

## Newsletter: Spring 2015

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### Introduction

Welcome to the Buildings Archaeology Group spring newsletter, this time with a First World War theme. In this issue Claire Howard of Historic England writes about Hooton Park Aerodrome, on the outskirts of Ellesmere Port, the remaining buildings of which are on the Heritage at Risk register. Jeff Spencer of Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust writes of the collaborative project between the four Welsh archaeological trusts and local communities to identify and interpret physical remains relating to the military and civil response to the First World War in Wales. Paul Stamper of Historic England writes of a similar project taking place in England that aims to enhance understanding of sites of remembrance and memorialisation, including halls and playing fields. On travels around London in the course of work and leisure, the editor (Lara Band) has been taking photographs of traces left by the First World War on London; these come at the end of the articles section.

Following the article on bee boles in the last newsletter a reader alerted us to the existence of the IBRA Bee Bole register. The register was started in 1952 and is now a searchable, online database. It contains over 1500 records of bee boles and other bee keeping structures, with images, in Great Britain and Ireland and can be found at <http://ibra.beeboles.org.uk/>.



@IfABAG

## News from The Committee

The last committee meeting took place on 16 January 2015 at House Mill, Bromley By Bow, London. The updating of the Standards and Guidance was discussed as were details for the upcoming BAG session at the ClfA conference to be held in Cardiff on 15 -17 April 2015 (see below). Marketing materials were discussed and have since resulted in business cards and a banner for the BAG.

As with the last committee meeting, which was followed by a visit to The Clifton Rocks Railway ([click Here for info](#)), the meeting was followed by a tour of the mill. This was conducted by Beverley Charters of The River Lea Tidal Mill Trust and by committee member Tim Murphy. The Grade 1 Listed House Mill was originally built in 1776 and is the largest existing tidal mill in the world. Mills in the area originally produced flour to feed the population of the City of London. House Mill, however, was grinding grain for the production of alcohol - largely gin and working in conjunction with the distillery buildings on Three Mill Island, which are now used as film studios. House Mill ceased operation in 1941 following heavy bombing in the area. The River Lea Tidal Mill Trust aims, ultimately, to see House Mill running as a self-sustaining, lively and vibrant visitor attraction. It also has a lovely café and rooms available for hire and is certainly worth a visit. Their website is currently under construction; visit their Facebook page for more information: [Click Here](#)

The next committee meeting will be 25th June and followed by a visit to Stow Maries Great War aerodrome in Essex ([Click Here](#)). Details will be sent out to BAG members and other groups when details are confirmed.

By the time this newsletter is issued the ClfA 2015 conference, this time in Cardiff and on the theme *The future of your profession*, will have taken place. The BAG session *Our past, its future: the built environment in a changing world* was organised by committee members Edward James and Cath Poucher. Concerned with the environmental and related threats to built heritage as identified in English Heritage's NHPP 2011 - 2015 and Key Messages Report (2013), the session looked at how the balance between the imperative to be sustainable, and the need to conserve heritage significance can be struck. A report on the session will follow in the next newsletter.



House Mill, January 2015. Lara Band



The distillery building on Three Mill Island from the roof of House Mill, January 2015. Lara Band



The Stone Floor inside House Mill, January 2015. Lara Band



Three Mills packaging, House Mill, January 2015. Lara Band

## Other News

### Developer bulldozes pub after being denied planning permission

On the 8 April 2015 Kilburn's The Carlton Tavern, built in 1920-21 for Charrington & Co, probably by Frank J Potter, was demolished without warning. In January the developer CTLX had been refused planning permission to demolish the building and replace it with a pub and 10 flats. According to The Brent and Kilburn Times the landlady had been told that the pub would be closed for an inventory following the Easter weekend and only found out that it was being demolished as it was happening. The pub was a particularly good example of an interwar improved public house, with many original features. According to various sources, including the Architects Journal a case was to be made for Grade II listing. The Architects Journal also states that Westminster City Council is seeking legal advice on the matter.

[http://www.kilburntimes.co.uk/news/heritage/shock\\_as\\_historic\\_pub\\_in\\_kilburn\\_is\\_demolished\\_with\\_no\\_warning\\_and\\_without\\_permission\\_1\\_4027231](http://www.kilburntimes.co.uk/news/heritage/shock_as_historic_pub_in_kilburn_is_demolished_with_no_warning_and_without_permission_1_4027231)

<http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/developer-demolishes-historic-london-pub/8681094.article?blocktitle=Latest-news&contentID=7896>

