

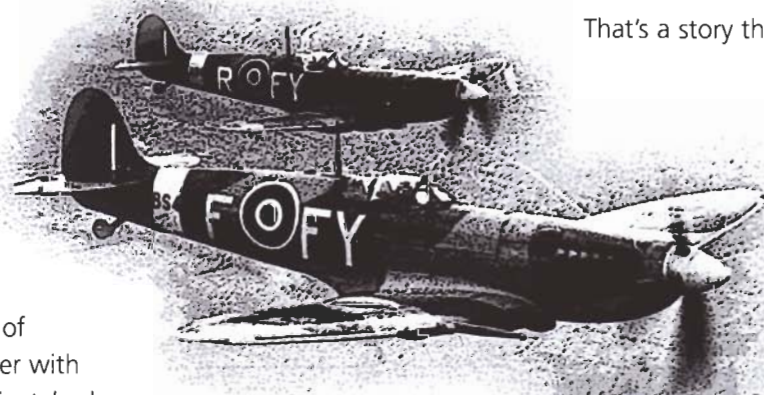
Tony Harding, G3RGQ, in the electronics workshop surrounded by dozens of historically important restored vintage radios.

by Brian R. Page, N4TRB

CW opens doors. Literally! While visiting the Imperial War Museum at Duxford in the U. K., just outside of Cambridge, I had the very good fortune to stumble upon the Duxford Radio Society (DRS) club station (Figure 1). The DRS operates a radio room filled with World War II vintage gear (along with some modern rigs) and is an integral, though unadvertised, part of the WW II Royal Air Force (RAF) experience at the museum.

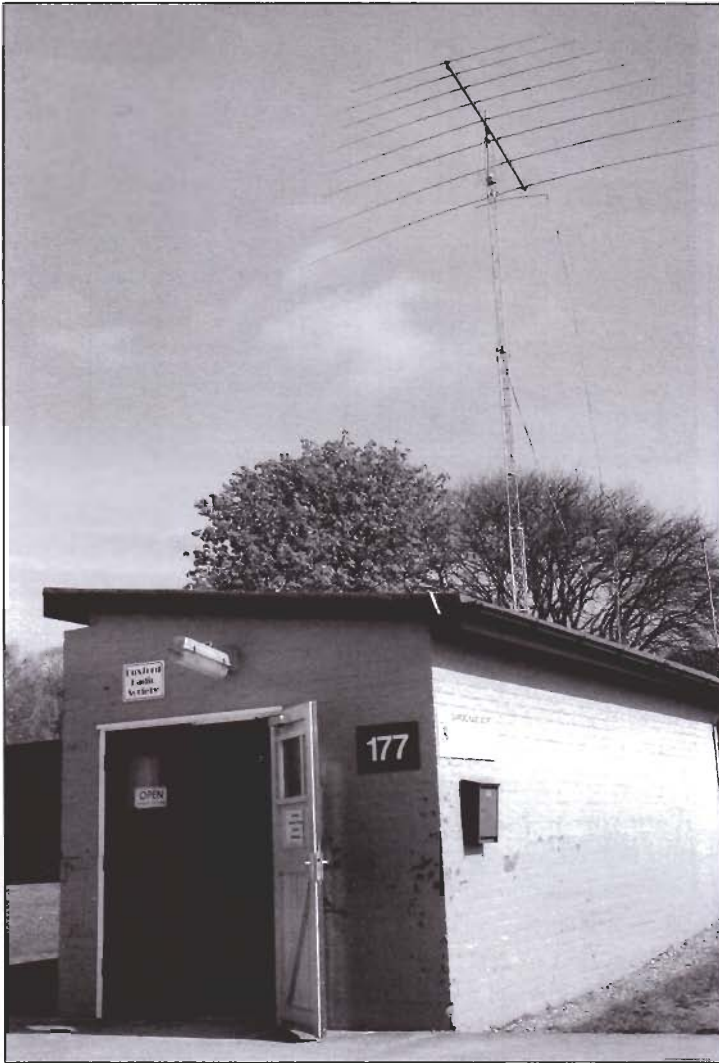
RAF Duxford was the first airfield to receive the renowned Spitfire fighter aircraft immediately prior to the outbreak of WW II. The Spitfire together with the Hurricane played the pivotal role in preventing Germany from achieving air superiority during the Battle of Britain which, in turn, prevented German dictator Adolph Hitler from launching Operation Sea Lion, the invasion of the British Isles. Using secret intelligence obtained from the now famous

