



# RAF Wymeswold

Richard Knight

Part Six 1944

# RAF Wymeswold – Postwar Flying 1948 to 1970

(with a Second World War postscript)

Richard Knight

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This is the history of an aerodrome, not an official document. It has been drawn  
from memories and formal records and should give a reliable picture of what took  
place. Any discrepancies are my responsibility.  
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## **Abbreviations used for Royal Air Force ranks**

Plt Off	Pilot Officer
Fg Off	Flying Officer
Flt Lt	Flight Lieutenant
Sqn Ldr	Squadron Leader
Wg Cdr	Wing Commander
Gp Capt	Group Captain
A Cdr	Air Commodore

# Contents

This account of RAF Wymeswold is published as six free-to-download PDFs.

All the necessary links are at [www.hoap/who#raf](http://www.hoap/who#raf)

**Part One            1946 to 1954**

Farewell Dakotas; 504 Sqn. Spitfires to Meteors

**Part Two            1954 to 1955**

Rolls Royce test fleet and sonic bangs; 504 Sqn. Meteors;

RAFA Air Display; 56 Sqn Hunters

**Part Three         1956 to 1957**

The Wymeswold Wing (504 Sqn & 616 Sqn Meteors);

The Wattisham Wing (257 Sqn & 263 Sqn Hunters);

Battle of Britain 'At Home'

**Part Four         Memories from members of 504 Sqn**

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**Part Five         1958 to 1970**

Field Aircraft Services: civilian & military aircraft;

No. 2 Flying Training School; Provosts & Jet Provosts

**Part Six            1944**

Frederick Dixon's images: of accommodation, Wellingtons, Hampdens, Horsas and C47s

## Videos

There are several videos about RAF Wymeswold, four by Richard Knight:, and one by Cerrighedd:

[youtu.be/lto9rs86ZkY](https://youtu.be/lto9rs86ZkY)

[youtu.be/S6rN9nWrQpl](https://youtu.be/S6rN9nWrQpl)

[youtu.be/7yj9Qb4Qjgo](https://youtu.be/7yj9Qb4Qjgo)

[youtu.be/dkNnEV4QLwc](https://youtu.be/dkNnEV4QLwc)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTIMQkKvPKI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTIMQkKvPKI)

You can try copy-and-pasting these URLs into your browser. Or got to **[www.hoap/who#raf](http://www.hoap/who#raf)** where you will find all the links.

## **Part Six**

**1944**

# RAF Wymeswold

## Wartime 1944

### Wymeswold through the lens of Frederick Dixon

Frederick Stanley Dixon, standing sixth from the left in the photograph below, was stationed at RAF Wymeswold in 1944. The photographs that follow below were all taken by him and permission for their use here has kindly been granted by his granddaughter, Rosemary Booth.



Top:

*WAAAF Parade 1944.*

Below:

*The Airmen's Dining Hall  
1944.*





*The Camp Theatre.*

Aircraft Recognition Room



Aircraft Recognition Room –  
dark glasses worn prior to a  
night operation



*The Station Newsroom and Newsboard.*



*Above and left: The Unit Gen. Room.*



*'Nickel Operation'*

Above: *Briefing.*

Right and below: *Loading.*





Above: *Nickel operation* marshalling, probably on the perimeter track from Hangar 5.

Right: Stores outside hangar. (Hangar 1?)



Right: *Nickel Op.* 'Interrogation' (Debriefing).





*Loading a Horsa (glider):  
training for D-Day).*

*In the second photograph the  
Horsa is being loaded with  
bicycles.*

*Bottom: Hampden and Horsa  
taking off on Runway 26,  
crossing the junction with  
runway 14/32. Gorse Covert  
(bomb stores) in the  
background*





Top: *Hampden and Horsa in flight.*

Above: *Horsa Landing.*



Above: *Winter 1944.*



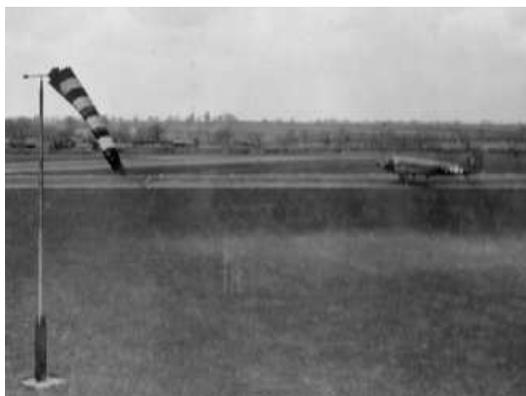
*Snow Clearing duties Winter 1944.*



*United States Army Air Force (USAAF) C47s exercise at Wymeswold 1944 with brackets visible under the fuselage from which panniers were slung on D-Day.*

*The bottom two photographs show the C47s taxiing for take off from runway 26.*





*USAAF C47 taking off on runway 26. Wellingtons in background on Dispersals 1 and 2.*



*Left and bottom: Wymeswold control tower May 1<sup>st</sup> 1944.*





*Wymeswold control tower evening of May 7<sup>th</sup> 1944.*

## Additional Histories

### 1943

#### **Crew members of Halifax LW282**

Halifax LW282 Squadron ID VR-Y took off from Middleton St George at approximately 1648 on a mission to Berlin on the night of December 29<sup>th</sup> 1943. Somewhere near the target mechanical problems were believed to have caused the outer port engine to lose power and then start a fire on the port wing spreading across to the inner engine and moving towards the fuselage. Orders were given to bail out. All the crew safely bailed out and became POWs. During the bail out or on his parachute landing Sgt S.J. Maloney was injured.

