



## **Hack Green Secret Nuclear Bunker**

### **Pre-amble**

In recent months Para.Science have become aware that some people have come to believe that the former Regional Government Headquarters at Hack Green, Cheshire is the centre of a plan involving the military, UFO's and of course the obligatory conspiracy theories.

Doubting that this could be the case but open minded, Para.Science set out to discover the truth behind this tourist attraction.

A series of visits were arranged and with the full co-operation of the owner Mr. Rod Siebert, the bunker was examined and photographed. The historical context of the site was researched and the present use of and function of the site was likewise studied.

In compiling this report we are indebted to Mr. D.J. Smith [author, historian and air traffic controller], Mr. R. Siebert [site owner] and the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England [RCHME] for their assistance and co-operation.

### **Introduction**

Hack Green is a small dispersed rural hamlet lying about 4km south of the town of Nantwich, Cheshire.

The Regional Government Headquarters [RGHQ] 10.2 Hack Green is a semi-sunken, heavily protected bunker. In the event of nuclear war, it was planned that central government of this region would be conducted from this bunker. The bunker reused an earlier R6 type bunker built in the early 1950's, as part of the Rotor radar programme.

It would not be feasible within the context of this report to go into detail about the function of the site prior to it's use as an RGHQ. For readers wishing to delve further into the history of the site it is recommended that they consult the National Monuments Record survey available from the RCHME - [www.rchme.gov.uk](http://www.rchme.gov.uk)

It is useful to record briefly that the site was selected early in the war to become the site of a Ground Controlled Interception [GCI] radar station. After the war, the site continued in use as part of the Rotor GCI radar network, moving from brick huts and caravans to a purpose built R6 semi-submerged and protected bunker. The Rotor system was ended in 1958 but Hack Green was chosen to form part of the United Kingdom Air Traffic System [UKATS] Radar. The station was re-designated as an Air Traffic Radar Unit [ATCRU] and was staffed by both military and civilian controllers.

RAF Hack Green was closed in September 1966 and the site largely abandoned but the ownership of the site was still retained by the government.

In the mid 1970's the bunker was identified as a suitable location for the RGHQ for Home Defence Region 10.2. By this time the bunker had been almost derelict for almost a decade and refurbishment involved virtual stripping and remodelling the interior and relaying of the roof. This work was so exten-

sive that few features from the original bunker now remain. Conversion work began in 1980 and took around 5 years at the cost of £22 million. The RGHQ finally became operational in 1984.

## The Bunker



The bunker newly re-furbished bears little resemblance to the standard R6 bunker form. Most of the internal walls date from the period following conversion to RGHQ. Partition walls from this date are easily recognised by the use of breeze block. Ceilings are covered with spray finished concrete with roof supports 2m apart, 0.37m wide and 0.47m deep.



Originally, the bunker was approached from its south western corner up a flight of nine steps. During the conversion the cutaway corner was closed by the construction of the generator room and the main entrance moved onto the southern elevation.

The steel blast door is 1.5m wide by 2.25m tall. It opens outward and has rubber seals. Inside is a small lobby at the foot of the original flight of stairs.

At the head of these stairs is a door leading into the Decontamination room and to the left is the Control room, with sliding glass screen to monitor entry into the bunker complex.



Behind the Control room is the electrical switch room.

The main air intake consists of a raised projecting air intake on the eastern elevation of the bunker. Below this at ground level is an opening in the southern elevation, the interior of which is sealed with a metal grill.



At the control room the passageway turns into the main axial corridor.

This is set off centre and runs the entire length of the bunker at upper floor level.

At the end of the corridor are three sets of double doors which may be used to segregate movements within this area. In keeping with the original configuration of the bunker a passage leads to the female toilets and showers.

Adjacent to this is a single flight of stairs which leads to the lower level.

Returning to the upper floor corridor, at the top of the stairs are a pair of double swing doors.



Beyond these opening off the western side of the corridor are the male toilets and showers, sick bay, store, female dormitories and male dormitories.

