

Stories from the skies of the past

By [Evening Gazette](#) on March 3, 2009 12:23 PM in [Local News](#)



THE vital role Thornaby-based airmen played in the defence of the United Kingdom has been finally recorded thanks to a history teacher.

Louise Wilkinson, pictured, head of history at Grangefield School, Stockton, has had her book, *The Kipper Patrol*, published.

It is the first time the stories of the members of 608 Squadron Auxiliary Air Force and Thornaby Aerodrome have been recorded in a book.

Louise researched the history of the squadron and aerodrome for her MPhil course at the University of Teesside.

She then followed the advice of the veterans she interviewed to publish a book.

It is now available to buy online.

Affectionately known as *The Kipper Patrol*, the squadron was formed in 1930, as part of Coastal Command, and were involved in protecting shipping convoys, looking for submarines, and defending supply routes.

The book tells the story of the airmen and how the Second World War changed their lives as they ceased to be part-timers and became full-time members of the RAF.

Louise said: "I interviewed lots of men who served in the squadron. They were men who worked in the community in places like ICI and gave up a night a week and weekends.

"They existed from 1930 to 1939 when they were embedded with the RAF. It was broken up in 1944."



She decided to research the squadron because she wanted to do something that had local interest, pictured above members of the *Kipper Patrol*.

"A lot of the veterans I'd interviewed couldn't quite get a grip on the fact I was doing a further degree and asked will you write a book? Nothing had been written about the squadron," she said.

She said juggling her job as a teacher and doing the research was difficult but added the school had been "fantastically supportive."

The book is available from www.pneumasprings.com or from good online bookstores.