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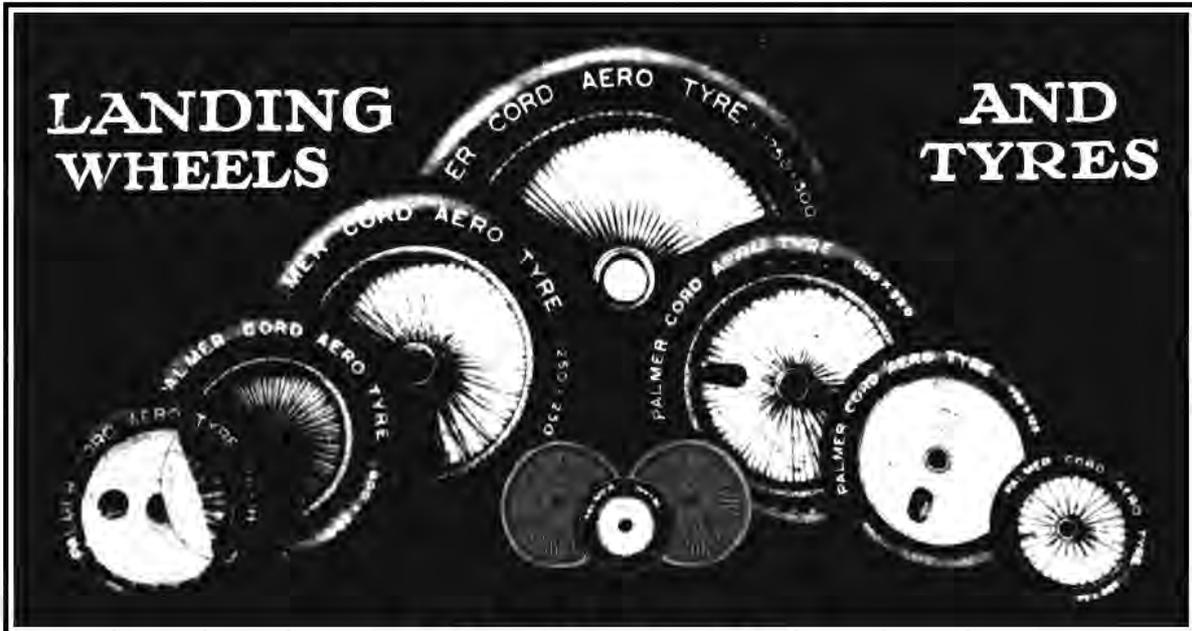


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"	186	120.	34.92	Central	750 x 125	77	178.	44.45	132/46	900 x 200	107	185.	55.	Central
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In the nineteen twenties and thirties, the choice of standard wheels and tyres available to aircraft designers and aircraft owners was wide, as shown this advert in a 1926 "Flight" magazine.

WINGS OVER NAZEING



The Author, Broxbourne, September 1950

An Illustrated History and Reminiscences of
BROXBOURNE AERODROME

and the

HERTS AND ESSEX AERO CLUB
Broxbourne Aerodrome, Nazeing, Essex
from

1929 to end of World War Two in 1945

by

Leslie A. Kimm

Foreword

Leslie Kimm has produced a wonderfully researched and detailed account of the history and development of the Herts and Essex Aero Club, recounting many of the fascinating and extraordinary experiences of club members and of others connected with Broxbourne Aerodrome.

Much of the contents feature my parents, family members and friends, who initiated the idea of a local flying club, and so successfully brought it to fruition. The writings were originally intended to be a personal record of Les's own experiences with the club, but my mother, Hetty Frogley, on hearing of this, suggested and encouraged him to write down a more detailed history of the club itself. I am sure that she would have been so pleased with what Les has achieved.

In many ways the pre-war years were a period of great freedom and adventure, prior to the dark clouds of war gathering. This book certainly captures the spirit of those times.

I hope it will give pleasure to those who read it, and especially to many who may still remember the Aero Club at Nazeing.

Geraldine Lofting (née Frogley)

Acknowledgements

My original intention was to write down a personal account of my own life in aviation, which started when I left school at the age of fourteen. March 1941 was a time of war, and seeking employment I was directed to start work with Herts and Essex Aviation Ltd. at Broxbourne Aerodrome, which was actually situated in Nazeing, Essex, my home village at that time. I was immediately fascinated by the work and all things aviation, and remained in the industry for the whole of my working life. Now in retirement, I decided to record my memories of those early years, which had been so enjoyable, as part of the family record.

The late Mrs. 'Hettie' Frogley, on hearing what I was doing, made the suggestion that I should write a more detailed history of the aerodrome and flying club itself, and its various activities. She produced a large box of some three hundred photographs relating to the club from its very beginnings, and a bound set of the club's magazine, "The Broxbourne Flyer" which recorded many of the club's day-to-day activities. She also offered her help and encouragement with the venture.

The aerodrome was founded early in 1930 by the Frogley family, who then initiated the Herts and Essex Aero Club at the suggestion of a family friend, the late Mr. F. E. 'Teddy' Darlow, who became secretary and a director of the club, a position he held for the entire life of the club's existence at Broxbourne. He provided me with much little known information about the club from his vast stock of memories.

I am especially grateful to the late Mr. 'Reg' Randall, who was the Club Steward and general factotum throughout the life of the club. He meticulously kept a scrap book of all the club activities, regularly scouring local and daily newspapers, journals and aviation magazines, for any news items and recordings of the club's work. Without his invaluable contribution there would have been little of the club's history to record..

I should also like to thank— Geraldine Lofting (née Frogley, Hettie's daughter), and William Frogley (Roger Frogley's son) for their continuous interest and encouragement, helpful information and advice; Mrs Diana Barnato Walker, M.B.E., a wartime ferry pilot, who vetted my article on the ATA (Air Transport Auxiliary) and allowed me the use of her photographs; ex-wartime employees of Herts and Essex Aviation Ltd., among them :- Eric Soulard, Leslie Miller, Howard Barnes, Harry Smith, Stella Frost (née Duncan), and Phyllis Dukes (née Hills), who also contributed from their nostalgic memories of those past years. I have also been helped and encouraged by Mr Tom Papworth, a resident of Nazeing, and finally I would like to thank Freda Drewery (née Young), also an ex-wartime employee of H & E Aviation Ltd. who painstakingly proof read the manuscript and corrected any typing errors, as well as contributing from her own nostalgic memories.

