

LIFE

AT

KETE

Acknowledgements

Extracts taken from...

HMS HARRIER

by the

**REVEREND
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Photographs courtesy of...

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Margaret Copley

PJ & MI Squibb

The construction of *HMS Harrier* at Kete on the Dale peninsula in the county of Pembrokeshire in south west Wales began in 1944. It was originally known as *HMS Goldcrest II*, a satellite of *HMS Goldcrest*, the Royal Naval Air Station at nearby Dale.



Harrier at Kete (foreground) with *HMS Goldcrest*, the Royal Naval Air Station at Dale (background)

On February 1st 1948 it was commissioned as *HMS Harrier*, the tenth 'ship' to bear the name, as the Royal Navy Aircraft Direction (RNAD) centre.

The purpose of the centre was to train Air Direction officers for service primarily with the aircraft carriers of the Fleet, and both ratings and WRNS as Air Plotters for service at sea and ashore.



Bill Brimson

WRNS Radar Plotting Course - Kete

c1951

In the early days aircraft could not be spared from the war at sea for training use. The Royal Navy used ice cream tricycles requisitioned from a well know ice cream manufacturer. Each trike was fitted with a radio telephone, a compass and a metronome for beating time. One trike would pretend to be an enemy bomber, and steer a course by compass while pedalling in strict time with the metronome. The radar operator's job was to spot it and direct the 'friendly' trikes to attack it.

Adapted from the National Trust Information Board.



Fighter Direction Tricycle

Fleet Air Arm Museum

Photograph supplied by Mrs E.M. Jones & Mrs Ruth Steere

The training of Air Direction officers to identify and take appropriate action against incoming 'enemy' aircraft used simulated attacks and on occasion, aircraft from aircraft carriers visiting Milford Haven, or aircraft from RNAS Dale.

When Dale closed Airwork Services flying mosquitos from RNAS Brawdy, then St David's and back to Brawdy again flew intercept missions until *HMS Harrier* closed in December 1960.

Also on the site was the Royal Naval School of Meteorology. Its principal task was the training of Instructor Officers in meteorology and Naval Airmen and WRNS as meteorological observers.



Bill Brimson

Meteorology area - Kete

At the Royal Naval School of Meteorology the training of Instructor branch officers as forecaster continued as well as the training of Naval Airmen and WRNS as meteorological observers until April 1960 when the school was transferred to *HMS Seahawk* at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall.



The living quarters at Kete were situated away from the instructional and administrative areas.

There was accommodation for WRNS, junior rates under training, permanent staff and Officers, there was a squash court and All Saints chapel. There was a wooden figurehead of Britannia at the main gate, half way between the living quarters and instructional area, on the Dale to St. Ann's Head road. Married quarters were in the village of Dale.



Rick Parkinson

Living quarters for the male ratings.

All Saints Chapel was situated within the living quarters area.



