins Museum.

Further help on the subject came from Sydney Foster-Smith, who produced a photograph of the Bury Fixer taken in 1948. One of the earliest National Servicemen, his period had finished in 1948, but his former Brighton school friend Les Ransom was still serving his term at the very favourable local posting of RAF Truleigh Hill. Les Ransom's duties included operations at the Bury Fixer. As this was well away from the rest of the radar site, it was possible for Sydney Foster-Smith and friends to pay their colleague an occasional, but somewhat risky visit. A possible link to earlier operations was provided by John Still from his wartime memories of travelling to school on the steam railway from Southwick to Steyning. The 'windmill type' building that he could see from the train, on the hill behind Old Erringham Farm, would seem to a fair description of the Bury Fixer. It is known that static and mobile fixer stations existed at Beachy Head during wartime. Truleigh Hill's wartime operations were more or less identical to those at Beachy Head.

Also, in the 1950s, a mobile unit believed to be codenamed Flange, was driven from the Stoney Lane site daily, to its base in a field to the west of the Devils Dyke Hotel. An aerial on top of the vehicle could pick up signals by being rotated by a steering wheel arrangement from inside. It is possible that this unit served a similar function to that described above. As with the fixer system described above, this operation seems to be totally by-passed by the recognised radar books and internet sites.

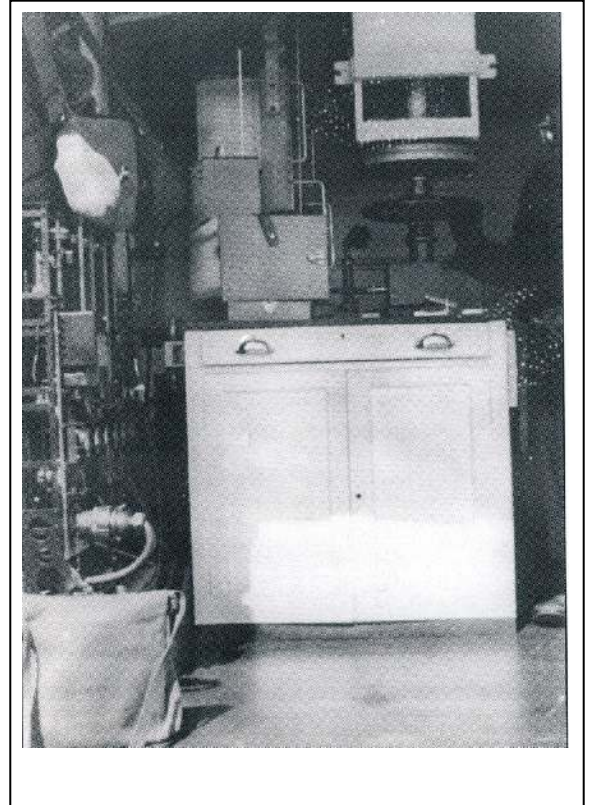


Phillip Down with the mobile unit, possibly codenamed 'Flange', and staff transport described above. (Phillip Down)



During wartime the radar types at RAF Beachy Head were similar, if not identical to those at Truleigh Hill. The fixer station (above) and the mobile unit (right) were both at Beachy Head, but similar units were located in the field to the left of the Truleigh Hill road, close to the point where the road branches right to New Erringham Farm.

(Photos adapted from A Sussex Sunset by Peter Longstaff-Tyrrell)



The similarity to the Beachy Head installation can be seen in this photograph, taken in 1948, showing the lower part of the Truleigh Hill 'Bury Fixer', only two of the 'music' group are Truleigh Hill airmen. The rest are visiting friends, although the difference may not be immediately noticeable!

(Sydney Foster-Smith)

The immaculate turnout of duty Policeman John Buggins matches the pristine condition of the newly built technical site guardroom.



As part of the overall ROTOR programme, it was considered necessary to provide each of the underground radar stations with a reserve power supply. These were housed in specially constructed, distinctively designed buildings known as standby set-houses. In much the same way that the guardrooms to the technical sites were built with similar designs to resemble private housing, the standby set-houses, although a totally different design, followed the same principle. They were generally positioned about a mile from the technical site. Where domestic sites were close enough, this provided a convenient location. Truleigh Hill's two sites, however, were over three miles apart as the crow flies, and some five miles by road. A site was chosen at New Erringham Farm, very close to the road that the trucks used on the daily trips between the domestic and technical sites. When radar sites such as Truleigh Hill were finally deemed surplus to RAF requirements, many of the set-houses were either demolished or fell into disrepair. Some were used as stores or extra farm buildings with very few signs of repair or renovation having taken place. Truleigh Hill's building was put to far better use, as can be seen from the picture below, and will live on as a reminder of the area's part in Cold War radar history.



The former 1950s Truleigh Hill standby set house at New Erringham Farm.

(Bob Jenner)



Two views of the technical site taken in 1954-55. The lower view shows the present South Downs Way heading across to Devils Dyke at the top left hand corner of the picture.
(RAF Museum, Hendon)

6. Stoney Lane Domestic Site

It had become normal practice for living accommodation and technical areas for radar stations to be on separate sites to minimise the effects of any bombing raid. In RAF terminology the living accommodation was known as the domestic site. The problem had not arisen earlier for RAF Truleigh Hill, as large amounts of local private billeting had been used, plus the period of 'lodging' at RAF Poling.

With the introduction of the Chain Home Extra Low system as part of the overall ROTOR programme, a decision was made to create a purpose built camp for 100 personnel on land between Stoney Lane and Buci Crescent, on the eastern edge of Shoreham. Housing development of this area had stopped with the onset of war, with houses at that time filling the northern section of Buci Crescent and a short section of the western side. Kingston Close, in between Buci Crescent and Stoney Lane, had been completed, but the southern section of Buci Crescent, later to become an extension of Wilmot Road, was still undeveloped. Land previously owned by Garden Close Estates and Kingston Buci Estates was acquired and work commenced in 1951.

RAF Truleigh Hill, under the command of Flight Lieutenant. C.Burdett DFC, moved into a brand new camp on 8th July 1952. Some support staff such as police, medical, catering and drivers had been billeted briefly at Poling in readiness, and were transferred quickly into the new camp. Radar staff were posted in direct from either training units or other radar stations. The GEE staff's brief spell on the camp has been described earlier. If it seems strange that the GEE staff were not accommodated permanently at the new camp, the answer lies in the chain of command applicable to the different sections of radar. The Truleigh Hill ROTOR operation was officially titled No.607 Signals Unit and was part of No.11 Group, which in turn was part of Fighter Command. The GEE navigational aid operated as No. 894 Signals Unit as part of No.90 Signals Group, which itself had command status. The camp was officially considered to be a No. 11 Group establishment. For the next four years it would be filled by operatives for the ROTOR Chain Home Extra Low system and the necessary support staff.

The entrance to the site was opposite Clarendon Road, with a barrier across the road and a guardroom to the left just inside the barrier. Most of the buildings were centred on the stretch of road that ran from Stoney Lane to the western section of Buci Crescent. Along this section was a transport department, stores, boiler room, station headquarters, medical section and four billets housing a maximum of 11 people each. At the end of this road, a large building containing the cookhouse, NAAFI and officers' quarters occupied a piece of land on which now sits Millward Court and a day centre.

Facing Buci Crescent, inside a wire fence, were three larger billets built to house up to 16 airmen each and a small education block. The billets were divided into three rooms, which in the busiest periods could accommodate five beds. A single NCOs room and an area for toilets and bathrooms completed this very comfortable accommodation. Across the road, on the other side of Buci Crescent, six single storey, semi-detached married quarters with gardens, faced the three larger billets.



AOC parade in 1953, probably linked to the coronation, shows the Station Headquarters, Boiler House and Stores building in the background. Commanding Officer Flt/Lt Somerfield is second left. The officer with the sword is P/O Eve. (Len Tarplee & Jonathan Fryer)



Alan Shaw makes a Tannoy announcement from Stoney Lane guardroom. (Alan Shaw)

The camp settled quickly into a small self-contained community, but not without a few difficulties. Although the Stoney Lane site was taken over in July, an entry in the station records mentions the arrival of dining tables in October! It was not until a year after the opening of the site that an officers mess was established, ending what is referred to as a period of combined facilities. By March 1953, station strength reached a maximum for the 1950s period of 120. Most of these were conscripted National Servicemen. With approximately 30 GEE staff billeted out, the camp itself was fairly full with around 90 inhabitants.

In the period between the opening of the camp in August 1952 and March 1953, reports show that table tennis and snooker tables, a piano and football equipment was purchased. The table tennis team joined the Worthing League and the football team the West Sussex Wednesday League. A library was also opened. For a small camp the NAAFI facilities were reasonable. As it was not large enough to warrant the employment of permanent NAAFI staff, the airmen carried out the necessary duties on a rota basis.

Not surprisingly, an entry in the station records for June 1953 observed that very few airmen remained on camp during the evenings, due to the unusual variety of outside attractions offered locally. Many radar stations were sited in quite remote parts of the country. Airmen posted from these stations to one with all of the attractions of Brighton on the doorstep, must have thought that all of their birthdays had come together. League football, county cricket, the Regent and Aquarium Ballrooms, two piers, first class theatre, many cinemas plus countless pubs, made it a very attractive posting indeed. Even Shoreham boasted a cinema and more than twenty public houses with one, The Royal George, virtually on the doorstep.

Despite the outside attractions, the stations first dance in June 1953 proved so successful that another was held the following month. Obviously, with an all male population, the dances had to be open to the local public, generally by invitation. If there seemed any possibility of insufficient support from the girls in the immediate area, a phone call by the airmen to Brighton or Worthing telephone exchanges (or both) usually produced the desired result. The dances became a regular feature and to this day are favourably remembered by local people of a certain age.

With the likelihood of a large slice of the young Shoreham male population serving their two years National Service in various parts of the country or abroad, there seems little doubt that the sudden influx of 120 young airmen into the area was welcomed by the young ladies of Shoreham. If there is any doubt about this, research for the preparation of this book will show that 28 Truleigh Hill airmen from the period 1952-1958 found their future wives during their Shoreham service. And these are just the ones that are known about! Half of the 28 lived no more than three streets away from the Stoney Lane site. A small café opposite Southlands Hospital was soon discovered as a good place to meet nurses. It is hard to believe that the two nurses who figure among the 28 were the only ones to meet their future husbands in this establishment.

Later in the year, the medical section reported a large amount of petty sickness due to lack of exercise and fresh air. This could probably be interpreted as being the result of spending working days 40 feet underground and evenings at the unusual variety of outside attractions previously mentioned. Corporal radar operator Roy Catling was sent on a PT Instructors course and a morning PT parade was instigated.



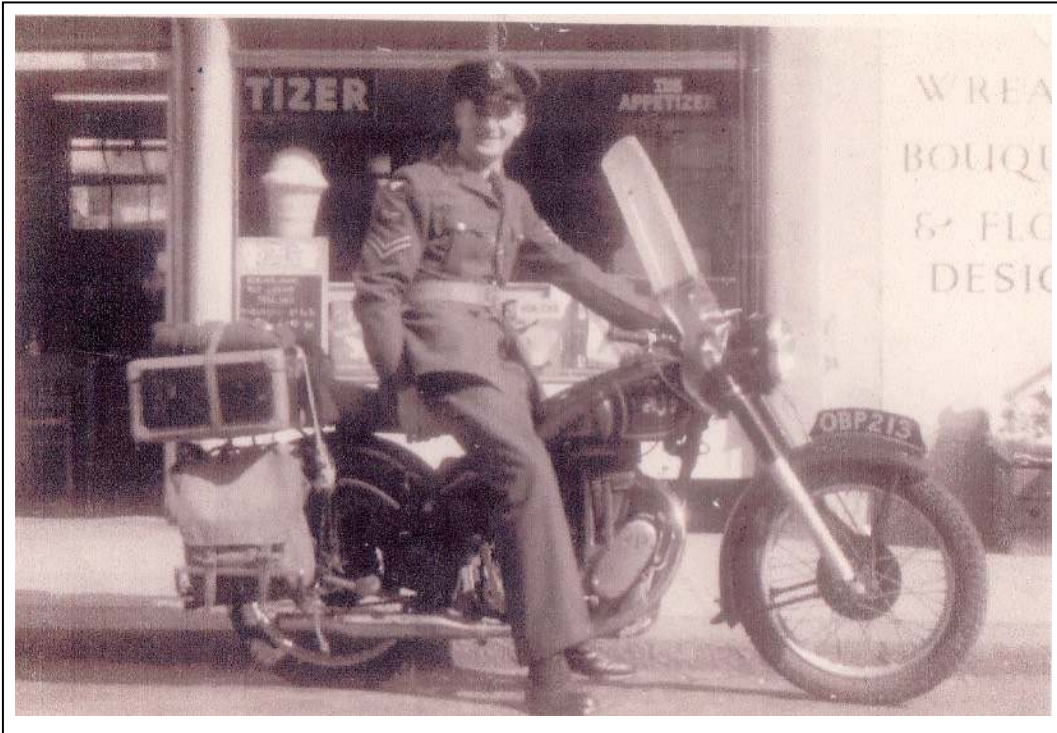
John Webb stands guard at the Stoney Lane Entrance, opposite Clarendon Road. Behind him is the MT (Motor Transport) building. The house in the background is in Stoney Lane
(John Webb)



Truleigh Hill domestic site photographs are rare. Fortunately Pete Waterfall chose the combined cookhouse, NAAFI and officers quarters building as the background to this picture
(Ray Towning)



Clive Costema, Jerry Lordan, Dave Terry and 'Bunny' Warren with unknown young Shoreham lady at station dance in 1954. (Clive Costema)



Bob Monaghan in front of The Snack Bar in East Street, Shoreham, a favourite haunt for off-duty Truleigh Hill airmen. (June Monaghan)



Busy evening in the Truleigh Hill NAAFI.



RAF police domination of the photographs for this chapter is completed by Sgt. Bonner at his desk in the Stoney Lane guardroom. (Sally Norcliffe)

Transport between the domestic and technical sites became a regular feature in Shoreham as a 32-seater RAF coach, plus trucks of varying sizes made the journey. With two operations in force, changeover times did not always coincide, so more than one vehicle was often necessary. Whether it is wartime or 1950s, radar staff, without exception, describe the journeys as hair-raising.

Local drivers encountering the trucks hurtling down Mill Hill towards them probably had similar feelings. In February 1955 the roads to Truleigh Hill were blocked for 14 days by heavy snowfalls, but the drivers mostly managed to meet the demands by secondary routes. Radar mechanic Phillip Down remembers the skill displayed by the driver of the coach in negotiating the track from the Henfield road to the corner at the top of Beeding Hill. It is not known when the snow plough was ordered, but it is on record that it arrived in March 1956! After one particularly heavy fall, police dog-handler Neil Elphick recalls having to walk from the Truleigh Hill guardroom to the fixer station at New Erringham Farm, the point at which the truck had reached its limit.

Despite the numerous attractions of nearby Brighton, much off duty time was spent in Shoreham. A considerable amount of time was spent on the beach and also in The Snack Bar at the High Street end of East Street. If slightly more up market surroundings were required, the Queen Anne Tea Rooms, now The Indian Cottage Tandoori, provided an acceptable alternative. The Ritz Cinema was still in full swing and epics such as *Rock Around the Clock* and *The Glen Miller Story* are remembered in 1956. Dances at Shoreham Town Hall were memorable occasions. Among Shoreham's hostelrys, the Royal Sovereign gets the vote as the one most mentioned by former Truleigh men, particularly those from the early years of the Stoney Lane camp. Demob parties were often held at The Swiss Cottage where some form of musical entertainment could usually be found. With the boating lake still in operation, the consequences can be imagined. For the studious, books could be hired from The Readwell Library in East Street at 4d a time, as an alternative to the station library..