Ranged along the eastern side of the corridor are:

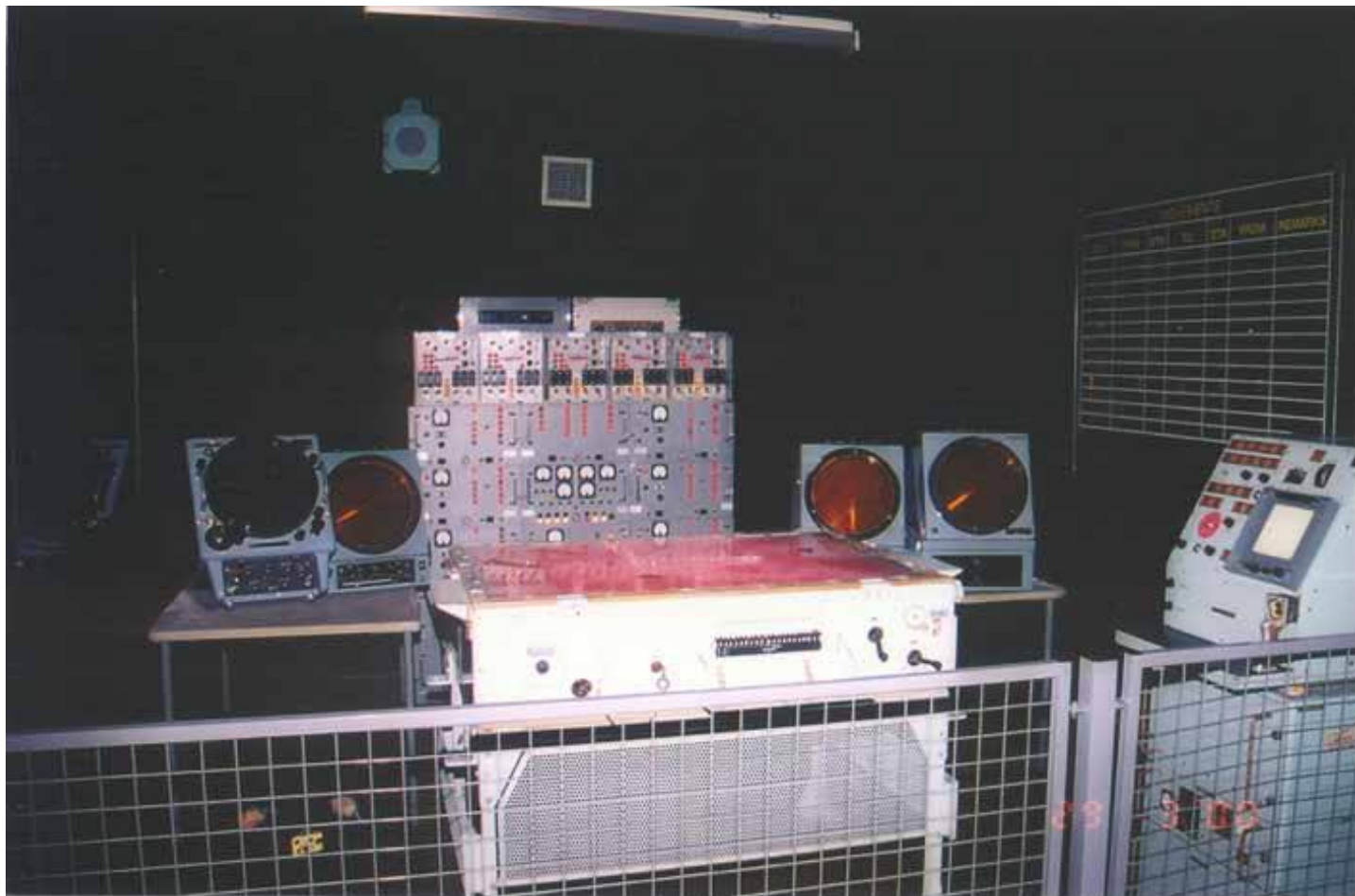
The Uniformed Services Room:



The Common Room:



The Administration Room:



The kitchen, store and canteen:



and another male dormitory in the north east corner of the bunker. In the early 1990's a double blast door was inserted into the northern wall of this room to allow it to be used as a workshop. Today this serves as the main entrance to the museum.

