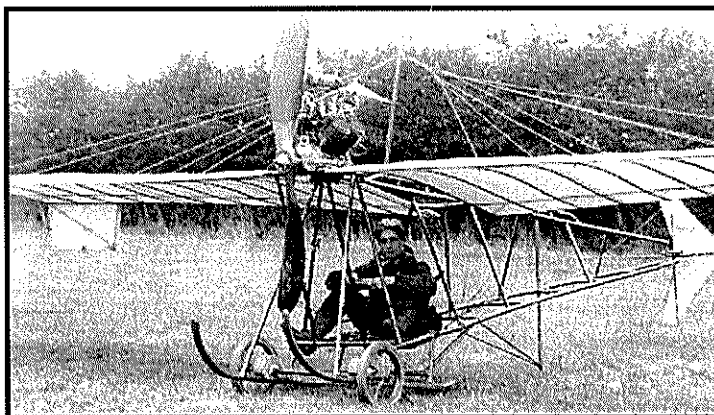# History of Southampton Airport

1910 to Present Day

1910 The very first aircraft to take off from the Southampton Airport site belonged to local man Eric Rowland Moon. Eric made and tested the Moonbeam II aircraft on the North Stoneham Farm Meadows. No one is entirely sure where Moonbeam I departed from or landed.

E.R Moon in his homemade aircraft, The Moonbeam II, the first plane to fly from the Southampton Airport site.
Courtesy of Fawley Historians.

1914 Gustav Hamel performed a public flying display on his Morain Saulnier Monoplane. 10,000 people witnessed his aerobatic loops and tail-dives.

1917 Stoneham Farm was requisitioned by the War Office as an Aircraft Acceptance Park, but before completion, the base was given to the US Navy to develop an assembly area.

1918 The Air Ministry gave approval to set up a civil air transport system to serve both international and domestic routes with direct flights to Plymouth, London, Bristol, and Bournemouth via the Isle of Wight as well as ports in France.

1919 On 19th May, Leiutenant G.P.Templeton of the Tank Core was Southampton Airport's first fare paying passenger. He flew from Southampton to London in a twin engine Handley – Page aircraft.

1920 A number of shipping companies used the facilities as a trans-migrant centre. Renamed **Atlantic Park Hostel**, flying activities were curtailed until the end of the 1920's.

1932 Southampton Corporation purchased Atlantic Park and renamed it **Southampton Municipal Airport.**

1933 The Hampshire Aeroplane Club moved operations to the site from Hamble. One famous member was RJ Mitchell, aircraft designer, who was responsible for the Spitfire.

**1934** Railway Air Services operated to Birmingham, Cowes and Glasgow.

Southampton - Birmingham	= £3.25 return (65 shillings)
Southampton - Cowes	= 50p return (10 shillings)
Southampton - Glasgow	= £10.75 return (215 shillings)

1936 Spitfire prototype K5054 took off 5th March. Captained by Joseph 'Mutt' Summers, Chief Test Pilot with Vickers Supermarine Ltd. The Spitfire aircraft were designed and built locally in Woolston and assembled and tested at Southampton Airport. The first flight records are on display at Southampton Airport.

1939 As a part of Southampton Municipal Airport, RAF Southampton was re-commissioned as HMS Raven and subsequently spent most of the war in a ground and air training role for the Royal Navy. In an attempt to disrupt the assembly of aircraft, sporadic raids were made on the airport. However, German propaganda did not quite get it right when, reporting HMS Raven had been sunk!

1945 Resumption of a regular air service to the Channel Islands marked the return of the war time aerodrome to a municipal airport.

1951 Silver City Airways operated Bristol freighter car ferry services to Cherbourg which could also carry up to 20 passengers simultaneously.
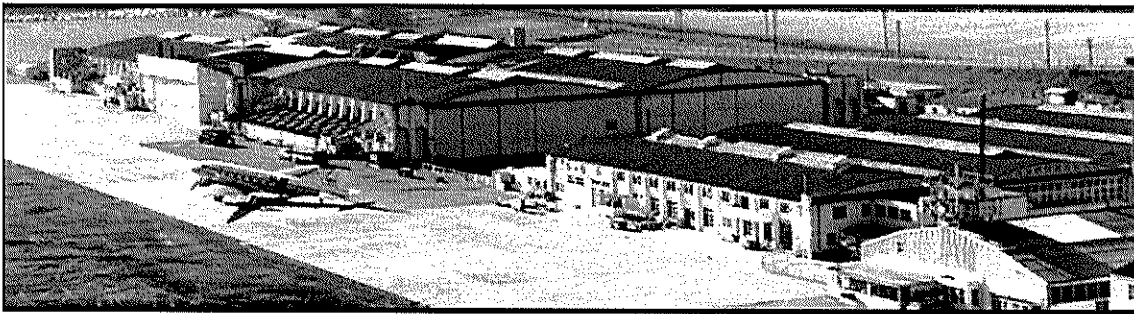
Southampton Airport, mid 1950's
Courtesy of Hampshire Chronicle

1960's Mr J N Somer, owner of an airfield in Hertfordshire, secured the future of Southampton Airport when he purchased it from Southampton Corporation. A number of airport improvements were made including the construction of a 1723 metre concrete runway. In the first year of operation with the new runway, 273,247 passengers passed through the airport - four times more than the previous year.