As mentioned in the previous chapter, radar development during this period was not standing still and a new system, known as Type 80, was to spell the end for Truleigh's underground CHEL system after just four years of operation. Type 80 stations at St.Margaret's (Dover), Beachy Head and Ventnor covered the whole south east area, rendering Truleigh Hill and several others redundant.

It was not completely the end for Truleigh Hill however. The underground operation ceased on 1st August 1956. The following month the GEE staff were brought on to camp to fill the accommodation vacated by the ROTOR staff. The GEE operation continued for a further 14 months. With probably around 30 GEE personnel and another 20 or so police, drivers, cooks etc., the camp dropped to about 50% capacity, and was nothing like the busy unit that it had been for the previous four years. At its height the Truleigh Hill strength included as many as eight officers, several of whom would have been resident in the officers quarters attached to the combined cookhouse/NAAFI building. For the whole of 1957 senior staff amounted to just Flt/Lt MacDougall and W/O Austin, supported by one flight sergeant and two sergeants, all of whom lived off the camp or in married quarters.

In the early days of the camp, the NAAFI, including the snooker and table tennis facilities, would appear to have been fairly well used, despite the observation in station records relating to airmen enjoying the range of nearby outside attractions. In 1957, the final year of operations, the NAAFI facilities do not seem to figure in the memories of those who served at that time. With the camp only half full, it is possible that the NAAFI operation had been discontinued.

In November 1957 the GEE operation ground to a halt after 15 years of continuous service. Those close to demob were employed in any manner that could be found. The rest were posted out to GEE stations still operating, or re-trained on to the Type 80 system. The very last radar operator in Shoreham, Senior Aircraftsman Brian Mickels, left in February 1958. He had the foresight to make an excellent detailed drawing of the GEE receiver set before he helped to dismantle it.

For the next six months, six RAF policemen carried out guard duties at both Stoney Lane and Truleigh Hill, with six other staff providing driving, cooking and admin duties. Both sites closed in August 1958. Although this is the end of the Truleigh Hill story, the remaining chapters will tell something of the personnel that played their part and the subsequent developments at both the technical and domestic sites.



John Shefford and Brian Mickels
in front of the billets that faced
Buci Crescent. The white house
in the background is No.46 Buci
Crescent.

(Don Allwright)

This picture shows the other side of
the billets, and also features John
Shefford, Tony Stirling and 'Doc'
Kinsey (back) and John Glover &
Roy Taylor (front).





Early social occasion at the Stoney Lane camp, shortly after its opening in 1952.
 Back: David Bielby, W/O 'Tommy' Tucker, Centre: Bob Monaghan, John Mowat,
 Dennis Lee, Colin Woodward, Les Burchell, W/O Tucker's brother, Bill Smith, Front:
 Jeff Carter, John Disbery, Brian Johnson, Peter Sampson, Don Beckley.
 (Don Beckley)



Clive Payne is concerned that he may have done his friend 'Bernie' Horsman some serious damage with his powerful motor-car. Barry Price, Keith Huss and Bill Davies seem fairly certain that he will make a quick recovery, while policeman Terry Ward takes notes just in case he doesn't.
 (David 'Bernie' Horsman)

RAF TRULEIGH HILL 1952 – 1958



Aerial view of the Truleigh Hill domestic site shortly before demolition in 1965.
(West Sussex Records Office)

7. Sport

For obvious reasons sport did not figure too highly in RAF priorities during wartime. In the period between the end of the war and the start of the ROTOR period in 1952 Truleigh Hill numbers were not sufficient to make team sport viable. The situation changed considerably with the opening of the Stoney Lane domestic site.

With the introduction of National Service, many young sportsmen found themselves in uniform just at the time their careers were beginning to take shape. The RAF was very responsive, with professional footballers and county cricketers in particular receiving favourable postings. Some of the larger camps seemed to receive accomplished sportsmen in bulk and consequently were well able to hold their own against civilian teams.

With small stations such as Truleigh Hill, it was very much the luck of the draw. One decent performer could make a world of difference in local competitions. In 1952 with the opening of the Stoney Lane site, one of the immediate priorities was the purchase of football and cricket gear, plus table tennis and snooker tables. A football team was entered in the West Sussex Wednesday league and a table tennis team in division two of the four-division Worthing League. With 120 young men to choose from it would be relatively easy to find a team of decent footballers. Research has revealed several with professional club connections. Mick Cousins, Brian Elcome and John Patterson were registered with Derby County, Tottenham Hotspur and Doncaster Rovers respectively. Of the successful 1956 team Ian Harkness was on the books of one of the Manchester clubs, Ian Smith was with Colchester and Roy Carr with Exeter. Brian Jones and Vic Gibson were with top flight non-league clubs Newtown and Sutton. Mike Wheeler played Sussex County League Division One football for Old Varndeanians. Currently the club president, he today lives less than a half a mile from the site of the Stoney Lane camp.

Records show that Glamorgan County cricketer Tudor Hargest had trials for the RAF team, but not, unfortunately, if he was selected. Either way, his worth to the Truleigh Hill team in services matches was considerable, as an unbeaten century and 5 wickets for 22 runs against RAF Fairlight in an RAF cup match at the county ground at Hastings proves.

John Mitchell, from Elswick Harriers on Tyneside and Gordon Dixon, from the London club Thames Valley Harriers were the most successful athletes to be stationed at Truleigh Hill. In 1954 Mitchell won the Fighter Command 440yds, placed second in the RAF Championship, and represented the RAF in the Inter-Services Championship. He went on to rank very highly nationally. The following year Dixon, a long jumper, was a member of the RAF team that defeated Sussex and Hampshire in the first ever athletics fixture at Brighton's Withdean Stadium



Tudor Hargest
(Glamorgan Cricket Archive)

John Sapwell (Surrey Athletic Club) represented the RAF at race walking in 1956, whilst back on the running side Roy Taylor makes a claim for inclusion as the 1957 No.90 Group 3 miles champion.

Boxing was usually well catered for in the RAF. Prior to call-up Stan Mussell had been a regional ABA age-group champion, losing on points in a National semi-final at The Albert Hall. Lack of facilities on the smaller camps, however, made training difficult and a promising career came to an end.

The football, cricket and table tennis teams all performed consistently throughout the period of the Stoney Lane site's occupation. The cricket team, in addition to matches against other service teams, took on local opponents at Buckingham Park with after-match celebrations, win or lose, in the nearby Green Jacket. In 1956, several very enthusiastic football entries were logged in the station reports by the commanding officer Flt/Lt MacDougall. He reports that the team won the Sussex Mid-Week Cup, beating Railway Rovers 9-2 in the final, before completing the double by winning the West Sussex Mid-Week League. It is known that some local opponents were not happy with the level of players available to the Truleigh Hill team.

The team also reached two other finals and were so successful that the funds available to the transport department to take them to away matches ran out. This resulted in withdrawal from the No.11 Group cup competition as this involved the longest journeys. Truleigh Hill had already reached the quarter finals of the RAF junior cup, losing 5-1 to a Hornchurch team that was reported by Flt/Lt MacDougall to have contained a number of first division players.

It would seem that the RAF junior cup was a competition for smaller stations. It is difficult to see Hornchurch as a small station, particularly in relation to Truleigh Hill's overall strength of 120. Very few stations would have been as small, so to reach the last eight was a commendable performance. Prominent in the Hornchurch team was Stuart Leary, scorer of 153 goals for Charlton Athletic, many of them in the top division. John Coghlan recalls relieving him of the ball on two occasions with some pride. The full Truleigh Hill team was: Goddard, Buckland, Baldwin, Smith, Gibson, Coghlan, Harkness, Hartman, Jones, Finnemore, Livingstone. Three of the team played regularly for Worthing in the Corinthian League in addition to attempting to stay loyal to their home clubs. Brian Jones was centre forward for Newtown in the Welsh Premier League. His services were needed when they met Swansea in the 5th round of the Welsh Cup, where Jones lined up against internationals such as Cliff Jones, Terry Medwin and the Allchurch brothers Len and Ivor.

Flt/Lt MacDougall's interest in sailing may also have been the reason for the Truleigh Hill station's block membership of The Sussex Yacht Club. The station even had its own boat kept permanently at the yacht club's headquarters on the River Adur. Many airmen acquired early sailing skills during their time in Shoreham, including Lancing Sailing Club Commodore Don Allwright, who is still sailing competitively at the time of writing. To supplement the other sporting activities, a tennis court was completed, alongside the guardroom, in February 1956. At that stage it was probably not known that in six months the station numbers would be halved and that in two years the camp would be near to closure.



(Don Allwright)

Synchronised sailing
on the River Adur by
Don Allwright and
John Shefford (left)
and John Pearl and
Leon Brook (right)



(John Pearl)



RAF Truleigh Hill football team. West Sussex Mid Week League season 1953-54.
Back row: 'Bunny' Warren, Jerry Lordan, Pete Ellison, Dave Terry, Mike Varney, Jim Morrison.
Front row: Clive Durrant, Tony Elcome, Vernon Warwick (Capt), Mike Livingstone, Colin Franklin.
(Vernon Warwick)



The Truleigh Hill boat (9) on the River Adur with Shoreham footbridge in the background.
(John Pearl)

TRULEIGH HAD LUCK IN RAF CUP FIGHT

THE battle of the R.A.F. stations in the semi-final of the Sussex Mid-Week Cup resulted in a 5-3 victory for Truleigh Hill (camp strength 60) over Wartling (400) writes John Vinicombe.

Truleigh Hill were losing 2-0 inside 14 minutes. It looked like Wartling entering the final for the second time in three years.

But tiny Truleigh hit back, and centre-forward Brian Jones led them to victory with a hat trick.

Brian, who plays centre-forward for Worthing and is a Welsh schoolboy international, is being released from the R.A.F. next month. It is touch and go if he will assist Truleigh in the final.

He shot Truleigh into the lead six minutes before half-time, but I thought Wartling were the better side, and it was no surprise when Hicks equalised shortly after the restart.

Five minutes from time Jones scored a masterly goal to clinch matters. He shot from 10 yards as he fell between two defenders.

Three minutes later he netted in an amazing incident. Clean through, he was brought down in a rugby tackle by goalkeeper Benson. The ball ran loose and slowly trickled over the line. Wisely, the referee did not award a penalty against Wartling and allowed the goal to stand.

Outstanding for Wartling was left-back Bob Christie, who plays for West Ham Reserves. Malcolm Owen, Eastbourne Town left-half, played his usual strong game for the East Sussex airmen.

In the Truleigh side, Jones, Ian Harkness and Vic Gibson play for Worthing, and right-half Ian Smith is on Colchester's books as an amateur.

This first meeting between the sides produced much good soccer, with Truleigh enjoying that little bit of luck so vital to a winning run.

They now meet the winners of Railways Rangers and Brighton Co-op, who contest the other semi-final at Eastbourne next Wednesday.

Score-sheet: Truleigh—Crabb (20 mins.), Fynamoure (29 mins.), Jones (39 mins., 85 mins., 88 mins.), Wartling—Tubb (10 mins.), Rennick (14 mins.), Hicks (47 mins.).

EIGHT IN 30 MINUTES

R.A.F. Truleigh Hill 9
Worthing Wednesday Res. 0

The 10-man Worthing team held out for 30 minutes against the smooth-moving Truleigh Hill in a West Sussex Mid-Week League match at Shoreham on Wednesday. The home side scored eight of their goals in a 30-minute spell either side of half-time. Brian Jones, the Worthing player, netted three of their goals and the R.A.F. goalkeeper touched the ball only four times, twice for free-kicks and twice when it was passed back to him.

BROADWATER BOWL

Worthing Wednesday 4, R.A.F. Truleigh Hill 6.

This first round game provided typical cup-tie football. The Air Force side, who were just that shade better, led 3-2 at half-time. Ford (2), Roe and Adams scored for Worthing, while two of the Truleigh Hill goals were netted by Brian Jones, Worthing's young centre-forward.

WEST SUSSEX MID-WEEK LEAGUE

R.S.R. v. R.E.
Thursday: R.N.A.S. v. Training College.

TABLE TO DATE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
R.A.F. (T.H.)	5	5	0	0	28	8	10
R.N.A.S.	7	4	1	2	48	14	9
R.S.R.	6	3	1	2	26	21	7
Training Col.	4	3	0	1	14	9	6
5th Field Amb	7	3	0	4	22	22	6
R.E.	2	2	0	0	5	0	4
L'hampton U.	4	2	0	2	9	11	4
R.A.F. (T)	6	1	0	5	16	31	2
Worthing P.O.	4	0	0	4	3	1	0
Worthing W.	3	0	0	3	0	24	0

They could not arrest the R A F

THE Sussex Mid-Week Cup second round replay between R.A.F. Truleigh Hill and West Sussex Police, which the R.A.F. side won 4-2, never approached the standard of last week's match at Chichester. But conditions were not easy at Buckingham Park, Shoreham. A blustering down-pitch wind, drenching rain and a slippery ball proved handicaps the players could not master.

However, the R.A.F. side were more at home than the burly policemen, controlled the ball better and were smarter near goal. They took a 2-0 lead in the first half with the wind at their backs, had a shaky period just after the interval, when the Police came back very gamely to level the score at 2-2, but possessed something in reserve and scored two more goals.

Jones led the R.A.F. skilfully and gave them an early lead, Crabb following with a second, and the Police were forced back on a long spell of harassed defence.

But the Police were quick to go into aggressive action after half-time, and centre-forward Twine headed two good goals within three minutes to bring them right back into the game.

For a while the R.A.F. looked in trouble, and Goddard and his backs worked overtime to prevent further goals from the Police.

Then the Truleigh Hill players swarmed to the attack once again and Finnigan and Jones grabbed two of the chances that went begging to take their team into the next round.

CUP WIN FOR R.A.F.

Worthing Wednesday Res. 4
R.A.F. Truleigh Hill 6

Even strengthened by the inclusion of five first team players, Worthing Wednesday were unable to halt the winning run of Truleigh Hill, whose victory at Hill Barn on Wednesday was in the first round of the Littlehampton Charity Cup.

It was a tough game, with Truleigh Hill unsettled by the quick-tackling Wednesday defenders who conceded two penalties, one of which did not result in a goal. The visitors received constant instructions from their captain, Brian Jones, the Worthing player, who scored twice. Ford (2), Rowe and Adams netted for Worthing.

LEAGUE. (M) T. HILL v FORD ON. 5-10-55

AT. BUCKINGHAM

TEAM GREEN.

BUCKLAND. LINDABSTONE.

GIBSON. SMITH. COHLAN.

DIXON. HARTMAN. JONES, (39) FYNAMOURE. FRYER.

SCORERS: - FYNAMOURE. 3. JONES. 3. SCORE - 6 - 2

Just a few scrapbook items of the Truleigh Hill football teams that terrorised local Wednesday teams between 1953 and 1956, as well as much larger service units such as RAF Tangmere, RAF Wartling and RNAS Ford. Evening Argus reporter John Vinicombe is slightly exaggerating Truleigh's 'smallness'. Unit strength at the time was around 120.



Brian Jones gets up to a high ball with assistance (reluctantly) from Jerry Lordan.

Sergeant 'Taffy' Thomas
(left) with the 1954-55

Truleigh Hill team.

Back: Eddie Buckland, Ian
Smith, ? Callaghan, Dave Terry,
John Mitchell, Mike Livingstone,
Front: Ian Harkness, Roy Carr,
Brian Jones, John Franklin,
Colin Franklin.



Brian Jones receiving the
Sussex Evening News Trophy
at the end of a successful
1954-55 season.

All pictures and cuttings on pages 55 and 56 supplied by Brian Jones. His position in the Orderly Room (station office) made him well placed to be not only the team captain and star centre-forward, but also the administrator and record keeper.

8. Commanding Officers

Wartime Chain Home Low No.75 Wing/No.11 Group

July 1940 - Unknown date	W/O. A.J.Rowe
Unknown date - Aug 1941	F/O. E.G.Kelly
Aug 1941 - Feb 1942	P/O. D.R.Forte
Feb 1942 - Unknown date	P/O. M.Easy
Unknown dates	Flt/Lt Levy
1945 Dates not known	Flt/Lt. H. le Good
1945 Dates not Known	Flt/Lt. A.Gilkis
Unknown - Oct 1945	P/O. Noakes
Oct 1945 - Feb 1946	Flt/Lt. W. Slack

GEE Navigational Aid only No. 90 Group.

