

Colin Rouse



Passed out as JT. Left in 1969 as Sgt.

Stradishall

My first posting was to Stradishall. There I was working in the Radio Servicing Flight (RSF) on completely unfamiliar equipment. I particularly disliked the VHF radio with its nasty mechanical tuning. The main aircraft at the time was the Hunter.

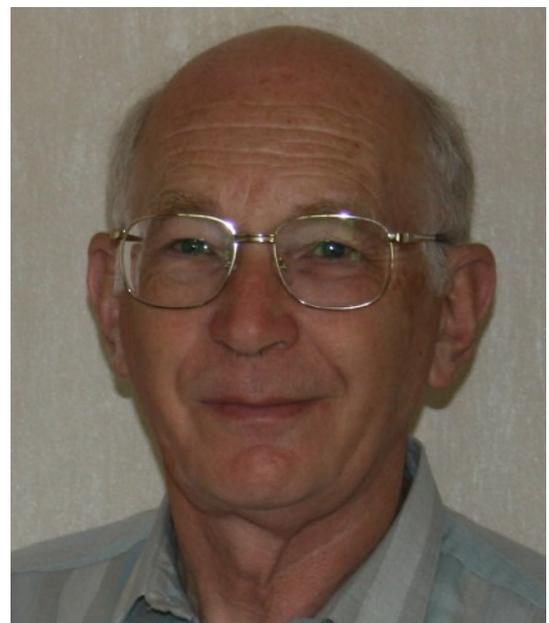
During one interesting episode I was told to go, on my own, to another airfield - can't remember where. On arriving I was sent to a hut on the far side of the airfield where I found a bunch of crates and instructions to open them and create a 'mobile RSF'. I achieved that and even serviced a few units before burning out the motor generators. I never found out what became of my efforts!

Overall, I didn't like Stradishall much and at the earliest moment applied for a course at Yatesbury. At Yatesbury I was trained on the Lightning radar, AI23B, and was posted to Wattisham while still on the course.

Wattisham

At Wattisham I was on 1st line servicing on 111 Squadron. It was here that I found out just how smelly jet engines were. I had the doubtful privilege of being one of only two guys who could get into the Lightning intake without removing any clothes.

I quite enjoyed the year or so that I stayed at Wattisham but finally moved on to Yatesbury as a Trainer on AI23B.



Yatesbury/Cosford

I enjoyed teaching AI23B and was quite happy to stay there even if the place dropped to sub-zero temperatures in the winter. When it was really cold I would just go home (about 20 miles) at night to get a good nights sleep.

I made it to Sgt while there and in my spare time I went into Swindon and started learning to dance - Ballroom.

Sometime around 1965/66 Yatesbury was closed and the training transferred to Cosford. I went with it.

At Cosford I continued teaching AI23B until I was posted to Masirah some time in 1967. I was not happy with this as I had just met this girl at a dance. While at Cosford I bumped into Ian Pratt. He was still wielding his camera and kindly took a picture of my girl friend, Miriam.

Sharjah

I got as far as Aden, en route to Masirah, when it was 'all change'. I was held at Aden for a few days and then sent up to Sharjah. I was there for a year, with a fortnight back in the UK half way through. The posting was for a year and then it was back to Wattisham.

Wattisham again

This time I was in RSF servicing AI23B and other Lightning kit. It was while at Wattisham that I got married to Miriam - well, actually, I got married in Wolverhampton but I was stationed at Wattisham at the time. We lived out in Sudbury for a year before I was demobbed.

Bracknell

I obtained a job at Sperry Gyroscope in Bracknell doing work on high frequency radio receivers. I found myself under-qualified however, so did night school and sandwich courses over a period of five years or so to get

myself up to engineer standard. I then got the job of designing the test equipment for the Tornado Crash Recorder. All done without the aid of computers!

With that job done, work got a little scarce so when Sperry decided to open an office in Bristol to develop a revised Firestreak missile I volunteered to move there. That was in 1978 and we moved to Nailsea near Bristol.

Nailsea

We had just about got going with me leading the Electronics group when the contract was cancelled. Typical! I was made redundant and decided to stay in Bristol so was out of a job. I bought a franchise selling a small computer with my redundancy pay. Bad move. The brilliant idea was too late to the market and after only about nine months the firm went bust - and me too.

Back to working in electronics; this time for British Aerospace. There I spent some time in the Electronics Department before moving to Project Control to work on the computer. I eventually became System Manager for it. Finally the computer was gobbled up by the IT Department and I ended up going with it.

At various times over the years BAe became BAe Space Systems and finally Matra Marconi Space. In 1999 Matra Marconi closed the Bristol site and, again, I was redundant. This time, however, I called it a day and gave up work entirely.

Since then I have been a man of leisure! While in the Apps I used to skive off on my bike on sports afternoons. I still have a bike and try to ride it as much as possible. It always goes with me on holiday. Miriam also rides. We still dance a couple of times a week too.

We have two children, Mark (born 1969), now living in America, and Janine (born 1971) living in Leicester. We have four grandchildren, two each side of the Atlantic. Interestingly, the two eldest boys were born on the same day one in Leicester and the other in the USA.