### Battersea Arts Centre to receive £1m from Government

Following the fire, the London arts centre is to receive £1m from the government to help with redevelopment from DCMS and HM Treasury: [https://www.bac.org.uk/blog\\_entry/3068/about\\_us/blog\\_feed/david\\_jubb\\_phoenix\\_updates/an\\_update\\_from\\_david\\_jubb\\_braving\\_the\\_wind](https://www.bac.org.uk/blog_entry/3068/about_us/blog_feed/david_jubb_phoenix_updates/an_update_from_david_jubb_braving_the_wind)

The Battersea Arts Centre will receive £1 million funding from Government to help the Centre continue with important redevelopment work, the Culture Secretary Sajid Javid announced today. Earlier this month a blaze broke out in the Grade II-listed venue and destroyed most of the Grand Hall. Work was already underway prior to the fire to restore the building. Government, through Arts Council England, has already contributed £4.69 million to this redevelopment project.

Culture Secretary Sajid Javid, said:

*I was terribly sad to hear about the fire at the Arts Centre but was deeply relieved that no one was hurt. I have visited the centre to see the damage and met the very dedicated team of staff who have launched an impressive fundraising campaign and are doing everything to carry on as far as possible.*

*The Arts Centre are having to divert all their available resources into dealing with the aftermath and so I am pleased to be able to confirm that Government will provide £1 million towards the ongoing redevelopment work to help get this important south London venue back on track.*

Read more from Battersea Arts Centre on progress since the fire here: [http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/BAG\\_newsletter\\_36\\_Autumn\\_2014.pdf](http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/BAG_newsletter_36_Autumn_2014.pdf)

## Historic England Enhanced Advisory Services

Historic England, formerly English Heritage, is inviting comment on proposals for Enhanced Advisory Services. A brief online survey is available here <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/enhanced-advisory-services-consultation/> until 8 May 2015.

Historic England writes that:

The Enhanced Advisory Services will offer greater speed, clarity and engagement from Historic England. Alongside our existing free planning and designation services, Historic England is now consulting on proposals for four enhanced services that will give greater certainty to complex or time sensitive development projects. The four services are:

- Fast-track Listing
- Listing enhancement
- Extended pre-application advice
- Screening service

Historic England will recover the cost of these services from our customers, thereby ensuring our core work is unaffected.

## The Scottish Historic Environment Audit (SHEA) 2014

The part that historic environment plays in a nation's wellbeing, cultural identity, education and economy has been highlighted by the 2014 Scottish Historic Environment Audit (SHEA).

From Historic Scotland's website: [http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/news/news\\_article.htm?articleid=45911](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/news/news_article.htm?articleid=45911)

The SHEA report compiled by Historic Scotland provides both a broad overview and detailed insight into the country's historic environment as well as outlining the direct and indirect economic benefits, investment levels and current condition of Scotland's historic monuments and listed buildings. The report is structured around the strategic priorities of Scotland's first strategy for the historic environment: Our Place in Time.

The audit is an ongoing project – last published in 2012 - which draws upon current data and research to provide facts and figures, which provide a health check for the nation's heritage sector. The report has been published in advance of the coming together of Historic Scotland and The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) later this year to form a new, lead heritage body, Historic Environment Scotland (HES). The audit builds on the information provided in previous SHEA reports compiled in 2010 and 2012.

## Pickles on planning

Eric Pickles has released a statement outlining the steps the government are taking to streamline the planning system, protect the environment, support economic growth and assist locally-led decision-making.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/planning-update-march-2015>

Among other issues the statement includes pronouncements on:

- Solar energy
- Brownfield land
- Green belt: protecting against inappropriate development
- Unauthorised encampments

- Parking
- Streamlining planning applications
- Planning guidance
- New homes

In the words of the statement:

This package of measures will help deliver more homes in a locally-led planning system, protect the environment, provide certainty for local residents and business, and contribute to the government's long-term economic plan and economic growth.

## University of Leicester Heritage Practice Training Courses

The University of Leicester is working in partnership with Historic England, the public body that looks after England's Historic Environment, to deliver a programme of short Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses, passing on practical, technical and specialist skills for those working in the heritage sector.

Over the next three years, the courses delivered by the new partnership will address skills gaps and needs that have been identified in market analysis commissioned by English Heritage, the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and the National Heritage Training Group (NHTG) among others. The short, one and two-day courses are recognised by the IHBC and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) as being suitable for meeting the CPD requirements of their members.

The programme is directed by Prof Simon Gunn who also directs the University's MA and MSc in Urban Conservation at the Centre for Urban History. Courses are delivered by staff from Historic England, experts from other organisations, as well as staff from the University of Leicester, ensuring that the University's research continues to inform and be informed by, professional practice.