June 1942 - Unknown date	P/O. Clarke
Unknown dates 1943	F/O Mewse
Feb 1944 - Unknown date	Flt/Lt. Davidson
Feb 1946 - Unknown date	F/O. Maurice
Unknown dates 1952 – 1954	W/O. Beecham
Unknown dates 1952 – 1954	W/O. Tucker
Unknown date - Nov 1957	W/O. W.Austin

ROTOR – Chain Home Extra Low No.11 Group.

July 1952 - Oct 1952	Flt/Lt. C.Burdett
Oct 1952 - Mar 1953	Flt/Lt. J.Matthews
Mar 1953 - May 1953	Flt/Lt. J.Edwards
May 1953 - July 1955	Flt/Lt. B Somerfield
July 1955 - Jan 1956	Flt/Lt. A Power
Jan 1956 - Aug 1958	Flt/ Lt. R.I.G. MacDougall

Very little is known individually about most of the Truleigh Hill commanding officers. The difficult task of setting up the station in the early stages of The Battle of Britain appears to have been handled with considerable technical competence by the first commanding officer W/O Rowe. Several reports are on file for his period, including one that dealt with the complications of combining the transmitter and receiver aerials.

Flt/Lt. Wilfred Slack enlisted in 1939 as a civilian Wireless and Electrical Engineer, but found himself in uniform within three months on the bottom rung of the ladder as an Aircraftsman 2. Four months after V/E Day, after many promotions and service at 11 different radar stations, he found himself back where he started, at Poling, but this time as Commanding Officer.

Shortly after his arrival, all remaining Truleigh Hill staff (CHL and GEE) were moved onto the Poling domestic site, with the command of both operations being added to his Poling C/O duties. For good measure he was also responsible for overseeing the closure of RAF Durrington, the first GCI (Ground Control Interception) station.

A surprise contact from Tim Power, grandson of Flt/Lt. Arthur Power, provided details of his grandfather's lengthy and eventful RAF career, which started in the 1930s in India as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner on Westland Wapitis. This was followed by service with No.88 Battle Squadron, Bomber Command in the Battle of France, shortly before Dunkirk. A section in Len Deighton's book *Battle of Britain* describes him as 'Sgt. Arthur Power, a veteran observer of thirteen years' service, stationed a few miles east of Rheims when the German attack began'.

Arthur Power's version of events follows and is reprinted in full, with permission. To be able to reprint it in his own words captures the mood of the occasion far better than an account written by someone else many years later.

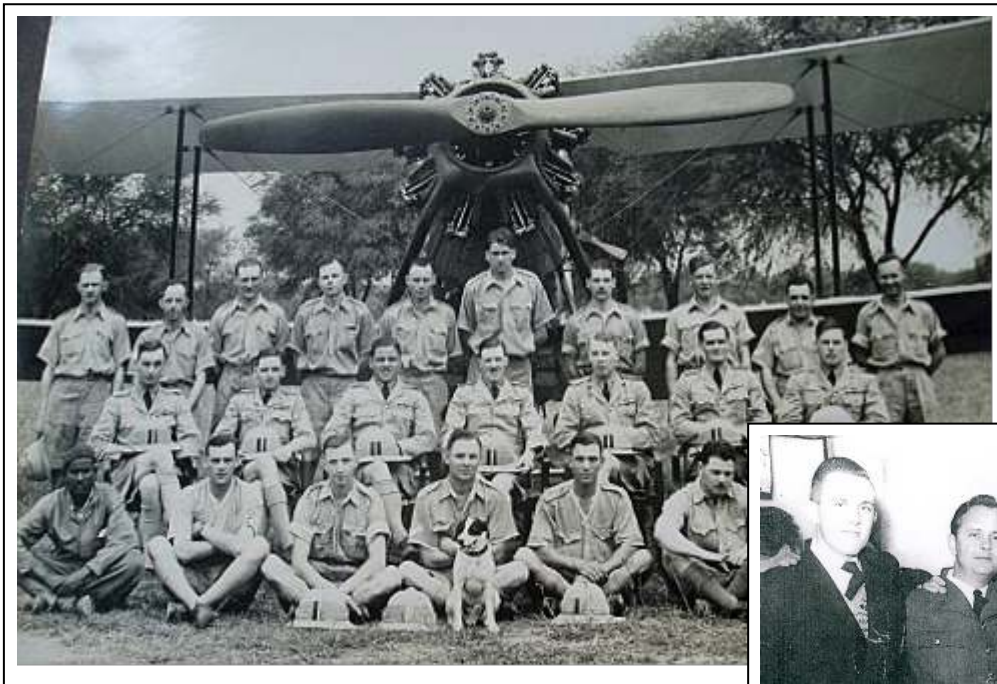
1' The Germans strafed us on the first day without doing much, because all our aircraft were dispersed. But on the big French airfield a few miles away at Mourmelon-le-Grand everything was lined up in rows, parade ground style, and there wasn't much left when the Luftwaffe had finished.

We were ordered to attack the advancing German columns around Sedan. On 11th and 12th May (1940), everybody got back all right. Then on 13th May, five of our aircraft went again on exactly the same course for the third day running. Only one came back. After that it was chaos. We did some leaflet-dropping at night. Those of us who were left moved from field to field, half a dozen times in a fortnight. A lot of people got lost. We ended up with two other Battles from squadrons we didn't know, alone in a field in central France about the time of Dunkirk. There was so little information. We'd take off and see troops and transport, with no way of knowing if they were even French or German. We'd have a look, and if they threw things at us, we threw them back and buzzed off at a rate of knots.

On our last day we had flown five times and were just getting ready to go again when we were ordered to jettison bombs and scarper. Our aircraft had been damaged a good bit by then, but we found another that was only missing a tailwheel, put our tailwheel on it, pushed the groundcrew in the back and took off. All I had was a cycling map of France. The French fleet blasted off at us as we flew over them, then we were clear. We finally staggered down at Middle Wallop in Hampshire. It was some sort of training station, and while we were getting something to eat, some bastards swiped everything in the aircraft down to our souvenirs and the gear of people who had been lost.

Arthur Power was commissioned in 1944 and served a period in 1955-56 as Truleigh Hill's C/O shortly before retirement from the RAF.

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Commanding Officer Arthur Power at both ends of his RAF career. Main picture, front row third from left, during his 1930s service in India. Inset, Truleigh Hill dance, Christmas 1955, with Sgt. Thomas, second left, Eddie Buckland left and Brian Jones, right.

(Tim Power and Brian Jones)

For a period in late 1936 and early 1937, Flt/Lt. R.I.G. MacDougall, who succeeded Arthur Power in 1956, had command of No.43 Squadron, the legendary Fighting Cocks, at Tangmere, a unit flying Hawker Fury bi-plane fighters. Wartime aircrew service as a Squadron Leader with No.17 Hurricane Squadron in the Battle of Britain followed. Despite considerable searching nothing further had been found relating to his career, prior to his arrival at Truleigh Hill early in 1956, until a totally unexpected e-mail from his daughter, Annette Quelch, provided all of the missing details. A two-year spell as a test pilot at Farnborough filled the gap between Tangmere and the Battle of Britain. Later in the war, as a Wing Commander he held high level positions in Malta and Palestine. After the war, spells at several stations in the UK were followed by three years in Ceylon, before he arrived in Sussex to be the last occupant of the C/O's office in the Station Headquarters at the Stoney Lane site. Unlike his predecessor this was not the end of the line. Further overseas service in Aden and Kenya followed, before a long and distinguished career ended in 1966 where it started, at his own request, at Tangmere.

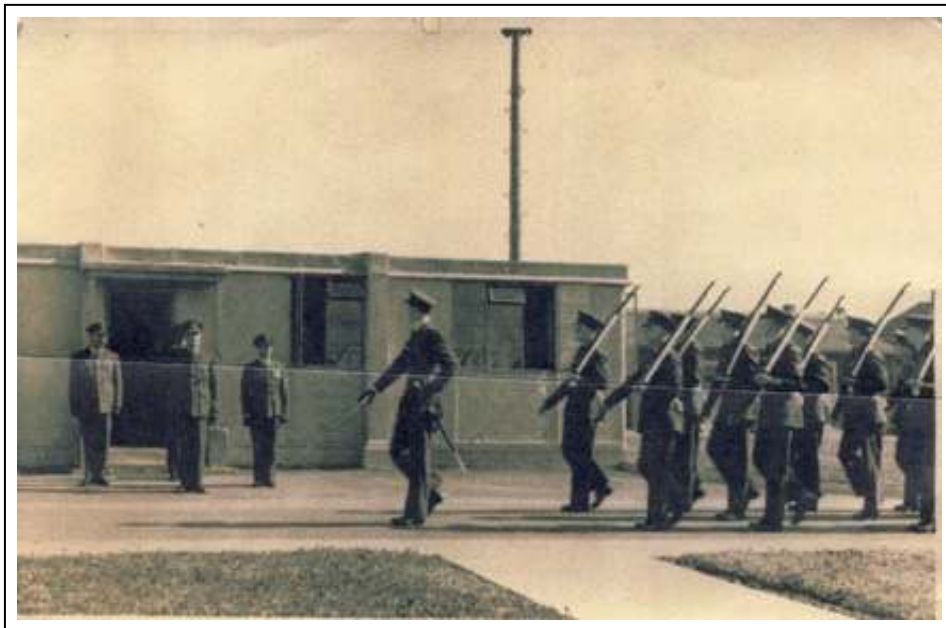
Those fortunate to be stationed at Truleigh Hill during its last two years remember him walking to the camp in civilian clothing from his home in The Drive area of Shoreham, changing into uniform in his office. His sporting interest may not have been fully appreciated by the airmen at the time, who probably would not have been aware of his enthusiastic reports of the stations sporting activities in the operations records. One keen athlete from this period has often wondered who was responsible for making sure that he was entered in the various group and command athletics championships. Perhaps he now has the answer.



Warrant Officer Bill Austin (left) and
Warrant Officer 'Tommy' Tucker (right)
The last two Commanding Officers of
Truleigh Hill GEE operation.
(Jim Stiff and Don Beckley)



RAF Truleigh Hill's final Commanding Officer (1956-1958) Flt/Lt. Ralph Ian
George MacDougall early in his wartime service as a Wing Commander.
(Annette Quelch)



A rare ceremonial occasion at the Stoney Lane domestic site. Flt/Lt. Somerfield,
third from left in front of the station headquarters, as the AOC parade passes.
(Roy Catling)

9. Finding the Veterans

The 2004 season at The Marlipins Museum in Shoreham ended in September, with plans for an exhibition of Truleigh Hill material to be held in April 2005, before the museum re-opened for the summer season. Although some material was already to hand, a much larger amount was necessary to warrant staging an exhibition. Valuable assistance came from two people who already had a Truleigh Hill interest, but an obvious source of material would be from ex airmen, and WAAFs, if any could be found.

It was known that half a dozen ex-Truleigh people were still in the area, having married local girls and choosing to stay in Sussex. A first letter to the *Shoreham Herald* produced several more as did later letters to the *Evening Argus*. The total number of known Truleigh marriages now stands at 30 but is probably nowhere near the actual number. The letters, notices on web sites, and checks with various association membership lists eventually brought the list of ex Truleigh people up to nearly 100. It is now 2008 and they are still coming!

Most service establishments can boast someone who went on to achieve success in a particular field after leaving the service. Two names in particular cropped up in many of the conversations with those who responded to the appeals.

Features of the social life of the Stoney Lane camp were the dances that have been referred to in an earlier chapter. Whilst the locals who attended these occasions may have been extremely impressed by the young radar operator who provided much of the musical entertainment, singing and playing several instruments, they may not be aware of his later achievements.

Jerry Lordan, having signed for a three year period spent all of 1954, and parts of 1953 and 1955 at Shoreham. On leaving the air force, success in the music industry did not come immediately. By 1960 however, he had written songs for Cliff Richard, Cleo Laine, Petula Clark and Matt Monroe among others and had four records in the UK charts himself as a solo singer. But greater things were to come. Cliff Richard had just split with The Shadows who were struggling to make an impact on their own. Jerry Lordan had now turned his attention to writing instrumental music and it is generally acknowledged that *Apache*, his first composition for The Shadows, gave their career a huge kick start. He followed up with other massive hits *Atlantis* and *Wonderful Land*, thereby ensuring their ongoing success, as well as *Diamonds* and *Scarlett O'Hara* for Jet Harris and Tony Meehan in 1963.

At some time in the 1960s former radar colleague Jonathan Fryer met him by chance in Charing Cross Road. In answer to Fryer's question 'How are you doing these days?' Jerry Lordan took him by the shoulders and turned him to face a music shop with a window display full of his sheet music. Of the former Truleigh colleagues that had memories of Jerry Lordan, only Dave Pagram made mention of the Oxometer, a machine that he constructed from all manner of parts found, borrowed or stolen from around the Truleigh Hill site. It was, he said, a machine for measuring bull-shit! Sadly, Jerry Lordan died in 1995 at the age of 61. A close colleague at Truleigh Hill, Clive Costema, attended his funeral. His wife Claudine gave her approval to a display of his achievements as part of the exhibition at the Marlipins Museum.



Jerry Lordan

Some of radar operator Jerry Lordan's achievements after leaving Truleigh Hill

In the early days of the Stoney Lane camp, airmen with a need to visit the sick quarters/medical section would find themselves being treated by a film star. Edward Judd had already appeared in three films as a teenage actor prior to his National Service, including one with Richard Attenborough. Resuming his career after his service time, he went on to appear in 50 films, the last in 1988. Between 1961 and 1966 he had starring roles in *The Day the Earth Caught Fire*, *First Men in the Moon* and *Island of Terror*. Television work kept him regularly employed alongside his film roles, with a final appearance in *Van der Valk* in 1992.

During his Truleigh Hill time Alan Wilson recalls trips into town with him being a slow process while he combed his hair regularly in shop windows. David Cammish, who shared a billet with him at Stoney Lane, had a jacket that 'Ted' Judd, as he was generally known, took a fancy to and borrowed on occasions for evening trips into Brighton.

Fred King was a hairdresser in civilian life and kept his hand in on the Truleigh Hill camp by cutting the airmen's hair. In service life he was a colleague of Judd in the Stoney Lane medical section. Fred King died in 1997, but Jean King recalls an occasion long before, when they were invited backstage at the Theatre Royal in Brighton where Edward Judd was appearing with Richard Todd.

Attempts to trace him developed into a mystery story that would not have been out of place in one of his films. In 2004, the magazine of the actors union *Equity* included his name in a list of actors and actresses that had recently passed away. After being informed of their mistake by a couple of his friends, *Equity* was forced to issue a correction, but not until after a number of tributes had been posted on Britmovie, a web site for serious film fans.

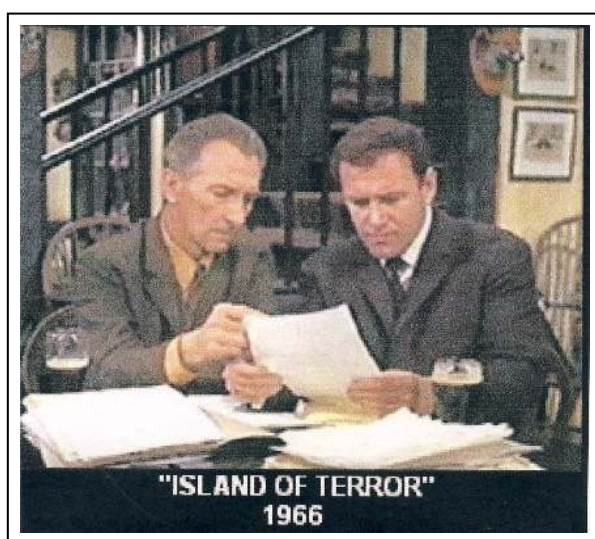
Now he was not only being traced for Truleigh Hill research, but a host of film buffs were now anxious to learn of his whereabouts and his state of health. This led to an exchange of e-mails with Barry Whatton, a film researcher from Wiltshire who seemed to be leading the hunt. After several promising leads came to nothing, the trail appeared to be going cold towards the end of 2006. Finally it was established that he was living in a residential care home in Merton in Surrey and possibly not in the best of health. At this point it would seem that a collective decision had been made not to cause him any further problems and to call an end to the search.