Credits for photographs poses a difficulty. Credits are given where definitely known. Most of the photos come from collections amassed over many years from the early thirties, with contributions from Mrs 'Hettie' Frogley, already mentioned above; the late Mr. John Perrin, a personal friend and colleague, who was an early club member and pre-war ground engineer, and who also provided me with much information about the club's history; and Mr. C.W. 'Jack' Rogers, an avid pre-war amateur photographer of aircraft at Broxbourne. A large number are from my own vast collection of photographs amassed over many years, a fair number of them contributed by friends, acquaintances, and former club members too numerous to mention by name, including those ex employees mentioned in the paragraph above. My sincere thanks to them all. The majority of these photos unfortunately bear no indication of source or date, making it difficult to give due credit.

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Wings Over Nazeing
An Illustrated History and Reminiscences of
Broxbourne Aerodrome
and the
The Herts and Essex Aero Club
Nazeing, Essex.
(1930 to 1954)

by Leslie A. Kimm

INTRODUCTION

I was only a year and a half old when, in 1928, my mother and father moved to Nazeing, where they had already purchased a plot of land in St. Leonard's Road and arranged for a wooden bungalow to be built on it, which they named 'Lynton'. For the first few years life there was fairly primitive, there was no gas or electricity and no main sewerage system. Oil-lamps provided the lighting, and I can still recall my parents' daily routine of cleaning the glass lamp-chimneys, trimming the wicks, and refilling them with oil. Things greatly improved when gas was supplied to the area, pipes were laid and a 'shilling-in-the-slot' meter installed. The improvement in the lighting was unbelievable, it was night turned into day. A gas cooker replaced the old black iron, coal-burning stove, much to the relief of my mother. A chemical 'Elsan' type toilet was installed in a small wooden out-building, quite the normal thing in many rural villages in those days, ours sat half way down the two hundred feet long garden, which was not exactly ideal on cold and dark winter nights. But this too improved when a few years later electricity, and a main sewerage system came into being. The roadway at this time was not much more than a clay and shingle track which became muddy and rutted in winter. However, there was not a great deal of traffic about at that time. Of interest to us boys were the chain-driven Foden and Sentinel steam wagons, with their solid rubber tyres, rattling to and fro transporting sand and ballast from the local gravel pits. They could be heard approaching from a long way off, which was the signal for us to run the quarter of a mile to the brook at the Pound cross-roads where, if we were lucky, they would stop and lower a large canvas hose-pipe into the brook to replenish the water for the boiler. I can still recall the nostalgic smell of coal, steam, and hot oil. One of life's simple pleasures! And then came the aeroplanes.

I could only have been about three and a half years old when I was first attracted by the noise of a flying machine circling low around our bungalow. It was possibly the first aircraft that I, and my twin brother Stan, had ever seen at such low level and, according to my parents, we were somewhat awe-struck and rather scared of the thing. But it was soon to become a fairly common occurrence with the numbers of aircraft increasing as the months passed by, and we soon became quite used to them.

So, Nazeing now had an attraction, at least to some people, that most other villages had not—an airfield, or rather, in the parlance of those days, an aerodrome. The word '*aerodrome*' comes from the Greek '*aerodromos*' which actually means 'traversing the air' and indeed, in the earlier days of aviation was used to describe a flying machine. The meaning of '*aerodrome*' is given in one modern dictionary as "*—an area of open level ground, together with runways, hangars, and other installations, for the take-off, landing, and maintenance of aircraft*". Later the term *airfield* came more into general use, in particular by the military, which the dictionary gives as "*—an area of land where aircraft were kept and may take off and land*". So, I suppose, in that sense Broxbourne could more accurately be described as an 'airfield' rather than an

‘aerodrome’, for it never had a runway, and a field it most certainly was, or more accurately an amalgamation of small fields, but “Aerodrome” it was proudly called, and Broxbourne Aerodrome it remained, even though it was actually sited in Nazeing, for its entire existence of almost twenty-four years. Even today some of the older inhabitants of Nazeing still speak of the junction of the Old Nazeing Road, through Keyzers Estate, and the New Nazeing Road, as “Aerodrome Corner”. Newcomers to the area are often quite mystified by this title, for the site, even when it was an aerodrome, was quite small and now, housing a factory complex which has replaced the clubhouse and hangar buildings, a man-made flood relief river running right through what was the take-off and landing area, together with tall trees which over the years have grown up around its low hedged perimeter, it is not surprising that there is a look of utter disbelief when they hear that it was once a thriving airfield.

A signpost in Broxbourne pointed the way to “Broxbourne Airport” which seemed to be a wee bit of an exaggeration, for the 9th edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary describes an ‘Airport’ as — “*a complex of runways and buildings for the take-off, landing, and maintenance of civil aircraft, with facilities for passengers*”, while the same dictionary gives ‘Aerodrome’ as — “*a small airport or airfield*”

