



Fifty years of Cranwell

A HISTORY OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE



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THE ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE

1920 – 1970

PUBLISHED BY

THE ROYAL AIR FORCE COLLEGE

CRANWELL



The Arms of the College, granted in 1929, are particularly appropriate both to the historical associations of Cranwell and to the role of the Royal Air Force College. Based on the arms of the de Cranewell family, discovered in the village church in the seventeenth century, they feature three cranes, emblematic of long-distance flight, with wings spread signifying the three original squadrons of the College. The ground of the shield is light blue and the royal status of the College is embodied in the three lions in red and gold. The crest is fittingly the figure of Daedalus, the mythical first aviator whose name was borne by the Royal Naval Air Station first located at Cranwell. Finally, the legend 'Superna Petimus' ('We seek things that are above'), which had long been the motto of the College, is attributed to the Reverend B. W. Keymer, one of the first College Chaplains.

Foreword

BY

MARSHAL OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

SIR DERMOT A. BOYLE

G.C.B., K.C.V.O., K.B.E., A.F.C.

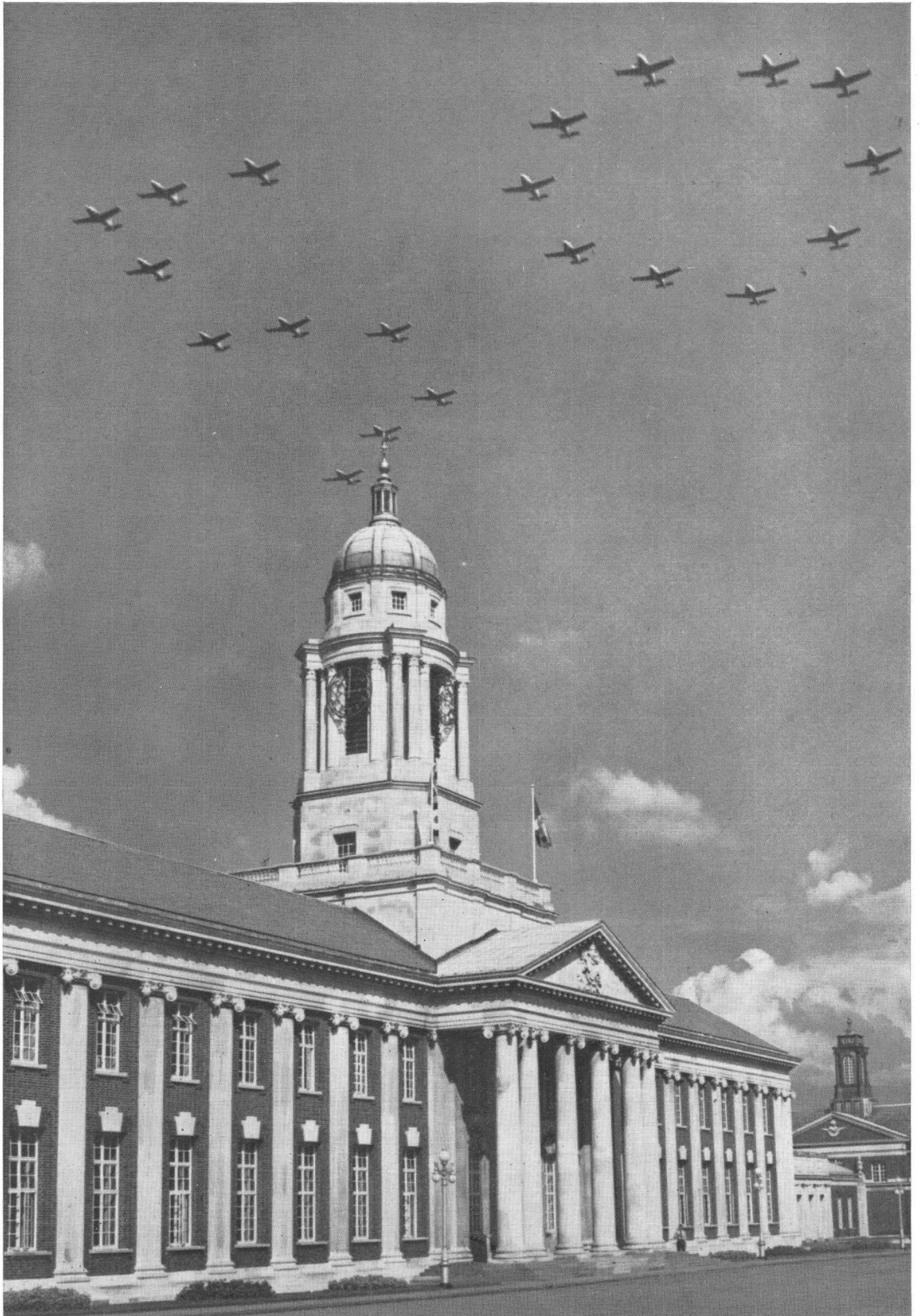
Many readers of this book will be as familiar with Cranwell as I am; to others the story it reveals may be quite new. I am pleased to have been given the opportunity of commending to all this History of the Royal Air Force College.

An anniversary provides a fitting opportunity to recall the origins of present traditions and to survey past accomplishments. This book attempts to record in words and pictures not only the story of a place but the contribution in terms of achievement and service of those who have lived and worked in that place.

No progressive institution can live on its past and it is therefore important that this Fiftieth Anniversary of the College should encourage us to look to the future. As the world's first air academy, Cranwell began as a pioneer and, if it is to continue to serve the country and the Royal Air Force as faithfully in the years to come as in those gone by, it must carry the same pioneering spirit into the next half-century. I am confident that it will.



Patron
Old Cranwellian Association





An early inspection by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Hugh Trenchard

The Early Years

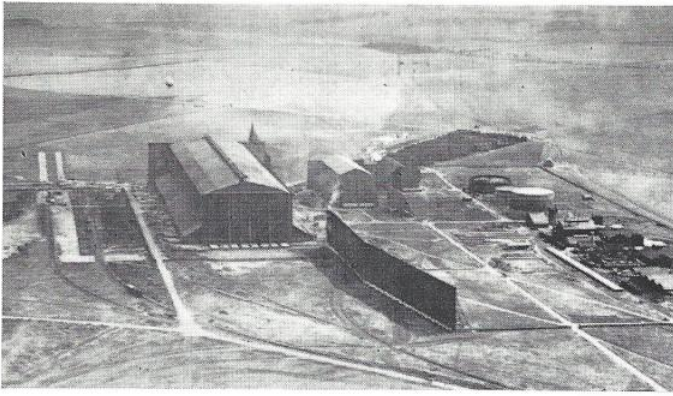
Notwithstanding the prodigious leap of Byard, the legendary horse, and a most undignified landing by two gentleman balloonists in a tree in 1811, Cranwell's first real association with aviation began during the First World War. In the autumn of 1915, the Royal Naval Air Service launched a scheme for the location of a single unit at which officers and ratings could be trained on aeroplanes, kite balloons and airships. Unsubstantiated tradition has it that a young Naval pilot was chosen at random and briefed to fly around until he found a piece of land that was both large enough and flat enough for the purpose: he flew over Cranwell and thought it quite admirable. By November 1915 the Admiralty had commandeered some 3,000 acres of farmland mainly from the Earl of Bristol's estate and in the following month there began the construction of the huts that were to house H.M.S. *Daedalus*, the name chosen for the new Naval school.

The name is significant. According to classical mythology, Daedalus and his son Icarus were the first men to fly—from

Crete to Cumae—using birds' wings attached to their arms with wax. As Daedalus was the teacher, the School was aptly named—although the fate of his pupil is best forgotten.

The importance of Cranwell was obvious from the beginning, a fact underlined by the first Royal visit in July 1916. So impressed must the King and Queen have been with what they saw that their second son, Albert, Duke of York (later King George VI), already a Naval officer, joined the Royal Naval Air Service at his father's wish, and in January 1918 was appointed to Cranwell to command No. 4 Squadron in the Boys' Wing. The Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps were incorporated into the Royal Air Force on 1 April 1918, and Major-General Sir Hugh Trenchard became the first Chief of the Air Staff. A few days later the King again visited Cranwell and recorded in his personal diary:

We motored to Cranwell which by now has become the largest aerodrome in the world . . . inspected the boys whom Bertie is

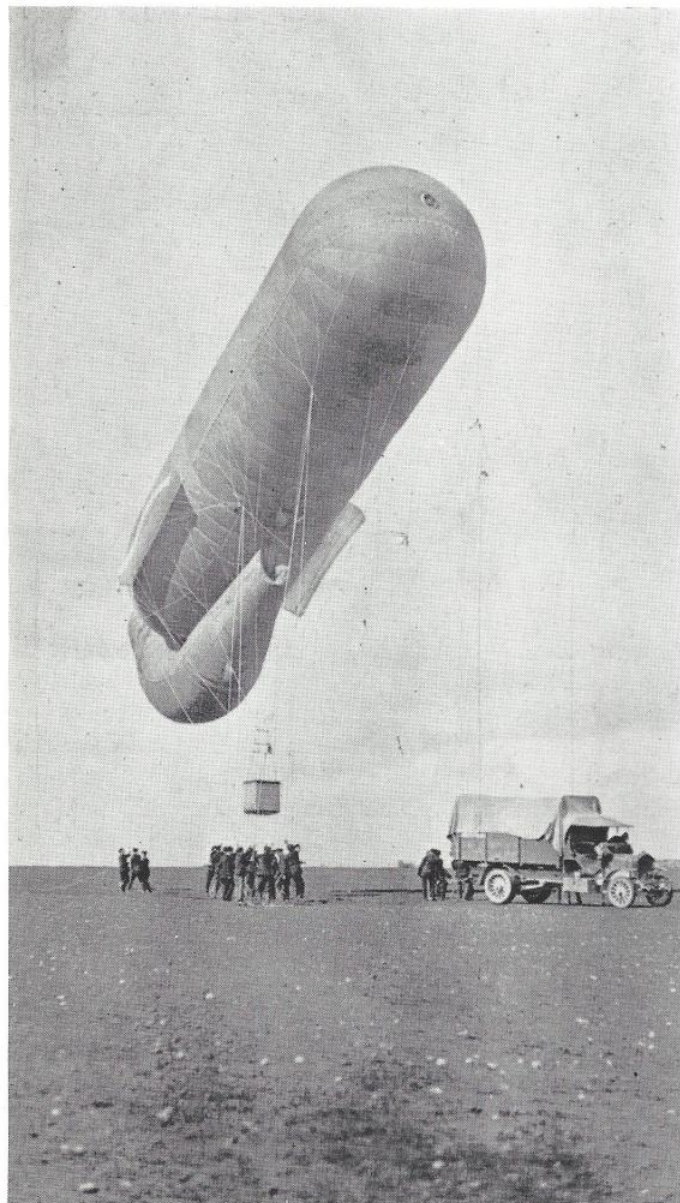


ABOVE: *The main airship sheds (on the site of the present officers' married quarters, beyond the North Airfield)*

ABOVE RIGHT: *1915: The Navy arrives*

RIGHT: *'... the first Royal Visit in July 1916' (p. 5)*

BELOW: *Handling a World War I observer's balloon*



in charge of, visited the sheds and saw the different types of machines. We also saw the classes at instruction and we saw the airships in their hangars. Unfortunately it was misty and foggy so we could not see any flying.

The origins of Cranwell and the early associations are recalled in present-day buildings such as Bristol, York and Daedalus Houses and in Airship and Lighter-than-Air roads.

With the formation of the Royal Air Force and the ending of the war a few months later, the future of Cranwell hung in the balance. However, the now famous Churchill-Trenchard Memorandum, submitted to Parliament in 1919, included proposals for the formation of a cadet college to help strengthen the calibre, quality and spirit of the new Service. Trenchard favoured the siting of this college at Cranwell because of its remoteness from large towns and the suitability of its flat surroundings for the inevitable forced landings. His wishes prevailed and the first course of the Royal Air Force Cadet College began at Cranwell on 5 February 1920, a date that has subsequently been celebrated annually as Founders' Day.

The first Commandant of the College was Air Commodore C. A. H. Longcroft—an ideal choice as he had gained early fame as an aviator by winning the Britannia Trophy in 1913 for a non-stop flight of 630 miles from Montrose to Farnborough. There were 52 students of whom 17 were ex-Naval cadets who formed the Senior Entry and were given a one-year course. The initial impressions of this first Entry were recorded by one of its members in the first volume of what was to become the College Journal:

During the first few parades by early morning moonlight we must have had the appearance of secret detachments of the Bolshevik army in training since at first, and for several weeks to come, we paraded in an unbelievable variety of mufti, intermingled with naval uniform. Such minor drawbacks as our un-airmanlike appearance did not, however, dampen our keenness to do our occasionally ludicrous best to assist those officers and instructors who began our training.