Edward (Ted) Judd



With Leo McKern in *The Day The Earth Caught Fire*.

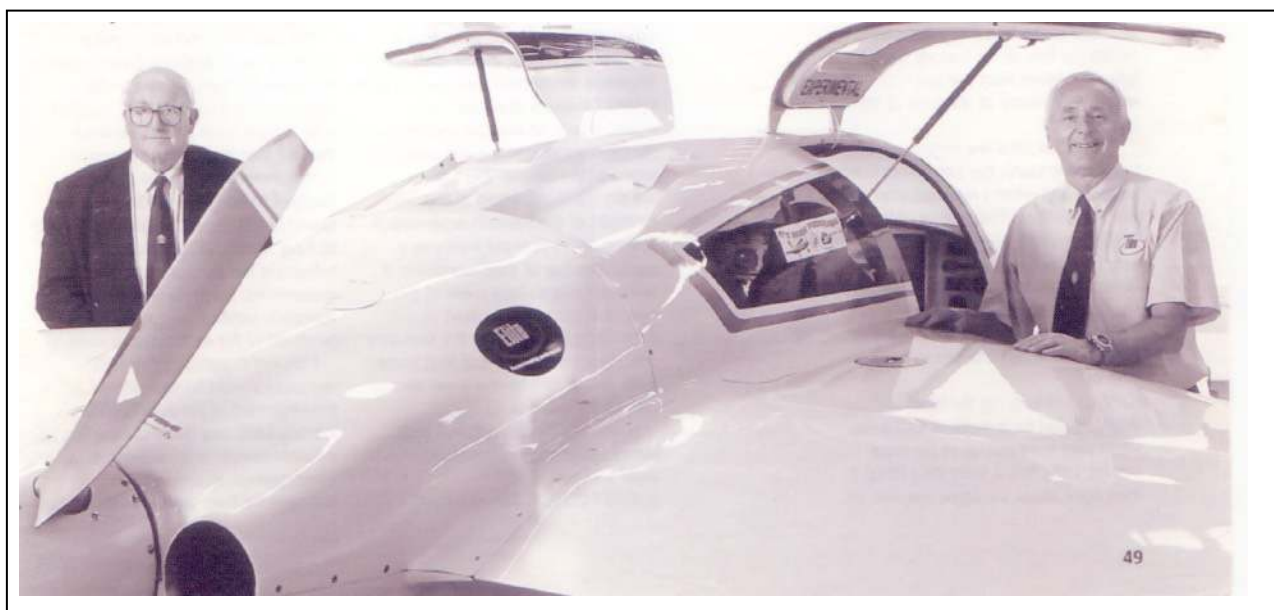


With Peter Cushing in *Island of Terror*

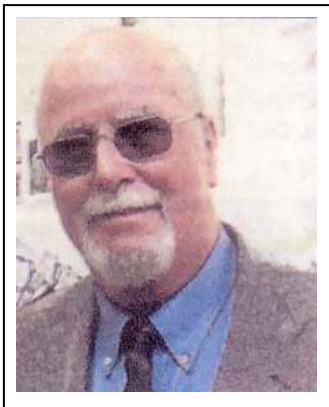
Edward Judd was not the only actor at Truleigh Hill in the 1950s. Jonathan Fryer started an acting career whilst serving his time as a radar operator, which was to eventually span 50 years. Encouraged by the Commanding Officer, Flt/Lt. Somerfield, to take acting lessons and to arrange shows at the camp, within five days of demob he was appearing in weekly repertory theatre for the princely sum of four pounds ten shilling per week. He is particularly proud of his appearances with Jimmy Edwards early in his career, and later those with Ken Dodd, Tom Baker and Bill Kenwright. Jonathan was located through the membership list of the National Service (RAF) Association and through him two more were added to the Truleigh Hill contact list.

He had kept touch with former colleague Brian Ayres, now living in Cyprus, since his service days. Early in 2005 Brian Ayres sent Jonathan Fryer a magazine article, which reported an amazing story of two 68-year-olds who built a kit plane in France. They then had it shipped to Dayton, Ohio to coincide with the Wright brothers centenary celebrations. The next stage was to fly home in a momentous six-day, eight-stage journey taking in Montreal, Quebec, Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, the Outer Hebrides, Blackpool and finally North Weald. One of the men was retired British Airways pilot Dennis Wood, but it was the name of the other man, Jack Berkin, that stirred the memories of Brian and Jonathan.

Among the photographs supplied by Jonathan for the forthcoming exhibition was one of a demob party which included a radar operator colleague named Jack Berkin. Fifty years on, was this the same man? An exchange of e-mails confirmed that it was. Jack Berkin was located on 28th March, just in time for the exhibition, now turning into a reunion, which was due to commence on 18th April. All three came together in 2005 for the first time since their service days ended in 1955.



Jack Berkin (right) with colleague Dennis Wood after their epic Trans-Atlantic flight.



Brian Ayres (left), who started the chain of events that resulted in himself, Jonathan Fryer and Jack Berkin (main picture) coming together for the first time since they were billet-mates at Truleigh Hill 50 years earlier.

Jim Stiff, who played the clarinet in his Truleigh Hill days, was disappointed that none of those present at the Marlipins event made mention of jazz pianist Phil Phillips, who Jim felt sure had gone on to have a successful career after leaving the forces. Attempts to track him down seemed doomed to failure until David Horsman arrived on the scene. David, known as ‘Bernie’ throughout his service time, but never before or after, provided the contact details. He also confirmed that a trio with himself on drums, Dave Trotman on trumpet and Phil Phillips on piano, staged regular sessions before the Thursday pay parades. Phil, when contacted, revealed that not only did he enjoy a very successful career; it was by no means over. Appearances with many of the top bands of the day came alongside television appearances in *East Enders*, *The Generation Game* and the *Little and Large* show, among others. A major career highlight came in the form of 11 years as leader of a quartet at London’s *Talk of the Town*, providing the music for some of the largest names in show business. Ten years and 120 shows with Michael Barrymore, however, gave him his greatest television exposure. More recently he was the pianist in the *Windmill Theatre Band*, assembled for the film *Mrs. Henderson Presents* starring Judi Dench and Bob Hoskins. Still a regular on the London jazz scene, on the weekend that he was contacted he had engagements on both Saturday and Sunday evenings.

His period at Shoreham coincided with the start of the Rock and Roll era. Soon after demob he became a member of Britain’s first Rock and Roll band, touring the country playing the music made famous earlier by Bill Haley. He is in no doubt that being posted to Truleigh Hill, with all of the opportunities available in nearby ‘swinging’ Brighton, was a great help in moving his career in the right direction.

He readily admits that his attempts to juggle night watch GEE duties with engagements at clubs and dance halls in Brighton, gave Warrant Officer Austin a few headaches. It also gives some credibility to the tale that he used some of his dual income to pay others to cover his radar night watches. A degree of peace was made with the boss when Phil organised a grand dance at Shoreham Town Hall, with the profits to go to the Truleigh Hill Sports Association, a pet project of W/O Austin.

'Bernie' Horsman (drums) and
Dave Trotman (trumpet). Two
thirds of the pay parade trio.
(David Horsman)



The other third, 50 years on and still performing at a wide range of
engagements. Phil Phillips at the Antiques Fair at Olympia in 2005.



Truleigh Hill takes over Shoreham
Town Hall in 1956.
(Both items: Phil Phillips)

The original letter to the *Shoreham Herald* was published at the end of October and drew an encouraging response. Not only did it reveal Truleigh Hill men who had married and stayed in the area, the letter was passed on by relations to others who had married and taken their wives back to their home towns. Telephone calls were coming in from various parts of the country. Almost all were expressing a wish to be present at the Marlipins Museum on 18th April.

One of the first calls was from Stan Mussell, originally from Dorset. One of those who married and stayed in Shoreham, it would be difficult to live any closer to the former camp than Stan's house in Williams Road. The first driver at Stoney Lane in 1952, he had entered the service at 18 with a driving licence and three years mechanical training already behind him. Shortly after, he was driving a 32-seater coach full of radar staff up to Truleigh Hill and back. On demob he continued in the motor trade, eventually becoming the owner of the successful Montgomery Motors businesses in Southwick and Shoreham.

Another early call was from Vernon Warwick, another who chose to stay in his wife's home area instead of returning home to Shrewsbury. The captain of the 1953 camp football team he provided an excellent photo of the team, which included the musician Jerry Lordan. The passing of fifty plus years has not lessened his feelings for the 'beautiful game'. Still an enthusiastic Wolves supporter he is also a season ticket holder at conference side Crawley Town.

Although the GEE staff were billeted with local families between 1952 and 1956, it was also possible for anyone whose home was in the area to actually live at home during their service period. Don Randall spent 20 of his 24 months at Truleigh Hill, all of it whilst living at home in Brighton. On duty days he was collected by the Truleigh Hill transport at Shoreham Station and only visited the camp for weekly pay parades. By a strange coincidence his Varndean school colleague Jim Peters enjoyed the same arrangement at the same period of time.

The first call from outside of Sussex produced three ex-Truleigh men in one go. Len Tarplee, whose wife was a former Southlands Hospital nurse, returned to his home town of Evesham after demob. Len came up with details of two others with whom he had recently made contact. A few months earlier, Roy Catling from Irchester in Northants, had been driving through Evesham and had spotted the name Tarplee and Wilkes above a carpet shop. He wondered if it was his former radar operator friend from over 50 years ago. A phone call revealed that it was, and Roy was able to tell Len that he was in contact with former Truleigh Hill policeman John Buggins, whose home is in Sutton Coldfield. The three arranged a successful meeting. All provided photographs for the exhibition and all attended.

John Buggins, whose main claim to fame was that he didn't book anyone throughout his two years service as a policeman, provided a picture of himself either driving or sitting in an HRG sports car at the camp. It was a car with a windscreen that folded down, allowing the car to be driven, with some skill, under the barrier at the camp entrance. For fifty years John Buggins was convinced that the owner was a radar operator named Clive Costema. An internet search revealed a Clive Costema who was an officer of Bishops Stortford Angling Club.

It was worth a try. John opened his phone call with ‘Are you the Clive Costema who owned an HRG sports car at RAF Truleigh Hill in the 1950s?’ The reply was ‘You must be joking, I could barely afford a bike in the 1950s’. Disappointed, John said ‘Sorry to have bothered you, I’ve got the wrong bloke’. Just as he was about to hang up, the answer came ‘But I was at Truleigh Hill’.

So another was added to the exhibition attendance, but who was the owner of the HRG? With only around 240 ever being produced, it was likely that the HRG Owners Club could come up with the answer, particularly as the registration was visible in the photograph. This however drew a blank and it was some time before the owner was revealed as Paul Bernini, the driver who skilfully negotiated the climb up the track from Beeding during the snowfall of 1955. Locating Paul Bernini seemed an impossible task until it was pointed out that the car had a Surrey registration. BT telephone records listed only one Bernini in the whole of Surrey. Just five days after the telephone call Paul Bernini arrived in the Marlipins Museum to view the Truleigh Hill material on display.

Len Tarples, Roy Catling and John Buggins at the Marlipins Museum in 2005



John Buggins in the legendary HRG sports car, with the Station Headquarters in the background. (John Buggins)

RAF policeman Alan ‘Artie’ Shaw served on relief duties at eight different radar stations before spending two years from 1952 to 1954 at Truleigh Hill. This was in the early stages of a long RAF career during which he was awarded the British Empire Medal. Another who met his wife during his Truleigh Hill days and now living in Middlesex, he recalled a couple of incidents from the 1950s.

Alan, together with radar operators Gary Godfrey and Jerry Lordan, remembers forming a music club called Record Rendezvous Club in a café in Ferry Road. It was well used by airmen and local girls, much, as Alan Shaw recalls, to the annoyance of the local lads. Another of his memories relates to an airman who lived at home during his Truleigh spell. The son of a peer, he arrived for duty in a white Rolls Royce which was parked outside of the station headquarters alongside the C/Os rather less impressive vehicle.



Another re-union after 50 plus years. Alan Shaw and Gary Godfrey

As mentioned earlier, another Shoreham café that received regular RAF patronage was The Snack Bar at the footbridge end of East Street. The building is still serving the same function, but in slightly less basic surroundings as Toast on the Coast. The Italian family owners were very tolerant of the amount of time spent by airmen in the café for very little return, to the point of offering radar mechanic Brian Stokes, from Wimbledon, a job both before and after he left the forces. In 1959, a headline and large photo of Brian with the family adorned the front page of the *Shoreham Herald*, the four having shared a pools payout of quite acceptable proportions. Brian then, for a period, became a Shoreham businessman, buying a newsagents shop in the High Street, next door to the Ferry Inn. He remained in Sussex, but sadly died in 2007.



Brian Stokes (right) with the Shoreham Snack Bar staff following their pools win. (Shoreham Herald)

A bizarre episode concerns another radar mechanic David Reade, whose story came via e-mail from New Zealand. In the summer of 1955, then known as David Cox, he was sent from RAF Wartling for a few days training exercise at Truleigh Hill. On completion of the exercise, he was not recalled to Wartling for some months. Whilst this may seem improbable today, stories of people becoming lost in the system seemed to crop up from time to time in the 1950s. Personal experience confirms this, but in this instance the period was just three days. David Reade recalls being loaned out to the farmer on Truleigh Hill, a not uncommon practice it seems, although in most cases it probably involved just an odd day. David's spell was rather longer, during which he received pay from both farmer and air force until being eventually recalled by Wartling.



General view of 2005 exhibition/re-union showing ex Truleigh Hill airmen Jack Berkin, Dave Pagram, Les Burchell, John Webb and John Coghlan

After the successful exhibition and reunion in 2005 former Truleigh Hill people were emerging at regular intervals. A few were actively sought via the Internet and letters to local papers. If the letter did not produce the desired result, it still had a hidden advantage. Every letter seemed to find its way on to the Internet. Anyone looking for information under the heading of RAF Truleigh Hill will find several letters, all containing contact details, tucked away among the other items relating to the station. Every so often a phone call or an e-mail adds another to the list which has now reached 100. Of these, however, seven are wives or relations of airmen who had already passed away at the time the research started. A further five have gone since. This figure could be larger as several have not replied to recent communications.

Between seventy and eighty have been in recent contact and forty of those attended a second reunion at Horsham Cricket Club in April 2008. A further dozen sent apologies, being unable to attend for various reasons. The cricket club venue and catering was arranged by former Truleigh Hill radar operator David 'Bernie' Horsman, who just happened to be the club chairman. Earlier in this chapter, the pre pay parade sessions in 1956 by David on drums, Phil Phillips on piano and Dave Trotman on trumpet was described. David was still in contact with Phil and the pair of them performed a superb session of appropriate period numbers at the Horsham event. The third member of the trio, Dave Trotman, originally from Croydon, was finally tracked down in Lincolnshire. He was unable to complete the trio on this occasion as the reunion unfortunately coincided with a major family birthday celebration.

Finding football star Brian Jones in Wales would have been considerably more difficult had he not returned to his previous home at Newtown, where he is very well known in local sporting circles. Although unable to attend the reunion, he sent a large amount of material for inclusion in the sport chapter of this book. Later in the year he did make it to Sussex, when he made a visit to the Marlipins Museum with three other members of the successful football team. All four had been at a golden wedding celebration in Surrey the previous day. The museum has become a recognised meeting place for former Truleigh people on a nostalgia mission. After viewing the large amount of Truleigh Hill material on display, all four then paid their first visit to the former technical site for over 50 years. In fact, for Brian, it was his first ever visit. His position in the camp orderly room did not necessitate visiting the radar site, so amazingly, despite spending over two years in Shoreham, this was his first visit.



