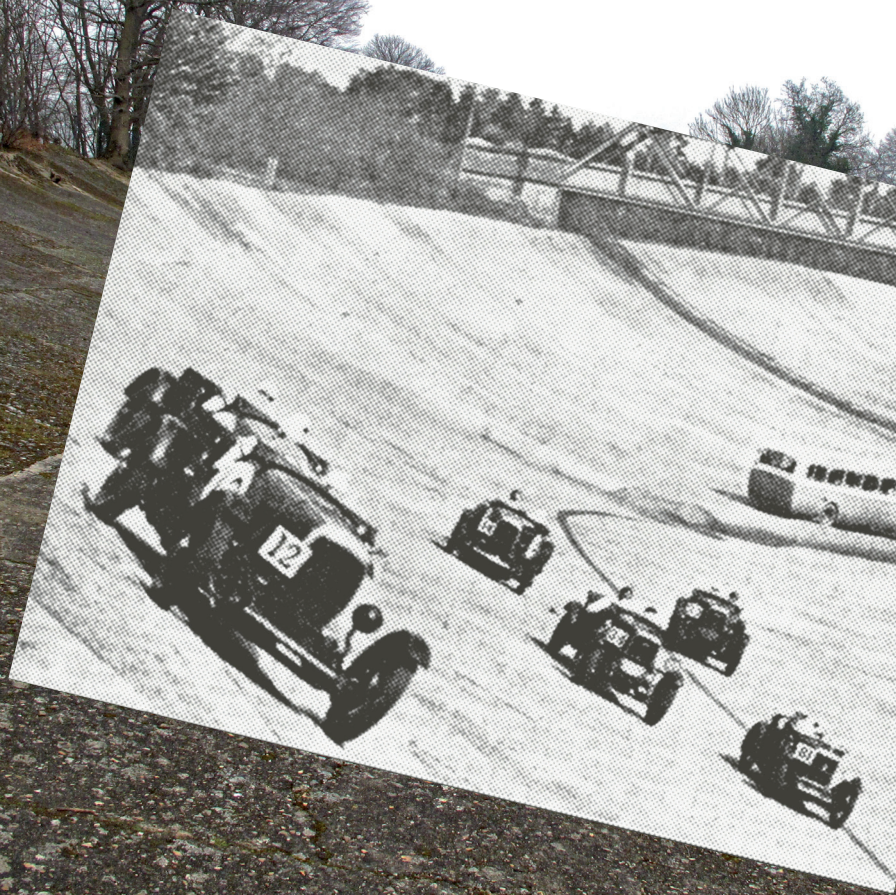


# A GRAND DAY OUT BROOKLANDS

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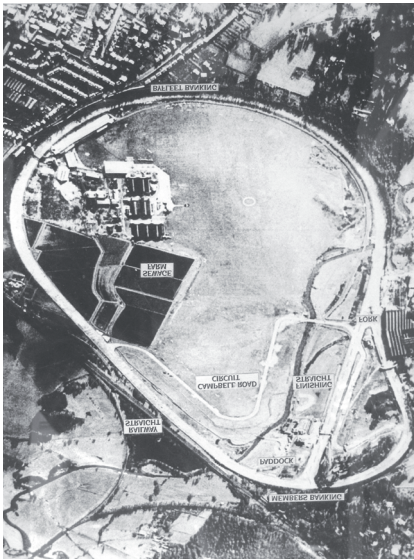


The museum occupies 30 acres of a huge site that includes Mercedes-Benz World, Marks & Spencer and Tesco stores and a hotel. At the centre is The Clubhouse with its distinctive copper dome. Downstairs is an excellent cafe and toilets, the gent's featuring original though not practical urinals. There are various other rooms sadly not open on our visit: these include the Clerk of the Course office, the billiard room and the Barbara Cartland room. The romantic author had a long standing interest in gliding and was a frequent visitor to Brooklands. The Clubhouse became the great designer Barnes Wallis's office after WWII.

Right: Mockup of one of the workshops in the early days of Brooklands.



Right: Brooklands during it's 30's racing heyday. Cover: The bleak remains of a glorious past. The track is of concrete, no tarmac or bitumen was ever used as a top layer due to the difficulty of laying it. Over time the track settled leading to the notoriously bumpy ride for drivers and their mechanics.

