

RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL

“From 1920 through 1985 to 2023”



A Tribute to the Changing Face of RAF Cranwell
Inspired by Gp Capt ret'd Clive Montellier OBE FCIPD FCMI RAF
of 86 IOT (Apr-Aug 85)

INTRODUCTION

This album is inspired by a response from Gp Capt ret'd Clive Montellier, once of 86 IOT, to an invitation to join the CHS Community Group on the RAF's Galaxy Alumni Network - <https://alumni.raf.mod.uk/>.

In his initial response, he offered to make copies of photos of his time whilst at the RAF College. Fully expecting just photos of him with his cohort under training, we naturally offered to place them in the album for the '1980s Entries', which we have now done.

However, we are delighted that Clive also donated photos of the station environment of 1985, including the restoration work being conducted on the iconic College Hall Officers' Mess (CHOM) and the impact of temporary arrangements on cadets whilst CHOM was out of use. Whilst we have a fair number of albums on the CHS website depicting station assets - notably 'The Lodge' and 'The Hangar Church' - most are of the College of pre-WWII years. In that context, the photos provided by Clive are unique and we saw an opportunity to create an album that at least attempts to track the changes to the RAF Cranwell estate during its 100 year history.

Thus, you will find in this album the photos of the College and the Station provided by Clive, as the centrepiece, bounded by some of the photos we possess of the Station from other eras. The album finishes with a video of the unveiling ceremony of the monument commemorating our Founder, Lord Trenchard, donated by the Cranwellian Association and its members on the centennial of the College.

If you would like to offer copies of your own photos to 'fill in the gaps', as it were, please be kind enough to forward them to Ian at ibms520@gmail.com.

**In its electronic form, this document contains underlined, hypertext links to additional material, including alternative source data and archived video/audio clips.
*[To open these links in a separate browser tab and thus not lose your place in this e-document, press control+click (Windows) or command+click (Apple Mac) on the underlined word or image]***

Formation of HMS Daedalus, Cranwell



The RFC had constructed its Central Flying School in 1912, on an elevated site of training gallops, about 1.5 mi east of Upavon village, near the edge of the Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire. The RFC site was unusual, in that it was bisected by a public highway, the A342 – with the airfield and hangars on the south side of the road, and all the administrative (and some technical) buildings and accommodation on the north side. Though fit for the RFC's purpose, it could not accommodate RNAS training, when the RNAS formed in 1914



The Admiralty was thus forced to seek alternative accommodation and selected Cranwell as it was close to existing air stations on the east coast and, being in the middle of nowhere, it was far away from possible extra curricular distractions.

In keeping with RN tradition, personnel posted to a shore base had to be borne on the books of a naval vessel. In the case of Cranwell staff, they were borne on a renamed Medway hulk - HMS Daedalus - a depot ship for RN personnel serving ashore on Britain's east coast.

Under the command of Cdre Geoffrey Paine, the RNAS students at Cranwell effectively became part of the ship's company of HMS Daedalus



Cranwell Lodge Farm was commandeered from Mr Usher Banks for the Admiralty by CPO Whitlock on 23 November 1915. Accommodation for the men comprised three cottages and the outbuildings. Cranwell Avenue was, at that time, a cart track.

The Lodge was used as the Commandant's accommodation and also the Officer's Mess, or Wardroom in RN parlance, until early 1916 when the Mess building was completed.

With the infrastructure completed, the RNAS Central Training Establishment formed on 1 April 1916 and, in late 1916, RNAS Cranwell was fully established, equipped and operational.



The (Commandant's) Lodge

Extracts taken from the CHS album held at
[https://www.cranwellian-ian.com/library-navigation/ewExternalFiles/The Lodge v0.3 \(NXPowerLite Copy\).pdf](https://www.cranwellian-ian.com/library-navigation/ewExternalFiles/The Lodge v0.3 (NXPowerLite Copy).pdf)