I little realised then how this tiny aerodrome was to be the stepping stone to my future life-long career in aviation. I left school in early 1941, during the Second World War, and on learning from the Employment Exchange that aircraft workers were wanted for war work at the local aerodrome applied for a job as an apprentice engine and airframe fitter. I started work on Tuesday, 15th April, 1941, following the Easter weekend, and remained there until called up for military service. I returned to Broxbourne aerodrome in April 1948, by which time the Aero Club had reverted to its original civilian status as ‘The Herts and Essex Aero Club’ with the addition of ‘(1946) Ltd.’, denoting the date of its change from the war-time title of ‘Herts and Essex Aviation Ltd.’ I worked there as a Club Ground Engineer for most of that year and during that time took the opportunity to gain my “Pilot’s “A” Licence, fulfilling a long time ambition to fly. On 22nd November, 1948, I transferred to the de Havilland Aircraft Company at Hatfield, Herts., where I worked in the Service Department overhauling and repairing propeller driven RAF D.H. Mosquitoes and Sea-Hornets, also D.H. Vampire Jet Fighters, before moving on to the Experimental Dept. in 1955 as a Planning Engineer on D.H.110 Sea Vixens. My next move was to the Production Dept. working on the D.H.106 Comet, the worlds first Jet-Airliner, followed by the DH121 Trident 1, 2 and 3 series. My final move was to the Design Office on 1st April 1981, as a Project Engineer on the B.Ae.146 regional jet airliner, also built in 1, 2 and 3 series. I remained with the Company for forty three years until retirement in January, 1992, as a Principal (Project) Engineer, thereby completing over fifty years in the aircraft industry —apart from the three and a half years military service as a wireless operator in The Royal Corps of Signals, but even then, while serving in Egypt, I was sent on a pre-demobilisation refresher course to RAF Station Fayid, in the Canal Zone, where I spent six weeks working and flying with Royal Air Force engineers on Avro Ansons Mk.I and C.19, as well as Percival Proctor aircraft with which I was already familiar, having worked on them throughout most of the war period.



The author (left) with Corporal “Lofty” Cooper at RAF Fayid, Canal Zone, Egypt, servicing Percival Proctor Mk.III, DX201, on Monday, 26th January 1948 —



—and with ‘VIP’ Avro Anson Mk.19, serial VP524, on Tuesday the following day, just prior to flying down to RAF Station Cabritt on a test flight.



The Foundation and Evolution of the Aero Club

When Dirt-Track motor-cycle racing, later known as Speedway Riding, became a popular new sport in England in 1928, Roger (aged 19) and Arthur (aged 24), the sons of a Hoddesdon farmer, Mr. Gerard Wilfred Frogley of Cherry Tree Farm, decided to give it a try for themselves. At that time there were few suitably designed motor-cycles for this type of racing and riders would often modify or redesign standard road machines to their own requirements. Roger and Arthur both rode “Frogley Specials”. These were basically modified 1928 Dirt Track Rudge machines and were so successful that they marketed them for some time, until better performance machines like Douglas, Rudge, Wallis, Ariel and American Harley Davidsons were available in quantity. In the early days of 1928 races were won at comparatively slow speeds, averages being somewhat less than 39 m.p.h., in fact a special trophy was put up to be competed for by the first four riders to average more than 39 m.p.h.. Two of the four to do so were Roger and his brother Arthur (or “Buster” as he was more popularly known) riding their own “Frogley Specials”, the other two were Joe Francis and Arthur Willimott who, like the Frogleys, went on to become famous pioneer speedway riders. In this year Roger became the first British Dirt Track Champion, a title that he achieved on more than one occasion.



Roger Frogley on his 500 c.c. Rudge Whitworth Roadster in 1928.

By 1929 much better machines were available, the earlier Douglas lacked performance and reliability, but the new 1929 model was in a different class, it became Rogers favourite machine and brought him many successes, including British Champion for the second year running.

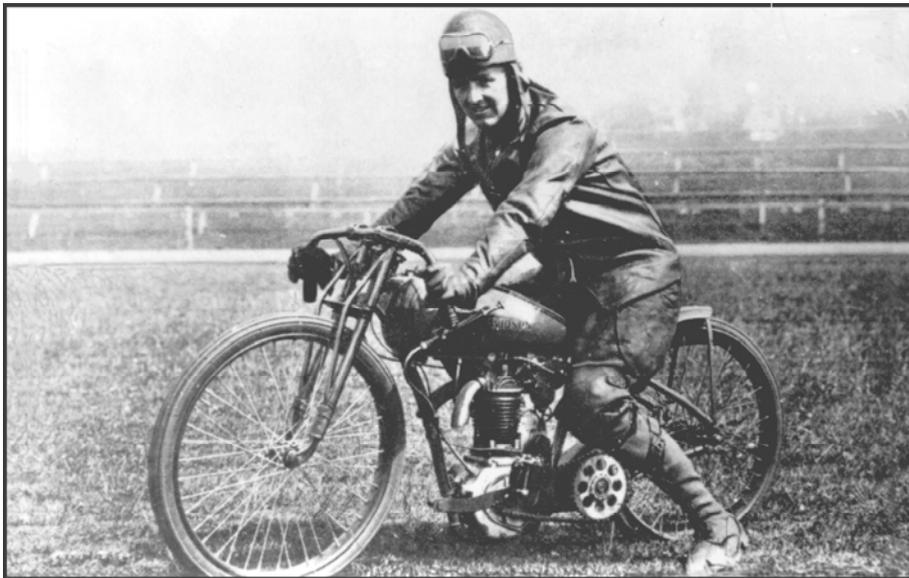
In 1929 he went on tour to New Zealand and Australia, and became the first British rider to beat an Australian rider. In the same year he became Captain of Crystal Palace Speedway Club, and also Captain of the England Team. “Buster” too was a very successful rider and became Captain of the Wembley Team in the same year.

On Saturday 12th October “Buster” married Henrietta “Hetty” M. Wrighton. Hetty was an aviation enthusiast and a great asset to the smooth running of the club, she was also a Club-Trained Pilot, gaining her “A”-Licence in 1937. Her interest and dedication to the club remained throughout her entire life.