Flight Cadet Atcherley taking off in a Bristol Fighter, 1924

Training

In these early days the flight cadets lived and worked in unpretentious wooden huts to the south of the main road running through to Cranwell village. Many of these buildings were not finally demolished until 1953; some indeed survived until 1960. All at this time were trained as pilots and an air publication of the time summarised the requirements they should meet:

It is a fact that the sole conditions of successful flying are physical and mental fitness and the correct temperament . . . for the rest no finer career could be chosen for an alert and healthy boy. Individuality, resource, and rapid judgement are qualities which must find ready appreciation in such a Service.

Such sentiments would find many supporters today.

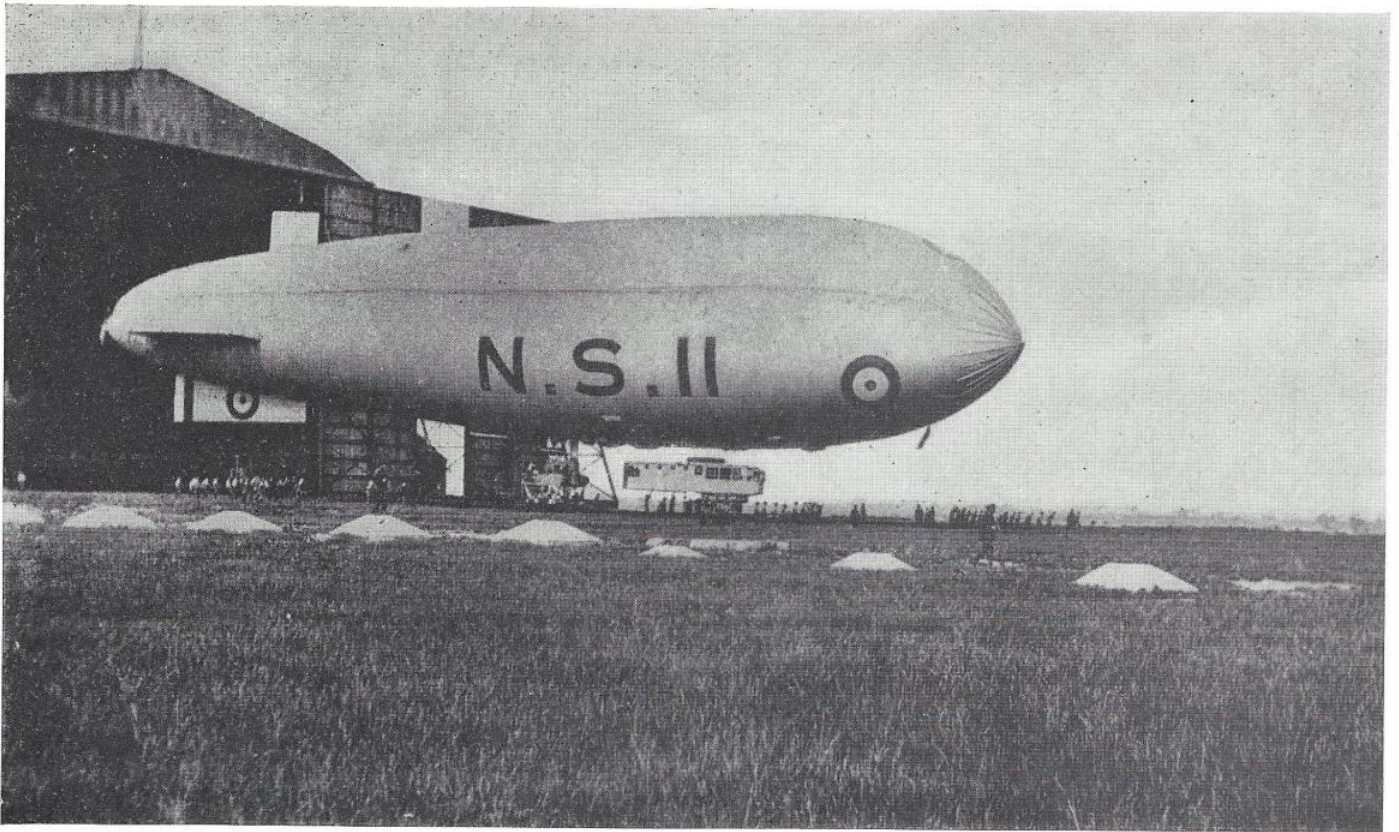
Flying began in the first term, and after some ten hours of dual instruction the flight cadet went solo. During the elementary stage of flying training the student would fly aircraft such as the Avro 504 K and N and the Tutor, and he was expected fully to have mastered this stage before passing on to operational types in his second year. Here he would fly, or see flying, the DH 9, the Sopwith Snipe, and the Vickers Vimy, and later the Siskin, the Bristol Fighter, the Armstrong Whitworth Atlas and the Hawker Hart. Depending on performance and aptitude, he would be recommended ultimately for single-seat

fighter, day bombing or Army co-operation roles. To a whole generation of flight cadets the sight, sound and smell of these old aircraft were as exhilarating as the faster and more sophisticated machines of today.

Like his modern counterpart, he also received officer training and academic instruction. The latter included courses in aeronautical science, engineering, history and English, and for these the College employed a modest staff of two professors and three lecturers. Successive Commandants' Annual Reports of this time state that flight cadets were not as adept at scientific subjects as they might have been and that more application in this sphere was necessary. At least one, however, was convinced of the importance of engineering in the Service and his contribution to an early Journal has the ring of prophecy:

So perhaps if we in later years reverse our traditional policy and make an officer trained in the R.A.F. Cadet College an Air, Sea and Land Commander-in-Chief, he may achieve victory at small cost if he remembers the true sequence—Flying First, Engineering Second—then the Rest.

The College was organised into two schools—the Flying School and the Ground School. The Flying School was divided into three flights at first, with a provision to increase



ABOVE: *A naval airship leaving its hangar during the First World War*



LEFT: *A Vickers FB 9 at Cranwell, 1917*

BELOW: *Sir Hugh Trenchard meeting members of the College staff, 1928*



these to six when the population was large enough. The Ground School was responsible for everything but the flying training. The students were organised into two squadrons (later into three and ultimately into four), each commanded by a Squadron Leader. As today, however, much of the running of the squadrons was in the hands of flight cadet under-officers and senior flight cadets. Each squadron was a complete unit in itself both for work and for leisure. As far as the latter was concerned, there were more than enough activities to choose from. By 1926 there were nineteen sports played regularly throughout the year, an established Beagle Pack, and, on a less physically energetic side, there were debating and musical societies and a model aeroplane club. These activities were added to each year.

One problem recognised very early on, however, was the difficulty of fitting such a wide range of training and other activities into a two-year course, whilst at the same time making the best possible use of good weather for flying training. Once again a quotation from the first Journal would find a very sympathetic response from the present-day flight cadet:

Our camp life may be summed up quite shortly: more opportunities for games than we have time to play; rather more work than we think we can do; the whole leaving us barely sufficient time to tie our ties for dinner. We are being trained to make the most of every minute and our surroundings offer about three times as many opportunities as the moments will hold.



ABOVE: 'In these early days the flight cadets lived and worked in unpretentious wooden huts.' (p. 7)

RIGHT: Instructor and pupil with an Avro 504K

BELOW: Four early flight cadets, 1923. The second from the left, the Earl of Bandon, ended a distinguished career in 1964 when he was Commander, Allied Air Forces, Central Europe. G. R. Beamish, right, became a well-known Irish rugby international, returned to the College as Commandant in 1949, and retired as C-in-C Technical Training Command in 1958

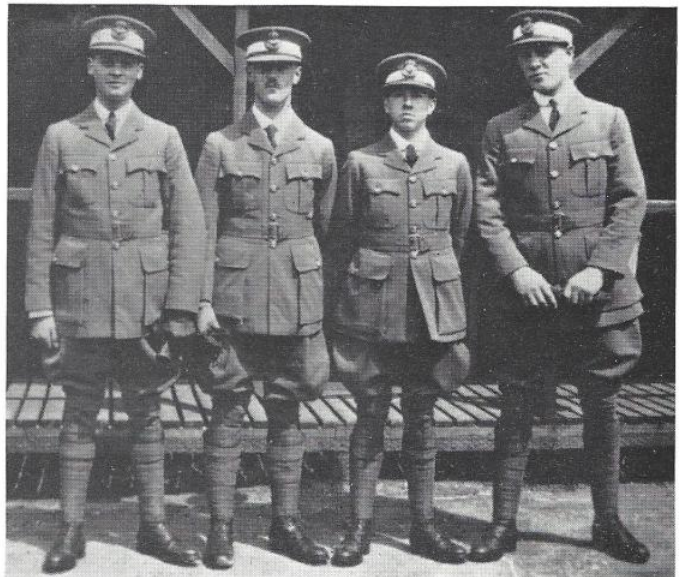


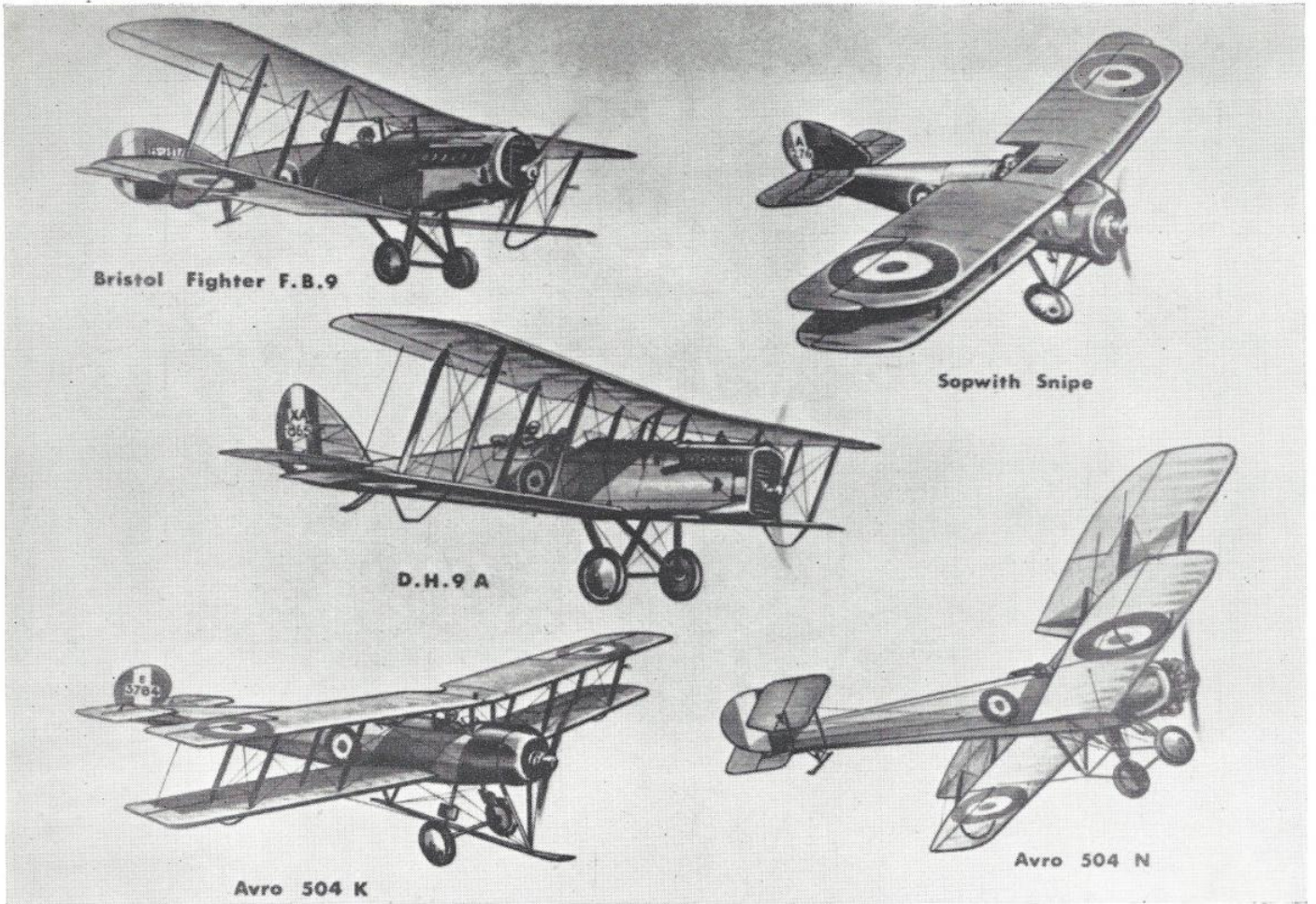
The stress was great but, though flying accidents were fairly frequent, they were generally only minor. Several trainees were called upon to make genuine forced landings, which they usually managed successfully. Accidents were normally attributed to a freak of fate and chalked up to experience. By 1929, 370 flight cadets had graduated with some 32,000 flying hours and there had been only seven fatalities.