1967 Aurigny Air Services began flights to Alderney and remains the airport's longest serving Airline.

1970's The recession led to a reduction in passenger numbers, but undeterred, a new air traffic tower was built and a surveillance radar installed.

1984 Airports UK Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of BAA plc, was appointed to manage the operational activities of Southampton Airport and set about improving the facilities and attracting new services.

1988 A consortium headed by Peter de Savary bought the airport site from Mr Somers and applied for planning permission for the complete redevelopment of the airport.

1990 BAA plc purchased the site announcing its intentions to invest £27 million in the complete redevelopment of the airport.

1993 Detailed planning permission was granted and construction began of the new facilities.

1994 The airport's name became **BAA Southampton International Airport**. The new passenger terminal was opened by HRH Prince Andrew, the Duke of York on 9th December. The facilities took 56 weeks to complete. The whole site redevelopment cost over £27 million.

1995 The old terminal building was demolished.

BAA Southampton ⼃

In 1995 Southampton Airport was awarded:

- British Construction Industry Award 1995
- Structured Steel Design Award
- Royal Fine Art Commission and Sunday Times Building of the Year Award
- Hampshire Training and Enterprise Customer Care Award for the most "Customer Caring" company in Hampshire

1999 A runway upgrade was completed at a cost of £3 million. Part of the project included a new asphalt service and centre line lights. The first BAA Southampton Airport Hampshire Youth Games took place, Hampshire's largest youth sports event. The airport was also awarded Gold as the 'Best Regional Airport' at the 'Routes' Airport Awards.

2000 Southampton Airport assisted with Seawings 2000 flying display. Seawings is a waterborn aircraft display celebrating Southampton's Seaplane and flying boat heritage and the 60th anniversary of the battle of Britain. Most displaying aircraft co-ordinated their displays from Southampton Airport. The first flight of the Spitfire commemorations took place with Caroline Grace, the only woman in the world currently flying one of the aircraft. The first ever annual Runway Run took place at the airport and raised in excess of £13,500 with over 300 runners.

In 2000, Southampton Airport was awarded the "KPMG Hampshire Company of the Year Award", the "Gold Award" for Southampton Airport's Marketing Strategy at the 'Routes' Conference for the second year running and was voted "Regional Airport of the Year" at the Regional Airline World Awards.

2001 BAA spent £8 million on redeveloping the Short Term Car Park into a Multi-storey facility.

2002 Brymon became British Airways CitiExpress and Aer Arann Express launched services to Cork. British European changed it's name to Flybe and announced Southampton Airport as a key hub. The airports new Short Term Car Park was awarded the "Secure Car Park Award".
The England Football Team also flew into Southampton Airport.

2003 Flybe launched 14 routes from Southampton Airport:- Milan, Geneva, Dublin, Belfast City, Jersey, Murcia, Malaga, Toulouse, Alicante, Ibiza, Bergerac, Prague, Salzburg and Chambery.
The airport's passenger numbers reached 1 million per year for the first time. Southampton Airport was awarded the "Top UK Airport Award" at the Wanderlust Travel Magazine Travel Awards. BAA also acquired the Northern Development Site from Gazeley's Properties for £5.75 million.

2004 Southampton Airport commemorated the 70th Anniversary of air services between Southampton and Jersey as well as the celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Hampshire's only supercar - Gordon Keeble Cars built at Southampton Airport between 1964 – 1966. The airport was awarded the "KPMG Hampshire Company of the Year" as well as the "Airport of the Year Award" by the European Regions Airline Association. Southampton Airport also celebrated its 10th birthday in the new terminal on 9th Dec.

BAA Southampton

2005 Southampton Airport officially opened the £5 million re-developed Departure Lounge in July. The Southampton Airport Outline Master Plan launched detailing the airport's development plans for the next 25 years. A full public consultation followed, lasting over 3 months.

In 2005, Southampton Airport was awarded "Top UK Airport Silver Award" by Wanderlust Magazine Travel Awards and was a finalist in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Sustainable Business Awards. The airport was also voted "3rd Best Airport in the world" by Daily Telegraph readers in a comprehensive survey of 30,000 regular travellers.

2006 Aurigny Air Services welcomed their 1 millionth passenger between Southampton and Alderney. British Airways CitiExpress renamed to BA Connect. Southampton Airport also celebrated the 70th Anniversary of the first flight of the Spitfire with a re-enactment of the first test flight, a 5 Spitfire fly-past, schools challenge throughout Hampshire, art competition and museum exhibition.

Passenger Numbers Through Terminal

1937	25,266
1938	23,187
1960's	273,000
1994	484,000 Terminal opening
97/98	640,583
98/99	763, 898
99/00	774, 562
00/01	870,975
01/02	840,911
02/03	794,441
Aug 03	**1 million passenger mark**
03/04	1.4 million
04/05	1.5 million
05/06	1.8 million

Produced by BAA Southampton Airport.

BAA **Southampton**