

APRIL 3RD 2019

Dr Jonathan Sayers gave a very detailed talk about “The History of Greenham Common” from the 17th to the 20th Centuries.

There was an army camp at Greenham Common in 1714 at the time of the Jacobite Rebellion, but its use by the RAF really began in the 1930s when it was used for the storage of planes as well as for pilot training. This intensified after the arrival of the USAAF in 1942 and as preparations for the D Day landings progressed Greenham Common became crucial for the storage and building of WACO Gliders which were vital for transporting both men and materials behind enemy lines.

Instead of being mothballed after the War its importance again grew as part of the allied defence during the Cold War period when, from 1950 onwards, the USAAF upgraded and expanded the facilities to allow for B47 bombers and later for the storage of 96 Cruise missiles which were intended to counteract the growing threat of SS80 missiles from the USSR. Unfortunately this situation aroused growing protests from supporters of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, amongst whom were many subsequent Labour MPs. After the closure of Greenham Common in 1992 this all died down.

In 1997 the airbase was purchased by the newly formed Greenham Common Trust - a partnership of local authority and business representatives.

New Greenham Park continues to develop.

More information can be found on the websites:

www.greenham-common.org.uk

www.greenhamtrust.com