Indeed, motor-cycling caused more accidents than flying: the ratio in 1923 was 14 to 1 in favour of the motor-cycle. Towards the end of the decade Flight Cadet Douglas Bader gained local notoriety for his many dangerous escapades on his old motor-cycle—occasionally accompanied on the same machine by several of his equally irrepressible contemporaries. The fever, moreover, was not confined to the flight cadets. 338171 Aircraftman Shaw, who thought nothing of spending his Wednesday afternoon on a London-and-back-before-tea trip, or of an evening run to Lincoln to collect food to cook in his billet, waxed eloquent on the matter:

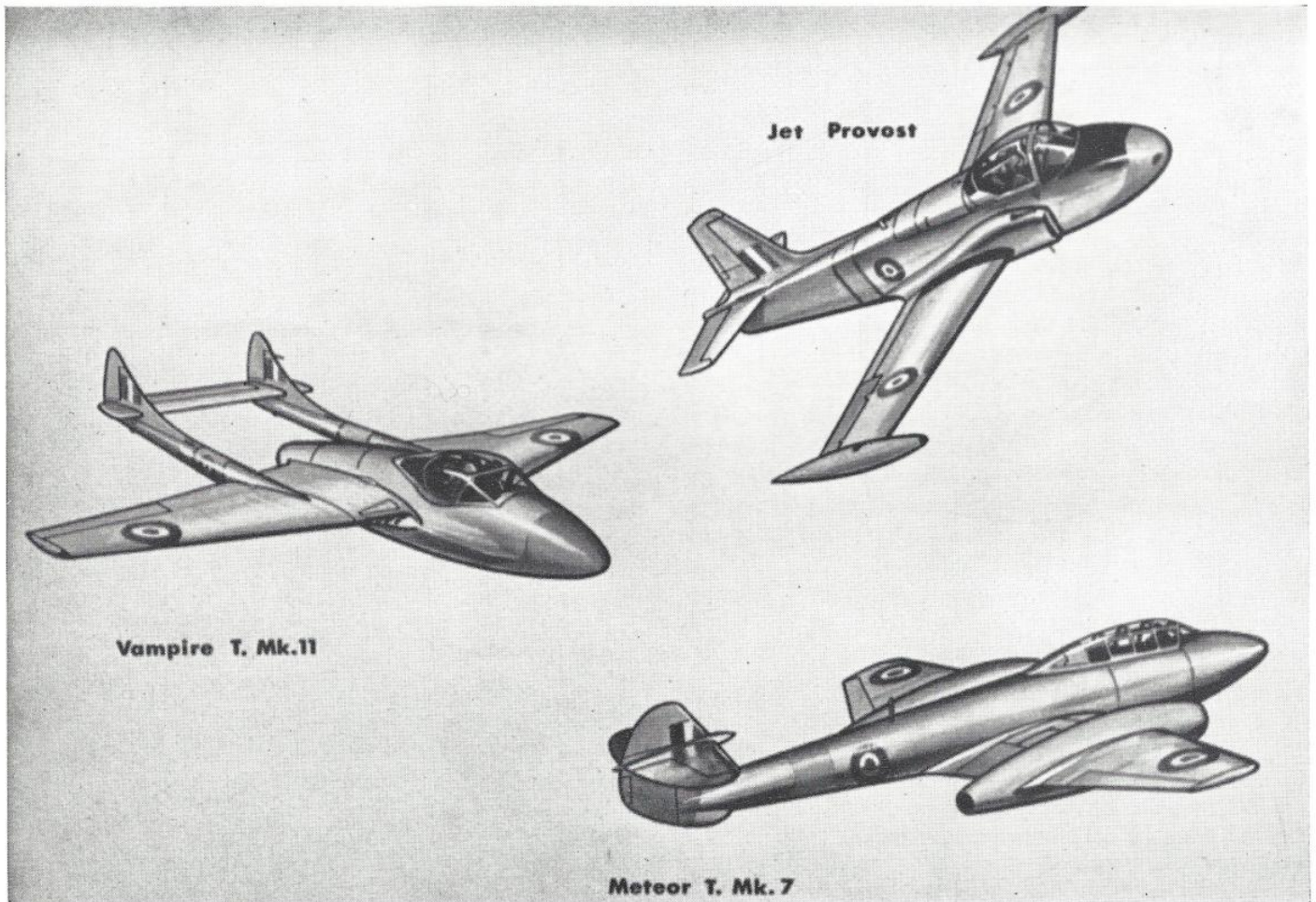
A skittish motor bike with a touch of blood in it is better than all the riding animals on earth, because of its logical extension of our faculties and the hint, the provocation to excess confirmed by its untiring smoothness.

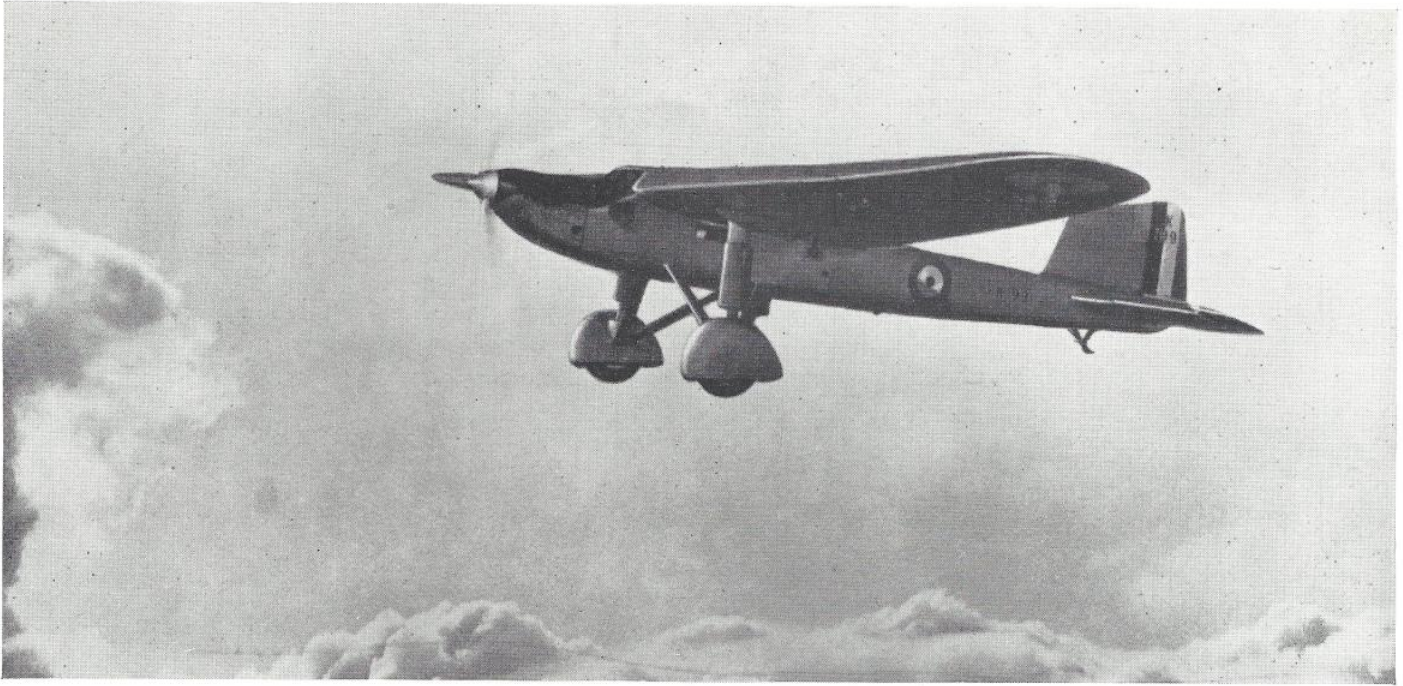
'Shaw' was the name adopted by Lt.-Col. T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), who at this time was seeking anonymity by serving in the ranks of the Royal Air Force and was currently employed on servicing the flight cadets' aircraft.





SOME OF THE TRAINING AIRCRAFT USED AT THE COLLEGE, 1920-1970





'Other flights included that of a Fairey Kestrel to Capetown in 1931 . . .' (p. 10)

Prophecy and Achievement

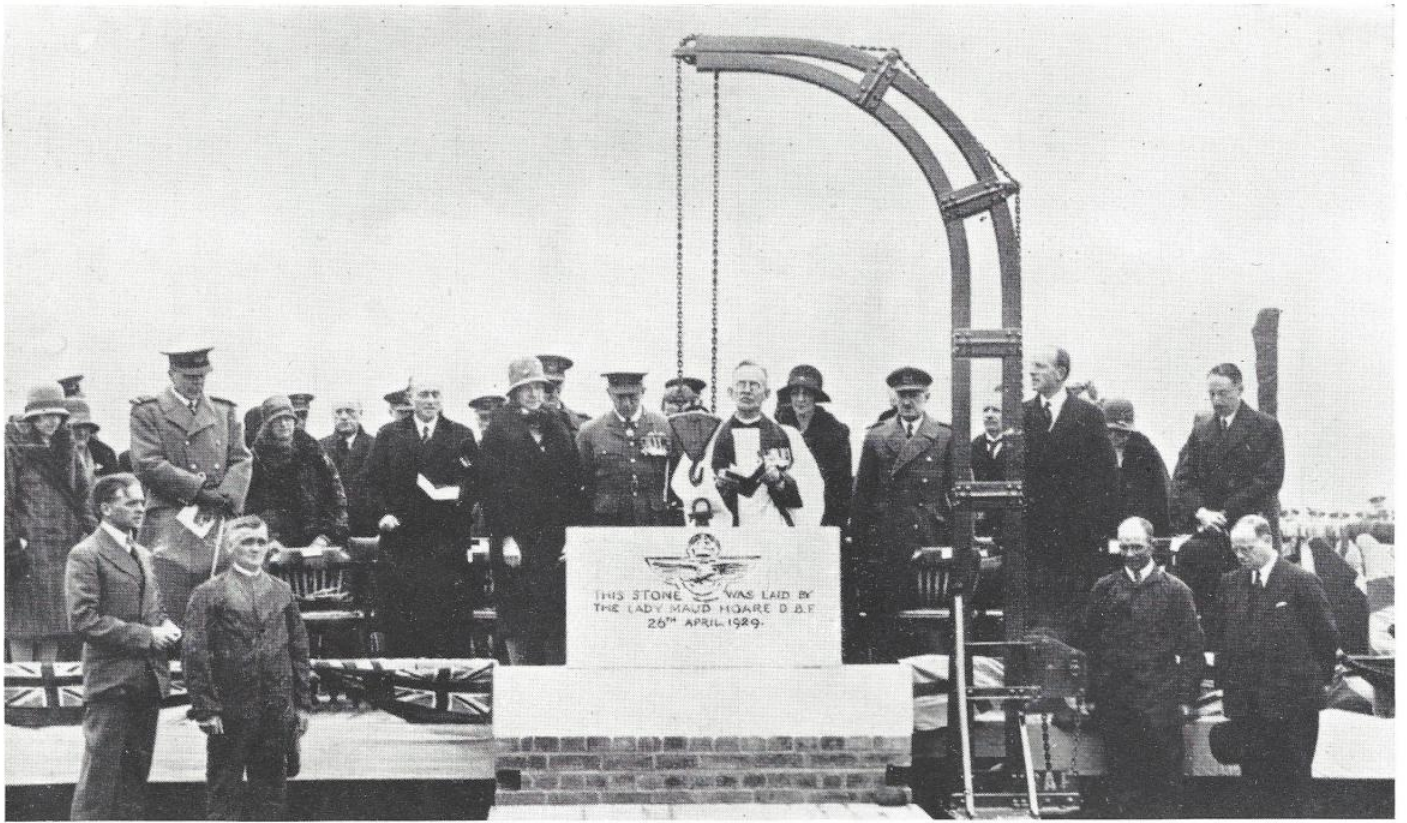
Six weeks after it opened, the new College received its first Royal visit when the Duke of York returned to his old unit and inspected the flight cadets. Cranwell was the first establishment devoted to training officers for permanent commissions in any air force and a great deal of interest was aroused in the College both at home and abroad. During the first term alone official visits were paid by representatives of Spain, Uruguay, Japan and Norway. 1920 culminated in a visit from the Secretary of State for Air, Winston Churchill. In a far-sighted speech, he said:

Science is expanding and one cannot compare the machines of today, like the Avro, with the machines of ten years ago. It seems absurd to remember that from ten to twelve years ago people used to lie on the ground to see if the wheels of an aeroplane lifted from it for four or five yards—in those days a great feat. Much has been done up to the present time but much remains to be done, as greater things lie before us in the future. We must press forward towards such problems as vertical flight, the substitution of some other form of propulsion for the air screw or propeller, some form of non-inflammable fuel from which engines will develop the utmost possible power.

