



RAF Madley Airfield

Part of the Nature Reserve at MESC is a section of the WW2 Madley Airfield, where in the early days of WW2, three full size runways and dozens of buildings were created on arable land adjacent to the villages of Madley and Kingstone in Herefordshire, to accommodate an RAF radio signals training school.

During construction 36 busloads of workers were brought to the site each day. When completed the No. 4 Radio Signals School, as it was known, included barrack huts, a NAAFI, a barber's shop, a tailor, shoemaker, a cinema, gymnasium, and a church annex.

In October of 1943 the RAF converted the grass covered airfield into a reinforced airstrip adding various types of aircraft hangers at the same time. The many aircraft flying out of RAF Madley during this time included Dominies, Lysanders, Tomahawks, Hurricanes and Mustangs.

Some of the airfield hangers are still in use today as part of the industrial site development that took place after the RAF closed the station in the 1950's.

At the end of the war the infamous Rudolph Hess, Hitler's deputy, was imprisoned locally for a short time before he was secretly flown from the airfield in 1946 to Nuremberg where he stood trial for his war crimes. He was consequently found guilty as charged and imprisoned for life.

This photograph shows a sculpture commissioned by MESC and is a representation of a De Havilland Dominie aircraft. This aircraft was flown during WW2 at RAF Madley and was known as the flying classroom due to its use in the training of RAF Wireless Operators.

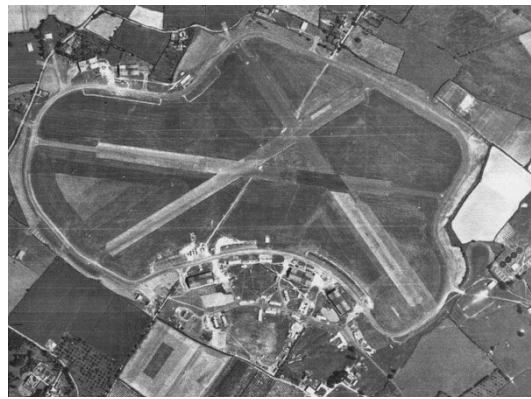


Figure 1. RAF Madley Airfield



Figure 2. Domini, The "Flying" Classroom

The sculpture was made by Dave Preston and is positioned to look out towards the Hangers and the Runway of RAF Madley. The artwork was unveiled at a large event in 2005 commemorating 50 years since the end of the war. At this event was an entire History marquee devoted to the retelling of stories of airfield life collected by MESC from veterans and people who worked there.

In 2018 MESC were approached by The Airfields of Britain Trust to place a memorial stone on the nature reserve. The stone was unveiled by Fiona Macklin on behalf of Bill Williams – an RAF veteran and great friend to MESC, who sadly died the year before.

With the stone positioned next to the sculpture and information board, it has become our tribute to the work of the service personnel who trained during WW2 at RAF Madley.

The Story of RAF Madley by Fiona Macklin

Book published by Logaston, 78 pages. Rectangular paperback - (N7183)

The site for RAF Madley Radio School was acquired at the end of 1940 in response to a need for training bases away from the threat of German bombers and entering operation whilst still under construction, it was one of the largest RAF bases in Britain. The main courses provided at the base were in Morse and Wireless operation, with in flight practice being carried out in Dominie and Proctor aircraft. But training covered a multitude of other areas too, such as surviving ditching at sea, jungle warfare, street fighting, how to escape if captured and much more besides.

This fascinating book tells of the sports and entertainments held on the base, its interaction with the local community and that of Hereford, of some of the personalities and pranks, of life at the base in general and its most infamous visitor, Rudolf Hess

Fiona Macklin was manager of Churchill's Cabinet War Rooms at the Imperial War Museum and became involved in the RAF Madley book project through Madley Environmental Study Centre.

Copies are now available from **MESC** priced at just **£6.00** plus **£2.50 P&P (uk)**

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Figure 3. RAF Radio Operators Badge