At the northern end of the bunker was another entrance, this was entered through a steel blast door. In a corresponding arrangement to the main entrance access to the upper floor of the bunker was by a flight of concrete stairs. It was also through this entrance that most of the plant was installed into the bunker. To lift heavy loads a steel lifting beam is secured into the roof. At the head of these stairs is the only remaining 1950's blast door, with a bottom hinged window light above.

Beyond this door a double swing door opens into the main axial corridor. At this end of the corridor is a stair well with a central shaft with a lifting beam above, to enable plant to be lowered into the lower level.

The lower level is laid out to a similar plan to the upper floor with a long axial corridor placed directly below the upper level corridor. In the Northwest corner of the bunker behind the stair well is a small self contained room to accommodate the drivers and maintenance teams. Working southwards along the corridor, doors lead off into the Senior Telecom officer's room, the information room (pictured below):



and double doors lead into the plant room (pictured below):



from which access may be gained into the tank room, which houses a large tank that holds the bunker's water supply.

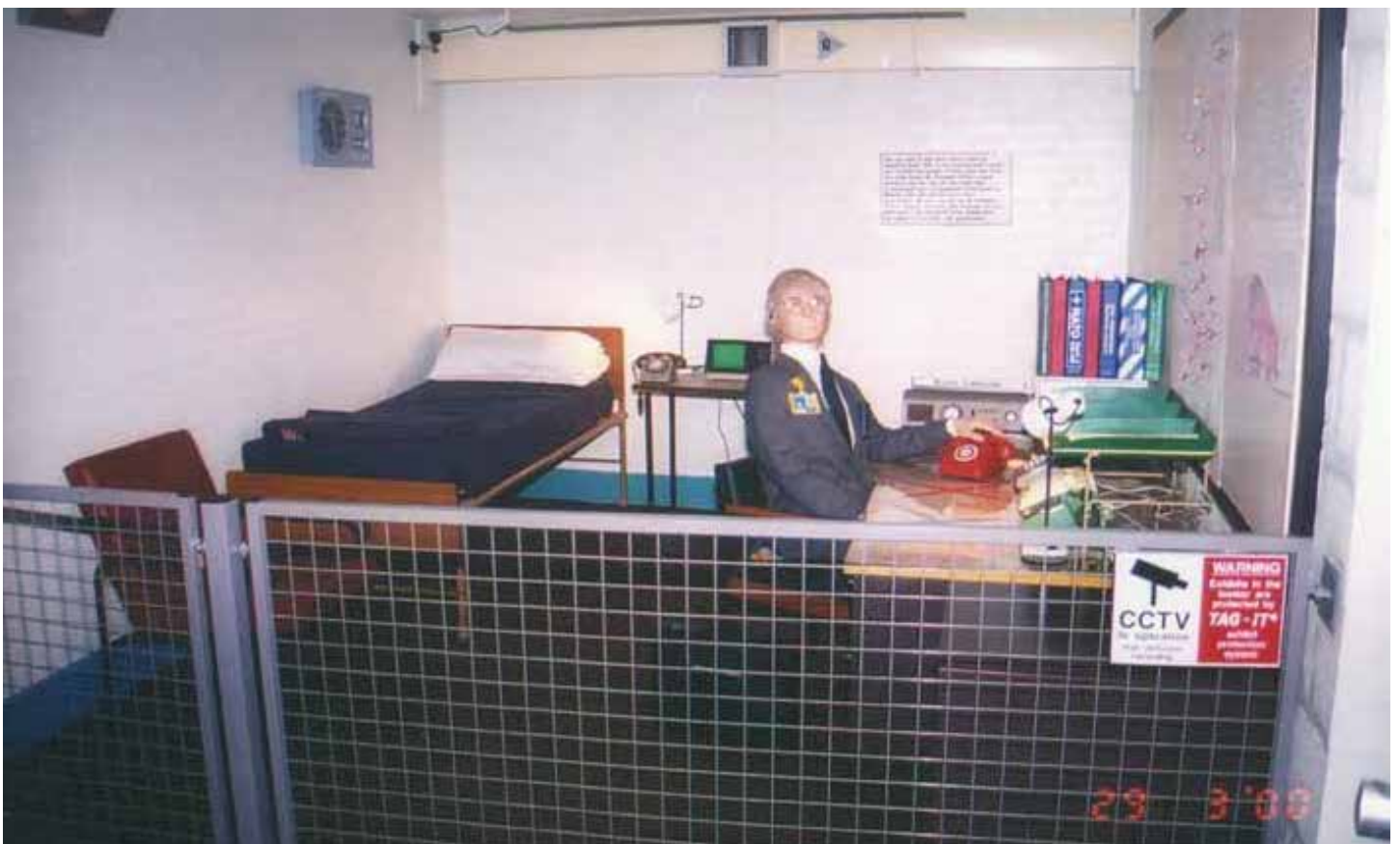
At the end of this corridor a small flight of steps leads down to the military communications room in the Southwest corner and two store rooms (pictured on the next page).