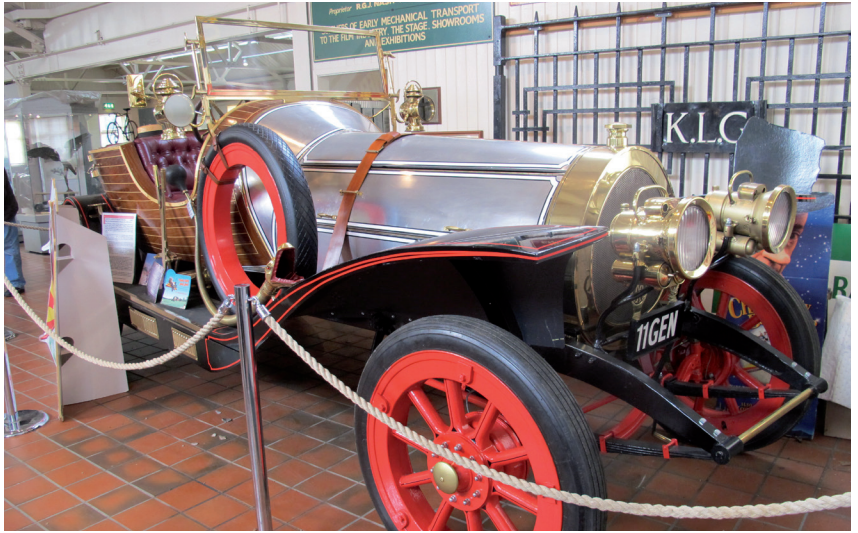
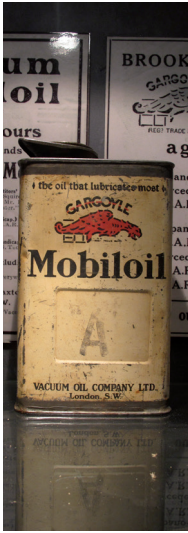


## BROOKLANDS MUSEUM

Brooklands was the world's first motor racing circuit opened in 1907, the brainchild of Hugh F Locke King who wanted Britain's nascent motor industry to have test track facilities as well as a sporting venue. It soon boasted an airfield which by 1918 was the country's largest aircraft manufacturing base. The last motor race was held in 1939.

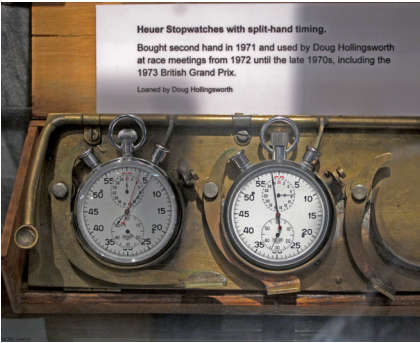
At the outbreak of WWII the whole site was turned over to aircraft manufacturing which continued until recently. In 1987 the Brooklands Museum Trust was formed to research and preserve all aspects of the sites history as well as protecting many of the original buildings that remain.

The original track was a 2.75 mile oval circuit with banking at each end, the only track in the UK ever to have this feature. Over the years additions to the track were made allowing handicap races and a mountain circuit was added by using the test hill. This remains and leads to the Member's Bridge giving good views over the Home banking. The banking at the far end of the circuit, known as the Byfleet Banking has been pierced in a couple of places to allow present day access to the commercial area of the site. Our first visit was to the old motor racing sheds. These



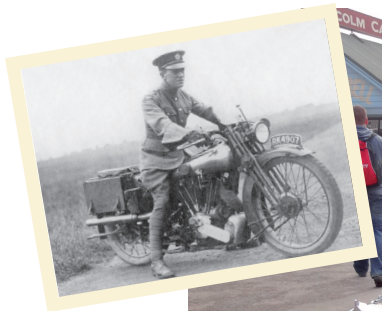
Top; One of the elderly mechanics waiting to show 'Samantha' his nuts.

The old workshops contain a variety of cars and memorabilia from oil cans to stopwatches plus one of the replica Hispano Suiza cars used for the filming of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.