Due, in part, to his racing successes Roger was able to afford to take up the exciting new hobby of flying. He learnt to fly at the Brooklands Aeroplane Club, at Weybridge in Surrey. His

first flying lesson took place on 27th August 1929 in a brand new de Havilland DH60X Cirrus III Moth, G-AAPD, which had only been registered ten days earlier. The flight lasted 35 minutes and his flying instructor was a Mr. Shepherd. Roger made his First Solo flight on 18th September 1929 after being checked out by Flying Instructor Captain Schofield. The flight lasted 15 minutes. Not long after this he gained his pilots' "A" Licence. He then decided to purchase his own aircraft, some sources suggest this was, for a while at least, in partnership with Jack Ormston. This was a second hand de Havilland DH60X Cirrus Moth, with a 90 h.p. Cirrus III engine, and bore the registration letters G-EBVK. It was this aircraft we had seen flying around Nazeing, and it was destined to become the Herts and Essex Aero Club's first aircraft.

On Sunday 13th October 1929 Roger had his first set-back in his new pass-time of flying when he unfortunately crashed this aircraft in a field near Dobb's Weir. He received only slight facial injuries and was also lucky in that the aircraft was not too badly damaged. However, his flying was curtailed for almost six months, in this aircraft at least, while the necessary repairs were carried out by the makers, The de Havilland Aircraft Company, Ltd. at Stag Lane Aerodrome, Edgware, Middlesex.



Arthur "Buster" Frogley on a Harley Davidson in 1929.

Until 1930 aircraft and flying had just been a pleasant, adventurous pastime, for the two Frogley brothers, and several of their racing colleagues had begun to show interest in their activities. The suggestion, and the idea, to form an Aero Club first came from a family friend of the Frogleys, Frank Edward "Teddy" Darlow, towards the latter end of 1930. He already had experience of such matters as he ran a small gliding club at Fairlop in Essex. This flying, he suggested, could be turned into a self supporting business, by developing it into a proper flying and social club, giving members the opportunity of learning to fly, hiring out the aircraft at a suitable rate, and by organising social events and flying competitions for both flying and non-flying members, with the occasional air display laid on to encourage public interest. In this way the high expense of operating the aircraft, and keeping them properly maintained, would be spread throughout the club membership.

The formation of the Aero Club was discussed and planned at a meeting of four, namely: Roger and "Buster" Frogley, Edward "Ted" Darlow, and Walter R. Bannister, who was to become the club's first flying instructor. Mr. Bannister was an ex RAF Flying Officer and pilot who had flown in the First World War, he was to become known to the members as 'Old Bann'. They were fortunate in that the Frogley brothers' father, Mr. Gerard W. Frogley, had taken an interest in their project and agreed to give them the use of some of his land at Lower Nazeing, Essex, and later was agreeable to clear hedges, and fill in ditches where necessary, in order to

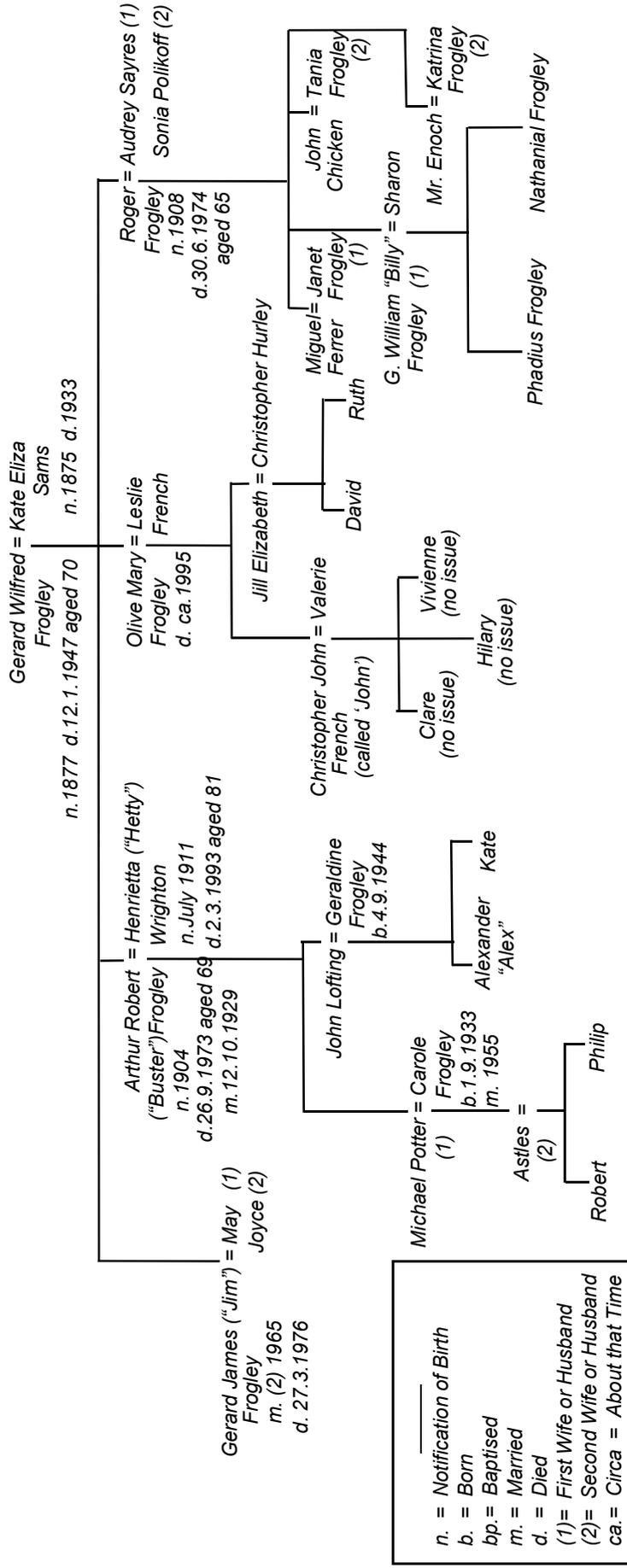
convert the existing small field into a much larger one should the number of aircraft and activities increase. The name decided on for the club was 'The Herts and Essex Aero Club' as the site of the airfield straddled the Hertfordshire and Essex county border. A lock-up shed was erected and a simple, single-room clubhouse, costing £850, was built on the site and fitted out with a bar, the necessary toilets, tables and chairs, etc., and provision made for light refreshments.