THE LODGE Cranwell

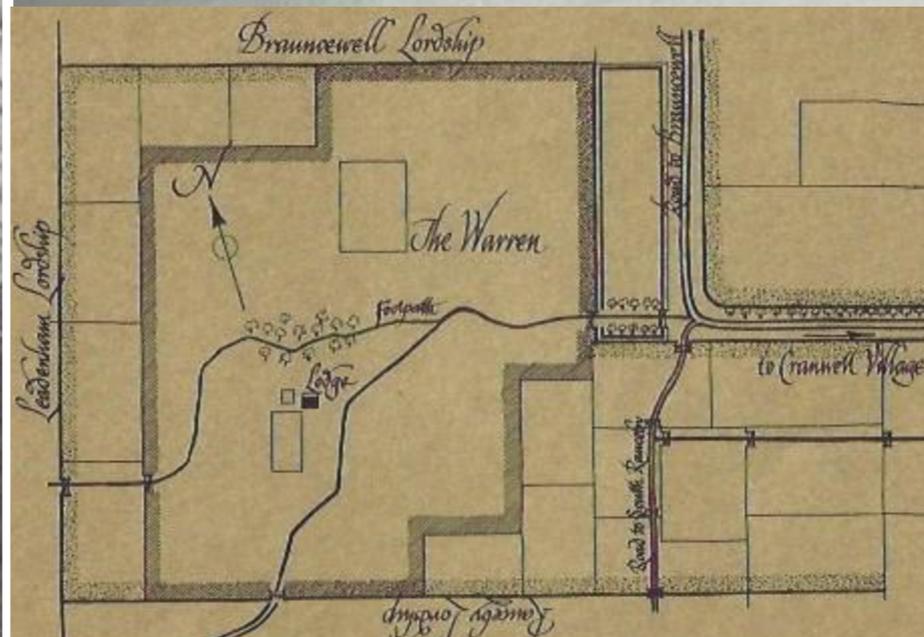
For many years now, the Lodge has been the official residence of the Commandant of the Royal Air Force College. The building, in varying forms, has a long history and, for what it is possible to find out from local records, the more interesting aspects are given in the following brief summary.

The HEATH CRANWELL circa 1807

Legend

-  Land belonging to Sir J. Thorold Bart including pasture and arable land
-  Land belonging to St John's College Cambridge
-  Land belonging to Sir J. Thorold referred to as 'warren'

From a map drawn up for Sir J. Thorold included in the Cranwell estate records



Gamekeeper's Lodge

Joseph Aldgate C 1736

Farmhouse

Joseph Long C 1807
 William Lamb C 1831
 Henry West Foster C 1863
 Charles Edward Robinson C 1876
 Thomas Thorlby C 1892
 William Usher Banks C 1913

Commandant's House

Commodore G M Paine	1916 - 1917
Commodore J Luce	1917 - 1918
Commodore R G Talbot	1918 - 1919
Air Commodore C A H Longcroft	1920 - 1923
Air Commodore A E Borton	1923 - 1926
*Air Commodore F C Halahan	1926 - 1929
*Air Commodore A M Longmore	1929 - 1933
*Air Commodore W G S Mitchell	1933 - 1934
*Air Commodore H M Cave-Brown-Cave	1934 - 1936
Air Vice Marshal J E A Baldwin	1936 - 1939
Air Vice Marshal R P Willock	1939 - 1940
Officers on RAF & WAAF Courses	1941 - 1945
Air Commodore R L R Atcherley	1946 - 1949
*Air Commodore G R Beamish	1949 - 1950
Air Commodore L F Sinclair	1950 - 1952
Air Commodore D F Spotswood	1958 - 1961
Air Commodore E D McK Nelson	1961 - 1963
Air Commodore M D Lyne	1963 - 1964
*Air Commodore I D N Lawson	1964 - 1967
Air Vice Marshal T N Stack	1967 - 1970
Air Vice Marshal F D Hughes	1970 - 1972
Air Vice Marshal R D Austen-Smith	1972 -