One aspect of this vision started to become reality a few years later when, in 1928, a flight cadet by the name of Whittle submitted as the thesis required from all graduating students one entitled 'Future Developments in Aircraft Design'. This was the starting point of Sir Frank Whittle's pioneer work on jet propulsion that was to make him the first Old Cranwellian to receive a knighthood and the first to be elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society. Other Old Cranwel-

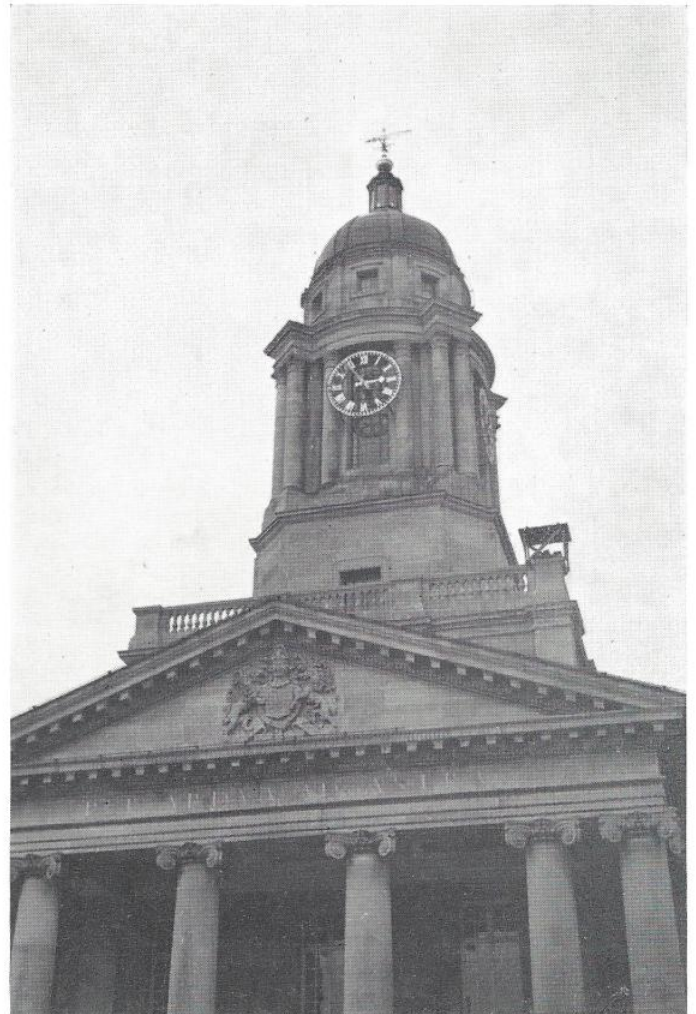
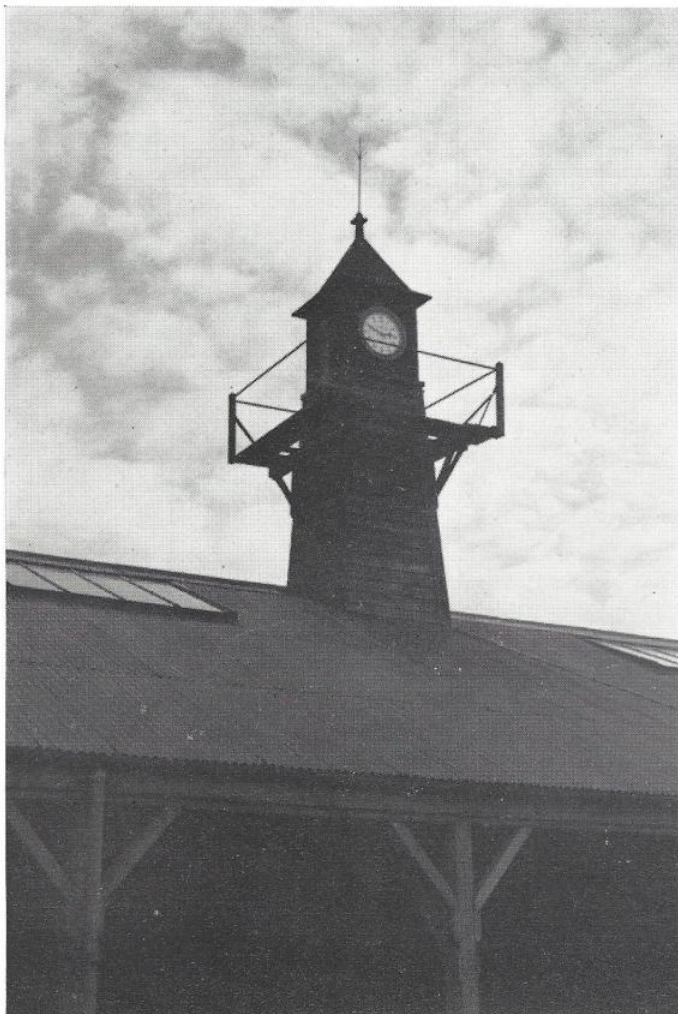
lians of this period who made their mark on aviation history were Flying Officer Waghorn, who won the Schneider Trophy in 1929, and Douglas Bader, whose early escapades on his motor-cycle perhaps presaged his later reputation as a great (albeit legless) fighter pilot and an irrepressible prisoner of war. On several occasions Trenchard is reputed to have asserted that the R.A.F. would come of age only when a Cranwell product became Chief of the Air Staff. On 1 January 1956, Air Chief Marshal Sir Dermot Boyle was able to visit Trenchard, shortly before the latter's death, and tell him that this had now been accomplished.

Cranwell was also closely associated with the historic long-distance flights which played so great a part in securing public interest in the R.A.F. as well as providing valuable operational experience. In May 1927, in an attempt to fly from the station to India, Flight Lieutenant C. R. Carr in a Hawker Horsley aircraft set up the world record for the longest non-stop flight. He failed to reach India and had to be rescued in the Persian Gulf, but he was airborne for 34 hours and 35 minutes—an incredible achievement. Two years later Squadron Leader Jones-Williams and Flight Lieutenant Jenkins achieved the goal by flying 4,130 miles from Cranwell to Karachi in 54 hours and 30 minutes. Other flights included that of a Fairey Kestrel to Capetown in 1931 and the first non-stop journey to West Africa in a Fairey Monoplane by Squadron Leader Gayford and Flight Lieutenant Nicholets in February 1933. The long-range Wellesleys kept up this tradition by setting up a new world record in 1938. To ensure maximum lift from the long grass runway at Cranwell a specially designed hump was constructed at the end of the aircraft's run.



'... and proceeded to a hayfield, where my wife duly laid the stone' (p. 13)

The old, and the new, clock towers. (Note the air raid siren in the 1942 photograph of the new tower)





The new College, seen through Sir Samuel Hoare's lime trees

The New College Building

As early as 1922 it had been decided that the old wartime Naval huts had served their purpose and that a new College more appropriate to the task should be planned. Sir Samuel Hoare (later Lord Templewood) was the Secretary of State for Air in Baldwin's first two governments and he gave the idea his whole-hearted support, but it proved extremely difficult to get both the money and the backing of the government for such a project. In 1929 Hoare did manage to get approval to obtain an architect's plan for the new College, though this seemed little reward for his untiring efforts. Time was running short, however, because a general election was due within a few weeks and it was very doubtful if any succeeding government would support the plan. There was clearly no time to organise the normal competition and so Hoare gave the task of designing the new College to the Ministry of Works. When the plans were received, Hoare was dismayed:

I found that with true bureaucratic conservatism they had been based on the pseudo-Gothic of St. Pancras Railway Station diversified by the influences of a Scottish hydro. I at once rejected a design that was unsuitable for the training College of a flying service.

Hoare took the architect, James West, to visit Wren's Royal Hospital in his own constituency of Chelsea, and the new design clearly reflected this influence. But all was not yet won.

Only the plans had been approved.

To make sure that the building proceeded whatever government might succeed Baldwin's, Trenchard and I arranged for an official laying of the foundation stone before the dissolution of Parliament. My wife was asked to perform the ceremony which was fixed for 26 April 1929. Accordingly, with the General Election hanging over us, we journeyed to Cranwell on a wet and windy day and proceeded to a hayfield, where my wife duly laid the stone. No expenditure had as yet been authorised for anything more than the plan. Ours, therefore, was frankly an act of bluff, but it was also an act of faith. And it was one of those acts of faith that was afterwards justified by works.

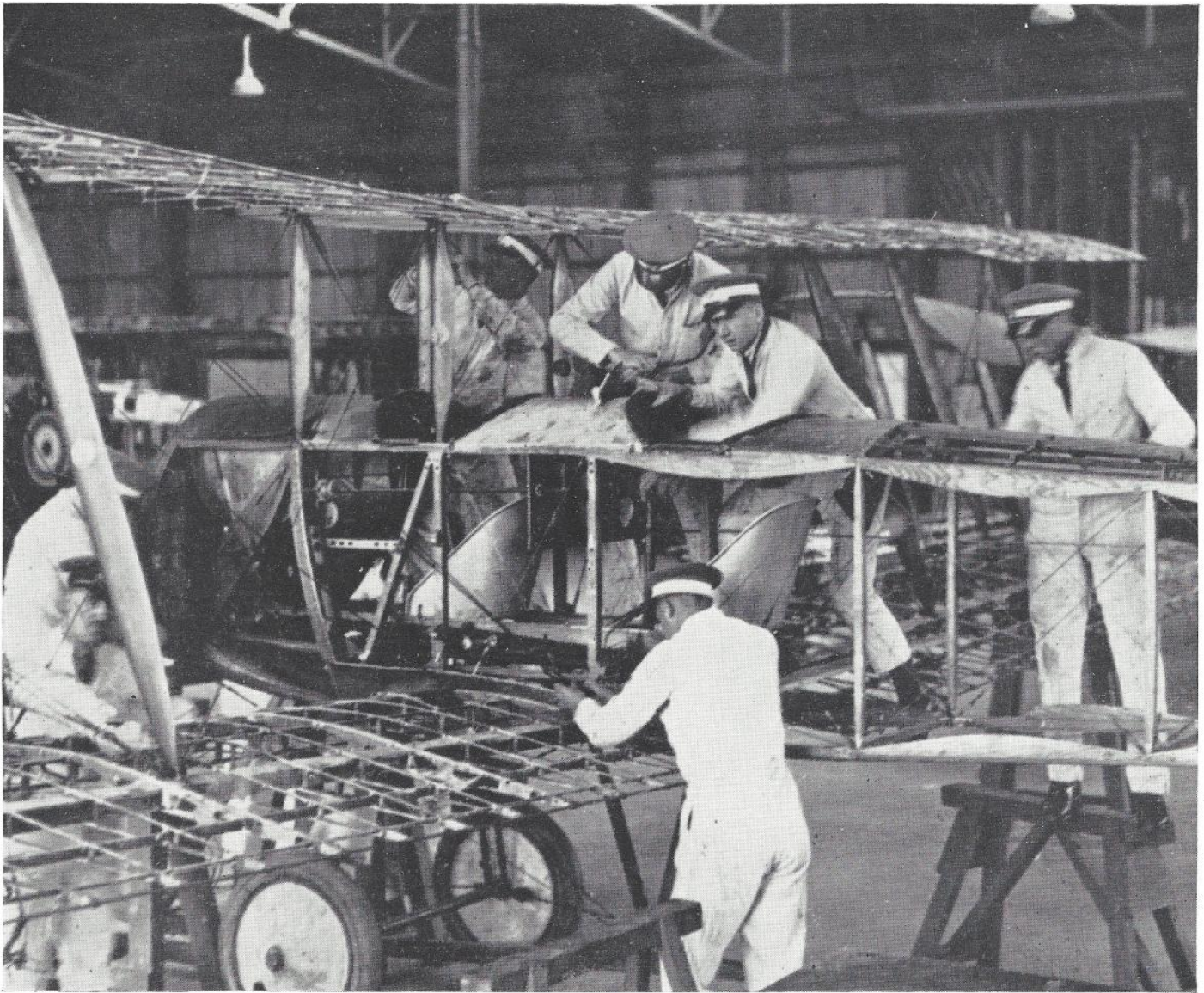
There could be no more fitting a fulfilment of such vision than the new College when it was finally completed in September 1933. It was truly grand in conception and design. The three wings accommodated 150 cadets and there was also provision for lecture rooms, laboratories and a library. The whole structure was surmounted by a tower 130 feet high, carrying the now famous flashing beacon. Permission to install the beacon had to be obtained from Trinity House, however, as the College was less than fifty miles from the sea. The official opening ceremony was performed by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales on 11 October 1934. Sir Samuel and Lady Hoare also presented the two beautiful avenues of lime-trees that today grace the front of the College.



