

THE SHUTTLEWORTH COLLECTION

On the day of the Spring Equinox, 20th March 2024, a gathering of 28 members and associates of the National Grid REA Lincoln met on a damp morning at Rustons Sports Ground in readiness for a trip down the A1 to Old Warden Aerodrome in Bedfordshire, the home of the Shuttleworth Collection.

Originally founded in 1928 by Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth, an Aviator and Racing Driver, who died in 1940 flying a Fairey Battle, the Collection represents the earliest types of aircraft from the early days of flying (those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines springs to mind) and transport generally, with collections of early motor vehicles, tractors, motor cycles and pedal cycles. Emphasis is naturally placed on the aircraft, and a team of full time staff and volunteers ensure that most of the aircraft are kept in flying condition, in line with the founder's original intentions.

Arriving at the Collection at around 10.30 we were greeted by one of the volunteers, who handed out the tickets and, a bonus, a voucher for a free tea or coffee. This was most acceptable! And, by the way, the bacon and sausage rolls were some of the best we had had!

The Collection comprises some 6 hangers holding a remarkable collection of weird and wonderful aircraft, from Tiger Moths to Spitfires and Hurricanes and everything in between. The motor collection is spectacular! One of the hangers has a Lincoln connection and is dedicated to the products of Clayton & Shuttleworth, including a remarkable 1920's Charabanc from Rhyl!

Also within the site is the Swiss Garden, part of the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens, which pre-dates the airfield by about 100 years, having been designed in the 1820's Regency fashion, with an assortment of listed structures and two resident peacocks.

There is a good walk around the gardens and, for the better appreciation of the gardens, a large number of seats to rest the weary legs, having first traipsed round the 6 hangers! Apart from the Swiss Cottage itself, and the various bits and bobs around the garden, is the spectacular Giant Californian Redwood. It is said that there are now more Giant Redwoods in this Country than there are in California! They are HUGE!

After a period of rest and recreation and a coffee sat out in the warm sun in the viewing area watching aeroplanes being hauled out of the maintenance bay by an old Fordson Major, the time to depart came all too quickly!

Back on the bus and to Stuart's tender mercies back up the heavily congested A1, from one traffic jam to another (Stuart's attempts to avoid these being largely unfruitful) we duly arrived back at Rustons tired but happy!

Another good day out, well organised and much appreciated by those attending!

Now for the next one!

Graeme Wade