David Horsman and Phil Phillips turn the clock back 52 years at the 2008 reunion.

Whilst there have been few problems in obtaining memories and photographs from post-war Truleigh personnel, wartime material has been understandably more difficult to obtain. In this respect, it has been a privilege to meet or correspond with several of the former radar staff who played their part at wartime Truleigh Hill. All have contributed to the quite substantial file of material from wartime which has enabled a clear picture of the radar and billeting situation to be described. Two telephone conversations with former WAAF Sergeant Millicent Start also gave an insight into the administration of the unit during wartime.

The memories of some of the wartime personnel have been recorded in earlier chapters. Joan Barnett entered the air force shortly before Christmas 1942 as Joan Corby and married her soldier husband during her time in Shoreham in 1943 and 1944. Joining at Innsworth, she received her radar training at Yatesbury as did many thousands after her. After her first posting on the Isle of Anglesey, she arrived at Shoreham to be billeted in private accommodation in Park Avenue.

She was collected by the Truleigh Hill truck at The Green Jacket and remembers operating for part of her time from a mobile trailer radar system. She finished her time very close to the action at RAF North Foreland, near Broadstairs. She recalls plotting a doodlebug which appeared to be heading in her direction before being intercepted and crashing into the Kent cliffs.

Pamela Jenkins was just 18 years old when, as Pamela Pounsett, she left her Lancing home to volunteer for service in 1943. If she thought that basic training at Wilmslow and trade training at Cranwell were a long way from home, worse was to follow. Her first radar posting was to Saligo Bay on the Isle of Islay, followed by a second to Hillhead, some 30 miles north of Aberdeen. Third time lucky saw her posted to Truleigh Hill, where at the end of the war she was one of the Truleigh Hill radar staff billeted at Poling. Although there are many instances of Truleigh airmen marrying local girls, there has only been one marriage discovered between two Truleigh Hill people. Pamela met and married her first husband, radar mechanic Ricky Turner, before leaving the service in 1946.

This is just a brief selection of those who answered the call. The exhibition & reunion at the Marlipins Museum in April 2005 was a huge success with 34 former airmen and one WAAF (Joan Barnett) returning to Shoreham, many for the first time in over 50 years. Over 100 people attended the first day and the considerable local interest has ensured that a Truleigh Hill display has remained as a permanent feature in the museum. In the three years up to the Horsham reunion in April 2008 many more were discovered and they are still coming.

For the latter two-thirds of the Truleigh Hill period, the greater percentage of those involved were National Servicemen, some called up initially for a period of 18 months, which very quickly became two years. Most of those called up served the mandatory two years, but many signed for an additional period thereby gaining several advantages. Those signing for a longer period, even those committing to just an extra year, were known as 'regulars'. The most obvious advantage was an enhanced rate of pay, although regulars were most likely to be granted their first choice of trade. The qualified toolmaker or sheet metalworker, opting for the minimum period and hoping to become an airframe mechanic, could quite easily find himself serving two years as a batman-waiter. There is a former airframe mechanic living in Shoreham today who entered service life as a greengrocer.

Although this chapter is titled Finding the Veterans, it is also an account of how people and material came together to result in a successful exhibition and re-union. Not all of the material was supplied by former airmen and women. Some came from records offices and some from local newspapers. Very significant and much appreciated contributions came from Squadron Leader Howard Toon and Bob Jenner both of whom had been researching Truleigh Hill long before any of the detail covered here was collected.

Howard Toon, recently retired as Director of Computing at Lancing College, also organised the college's Combined Cadet Force. As part of the cadets' activities, he ran a radio operation that was receiving interference from the present aerials on Truleigh Hill. An investigation led to an interest in the RAF radar operation, resulting in the creation of a very informative web. Considerable technical radar information was included alongside a host of pictures of the underground ROTOR site as it was at the end of the 1990s. Howard Toon generously offered complete access to his files, with permission to use anything required. As a consequence several of his photographs have been used in the museum, as illustration to talks and in this book. His web site officially vanished in 2004, but a bit of persistent 'Googling' on the heading RAF Truleigh Hill usually brings it back.

Bob Jenner is a leading member of Subterranea Britannica, a large organisation dedicated to exploring and documenting all manner of underground structures, military and otherwise, but also with sub-sections to such items as disused railway stations and wartime radar stations. Their web site is a must for any researcher into wartime and cold war radar.

Apart from masses of photographs of the present state of buildings and underground structures, details of aerials for the many types of radar and much technical information is included. It is difficult to imagine anyone in the country knowing more about RAF radar technical and domestic sites than Bob Jenner. His massive fund of knowledge on virtually all of the wartime and cold war radar stations is backed up by an incredible archive system and book collection. A visit to his organisation's web site will reveal the extent of mileage covered in search of this information. From the very start of this particular Truleigh Hill research he telephoned to offer assistance. Material and information supplied by him has been used in various forms in publicising the Truleigh Hill story in Sussex. It has been most satisfying to have sent some material from these researches in the opposite direction to add to his records.

Type 14 Mk 7 aerial for the Chain Home Extra Low radar system that operated at Truleigh Hill between 1952 and 1956.
(Crown Copyright via Bob Jenner)



Remains of the wartime Direction Finder building on Truleigh Hill

(Bob Jenner)

10. Local Involvement

When appeals have been made for memories or information relating to RAF Truleigh Hill, many interesting recollections came from Sussex residents, some now of quite advanced age. Their memories all add something to the Truleigh Hill story.

The earliest memories came from 85-year-old Eric Masters, from Portslade, who served his RAF time between 1941 and 1946 as an aircraft and motor transport fitter. As a very observant teenager he was working at a house in Cokeham Lane, Sompting in 1938, when four men arrived as lodgers. With some careful questioning and despite the secrecy in force at the time, Eric Masters is sure that they were erecting the aerials at Poling radar station which became operational before the war. He also remembers the first trucks in 1940 carrying the radar staff from their private billets in Shoreham to the radar site at Truleigh Hill.

Although towards the end of the war, close to 200 radar staff were billeted in Shoreham houses, it has been difficult to obtain memories from local people who played host to either an airman or WAAF during the war period. Maybe quantity is lacking, but there is a record of possibly one of the most important of Shoreham's temporary residents. Alan Bird's family had WAAF billeting officer Paula Teece as their house guest at 26 Norman Crescent at some stage during the war. She was also known to have been billeted at the officers quarters at Upper Beeding. Among her duties was the responsibility for paying the host families. On Fridays, a RAF van with an armed escort called to collect her; all very exciting for young Alan Bird.

At the end of the war many of the CH and CHL stations had their operations wound up and the equipment put on standby. Colin Turrell, from Shoreham, was part of an RAF team that de-commissioned many of the stations, including the CHL operation at Truleigh Hill.

Ted Field now lives in Heathfield. For part of his working life, however, his job took him to so many different parts of the country that his son attended no fewer than 33 different schools. His job, as a driver of bulldozers and other heavy plant items was to clear land for airstrips and, of particular interest here, the range of Cold War underground radar stations. Working for a company called Latrobe, from Charing in Kent, his first spell at Truleigh Hill, in 1951, involved clearing the large amount of surplus wartime buildings and roadways. At the same time, the MacAlpine Company were excavating the very large hole which was to accommodate the Truleigh Hill ROTOR radar operation. A lifelong heavy plant enthusiast, Ted Field had no difficulty in recalling that the excavation was being carried out by two HD19 diggers, among other equipment. On several occasions he was called upon to rescue them with his bulldozer when they became stuck on the wet chalk. He returned in 1952 to prepare the ground for the brick guardroom which replaced the original timber structure.

During the same period, Reg Hoad, currently magazine distributor for the Shoreham Society, ventured up to Truleigh Hill in search of work during his college vacation. He was sent down to the Stoney Lane domestic site and spent some time assisting with the building of the new camp.

Whilst Reg Hoad assisted in its construction, local historian Pete Staniforth played a part in its demolition in 1965, as an employee of Hall & Co. More than a decade earlier he had delivered newspapers to the camp for Billingtons, the newsagents on Royal George Parade. Pete's house in Buci Crescent was a mere 50 yards from the first RAF billet on the other side of the road. A photograph of his garden, taken shortly before demolition of the camp, inadvertently captured the billets for a useful and unexpected addition to the Truleigh Hill memorabilia.

Mike Williams, an archivist at Shoreham Airport, saw eight years service with the RAF Regiment, but his single involvement with Truleigh Hill came as a 15-year-old. In his first job, with Edwards, the sports shop in Portland Road, Hove, he was detailed to deliver a cricket bag full of gear to RAF Truleigh Hill, on his bike! Setting out from Portland Road, he eventually arrived at the radar site at Truleigh Hill some 700 feet higher than his starting point. A very sympathetic RAF policeman said 'Sorry son, you are at the wrong place. This lot has to go to the domestic site in Stoney Lane'. Fifty-three years later it is possible that he met that policeman, as three of the likely candidates were in attendance at the Marlipins Museum exhibition.

Mention has been made of the successful dances at the Stoney Lane camp. Janet Scott lived in Applesham Way, Portslade at the time, but it was her employment as a telephonist at Brighton Telephone Exchange that gained her access to the dances. She recalls the occasions as being memorable and observed that the airmen always made sure that the girls got home safely. Further comment here would seem to be quite unnecessary.



This shot, taken from a garden in Buci Crescent shows the Truleigh Hill billets shortly before demolition in 1965. The boiler house chimney can be seen above the houses in Kingston Close
(Pete Staniforth)

The nearest that Shoreham radar man Ken Townsend got to Truleigh Hill during his RAF service in the mid 1950s was a spell at Wartling, before being stationed very close to any likely action in Berlin. His present home in the Upper Shoreham road is close to the point where the transport to the radar site turned into Erringham Road, but at three earlier addresses he lived rather closer to the domestic site. It would be difficult to live any closer to the Stoney Lane site than his family homes in Clarendon Road and Williams Road, but Ken managed to achieve it with his own home in Stoney Lane, very next door to the camp. This was after the RAF had left the site, but before demolition. On the other side of his garden wall was the abandoned motor transport section with its garage building and inspection pits. Ken remembers the local motor DIY enthusiasts making full use of the facilities. He did, however, have a much stronger and permanent connection. His sister Maureen married radar operator Vernon Warwick, the captain of the first Truleigh Hill football team.

Well known local historian Trevor Povey has expressed a keen interest in the Truleigh Hill research. As an employee at Freshcombe Farm, he was involved in the dismantling of the six aerials for the GEE navigational aid in late 1959/early 1960.

A chance conversation with Peter Atkinson, a colleague at a local sports club, revealed that his mother, former WAAF Ruth Atkinson, was stationed as a plotter at Stanmore during the later stages of the war. There is every possibility that she would have received plots from Truleigh Hill at some stage during this period. It would have been a bonus to have received an account of what life was like at the other end of the line, but sadly Ruth passed away before an interview could be arranged.



A posting to Truleigh Hill would have been most convenient for Ruth Atkinson (centre) from Southwick. Instead, she found herself on the other end of the line at Stanmore, receiving plots from Truleigh Hill and other similar radar stations.

(Peter Atkinson)

11. Later Developments.

By March 1958 RAF Truleigh Hill staff had been drastically reduced. All radar operations had ceased. For a period, six policemen shared guarding duties at the technical and domestic sites, supplemented by two cooks and two drivers and possibly one person each to man the medical and administration sections. Flt/Sgt Perry remained in married quarters and took day to day responsibility, while Flt. Lt. MacDougall remained in overall command as C/O until closure later in the year.

One of the policemen, Ray Towning, describes a situation where a guard rota worked out by the six police involved some very lengthy spells on duty but were compensated by some extremely acceptable periods of free time after. Cpl. Vic King, who had run the cookhouse operation very successfully for some time, remained in charge with the most recent addition to the catering staff, Graham Burgess, retained to assist. Graham made the weekly trip to RAF Tangmere with Jim Mullins, one of the two drivers to remain at the camp, to collect the week's provisions.

Eventually everything finally ground to a halt. There are no records of developments at the domestic site between closure early in the second half of 1958 and demolition in 1965, other than periodic reports in the local press expressing concern at the general untidy state of the site. An interesting piece of information comes from longstanding Stoney Lane resident George Parsons. He reports that two trucks were still being garaged at the camp in 1960, and that a Warrant Officer arrived each day to raise and lower the flag. It is known that former GEE Commanding Officer, Warrant Officer Bill Austin, was still resident in Shoreham in 1960 and would seem to be the likely candidate.

On 14th February 1964, the entire area covered by the camp was purchased by Shoreham Council for £58,927. The council accepted responsibility for demolition and clearance of the buildings, and any alterations that might be necessary to the road layout. Demolition took place in 1965, and plans were formulated for the development of the sections on either side of Buci Crescent.

A drawing dated April 1967 shows completion of stage 1; 36 flats on the site of the former married quarters. The same drawing shows 41 flats on the other side of the road being under construction as stage 2 of the project. These two stages were relatively small developments, completed without too many complications. Stage three was a totally different situation with another five years passing before work got underway. This was altogether a much larger project. Stage 3 alone constituted the largest housing project in the history of Shoreham Council. Plans were drawn up for 240 dwellings comprising maisonettes, flats and terraced houses to accommodate 700 people on the remaining six and a half acres of the former camp. There was some apprehension at the prospect of undertaking such a large project, with the Housing Committee initially voting to develop only half of the area as a first phase.

At the time there were 450 people on Shoreham Council's housing list, with a waiting time of up to four years. In addition, many more were soon to lose their homes, as a result of the imminent widening of the A259 Brighton Road. One section of the council felt that the entire area should be re-developed as one project, but others preferred a two-stage approach. Some also felt that alternative sites should have been considered. Bearing in mind that purchase of the site was some eight years earlier, to leave a large part of the site undeveloped was already proving costly.

Council meetings at the end of 1971 and early in 1972 became so stormy that on one occasion the press were barred from attending. Housing Committee chairman Mrs. Robin Richards, supported by prominent local councillors Maureen Colquhoun and Derek Frost, eventually won the day, overturning the earlier decision to only develop half of the site. Advertisements inviting tenders for the work were placed in local papers and the Daily Telegraph in April 1972, with completion anticipated by the end of the following year.

Today, there is nothing to indicate that over a six-year period from 1952 to 1958, several hundred young airmen served part of their National Service on the site that is now covered by housing. Adur Court now spans the former entrance opposite Clarendon Road, with its southern end on land that previously contained the tennis court, and the northern end across part of the transport building. Part of Downes Court covers the old guardroom area, and the two ends of Osbourne Court are on land previously occupied by the medical section and the station headquarters. Residents of the eastern section of Millward Court, and users of the day centre, may not be aware that a large building that housed the cookhouse and NAAFI, as well as extension for officers quarters, once stood at this point. A short stretch of the original road through the centre of the camp has stayed in position from Buci Crescent to the eastern end of Millward Court. From here it has been re-routed to meet Stoney Lane further south than the former camp entrance opposite Clarendon Road.

The buildings and radar aerials gradually vanished from the technical site on Truleigh Hill to be replaced by other buildings and aerials, for various communications purposes. The guardroom and underground radar bunker passed into private ownership and remain in position today. A few other remnants from RAF times are scattered about the site. In May 1963 the contents of the underground ROTOR site were sold by auction. The selling price of £3000 for 280 lots was reported to be 25% up on similar sales.