Courses are held at the Grade II-listed College Court, a former halls of residence complex designed by Sir Leslie Martin and Trevor Dannatt, and built between 1958 and 1960 for the University of Leicester. The former halls were transformed into a residential conference centre, opening in 2013 with 18 meeting rooms and 123 en suite bedrooms. Several prizes have been awarded to this successful conversion project, including the RIBA East Midlands Award, RIBA East Midlands Conservation Award, and RIBA East Midlands Building of the Year Award for 2014.

Heritage Practice courses also make use of facilities on the University of Leicester's main campus, and the GII\* listed Engineering building by Stirling & Gowan, and the University's Special Collections featured during the recent successful course on Understanding Post-War Architecture. Courses extend into the wider region too; our forthcoming course Commemorating the Centenary: investigating the First World War on the Home Front will include a visit to the training area at Cannock Chase.

In addition to delivering courses at the University of Leicester, we are also working with the Heritage Skills Centre at Lincoln Castle, to provide a series of courses on practical conservation skills.

On Monday 22 and Tuesday 23 June 2015 we will be running a two day course focusing on World War One and its impact on the home front. The course aims to cover a wide variety of issues ranging from the application of archaeological techniques to understand the physical legacy of the war, including the range of sites and types of buildings that may be encountered, to the effect of total war on women's roles at home.

We are delighted to be including a trip to Cannock Chase to view the extant remains of the training area there as well information about the submerged legacy of the war off shore, the effects of the war on the Commonwealth and the role archaeology can play through excavation of modern battlefields and the material culture of the recent past, to the important role played in the development of aerial photography.

With input from speakers working for Historic England, private contractors, and also current PhD students we believe that this course offers a fantastic range of approaches for those getting involved in projects for the centenary events surrounding the commemoration of the First World War.

Our courses are designed to offer a unique and focused learning experience with only 20 places available we ensure you get quality time with your tutors and a chance to get really involved in the discussions, with prices starting from £325 please contact Pete Alfano on [heritagepractice@le.ac.uk](mailto:heritagepractice@le.ac.uk) or 0116 223 1987 to book your place. More information on all of the courses we are running please visit [www.le.ac.uk/heritage-practice](http://www.le.ac.uk/heritage-practice).

## First World War heritage projects in Wales

Jeff Spencer, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

Since 2012 the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts, with grant aid from Cadw, the Welsh Government's historic environment service, have been working to discover, identify and understand the physical remains of sites, buildings and landscapes relating to the military and civil response to the First World War in Wales.

It is hoped that over the course of five years the project will examine all aspects of the heritage of the First World War. To support this it has adopted as a framework the five broad themes identified in the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) *Modern Military Matters* publication (Schofield 2004), namely:

1. The militarised landscape
2. Research and development and manufacturing
3. Infrastructure and support
4. Operations
5. Commemoration



The first year's work took the form of a series of scoping studies by all four trusts to identify the nature of the surviving resource in each region of Wales. In subsequent years, each trust will focus on one or two themes each year as they see appropriate, influenced by local variations in the character of the resource, development pressures and research priorities. So far this has seen investigation of military landscapes including survey and excavation of practice trenches and the recording of a remarkably complete rifle range, and a study of the impact of the war on the industry of south-east Wales. Information about the project, and copies of reports completed so far, can be accessed via the websites of the Welsh Archaeological Trusts –

[www.cpat.org.uk](http://www.cpat.org.uk)  
[www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk](http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk)  
[www.heneb.co.uk](http://www.heneb.co.uk)  
[www.ggat.org.uk](http://www.ggat.org.uk)

An important element of the work to date has been the involvement of several volunteers in fieldwork and the hosting of community events to inform the local population and encourage enthusiasts to get involved. People are also being encouraged to contribute via the CBA's Home Front Legacy 1914-18 project website (Council for British Archaeology 2014). This aspect will be expanded as the project develops with links being made with local schools and the Army Cadet Force. In addition, it is hoped to hold a conflict archaeology themed day school in partnership with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Wales in October 2015 and to develop a research agenda for conflict archaeology in Wales.

[jeff@cpat.org.uk](mailto:jeff@cpat.org.uk)

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, 41 Broad Street, Welshpool, SY21 7RR.

## References

Council for British Archaeology, 2014 *Home Front Legacy 1914-18*. Available: <http://www.homefrontlegacy.org.uk/wp/> Accessed 26 March 2015  
Schofield, J, 2004 *Modern Military Matters*. York: Council for British Archaeology.

## Remembrance, memorialisation and the First World War

Paul Stamper (Designation Department, Historic England)

At the end of the First World War most communities in Britain erected a memorial of some sort to those who had served, and especially to those who had died. Early on in the war the decision had been taken that bodies should not be repatriated, but instead be cared for in the cemeteries established by the Imperial (later Commonwealth) War Graves Commission, and this absence of a grave close to home greatly increased the need for a focus for remembrance.

