



## NEWSLETTER 15

November 2021

**“Welcome” to new members:** We are very pleased to welcome several new members, so making our mailing list 241. We have 1800 followers on Facebook and 18k hits on the website.

**An Apology:** We have recently ‘found’ 1534 emails that somehow were never delivered to us. Some were important, others business-related. We have looked at **ALL** and found several important ones, some dating back to 2019. How can that be? Please resend any not responded to.

**SHORT Buildings at Rochester Airport:** It has recently come to our notice that BAe Systems have applied for planning permission (Medway Council. No.21/2292. August 2021) to demolish all the buildings (Shorts Offices and hangars) they occupy at the Airport.

This is understandable as fitting modern commercial premises into a building that is 80/90 years old must be difficult to say the least. There are 100 documents in the Application, most of which are unintelligible to ordinary folk. We have read the interesting one, it is labelled ‘HERITAGE’ We expect the application to be successful and the best we can hope for would be for some sort of heritage ‘condition’ imposed such as a monument in or around Rochester.

IMPORTANTLY 1500 are employed by BAe Systems at the Airport and 1200 jobs in the surrounding area support them. The high skills-base they work from is a Short Brothers legacy that BAe Systems inherited.

**Best possible** outcomes, in preferred order...

1. We have long thought about erecting a monument to the three Brothers on the very wide pavement opposite The Eagle Tavern on High Street, Rochester.
2. The last reminder that Shorts manufactured aeroplanes on the Esplanade is the crumbling launching ramp that was outside No.3 shop. It needs refurbishing and a ‘memory board’.
3. The surviving impressive frontage of the airport Shorts building could be incorporated into the new developments at Chatham.

**Worst possible** outcome...

1. All evidence of SHORT’s at the Airport, who employed 11,500 in Rochester during WW2, will be erased and subsequently forgotten with the demolition of the buildings.

**Consultants’ Proposal...** a ‘preservation by record’ that we presume will be photos and text that may well finish up at somewhere with no easy viewing to the general public = heritage lost.

Any of our proposals on the other hand would leave obvious signs of Shorts in/near the centre of Rochester. Oswald Short was a Freeman of the City of Rochester and of the City of London.

**Pembroke Dock Sunderland:** During a recent holiday on the west coast of Wales we visited the *Pembroke Dock Heritage Centre* ([www.sunderlandtrust.com](http://www.sunderlandtrust.com)) and met their primary researcher, Trevor Clark.

Trevor showed us some documents that had recently been donated to the Museum who decided that the papers did not fit in to their specific brief and so we have put them in touch with Peter West who is the curator of the *Eastchurch Aviation Museum* [EAM] ([www.eastchurchaviationmuseum.org.uk](http://www.eastchurchaviationmuseum.org.uk)).

We understand E.A.M. will be more than happy to accept Eustace’s letter and the other SHORT related documents into their safe-keeping.



**SHORT Grave Appeal:**

GoFundMe raised just over £500, somewhat short of the £2000 target and is still open. The Access Code is 636d79e3. Many thanks to the contributors to date. We still hope for more.

**Buy a Book for Christmas:**

As Christmas approaches, we would like to think that there are members out there who don't know what they or family member want for Christmas.

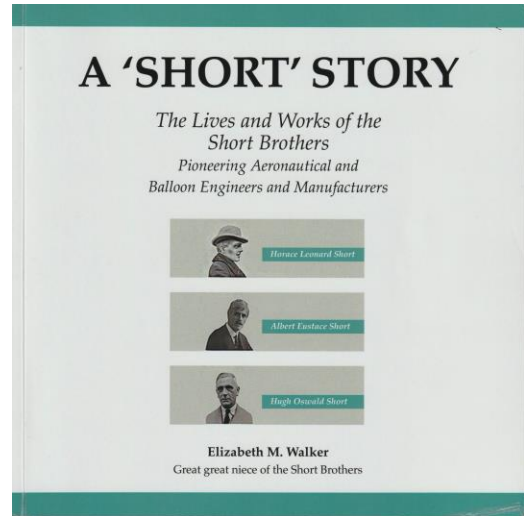
We have a suggestion...

**Why not give a book?**

We have just the book for anyone interested in what three members of the Short family did for aviation pioneering and development from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century until the mid-20<sup>th</sup>.

To obtain an author-signed copy send your cheque for £15 (that includes p & p) to...

**SHORT BROTHERS  
COMMEMORATION SOCIETY  
Jasmine Cottage Parvey Lane  
Sutton. MACCLESFIELD SK11 0HX**



OR order by email [info@shortbrothersaviationpioneers.co.uk](mailto:info@shortbrothersaviationpioneers.co.uk) and pay by BACS  
SHORT BROTHERS COMEMORATION SOCIETY. Coop Bank. Sort Code 08-92-99: Account 65788095

**RED WHEEL at the SHORT factory site, Windermere:**

One of the important emails rescued from the 1534 'missing', was from Parkdean Leisure Resorts. Their holiday homes site at Troutbeck, Windermere is where Francisco Short (Horace Short's son) was the onsite director of operations 1941-1945.

Here SHORT BROTHERS built 35 Sunderlands and repaired many war-damaged ones.

Chief Test pilot, John Lankester Parker OBE, is reputed to be the only pilot ever to land a *Sunderland* flying-boat ACROSS the lake rather than make use of some of its' 10-mile length.

The National Transport Trust ([www.nationaltransporttrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltransporttrust.org.uk)) now have permission to erect a RED WHEEL on the WW2 Guardhouse to mark the important heritage of the site.

**POSTSCRIPT:** Thanks to Geoff Harvey for the following Short Boys war-time verse found pencilled on the grey-brick wall of the WW2 air-raid tunnel complex that was built by Oswald Short...

**The shades of night were falling fast  
When o'er the coast some Heinkel's past [as written]  
Our Spitfires dived down like the rain  
The Heinkel's f\*\*\*\*d off home again.'**