



## **BROOKLANDS: The Official Centenary History by David Venables**

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Reviewed by Gerry Gledhill.

Here we have a detailed history of that great British icon of motor sport and aviation. David Venables writes in detail of how, from Wintersells Farm in 1906/1907, arose the quintessential British motor sport venue.

The opening chapters show wonderful photographs of Brooklands first summer 1907, with candid scenes of the Edwardian crowds with their beautiful motor cars. It is not just the motor racing history, but also Brooklands aviation history which saw the British aircraft develop from the very beginnings, through the cold war and beyond.

Chapters are arranged in respect to each year's activities making the book an easy volume to reference.

Venables shows how the track fostered the development of many types of motor sport. The first motor cycle events in 1908 give us an impression of the early popularity of these more affordable machines.

Brooklands developed into a true multi-user facility with the fledgling and faltering beginnings of British aviation. Such famous names as Bristol, Vickers, Avro, and Sopwith all had early history at Brooklands, the field within 'the banking' being a major centre for civil flying training up to 1914 and possessing a rich history thereafter.

War in Europe sees the temporary suspension of motor sport and a flurry of aviation activity. We are taken on a fascinating journey by Venables as he documents the way Brooklands is pivotal in the testing and development of the early British military aeroplane.

Post war enthusiasm brings the track and the motoring world back to life by the 1920s. The reader is taken through the lead up to the first British Grand Prix in 1926. Generally the between war period is well documented with some of the finest motoring photography of that time. MG enthusiasts are not forgotten with several notable references including the famous Goldie Gardner demonstrating his 1100cc record braking car on the banking in 1939.

Venables comprehensively covers motor sport and aviation as it relates to Brooklands, through the WW2 post war and cold war period, all the way to the present time. He has tied together the many threads which are the Brooklands story with an entertaining and easy writing style. He writes for both the historically minded scholar as well as for the absent amusement of the motoring enthusiast through his pictorial journey.

All in all, a thoroughly good read and a valuable reference volume for our library.