

BROOKLANDS VISIT

This month, I visited Brooklands Museum in Surrey, having made a previous visit some 15 years ago with Alan & Margaret Brown, John Thompson and other members of the NFAG on a coach trip. There have been some notable changes since our visit in 1999, the most notable being the arrival in 2004, of Concorde G-BBDG, the first production aircraft built in England.

This aircraft is open to the public, and as part of the tour, you get to fly at Mach 2 at 65,000ft (well that's what the display in the cabin indicates!), the seats "vibrate" and the "flight" is completed with a small "kick" in the back of your seat when Mach 1 and 2 are reached!!).

G-BBDG was the first Concorde to fly supersonic with 100 passengers on board. Situated on a roundabout near the entrance to the museum, is G-CONC, the 40% scale model of Concorde, which sat on a roundabout at the entrance to the Heathrow tunnel for 20 years. G-CONC has now been replaced at Heathrow by an Airbus A380 in Emirates livery. The Hawker Hurricane prototype first flew from Brooklands in 1935 and a Brooklands built Hurricane, Z2389, was recovered from Russia in 1997 and is now on display in the aircraft hangar, along with the "Loch Ness" Wellington N2980, bomber recovered from the depths of



the Loch in 1985, having ditched there on a training flight in 1940. 2,515 Wellingtons were built at Brooklands, a fifth of the total number. The Sultan of Oman donated his personal VIP equipped Vickers VC-10 A40-AB to the museum and this was flown into Brooklands in July 1987. The VIP interior, complete with two bedrooms and double beds



and a luxurious lounge complete with settees and TV's was fitted out at BAC Hurn in 1974. Most of you will have seen A40-AB on the big screen, as it has a fleeting 5 minutes of fame, when operated by British United as G-ASIX, it appeared in the 1966 movie "Born Free". Behind the VC-10 is G-APIM, a beautifully preserved example of the Vickers Viscount, in British Air Ferries livery. The initial fuselage assembly of 'APIM was done at Hurn in 1957, and then final assembly was at Brooklands, G-APIM flying from Brooklands in June 1958. A Hawker P.1127, XP984, the 6th prototype built is



displayed outside the aeroplane hangar, next to the motor racing clubhouse. In March 1965, whilst flying XP984, Hawker's Chief Test Pilot Hugh Merewether had an engine fire at 28,000ft and made a successful forced landing at RAF Thorney Island. Also on external display are two Hawker Hunters, E-412 & E-421, both ex Danish Air Force examples. A rather sorry looking Supermarine Swift F.4 fuselage, WK198, sits next to the replica 1907 A.V. Roe flight shed. In 1953, Mike Lithgow, flying WK198 in Libya, broke the world absolute speed record at 737.7 mph.



Of course a visit to Brooklands wouldn't be complete without

a visit to the section of the iconic banked motor racing circuit at the edge of the site, which saw motor racing events from 1907 to 1939. Now rather uneven in places, and moss covered, this atmospheric piece of motor racing history is available to buy! On the Brooklands website, you can buy a square yard of banking to "own" ...www.brooklandsmuseum.com



Take offs and landings from Brooklands by fixed wing aircraft are now impossible, as Mercedes Benz World have moved in, providing the general public (who have excessive spare cash!) with a variety of driving experiences, on test tracks built on the former runway.

Any newsletter contributions, ideas or comments to:

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