Founder Members of the Herts and Essex Aero Club circa 1931. Left to right, back row :— Leslie French; Jack Ormston; Roger Frogley; Gerard Wilfred Frogley; Arthur Robert "Buster" Frogley; Vic Huxley; Charlie Spinks; Reginald "Joe" Randall; Frank Edward "Teddy" Darlow. Front Row :— Mrs. L. French (Olive Mary, née Frogley); Mrs. R. Frogley (Audrey, née Sayres); Mrs. Vic Huxley; Mrs. C. Spinks; Mrs. G.W. Frogley (Kate Eliza, née Sams); Mrs. A.R. Frogley (Henrietta "Hetty", née Wrighton); and Mrs. F.E. (Elaine) Darlow.

One of the very early Staff members of the club was Mr. Reginald Randall, known as "Reg", or sometimes "Joe", a friend of the Frogley family, he was a rather unsung hero of the enterprise, often taken for granted by some of the club members because of his quiet, efficient way of working, he was always on hand to help out, give advice, or sort out a query. As Club Steward for almost the entire existence of the club at Broxbourne, he acted as barman in the clubhouse, and carried out many other duties that ensured the smooth running of the club. When asked one time what his official duties with the club were, he modestly replied "— me! Oh I'm just the general dog's-body!" Reg. was the man chiefly responsible for much of the club's history that exists today. He would carefully scan the local and daily newspapers and aero magazines, for any items relating to the club, or of general aviation interest, and paste them into a sort of diary-cum-scrapbook which he kept from around 1934 onwards, at a time when people were beginning to sit up and take notice of the club's activities.. Photographs were also added, building it up over the years to three volumes of the club's achievements. He stayed on with the club when it moved to Stapleford in 1953, soldiering on until forced to retire to his Hoddesdon home through ill health.

THE FROGLEY LINEAGE FROM 1875



n. = Notification of Birth
 b. = Born
 bp. = Baptised
 m. = Married
 d. = Died
 (1) = First Wife or Husband
 (2) = Second Wife or Husband
 ca. = Circa = About that Time

Leslie A. Kimm, 2 / 2000

Roger sold his aircraft to the club, and by Easter, 1931, flying was well and truly under way. The Club got off to a good start, better than could have been hoped for. Many of 'Buster' and Roger's speedway pals were eager and enthusiastic to take up flying, people like: Jack G. Ormston; Lionel Murice Van Praag a Norwegian rider; G. Greenwood a Yorkshire man; J.H.F. Morian Hansen the Danish rider ; Vic N. Huxley an Australian; Jack C. Hyland; Jim Kemster, and W. S. "Stiffy" Aston another Yorkshire man, all famous riders of their day. After the war, in 1947, two other well known riders, Eric Chitty and Malcolm S. Craven, also took their "A" Licenses at Broxbourne, thereby keeping up the tradition.

It was decided about this time that the aircraft should be painted in the club's own distinguishing colour scheme. The colours chosen were certainly attractive: orange fuselage with a chocolate-brown stripe running along each side just below the cockpit. The fin and rudder were also orange, with the chocolate-brown stripe continuing in a widening flare, curving up and across it. However, the scheme did vary, on some machines the reverse could be seen, with the fin and rudder in chocolate-brown and the 'fin flash' in orange. The wings, elevator and tailplane were finished in silver dope. At first, on G-EBVK, and some of the other aircraft, the fuselage registration letters were also in chocolate-brown, but this too was variable, and the letters were also seen in white. Possibly they were changed to white to give easier identification of the aircraft. On some aircraft the club name 'HERTS AND ESSEX AERO CLUB' would be printed, in small white or brown letters, on the side of the engine cowling. This orange colour scheme led to the aircraft being referred to locally by us lads as "Frogley's Orange Boxes. Just why we gave them this title I'm not sure, may be because aircraft of this era were quite often referred to as "crates". We thought the scheme was quite attractive, and it did enable us to readily identify the H.&E aircraft from those of the 'Busmens' Flying Club, also based at Broxbourne, which had all red fuselages, with silver wings and tails.

The club continued to make good progress, and the numbers of associate and flying members increased so rapidly that it soon became necessary to purchase another aircraft, and to erect more lock-up sheds. The club's second aircraft, which arrived on 11th June 1931, was G-EBWT, also a de Havilland DH60X Cirrus Moth but with an 85 h.p. Cirrus II engine, designed and produced in 1926. The Cirrus III in G-EBVK was a later, improved, version of 90 h.p. produced in 1929.

The official Opening Ceremony of the club, combined with an Air Display to attract and entertain the public, took place at 3 p.m. on Sunday the 14th June 1931. It was performed by the famous aviator (or aviatrix, as women flyers were then known) Amy Johnson, together with the well known radio comedian and film star Will Hay, who was made an honorary member of the club. He himself was a licenced pilot and owned his own aircraft, a de Havilland DH.80A Puss Moth, G-ABLR. Several other dignitaries were also present, including Mr. Tom E. Davies, MP, Mr. Fred C. Mockford, chairman, who was Roger's speedway manager, and of course most of the club members also attended. Amy and Jim Mollison later became joint-presidents of the club, a position they held for several years. Amy became Mrs. Mollison on Monday 29th July 1932.

