

Stamford in the Second World War

RAF Sites around Stamford

First established in the Stamford area as the Royal Flying Corps in 1916, the RAF underwent a major expansion locally during World War II. At the start of the war, all the airfields had grass runways but as heavier aircraft and American bombers arrived they were built or upgraded with concrete/asphalt runways.

1 North Witham 1943 - 1956 Allocated to the USAAF as Station 479 and used primarily for transport aircraft. At 21:30 hrs 5 June 1944, C-47s of the 9th TCC Pathfinder Group left here to drop the first American parachutists on the continent on D-Day.

2 Swinstead A night-time decoy airfield to deflect bombing from RAF Woolfox Lodge.

3 Swayfield A day-time (with dummy aircraft) and night-time decoy airfield for RAF Cottesmore, bombed several times.

4 Grimsthorpe
Used as a bombing range.

5 South Witham

An air ammunition park and Tallboy bomb store, it was responsible for supplying bombs, ammunition and oxygen to the flying stations.

6 Cottesmore 1938 - 2012
Initially used mainly for training, with Hampden bomber aircraft; but training could include participating in bombing raids over France and Germany! In 1943 the USAAF took over and it became station 489, flying troop transport aircraft and towing Waco gliders used in 'Operation Overlord' and later 'Operation Market Garden'.

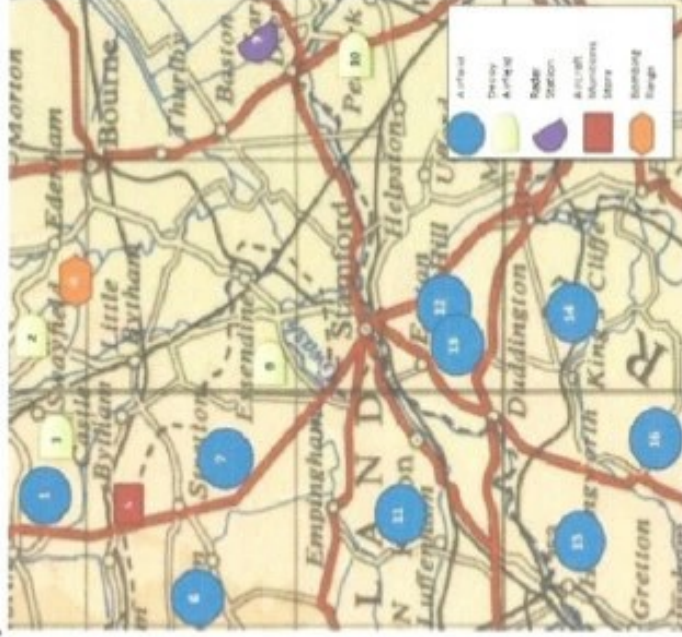
7 Woolfox Lodge 1940 - 1965 Opened as a relief Landing Ground for RAF Cottesmore, it subsequently became a satellite station to RAF North Luffenham. Stirling aircraft from the station took part in 'Operation Glimmer', the major deception operation flown by Bomber Command as part of the D-Day landings.

8 Pickworth Another night decoy airfield site for Woolfox Lodge.

9 Langtoft 1942 - 1958 Ground Control Intercept radar location.

10 Maxey A night-time decoy airfield to deflect enemy bombing from RAF Wittering; it was bombed several times.

11 North Luffenham 1940 - 1997
Opened as a basic flying training School with Tiger Moths, it was later used by Bomber Command as a heavy bomber base. In 1943 the runways were rebuilt and in 1944 was used to train Horsa glider pilots for D-Day.



North Witham airfield March 1944 (showing Standard Class A 3 Runway Layout)



Hampdens from 14 O.T.U. Cottesmore over Rutland.

Left

C-47s and Waco gliders at Cottesmore just prior to the D-Day parachute assault.



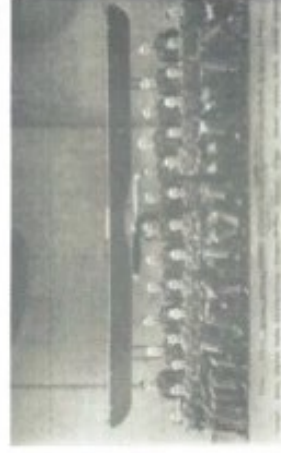
Left 218 Squadron Stirling as flown from Woolfox Lodge.



Horsa glider as used by 21 H.G.C.U. North Luffenham 1944.

Left

Flying Instructors with Tiger Moth aircraft. North Luffenham 1941. (W/C Douglas Allison)



Stamford Local History Society