

# GAZETTEER OF FLYING SITES IN THE UK AND IRELAND 1912-1920

by Mick Davis & Bill Morgan  
Part 1: Introduction and Sources

THERE IS NO WAY that a part-work of this nature can be 100% accurate, but it is an attempt to catalogue the hundreds of sites that were used by the flying services, manufacturers and civilian schools that supplied the flying services during the period under study and to trace the movements of service units occupying those sites. The sites of the RE Balloon School, which fall outside the dates in the title, are included, as is the French seaplane station on Guernsey, for the sake of completeness.

The *Gazetteer* is the culmination of more than twenty years of research in which invaluable assistance has been provided by many members of this society. Principal among these was the late Bill Morgan, certainly one of the kindest people I have known and one who shared my interest in the subject of this work. Ray Sturtivant was a constant source of snippets of information and Stuart Leslie, as ever, has helped by sharing photographic information.

The prime sources of reference lie in the National Archives. The six-part *RAF Quarterly Survey of Stations*, Autumn 1918 (AIR 1/452/15/312/26 & AIR 1/453/15/312/26) is an essential reference, containing site plans for the vast majority of major locations but, sadly, not landing grounds. Official Secret Map (No.141) showing Naval and Military Aircraft Stations

& Depots to date, 30 April 1916 is in AIR 1/15/226/294 Pt.2 and was useful for establishing sites in use at the beginning of the massive 1916 expansion of the RNAS and RFC. The Home Defence organisation occupied a significant proportion of the sites and documentation includes AIR 1/16/15/1/77 (*Home Defence Squadrons; Their HQs, Locations and Landing Grounds*), AIR 1/823/284/5/44 (*Renaming of RFC Home Defence Stations as at 31 December 1916*), AIR 1/16/15/17 (*Changes to Home Defence Station and Landing Grounds, January to October 1917*) and AIR 1/93/15/9/239 (*List of Stations, RFC and RNAS, as at January 1918*). The post-war run-down of the RAF can be traced with reference to the monthly *List of Units of the Royal Air Force*, held in AIR 1/2212.

## The Gazetteer

The conventional alphabetical arrangement has been adhered to, rather than presenting sites by function. The names used are the final ones given so that, for example, details for Brattleby are given under Scampton and those for Bramham Moor under Tadcaster. The alternative names are given in the listing and referenced to the final name for each relevant site.

Each site entry comprises several lines of information, the following being a typical, short example that introduces the layout that is being used throughout.

1	NEWCASTLE (Gosforth/Town Moor)	1 mile from Jesmond railway station, 2 miles from Newcastle-upon-Tyne railway station				
2	78/88 : NZ 243666 : Northumberland (Borough of Newcastle-upon-Tyne) : 80 acres : 750 x 750 yards : 220 feet amsl.					
3	Manufacturers' aerodrome for Sir W.G. Armstrong Whitworth & Co Ltd and Angus-Sanderson & Co Ltd 1915 - 1919 : Aircraft Acceptance Park RFC/RAF 8.1917 - 1919 : Relinquishment notified 22.1.1920.					
4	One late 1917 pattern GS Shed (timber), 170 x 80 feet, plus one 'French' Shed, 300 x 60 feet, plus four Bessonneau hangars, 80 x 60 feet.					
5	9 Aircraft Acceptance Park	1.8.1917	from	formed	12.10.1917	to re-designated 9 (Newcastle) Aircraft Acceptance Park
6	9 (Newcastle) Aircraft Acceptance Park	12.10.1917		formed from existing AAP	15.7.1919	disbanded
7	Note - 9 (Newcastle) AAP was classed as a 1 Section park and handled AW FK8s and Bristol F2Bs from Armstrong Whitworth and Angus-Sanderson as well as Sopwith Cuckoos from Pegler and Blackburn. Some AW prototypes were also test flown from Cramlington. The aerodrome housed the first 'airshow' staged by the RAF; the RAF Aircraft Exhibition which ran from 12.2.1919 until 1.4.1919.					
8	1 (Aircraft Acceptance) Group until 11.1.1918 : 19 Group, 4 Area from 1.4.1918 : HQ NE Area (AAP) 7.1918 - 11.1918 : 17 Group, NE Area 11.1918					

**LINE 1** gives the name, with any official alternative name in parenthesis, and, where given in the references above, distance from the nearest railway station. It is assumed that the distance was in road, and not air, miles.

**LINE 2** gives location and, where possible, area, dimensions and height above sea level. Location is by the relevant 1:63360/1:50000 OS Map sheets, the current lettered 100km Ordnance Survey grid square and a six figure grid reference. The OS grid system does not apply to Ireland or the Channel Isles and so positions there are given by Latitude and Longitude, in degrees, minutes and seconds. Contemporary counties are given, with later ones, if applicable, in parenthesis.

**LINE 3** specifies the site's function(s) and dates it operated as such.

**LINE 4** gives details of the hangarage available for the more permanent sites. This has been drawn from the details in AIR 1/452 & 453 and

photographic evidence. The latter can contradict the former in some instances, examples being the length of Shawbury's sheds (250ft according to the Survey, yet patently the standard 170ft by photographic evidence) and the type of shed at Beverley (two 210 x 65ft sheds plus one ARS shed 170 x 80ft according to the Survey, but photographs show only three of the former).

*The various styles of WWI aeroplane sheds and hangars are described below.*

**LINE 5 & 6** show, in the case of aerodromes and seaplane stations, tabulations of resident units that give each unit title, where and whence it arrived, leaving date and destination. Units and locations marked with an asterisk were ground units and non-flying stations.

**LINE 7** gives additional notes, as required.

**LINE 8** shows higher commands under which each station operated.