The Air Display following the opening ceremony was impressive and a great success. It started with a parade of light aeroplanes comprising a number of de Havilland Cirrus and Gipsy Moths; a de Havilland Puss Moth; Hendy 302; Robinson Redwing; Blackburn Bluebird; Southern Martlet Single-Seater; Simmons Spartan; Comper Swift Single-Seater; Civilian Coupé; Cierva Autogiro; Westland Wessex; Avro Avian Sports; and a Klemm Monoplane. An imposing sight. This was followed by a Parachute Descent made by L/AC Fairlie of RAF Hendon, who jumped from one of the Club's Moths flown by F/O W.R. Bannister the Club's Instructor. A Demonstration of individual aircraft followed; then a Bombing Competition

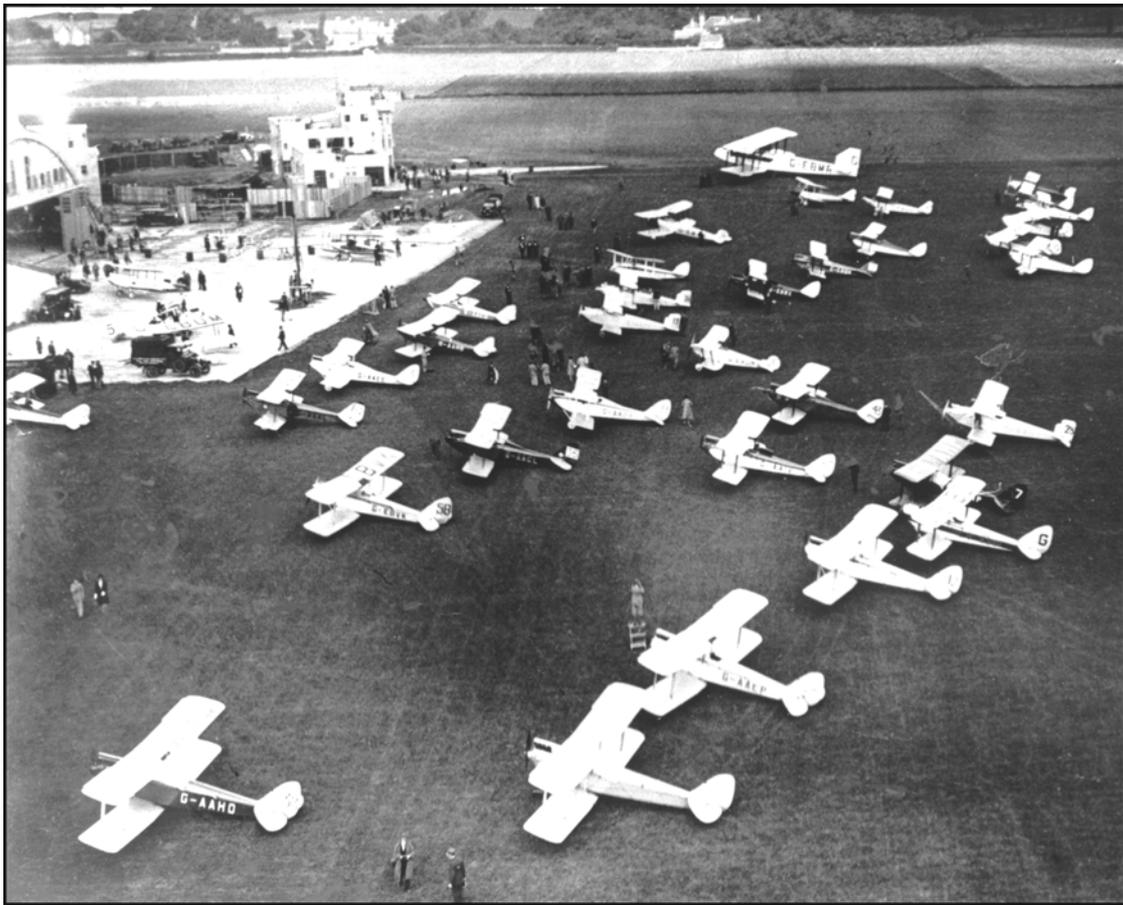


Photo: Planet News Ltd.

Competitors at Heston Air Park on King's Cup Air Race Day, Saturday 5th July 1929. Of the original sixty entrants only forty-one started, among them de Havilland DH60X Cirrus III Moth G-EBVK wearing race number 68 (left centre of picture) before it was purchased by Roger Frogley. The race was a two-day event, the course for the first day covered 589½ miles starting at 8a.m. from Heston flying on to Henlow —Norwich —Hadleigh —Hornchurch —Lympe —Hamble —Bristol —and Blackpool. Only 26 competitors survived to start the second leg on Sunday 6th from Blackpool when they flew on to Silloth —Glasgow —Dunbar —Newcastle —Leeds —Nottingham —Birmingham — and back to Heston. The records do not show whether G-EBVK was one of the second leg survivors. The winner was Flg. Off. R. L. R. Atcherley in a Gloster Grebe Mk.II, Serial No. J7519, with Flt. Lieut. G. H. Stainforth as navigator, at 150 m.p.h. Second was Lieut. L. G. Richardson in a red DH60 Moth, G-EBPQ, at 100.2 m.p.h., and third was Capt. W. L. Hope at 91 m.p.h. in DH60G Gipsy Moth G-AAPH which became part of the Herts and Essex Aero Club fleet at Broxbourne on 17th August 1937 and stayed with the club until the outbreak of the war when it was eventually impressed for military service with RAF Serial No. X5020.



G-AAPH at Broxbourne in July 1938

(attempting to bomb a moving car with small bags of flour); Motor-Cycle Trick Riding by a Mr. Frank Newman; A Display of Aerobatics; An Aerial Paper Chase whereby toilet-rolls were streamed into the air from the aircraft, which then proceeded to dive onto them, chopping them into small pieces. (This manoeuvre being described as “a toilet roll”!); More individual aircraft demonstrations followed, and finally, a further Parachute Descent.

Official Programmes for the event cost 6d. (2½ pence in today’s currency), and each bore a ‘Lucky No.’, the winners receiving a free ‘Joy-Flight’ at the end of the display.

Due to the ever increasing number of members wanting to take flying lessons, Flying Instructor Walter Bannister was soon to be helped out by Roger Frogley, who was now a qualified flying instructor himself. The total number of hours flown by the club’s aircraft for the nine months from Easter to the end of 1931 was 843, and 20 members had qualified for their pilots’ “A” Licences. A promising start.

