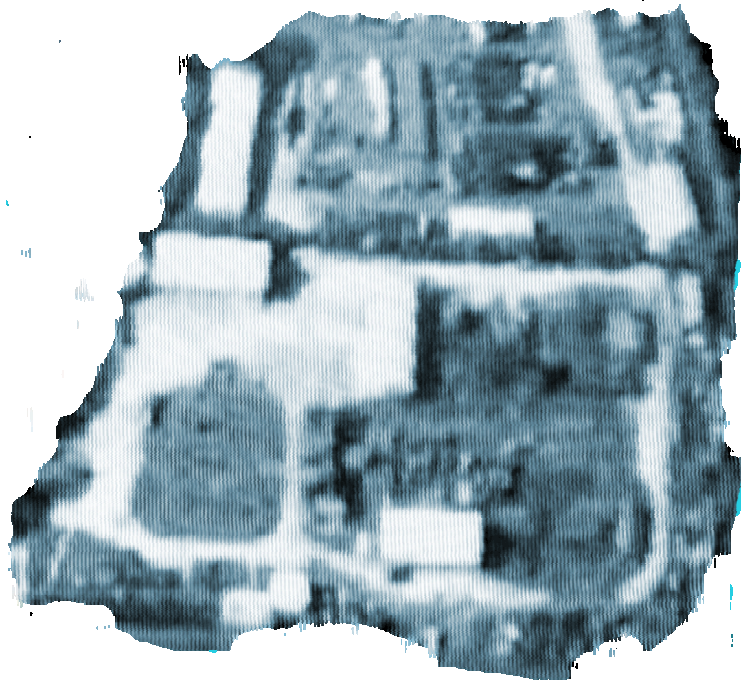


**The  
Air Ministry  
At Fakenham**

**Jim Baldwin**





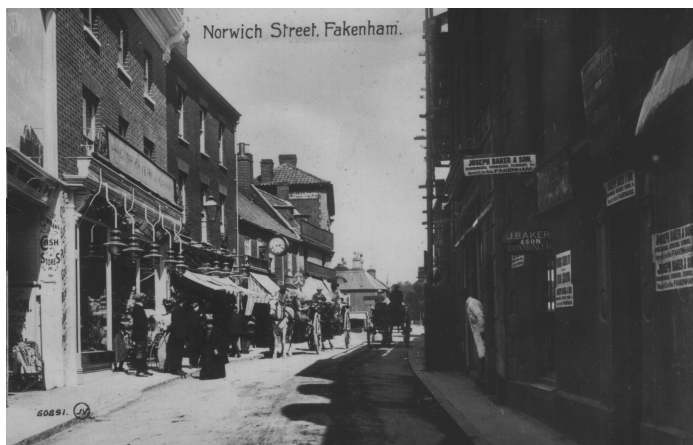
The airfield repair depot at Fakenham was situated to the north of the town on what was probably part of the nearby Dairy Farm. It was surrounded by a high security fence and was bordered on two sides by an ancient sand quarry connected with a nearby brick yard. Because of this the entrance was on the only piece of flat ground by the narrow High Terrace Road which would have been a problem if an emergency required a lot of traffic there were times when a Queen Mary trailer was seen to visit the site, sine these were made for transporting aircraft or large pieces of them then it is a mystery what they were doing there.



The idea of works repair depots was put forward before the War they would be staffed by civilians ready to carry out repairs on aerodromes damaged by enemy action.

25 were sanctioned in 1939. Fakeham was the last one in May 1941 which was very late considering the number of aerodromes in the area!

To begin with the Fakeham depot consisted of one office above a shop in Norwich street until the new depot was constructed to the on 5.5 acres to the North of the town. It was close by the Secondary School and the Northern suburbs of the town which could have been a problem should there have been enemy action against the depot. Up to 60 civilians were employed at Fakeham including female clerks.



The first depot at Fakeham was in the office above the shop on the left with the lamps outside.

In 1946 the Fakenham depot was stood down and became a store with limited 'bricks and works' facilities employing 20 men.

In 1954 it became the Air Ministry Works Directorate responsible for all RAF establishments from Holbech range to Trimingham radar site and out into the middle of the County. It is interesting to note that many aerodromes were already closed such as North Creak. At one time there was a plan to convert this into a VHB base but nothing came of this. It is possible that it would have become what Sculthorpe became!

In October 1954 all the civilians at the depot were replaced by RAF personnel.

By the late 1950s the depot was once again in civilian hands and was under the control of an HQ in Newmarket but it was being wound down and finally closed in 1959.

In 1965 the District council built a housing estate on the site and agreed that a portion could be converted into a local dairy distribution depot. This idea was not well received. Because another estate had been built nearby by Wyman's the printers under the 'Dollars for bricks' Scheme where companies who earned Dollars in the post war years could get a licence to build houses for workers which they did in 1952.

In the 1980s the last evidence of the Air Ministry disappeared when the Milk depot closed and the land was absorbed by the St Peters road housing estate.



The unpopular and noisy Milk Depot was the last remaining building of the Air Ministry depot. The access road was nothing to do with the original site but a later addition.



