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## ECHOES OF EAST ANGLIA

A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY THROUGH PICTURES AND MEMORIES 1940-45

*Martin W. Bowman*

*Oulton was the place we returned to when we'd been airborne for a while. To go to work every morning, we left our 'homes' at Blickling and rode by bus up to the Flights at Oulton. Blickling was our home in effect. Our Officers' Mess was at Blickling Hall and our Nissen hut billets only another 200 yards further on. When we wanted to have a bath, we walked over to Blickling Hall and up to the top floor of the old mansion where we got a cold (make that, frigid) bath. Sometimes we'd walk off the station, out past the guard-room and just across to the opposite side of the road to the Post Office there, where we would buy a cup of tea and a muffin or scone.*

So recalls an airman in East Anglia during the Second World War. From airfields throughout the region such brave men flew into the cauldron of the European war, many never to return. Along with photographs of the airfields, wall art, and the echoing remains of all that now survives of their bases, such poignant reminiscences make up this tribute to those who briefly made East Anglia their home in time of war.



Martin Bowman is among the best-known aircraft photographers in the country and Halsgrove recently published his celebrated book of classic aircraft photographs *Airs & Graces*. In this new work Martin has explored the many Second World War airfields in East Anglia, taking evocative photographs of all that remains, from ghostly control towers to the graffiti and wall art left by the airmen, many of whom flew to their deaths from this remote corner of England.

These airfields hold a fascination for many thousands who visit the area each year in search of this aspect of our military heritage. This book honours those who briefly made East Anglia their home and reminds us of their comradeship and bravery.



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Originally, the airfield at Wendling in the parish of Beeston near East Dereham was intended for RAF bomber use but in 1943 it was turned over to the 8th Air Force. The airfield was sold in 1963-64 and became a Bernard Matthews turkey farm with long turkey sheds being constructed on the runways.



Solitary Nissen. In the Second World War Nissen huts were purchased in bulk from the manufacturers and supplied to aerodromes by the Air Ministry.



Villa-style watch tower at Swanton Morley airfield and now a Grade II listed building.



Pin-up at Shipdham inspired by a Gillette A. 'Gil' Elvgren model, many of which appeared in various painted poses on popular pin-up calendars.

**THE GALLERY – ECHOES OF EAST ANGLIA**



Three Stearman biplanes passing picturesque Blickling Hall where RAF personnel were fortunate to be billeted during operations from Oulton nearby. Evidence of the RAF occupation, which included access to the lake for swimming and dinghy drills, can still be found today.



Example of a typical double page spread



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