The first to qualify was founder member James Angus Matthew MacDonald, a racing motor-cyclist, who was tragically killed while taking part in the Isle of Man Junior T.T. Races on Monday 17th June 1935. He was a very popular member of the club, and sadly missed by everyone. The second to gain his “A” Licence was the Club Secretary, “Ted” Darlow, who was to remain secretary of the club for the rest of his life. However, not all flying members were club-trained pilots, many had received their training during the First World War in the Royal Flying Corps or Royal Air Force and wanted to continue flying, either as a sport, or with a view to making a career out of it for themselves

Already, before the end of 1931, some members were so taken up with flying that they decided to purchase their own aircraft. Speedway rider Jack Ormston, the fifth club-trained pilot, bought himself a Westland Widgeon high-wing monoplane, registered G-EBRO, and with it entered for the 1931 King’s Cup Air Race which took place on Saturday 25th July, starting at 6 a.m. from Heston. A total of 40 aircraft took part. He also took part in the same race the following year, this time in an Avro 616 Sports Avian, G-ABIB. Another private-owner in 1931 was John Stark, the eighth club pilot to gain his “A” Licence, who bought a DH 60X Cirrus II Moth, G-EBXS.

With all this ever increasing activity it was soon necessary to have more lock-up wooden sheds erected, not just for the club aircraft, but also for the private owners who too required weatherproof storage for their aircraft, particularly with the approach of the unpredictable English winter. Also about this time, a substantially larger wooden workshop was built, large enough to house complete aircraft, with wings unfolded if necessary, for carrying out the Certificate of Airworthiness inspections, servicing and repairs. Prior to this the work would mainly have to be done outside, as there was barely sufficient room in the lock-up sheds, and the lighting poor. This workshop was situated adjacent to the road, by the eastern entry gate, and was later known as “DeeKay”. The club’s first Chief Ground Engineer was Mr. B. D. Whitaker, known to all as “Whit”. Later on he was joined by Mr. W.S. “Jock” Ogilvie, both excellent engineers.



Arthur "Buster" Frogley broardsliding circa 1930.



"Buster" Frogley with brother Roger on his 500 c.c. Rudge Whitworth Roadster speedway bike in 1928.



Arthur "Buster" Frogley
(Wembley Speedway)

"Buster" depicted on a cigarette card.

Frank Arthur —another Herts and Essex Aero Club Member from the speedway fraternity seen here in 1929.





Lionel M. van Praag, the tenth H.& E .Club-Trained pilot, gained his "A"-Licence in the latter half of 1931.



J.H.F. "Morian" Hansen on his J.A.P. speedway-bike carrying a lucky "13". He learnt to fly in 1935 (below).



Morian Hansen, who rode for Hackney Speedway, at Broxbourne receiving flying instruction from Roger Frogley the Chief Flying Instructor of The Herts and Essex Aero club. The aircraft is a de Havilland DH 60M (Metal) Moth, registration G-AAYG, it was added to the fleet on Thursday 30th August 1934 and remained until the outbreak of war.



Frank Arthur, an Australian, on his 350 c.c. Harley "Peashooter" at the White City track in 1928.



From the West Ham Speedway Programme of 22nd April 1947

Eric S. Chitty, a well-known speedway rider, who gained his Pilot's "A"-Licence on 24th July 1947 as a post-war member of the club, thereby maintaining the pre-war link with speedway, as also did Malcolm S. Craven (right) an equally famous rider who gained his "A"-Licence earlier in the year, in April. They were (respectively) the 467th and 451st Herts and Essex Club Trained pilots. Malcolm rode for West Ham Speedway.



The following article by John Marston appeared in the "Speedway Reporter" on Saturday, 31st May 1947:-

RIDERS IN THE AIR

I have often wondered why it is that speedway riders are attracted to aeroplanes. Perhaps it is the sheer thrill of speeding through the air, —you should hear Lionel Fredericks wax enthusiastic on the subject! —though personally I've been scared stiff whenever called on to fly. My own desire has always been to stick to Mother Earth.

But, whatever the reason, the fact remains that speedway racing and flying seem to go hand in hand and have done since the early days of the sport. Roger and Buster Frogley, two of Britain's first speedway stars, popularised aviation among the riders when increasing weight caused their retirement, and they did well with the flying-school at Broxbourne.

It was there that many of the old stars used to put in their flying-hours. Vic Huxley nearly frightened Ernie Bass, who used to promote at Lea Bridge, out of his life by looping the loop with him —and when he landed Ernie declared that only the thought that he himself was an insurance broker stopped him from jumping out!

Talking of Lea Bridge reminds me of "Stiffy" Aston, who used to ride there. He decided to winter in Australia and intended flying his own plane out there, but unfortunately "Stiffy" crash-landed in North Africa and had to abandon the scheme.

Jack Ormston and "Smiling" Jim Kemster were two others who did their early flying from Broxbourne. Jack, who was one of Johnnie Hoskins' unbeatable Lions and later went to Harringay, is now farming and training racehorses in Yorkshire. He was among the most enthusiastic of flying riders and competed in the King's Cup air race on two occasions.

He visited Australia in the winter of 1929 with Roger Frogley with whom he owned a plane in partnership at the time. Shortly before the pair left England, Roger was piloting the machine when the wind forced a door open and the whole lot turned turtle. Roger escaped with nothing more serious than shock and a badly battered nose —and the following day beat Jack Parker at Wimbledon in the English Championship.

I have mentioned before, I think, that Jim Kemster crashed to his death when flying a plane for Air Transport Auxiliary after the cessation of hostilities in Europe. He hit a high-tension cable when hedge-hopping in France, and that spelled the finish of one of the finest riders the cinders has ever known.

It was Jim who was responsible for the rise in popularity of the Rudge speedway machine after the all-conquering Douglas had held sway for two seasons. Incidentally, both Jim and Roger Frogley were married at the same time at Leighton Buzzard registry office in October, 1930.

