

Air Service Training - Hamble

21st June 2005 - Roy Underdown Pavilion

In April we held our sixth Annual General Meeting and, on completion of business, Tony Sedgwick talked about Air Service Training. He had worked there for a number of years, but he also referred to a copy of the official diary which listed an impressive number of dates and events. AST opened in 1931, but there were flying schools and other aviation activities in Hamble before then. The diary stated that Amy Johnson had attended a 'blind flying' course in 1932, and there were numerous entries during World War 2. Spitfires were mentioned, and a huge bomb which fell in 1941. Bofors guns being installed around the site, and land mines falling in the area. Then the post war era, and a return to civil aviation. I later asked a member what it was like living here when the airfield was operating. "It all depended on which way the wind was blowing," she said. "When it was in the wrong direction, they took off and landed right over our house, and the noise was sometimes deafening! I think some pilots deliberately flew unnecessarily low, and sometimes you could see the pilot looking out of the cockpit and grinning. I got straight onto the phone and rang the control tower. They usually did something about it. They were good like that!"