*Later Air Vice Marshal as Commandant

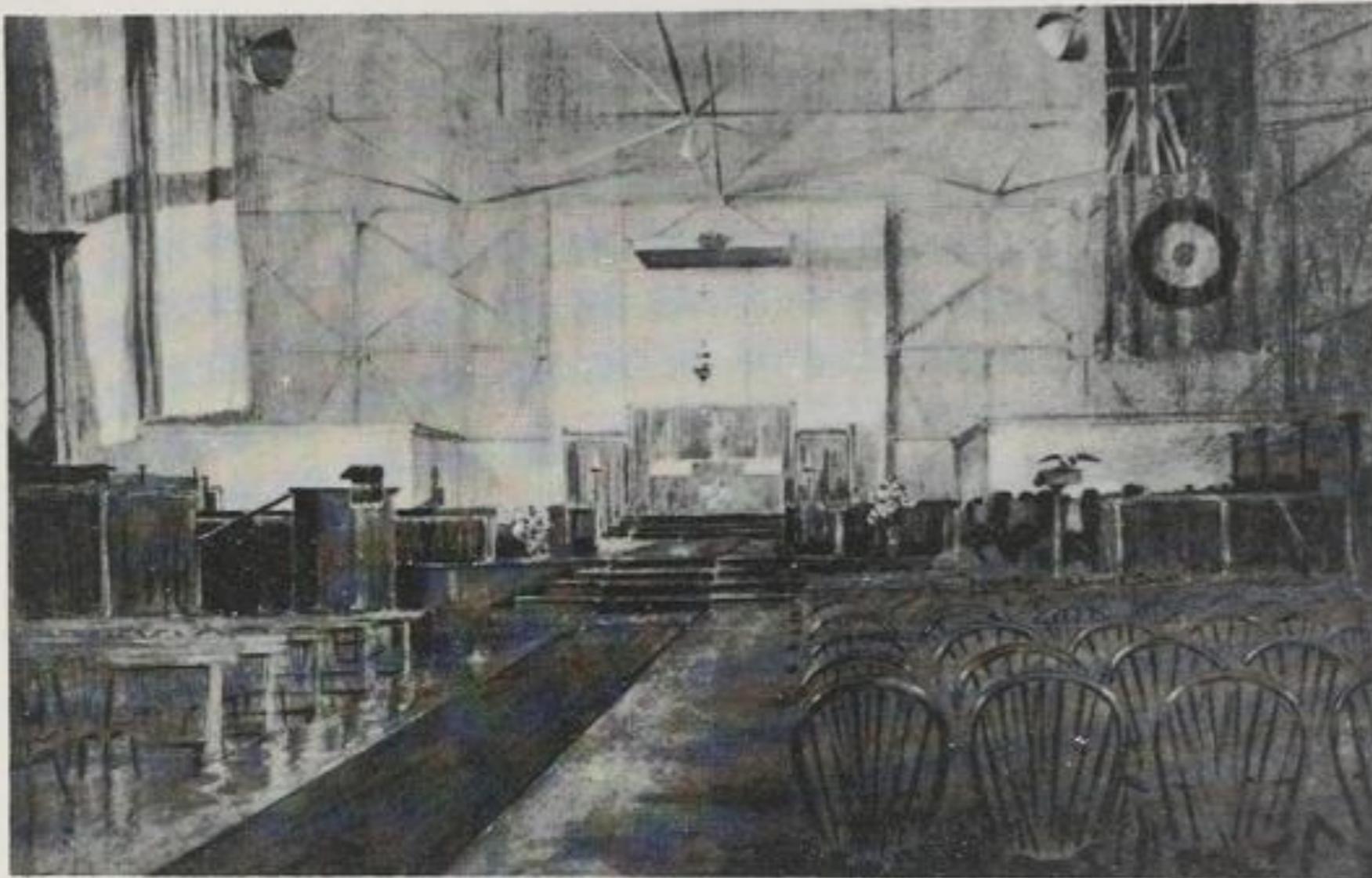


The Old Hangar Church - 1916 to 1960

Extracts taken from the CHS album held at

[https://www.cranwellian-ian.com/library-navigation/ewExternalFiles/The Old Hangar Church \(NXPowerLite Copy\).pdf](https://www.cranwellian-ian.com/library-navigation/ewExternalFiles/The%20Old%20Hangar%20Church%20(NXPowerLite%20Copy).pdf)

THE OLD HANGAR CHURCH



*From a Painting by
Alfred Walton Foster*

Foundation of the RAF College



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1. Realising Trenchard's vision for an RAF College on the lines of Sandhurst and Britannia, RAF Cranwell was officially formed on 1 November 1919 and opened for business on 5 February 1920.

2. The decision to replace the existing corrugated iron huts was made in 1922.

3. By 1929, plans had been drawn up, the final version of which produced the building which we see today. The Secretary of State for Air in Stanley Baldwin's Government, Lord Hoare, was highly supportive. The problem was that a general election (which Baldwin was expected to lose) was imminent and so Hoare pulled off what he described as "an act of bluff": Lady Maud Hoare - his wife - laid the foundation stone on 29/04/29 to the left of the entrance, in front of worthies that included Viscount and Lady Trenchard, AVM Longcroft (1st Commandant) and Sir James Grey West (Architect). The event was noted in the Statute Book and so, when the new Government was formed by Ramsay Macdonald, it seems that approval was assumed and building went ahead.