Heuer Stopwatches with split-hand timing.  
Bought second hand in 1971 and used by Doug Hollingsworth at race meetings from 1972 until the late 1970s, including the 1973 British Grand Prix.  
 loaned by Doug Hollingsworth

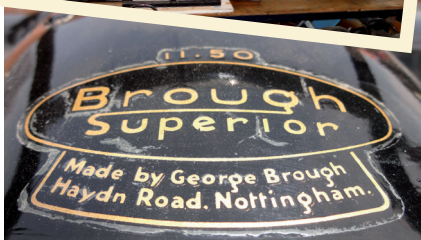




Top: T. E. Lawrence on the Brough Superior SS100 he called George V.  
Right: The Brough being worshipped by a number of enthusiasts.



T. E. Lawrence owned one of these special machines. The spare fuel tank is what looks like the roll bar which surrounds the sidecar. (Thomas Edward Lawrence CB DSO was an archaeologist and British Army officer renowned especially for his liaison role during the Sinai and Palestine Campaign, and the Arab Revolt against Ottoman Turkish rule of 1916–18. At the age of 46, two months after leaving military service, Lawrence was fatally injured in an accident on his Brough Superior SS100 motorcycle in Dorset, close to his cottage, Clouds Hill, near Wareham. A dip in the road obstructed his view of two boys on their bicycles; he swerved to avoid them, lost control, and was thrown over the handlebars. He died six days later on 19 May 1935. The spot is marked by a small memorial at the side of the road.

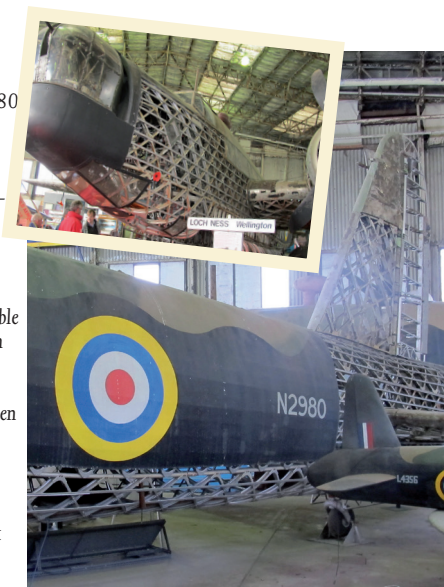


were originally garages where cars were prepared for racing, in particular the ERAs, giving a hugely nostalgic feel to the whole site. They now house historic motor cars like the Napier-Railton. Also motorcycles and bikes both old and modern. Outside one of their mechanics in immaculate white overalls was fettling a magnificent Brough Superior motor bike. We later saw the aforementioned Brough Superior being driven very sedately along the bottom of the banking. Given its present day value that seemed very sensible.

Next, the Wellington hangar. This is a “Bellman” relocatable hanger erected in 1940 on the finishing straight of the old motor racing circuit. It is planned to move it off the finishing straight at some time to enable motor sport. Inside is the Vickers Wellington bomber recovered from Loch Ness. This is undergoing cosmetic restoration but is in remarkably good condition after 45 years submersion and bears witness to the strength of Barnes Wallis’ original design. This aircraft was built here at Brooklands in 1939. Also in the hangar,

Top Left:  
The Vickers 290  
Wellington 1A N2980  
(1939)

N2980 is the only surviving Brooklands-built Wellington. During a training flight on the 31st December 1940 she developed engine trouble and ditched into Loch Ness. All the crew escaped, but the rear gunner was killed when his parachute failed to deploy. Developed from the Wellesley, the Wellington prototype first flew at Brooklands in 1936. Its fabric-covered geodetic structure was able to absorb heavy damage, and it was the only British bomber to be used throughout World War Two, serving with Bomber, Coastal, Transport and Training Commands. Altogether 11,461 Wellingtons were produced, 2,515 of these at Brooklands.



Right: J. H. decides that, having been on a flight phobia course, he is at liberty to pilot an aircraft. (the Varsity)

On a large area of hard standing is the open air display of airliners. This part of the collection includes a Concorde, for which there is a Concorde Experience trip, and the Sultan of Oman's personal VC 10.

a replica Vickers Vimy as flown by Alcock and Brown on the first flight across the Atlantic. There is a Hawker Harrier and a Hurricane, both built at the nearby factory at Kingston-on-Thames. The Harriers had a sad demise due to short sighted government policy. There are some of Barnes Wallis's Earthquake bombs and more modern Vickers guided missiles. Parked outside was a VC10, one of Freddie Lakers fleet and first flew in October 1964. Three of us went to look inside. In 1974 it was sold to the Sultan of Oman and extensively modified internally replacing the first class cabin with two bedrooms, a bathroom, a lounge with two large swivel chairs and a comfortable couch. The conversion included a 32 seater cabin for the Sultan's staff which was better than modern business class. The galley was enlarged from the rear economy section. Occasionally, when one of the Sultan's household had a craving for fresh strawberries, the plane and crew would fly to the UK to collect a few trays. The Sultan donated the plane to Brooklands when he took delivery of his



Above: If you have the money why not convert a VC10? The Sultan of Oman's VC10 was converted with bedrooms and toilets plus a 32 seater cabin for the Sultan's staff which was better than modern business class.