Memorials took many forms, but most typically a local subscription was raised for a memorial cross or the like. Precise figures are hard to ascertain, but the UK National Inventory of War Memorials estimates that overall there are over 100,000 war memorials in the UK. Most are modest affairs, albeit with deep significance and poignancy for the communities where they stand. But especially if there was a wealthy local patron, or in larger towns and cities, memorials were often more ambitious, many of them imposing Baroque ensembles of architecture and sculpture.

These memorials, of course, are generally (but sadly not always) well cared for, with many still the focus of Remembrance. A major new package of government-funded initiatives (below), announced in December 2013, will do much to further enhance the recognition and appropriate maintenance of these war memorials. Far less well known are the many other ways in which the Fallen were remembered, through projects (as we would call them today) of a socially beneficial character. Often these seem to have been promoted by returning servicemen, who wanted 'something for the future' – for the living, and future generations - rather than a mute memorial cross to their dead friends and comrades.

Better health provision was one priority, leading to the construction of new hospital wings, cottage hospitals and homes for district nurses. Schools, especially public schools, often honoured fallen pupils and staff through new classrooms, cloisters, libraries, cricket pavilions or memorial chapels – these, especially, often architecturally ambitious - and in 1927 C.F. Kernot published an illustrated survey of these as *British Public Schools Memorials*. In towns, civic improvements included clock towers, museums, art galleries and meeting halls, and if they might be included here churches or extensions thereto. Even new roads and bridges were mooted as appropriate memorials.

Most numerous (although, as so often, quantification is difficult) of the memorial buildings were the community halls which appeared in towns, cities and especially villages across the land in the early 1920s. Again, the initiative often came from those who had been away on war service – women munition workers as well as servicemen - who had got used to urban standards



Fig 1. The war memorial of 1920 at Titchmarsh (Northants), by JA Gotch, recently listed at Grade II. Successive parish magazines from November 1918 onwards record fundraising, and village meetings to decide what form of memorial should be chosen. Historic England



Fig 2. Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's 1927 memorial chapel at Charterhouse school (Surrey), listed at Grade II\*. It remembers the 670 old boys and masters who died in the First World War. Wayne Cocroft

of leisure provision and were no longer prepared spend every evening sitting at home. A few, like that at Shrivenham (Wilts.) in the Arts and Crafts style (1921-5; listed Grade II), were architecturally ambitious, or at least aspired to permanency and a degree of politeness. Most, however, were modest affairs, and ex-army huts were a favourite, and cheap option. Many still stood, much adapted and improved, until 10 or 20 years ago; since then, higher customer expectations, and HLF funding, have seen most replaced by something much swankier. In fact, hut-halls which have survived with little alteration are now extremely rare, and would be possible designation candidates.



Fig 3. The Memorial Hall of 1929 at Salle (Norfolk), recently listed at Grade II. Designed by the Norwich architect Edward Boardman, its crow-stepped gables echo those of the school alongside, built half a century earlier. Historic England

Parks, gardens, playing fields and wider tracts of countryside also fall into the category of living or useful memorials. Once more, numbers are still unclear, but a project hosted by Parks & Gardens UK (<http://www.parksandgardens.org/>) is compiling a national gazetteer of the parks and gardens. There are currently 339 gardens and 212 parks or playing fields listed on the Imperial War Museum's War Memorials Archive ([www.iwm.org.uk/warmemorials](http://www.iwm.org.uk/warmemorials)), but more are coming to light all the time. Historic England has published an overview, War Memorial Parks and Gardens in its Introduction to Heritage Assets series. <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/iha-warmemorial-parks-gardens/>

#### Additional funding announced for war memorial conservation 2014-18

In December 2013, the Prime Minister announced new funding of £5M to conserve, repair and protect First World War memorials and burial sites, and to enhance understanding of these through interpretative resources. £4.5m of that was allocated to a partnership of Historic England, the War memorials Trust and Civic Voice to deliver:

- FWW memorials in the best possible condition for the centenary;
- More money in direct grants for war memorials and the resources to deliver it and encourage take-up;
- Volunteers engaged with their war memorial heritage, stimulating projects related to research, protection and conservation;
- Better protection for war memorials through statutory Listing;
- A larger pool of skilled and trained specialists to repair memorials appropriately through the centenary and maintain them beyond it;
- Improved public understanding of, and engagement with, war memorials through a single web portal; clear and simple access to information, advice and grant availability;
- Clean, integrated, authoritative war memorials national register to provide clarity, coherence and a more efficient and effective overall use of funds to support war memorials, eliminating, waste, confusion and duplication;
- Improved support for public engagement in the recording and research into memorials and the people they commemorate;
- Grants for schools to research memorials, and wider appreciation of the importance and local significance of community based war memorials.
- A lasting legacy of improved war memorials data and better access to information, advice and funding for the public.
- In addition to ensuring that all memorials are in a fit state for the centenary, it will also deliver a specialist skills legacy, greater protection through listing, and improved community engagement.

