

# **RAF during WWII**

## **24th June 2003 - Roy Underdown Pavilion**

When the speaker was introduced at our meeting in June, we were warned that some of what we would hear would be difficult to believe, and it was. Squadron Leader David Roberts, DFM, told of his experiences since joining the Air Force in 1937. He spoke about training at Cranwell, and being 'volunteered' as an air gunner to fly in Bristol Blenheim aircraft in 53 Squadron. Then, on 3rd September 1939, the voice of Neville Chamberlain on the tannoy announcing that they were at war. He talked about the early months when there was no shooting or bombing, and he felt as if he was on holiday. Then he took us through the times of three sorties a day, with heavy losses and little sleep. Not a cheerful subject, but the Squadron Leader sprinkled his talk with amusing accounts of characters and conditions in the services in those days. Like the latrine which was a deep pit with a pole across it, on which you sat, and the man who jumped off during a raid and dangled from his braces all night. Someone asked how they had coped under such conditions, "Well, the British sense of humour helped," he said, and he obviously hasn't lost that!