

1



Beginnings and the Beacon

The Beacon was an important navigational device in the 1930s. Removed in the 1980s, it was repaired and reinstated in 2011 as an iconic monument to Hatfield's aviation history.

2



The Early Years

The aerodrome's facilities became known for staging major aviation events. The RAF's Elementary Flying Training School, based at the aerodrome, trained over 3000 RAF and Army pilots.

3



The Runway

The Gipsy Moth and the Tiger Moth aeroplanes could frequently be seen taking off from the aerodrome site. First flown in 1931, the Tiger Moth went on to become the main primary training aeroplane for the RAF until the 1950s.

4



Astwick Manor

The Astwick estate was held by the Bassingbourne family from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. In 1949 the Manor became the new headquarters of the de Havilland Aeronautical Technical School.

5



Rocket Development

The aerodrome became a centre for rocket research, design and development. Innovations in missile and rocket technology were developed at the site including the Firestreak and the Blue Streak.

6



Community

The aerodrome contributed a tremendous amount to the community in Hatfield through sports competitions, clubs, concerts, and popular public open days.

7



Design Innovation

In 1941 the Comet Racer was the fastest aeroplane in the sky and in 1948 the Vampire jet fighter achieved a world record height of 59,446 feet.

8



Administration Block and the bombing

The administration block was the hub of the aerodrome. It was painted in camouflage colours to avoid being bombed during the War. Also here is the Police Station's tribute to de Havilland - the Walk of Memories.

9



The Gatehouse

This is another surviving listed building from the early days, which stands next to what was the main entrance to the aerodrome.

10



The Comet

This stands before the Flight Test Hangar, where the Comet jet airliner was maintained. Completed in 1954 it was the largest aluminium building in the world, measuring 200 by 300 feet.

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Hatfield Aerodrome Heritage Trail



“ Within easy access of London, yet situated amid delightful Hertfordshire country surroundings, Hatfield Aerodrome is undoubtedly the largest and finest private flying ground in Great Britain ”

From 'Hatfield Aerodrome' (1936)

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With 3 bars and a warm, friendly atmosphere Club de Havilland is the perfect place to end your heritage tour with a drink and a meal.



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A Brief Introduction

In 1930 Geoffrey de Havilland (1882 – 1965), aviation pioneer and founder of the de Havilland Aircraft Company, began moving his business from Stag Lane in North London to the small town of Hatfield.

The creation of a new headquarters and a factory for the de Havilland Aircraft Company in 1934 marked the beginning of Hatfield's aviation industry. The Heritage Trail is a way for the local community and visitors to explore Hatfield's heritage and discover its aviation and rocket history. The Heritage Trail consists of ten boards placed around the former aerodrome. Each board is in a relevant location and provides information on the aerodrome's remarkable history.



Full Trail

- Shorter Trail Option
- 1. Beginnings and the Beacon
- 2. The Early Years
- 3. The Runway
- 4. Astwick Manor
- 5. Rocket Development Community
- 6. Design Innovation
- 7. Administration Block and the Bombing
- 8. The Gatehouse
- 9. The Comet
- 10. The Comet

The full trail is about **4km** long and takes approximately **90 minutes** to walk.
The shorter trail option is about **3km** long and takes approximately **60 minutes** to walk.