[paul.stamper@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:paul.stamper@english-heritage.org.uk)

Senior Adviser, Designation Department, English Heritage, 1 Waterhouse Square, 138-42 Holborn, London, EC1N 2ST

#### References

Historic England has Remembrance web pages, which include guidance on getting a memorial listed and on its publications which can guide the maintenance and repair of war memorials <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/caring/listing/first-world-war-home-front/remembrance/>

The War Memorials Trust is at <http://www.warmemorials.org/>

The Imperial War Museum's War Memorials Archive (formerly the UK National Inventory of War Memorials is at <http://www.ukniwm.org.uk/>

UK War Memorials, the Government's single web point of public access for information and advice about the conservation and repair of war memorials, is at <http://ukwarmemorials.org>



## Hooton Park Aerodrome, Chester and Chester West

Clare Howard, Historic England

The three General Service (GS) sheds (commonly known as hangars) and associated technical buildings at Hooton Park, located on the outskirts of Ellesmere Port, present one of the best-preserved groups of First-World-War aviation buildings in the country. Established in 1917 as a Training Depot Station (TDS) to train new pilots for the war, the site played a vital role in the development of both military and civil aviation until its closure in 1957. An assessment of the site was undertaken in July 2014 by Assessment Team North, English Heritage (now Historic England), in order to fully understand the site and to inform the restoration of the GS sheds which are currently listed on the Heritage at Risk Register, due to their deteriorating condition. This article presents a summary of the recent report published in English Heritage's Research Report Series, considering the history of the site as well as the buildings themselves.

### Historical background

Prior to its establishment as an aerodrome, Hooton Park was a private estate incorporating the elegant country house of Hooton Hall (Figure 1), an 18th-century building which was remodelled in the mid-19th century by James Kellaway Colling for Richard Christopher Naylor, a Liverpool banker (Richardson 1993, 9). Naylor added a racecourse and polo ground which remained in use even after the family's move to Kelmarsh Hall in Northamptonshire towards the end of the 19th century (Richardson 1993, 11).



Fig 1. Photograph of Hooton Hall as remodelled in circa 1849, demolished circa 1925 (© The Griffin Trust)

When war was declared on 4 August 1914, the hall and its estate were requisitioned by the government for army training purposes, with the hall becoming

a headquarters, hospital and officers' mess for the 18th Battalion King's Liverpool Rifles (Smith 1990, 99). This use continued until 1917, when the decision was made to transform Hooton Park into an Aircraft Acceptance Park (AAP) for receiving and assembling aircraft sent from America. However, this purpose was soon superseded by the requirement for a Training Depot Station (TDS); in consequence, the No. 4 Training Depot Station was established at Hooton Park on 19 September 1917 (Smith 1990, 100; Abraham 1994, 16). It was one of 63 TDSs established during the course of the First World War and as such followed a typical layout which was split between the regimental buildings, which included an officers' mess (within Hooton Hall), women's room and hostel, and the technical buildings incorporating aircraft sheds and other support buildings. The GS sheds were constructed by Holland, Hannen and Cubitts Limited on the site of the former racecourse paddock whilst the characteristic wooden lattice 'Belfast' roof trusses were supplied by D Anderson and Co, a company who had been erecting such trusses over shipyards in Northern Ireland since the early 1900s (Francis 1996, 88). The RAF Quarterly Report of the stations issued in September 1918 describes the station in some detail; it lists the regimental buildings, three double GS sheds, an Aircraft Repair shed, a number of huts and Motor Transport (MT) sheds, all accommodating 839 personnel (AIR 1/452/15/312/26 Volume 1, National Archives).

The TDS was disbanded following the armistice in 1918 and the aircraft were moved to nearby RAF Shotwick (later known as Sealand), the land reverting back to farmland (Abraham 1994, 17). The site, including many of the aerodrome buildings, was advertised for sale by auction in 1922, although it is uncertain who bought the site at this time (SC/4/27, Cheshire Archives). In 1927 the site was held by George H Dawson, a local businessman and aviation enthusiast, who leased many of the former aerodrome buildings to small businesses for light industrial use. The following year the Liverpool District Aero Club was established at Hooton, later becoming one of the largest flying clubs outside of London. They hosted the King's Cup National Air Races, attracting many of the aviation celebrities of the day including Amy Johnson and Alan Cobham and his flying circus (Abraham 1994, 15-23).

