

## **WITHINGTON AIRFIELD**

### **ALEXANDER PARK AERODROME**

**Alliot Verdon Roe formed A. V. Roe on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1910 in Ancoats, the first registered aeroplane manufacturers. Aircraft were taken to Brooklands, near Sale, for assembly, and it was not until December 1910 that an aerodrome was constructed at Trafford Hall.**

**The First World War was the first conflict in which planes played an important part. In 1917 it was decided to increase aircraft production by establishing National Aircraft Factories, and NAF No.2 was created at Crossley Road, Heaton Chapel. Part of Cringle Fields Park was requisitioned for testing aircraft.**

**The War Office looked at sites near Manchester for a new airfield. They picked out land in Withington running from Hough End Farm to Old Hall Farm. The land was owned by the Egerton Family but was requisitioned in 1917 by the government. It lay near the Midland Railway's line to Stockport and the Great Central railway route to Fairfield.**

**Designs for the Didsbury Aircraft Acceptance Park were produced in December. The airfield had grass**

runways of 3500 feet and two sets of the “Aeroplane Shed, General Service Type” were built with other buildings, and Withington Airfield became operational in May 1918. By 1919 the name Alexander Park was in general use from the nearby railway station. Aircraft sets from Heaton Chapel were sent to the airfield for assembly and testing, while Avro had a hanger where they carried out delivery flights.

After the war military flying continued, but civil flying became available from the airfield in 1919. The first civil transport flight into Manchester took place on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1919, when Lt. Col. Sholto Douglas piloted a O/400 bomber of Handley Page from London with 10 passengers.

Manchester Corporation tried to purchase the land, but Lord Egerton refused to sell, and flying ceased in August 1924. The surviving open land is now the Hough End sports field.