In 1971 the Truleigh Hill technical site made local headlines when a 17-year-old youth from Henfield was killed when a dismantled blast door fell on him. With other members from a local youth club, they had managed to gain entry for what seems to have been an exploration exercise, rather than with any intentions of the type of vandalism that has affected other ROTOR sites.,

Initially the bunker was used to host occasional charity functions and later for storage. When Howard Toon was permitted access in 1998 his many excellent photographs show signs of deterioration in the various rooms. It is understood that the condition of the underground area has become worse since that time and any further visits are extremely unlikely. Many similar sites around the country are in a much poorer state and most have now been sealed off. Several of the guardrooms have been turned into very attractive houses, the one at St.Margaret's Bay in Kent being a particularly good example.

New buildings and aerials have appeared over the years, serving a variety of communications purposes. The aerials, 700 feet above the town, make the location easily identifiable from Shoreham and neighbouring areas as the site of the former RAF Truleigh Hill radar station. The Truleigh Hill guardroom has survived in its original position inside a locked compound for nearly fifty years since RAF operations ceased. Over the years there has been no visible evidence of maintenance to the outside of the building giving rise to concerns for its future. Visits to the site in 2007, however, reveal that new windows and doors have been recently fitted, and renovation work carried out to an area of brickwork facing the South Downs Way.

Many military institutions that served the country in wartime and other times of need are being permitted to vanish without trace, although thankfully a few radar sites have been retained as museums. Enough Truleigh Hill material now exists for a permanent comprehensive display in the Marlipins Museum in Shoreham High Street, and it is to be hoped that this book will help to keep the memory alive. The museum is open from May to October, Tuesday to Saturday, from 10.30 to 4.30. Interested visitors on Thursday afternoons may even have a former Truleigh Hill radar operator on hand to tell them about it.

Friday, May 10, 1963



'Town' under Downs off secret list

DID YOU KNOW that the harmless looking building above conceals the entrance to a deep tunnel, part of the RAF radar station on Truleigh Hill? A picture taken down the tunnel is seen below.

A SECRET "town" beneath the disbanded Royal Air Force early warning radar station on Truleigh Hill, Shoreham, was found by journalists who went on Tuesday to watch an underground sale of equipment on the site. The station is now off the secret list and has become obsolete.

A modern "bungalow" on the hill-top which is visible from the road nearby and has been seen by thousands of people is really only a decoy.

It hides the entrance to a huge tunnel, lined with concrete, which runs for about 300 yards deep into the chalk. The tunnel, reached by an angled staircase, is about 8ft. high and 8ft. wide.

The tunnel leads to rooms including offices, toilets and kitchens. It has an alternative exit and air shafts which protrude out among the gorse.

SECRET

The "town" is likely to be proof against conventional bombs but not against larger nuclear weapons.

The tunnel was built about 10 years ago. Most Shoreham people were unaware that it existed.

A HERALD reporter asked the Vicar of Shoreham, the Rev. G. S. Froggatt, if he knew about the tunnel.

"I was chaplain to Truleigh Hill RAF Station off Stoney-lane, but I knew nothing about anything underground on Truleigh Hill," he said. "We were not allowed to go up there."

He added, "I know the 'bungalow' at the entrance, but had no idea what was underneath it."

Coun. R. Browne, who has lived continuously in Shoreham since the last war and also spent his youth in the town in the early years of the century, stated, "I knew about the site but was told to keep 'mum' about it. It was secret and you could not get near the place."

Scrap dealers and contractors came long distances to bid for equipment at the auction.

Heavy equipment of various kinds, most of it electrical, is being dismantled, including the contents of the radar room, workshop, track room, main switch room, control cabin and technical officer's room, to say nothing of gas filtration plant, air conditioning plant, pump room, transformer room and guard room, and various outside equipment, including a guard dog kennel compound.

The 280-odd lots were auctioned by Mr N. T. Pocock, of Messrs. Geering and Colyer, of Ashford, Kent, who told the HERALD that the equipment sold realised about £3,000, about 25 per cent up on similar sales held at other disbanded rotor sites.



Friday, March 8, 1965

£58,000 FOR RAF SITE

On Tuesday Shoreham Council agreed to acquire from the Air Ministry, for housing purposes, the unencumbered freehold interest, with vacant possession, of the deserted RAF site at Stoney-lane.

The price is £58,000, the Council to take the site as it stands and be responsible for any further road works and the demolition of existing buildings.

The Council decided to proceed with the purchase of land south of Southlands Hospital from the Minister of Health for residential development, despite a County Council proposal for a link road between Brighton-road and Upper Shoreham - road which would affect the land.

Shoreham Herald's reports of 1963 developments at the Truleigh Hill technical site and the Stoney Lane domestic site. The tunnel is looking in better shape in this picture than it does in the one that accompanies Chapter 5, which was taken some thirty-five years later.



When these pictures were taken in 2007, all traces of RAF Truleigh Hill had vanished many years earlier. Married quarters once stood on the left hand side of this road, with billets facing on the opposite side.



The buildings on the right are Millward Court and a day centre. The Truleigh Hill cookhouse and NAAFI were the previous occupants of this piece of land. There is no trace of the RAF occupation of the site, but the community association that uses the day centre is exploring the possibility of a plaque to be mounted at the entrance to the centre.

Appendix 1. Roll Call (Wartime)

By late 2008 the number of Truleigh Hill contacts was approaching 100. Many mentioned colleagues that they remembered. Personal notes from 1956 and 1957 have helped to increase the postwar list. Substantial contributions from Mike Dean and Jim Ward have boosted the wartime list from just a few names up to a total of 120. Sqdn/Ldr. Mike Dean has painstakingly compiled station lists from those attending the annual wartime radar reunions and has kindly made his Truleigh Hill list available. Jim Ward, a Truleigh Hill radar operator with a very good memory, came up with a list of nearly 50 names from his periods at the station between 1942 and 1945. WAAF members are mostly listed with maiden names. Married names where known are shown in brackets.

Officers and Warrant Officers

Flt/Lt Davidson, ?
Flt/Lt Gilkis, J
Flt/Lt Le Good, H
Flt/Lt Levy
F/O Kelly, E
F/O Mewse, ?
P/O Broadbridge, ? RCAF
P/O Clarke, ?
P/O Easy, M
P/O Harrild, Peter
P/O Jackson, Alan
P/O King, David
P/O Noakes, ?
W/O Rowe, A
S/O McGiffen, Jessie (Harris-Burland)
S/O Teece, Paula
S/O Waldron, 'Wally' RCAF

Sergeants

Flt/Sgt Collins, ?
Flt/Sgt Chalk, ?
Flt/Sgt Engelman, S
Sgt Leigh, ?
Sgt Start, Millicent (WAAF)

WAAF-CHL+Types 41,51,57,& Fixer

Corby, Joan (Barnett)
Charlesworth, Edna
Broad, ?
Davey, Letitia
Dawson, Mary
Fogden, Judy
Gascoigne, 'Gassy'
Green, Nancy
Haines, Pamela (Cullum)
Hayward, Prue (Riddiford)
Horn, Margaret (Curtis)
Isherwood, Margaret (Heathcote)
Kerridge, Molly
Lawrence, Margaret (Quinn)
Milson, Barbara
Parker, Jan (Dinnage)
Pegg, Mary
Purdy, Muriel (Holland)
Pounsett, Pamela (Jenkins)
Sapstead, Joyce
Scott, ?
Shand, Patricia
Stannett, Phyllis
Stobbs, Cynthia (Stevens)
Wakeford, Kathleen (Sutcliffe)
Watkinson, Margaret (Bullock)
Wilkinson Phyllis (Savage)

WAAF -- GEE Navigational Aid

Cassin, Barbara (Ingles)
Cobb, June (Elliott)
Cooper, Jean (Griffiths)
Dinnis, Kathleen (Shedden)
Fearnley, Marjorie (Lax)
Fuller, Joy (Harrild)
Mair, Catherine (Hillesley)
O'Rourke, Mary (Allen)
Rowe, Patricia (Vale)

RAF – GEE Navigational Aid

Adam, John RCAF
Collings, Ivan
Fuller, Edward
Holdroyd, Hubert
Leach, Robert
Munday, Eric
Penrose, Walter RCAF
Rawes, Norman
Simkin, Ronald
Wingate, Raymond.

WAAF - Trade Not Known

Alexander, Mildred (Rule)
Clark, Doreen (Rendell)
Copeland, Gladys (Brundle)
Daffern, ?
Jaquette, ? RCAF
Keelan, Pamela (Faris)
Marchand, Sheila (Caddy)
Street, ?
Wilson, Dee (Fairbridge)

RAF - Trade Not Known

Eley, Albert
Lamb,?
Marett, Philip
Narborough, Malcolm
Pitcher, Bob

RAF – CHL + Types 41,51 & 57

Armstrong, ?
Baker, John
Blanks, Eric
Blewitt, Bill
Blunden, George
Boon,?
Brundle, Richard
Buck, Langton
Childs, Edward
Clarkson, William RNZAF
Davies, 'Curly' RN
Dear, Harold
Denyer, Harold
Dodds, Joe RN
Eustace,?
Harris, Richard
Hallams, Harry
Hayden, Robert
Hearn, Jeff
Howarth, John RN
Howes, Robert
Johnson, Johnnie
Livingstone, ?
Maubak, Johnnie RCAF
Moore, Earl RCAF
Patience, James
Polglaze, ?
Pye, David
Savage, Peter
Stephenson, Dennis
Sutcliffe, Thomas
Town, ?
Vaughan, Bob
Ward, Jim
Wilson, Ted RCAF
Whitehorn, Stan
Whitley, Harry

Others

Horwood, Tony 75 Wing Maintenance
Kilcoin, John US Army Signals Corps
Slater, Robert GPO Maintenance

Roll Call - Post War (1946-1958)

The names listed here and in the wartime section, are only a fraction of those that spent time at Truleigh Hill. They have been collated from various records and memories of those on the contact list. If the GEE list seems rather larger than the CHEL, it reflects the differences in the period of post war operation, 11 years for Gee opposed to just 4 years of underground CHEL operations.

Officers & Warrant

Officers

Flt/Lt Burdett, C
Flt/Lt. Dean, ?
Flt/Lt Edwards, J
Flt/Lt MacDougall, R
Flt/Lt Matthews, J
Flt/Lt Power, A
Flt/Lt Slack, W
Flt/Lt Somerfield, B
F/O Fryer, J
F/O Howard, ?
F/O Maurice, ?
F/O Patterson, ?
P/O Duncan, J
P/O Eve, R
P/O Ford, ?
P/O Granter, G
P/O Hawkins, ?
W/O Austin, W
W/O Beecham, ?
W/O Dickens, ?
W/O Tucker, ?

Sergeants

Flt/Sgt Perry, ?
Sgt Bonner, ?
Sgt Crewe, ?
Sgt Foster, Peter
Sgt Fowler, ?
Sgt Jolley, George
Sgt Lilley, John
Sgt. Little, ?
Sgt. Ogdon, Don
Sgt O'Grady, ?
Sgt Parrott, ?
Sgt. Pirie, ?
Sgt. Pearce, ?
Sgt Thomas ?
Sgt Wall, ?

GEE Navigational Aid

Allwright, Don
Almrott, Graham
Ballard, ?
Banks, Roger
Barry, 'Taff'
Bayliss, Ken
Beamish, Steve
Beebee, John
Beckley, Don
Bielby, David
Bloomfield, Barry
Bluett, Peter
Boss, Ian
Brook, Leon
Burchell, Les
Cardozo, Gene
Carter, Jeff
Clapshaw, John
Clark, Mick
Coghlan, John
Coultas, Norman
Cousins, Mick
Crabb, George
Darling, Brian
Davies, Ken
Delmar, Brian
Dennington, Larry
Disbery, John
Eaton, Harry
Elcombe, Tony
Fitzgerald, John
Floyd, Stuart
Freer, Barry
Fulker, Bobby
Gee, Brian
Glover, John
Glyde, Dave
Godfrey, Gary

GEE Navigational Aid

Green, Doug
Green, George
Hart, Trevor
Hearn, Ron
Heartfield, Jim
Hewitt, John
Hickling, Peter
Hinde, John
Holland, 'Dutch'
Humphries, Malcolm
Hyams, Maurice
Jackson, Keith
Johnson, Brian,
Johnson, Jack
Jones, David
Kinsey, 'Doc'
Lambert, Jack
Lee, Dennis
Liddington, Brian
Loft, John
Longstaffe, Peter
March, Danny
Mawer, Peter
McCarthy, 'Mac'
Mickels, Brian
Monksfield, 'Ginger'
Monaghan, Bob
Mooney, ?
Mowatt, John
Nott, Mike
Patterson, John
Pearl, John
Peters, Jim
Phillips, Phil
Poore, Jerry
Potts, Brian
Pullen, Peter
Randall, Don
Rennie, 'Jock'

GEE Navigational Aid

Revill, Dennis
 Rollings, 'Tiny'
 Saddleton, John
 Sampson, Peter
 Sapwell, John
 Scott, Jack
 Sharp, Dennis
 Shefford, John
 Skelton, ?
 Smart, Ray
 Smith, Ken
 Stiff, Jim
 Stirling, Tony
 Stride, Fred
 Stockton, Neville
 Stokes, Brian
 Tame, Stan
 Tarling, Alan
 Taylor, Roy
 Thomas, Ian
 Todd, Peter
 Tomkins, 'Ali'
 Webb, ?
 Wilkins, Trevor
 Wilkinson, Derek
 Williams, Glyn
 Wilson, Alan
 Woodward, Colin
 Young, 'Taffy'

Transport

Albert, Ken
 Aspbury, Ben
 Baldwin, Jack
 Bernini, Paul
 Burrows, Tony
 Gardner, ?
 Jarvis, ?
 McLaughlin, Jim
 Morrison, Jim
 Mullins, Jim
 Mussell, Stan
 Parker, Eric
 Paxton, Ken
 Phillips, Eddie
 Stonham, Derek
 Tapley, Bernard
 Williams, Bill

ROTOR – CHEL

Ardy, Les
 Armstrong, Tony
 Atkins, ?
 Ayres, Brian
 Banfield, David
 Berkin, Jack
 Bessant, Derek
 Butler, Bill
 Camish, David
 Catling, Roy
 Chatfield, Stan
 Collins, Vic
 Commander, Arthur
 Cook-Martin, Douglas
 Cooper, Peter
 Crimes, Mike
 Costema, Clive
 Dacey, Dave
 Davies, Bill
 Davies, Sid
 Davis, Sid
 Dixon, Gordon
 Down, Philip
 Dupree, Roy
 Effenberg, Frank
 Ellis, Paul
 Field, Ray
 Fleetwood, F
 Freeman, Tony
 Fryer, Jonathan
 Gale, Alan
 Gibson, Vic
 Goddard, Colin
 Godfrey, Roy
 Goodey, John
 Hackett, Ron
 Hallibone, Pete
 Hargest, Tudor
 Harkness, Ian
 Harvey, Ken
 Hayes, Pete
 Hodges, Mick
 Holmewood, Keith
 Horsman, David
 Horwood, Melvyn
 Hurst, Geoff
 Huss, Keith
 Janes, Peter
 Jeffries, Dick

ROTOR – CHEL

Jenkins, Don
 Jones, Brian (1)
 Jones, Roger
 Lace, Alan
 Lattimore, David
 Limpus, Philip
 Lippell, 'Bish'
 Lordan, Jerry
 Mitchell, John
 Morris, Brian
 Moulton, Pete
 Pagram, Dave
 Palmer, Dick
 Payne, Clive
 Porteous, Don
 Prankett, Brian
 Pratt, Bert
 Price, Barry
 Purvey, Peter
 Ramsdale, Dave
 Ramm, Eric
 Ransome, Les
 Reade, David (Cox)
 Rennison, Alan
 Ritchie, John
 Roughead, John
 Savin, Tony
 Sawyer, Joe
 Singleton, Glen
 Skilling, Ted
 Smith, Ian
 Smythe, Frank
 Sykes, ?
 Tarplee, Len
 Terry, Dave
 Trotman, Dave
 Varney, Mike
 Walker, Jim
 Warren, 'Bunny'
 Warwick, Vernon
 Wheeler, Mike
 Winslow, ?

