



LCF Case Study

RAF Defford Heritage Centre

National Trust and Defford Airfield Heritage Group

LCF
funding
£86,500

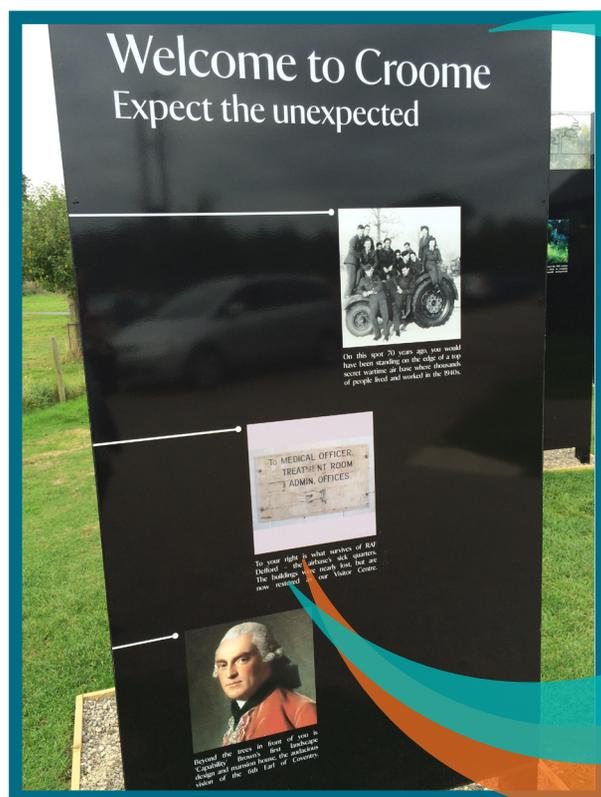
Background

In 1940 Croome Court was requisitioned by the Government from the Earl of Coventry to construct RAF Defford. The air station was central to the development of airborne radar, which was vital in helping the Allies win the war.

RAF Defford became the main station in Britain for the development of airborne radar during and after World War II. The airfield housed the Telecommunications Flying Unit (TFU), carrying out flight trials for the Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE), which had moved from Worth Matravers to Malvern in May 1942. The experiments and developments carried out at Defford were of great historic significance, for they played a vital part in helping the Allies to win the war, and paved the way for many electronic applications that we now take for granted.

The airfield closed in 1957, after it was decided the runways were too short for large jet bombers, and the flying unit made the short move to Pershore airfield, formerly used by the RAF for training. However, Defford then provided a base for radio astronomy, an activity that has continued to the present day.

'Capability' Brown re-modelled the landscape of Croome Park in the 18th century, and he was also responsible for much of the rebuilding and decoration of Croome Court. Since 1996, the National Trust has not only restored the landscape park and opened it to the public, but has also preserved and refurbished some of the surviving RAF buildings. Croome Court is open to the public, giving visitors an opportunity to view its long-term restoration.

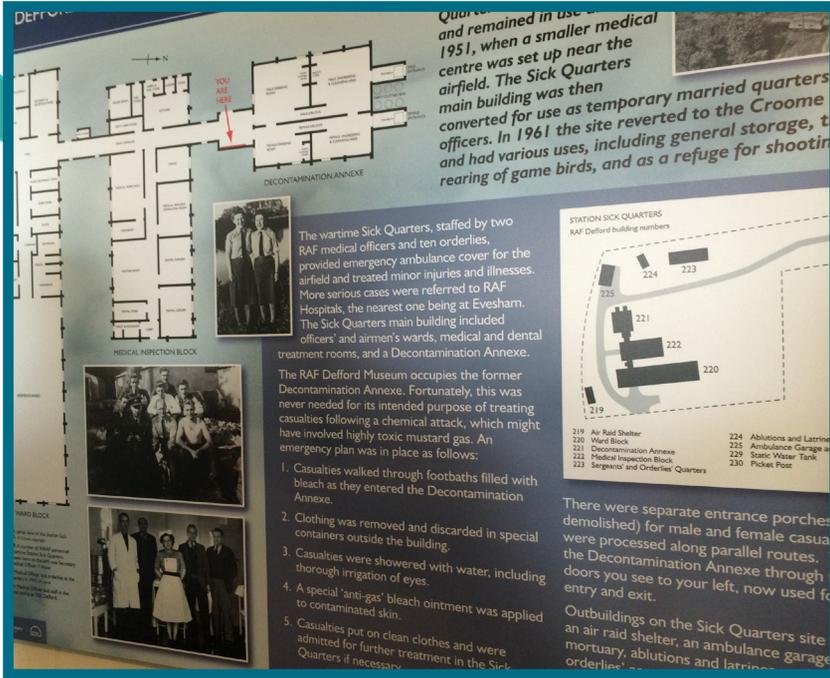


Objectives

This project planned to restore the 'decontamination annex', so that it could be used to house an exhibition telling the story of the work of RAF Defford in World War 2 and the early part of the Cold War to the local community.

The restoration aimed to be sympathetic to the environment in all aspects, including the preservation of historical integrity, energy conservation and sustainability as well as enhancing the visual environment.

The project has allowed this element of the story to be told in a new way.



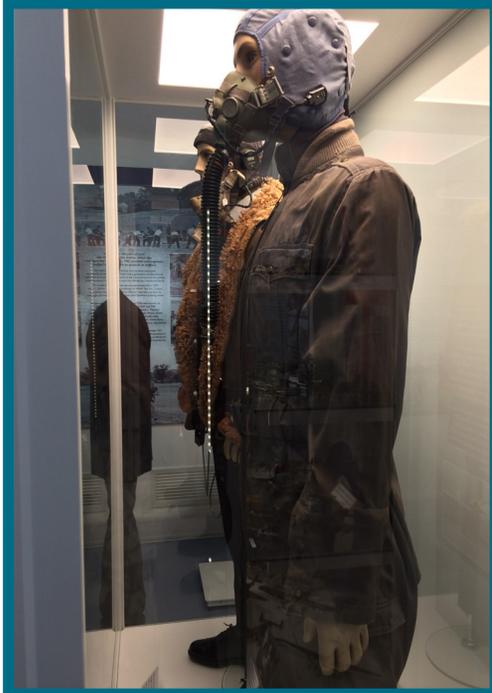
Outcomes

The Heritage Centre is a place for the local community to learn about the history of RAF Defford and the impact it had on the local area as well as its national importance.

The restored historic building houses an exhibition that will preserve the memory of and record the significant historic events which took place at Defford Airfield from 1942 to 1957.

The exhibition is very important for local people, especially young people, to learn about the local and national significance of the work that was carried out at RAF Defford. It is also a destination for the visitors to Croome Park to help them to discover the different layers of history at Croome.

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Prior to the development of the museum the story of the RAF heritage was told through the use of the Airmen's Ward at the National Trust restaurant and a small exhibition space. This project has allowed this element of the story to be told in a new way and explore the contribution that RAF Defford made to the advancements in airborne radar more fully.

Further information

Defford Airfield Heritage Group:
<http://deffordairfieldheritagegroup.wordpress.com/>

National Trust:
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/croome/things-to-see-and-do/raf-defford/

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Images courtesy of Helen McCarthy-Deeks.