The Military Communications Room

The most important rooms in the bunker were located along the eastern side of the bunker and were occupied by the Regional Commissioner and the services needed to support his role.

The Regional Commissioner's room (below) was located at the centre of this complex.



To the south was a large room occupied by representatives of selected government departments and adjacent to this a room for the secretarial services:



To either side of the commissioner's room was the Principal Officer's room and a conference room:



To the north of the Commissioner's room were rooms occupied by Common services, shown on the next page.





Left: a BBC office and studio; and Right: the scientists' room

In the Northeast corner of the bunker were located the main communications functions, including *clock-wise from left*: Communications Centre (ComCen) Registry; a radio room; a PMBX room; and Communications centre.



and in the corner of the bunker the British Telecom Equipment room (pictured below).



Entry into this most sensitive area of the RGHQ was restricted by desks placed at the entrances to the ComCen Registry and the Government department's room. Along the northern side of the bunker beneath the entrance passage is another storage area.

One of the most substantial alterations to the R6 bunker was the insertion of a mezzanine level. This is accessed by a flight of stairs adjacent to the administration room. This floor houses a strong room, a store room and a large room used for additional space requirements by the various government departments. A staircase at the southern end of this room leads down to the government department's room on the lower level.



## The Bunker



Para.Science members made a series of visits during late March to view the bunker and its associated museum.

Outside the bunker are a number of displays including the nose section of an RAF Phantom interceptor, several military vehicles and perhaps the most important exterior exhibit the unique Marconi type 264 A/H radar antenna.

This was installed during 1962 as part of Hack Green's Air Traffic Control commitments.



The antenna comprises the middle array of the type 82 combined with the upper array of the type 84. Originally it was mounted over a single storey brick building which stood near the sharp bend in the approach lane to the site. During our visits a team of workers was busy restoring this item and it was hoped to have the antenna rotating by the middle of April 2000.



Standing aside from the eastern side of the main bunker is steel section mast used for mobile telephone communications.

The control function of this mast is now external to the bunker and is housed in a large metal box adjacent to the foot of the mast.

Entrance to the museum is via the former male dormitory /workshop and now housing a series of military exhibits and a television presentation.

The former canteen provides visitors with refreshments and a range of souvenirs before commencing the tour proper. There was no guide and visitors simply follow a numbered and well sign posted trail through the many rooms and over the two levels.