4. A tinned steel time capsule, held within the foundation stone, holds a record of all present and a special edition of the RAF Journal Vol IX No 1 with details of every cadet who passed through the College since its inception in Feb 1920.

5. Constructed in 1932, the RAF College design was based on St Pancras Station and the dining room on the long room at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The station canopy of the branch line terminus joining the main Cranwell station (currently the guard room) can still be seen from behind the kitchens.

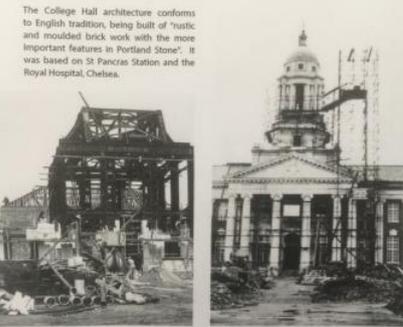
6. The new College was first used by cadets in 1933, but not formally opened until 11/10/34 by HRH Edward, Prince of Wales - the honorary Air Commodore in Chief of the Auxiliary Air Force.

7. The Foundation & Commemorative Stones can be seen either side of the front entrance.



5

Marshal of The RAF, Viscount Hugh Trenchard



The College Hall architecture conforms to English tradition, being built of "rustic and moulded brick work with the more important features in Portland Stone". It was based on St Pancras Station and the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.



All showing CHOM under construction c.1932

The laying of the foundation Stone, 1929

3



6



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7

4



6

7

Evolution of RAF Cranwell in 1920s



Cranwell Training Facilities 1920s



The Keeper of the Lighthouse



The cupola over the RAF College main hall houses the last operational aerial lighthouse in the UK, a legacy from days when RNAS aircraft operated between the east coast and Cranwell (HMS Daedalus).

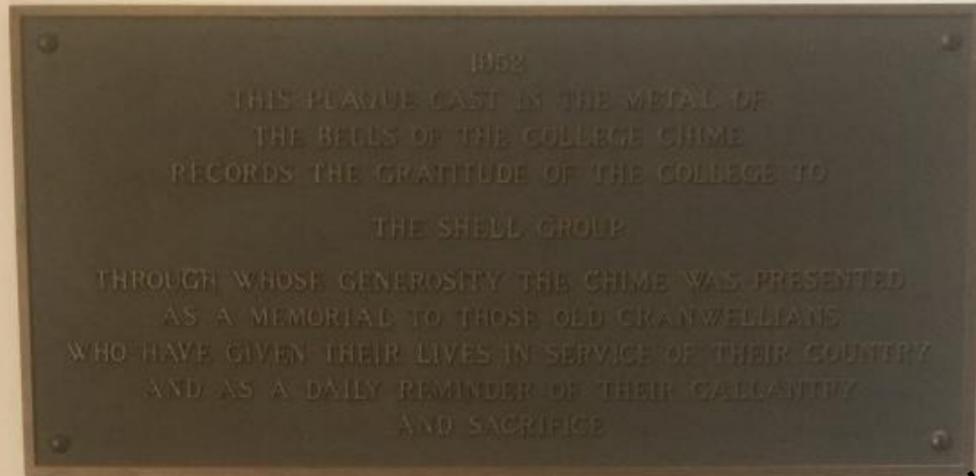
In the 1920s and 30s, ahead of radio navigation aids, a network of aerial lighthouses had been set up to guide aircraft at night. In the dome is a light, which, in the early days, could be seen as far as thirty miles away as the UK's most inland lighthouse. The modern light is not so powerful and scans at 15 rpm.

To this day, the Commandant of the College assumes the responsibilities as 'Keeper of the Lighthouse'.