In 1930 Hooton was established as the main airport for Liverpool but it was rather short-lived: a closer and more convenient airport was introduced at Speke in 1933 (Smith 1990, 100). Comper Aircraft Company, manufacturers of the popular and award-winning Comper Swift light aircraft, were established at Hooton Park in 1931 and were later joined by Pobjoy Airmotors but both businesses moved elsewhere in 1933 and 1934 respectively (Smith 1990, 100). Nevertheless, Hooton Aerodrome continued to attract civil, commercial and military aviators (Figure 2) and by 1935 it became the home of Martin Hearne Limited, a company which specialised in the repair of aircraft. The following year, the 610 (County of Chester) Squadron, a light bomber unit, was formed at Hooton and they were later re-formed to become a fighter unit, playing a key role in the Battle of France and the Battle of Britain (Smith 1990, 100).

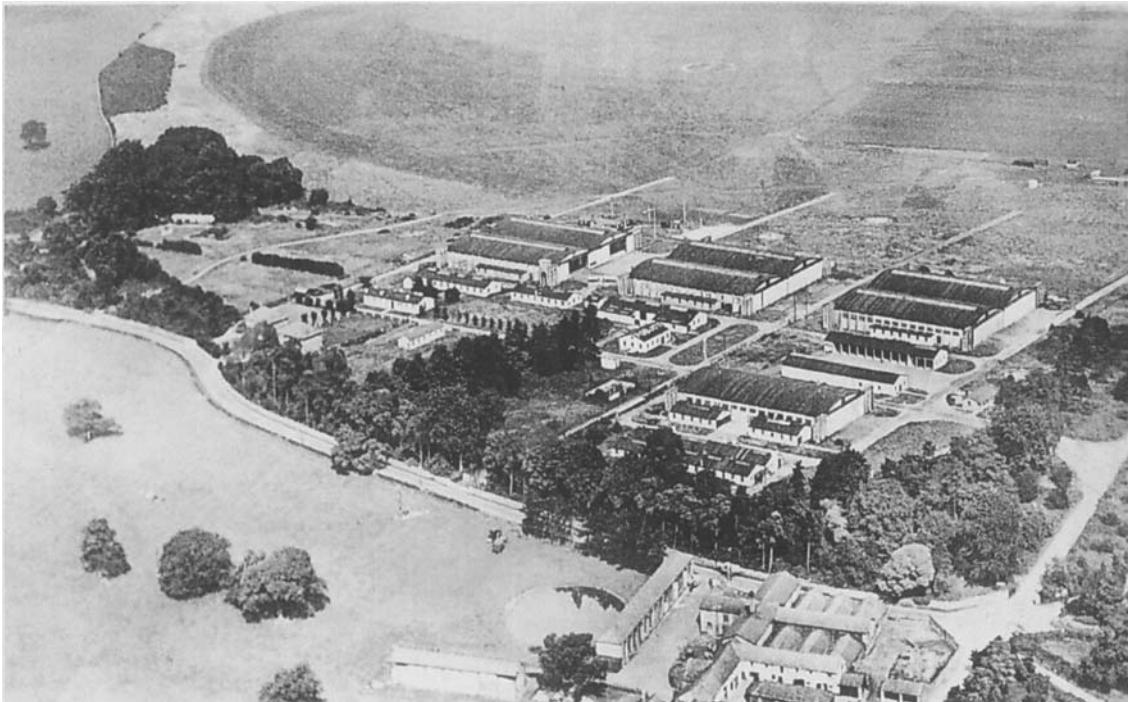


Fig 2. Aerial photograph of Hooton Park taken in the 1930s (© The Hooton Park Trust)

On 9 October 1939 Hooton Park Aerodrome was once again requisitioned by the government for direct military use by the RAF. Many of the existing First-World-War buildings, including the GS sheds, were retained and refurbished; these were then accompanied by new huts and specialised training and defence buildings (Abraham 1994, 15-23). The aerodrome was used as a base for aircraft involved in convoy protection, anti-submarine and general surveillance by Coastal Command and, as such, played a key role in keeping shipping lanes into Liverpool open. Martin Hearne Limited became the No. 7 Aircraft Assembly Unit (AAU), assembling and testing over 9000 aircraft over the course of the war which included some of the first helicopters ever seen in Britain (Delve 2007, 172). Technical Training Command took over the aerodrome in 1942 to operate the 11 Radio School and 3 General Reconnaissance School to train air crew in the use of airborne radar equipment; this was the only school of its kind in the country (Lake 2003).

