



# Heritage Team display at the former Fighter Command station RAF North Weald

The **BATTLE OF BRITAIN 75 years on.** *By Edwina Holden MBE*

Last July the Heritage Team were invited to take the National ROCA Display to the Battle of Britain parade, at North Weald airfield, in recognition of the significant part played by the **Observer Corps** back in 1940. The picture shows the Drum Head ceremony, held there on the **24 June 1945** when the **Royal Observer Corps** received its first colours.



**JULY 2015** John Shere and I arrived on the morning with the necessary display materials to find Keith Arnold waiting for us. Keith was recently the Curator at the Battle of Britain Museum at Bentley Priory and is an Associate Member of No 7 Group. He has a wealth of experience in military history.

The promised green 12X12 Army tent was not yet erected, the Air Cadets who were detailed to do this were called away for a briefing, the tent was eventually erected, the promised table found and we were in business. Our site overlooked the runway on which were several small aircraft, we were told that the yellow Gnat belonged to Pink Floyd. There was also a red Gnat and sadly this was the one that recently crashed. We were fortunate to be close to the Club House with its all-day canteen, BarBQ and loos.



**Keith Arnold, John Shere & Edwina Holden**

Mike Quincey (7 Group) was to parade the National Standard for the Parade and Sunset Ceremony later in the day, with John and Keith as escorts. This had been arranged by the organiser of the event. The three of them were summoned to a practise leaving me in charge. It wasn't long before a gust of wind lifted the tent off the ground, twisting the display banners which we had secured to the metal struts, leaving me to hang on to the structure with one hand and ring John with the other asking him to come back, memories are made of this I thought! During the day lots of interesting people called, the majority of whom had never heard of the Corps but were very impressed – barely able to credit the number of Posts shown on the large ROC map sheet which John had brought along from the archive. Several visitors had either been in the Corps or had a relative who had served and were delighted to share experiences.

As the time came for the big Parade we dismantled the display only to find Mick Marks and Joyce Shrubbs coming to visit. At the parade site we were told that the National Standard could not have the escorts. They had changed their mind as they had too many RAFA Standards. John managed to find himself a space, Keith did too but was soon ousted by someone who said 'that is my place'. Keith was heard to say 'when I was in the RAF I did my best to dodge the Parades, now I have been thrown off!' As the photographs show, Mike Quincey and John Shere as usual represented the Association very well. Behind Mike can be seen Roy Sherwin a member from Coventry Group.

The very long Parade passed the saluting Dias, containing local VIPs, and entered the arena where the Sunset Ceremony was to take place. This was impressive as usual and the rain kept away until it was over. The thousands of visitors then departed after a very enjoyable day.

*Photos by Margaret Quincey*