Police

Bannister, John
 Bentley, Dick
 Buggins, John
 Chadwick, ?
 Collins, Keith
 Cornwall, Ron
 Elphick, Neil
 Fife, Jim
 Hawkins, David
 Hibbs, John
 Kelly, Brian
 Moran, 'Geordie'
 Norcliffe, Brian
 North, Rex
 Shaw, Alan
 Steele, Jim
 Sutton, Charles
 Towning, Ray
 Waterfall, Peter
 Webb, John

Medical

Curant, John
 Judd, Ted
 King, Dave
 King, Fred
 Miller, 'Dusty'
 Wright, Alan

Catering

Baker, Bert
 Bridges, Dick
 Burgess, Graham
 Burton, Bill
 Callaghan, ?
 Carpenter, 'Snowy'
 Harrison, Jack
 King, Vic
 Livingstone, Mike
 Meikle, ?
 Moody, Jim

Administration

Attwood, Ken
 Burgess, Ron
 Collom, Harry
 Coxhead, Fred
 Finch, John
 Flitter, Roger
 Humphries, Peter
 Jones, Brian (2)
 Millen, Alan
 Morris, Ken
 Rogers, John
 Spratt, John

Trade not Known

Anstey, Brian
 Bergan, Roly
 Catt, Ron
 Diamond, Dave
 Franklin, Colin
 Franklin, John
 Hart, 'Buster'
 Higgins, Harry
 Keeble, Maurice
 King, Henry
 Mitchell, Ted
 Saul, Tony
 Senior, Ken
 Wallcroft, Peter

Air Ministry Works Department – RAF Truleigh Hill 1952-58

Mease, ? - Station Engineer
 Butcher, ? - Clerk of Works
 Delderfield, ? - Assistant Clerk of Works
 Jimson, F - Foreman, Mechanical/Electrical
 Knibbs, Ernie - Electrician
 Heath, Charles - Electrician's Mate
 Miles, George - Fitter
 Meads, W - Fitter's Mate
 Cairns, ? - Driver
 Ewins, Jerry - Boilerman
 Aggutter ? - Boilerman
 Carson, W - Groundsman
 Cowley, A - Assistant Groundsman
 Knight, William - Building Trades Foreman for contractors
 Corbins, Maidstone, Kent.

GEE–Civilian Technicians

Bloomfield, Charlie
 Edwards, Jack
 Hoath, Cliff
 Howgate, Ted
 Humphrey, Vic
 Norwood, Jack
 Powell, Ralph
 Smith, Bill
 Tester, Len
 Tidmarsh, Bert
 Waters, Paul

Gallery



Ken Albert



Don Allwright



Graham Almrott



David Banfield



Roger Banks



Steve Beamish



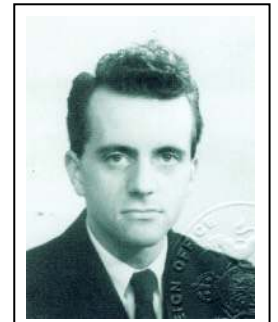
Don Beckley



Jack Berkin



Leon Brook



Paul Bernini



Pete Brown



Eddie Buckland



Les Burchell



Graham Burgess



Bill Burton



John Buggins



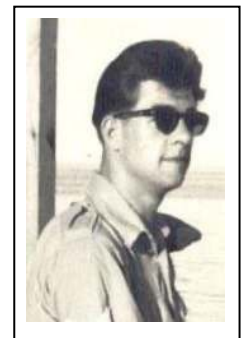
Roy Catling



Stan Chatfield



Nobby Clarke



Harry Collom



Pete Cooper



Clive Costema



George Crabb



John Curant



Dave Dacey



Brian Darling



Bill Davies



Ken Davies



Sid Davies



Sid Davis



Larry Dennington



John Disbery



Tommy Dodds



Phillip Down



Harry Eaton



Tony Elcome



Paul Ellis



Frank Effenberg



Ray Field



'Tich' Fleetwood



Colin Franklin



John Franklin



Tony Freeman



Jonathan Fryer



Jim Fyfe



Vic Gibson



John Glover



Gary Godfrey



Roy Godfrey



John Goodey



Ron Hackett



Pete Hallibone



Tudor Hargest



Ian Harkness



Pete Hayes



Malcolm
Humphries



Ron Hearn



'Bernie' Horsman



Keith Huss



Peter Janes



Brian Johnson



Brian Jones



Ted Judd



Brian Kelly



Fred King



'Doc' Kinsey



Alan Lace



David Lattimore



John Lilley



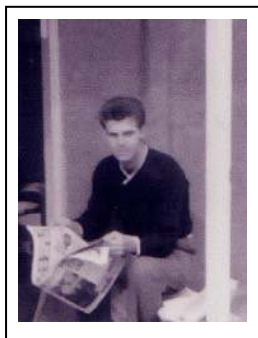
'Bish' Lippell



Mike Livingston



Jerry Lordan



John Loft



Pete Mawer



Chris McGill



Jim McLaughlin



Brian Mickels



Alan Millen



John Mitchell



Bob Monaghan



Brian Morris



Ken Morris



Jim Morrison



John Mowatt



Stan Mussell



Brian Norcliffe



Les Newman



John Patterson



Clive Payne



John Pearl



Phil Phillips



Bert Pratt



Pete Pullen



Peter Purvey



Eric Ramm



Alan Rennison



Dave Ramsdale



Dennis Revill



John Ritchie



John Rogers



John Roughead



Tony Savin



John Sapwell



Jack Scott



Alan Shaw



John Shefford



Glyn Singleton



Ted Skilling



Ray Smart



Ian Smith



'Jack' Spratt



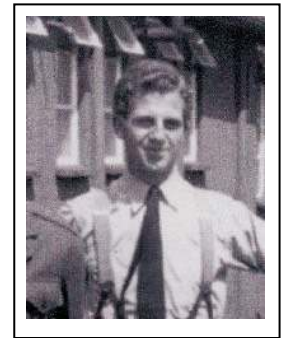
Brian Stalker



Jim Steele



Jim Stiff



Tony Stirling



Neville Stockton



Brian Stokes



Len Tarplee



Roy Taylor



Dave Terry



Ray Towning



Dave Trotman



Mike Varney



Arthur Waller



Brian Ward



Bunny' Warren



Vernon Warwick



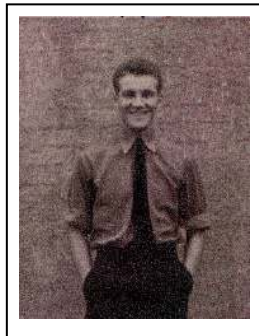
Pete Waterfall



Doug Watts



John Webb



Mike Wheeler



Derek Wilkinson



Colin Goddard



Alan Wilson



Colin Woodward



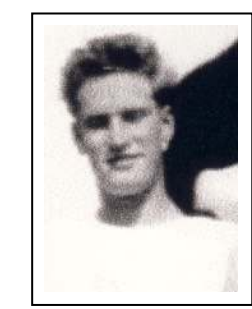
Brian Gee



'Ginger Monksfield



Vic Collins



Mike Grimes



Ken Harvey



John Burchell



'Dick 'Dixon



Melvyn Horwood
92



Dave Pagram



Barry Price

Appendix 2. Other Sussex RAF Radar Stations

Beachy Head Opened as Chain Home Low station in 1940. Centrimetric Early Warning underground site as part of ROTOR programme 1953. Upgraded to Type 80 in 1954. Closed 1960. Guardroom demolished and bunker sealed in 1996. Billeting in private homes during wartime, but domestic site built at Hampden Park for 1950s operation.

Durrington First GCI (Ground Control Interception) site in 1941. 'Happidrome' operations block completed in 1942 is now part of Palatine School. Messes and airmen's accommodation at Field Place. Officers and WAAFs billeted locally in West Worthing. Decommissioned in 1945.

Highdown Hill Small operation, originally Army Type CD No.1 Mk.1. Converted to Type 12, probably transportable, on takeover by RAF. Operated 1943-44. Staff accommodated at Poling.

Fairlight Chain Home Low 1940, upgraded to GCI in 1941. ROTOR Chain Home Extra Low in 1950s, closed 1956. Bunker sealed and buildings demolished 1973. Wartime staff accommodated in private billeting in Hastings. 1950s domestic site in Coastguard Lane.

Grangewood One of a small number of GEE H (Type 100) stations forming a navigational aid for precision bombing. Operational only from Oct. 1943-Nov. 1944 after which the equipment was used as part of a mobile chain in France and Germany. Situated near Fairlight Church and administered from RAF Fairlight. Staff billeted privately in Hastings area.

Poling See chapter 3

Rye. Although named after the nearest town, both technical and domestic sites were just inside the Kent border, close to the village of Brookland. One of first batch of Chain Home sites in position at commencement of war. Upgraded as part of Rotor plan in early 1950s, closed 1956. Buildings and aerials sold by auction 1958.

Pevensey Also part of original batch of Chain Home stations. Placed on standby after war. Wartime staff billeted in private accommodation in Eastbourne. Technical site on Pevensey Levels close to Wartling technical site. Buildings and aerials sold by auction with Rye 1958.

Wartling Opened as Ground Control Interception in 1941, continuing after war to become part of ROTOR plan with two-level underground bunker. Closed early 1960s. Technical site guardroom now a private residence. 1950s domestic site on A259 became HM Prison Northeye, and more recently a training hostel for students from the United Arab Emirates.

Several other smaller sites included those at Newhaven and Brighton (Whitehawk) which originated and operated along similar lines to Highdown Hill.

Appendix 3. Further Reading

The Eyes of the Few by Daphne Carne

An excellent account of life at RAF Rye during wartime by a WAAF radar operator who was on duty during the 1940 bombing.

A Sussex Sunset by Peter Longstaff-Tyrrell.

A collection of memories of RAF Pevensey and RAF Wartling by radar staff who served there during wartime and the Cold War period. Also contains location maps, some station history and technical information.

Searching in the Dark by Peggy Butler.

The setting for most of this book is at radar stations outside of Sussex. There is, however, an interesting section which covers the period when the author was posted to RAF Poling, during the station's period at the end of the war as the RAF School of Dramatic Art.

After the Blitz-Then and Now Vol 1. edited by Winston Ramsey.

There are many contributors to this book, including former Truleigh Hill and Poling radar operator Eric Munday. His excellent contribution includes sections on wartime Chain Home and Chain Home Low radars, and a detailed article describing RAF Poling with several photographs.

The above books are listed as having relevance to Sussex Radar stations. There are of course many other books that cover the wartime and Cold War radar operations in detail. Much information is available on web sites with some sites dedicated to individual stations. Possibly the best of these is the RAF Ventnor site compiled by Don Adams.

An absolute must for anyone interested in early radar stations is the massive web site of the organisation Subterranea Britannica. There is an incredible amount of detail relating to wartime sites with many photographs of remaining buildings. Their main interest however is underground sites, and the range of 1950s Cold War Radar stations has been very extensively covered. Beachy Head, Fairlight, Pevensey and Wartling are among the stations featured.

A visit to the RAF Air Defence Museum at Neatishead is also to be recommended. For a modest annual subscription, membership of the Friends of the RAF Air Defence Museum includes the receipt of a quarterly magazine, with many technical articles and reminiscences among the benefits.

Appendix 4. Technical Notes (CHEL) by Eric Ramm

The following notes are selected sections from a large amount of material supplied by Eric Ramm in relation to his time at Truleigh Hill as a Radar Mechanic. Eric reached the rank of Warrant Officer in a lengthy career, which had a very unusual beginning. Following completion of basic training he was posted directly to Truleigh Hill, completely by passing the usual trade training course. After 10 months at Truleigh he eventually reached a trade training course, not however in radar, but in his first choice of Ground Wireless Mechanic and later Ground Wireless Fitter.

‘On the second day I was told where to get the bus to the technical site and met up with Sgt. Pearce who was the technical boss of the Rotor Radar. I would be part of his workforce. Into the compound, through the security gates, at this point the gigantic radar scanner could be seen rotating on its steel structure. We filed into the small bungalow-like building which was in fact the guardroom. Our identity was checked and we were clocked through the turnstile then down steps to a long sloping concrete tunnel very much like a road underpass, at the end of which were large air lock doors. Passing through these doors was the operational environment, fully air conditioned and immaculately clean. The radar equipment racks and PPI consoles were possibly of very advanced technology at that time, and all very new.

I worked with the Radar Mechanics and Fitters normally based in the Radar Workshop. I think as mechanics we worked alternate mornings and afternoons. The morning shift would start with us being transported up to the technical site by 3 ton truck in advance of the operators who had the comparative luxury of RAF coach travel. On arrival we would split into two teams. One team would be assigned ‘down the hole’ to run up the underground equipment with the main job being to set up the Plan Position Indicator (PPI) consoles.

The other team would be assigned to running up the Radar Head (aerial). The Radar Head had to be set up and running before the consoles could be fully set up. The procedure was for one man to climb up to the Radar Scanner cabin. The other would enter the square brick building under the Scanner gantry. This housed the Amplidyne, a large mains-driven electric motor coupled to a generator and the start and control panel. On pressing and holding the red start button, the generator came to life with a distinctive whine and increasing pitch. Once the Amplidyne was running attention was given to running up the equipment in the Radar Scanner cabin. The cabin had two access doors to separate and unconnected sections of the cabin. Access from one end to the other was via an outside platform. The left hand section contained the turning motors and IFF equipment. The right hand section contained the Magnetron Transmitter and its associated equipment and also the Radar receiver. The Radar Magnetron had to be run up from low power to its rated power by getting it to sing and then gradually increasing the voltage by means of the high voltage control wheel.

This procedure could not be rushed, especially on a cold day when turning up the voltage too quickly resulted in a trip and close down, whereupon the system had to be reset and the slow run up started again. Before leaving the cabin the safety switch for the head would be set to rotate, but the head would not rotate until we had returned to the Amplidyne building and set that switch to rotate. The head would then rotate at 7.5 rpm.

It was possible to be in the cabin when it was rotating and this was often necessary for servicing or testing, at the same time keeping the Radar fully operational. As the safety switches in both the cabin and the Amplidyne building both had to be set to rotate before the scanner would turn, safe entry and exit to and from the cabin was ensured. The strictly forbidden practice of radar cabin entry and exit while rotating was possible, but not by me!

Once the outside running up procedures were complete the team would join the other team down the hole and assist if necessary with the setting up of the PPI consoles by checking that trace centering, range markers, focus and brightness were all functioning correctly. The Cathode Ray Tubes (CRT) in these consoles were round with a long neck, not unlike those used in domestic television sets of that period. The radar CRTs were long persistence so that the targets remained on the PPI as an afterglow for about a minute. The trace originated from the centre, extending to the 360 degree outer ring and rotated in sympathy with the scanner.

The Anti Sea Clutter Rack situated in the Equipment Room merits a mention. The Truleigh Hill CHEL radar could also detect shipping movements. Unfortunately the radar could also see the waves and when the sea was rough it became a problem seeing the aircraft at low level. By the wonders of electronics, the Anti Sea Clutter equipment could be adjusted to minimise the unwanted returns from the waves.

The Radar Workshop was situated off the corridor containing the operations rooms and was long and narrow with a workbench at one end and a working capacity of around six mechanics or fitters. There was a further small workshop about a third of the way along the sloping tunnel. At the end of the main corridor, on the other side of the blast doors, was a large water cabinet used officially to cleanse the air below ground and unofficially by the airman in charge of the tea bar to keep the milk cool. This was in the area containing the stairs to the emergency exit. A possible third exit was a 40 feet long narrow vertical shaft with a fixed metal ladder. Its official purpose was not as an exit, but as a means of feeding a cable from a mobile radar down to the lower level should the main radar be out of action.