After the war, the 610 Squadron re-formed at Hooton and were stationed there, along with 611 (West Lancashire) Squadron and 663 Squadron (Air Observation Post unit), until the closure of the airfield in 1957 (Smith 1990, 102). The site was acquired by Vauxhall Motors (now General Motors) in 1961 who continued to use the GS sheds for constructing, testing and servicing Vauxhall cars. The buildings were later abandoned when the existing car factory, located on the former airfield, was extended. During the 1980s, however, a group of employees, who later became the Griffin Trust, requested permission to use the GS sheds to store and maintain historic vehicles. The buildings were listed at grade II in 1988 and were upgraded to II\* in 2003 due to the rarity of complete groups of GS sheds incorporating the Belfast-truss roof type. The Hooton Park Trust was formed in 2000 to take on the ownership and management of the site with the aim of conserving the buildings and they retain this role today.

**The remaining aerodrome buildings**

Only a fragment of the former technical area of the aerodrome survives today. It consists of three double GS sheds and contemporary ancillary buildings including two huts and two Motor Transport (MT) sheds. These will be briefly described below.

*General Service Sheds*

The three double GS sheds are located in a row alongside the south-western edge of the former airfield (now the General Motors car park) with their hangar doors opening onto the former taxiways which ultimately led to the airfield. They are in varying condition: one hangar has almost completely collapsed, one has been partially restored and the third is showing serious signs of decay.

Each shed follows a typical double-hangar arrangement with side walls constructed of red brick laid in English Garden Wall bond supported by raking buttresses which form 16 bays, the central 14 of which contain windows (some of which are now blocked) (Figure 3). The ends of the GS sheds were originally closed by two sets of six-leaf sliding doors which ran on steel rails and which could retract into tall brick gantries when fully open. Unfortunately, the sliding mechanisms were temperamental, leading to the removal of some of the doors and gantries. The hall of each hangar is covered by a bow-string roof which is laid with asbestos sheeting and bitumen felt, though some of the roofs have since been replaced. Additional natural light is provided by large central roof lights. There are single-storeyed annexes to the centre of each side elevation, also constructed of red brick with corrugated cement roofs; these provided dressing rooms, offices, stores, workshops and boiler rooms. The latter was important to provide heating which prevented early wooden aeroplanes from warping. Some of these 1917 annexes have been replaced or modified during subsequent reuse of the buildings.

Internally, the two large open halls are separated by a brick arcade of segmental arches providing access between them. The roofs are formed of 17 Belfast trusses which are composed of segmental laminated-timber principals and straight tie beams infilled by a lattice of wooden struts (Figure 4). The internal appearance and layout of the GS sheds has been only minimally altered since their construction in 1917.

*Centralised workshops (Building 27)*

The larger of the two remaining huts is described on a plan dated 1945 as ‘centralised workshops (former fabric shop)’ and it probably served as a fabric shop for storing canvas for the early wood and canvas aeroplanes during the First World War (6A/54/45 (W/436/45) RAF Museum, Hendon). It is constructed of red brick which is rendered and has a pitched roof of composite trusses (Figure 5). Internally, it consists of a large room (later sub-divided) and two annexes to the rear which may have served specialised functions such as a machine or carpenters’ shops.



Fig 3. The southernmost General Service shed (© English Heritage, photograph: Clare Howard)



Fig 4. The interior of the central General Service Shed (© English Heritage, photograph: Clare Howard)



Fig 5. Centralised Workshops, former fabric shop (© English Heritage, photograph: Clare Howard)

### *Welders' shop (Building 42)*

The smaller hut is constructed of rendered red bricks with a pitched roof of wooden-lattice trusses similar to those found within the GS sheds but with straight principal rafters rather than curved (Figure 6). The internal layout consists of a large open room with a smaller store at one end. The function of the building during the First World War is uncertain, but it was used by Pobjoy during their occupation of the aerodrome in the 1930s. In 1945 it is listed as an acetylene welders' shop (6A/54/45 (W/436/45) RAF Museum, Hendon).

### *Motor Transport sheds*

The two motor transport sheds form two parallel, open-fronted ranges with a yard in between, set at the corner of the site (Figure 7). Again, they are constructed of rendered red brick and have pitched roofs. In September 1918 there were 42 motor vehicles stationed at Hooton and these were stored, repaired and maintained within these buildings.

### **A future for Hooton Park's buildings?**

Following the partial collapse of one of the GS sheds in 2003 and increased concerns over the condition of another, the Hooton Park Trust is currently seeking funding to restore the buildings at Hooton Park to ensure that the buildings are retained for future generations. Whilst all of the buildings have been subject to minor modifications, they largely retain their original 1917 layouts and many of the fixtures and fittings serve as a reminder of the key role that Hooton played not only during the First World War but also in the development of civil, commercial and military aviation.



