

Reepham ROC Posts

From November 1934 Reepham had an ROC post ("16 Group Post W1") at [grid ref TG 112 225](#). This point is 1.4 km from the centre of Reepham, so would logically have taken its name from the town. The grid reference is in a field between Booton and Eve's Hill, opposite the end of Furze Lane. There was an Orlit concrete shelter here from 1951. At this date the post would still have been for aircraft observation only.

In November 1953 the post moved to its present site of [TG 085 189](#) and was re-classified as "6 Group Post S3". It kept the Reepham name, even though this site is 4.1 km from the town centre, on the A1067 Norwich to Fakenham Road near the junction with Nowhere Lane.

It is possible the Orlit concrete panels were taken down and re-erected on top of a new brick tower, which is still standing.

In September 1962 the underground post was built and the focus moved to nuclear monitoring. It closed in October 1968, along with many others, as a result of that year's budget cuts. As far as we know the underground post is still basically intact

ROC Memories in WWII

Hazel Dove was a member of the ROC during WWII. Usually there were two girls on duty together but on the night shift from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. there had to be three. They had a heavy rifle to defend themselves but Hazel reckoned they couldn't have used it. They liked it when they were on duty with Bob Smith as he supplied them with cigarettes. American airmen on their bikes would stop by to chat. They told them that they had to be up at 3 a.m. each morning preparing for bombing flights over France at 8 a.m. The ROCs had to count those planes out and count them home. The sky was black with planes, she thought 800 or so when they left- hard to count, and they came back in formation.

Hazel's post was on the Norwich Road opposite Furze Lane. Early on a clear morning you could see vapour trails of doodlebugs being sent over from France. It was the observers' duty to track their course and Spitfires would be sent to intersect them and bring them down.

Extract from Royal Observer Corps Heritage website

At first the Royal Observer Corps was rather protective towards its women members, for example they were not initially allowed to work the night shift.

The two main categories of Observers were not male and female, but ...

- A Class – Full Time and working at least 48 hours a week and usually rotating shifts of 8 hours.
- B Class – Part Time and were generally those in reserved occupations, or in the case of women, those with domestic commitments; who devoted up to 24 hours per week of their 'leisure' to Corps duties and usually working 4 hour shifts except at night when it usually was an 8 hour shift.

As part of the 'team' restrictions did still exist as to women's activities especially at posts where many groups avoided mixed crews. Most did not allow women to work the night shift, and none permitted a woman to share the night duty with a man.