

The Gayford Flyer



To commemorate the achievements of our fearless aviator Hadleigh Cycling Club has established a Cycling Sportive, held each September.

The event takes cyclists from Hadleigh out into the idyllic Suffolk countryside on routes called Hurricane, Lancaster and Spitfire.



This is a non-competitive sportive, with fully signed routes of 50km and 100km. Details of the Gayford Flyer are available www.hadleighcyclingclub.org

Wattisham Station Heritage Air Field



The Museum is open the first Sunday in the Month from 11am—4.pm. Amongst the memorabilia are uniforms belonging to Air Commodore Gayford.

IMPORTANT Wattisham is an active military base visitors must pre book a visit. Contact:

www.wattishamstationheritage.org

A newsreel of Gayford's plane leaving for the record breaking flight can be found at www.britishpathe.com/video/brave-gayford

For more information about Hadleigh see our website:

visithadleighsuffolk.co.uk

OSWALD GAYFORD



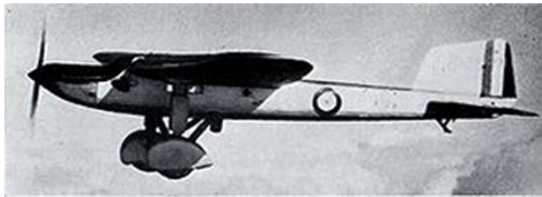
The National Portrait Gallery

Pioneer Aviator
1893 – 1945

Oswald Gayford, born in Hadleigh, began his service career in 1914 by joining the Navy. He transferred to the Royal Naval Air Service and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. By the end of the First World War in 1918, he had joined the new Royal Air Force.

His postings took him to Africa and the Middle East, where he gained a particular expertise for long range missions.

During the time between the wars, he achieved his world record breaking flights. In 1933 he flew non stop from Lincolnshire to South Africa in the British experimental long range, mono aircraft built by the Fairey Aviation Company. The flight covered a distance of 5,340 miles.



Fairey long range Mono Plane

Returning to his home town of Hadleigh on his 40th Birthday, the whole town turned out to cheer him, attaching ropes to his open topped car, turning off the engine and towing him to his mother's home in Angel St.

The house displayed a huge WELCOME HOME banner and was decorated with model aircraft. His long distance flying exploits had been seen on the Pathe News



Farnborough Airfield - Gayford is third from left

Five years later in 1938, his unit made an even longer flight from Egypt to Australia winning the Britannia Challenge trophy for the RAF.

At the start of World War Two 1939-45 he became the Commanding Officer at RAF Wattisham, not far from Hadleigh. After a posting in Egypt, he returned with the rank of Air Commodore to join Bomber Command. Oswald Gayford retired from military service in 1944 and was made Regional Controller for the Ministry of Fuel and Power. He died in 1945 aged only 52.

Eily (Kit) Gayford 1903-1991

Oswald's sister also showed a pioneering spirit. Most people are familiar with the role of the Land Girls during WW2 but not their equivalent on the canals. Later they were to become known as the 'Idle Women', because of the IW (Inland Waterways) badge they wore. Eily (seen here wearing a cap) was one of the



Women who operated the narrow boats, carrying vital supplies throughout the canal network. The work was dirty and arduous, living conditions cramped and very basic. The Idle Women never received any official recognition, though Eily, who trained the crews, was awarded the MBE and wrote a book about her experiences. She was to spend some years living on a houseboat, called The Buccaneer.