Fig 6. Wooden lattice Belfast trusses in the welders' shop (© English Heritage, photograph: Clare Howard)



Fig 7. The two Motor Transport sheds (© English Heritage, photograph: Clare Howard)

clare.howard@historicengland.org.uk

Investigator (Architecture), Historic England, 37 Tanner Row, York, YO1 6WP

### **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank the Hooton Park Trust for providing access to the site as well as information on the history of the aerodrome. Thanks also go to the Griffin Trust, Cheshire Archives, the RAF Museum in Hendon and the National Archives in Kew for providing other useful sources of information.

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### **Afternote**

This article is a shortened version of the recent English Heritage report *Hooton Park Aerodrome, Chester and Chester West: An Assessment of the General Service Sheds and Associated Buildings*, a low-resolution version of which is available (along with other English Heritage and Historic England Research Reports) to download from the new Historic England website at <http://research.historicengland.org.uk/>

## Traces of the First World War across London

Lara Band

Following are some of the photographs taken over the last few months by the editor, out and about in central and east London. The photographs were taken out of personal interest and with the intention to contribute to the CBA project Home Front Legacy project, mentioned Jeff Spencer's article above. <http://www.homefrontlegacy.org.uk/wp/>

### Victoria Embankment, Charing Cross, WC2N

The plaque on the side reads "The scars that disfigure the pedestal of the obelisk, the bases of the sphinxes and the right hand sphinx were caused by fragments of a bomb dropped in the roadway close to this spot in the first raid on London by German aeroplanes a few minutes before midnight on Tuesday 4th September 1917".



### St Bart's Hospital, West Smithfield, EC1A

Blast damage from a bomb dropped during a raid on 8/9 September 1915.



### 61 Farringdon Road, EC1M



**10 Chancery Lane, Holborn, WC2A**

There used to be a plaque which read “The round stone in the middle of the roadway marks the spot where, on 18th December 1917 at 8 - 10pm a bomb from a German aeroplane struck the ground and exploded, shattering the windows in Stone Buildings and doing other material damage”. The plaque and the round stone are no longer there however. [ <http://awalkinhistory.blogspot.co.uk/2008/05/friday-23rd-may-2008-zeppelin-attack.html> ]

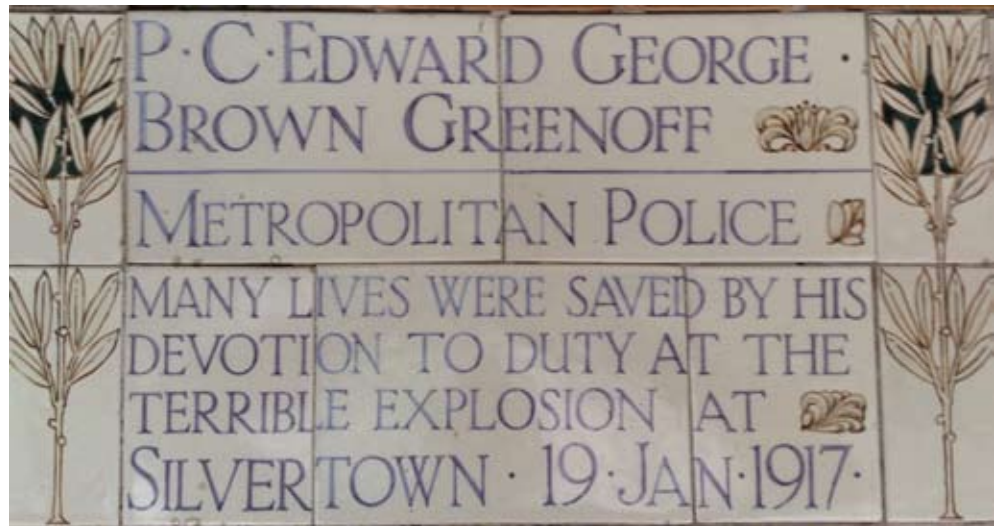


**Poplar recreation ground, E14**

The dedication reads “In memory of 18 children who were killed by a bomb dropped from a German aeroplane upon the L.C.C. school ~ Upper North Street ~ Poplar ~ on the 13th June 1917 [...] Erected by public subscription”

**Postman’s Park, Little Britain, EC1A**

A memorial tablet on George Frederic Watts’s Memorial to Heroic Self Sacrifice. At the request of the War Office the Brunner, Mond and Co chemical plant, in Silvertown, East London, had been adapted for the production of TNT. A fire at the plant caused the detonation of 50 tons of explosives; 73 people died immediately and over 50,000 properties were damaged. You can listen to eyewitness accounts of the explosion [ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02b2nz8> ].





DO YOU HAVE NEWS OR AN INTERESTING PROJECT TO SHARE?

We would be grateful for any articles or news for our summer newsletter.

For further information please contact Lara Band (Newsletter Editor): [lband@mola.org.uk](mailto:lband@mola.org.uk)