Below Right: The converted Varsity not so luxuriant. Being formerly used for training air navigators for the RAF. It did at least provide parachutes. AB looks down to the escape hatch.

new planes, two Boeing 747 SP jumbo jets. There is also a Vickers Viscount, Vanguard and Varsity as well as a BAC 1-11. The Varsity is an interesting exhibit being formerly used for training air navigators for the RAF. The interior is fitted out with 6 navigation stations as well as spaces for the instructors. With the actual flight crew there would have been about 10 to 12 people on board and unlike civilian airliners everyone was provided with a parachute.

The London Bus Museum is not strictly speaking part of the Brooklands Museum. It moved here in 2011 and had been housed in a former aircraft factory in nearby Cobham. It is now housed in a modern purpose built exhibition hall with vehicles on display from the 1875 Knifeboard horse drawn bus up to the 1979 Leyland Titan double-decker. From the Clapham Omnibus to one man operated rear engine buses. About 30 buses are on display, others are in an adjacent workshop awaiting restoration. An excellent Collection.



The London Bus Museum is now in a purpose built exhibition hall with vehicles from the 1875 Knifeboard horse drawn bus up to the 1979 Leyland Titan double-decker.

Right: Chris re-lives the happy times of travelling on these knights of the road, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of a past age, evocative of colourful liveries, elegant coachwork, fine leather and moquette upholstery- at least that's what it looks like. Man in white coat stands by.



The last major exhibit at Brookland is also possibly the most impressive and least known to the general public. It is the Barnes Wallis Stratospheric Chamber. In 1946, Wallis designed this chamber to simulate conditions at 70,000 feet where he hoped to design and fly a new generation of supersonic aircraft. The chamber is very large and easily able to accommodate a double-decker bus. It was built by Vickers submarine yard at Barrow-in-Furness. In essence, a large tube with one end being rolled back on railway tracks. When closed up air pressure inside could be reduced and the air cooled. The whole chamber and its associated pumps and refrigeration equipment and the control cubicle and observation chamber is housed in a large hangar. In use it was more successful than had been realised. As well as high altitude, low temperature tests, other tests were carried out on ship models to help with problems of icing in Arctic waters leading to capsizes and loss of crews and their ships. Another little spin-off was a small supersonic wind tunnel to be built that could



When the Stratospheric Chamber was sealed the only entrance was via a submarine type airlock.

**OPENING TIMES**

Open every day, apart from a few days over Christmas.

In 2015 we will be closed from the 24th-27th December inclusive.

**SUMMER**

10am-5pm

Summer opening hours start from 1st March and end when the clocks change in October.

**WINTER**

10am-4pm

Last admission is one hour before closing. These times may be extended on event days.

**PRICES:**

Adult: £11.00

Senior Citizen: £10.00

Children £6.00

Family ticket: £30.00

(2 adults & up to 3 children)

**Postal address:**

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[www.brooklandsmuseum.com](http://www.brooklandsmuseum.com)



simulate Mach 3 for very short periods utilising the partial vacuum in the main chamber. The hangar also has a fine collection of aero engines, both piston and jet/gas turbine.

Finally a word should be said about the Museum Volunteers. They were all very welcoming, extremely well informed and took great pleasure in explaining exhibits. They deserve great credit. A grand day out!

Inside the huge BarnesWallis Stratospheric Chamber. Usual suspects L. to R. Alex, Albert, Chris, Robin and John.

**PLEASE NOTE** This document was made for private educational use to accompany a trip to the museum. It is not for general publication or distribution. Please note therefore that the contents within are from various sources, most of it photographed and written by ourselves. Whilst every effort has been to use our own material there may be instances where some items, whilst on display at the museum, is not. Therefore please treat the material within with the good faith that we have tried to respect.

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