Ultra intercepts at Bletchley Park and immediate reports from the Chain Home Radar and spotters, Fighter Command Chief Hugh Dowding managed to achieve the perfect balance between destruction & disruption of the Luftwaffe offensive without losing it all in a decisive confrontation. His fighters flew from dozens of fields just like Duxford scattered across England.



That's a story that's brilliantly told by the Imperial War Museum Duxford. So where does CW come in?

In the radio operations building, the DRS has reproduced the radioman's position from a Lancaster bomber using vintage equipment – with one minor difference. The CW key is connected to a code practice oscillator rather than the transmitter. This allows visiting school children to try their hands at sending a bit of Morse. When I entered the little build-



The Duxford Radio Society operates the Radio Section of the Imperial War Museum's recreation of Royal Air Force Duxford. Building 177, easily spotted by way of the log periodic HF antenna, houses World War II vintage radio equipment including the radio operator position from a British Lancaster bomber. Duxford is still an operational air field and lies just south of Cambridge.

ing all the Duxford ops were in the back room. The key beckoned and what ham could resist? When I sent "CQ CQ CQ DE N4TRB" a couple of heads quickly popped out of the open door of the back room. At that, they decided I was a VIP, invited me to sign their visitor's book, and be given the full tour!

My host was Tony Harding, G3RGQ. After looking over the exhibits in the Radio Section, Tony took me next door to their electronics workshop and unlocked the door for a private showing. For a boat anchor buff, the sight was breath-taking. Even the smell was just right! The DRS annex building is filled with a great variety of WW II radios, including my favorite, the National HRO

receiver. Their collection isn't limited to British radio. It includes American and German rigs too. Had I not keyed up their little code practice oscillator I would never have known this annex building even existed. Once again, CW gets through and does the job!

Just as we were discussing the Tornister "Torn" E.b TRF receivers used by the German Signal Corps, I walked Denis Willis, a veteran of 17 combat missions as a Lancaster radio operator and an expert on WW II German radio equipment. Denis achieved his knowledge first-hand. One of his wartime duties was to inspect downed German aircraft and remove any radio equipment, taking care to not alter any switch or dial settings. Such details were valuable for intelligence purposes.

Meeting Denis was especially poignant when he thanked me, as a "Yank," for the U. S. entering the war at the point when Great Britain was pretty well spent. He specifically mentioned our ability to supply the 100 octane aviation fuel that was guzzled by the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine in the likes of a Spitfire Mk V.

The Duxford Radio Society operates GB2IWM and GOPZJ from Building 177, the Radio Section of Duxford RAF Field. In addition to the operational T1154M/R1155L equipment in the Lancaster reproduction, club equipment includes a Collins KWM2A transceiver with 30L-1 linear (which they can use up to 400 watts PEP) plus some modern Kenwood sets. The antennas are a G5RV for 80- and 40-meters, and a Cushcraft ASL2010 log-periodic beam for the higher-frequency bands. It was the log-periodic that originally caught my eye and, in truth, is a much better advertisement than the tiny sign on Building 177.

The Duxford Radio Society itself is worth a visit to the Imperial War Museum; however, I had to remind myself that other sights awaited and I eventually tore myself away from their exhibits. Tony was a gracious host and sent me on my way with detailed handouts on the Lancaster radios, the famous Wireless Set No. 19 "one of the wireless sets which won the war," and a 1944 mobile anti-aircraft radar station.