Not long before the war, a bunch of New Cross and Bristol riders —among whom were Stan Greatrex, Ernie Evans (the young Australian who was in partnership with Stan in a motor-cycle business in those days), and Morian Hansen the Danish rider —did a lot of week-end flying. Morian —which, by the way, is only a nickname approximating to our "Darkie" —joined the R.A.F. and became famous as an air-gunner. He was twice decorated, now, back in Denmark once more,

owns an airfield and a successful air-line as well. He has not completely forsaken the cinders, though, and you may keep your weather-eyes peeled for a possible visit from a Danish team later this season. Matches between Morian's boys and Second Division sides would be bright attractions to my way of thinking and give the sport that international interest which has been so badly lacking this season.

Another rider to be decorated during the war was Lionel van Praag, who received the George Medal for rescue work after a crash in the Timor Sea while he was serving in the R.A.A.F. Lionel has always been a keen flyer, of course, and in the years before the war flew to Manchester from London to ride in one of the Test Matches at Belle Vue.

Mention of the R.A.A.F. reminds me that Bluey Thorpe, the young Australian who was at one time on Wembley's books and is now with Norwich, was also in that service. Bluey (which is Aussie for "Ginger") had rather a bad crash last season but is now recovered, I'm glad to say. He is married to a Norwich girl and I fancy that the local "pull" was one of the main reasons for his move from Wembley. The saddest crash of all, perhaps, was that which ended the life of Frank Charles, captain of the English test side in 1936, a photo of which was recently published in the "Reporter". Frank was ever keen on gliding and a very proficient pilot. At Dunstable Downs one day the tow-rope of his glider failed to disengage properly, with the result that the machine nose-dived into the ground and Frank was killed.

Air travel seems to be very popular just now. The Duggan brothers and Cliff Parkinson flew from Australia, complete with machines, to this country, while Bill Kitchen and Ron Johnson recently made their successful flying visit to Czecho-Slovakia, and another who has been flying around Europe during the winter is Birmingham's captain, Phil Hart.

Phil, who is an Australian by adoption (he was born in Balham), originally came to this country with Steve Langton (now with Arthur Westwood at Tamworth). He went to Sweden last winter intending to race on ice there but as the meeting was frozen out he flew to the British Zone of Germany. According to Phil he spent a pleasant

time at Kiel teaching the services the rudiments of speedway racing and hopes to go back there at the end of this season to carry on his "school-mastering".

As far back as 1935 Lionel van Praag and Dick Case flew from Australia to New Zealand to help Wally Kilmister (not Kilminster, if you please) to whack an English touring side which included Jack Parker and Bob Harrison in a series of so-called Tests. Mention of Wally, who often spectates at meetings these days, reminds me that he lost all the trophies he won on the track when his house at Wembley was burgled recently.

There are dozens of other instances of the link between speedway and the air, but space forbids my mentioning them all. Bobbie Cox wrote recently that she found most riders to be schoolboys at heart, always ready for a dare. That, perhaps, is the explanation of aviation's attraction for them. It is fast and thrilling, satisfying to that urge for excitement which riders seem to possess off and on the track.



*Jack Ormston (Harringay)
The 5th Club-Trained Pilot, 1931*



*Lionel van Praag (Wembley)
The 10th Club-Trained Pilot, 1931*



*Vic Huxley (Harringay)
The 32nd Club-Trained Pilot, 1932*



*Wally Kilmister (Wembley)
The 36th Club-Trained Pilot, 1932*



*Morian Hansen (Hackney Wick)
The 130th Club-Trained Pilot, 1935*



*George Greenwood (Nottingham)
Not Trained at H. & E. Broxbourne*

Speedway Pilot-Members of
The Herts and Essex Aero Club
Depicted on a 1937 Cigarette
Card Set of "Speedway Riders"



*Eric Chitty (West Ham)
The 467th Club-Trained Pilot, 1947*

ROGER FROGLEY IN AEROPLANE CRASH.

OCCUPANTS' WONDERFUL ESCAPE.

A startling accident occurred early on Sunday afternoon, when a D.H. Moth aeroplane, piloted by Mr. Roger Frogley, the famous dirt track rider, who resides with his parents at Hertford Road, Hoddesdon, crashed in a field in the Lea Valley about a mile south of the Fish and Eels Hotel at Dobbs Weir, near Hoddesdon.

Mr. Frogley was accompanied by his cousin,



Mercury Photo.

THE WRECKED 'PLANE.

Miss Daisy Mouldon. Miss Mouldon sustained a broken collar-bone, and both suffered minor facial injuries and bruises.

An eye-witness told a *Mercury* representative that Mr. Frogley suddenly appeared to get into difficulties, and it was only through his skilful piloting that the accident was not much more serious. The pilot and passenger appeared to jump from the machine when a short distance from the ground, thus probably saving themselves from a worse fate.

This misfortune occurred close upon another accident in which Mr. Frogley was involved on the speedway at the Chrystal Palace, where he fell heavily whilst racing on Saturday night. A few hours previous to the mishap on the speedway, Mr. Frogley had acted as best man at his brother's wedding at Broxbourne, a report of which will be found in another column.

Large numbers of people visited the wrecked plane, a picture of which we reproduce, on Sunday afternoon, and there was a continual stream of sightseers up to late at night. Everyone expressed surprise at the occupants lucky escape.

This report of the crash appeared in the Mercury on Friday 18th October 1929.

An early set-back in Roger's flying career. The cause of this accident, which occurred on Sunday afternoon, 13th October 1929, was an unfastened locker door, situated just behind the pilot's cockpit. This door, flapping violently, caused such vibration that Roger selected a field and decided to make an immediate emergency landing. On turning into wind on the final approach, a wing struck the ground and the aircraft cartwheeled over. The aircraft a de Havilland DH60X Cirrus Moth, G-EBVK, was jointly owned by Roger and another speedway rider, Jack Ormston, at the time of the accident. Roger later owned it outright before selling it to the club.



It appears that the straight-axle undercarriage was replaced by the "X"-type after the first crash. This is believed to be the same aircraft in a later accident which clearly shows this. The date and place of this incident is not known..

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