

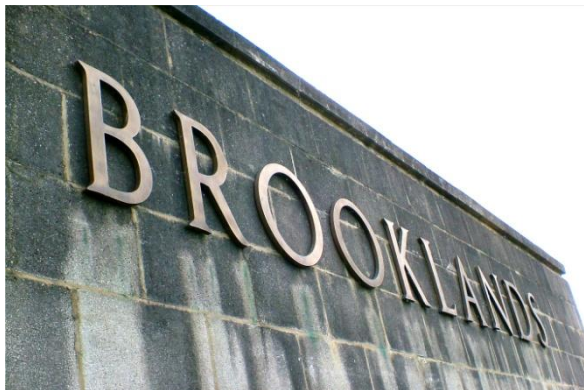
BROOKLANDS TODAY

Many of us have been to Brooklands for the famous Auto Italia Italian Car Days or perhaps for some other reason, but I feel that the events sometimes overshadow the location and provide too many distractions to allow us to appreciate the site properly. While what remains of



Brooklands to-day within the museum site is but a small part of the original acreage, there is much still to be found outside that somewhat confined area and even some of the features within the museum may be easily overlooked.

As many of you will know, Brooklands was built at his own expense by Hugh Locke King, as he was concerned that Britain was falling behind in having no permanent venue for the craze of motor racing that was beginning to sweep the world. It was opened in 1907 and after many developments the track held its last race meeting in August 1939, the whole huge site being



pretty badly used for very many years after that until the core of what was left was secured for preservation at a relatively late stage.

These days public parking is on the other side of the River Wey, but when you attend a special

event with your car the entrance road that you use is actually part of the Campbell circuit, constructed in 1937: As you come in from the main road you can see to your right where it bends to join –after a gap- the still-extant section of banking within the museum. While the Club House has been restored and many of the surviving workshops converted to display space, a number of buildings still remain frozen in time, for instance the stratosphere chamber which now also contains an interesting collection of aero engines.

Due to its strategic importance during the war a number of defensive remains can be found untouched such as a pillbox in



the old paddock, a searchlight tower to the top of the Test Hill and some shelters at the foot of the banking. The hangar which now blocks the main straight also dates from this period.

Only the foundations remain of the benches and grandstands in the overgrown area adjacent to the Test Hill, but at the top of the hill are the remarkably sound remains of the old Members Restaurant, the bridge over the banking and the tunnel almost below it formerly giving access to this area. Another tunnel which gave access to the paddock also still exists towards where the track used to cross the river.

Some of you may recall the times when the AI events used to spill over the bridge and utilise the remains of the airfield and until it was built over this was also used for aero gatherings. Much of the Campbell Circuit could easily be found there too, but to-day Mercedes-Benz World has changed the area forever, although they have preserved a bit of the CC within their complex of test

tracks. While it was sad to see the airfield obliterated, it had become something of a mess and was in poor condition and M-B have incorporated various features beneficial to the Museum into their development. While some criticise M-B for doing what they have done, aside from the fact that no-one British actually came up with the money to do anything with this area M-B cars have associations with the Circuit from its very earliest days.



On the far side of the former airfield the banking extends for some distance and there is also a sizable cleared section opposite the retail development which occupies the old Aero Village. This can be easily located and if you proceed up the side of the retail area in the direction M-BW the old airfield control tower can be found on the left. Now slightly down at heel and used for some purpose far from its original intention, it is sadly remote from the other surviving buildings. Although now out of bounds, I recall walking the further surviving banked section opposite here which runs back towards the office buildings of The Heights and finding the broken yellow line painted near the top of the banking clearly visible – well over 50 years after it was last used!



Although The Heights area has been built upon to an even greater extent latterly, somewhere in the Sony car park stand some restored concrete pits –if they have survived- and while the original Brooklands gates *have* survived you will need to

travel to the British Racing Drivers Club office within Silverstone circuit to find them!

These are just some of the features which you may have overlooked and an interesting aerial view of Brooklands as it was some ten years or more ago can be found via Google Maps: Just tap in KT13 0QN and all will be revealed.

M J B