H.R.H. the Prince of Wales giving the address during the official opening of the new College Buildings, October 1934

'... the green hut opposite the College gates that had housed Mr. Robinson's Post Office since 1916' (p. 21)





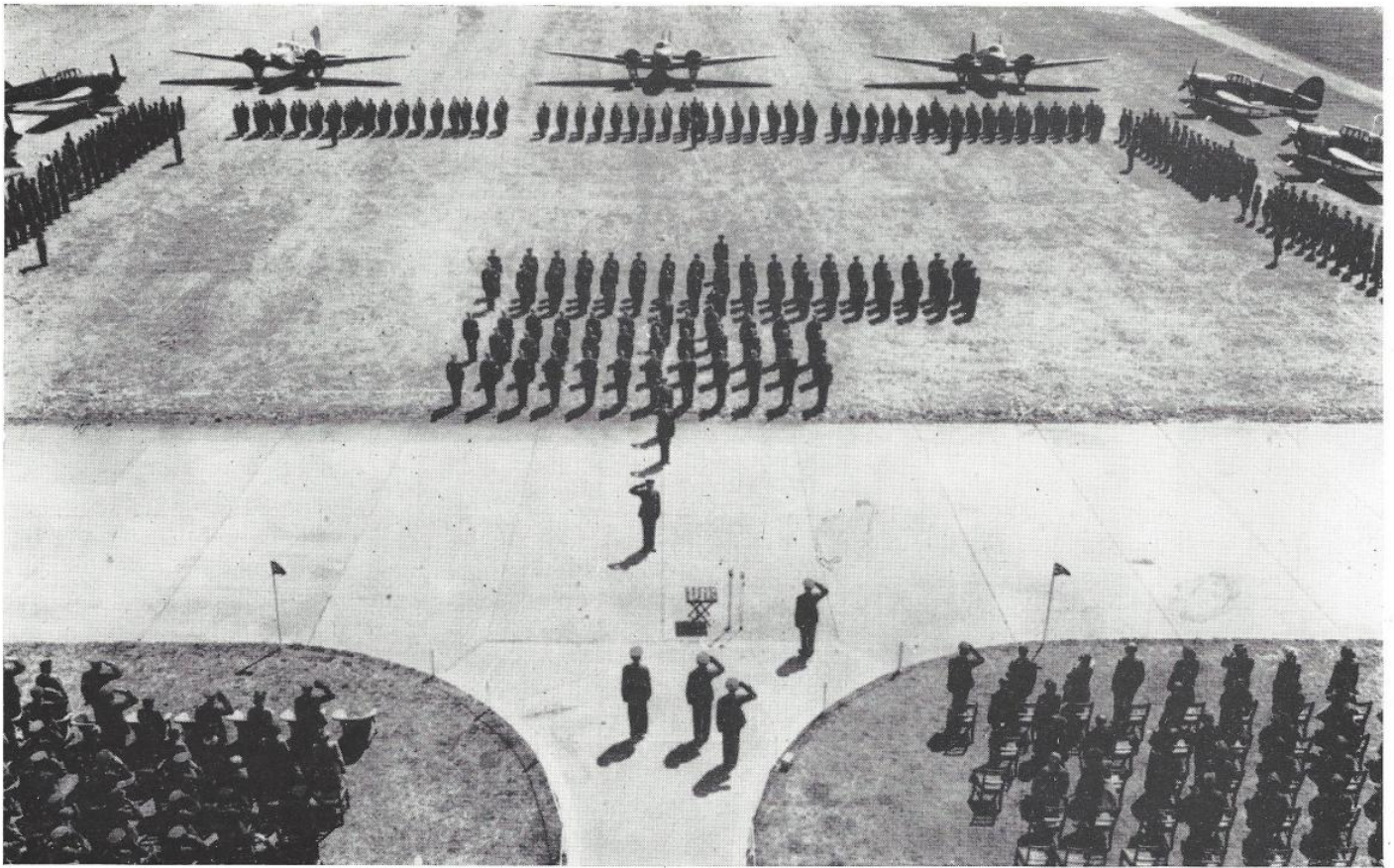
Pre-war flight cadets receiving practical instruction in the Ground School

Cadet Life in the 30's

It is worth while pausing briefly to compare the way of life of the flight cadet before the Second World War with that of his successor today. Perhaps the most obvious difference was that up to 1939 most were ex-public school boys whose parents paid fees for them to attend the College. Lest we get the impression of affluent young gentlemen, however, it is worth noting that each flight cadet was paid 6s. 6d. a day pocket money, of which Mess charges normally accounted for some 3s. 6d. Old Cranwellians of this period recall that few received further subsidies from their parents and that money was consequently tight. Also, sporting and social activities had to be self-supporting as there was no College Society to sponsor these. It was perhaps as well, therefore, that there were fewer opportunities to spend much. On the surface, College life appeared much more relaxed than nowadays. The pressures of

academic work were less demanding and the tempo of the working day was easier. On the other hand, the demands on leisure time were more rigid. The cadet had to dine formally in Mess three evenings each week, to parade to Church each Sunday, and to devote a greater proportion of his time to sport. One of the attractions of the pre-war College was that the trainee pilots had the opportunity to fly a variety of aircraft in contrast with the single type flown today.

Many of those who joined the last Entries before 1939 did so because they realised that war was a real possibility and they wished to prepare themselves to play their part in it. The consciousness that they were training for the 'real thing' tended, of course, to make them less tolerant of 'academics' and other subjects not directly related to the main task.

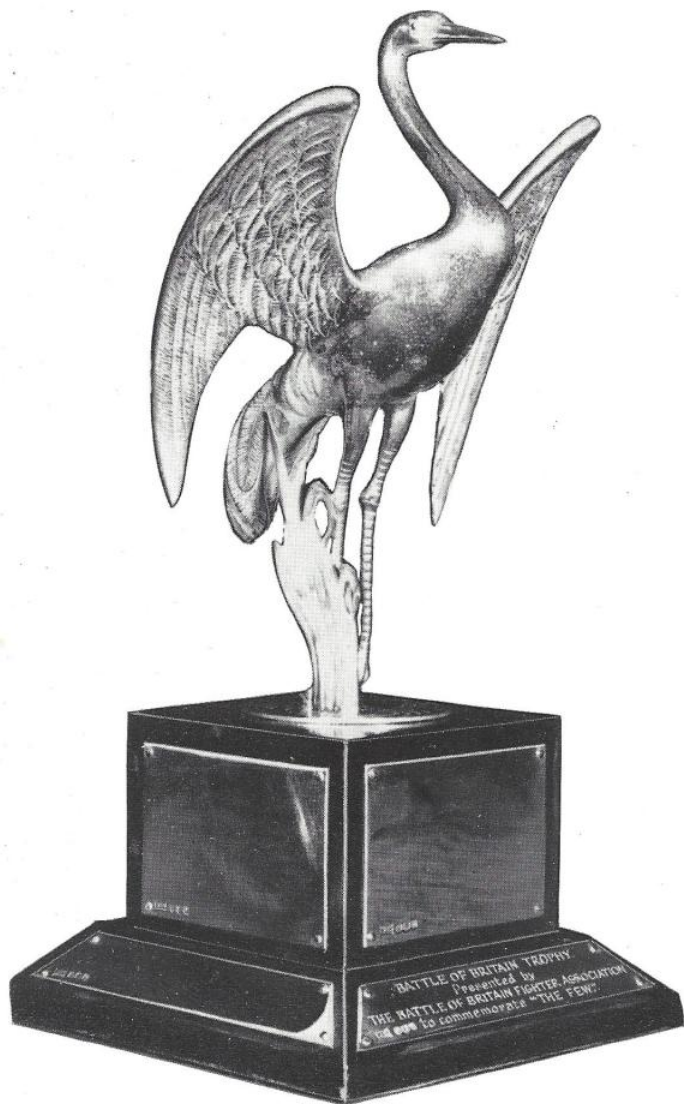


A wartime passing-out parade from the Royal Air Force College Flying Training School

The War Years



'As a memorial to those who died, the Shell Group, in 1952, presented to the College a peal of bells . . . ' (p. 18)



By 1939, forty-four Entries had graduated from the College and over one thousand officers had passed into the Royal Air Force. On the outbreak of war, however, flight cadet training ceased and the College was closed, only to be reopened immediately in the new role of the Royal Air Force College Flying Training School, with the task of training pupils from the Elementary Flying Training Schools to a standard of proficiency that would enable them to go forward to their operational training units. Although the course was planned to last for six months the demands of war soon necessitated a reduction to three months. One of the early graduates of the School was the present Commandant, Air Vice-Marshal F. D. Hughes.

Students came not only from all parts of the United Kingdom but also from the Dominions and other countries such as Belgium, France, Holland, Iran, Iraq, Poland and Turkey. A rash of wooden huts appeared almost overnight and satellite airfields at Fulbeck, Wellingore, Coleby Grange and Spitalgate had to be pressed into service as the demands on Cranwell grew.

The first German air raid on the College occurred on 6 June 1941, and sporadic attacks were experienced throughout the war years. Little damage was done, however, as most German aircraft dropped their bombs in the surrounding fields. One incendiary bomb did succeed in breaking a roof slate, but the only major damage to the College was caused when a Whitley bomber, flying in fog, struck the roof of the western half of the

The Battle of Britain trophy, presented by the survivors of 'The Few', awarded to the best aerobatic pilot on each Entry

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 attack on the German battleship *Tirpitz* in Tromsøfjord on 12 November 1944' (p. 18). Wing Commander J. B. Tait unveiling a commemorative picture presented by Rolls-Royce, 1969

main block. A dormitory was destroyed and a student who was asleep in it was killed, as was the crew of the aircraft.

Old Cranwellians distinguished themselves during the war. The Victoria Cross was awarded to Wing Commander H. G. Malcolm for his attack on Clonigni airfield on the night of 4 December 1942. The airfield was heavily defended and no fighter cover was available. Although he knew that he had little chance of returning alive, Malcolm unhesitatingly led the attack and the airfield was put out of action. The squadron was, however, quickly overwhelmed by German fighters and, after a furious air battle, all the British aircraft were destroyed. Malcolm was last seen plunging to the ground, his aircraft in flames. Equally memorable was the attack on the German battleship *Tirpitz* in Tromsøfjord on 12 November 1944. Wing Commander J. B. Tait led eighteen Lancasters of No. 617 Squadron and thirteen of No. 9 Squadron. Tait's force completely destroyed the ship, with the loss of only one aircraft and not a single life. For his superb leadership Tait gained a third bar to his D.S.O. Over 600 other decorations were awarded to former graduates, including three George Crosses, 82 Distinguished Service Orders and 269 Distinguished Flying Crosses. Of the 931 Old Cranwellians who served in the war, 326 lost their lives—a tribute to the bravery and the selfless service of the Cranwell product. As a memorial to those who died, the Shell Group, in 1952, presented to the College a peal

of bells which not only chimes the hours but also, at Colour lowering, sounds the 'Last Post'.

It was during these bleak war years that Cranwell witnessed an event that was historic both for the College and for the future of aviation. For Frank Whittle the years since 1928, when he submitted his thesis on jet propulsion, had been years of frustration and disappointment. Encouraged by his friends, however, Whittle persisted with his researches and, on an evening in May 1941, amidst great secrecy, his efforts were rewarded.

An aeroplane of unusual type was seen to taxi to the eastern end of the runway (on the South Airfield) and then, after a run of 600 yards, to rise gracefully into the air for a flight of 17 minutes. To the distant observers one very strange thing about this beautiful little aeroplane was that it had a very short undercarriage, but an even stranger thing was that it had no propeller.

The aircraft was the experimental Gloster-Whittle E28/39 pure jet and it ushered in a new generation of high-performance aircraft.

Peace in 1945 coincided with Cranwell's Silver Jubilee year, and on 13 June His Majesty King George VI revisited the College and met many of those who had served with him in the early days.