The museum uses many of the rooms to house displays relating to the cold war era including a pair of WE177 free-fall nuclear bombs in the former uniformed services room:



The lower level has been set out to depict the bunker's role as an RGHQ and allows visitors a chance to peer into the world of secret government operations in wartime. One or two of the rooms on this level also have displays that whilst unrelated to their original function are nevertheless relevant to the theme of the museum.

The former information room has been converted to represent a Ballistic Missile Early Warning System [BMEWS] centre. This was never located at Hack Green but makes an interesting exhibit all the same.

The bunker is maintained to an almost fully functioning state of repair although much of the equipment is now redundant. The large plant room still functions and indeed supplies all the water, heating and lighting for the bunker. With much of the structure being below ground and airtight without this room many of the visitors I fear would have to be removed by ambulance.

## The Mezzanine Level

This additional floor was the source of much speculation recently in some circles. Blacked out windows and a whole missing floor to which public access is denied was sited as proof that something was afoot. Locked doors and silent alarms backed up by a number of remote CCTV cameras lead some folk almost inevitably to the wrong conclusion.



As ever the truth is always more mundane but no less rewarding to uncover. A simple request to view the mezzanine was met with ready consent by the owner and we were conveyed through the locked doors and into the domain of the misguided! The mezzanine as described in the RCHME survey is in fact a very large, mostly empty room which is used by the museum as a conference centre and store. The strongroom holding the archive. The room is sometimes let out for groups and functions and provides a useful meeting place for the museum functions. The reason that this room was built also is mundane and straightforward that being to provide additional space for the various government departments that were required to be housed within the RGHQ but exceeded the space within the bunker. It was a more practical option therefore to insert an additional level rather than increase the size of the bunker to accommodate them.

## Nearby the Bunker

The fields surrounding the bunker are full of the remnants of the former radar sites. Concrete plinths abound and they are linked to the bunker site via sub surface cable ducts. Houses that used to accommodate the RAF personnel are nearby on the approach roads to the museum site. Many of these

former buildings have been demolished and are now only marked by concrete plinths and derelict huts. Next door to the bunker is a maggot farm which recycles abattoir waste to grow maggots for fishing.

Access to the site is very well sign posted from the centre of Nantwich follow the main A530 Nantwich to Whitchurch road.

There are a number of other interesting visitor attractions within a few miles.

For those with an interest in former military establishments RAF Calveley, a former RAF fighter base is to found only 4 miles North of Nantwich on the A51. Today the site houses various light industries and a farm supplies shop. Many of the hangars survive as does the original control tower. Calveley is used as a convenient turning point for low flying military aircraft and in 1974, two Harrier aircraft collided just to the north with fatal results.

Little Moreton Hall is just a few miles east of Nantwich and is an excellent example of a Tudor hall. It is not recorded if this hall has a resident ghost but it most certainly looks like it ought to have!

## Conclusion

The 'Secret' bunker at Hack Green is certainly a most interesting attraction and one that we can most heartily recommend. The owner is to be congratulated on establishing a first rate all weather attraction.

After examining the building and the site most carefully we can but reach one conclusion that this building does not continue to function in any capacity other than that as a museum and visitor attraction. There is no secret level either within or beneath the existing structure. No tunnels communicate with the exterior, except those cable ducts mentioned earlier. The government operate no facility, clandestine or otherwise at Hack Green.

Evidence presented at a talk to demonstrate Hack Green's continued secret role included the extensive modification of water pipes and other services. These are still required by the museum for the reasons described above and in any case were newly installed after 1980 when the bunker was refurbished and prepared for it's role as an RGHQ.

Similarly, the steel section mast adjacent to the bunker is simply a cellular telephone communications mast with associated microwave link dish antenna. This whole system is external from the bunker itself but takes advantage of the site's suitability as a transmitter site it also brings in useful revenue for the museum.



Finally, Para.Science feel obliged to state that one alien creature was in fact photographed inside Hack Green.

We leave it to the readers to make their own assessment as to the authenticity of the picture!!!!