Interestingly Sgt Thompson and the crewmen below had had a similar problem when, on a raid on Mannheim, the same aircraft developed a glycol leak shortly after dropping its bomb load. On that occasion he managed to bring the aircraft back to the RAF base Ford in West Sussex, which was on the south coast of England.

Indeed the crew seems to have had more than just this near miss before the final disaster. During a mission on November 25<sup>th</sup> with only five minutes of fuel remaining they had to land at RAF Wymeswold, which is located in the centre of England, and still a long way from Middleton St George.

*Crew members of Halifax  
LW282  
(419squadronbewarethemoose.  
com/LW282.html)*



## Lancaster Navigator, W/0 John Lee

From [www.spitfiresocietyeastern.org.uk/form%2050.html#Lancaster%20Navigator](http://www.spitfiresocietyeastern.org.uk/form%2050.html#Lancaster%20Navigator)

The next part of John's odyssey took him to 28 OTU at RAF Wymeswold in Leicestershire:

When we got there they put us all in this big hanger: there were pilots, navigators and bomb-aimers, gunners and engineers, and the C.O. came along and said "Right, find yourselves a crew." Anyway, we're looking round and this chap comes up to me, he wasn't very tall, he was a Scotsman, and he says "Have you got a crew?" and I said "No, still looking," he said "Well, how do you feel about coming with me then?" so I said "Fine, but be prepared for me to lose you a few times won't you?" and he replied "Yes, well you be prepared for a few bumpy landings too!" I'll never forget that.

The pilot's name was 'Sandy' Taylor, from Inveraray. Wireless Operator Bob Knight was also from Scotland, and went on to become a close friend of John's. Aged nineteen, Mid-upper Gunner Roy Gilson coincidentally came from John's hometown of Castleford in Yorkshire. The Flight Engineer and the Bomb-aimer came from Glasgow and Canada respectively, and the Rear Gunner, a big, stocky man of around forty called 'Nobby' was from Sheffield.

He proved to be the best signing we ever made, because he was like a father, you know. He'd make sure that we all got up in time to go on parade, because I was never very good at getting up in the morning – I still aren't – that sort of thing. He was with us all the time. And so we were crewed-up then, that's when we started working together.

At Wymeswold, in Wellingtons. They were a beautiful plane to fly, the pilot loved them. When we came in to land after a trip I could still keep writing on my log, no bother. It was a bit different later on, but we used to get on well with the Wellingtons. I remember one trip I did, I was walking along somewhere near the runway there when an officer came up and said "What are you doing?", I said "Nothing, I've got nothing on today," he said "There's a crew just going off on a trip, go with them."



*A Wellington crew at a Wymeswold dispersal. (Credit unknown)*

Not best pleased about the idea, John nonetheless did as he was told, and the bomber was soon crossing the west coast, heading out to sea. It soon became clear that the Navigator was in trouble, as John asked:

"Where's your turning point then?" The Navigator replied "I don't know, there's some land over there," 'I said "Yes, that's Ireland, don't go there, give him (the Pilot) a reciprocal course," so we gave him a reciprocal course to turn around and come back. And in the meantime, as we were coming back, the pilot had trouble with one of the engines, and he said "The engine's overheating," or something, I thought "Oh, great, I'm a spare Bod here as well," there was a bit of superstition there, we didn't like flying with another crew. Anyway, he said "I'm going to have to feather this engine," and asked where was the nearest place to get down.

Well we were over Wales by this time and I've got my ears and eyes open and I'm watching the map with the Navigator, and we worked out a course to a 'drome. When we got there we called up,

but we couldn't get permission to land, there was no-one there.' By now the Wellington was losing altitude, and they decided to make their way to an American airbase just a little further on.

So we called up, and they said "OK, come on in Buddy." But we couldn't get the wheels down then because the engine that he'd feathered was the generator that operated the hydraulics on the wheels. So he said "Right, crash positions, I'm going to have to make a belly landing."

So everybody got down behind the bulkheads, and we came in and he said "Right, I'm landing now – brace yourselves," and next thing there was a big bump, dust and muck flying about all over the place, and eventually it stopped. We used to do 'Abandon Aircraft' drill, getting out of a bent (you know, a damaged plane); I bet we got out of that plane far quicker than we ever did in practice! "

With no injuries apart from a cut finger to the Rear-Gunner, this was an adventure that John could have done without, and he vowed never to fly with another crew again if he could help it, though this was not to be the last landing incident.