

# *Dover's Salute to Bleriot*

by Terry Sutton

Following an initiative taken by The Dover Society, Dover District Council has revealed details of local celebrations to mark the 100th anniversary of Louis Bleriot's pioneer flight across the Dover Strait.

The celebrations will focus on Northfall Meadow where Bleriot landed on 25th July 1909 after a flight from Calais of 37 minutes. At that time Northfall Meadow was free of bushes, but is now heavily studded with trees and undergrowth.

Dover District Council has plans to refurbish the site especially the area around the Bleriot monument where the Tricolour used to fly. A council spokesman says that tenders for clearing the site are being sought.

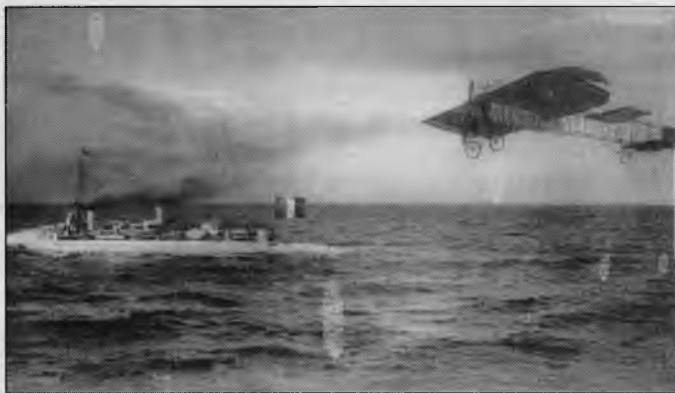
Next summer's celebrations will cover the weekend of Saturday 25th July and Sunday 26th July. Events scheduled will include an Edwardian seaside carnival on Dover's waterfront while overhead there will be an air pageant of aircraft depicting a century of flight. Most of the aircraft will have taken off from the French coast. One of the aircraft lined up to take part in this grand flypast is an original Bleriot XI aeroplane, controlled by an ace French pilot.

The British authorities are working with the French and Italian governments, the Armée de l'Air (the French air force) and the Royal Air Force to make it a spectacular weekend. The famous Red Arrows and their French counterpart La Patrouille de France expected to take part in the air pageant.

Aircraft, that are able, will land in the grounds of the Duke of York's Royal Military School to offer static displays of historic aircraft on both the Saturday and Sunday.

Saturday's celebrations will end with a formal dinner in the grounds of Dover Castle and with a firework spectacular over the town and port.

On the Sunday more events are planned including another Red Arrows flypast and displays by RAF units on the seafront and at the Duke of York's school.



*Artist's impression of Bleriot*