



Around Colindale

Make the most of your daily exercise and learn more about the history of Colindale and Grahame Park.

Aeroville

Aeroville was designed in 1917 for Grahame-White factory employees who were involved in manufacturing aircraft. It was designed by Grahame-White's architect, Herbert W Matthews, and was intended as the first part of a much larger estate. The 30 houses we see today were the only part completed before the First World War ended and the funding ran out. The intention was to build more units in 1919, but this did not happen. The architecture is based on 18th century Georgian designs with Doric columns on the façade. Inside, the modern units would have been fully electrically lit with modern appliances.

Rumour has it that the large clock was always set to be fast so that workers wouldn't be late to work!





Why not go online
and find out
more about these
famous aviators?

Booth Road

What we know as Booth Road today was just a track at the edge of the airfield during the First World War. Sheaveshill Avenue was the original Booth Road and the two were going to be linked. Plans changed, however, with the new road getting the old name and the old road being renamed.

The old Booth Road was home to a guest house for trainee pilots. The guest book was a glittering catalogue of famous First World War aviators including, 'Mick' Mannock (the highest Commonwealth scoring ace fighter pilot) and Albert Ball (at the time of his death, the United Kingdom's leading flying ace).

Other lodgers included: Leonard 'Tich' Rochford; Gwylim Lewis; Zeppelin killers Rex Warneford and Albert de Bathe Brandon; Cyril Crowe; Harold Rosher; and top-scoring Belgian aces Baron Willy Coppens and Baron Georges 'Jojo' Kervyn de Lettenhove.

Runways

In 1943, during the Second World War, the RAF Hendon airbase had three runways and covered approximately 200 acres. The airfield was roughly rectangular, with the perimeter tapering at the southern end and expanding at the north end. The three runways of RAF Hendon were positioned where the large green area of the Grahame Park Estate is today.



During the annual Grahame Park Festival gazebos must be positioned carefully as it's nearly impossible to hammer tent pegs into the ground on top of the solid old runways.

Aerodrome Road

Aerodrome Road was once the southern boundary of the Hendon Aerodrome. It now runs along the back of the RAF Museum and the newer Beaufort Park housing. The last remaining factory unit facing Aerodrome Road is a Dutch gable-style brick office structure. It was designed by Aeroville architect Herbert Matthews. Plans of these offices date back to August 1918. They housed the transport office, works police, and weighbridge.

Buildings on Aerodrome Road were photographed by Aerofilms Ltd who took more than 760,000 aerial photographs between 1919 and 2006. The first ever aerial photograph recorded by Aerofilms was of Claude Grahame-White's London Flying Club, Hendon (now the RAF Museum): historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/100-years-of-aerofilms/



Officers' Mess

The Officers' Mess was built in 1917 (you can see the date over the door) in the mock-Tudor style that was very fashionable at the time. The building was for the use of Royal Flying Corps pilots stationed at the aerodrome. Herbert Matthews was commissioned to design it in such a way that when its wartime function finished it could easily be converted into a useful hotel for paying guests to the aerodrome. Unfortunately for Grahame-White this did not happen as the airfield was purchased by the Air Ministry in the 1920s. Today the building is used as a hall of residence for students at Middlesex University.

In 1930, a small hut-like extension was made to the building on its north side (the left, as seen from the road). This was a room added for the exclusive use of the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII, to change into his flying clothing before taking off from the aerodrome.

Stay safe and happy exploring!

If you take photos of local aviation landmarks while out-and-about, do tag us in your posts @rafmuseum

