

FIDO

As the long winter nights approached, they brought along adverse weather. Crews, exhausted after hours of flying in severe icing conditions, battling through flak, searchlights and night fighters would often return over England to yet another enemy, equally as dangerous but this time a natural one... fog.

The 'boffins' came up with an answer to this problem which was given the title:

Fog Investigation Dispersal Operation, or FIDO for short.

The system involved pumping petroleum (mixed with alcohol) along a continuous line of pipes installed on both sides of the main runway. When ignited, huge flames shot into the sky where the resultant heat created a thermal effect, which in turn lifted the fog away from the runway.

Only fifteen airfields would receive this expensive but life saving system and Fiskerton was one of those selected. The contract for installation at Fiskerton was given to Messrs Austin Monk and the on-site assembly was to be carried out by Strong-Arc Welding Co., of Lincoln.

Fortunately 49 Squadron was operating from Dunholme Lodge during the latter part of the work. Fiskerton's first trials took place in late October and early November and gave several of the squadron's crews a welcome opportunity to practice landings in the turbulent effects created by such tremendous heat. FIDO was lit on 21 November, this time for night landing trials.

Unfortunately, neither the residents of Fiskerton village nor the Lincoln Fire Brigade had been informed of this first full-scale trial. Thinking a terrible accident had taken place; one of the villagers soon phoned the emergency services. After speeding their way from the Monks Road Station, the Brigade arrived at the airfield to be confronted by a six foot high wall of flame stretching for over a mile! Trepidation soon gave way to both astonishment and relief when the fire suddenly went out!

All these happenings were much to the amusement of the station personnel who had turned out in large numbers to watch the spectacle. Plied with drinks and hospitality in the Mess afterwards, the firemen soon came round to appreciating the funnier side of the affair.



Fiskerton, November 1943.

FIDO being tested during a late November afternoon, giving 49 Squadron crews the opportunity to practice landing by this dramatic system.