Associated with the radar operations was the VHF Ground to Air Wireless Communications system, consisting of two small buildings, one for VHF Receivers and one for VHF Transmitters. Both were identified by their characteristic 90ft wooden lattice mast and birdcage type aerials (aerial system 298). These two sites were located some distance apart on hills further along the track to Devils Dyke. The Land Rover was necessary to gain access to these sites along rough tracks and open fields. As my main interest had always been wireless, Sgt Pearce would often let me go along to the VHF sites to give me some experience of working with wireless equipment.'

Note: These notes are just a few extracts from the many pages produced by Eric Ramm. The full text has become part of a general archive of material relating to the station. A final footnote to the RAF involvement at the Technical site came with the addition to the contact list of former policemen Brian Kelly and Keith Collins. Brian revealed that he was guarding the site throughout 1959 whilst being accommodated at Preston Barracks. Keith's 20 month period of guarding, whilst billeted at his Brighton home, ended with his demob in October 1960.



There are very few pictures available of the later versions of the Type 14 aerial similar to the one used for the CHEL system at Truleigh. The photograph on page 73 is the one used in most items of research, but does not show the Scanner Cabin. The above picture is of a mobile unit at the Air Defence Radar Museum at Neatishead. The upper sections would be similar, if not identical to the Truleigh Hill aerial and show the cabin in which mechanics and fitters worked whilst the cabin, at times, was rotating along with the scanner
 (Eric Ramm)

Also in short supply are pictures of the Type 60 consoles used for Chain Home Extra Low and Centrimetric Early Warning Radars. The photograph here, also at Neatishead, is of a similar Type 64 console used in much greater numbers for the Ground Control Interception radar.
 (Eric Ramm)



Acknowledgements.

Most of the material for this book was gathered over a period of two and a half years from a wide variety of sources, although being involved in the Truleigh Hill operation myself for 15 months obviously helped. I have already acknowledged the major contributions by Bob Jenner and Howard Toon at the end of Chapter 9. There are many others to whom I would like to record my thanks.

On one of my visits to Lancing College to make the most of Howard Toon's offer to view and use his researches, I was very fortunate indeed to meet Jo Short. I hadn't envisaged that anyone else would be researching Truleigh Hill, but it formed a part of Jo's work for her Master of Arts degree course at the University of Leicester. The impressive overall title was: *The Remains Of a Military Landscape: The impact of Second World War Allied Military Activity on the Physical and Social Landscape of the Adur Valley, West Sussex*. Jo supplied me with some excellent aerial photographs of the radar site in 1945 and 1949. She also supplied considerable detail which made obtaining copies from a later period from the National Monument Record Centre easier than it might otherwise have been. It probably saved me a trip to Swindon! Radar researchers Dan Mackenzie and Jason Blackiston have also provided assistance.

Another valuable source of material came, surprisingly, from former work colleague John Grant. John's RAF experience was as an accounts clerk, some of it in the Suez Canal Zone. In recent years he has developed an interest in RAF Poling which is ongoing. Every so often a piece of interesting information arrives either by e-mail or through the letter-box, the most important being the two photos of the Poling site that accompany chapter 3, and a copy of the ARP report of the 1940 bombing raid on the station.

I was very pleased to make contact with Anne Stobbs who, with Colin Latham, has written several radar books. As both were actively involved in the wartime radar operation, their books are more readable than many others on the subject. Anne, (Now Mrs. Latham), and Colin were pleased to give me permission to use some items from *Radar: A Wartime Miracle* which is a good mix of technical detail and personal stories. Thanks are also due to Emma Faulkner of Jonathon Clowes Ltd., who arranged for permission to be granted to reproduce Arthur Power's story in Chapter 8 and generously agreed to waive the usual fee. Peter Longstaff-Tyrrell also gave permission for the use of two photographs from his book *A Sussex Sunset*.

Assistance has been received from the RAF Museum at Hendon, the RAF Radar Museum at Neatishead and the West Sussex Records Office at Chichester. In return, all three now have some of my material in their archives. The National Monument Record Centre gave approval for aerial photographs to be used. The staff at Shoreham and Southwick libraries have been very cooperative as has Lucy Walsh from Adur District Council. Lucy located the documents relating to the purchase and sale of the Stoney Lane site and arranged for me to make two visits to the council offices to view them. Material has been used from the *Evening Argus*, the *Shoreham Herald* and the *Worthing Gazette*.

Talbot Green arrived at RAF St.Margaret's from Beachy Head in 1956 just as I was making the journey in the opposite direction from St. Margaret's to Truleigh Hill. His knowledge of researching RAF radar stations at the National Archive made my first visit to Kew much easier than it would have been without his assistance. Also, as a prominent member of the Friends of the RAF Air Defence Radar Museum, he was able to direct me to back copies of their newsletter containing Truleigh Hill related items.

Research has taken me into all sorts of side avenues. Pat Terrett of the UB Hank Guitar Club smoothed the way for material relating to Jerry Lordan to be used and through him I had two interesting conversations with Jerry's wife Claudine.

Much of the information that I have on Edward Judd has come from the Britmovie web site, a very informative site for serious film buffs. I logged on regularly to follow the quest for the whereabouts of Edward Judd. I also became involved in a discussion to pin down the exact whereabouts of shots from the 1957 film *Hell Drivers*, that were filmed just north of the Truleigh Hill road on a day that I was on duty. This resulted in a couple of trips to photograph the locations which were needed for a re-release of the DVD to celebrate 50 years since the original appeared.



This just about covers most of the contributions to be acknowledged. A final big vote of thanks is due to the ex-Truleigh Hill personnel who responded magnificently to my request for photographs and memories. Many were happy to post valued original photos, over 50 years old, to someone that they had never seen in the hope that they would be copied and eventually sent back. I am most grateful for their assistance, and hope that all of the photos were received back safely. I enjoyed meeting many of them at the reunions in 2005 and 2008. Some of the photographs included domestic or technical site buildings in the background. These have proved to be extremely valuable, as possibly the only material from the time that will be available to future interested bodies.

In 1959 and 1960 I lived in Clarendon Road, within sight of the empty Stoney Lane camp. I could have taken as many pictures of the site as I had wished. I didn't know then, that I was going to be so heavily involved in the station's history nearly 50 years later. This type of research will become far more difficult. Memories will be harder to obtain as the very youngest to have served at Truleigh Hill will have just entered their seventies. The last National Serviceman to leave the RAF did so in January 1963. All survivors from those called up for National Service in the thirteen-year period between 1947 and 1960 must now be either drawing their state pension or be extremely close to it.

From the onset, it was appreciated that personal wartime memories were going to be hard to obtain, as numbers sadly are getting fewer. It has therefore been a great pleasure to have received considerable assistance from ten men and women with wartime Truleigh Hill experience. Some have been visited and some have provided information by telephone. Others have supplied written memories, mostly in quite substantial detail. By blending these memories with the official station reports from the National Archive, it is hoped that an interesting account of wartime life on Truleigh Hill has been achieved.

I have many more Truleigh Hill photographs and other items than those that appear in the book. Most can be viewed in the Marlipins Museum. Those with Truleigh Hill connections whose photos I have used for the book are: Ken Albert, Don Allwright, Joan Barnett, Steve Beamish, Don Beckley, Paul Bernini, John Buggins, Graham Burgess, Les Burchell, Bill Burton, Roy Catling, Peter Cooper, Clive Costema, Thomas Charlesworth, Jan Dinnage, John Disbery, Phillip Down, Paul Ellis, Bob Franklin, Jonathan Fryer, Vic Gibson, Gary Godfrey, Peter Harrild, Ken Harvey, David Horsman, Melvyn Horwood, Peter Janes, Pamela Jenkins, Brian Jones, Joan King, David Lattimore, Jim McLaughlin, Brian Mickels, Alan Millen, June Monaghan, Ken Morris, Brian Morris, Stan Mussell, Sally Norcliffe, John Pearl, Phil Phillips, Tim Power, Annette Quelch, Eric Ramm, Jack Scott, Alan Shaw, Sue Shelley, Ray Smart, Ian Smith, Jim Stiff, Len Tarplee, Ray Towning, Patricia Vale, Jim Ward, Vernon Warwick, John Webb, Mike Wheeler, Derek Wilkinson and Sheila Wilson.

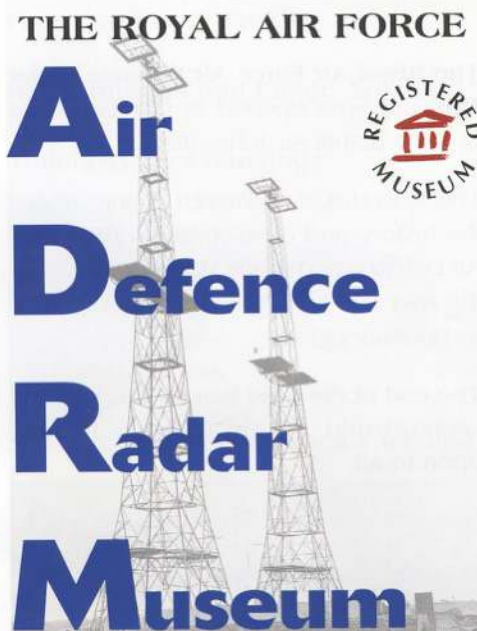

Production of this book has been a family enterprise. Without the technical back-up, editing services and considerable production assistance from members of the family, it might never have been more than just a good idea.




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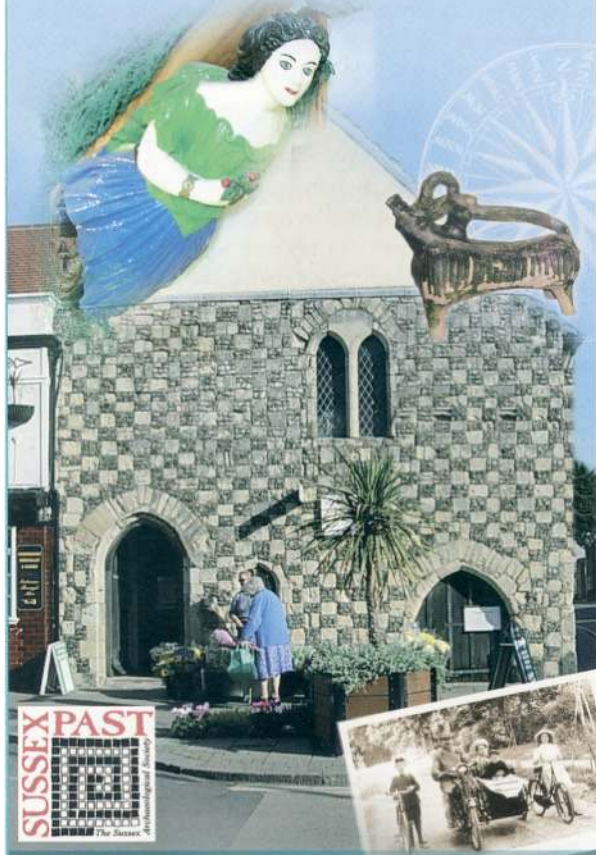

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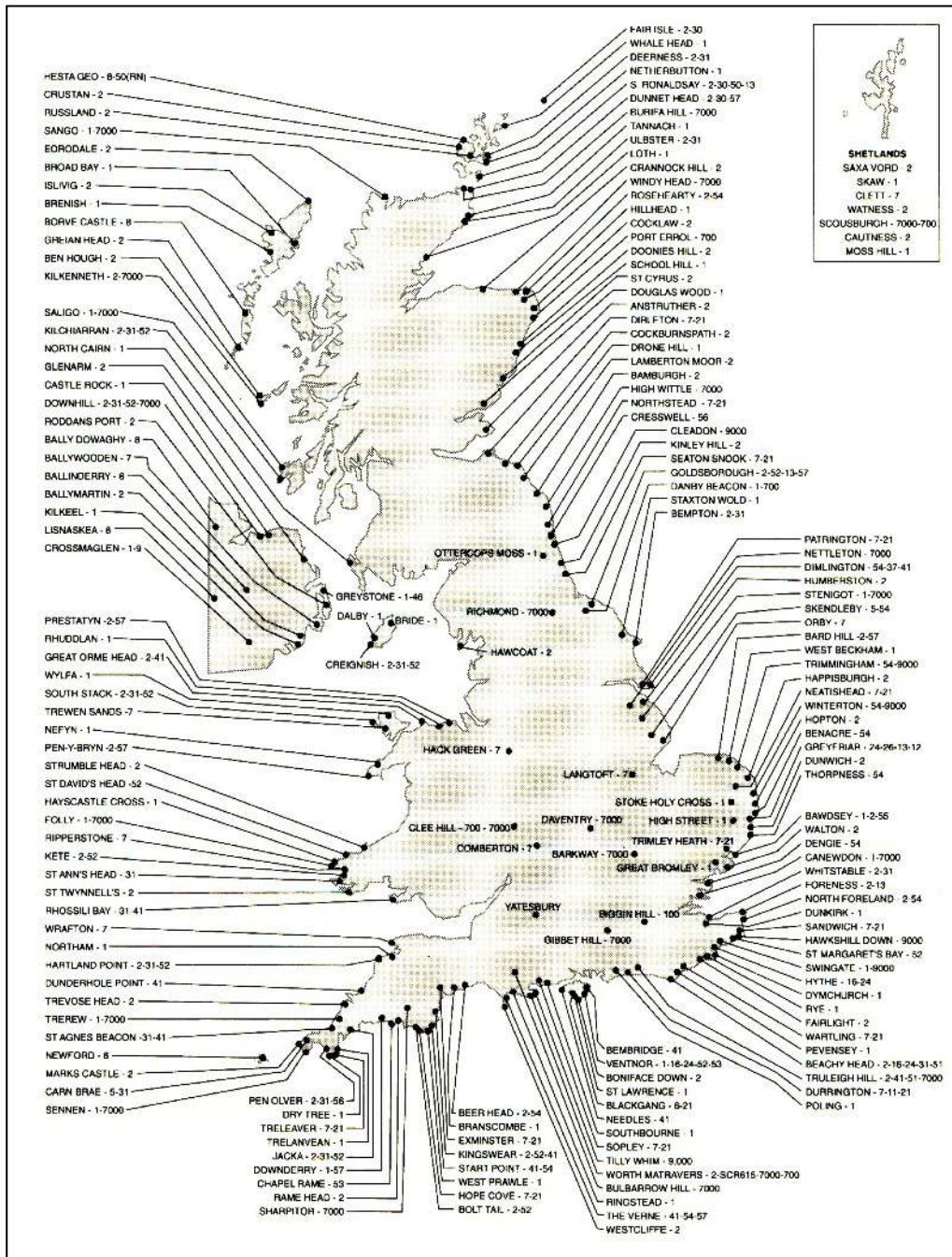
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The above map shows the extent of Britain's radar coverage during the Second World War. Some smaller stations and temporary sites have been omitted. The Numbers following the station name indicate the Air Ministry reference for the type of radar at each site. The Truleigh references are: No.2 – Chain Home Low, Nos. 41 and 51 – Early versions of Chain Home Extra Low. No. 7000 – GEE Navigational Aid (Reprinted with permission from *Radar-A Wartime Miracle* by Colin Latham and Anne Stobbs)

Roy Taylor was called up for National Service in January 1956. After a very cold two months at West Kirby, he became a Radar Operator (CH) after a training course at RAF St. Margaret's. He was retained at that station to become one of the last operators at the notable Swingate wartime site. The officer in charge of his first watch was the very young Pilot Officer Joan Hopkins, later to make history as Commanding Officer at RAF Neatishead before retiring as an Air Commodore. A brief spell below ground on Type 80 followed, before retraining at RAF Barkway, to become an operator on the GEE navigational aid. On completion of the course he was posted to RAF Truleigh Hill, where he served the final 15 months of his service.

There is every possibility that publication of this book may result in requests for contact details of some of the former Truleigh Hill personnel that are featured. Those who are aware that their details are held can be assured that no information will be passed to a third party without prior permission.



Back cover: The 2007 picture of the Truleigh Hill technical site guardroom reveals recent renovations to the windows and brickwork. It also shows the base building for the 1950s Type 14 Mk 7 aerial still in place.

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