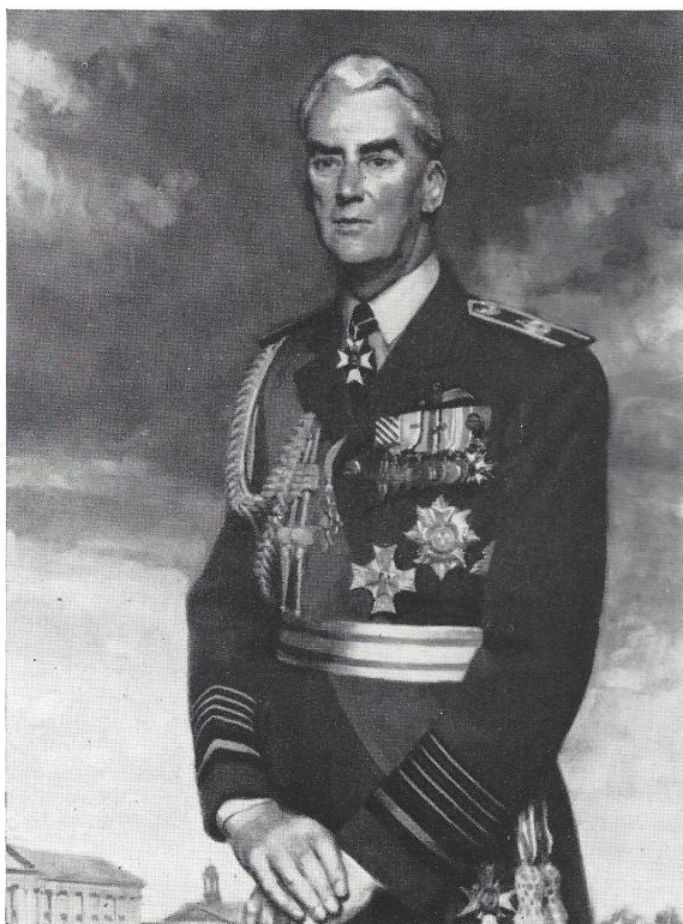
Wing Commander H. G. Malcolm



Group Captain Douglas Bader

SOME OF THE PORTRAITS IN THE COLLEGE

Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Dermot Boyle



Air Marshal Sir Richard Atcherley





Lord Trenchard pays one of his last visits to the College

The inauguration of Queen's Avenue



The Post-War College

Cadet courses began again on 14 October 1946, whilst the College was still operating as a Flying Training School. Fourteen students were chosen from the F.T.S. to form the Senior Entry and, by the winter of 1947, there were 157 flight cadets in residence. The official reopening took place in April 1947, after an interval of seven and a half years, and Air Commodore Richard Atcherley became the first Old Cranwellian to command his old College.

Training at Cranwell expanded rapidly. To achieve the mutual co-operation and understanding necessary in the complex modern Air Force it was felt that the potential leaders in all the main branches should share the advantages of training together at Cranwell. In 1947 trainees destined for Equipment and Secretarial Branches were accepted for training, Navigator training began in 1955 and nominees for the R.A.F. Regiment came to the College from 1962. Of the main branches only the second largest, the Technical (now Engineer) Branch, still concentrated its training elsewhere. The R.A.F. Technical College at Henlow undertook not only the training of Technical cadets (equal in status with their fellows at Cranwell) but all other aspects of the initial and postgraduate training of Technical Officers. Even here, however, a Memorandum to the Air Estimates for 1961-2 made the first official mention of a proposal to incorporate Technical cadet training at Cranwell. As part of the same process of reorganisation the last vestiges of apprentice training, which had been associated with Cranwell since 1920, disappeared in 1952, when the Radio School moved to Locking. Thus Cranwell was now responsible for officer training only.

These changes were accompanied by a new building programme. A fourth wing was added to College Hall in 1959 and a year later the remaining Naval huts that had housed the very first cadets were cleared away. The green hut opposite the College gates that had housed Mr. Robinson's Post Office since 1916 was also pulled down to make way for the new Queen's Avenue. A new Anglican Church of St. Michael and All Angels, replacing the historic Hangar Church, was built to one side of College Hall. It was dedicated by the Bishop of Lincoln on 1 June 1962. In October of the same year Sir Frank Whittle returned to open the newly constructed academic building that had been named after him and, by the end of the year, a new swimming-pool and gymnasium were also open.

The first post-war entry graduated from the College on 7 April 1948. July 6 of the same year was the occasion for the conferring of a singular honour, when His Majesty King George VI presented the College with his Sovereign's Colour—the first R.A.F. unit to receive such a distinction.

Flying Training was still divided into two stages. Early experience was gained on aircraft such as the Tiger Moth, the 'old work horse' that had served so magnificently all through the war, the Percival Prentice, the Chipmunk and the Provost; whilst more advanced training was done on the Harvard and



*'On 25 July 1960 . . . Her Majesty presented a new colour'
(p. 22)*



'A new Anglican Church of St. Michael and All Angels . . . was dedicated by the Bishop of Lincoln on 1 June 1962' (p. 21)



the Balliol. By 1954 the decision had been taken to introduce an element of jet flying and, to accommodate the Meteors and the Vampires, runways were built on the South Airfield and Barkston Heath was reopened as a satellite of Cranwell. Flying training became all-jet in 1961, and the Jet Provost, the world's first jet-powered basic training aircraft, became a familiar sight in the surrounding area.

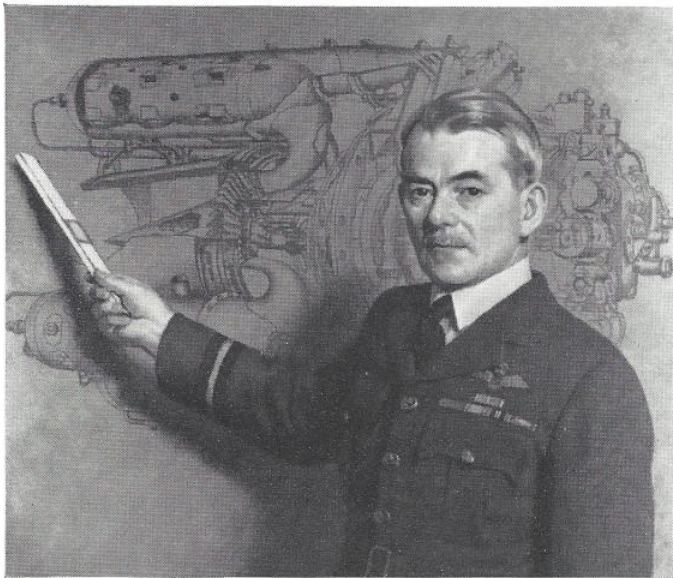
The close association that had developed over the years between the Royal Family and the College reached its climax on 27 May 1960, when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II graciously consented to become its Commandant-in-Chief. The Queen visited Cranwell on 25 July 1960, when the Sovereign's Colour presented by her father was paraded for the last time before being laid up in the College Chapel, and Her Majesty presented a new Colour.



ABOVE: *Whittle Hall under construction (p. 21)*

LEFT: *Sir Frank Whittle (portrait in the College)*

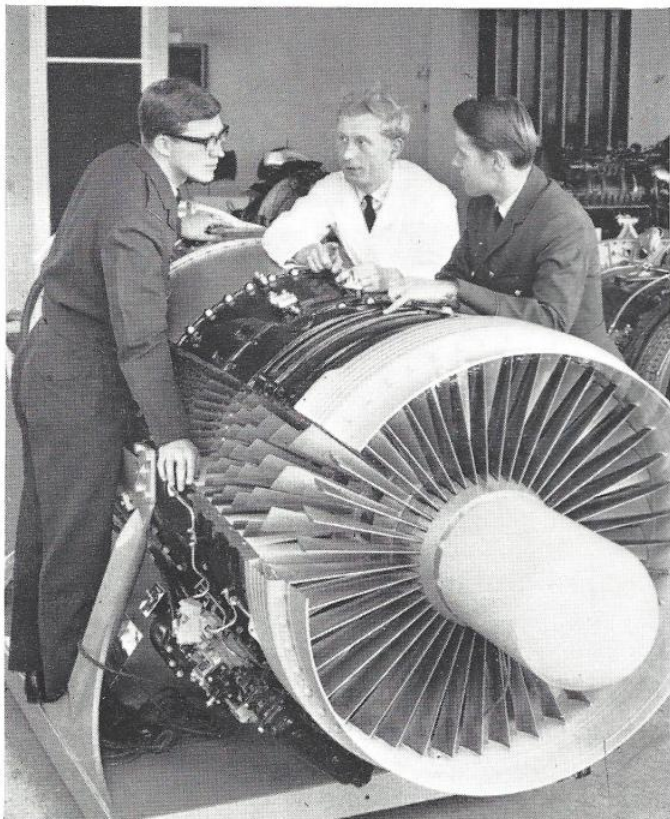
BELOW: *'Navigator training began in 1955' (p. 21).
Flight cadets boarding a Varsity preparatory
to a navigation exercise*





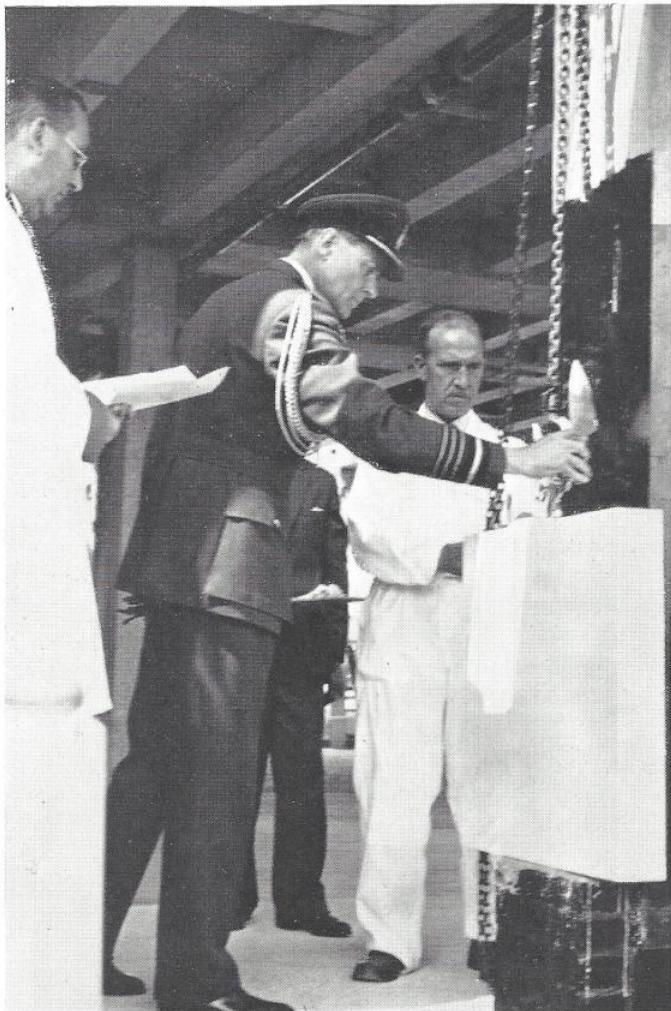
Opening ceremony, Trenchard Hall, 17 May 1966

Instruction, Trenchard Hall



Foundations of the old airship hangars (p. 6) being removed to make way for new married quarters





THIS STONE WAS LAID
ON 26TH JUNE 1964
BY THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF
AIR CHIEF MARSHAL
SIR CHARLES ELWORTHY
GCB, CBE, DSO, MVO, DFC, AFC

'The Foundation Stone of Trenchard Hall . . . was laid by the Chief of the Air Staff . . . (p. 25)