AVM Suraya Marshall, our first female Commandant and Keeper of the Lighthouse

Bell Chimes donated by Shell

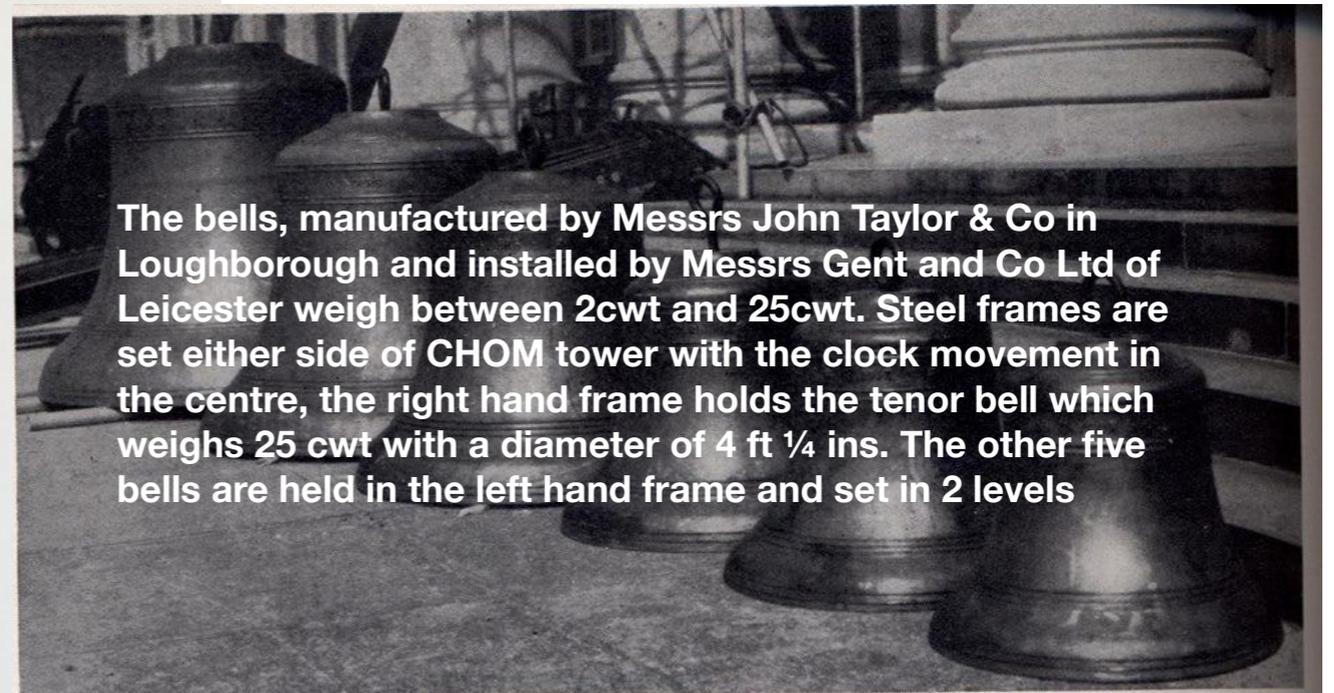


1952

**THIS PLAQUE CAST IN THE METAL OF
THE BELLS OF THE COLLEGE CHIME
RECORDS THE GRATITUDE OF THE COLLEGE TO**

THE SHELL GROUP

**THROUGH WHOSE GENEROSITY THE CHIME WAS PRESENTED
AS A MEMORIAL TO THOSE OLD CRANWELLIANS
WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES IN SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY
AND AS A DAILY REMINDER OF THEIR GALLANTRY
AND SACRIFICE**



The bells, manufactured by Messrs John Taylor & Co in Loughborough and installed by Messrs Gent and Co Ltd of Leicester weigh between 2cwt and 25cwt. Steel frames are set either side of CHOM tower with the clock movement in the centre, the right hand frame holds the tenor bell which weighs 25 cwt with a diameter of 4 ft ¼ ins. The other five bells are held in the left hand frame and set in 2 levels

Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader CBE DSO* DFC*
Flight Cadet 1928-30

Managing Director of Shell Aviation when the Shell Group presented the College Chime
31 July 1952

CHOM Under Restoration 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



CHOM East Wing 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



CHOM West Wing 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



The 'Orange' 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



RAF College Chapel, St Michael & All Angels 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



RAF College Main Gates 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



Station Gates (Opposite) 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



“Gate Guards” 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



Station Headquarters (SHQ) 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



SHQ “Dragging the Flag” 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



The Practice Parade Square 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



Homework when in Accommodation 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



The NAAFI 1985

Kindly Donated by Clive Montellier of 86 IOT



Today's Rotunda of College Hall



A unique feature of the College is its Rotunda. Aloft hang the standards of temporarily disbanded squadrons and the boards announcing previous cadet prizewinners

Squadron standards, which are permitted a maximum of 8 battle honours, are consecrated items that may be touched only by the ungloved hands of the monarch or clergy.

Standards of fully disbanded squadrons are held in the church or cathedral closest to the squadron's base.

Prize winners displayed include those of leadership trophies (e.g. Sword of Honour) and those for exceptional flying, engineering, supply and secretarial skills.

Our Founder Remembered

