

# A History of Aviation an Illustrated Talk

*Bob and Kathleen Hollingsbee reported by Alan Lee*

The talk at the AGM was unusual in that it consisted of a great number of pictures. Bob ably, assisted by Ken Chapman, gave a most illuminating history of aviation in the local area.

He started with ballooning from 1700 to 1899 with mention of the pioneering flight from Dover Castle to France by Blanchard and Jeffries in 1785. In 1899 after a conference, a balloon ascended from Dover College carrying greetings to French scientists in Boulogne.



Blanchard Balloon KG  
1785 Engraving

Stott had planned to fly his unusual 'Flying Tub' machine in 1876 but failed to do so. He and his companion once lodged at River.

Moving on to powered flight we saw and heard of many famous names, airfields and flying clubs in the area. Louis Bleriot landed on Northfall Meadow after the first solo flight across the Channel in 1909. The Dover Aero Club House was opened at Whitfield in 1912 by the Marquis of Camden. The same year Harriet



Air Station Clubhouse Whitfield 1912



Charles Rolls Launch Rail Swingate Airfield 1910



Harriet Quimby Flies Channel from Whitfield 1912



Edward Crundall RFC Plane named 'Whitfield' 1917.



*Short Bros Biplane 'T-5' at Whitfield Airfield 1912*

Quimby took off from here and flew over Dover Castle on the first solo channel crossing by a woman. Swingfield airfield, opposite the Duke of York's Royal Military School was where Charles Rolls made the first non-stop return cross channel flight in 1910. Old Capel Aerodrome was just off the Dover to Folkestone Road. Later we also had seaplanes stationed in Dover Harbour. In WWI Wing Commander Edward Duncan Crundall DFC named his aircraft 'Whitfield' after his place of birth (9th December 1896).

*Editor's note*

*In 1914 he joined the Royal Naval Air Service and served with No 8 Naval Squadron. In April 1917 flying a Sopwith Triplane serial number N5464 he downed 2 enemy aircraft. On the 10th May he was wounded and shot down by Alois Helmann (a German ace with 15 victories). On 28 July 1917, he was downed by Adolf von Tutschek. In August 1917 in the same plane he downed one more plane. He then switched to 210 Squadron Royal Air Force, as a Flight Commander, and flying a Sopwith Camel, s/n B7860, in July and August 1918 he downed 4 enemy planes. He was awarded the Distinguished*

*Flying Cross. He then flew civil flights between the wars and rejoined the Royal Air Force as Commanding Officer of 116 Calibration Squadron in WWII until 1945 and was awarded the Air Force Cross. After the war he started charter airlines to French Equatorial Africa and to South Africa. His autobiography 'Fighter Pilot on the Western Front' was published in 1975. He died in the 1980's.*

In 1929 Sir Alan Cobham flew passenger flights from Swingfield airfield. In 1934 there was the Dover Air Pageant at Whitfield Airfield, while in 1964 the comedy 'The Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines' recruited many Dover people as film extras.



*Sir Alan Cobham Biplane 'Youth of Britain' Swingate Airfield 1929*



*'Airman' Eric Sykes Filming Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines Dover Beach 1964*