Trenchard Hall

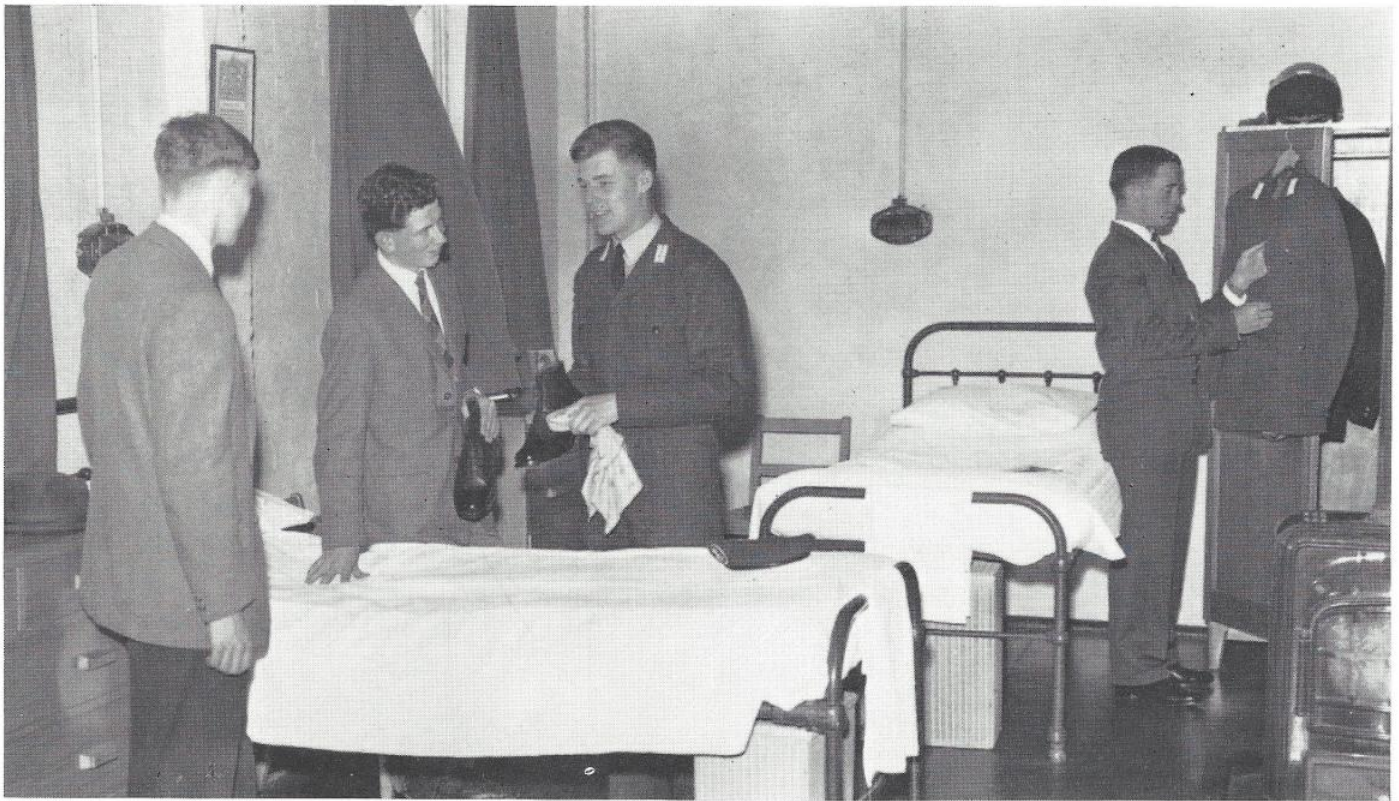
The growing complexity of military aviation accentuated the role of the Engineer Officer in the Royal Air Force. The Porter Committee had already reviewed the existing R.A.F. Technical College at Henlow and considered it unsuitable for the further extensive developments that would be required. It was, therefore, recommended that the new Engineer facilities should be established at Cranwell and fully integrated into the R.A.F. College. This would have the obvious advantage that Engineer Officers would be trained alongside their contemporaries in the other main branches. These recommendations were accepted by the Air Council in December 1960, and a building programme costing over two million pounds was started soon afterwards. As well as new instructional buildings the programme also allowed for a necessary expansion in domestic accommodation, including a second officers' mess, a new sergeants' mess, an airmen's social club and additional married quarters.

The foundation stone of Trenchard Hall, the name given to the new Engineering instructional complex, was laid by the

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Elworthy, on 16 June 1964. The official opening ceremony was performed by Lord Trenchard's son—the second Viscount Trenchard—on 17 May 1966. In his speech Lord Trenchard quoted extracts from a paper which his father had written in 1919. Few, he said, could doubt their relevance to Cranwell today:

We now come to that on which the whole future of the R.A.F. depends, namely, the training of its officers and men. The present need is . . . first and foremost the making of a sound framework on which to build a service which, while giving us now the first essential service squadrons, adequately trained and equipped, will be capable of producing whatever time may show to be necessary in the future.

By January 1966 the merger was completed and Cranwell now had provision for 300 staff officers, 380 student officers, 506 flight cadets and nearly 1,700 airmen and civilians. Under the Commandant, the College was divided into the Department of Cadets, the Department of Engineering and the R.A.F. College Unit, an organisation which it has retained to the present day.



New arrivals receive a few domestic hints

The College Today

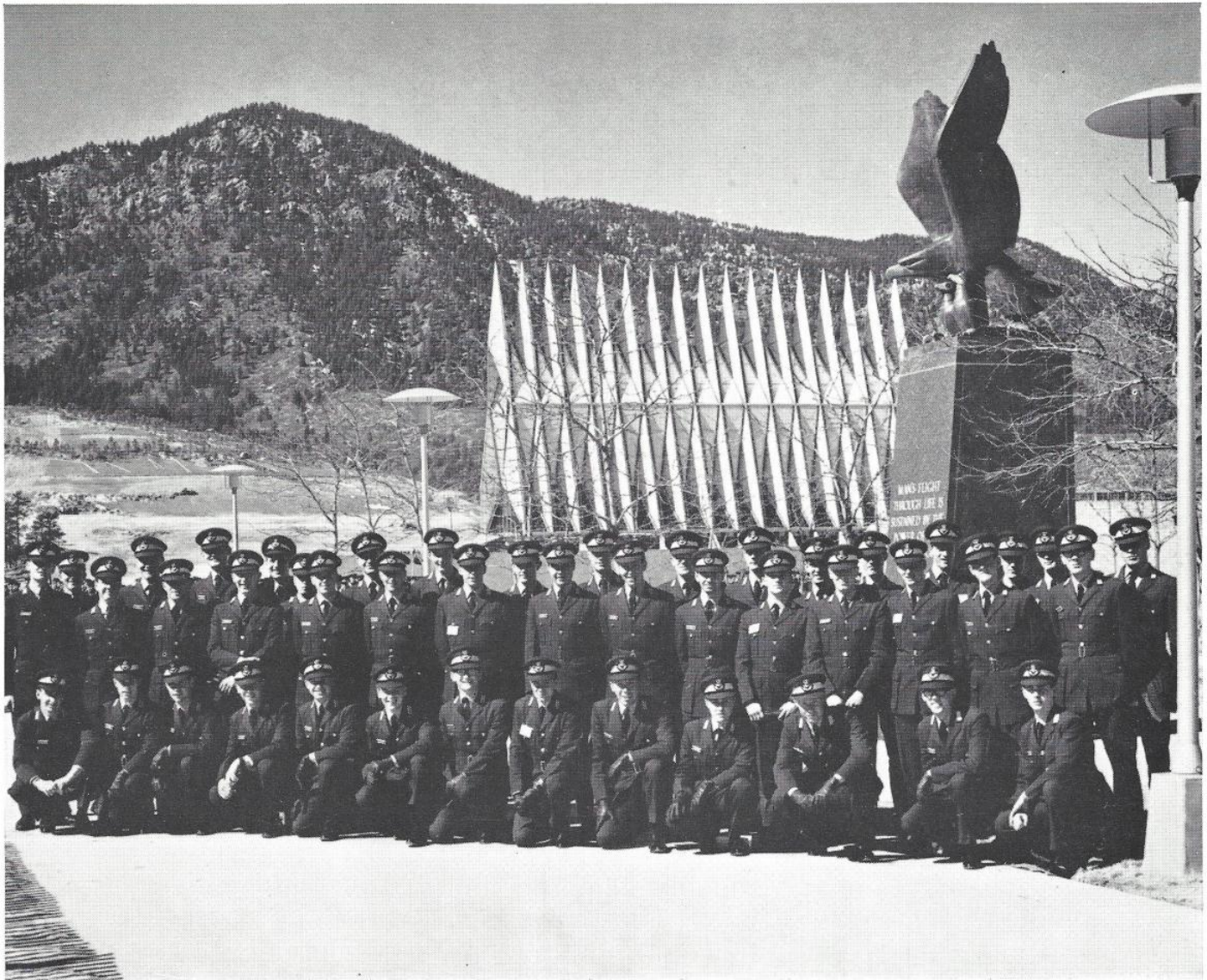


A new flight cadet takes the Oath of Allegiance

In February this year, No. 97 Entry graduated from the College, leaving in residence 98, 99 and 100 Entries. Entries now remain for two and a half years before the commissioning ceremony. Some Cranwell graduates, indeed, remain at the College as student officers to complete their professional training. Officers of the Equipment and Secretarial Branches undergo a further six months' training and the Engineer Officers study for another two years and two months to complete their degree course.

Whilst in residence, flight cadets have a wide variety of activities in which they can participate. The College maintains very close liaison with sister academies in the United States and France, and each year reciprocal visits are arranged between Cranwell and the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs and L'École de l'Air at Salon. Exchanges are also made with the Dutch and the Norwegian Air Force Academies. Thirty-one different sports can be played at Cranwell and the facilities are first rate by any standard. The highlights of the sporting season are the summer and winter fixtures with the Royal Naval College Dartmouth and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The College Society also helps foster a wide range of some forty cultural and outdoor activities.

Officer training, too, is kept as realistic as possible. Flight cadets and selected members of the Staff take part in expeditions like King Rock in Germany or Quick Fire in the North of



'... each year reciprocal visits are arranged between Cranwell and the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs ...' (p. 26)

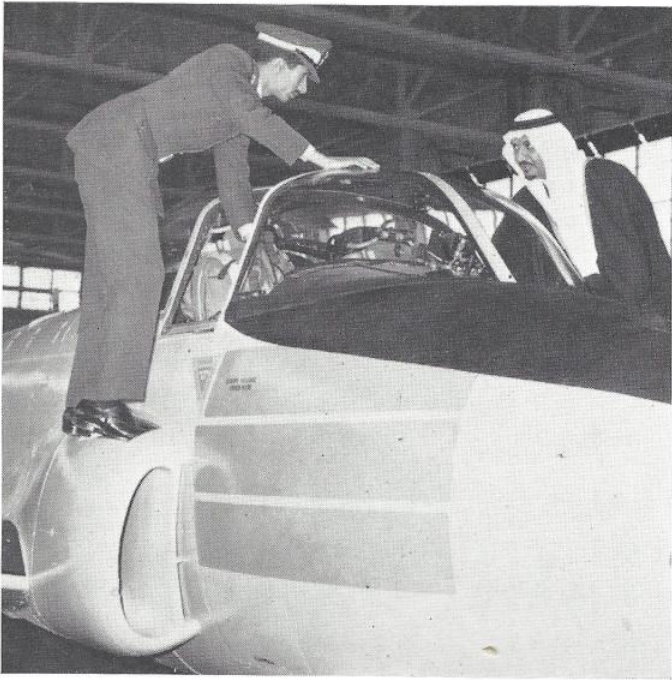
'... on occasions they have been encouraged to take part in the Nijmegen marches' (p. 27)

Scotland: on occasions they have been encouraged to take part in the Nijmegen marches or the Ten Tors walk. Visits are made annually to the Headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in Brussels and to the British Army of the Rhine. Most of the overseas Commands are visited each year, either for exercises or for sport.

The College, too, is pleased to be able to contribute to the life of the local community. The sports stadium and swimming-pool are much used throughout the year for a wide range of local sporting activities, and the Whittle Hall theatre is filled to capacity when 'Opera for All' or 'Ballet for All' visit the College. Last summer a crowd of over 10,000 were entertained on the 'Orange' in front of the College when the Lord's Taverners, a team of stage celebrities, played a charity cricket match against a Royal Air Force XI.

Students still come to the College from all parts of the world and graduates now occupy many of the more senior appointments in the air forces of other countries. At present there are in residence students from Australia, New Zealand, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. Most of these are students on the many and varied engineering courses.