Chapel of All Saints decorated for Harvest



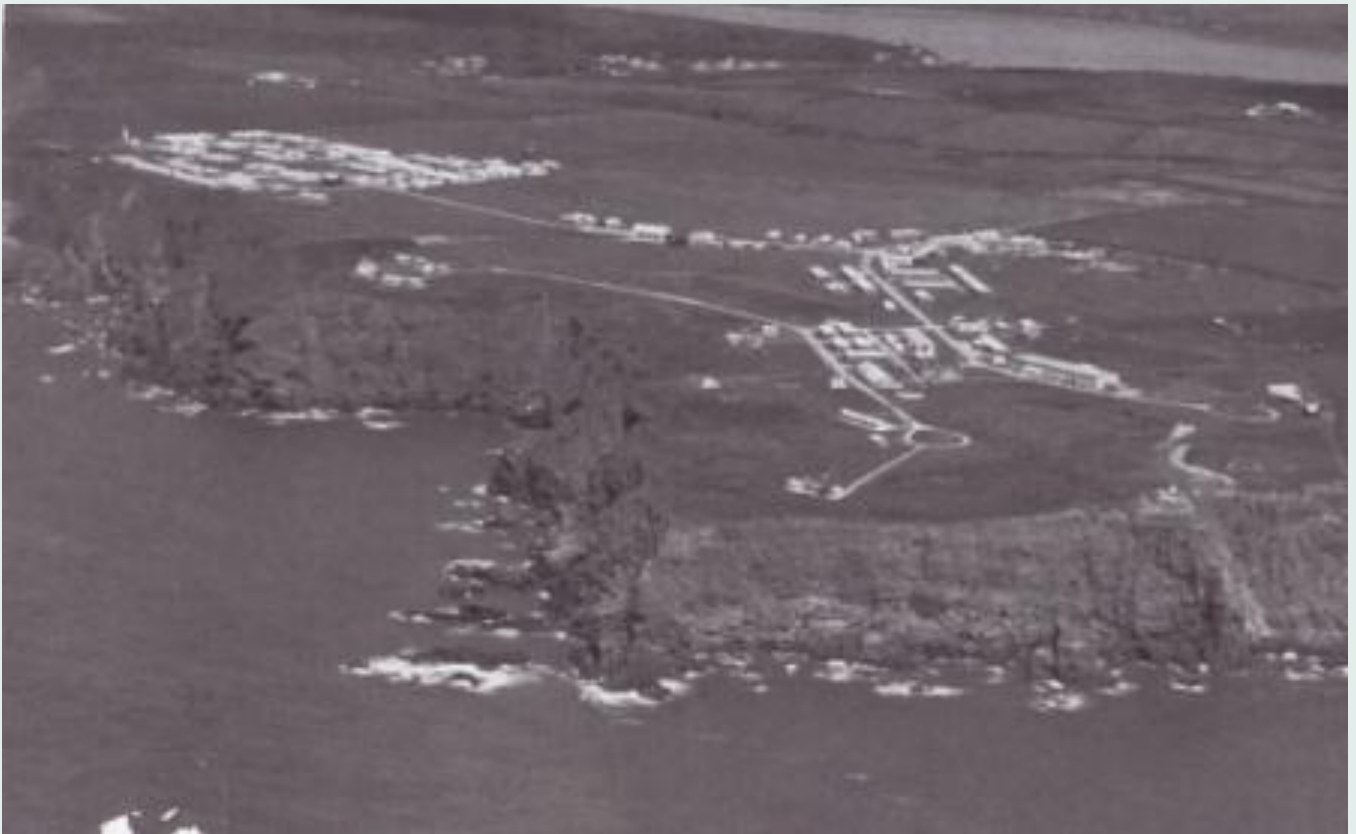
Wrens and sailors relaxation

Photographs supplied by Mrs E.M. Jones & Mrs Ruth Steere

As Kete was an isolated exposed location it suffered from the weather, in 1947 the station was cut off from the rest of the county, bread and milk being bought into Dale beach by sea.

In November 1954 a hurricane hit Pembrokehire causing damage estimated at £7000, lifting roofs from buildings, smashing in excess of 500 windows and causing other damage, fortunately there were no casualties.

The school of Meteorology recorded a wind speed of 106 mph.



Janet Jaehne

The isolation that is Dale & Kete.

Due to its isolation, the nearest town of Haverfordwest being 14 miles distant, Sport played a large part in the life of the camp. There were many clubs and societies, including amateur dramatics and an orchestra. Annual sports days that were open to the public were held in the early years then becoming Navy Days, with sports, air displays, bands and tours of the site.

Royal Navy personnel at *Harrier* were often called upon for formal engagements, every year they attended the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service in Milford Haven, as part of HM The Queen's Coronation visit to Wales *Harrier* provided the main Guard of Honour for her visit to Cardiff.



Guard of Honour.

In 1955 HM The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh arrived at Neyland railway station to board the Royal Yacht Britannia at the commencement of a Royal Visit to Pembrokeshire.

One hundred and twenty three WRNS lined the station yard and approaches. On the next day Sailors and WRNS lined the route during the visit to Milford Haven. Other important visitors included the Director of the WRNS in 1955 and the First Lord of the Admiralty in 1956.



Visit of HM The Queen and Prince Philip to Neyland on 6th August 1955

Photograph supplied by Mrs E.M. Jones & Mrs Ruth Steere

1960 saw the rundown of *Harrier*, the Royal Naval School of Meteorology moving to RNAS Culdrose in April and the Aircraft Direction School to *HMS Dryad* in July. *HMS Harrier* eventually paid off on 2 January 1961 with residual naval responsibilities transferred to RNAS Brawdy.

KETE IN LATER YEARS

Margaret Copley



What was the entrance to Kete is now the car park.





Ground where Kete once stood.

PJ & MI
Squibb



Ground where Kete once stood.



PJ & MI Squibb

Over 100 buildings and huts provided classrooms, offices and living quarters for about 800 people.

The base closed in 1960, and the buildings became derelict. The sight was cleared by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park authority in the 1970's, and is now owned by the National Trust.

Taken from the National Trust Information Board.



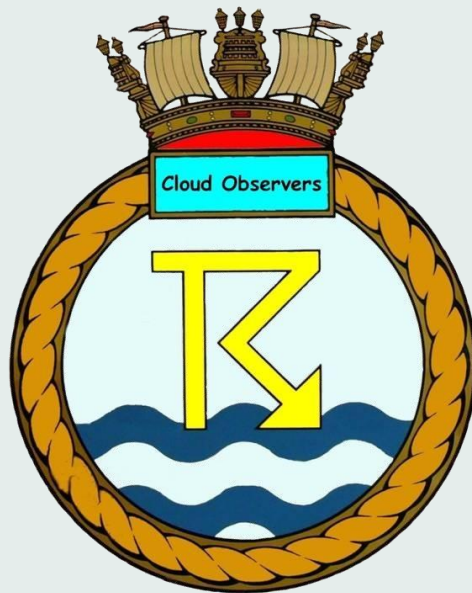
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The National Trust Plaque at the entrance to Kete.

Compiled by...

GWC
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On behalf of Cloud Observers



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