

A short history of 293 Squadron Cowbridge, Air Training Corps in the 1970s

The Squadron was one of the first commissioned in the UK and was originally established in Cowbridge in 1941 as part of the activities of the then Cowbridge Independent School. It subsequently closed in the early 1950s.

The Squadron was re-established in 1975 by Flight Lieutenant Ernie Deere with the help of other Cowbridge residents Mr Derek Reeves, Mr Roy Williams and Mr 'Rowley' Rowlands. The Squadron was initially housed in the Cowbridge Lower School, but was moved after a short time to the Cowbridge Institute behind the town hall. This now houses the Pocket Full of Presents emporium and a Chinese food provider. It transferred to its present headquarters at the bottom of the lane just south of the new Cowbridge Comprehensive School in 1979.

The Squadron staff were all civilian volunteers. The initial Squadron staff from 1975 were Flight Lieutenant Ernie Deere, Flying Officers Desmond Cartwright, Gerry Rosser and Terry Prosser and Warrant Officer Bryndley Jacobs. They were joined by Flying Officers Philip Davey and William Jones in 1979. The Squadron was given invaluable assistance during the 70s by two Civilian Instructors, the late Jim Overton and Charles Sanders. Jim Overton served the Squadron for 20 years. Ernie Deere was Commanding Officer until 1977, when he was succeeded by Des Cartwright who was CO until 1979. Des was followed by Gerry Rosser who was CO until 1984. Bryn Jacobs served until his untimely death in 1991. Terry Prosser retired from the Squadron in 2010.

Since 1975 over 1000 young people aged between 14 and 19 from Cowbridge and the surrounding villages have enrolled as Cadets. At the time of its re-establishment in 1975 the Air Training Corps was an all male organization. Girls living in Cowbridge joined a companion company, the Girls Venture Corps, but in 1987 the ATC opened its doors to girl members and the Girls Venture Corps was dissolved.

The Squadron has paraded for each Civic Sunday and annual Armistice parade since its re-establishment to the very considerable appreciation of the Cowbridge Town Council. The Squadron enjoys a full programme of educational, sporting and adventure training activities. Cadets also fly in gliders and powered aircraft and attend camps in Britain and abroad. The adventure training activities have ranged from expeditions in the Vale of Glamorgan and the Gower to mountaineering in the Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia. It has been the Squadron's aim that all Cadets should achieve Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and to date over 150 of these have been won by our Cadets including at least 22 Gold Awards.

Terry Prosser,

19th September 2014

I hope this will be of help to you - best wishes
TGP

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