



BROOKLANDS

CRADLE OF BRITISH MOTOR
RACING AND AVIATION

NICHOLAS H LANCASTER

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COVER IMAGE

The opening of the Campbell Circuit allowed the BARC to advertise road racing at last. Aware of competition from the new circuit in the grounds of the Crystal Palace, the Campbell Circuit was the Brooklands response as road racing grew in popularity.

TITLE PAGE IMAGE

An Aero Club brochure, c. 1930, a typical design from that era that successfully combined the two activities identified with the name 'Brooklands'.

CONTENTS PAGE IMAGE

Detail of a Brooklands poster from the 1930s.

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INTRODUCTION

TRAVELLING BY RAIL between Basingstoke and London, approaching Weybridge Station from the West, the traveller may notice the remains of a steeply banked concrete track, an impressive Edwardian building, a variety of sheds, and more curiously, several stranded aircraft parked miles from any runway. Surrounded by office buildings and supermarkets, this is all that remains today of Brooklands, a revolutionary purpose-built motor racing circuit and test track that dates from the earliest years of the motor car, and also a place that can claim to be the birthplace of much of the British aircraft industry.

Between 1907 and 1939 Brooklands was the acknowledged centre of motor sport in Britain for competitors on both two wheels and four, and a way of life for many enthusiasts. Not only was the Track a place where races were lost and won; speed records were set around the Outer Circuit, and the venue also welcomed the exciting new motor industry, which was able to test and prove its latest designs around the Outer Circuit and on the Test Hill.

The Clubhouse and Members' Hill also added a social dimension that attracted people from far and wide, giving summer weekends at the Weybridge venue a unique garden party atmosphere of tennis and tea dances.

However, Brooklands wasn't only the preserve of the sporting motorist and the pleasure seeker. Within the circuit an airfield was soon established, and spectators witnessed some great moments in the pioneering days of powered flight. Soon several flying schools were established, sending their students aloft in primitive contraptions that were the precursors of another revolution in transportation.

Before long an aircraft manufacturing industry grew up around the Track that would play a vital role in Britain's defence during two world wars, contributing many legendary aircraft to the war effort on both occasions, whilst between the wars the thriving Brooklands social scene also extended to the airfield as sports flying became ever more popular.

eventually the world of aviation took over the site completely – the last race meeting was held in 1939 – but Brooklands retains a place in the affections of many motor sport enthusiasts long after the final chequered flag was waved.

BROOKLANDS

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INTERNATIONAL**

**500
MILES RACE**

SATURDAY

SEPT. 16

**STARTING
at 11 A.M.**



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BROOKLANDS

CRADLE OF BRITISH MOTOR RACING AND AVIATION

Before the Second World War Brooklands was one of the most famous motor racing venues in the world, attracting thousands to its banked circuit to watch races being won and records being broken. Also an important centre for aviation, Brooklands witnessed the first flights of many famous British aircraft and became the home of the aviation division of Vickers-Armstrong. With the outbreak of war in 1939, motor racing stopped, never to resume, and the site became an even more important centre for aviation manufacturers, producing in its history both the Wellington bomber and Concorde. Discover the story of this unique sporting site as Nicholas H. Lancaster conjures up the atmosphere of pre-war race meetings and early British flying achievements in this concise history of the birthplace of British motor sport and aviation.

Nicholas H. Lancaster bought his first copy of *Motor Sport* in October 1965, and soon became fascinated with the Brooklands story. A member of the Brooklands Society, he has written a number of articles on motor sport history.

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