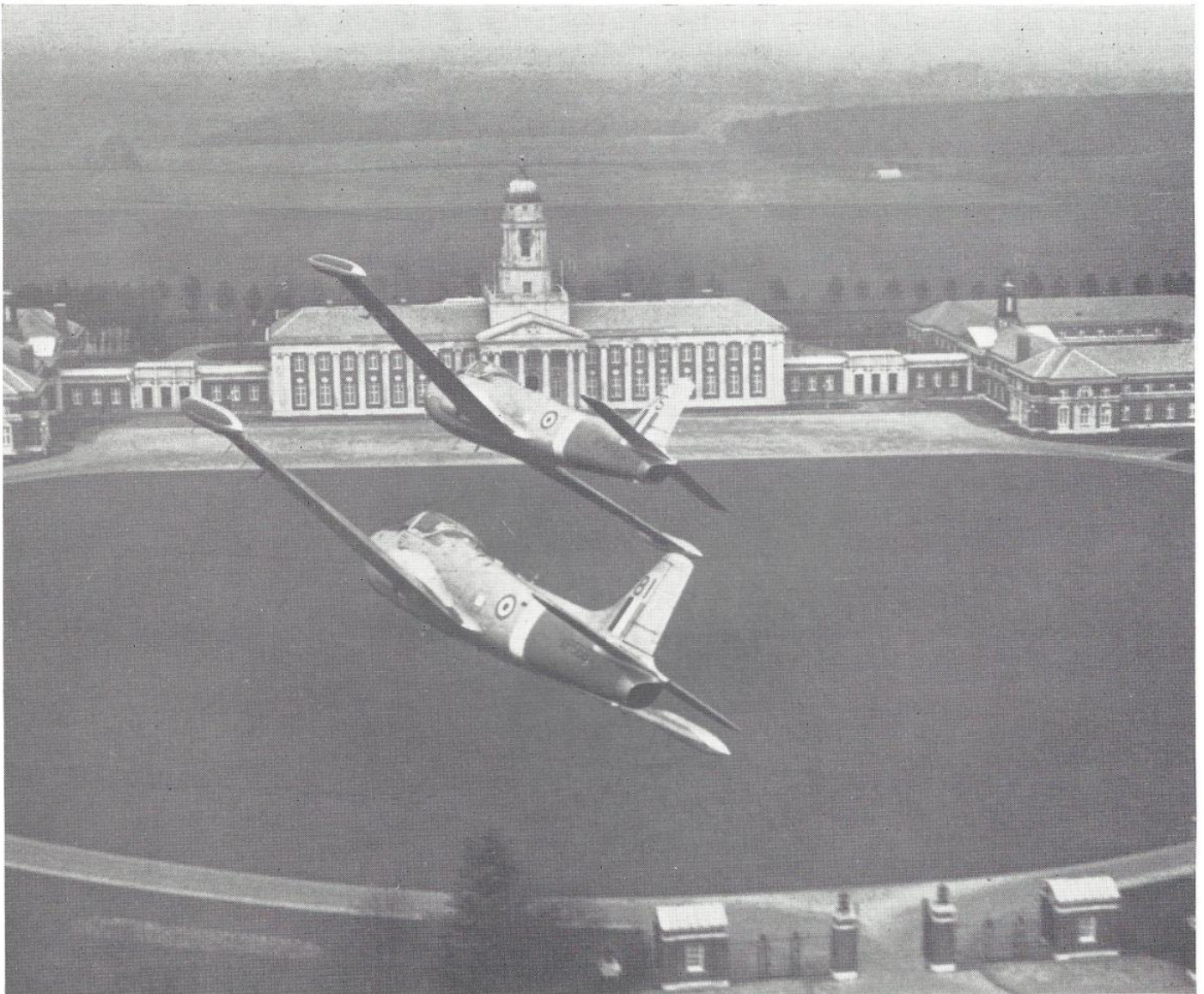


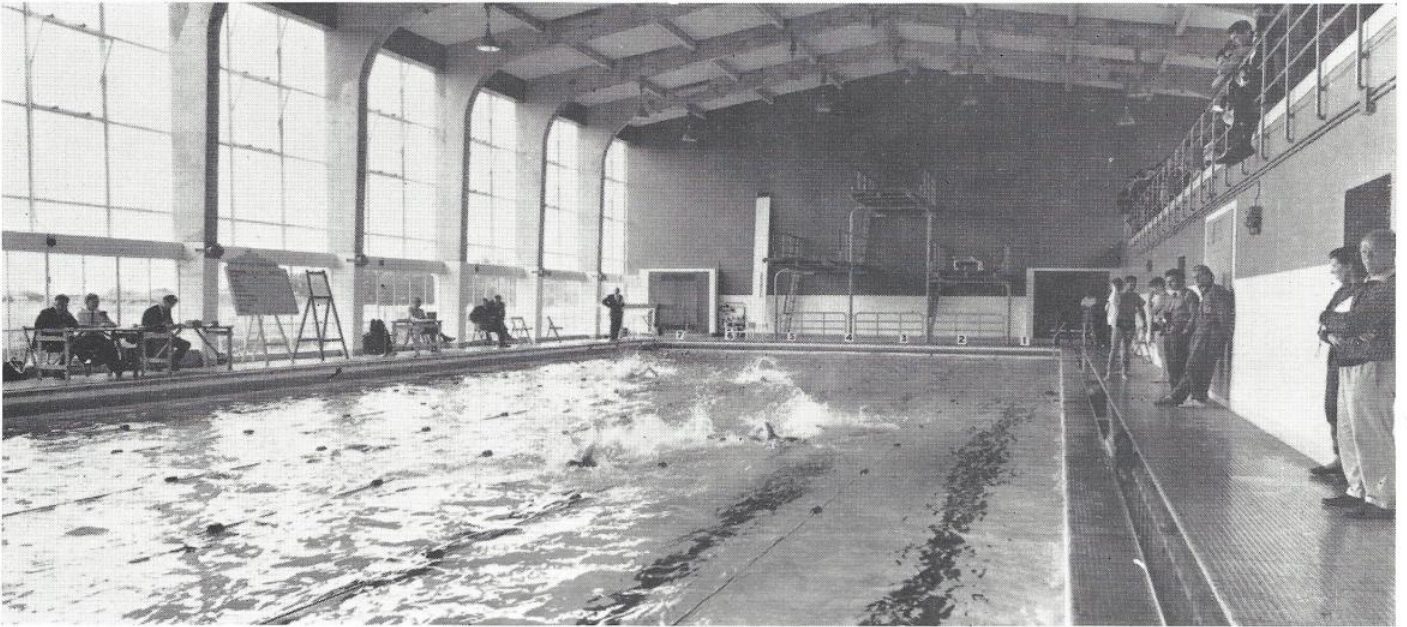
H.R.H. Prince Sultan being shown round by a Saudi-Arabian flight cadet



*'Students still come to the College from all parts of the world . . .'
(p. 27). A New Zealand winner of the Sword of Honour*

Jet Provost trainers over the College



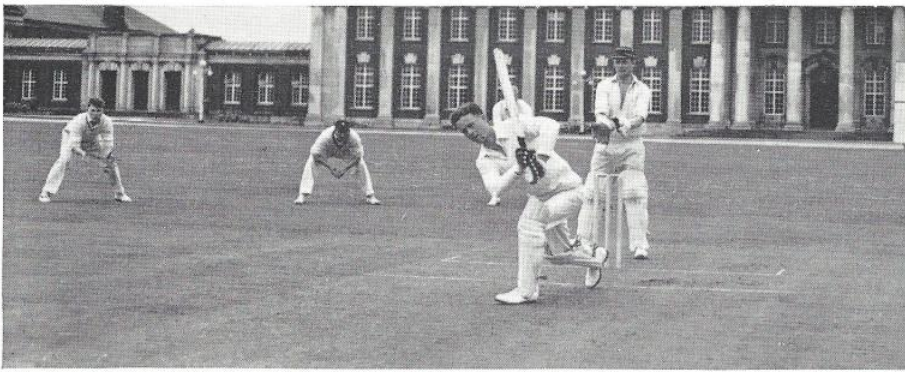


ABOVE: *The new swimming pool*

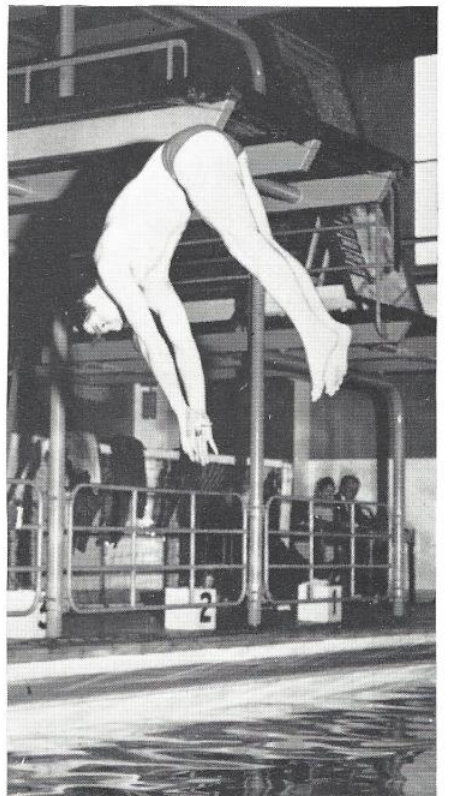
TOP OF PAGE: *Flying instructors and pupils*

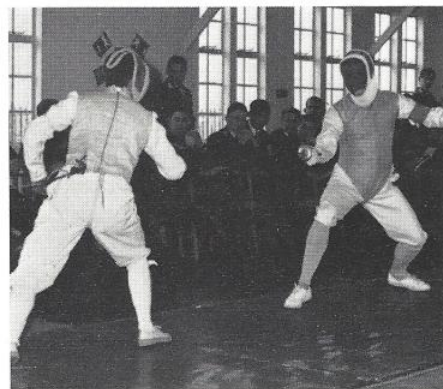
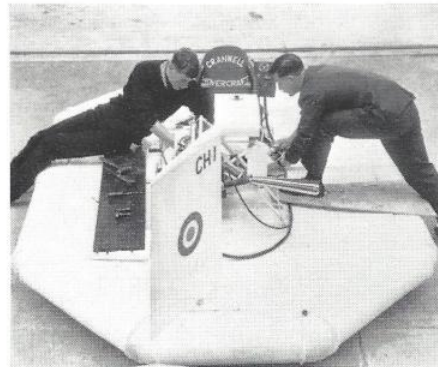
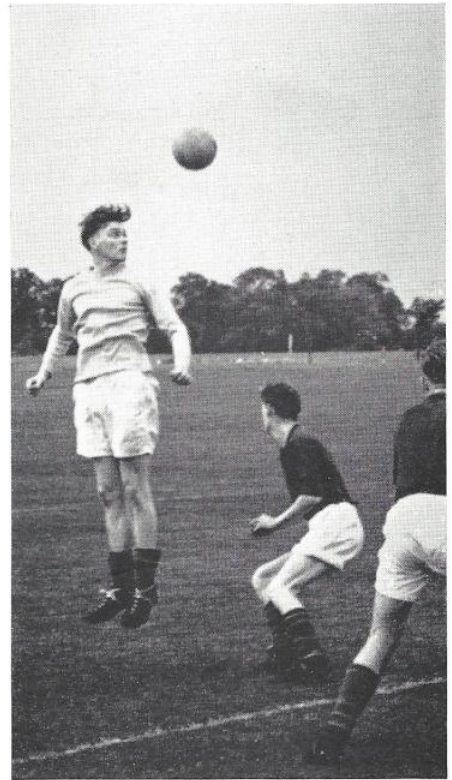
BELOW: *The Library*





Many different sports...
and a wide range
of cultural and
outdoor activities





The Future

We have seen that many changes have taken place during the College's first half-century. An even more momentous change will take place in the near future. The Royal Air Force has always recruited many of its officers direct from university. After next year Cranwell also will recruit its intake not from the schools but from the universities.

There are several good reasons for this. In the first place, a much higher proportion of young people now have the opportunity to go to the university. Therefore, in the foreseeable future, if the leaders of the R.A.F. are to continue to hold their own with their opposite numbers in government and industry and with their foreign counterparts, then they, too, should possess degrees. Also, there are already indications that some of the young men in whom the College is interested are preparing to go to university. Finally, and above all, the Service is conscious that the increasing political, technical and economic complexities of defence demand that its future leaders be educated to the highest possible standard.

Therefore the decision was taken that future flight cadets should have the opportunity to work for degrees. The next problem was how best to achieve this. In 1960, on an experimental basis, some began reading for external degrees of London University as part of their Cranwell course, but, on the whole, it was found impracticable to combine intensive academic work with flying training. Also, it was considered uneconomic to offer a full range of university courses for a

small number of students. A more economic solution was the concept of a Royal Defence College which would combine the academic work of Dartmouth, Sandhurst and Cranwell, but for various reasons—including the difficulty of marrying the needs of the three Services and the initial cost of a new establishment—this scheme has been shelved. Therefore it has been decided that, for the Royal Air Force, the answer lies with the present universities.

Under the new scheme aspirants for Cranwell, after selection on a basis of personal and academic qualities, are offered 'cadetships' which meet their expenses at university. They are commissioned as Acting Pilot Officers on entry to the university and they gain some introduction to the R.A.F. as members of their University Air Squadrons. Then, on graduation, they will come to Cranwell for their main officer and professional (for example flying) training.

Obviously this new Graduate Entry Scheme will bring many organisational changes to the College, but it can be seen as a logical evolution of Lord Trenchard's original concept of the role Cranwell must play. The first fifty years have seen many changes; no doubt the next fifty will also. Although one would have to be brave, indeed, to forecast their nature, one thing can be predicted with confidence: as long as there is a continuing need for defence, for an Air Force, and for leadership, Cranwell will continue to have a primary role in meeting these needs.





ABOVE: *Graduation Parade, July 1934*

On the front cover:

TOP: *A line-up of Avro 504s at Cranwell.* BOTTOM: *Jet Provost Trainers at Cranwell today*

BELOW: *Graduation Parade, February 1970*

