

Institute of **Physics**

LONDON AND SOUTH EASTERN BRANCH REMS SECTION

BROOKLANDS MUSEUM
THURSDAY 6 MARCH 2008

This visit has been organised by Bernard Gaydon

Our visit to Brooklands Museum will take in many aspects of the development of motoring and aviation. For three decades from 1907 the famous racing track, placed like a giant footprint in the Surrey countryside, just 20 miles south west of London, was the centre of British Motor Sport. The two and half mile circuit with its two massive concrete bankings was the very epitome of speed and captured the imagination of the period. What happened at Brooklands was news and the drivers that raced there became household names. Many of the classic racing cars are on display, together with associated memorabilia and historic facilities.

A.V. Roe came to Brooklands in 1907 to build his own aeroplane shed and assemble his No. 1 biplane scaled up from a prize-winning model. The following year, Roe and his fragile aeroplane with its 24hp engine briefly took to the air for the first time - and he became the first Englishman to fly in a powered aeroplane of his own design. In 1909, wealthy newspaper proprietor and aviation promoter George Holt-Thomas encouraged Hugh Locke King and Clerk of the Course Major Lindsay Lloyd to create one of Britain's first aerodromes in the middle of the Track. Soon, other pioneers and the first aircraft companies arrived - in February 1910, the British and Colonial Aircraft Company, later renamed The Bristol Aeroplane Company, took premises at Brooklands and offered flying lessons. The pioneer who was to leave the greatest and most enduring mark on Brooklands and on British aviation as a whole, was Thomas Sopwith, a wealthy young man determined to teach himself to fly. This he achieved by the end of 1910, but not without mishap - however with relatively low flying speeds involved, as he later recalled "you could do quite a lot of crashing without hurting anybody at all". There are numerous examples of aircraft and associated technology on display; my recollection is that this includes a VC10 with a gold-plated bath.

The Brooklands Concorde Experience is an opportunity for an extra £4 to go aboard a Concorde, part of which was manufactured at Brooklands, and experience a simulated supersonic flight. This is worth doing once in my view.

10:30h Check-in individually at the ticket-office, where they will have a list of names, and ask to be directed along the 5 minute walk to the Sunbeam Tea Room for refreshments and other pit-stop facilities.

11:00h Meet outside the old Reception, near the Tea Room, for a two hour guided tour. Our party will be split into two. If you have chosen to go on the Concorde Experience, find out which "flight" has been booked for you (we cannot all go at the same time).

13:15h Return to the Sunbeam Tea Room for lunch.

For those going on the Concorde Experience, make your way (5 minutes from the Tea Room) to the departure area to arrive there at either 14:25h or 14:55h.

There are numerous exhibits in the sheds, hangers and in parked aircraft for us to spend the rest of the afternoon, individually or in small groups as we choose.

16:00h Museum closes.

